



# SUNDAY READING

## SERMON.

The Friends of Jesus.  
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."—John 15: 14.

Our Lord does not, I think, in this text speak to us about his being our friend, but about our being his friends. He is "the friend of sinners"; but sinners are not his friends till their hearts are changed. "Ye are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you"; we are not his friends till then. His love to us is entirely of himself, but friendship needs something from us. Friendship cannot be all on one side; one-sided friendship is more fitly called mercy, grace or benevolence; friendship in its full sense is mutual. Hence, we have not before us the question as to whether Christ loves us or not, as to whether Christ has pity on us or not; the question is about our being friends to him, and such we must be made if, indeed, there is to be any intimacy of mutual friendship.

### The Highest Honor.

Beloved, it is the highest honor in the world to be called the friend of Christ. There is no title surely that excels in dignity that which was won by Abraham, who was called "The friend of God." Lord Brooke was so delighted with the friendship of Sir Philip Sydney that he ordered to be engraved upon his tomb nothing but this: "Here lies the friend of Sir Philip Sydney." There is beauty in such a feeling, but yet it is a small matter compared with being able to say, "Here lies a friend of Christ." O, wondrous condescension that he should call me "friend." If I am indeed a true believer, not only is he my friend, without which I could have no hope here or hereafter, but he hath in the abounding of his grace been pleased to regard me as his friend, and write me down in the honored list of inmates who are permitted to speak familiarly with him, as those do between whom there are no secrets, for their hearts are told out to him whilst he hides nothing from them, but saith, "If it were not so I would have told you."

Jesus values his friends, not by what they have, or what they wear, but by what they do. That is the point by which your friendship shall be tested: "If you are obedient you are my friends."

I. Let us come to the subject more closely, and notice first, that our Lord himself tells us

### What Obedience He Requests

from those who call themselves his friends. True friends are eager to know what they can do to please the objects of their love; let us gladly hearken to what our adorable Lord now speaks to the select circle of his chosen. He asks of one and all obedience. It must be active obedience, notice that. Abstinence from evil is a great part of righteousness, but it is not enough for a friendship. If a man can say, "I am not a drunkard, I am not a violator of the Sabbath, I am not a liar," so far so good, but such righteousness does not exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, and they cannot enter the kingdom. It is well if you do not willfully transgress, but if you are to be Christ's friends there must be far more than this. It would be a poor friendship which only said, "I am your friend, and to prove it, I don't insult you, I don't rob you, I don't speak evil of you." Surely there must be more positive evidence to certify friendship. You know it is

### And Old Saying.

"He is my friend who grinds at my mill." That is to say, friendship, shows itself in doing helpful acts, which prove sincerity. Fine words are mere wind, and go for nothing if not backed up with substantial deeds of kindness. Friendship cannot live on windy talk, it needs the bread of matter of fact. The inspired word says, "Show me a proof of your love; show it by doing whatsoever I command you."

This obedience must also be universal. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." No sooner is anything discovered to be the subject of a command than the man who is a true friend of Christ says, "I will do it," and he does. He does not pick and choose which precept he will keep and which he will neglect, for this is self-will and not obedience. I have known some professors err greatly in this matter. They have been very strict over one point, and they have blamed everybody who did not come up to their strictness, talking as if that one duty fulfilled the law. This will not do:

### The Test

is very comprehensive, "If ye do whatsoever I command you." I do not mean that little things are unimportant: far from it. If there be a great that God bids you strain at, strain it out with great diligence; do not let a midge escape you if he bids you remove it. Here is the proof of your love. Will you do the smaller thing for Jesus as well as the more weighty matter? Too many say, "I do not see any use in it, I can be saved without it; there are a great many different opinions on the point," and so on. As this cometh of evil, and is not consistent with the spirit of friendship with Christ, for love pleases even in trifles. Note well, that this obedience is to be rendered as to Christ himself. Put the emphasis on the little word "I": "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." We are to do these things because Jesus commands them. Does not the royal person of our Lord cast a very strong light upon

### The Necessity of Obedience?

When we refuse to obey a command we refuse to do what the Lord himself commands. We are to act rightly because Jesus commands us, and we love to do his pleasure; there can be no friendship with out this. Oh for grace to serve the Lord with gladness.

