

## FRIENDSHIP.

(Contributed)

"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you," John 15-15.

In our thoughts of association with our fellows, perhaps there is no more beautiful word that we could think of than,—friend.

Jesus in these closing hours of his life was trying to impress upon the minds of his disciples the close relationship that existed between them; his deep love and concern for and therefore his just claim upon them; and their undying devotion to his cause; and un-failing love for one another. As we try to follow the thought of true friendship, perhaps it would be well for us to hold in mind a few simple definitions, viz:—One attached to another, by esteem, respect and affection; a well wisher; intimate associates. The root meaning as we find is love, hence we might well say lover.

If we study for a little the first thought—One attached, etc., we see the significance of Christ's figure to represent the attachment. A vine, its branches. How vital to be a friend of our Lord. We are not only united to him, but in that union, He is imparting to us. The lifeless getting life from the fountain of life. The ingrafted bearing the likeness of the true vine. The fruit of the Godhead being reproduced in the godly. In this union we are to esteem him and His, not only His glory, but as one of old; esteem the reproach of Christ greater than the riches of Egypt; and glory not in our own selves, but in the cross of Christ. We respect him; his claims and his voluntary humility, and as one of old, we gladly forsake worldly associations and entanglements and whatever might grieve Him; and endure gladly all reproaches for and with him. In this thought may we not get a true measurement of a fuller responsibility in the verse preceeding,—“Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.” Among all his commandments next to loving God with all our hearts, we are to love one another.

Being true friends of Christ, we must be true friends of one another. To be “a friend of the world” is to be an “enemy of God.” To be a true friend in the church of God, is to prove our unbroken fellowship with Jesus. Broken fellowship with Jesus means withering and death, and can we think of broken fellowship in his church without surely knowing it means withering and death to at least one, and the word is, “if one member suffer, the whole body suffers.” Then what does true fellowship in Christ imply—attachment by esteem, respect and affection. The strong to bear the infirmities of the weak. The well supplied to help meet the needs of the needy; “In as much as ye did it unto the least of these, ye did it unto me.” Those who by grace have been kept, and seek to restore the fallen in the, “Spirit of meekness.” Those who have the “Comforter” speak comfortably to the oppressed, and sorrow stricken; from whatever cause, “Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

We hasten to note a last thought—an intimate associate. I wonder if we stop to think what Jesus was trying to say in these last hours; I now open my heart; I unveil myself; spread wide arms; draw you near to my bosom and whisper to you the deepest secrets of Godhead; things that angels would peer into, and prophets longed to know, viz:

I and my Father are one, I am going back

to my Father, I will send you another comforter. We will come to abide, because I live ye shall live also, I go to prepare a place for you, I am coming again for you, I came to save the world. “Go ye therefore into all the world and preach the gospel,—“Lo I am with you always.”

These secrets belong exclusively to the church, and will only be fully understood by those who at the loss of all things, maintain the closest fellowship. “Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure.” Friendship is never mercenary. It serves not for what it gets, but for what it gives.—“Though He was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich.” Abraham was called the friend of God, what attachment, what esteem, what intimate association, yea what unveiling of secrets. Hearing the call of God, he forsook his own people, left his native land, not knowing whither he went, glad to be a pilgrim and a stranger in a strange land, in order that he might walk with God as a friend. Privileges came in this friendship, in service to others,—those who had lightly esteemed the past it is true, but love never dies. Years have passed since Lot had parted company. One day word came that Lot was being carried captive at the will of the enemy. What now? no careless excusing, viz, it serves him just right, but a girding on of the sword, all visible signs overwhelming against him, duty calls, he is his brother's keeper, and at all hazards he must off to the rescue. Do we get it? “A friend of God” and one of God's is being led away, what an exalted privilege; that of bringing an erring one back. Jos. 5. 19-20. “——. Let him know that he which converteth the sinner, (erring one) from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins.” Then the marvellous privilege of that prayer for Sodom came only because of his friendship. God would not hide the doom from his friend, hence the wrestling intercessory prayer. There is the prayer spirit? the groaning that cannot be uttered? Is the doom any less or is the lack in our friendship? So God withheld the revelation because of our unfaithfulness? Let us to our closets go and there remain until God lets us into the secrets of a Gethsemane. I wonder if that marvellous scene on “Moriah” was not the outcome of Abraham, with longing heart, seeking to know how the promise in Isaac was to me fulfilled.

This was the secret of ages, but God showed him that it could only be done by sacrifice: The gift of his best, “His only begotten son.” He was the prototype of this scene came saying: “Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friend.

Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.” “I lay down my life that I may take it again.” How fully was this spirit of serving for what we give, manifested in the love of Jonathan for David. His concern for the life of David was virtually to bestow the kingdom upon him. He knew that he would decrease but that David would increase. How beautifully this fits the New Testament teaching. “Look not every man on his own things—but on the things of others.” “Let each esteem others better than themselves.”

May we not in the light of these last teachings of Jesus, tarry long in our closets, that we may indeed understand all that there is for us in being a friend of God.

Love—God's kinship;  
Seeks for others,  
Wayward sisters, fallen brothers;  
Seeks not self's, but others good;

## Missionary Correspondence.

Many of our people will be interested with the following letter from Paul Sanders to Brother and Sister S. Hayden Shaw.

Ed.

Balmoral, M. S.  
Paulpietersburg,  
Natal, South Africa  
April 21st, 1916

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Shaw,

I expect you will be quite surprised to get a letter from me. I have been thinking about you quite a lot lately. How I wish I could come to a good old prayer meeting like we used to have, it has been about four years since I was to an European meeting. We have quite a number of out-post meetings and I usually hold a service at one of them every Sunday. Last Sunday I was to a kraal about three or four miles from here, it is the home of a witch doctor, she is the one that asked for the service to be held there. I think she wants to give up the devil worship and become a christian. She gave me a little hen and said it was “to thank for the meeting” and that she would like to have them at her kraal all the time, there is one given out there for Sunday after next.

Today is Good Friday and we are having an all day meeting, and fasting, in the church. I was up in the forenoon and afternoon taking care of the children now while Faith is there. Oh may God pour his Spirit upon us all and use us more and more in his harvest field.

Do you still live in the same little house? and do you keep as many plants in the windows as you used to? How I wish I could visit you just for even one afternoon.

I went fishing to the Pongolo River last week, I did not even get a bite, this is a very poor place to fish, just as I was going to start for home I found a very pretty yellow lily it grows something like a Tiger lily, I am sending some seeds and think it will grow if you like to try it.

I do not think you would know me now if you saw me, I am grown so that I am taller than mama (i.e. 5 ft. 6 1-2 inches) and weigh 132 lbs. will close now hoping this will find you well and happy in the Lord, I remain.

Yours for Jesus.

H. Paul Sanders.

The fight of faith is a “good fight” because it is for the best objects; it insures a clean heart, a pure conscience, and God's approval. It is a good fight because God supplies the weapons. It is a winning fight because the omnipotent Christ takes us into His own keeping, and neither man nor devils can pluck us out of His hand. When the son of God is conquered we will be conquered, and not before.—Theodore L. Cuyler.

There can be no expectation of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, nor of achievement on the part of the church, unless she make diligent use of the means which God has appointed for her growth in knowledge and her advance in grace. Many a Christian and many a church are in a shriveled condition because they do not use the means which God has