To close this first point, it appears that our Lord would have us obey him out of a friendly spirit. Obedience to Christ as if we were forced to do it under pains and penalties would be of no worth as a proof of friendship; every one can see that. He speaks not of slaves, but of friends; he would not have us perform duties from fear of punishment or love of reward; that which he can accept of his friends must be the fruit of love. His will must be our law because his person is our delight. Some professors need to be whipped to their duties; they must hear stirring sermons, and attend exciting meetings, and live under pressure; but those who are Christ's friends need not spur but love. "The love of Christ constraineth us." When duty becomes delight and precepts are as sweet as promises, then are we Christ's friends, and not till then.

II. Having set forth what kind of obedience Christ requests, I now notice, in the second place, that our Lord leads us to gather from this sentence that those who do not obey him are

### No Friends of His.

He who does not do his commandments cannot be Christ's friends, because he is not of one mind with Christ; that is evident. Can two walk together except they be agreed? True friendship exists not between those who differ upon first principles, and there can be no points of agreement between Jesus Christ and the man who will not obey him. They are not of one mind: Christ is for holiness, this man is for sin; Christ is for spiritual-mindedness, this man is carnal-minded; Christ is for love, this man is for self; how can there be any friendship when they are diametrically opposed in design, object and spirit? It is impossible.

He who obeys not Christ cannot be Christ's friend, though he may profess to be. He may be a very high and loud professor, and for that reason he may be all the more an enemy of the cross: for when men see this man walking according to his own lusts they cry out, "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth," and they attribute all his faults to his religion, and straightway begin to blaspheme the name of Christ. Through the inconsistent conduct of our Lord's professed friends his cause is more hindered than anything else. Suppose you and I had some very intimate associate who was found drunk on the street, or committing burglary or theft, should we not feel disgraced by his conduct? When he was brought before the magistrate would you like to have it said, "This person is the bosom friend of So-and-so?" Oh, you would cover your face and beg your neighbors never to mention it. For such a fellow to be

### Known as Your Friend.

would compromise your name and character. We say this even weeping, that Jesus Christ's name is compromised, and his honor is tarnished among men by many who wear the name of Christian without having the spirit of Christ: such cannot be his dear companions.

Those that obey him not cannot be owned by Jesus as his friends, for that would dishonor him indeed. The title of "friends of Jesus" goes with a certain character, and cannot be otherwise obtained. Those are his friends who obey him: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." He grants this patent of nobility to all believers who lovingly follow him, but on his list of friends he enters none who are disobedient. Do you not see that his honor requires this? Would you have our Lord stand up and say, "The drunkard is my friend?" Would you hear him say, "That fraudulent bankrupt is my intimate companion?" Would you have Jesus claim friendly companionship with the vicious and profane? A man is known by his company; what would be thought of Jesus if his intimate associates were men of loose morals and unrighteous principles? To go among them for their good in one thing, to make them his friends is another.

III. Our third observation is: those who best obey Christ are

### On the Best Terms

with him. "Ye are my friends," he seems to say, "and live near to me, enjoying practical personal friendship, and daily intercourse with me, when you promptly obey." Some of you know by personal experience, brothers and sisters, that you cannot walk in holy converse with Christ unless you keep his commandments. There is no feeling of communion between our souls and Christ when we are conscious of having done wrong and yet are not sorry for it. If we know that we have erred, as we often do, and our hearts break because we have grieved our Beloved, and we go and tell him our grief, and confess our sin, we are still his friends, and he kisses away our tears, saying, "I know your weakness; I willingly blot out your offences. There is no breach of friendship between us; I will manifest myself to you still."

If, instead, knowing any act to be wrong we persevere in it, there cannot be any happy friendship between us and our Saviour. If conscience has told you, dear brother, that such and such a thing ought to be given up, and you continue in it, the next time you are on your knees you will feel yourself greatly hampered, and when you sit down before your open bible and hope to have communion with Christ as you have formerly enjoyed it, you will find that he has withdrawn himself, and will not be found by you. Is there any wonder? If sin lieth at the door how can the Lord smile on us? Secret sin will poison communion at the fountain head.

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Oh, beloved, see to this! Under all the crosses, and losses, and trials of life there is no comfort more desirable than the confidence that you have aimed at doing your Lord's will. If a man

### Suffers for Christ's Sake

while steadily pursuing the course of holiness, he may rejoice in such suffering. They may call the faithful one fanatic, and enthusiast, and all such ill-sounding names; but over these there is no need to fret, for the honor of being

Christ's friend infinitely outweighs the world's opinion. When we follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth he is responsible for results; we are not. The consequences which follow from our doing right belong to God. Abhor the theory that for the sake of a great good you may do a little wrong. I have heard men say, ay and christian men too, "If I were strictly to follow my convictions I should have to leave a post of great usefulness, and therefore I remain where I am, and quiet my conscience as well as I can. I should lose opportunities of doing good, which I now possess, if I were to put in practice all I believe, and therefore I remain in a position which I could not justify on any other ground." Is this according to the mind of Jesus? Thousands of people sin because it seems so advantageous, so wise, so necessary, so sure to turn out well. Hear what Christ says—"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." If you do evil that good may come you cannot walk with him, but if your heart is set toward his statutes you shall find him loving you, and taking up his abode with you.

IV. By our text we are taught that

### The Most Friendly Action

a man can do for Jesus is to obey him: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Rich men have thought to do the most friendly act possible toward Christ by giving an immense sum to build a church, or to found an almshouse or schools. If they are believers, and have done this thing as an act of obedience to Christ's law of stewardship, they have well done, and the more of such munificence the better, but where splendid benefactions are given out of ostentation, or from the idea that some merit will be gained by the consecration of a large amount of wealth, the whole business is unacceptable. Jesus asks not lavish expenditure, but ourselves. He has made this the token of true love. "If ye do whatsoever I command you." To bring our wealth and not to yield our heart is to give the casket and steal the jewel.

Others have imagined that they could show their friendliness to Christ by some remarkable action of self-mortification. Among Romanists especially in the old times it was believed that misery and merit went together, and so men tortured themselves that they might please God. They went for many a day without washing themselves or their clothes, and fancied that they thus acquired the odor of sanctity. I do not believe that Jesus thinks a man any more his friend because he is dirty. Some have put on a hair shirt, or have worn

### A Chain Girdle.

which made wounds. I do not think that the kind Lord Jesus counts these things to be friendly acts. Ask any humane person whether he would be gratified by knowing that a friend wore a hair shirt for his sake, and he would answer, "Pray let the poor creature wear whatever is most comfortable to him, and that will please me best." The loving Jesus takes no delight in pain and discomfort; the maceration of the body is no doctrine of his. When we hear of the nuns of St. Ann sleeping bolt upright in their coffins, we take no particular satisfaction in their doing so; a kind heart would beg them to go to bed. I went over a monastery some time ago, and over each bed was a little cat-o-nine tails, which I sincerely hope was used to the satisfaction of the professor, but I did not copy the idea. Our Lord cannot be gratified by self-inflicted, self-invented tortures. Jesus Christ has not demanded this as the gauge of friendship, neither will he regard us as his friends for this. He says, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

Some think it a very friendly act towards Christ to attend many religious services in a consecrated building. They are at matins, and vespers, and

### Fasts and Feasts

without regard to number. Some of us prefer to have our religious services each day in our own homes, and it will be a dreadful thing when family prayer is given up for public service; but a number of people think little of family devotion; they must needs repair to the parish church or to some other temple made with hands; but let no man dream that Jesus is thus made our friend. We are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is. It is well to be found meeting with God's people as often as we can; but still you may multiply your sacraments and increase your ceremonies, and you may attend to this service, and to the other service, until your heart is worn away with grinding at the mill of outward religion. Ye are Christ's friends, if ye do whatsoever he commands you: that is a better test than early communion or daily mass.

The practical outcome of it all is this: examine every question as to duty by the light of this one enquiry—Will this be friendly action to Christ? If I do this shall I act as Christ's friend? Then I am glad. If it will dishonor him I will have nothing to do with it. You would not do anything unkind to him, would you? Certainly you would not do anything to grieve him if you saw him before your eyes. Well,

### Keep Him Always Before You.

You will want much of the Holy Spirit's anointing to do this. May God give it to you. Live, dear friends, as if Christ would come at once and detect you in the very act. Do that which you would not be ashamed of if the next instant you should see the Lord sitting on the throne of his glory, and calling you before his bar. Thus living, you shall delight yourself in the abundance of peace.

"So shall you walk with close with God,  
Calm and serene your frame;  
So pure, right shall mark the road  
That leads you to the Lamb."

Obedience will gladden you with the blissful presence of your Lord, and in that presence you shall find fullness of joy. You shall be the envied of all wise men, for you shall be the beloved of the Lord; and your pathway, if it be not always smooth shall be always safe, for Jesus never leaves his friend, and he will never leave you, but he will keep you even to the end. May this be my happy case and yours. Amen.

### Does Protection Protect?

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### Life a System of Terrorism.

Although an ardent admirer of nature and her mysterious laws, I am not one of those who regard them as perfection: it is an irresistible law of force, by which the strong predominate, and the weak must suffer. In every direction we see a struggle for existence; the empty stomach must be filled, therefore one species devour the other. It is a system of terrorism from the beginning to the end. The fowl destroys the worm, the hawk destroys the fowl, the cat kills the dog, the dog kills the cat, the leopard kills the lion, the lion kills the leopard, and the lion is slain by man. Man appears upon the scene of general destruction as the greatest of all destroyers, as he alone in creation was against his own species. We hear of love, and pity, and Christian charity; we see torpedoes and hellish inventions of incredible power to destroy our fellow-creatures. The inventors of these horrible engines of destruction receive titles and the highest honors, while those who have worked in progressive science for the welfare of mankind are forgotten in the obscure laboratory, although the saving light which they invented is gleaming above the hidden rock, for the benefit of all, to expose the danger of the sea. Thus with one hand we save, with the other we destroy.—Sir Samuel Baker.

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### Notice of Dissolution

THE undersigned hereby give notice and certify that a certain limited Partnership under the laws of the Province of New Brunswick, conducted under the firm name of "W. C. PITFIELD & Co.," for the buying and selling at wholesale of dry goods and other merchandise, and generally a wholesale dry goods and general jobbing and commission business, which by the certificate of Limited Partnership registered in the office of the Registrar of Deeds of the City and County of Saint John in the said Province, was to commence the Twenty-eighth day of December, A. D. 1889, and terminate the First day of January, A. D. 1892, did terminate and is and was dissolved the said First day of January, A. D. 1892.

(Signed) WARD C. PITFIELD,  
S. HAYWARD.

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAINT JOHN, to wit:

Be it remembered that WARD C. PITFIELD and SAMUEL HAYWARD, parties to and the signers of the annexed notice and certificate, personally came and appeared at the City of Saint John, in the City and County of Saint John and Province of New Brunswick, before me, J. E. BARNES, one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace in and for the said City and County of Saint John, and acknowledged the said WARD C. PITFIELD that he signed the said notice and certificate, and the said SAMUEL HAYWARD that he signed the same.

Given under my hand at the said City of Saint John this Twenty-first day of December, A. D. 1891.

(Signed) J. E. BARNES,  
J. P. City and County of Saint John.

### Partnership Notice.

THE undersigned, desirous of forming a Limited Partnership under the Laws of the Province of New Brunswick, hereby certify:

1. That the name of the firm under which such partnership is to be conducted is "W. C. PITFIELD & Co."
2. That the general nature of the business intended to be transacted by such partnership is the buying and selling at wholesale of dry goods and other merchandise, and generally a wholesale dry goods and general jobbing and commission business.
3. That the names of all the general and special partners interested in said partnership are as follows:

WARD C. PITFIELD, who resides at the City of Saint John in the City and County of Saint John and Province of New Brunswick, is the general partner, and SAMUEL HAYWARD, who resides at the Parish of Hampton in the County of Kings and Province aforesaid, is the special partner.

4. That the said SAMUEL HAYWARD has contributed the sum of forty thousand dollars as capital to common stock.

5. That the period at which the said partnership is to commence is the Second day of January, A. D. 1892, and the period at which the said partnership is to terminate is the Second day of January, A. D. 1896, dated this Thirty-first day of December, A. D. 1891.

(Signed) WARD C. PITFIELD,  
S. HAYWARD.

PROVINCE OF NEW BRUNSWICK.

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAINT JOHN, to wit:

Be it remembered that on this Thirty-first day of December, A. D. 1891, at the City of Saint John and Province of New Brunswick, before me, JAMES A. BELYEA, a Notary Public in and for the said Province, by lawful authority duly commissioned and sworn, residing and practising in the said City of Saint John, personally came and appeared, WARD C. PITFIELD and SAMUEL HAYWARD, parties to and the signers of the annexed certificate, and in the said certificate mentioned and severally acknowledged, the said WARD C. PITFIELD that he signed the said certificate, and the said SAMUEL HAYWARD that he signed the said certificate.

In witness whereof, I the said Notary have hereunto set my hand and Notarial Seal at the said City and County of Saint John, the said Thirty-first day of December, A. D. 1891.

(Signed) JAMES A. BELYEA,  
Notary Public.

(L. S.)

### Notice.

DANIEL & BOYD (LIMITED) having purchased the Stock and good will of the business of DANIEL & BOYD, the future business will be conducted at the old stand, Market Square, under the name and style of DANIEL & BOYD (Limited).

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JOHN BOYD, Vice-President.  
FREDK. W. DANIEL, Managing Director.

THOS. H. SOMMERVILLE, Secretary.  
St. John, N. B., Dec. 21, 1891. Jan. 16.

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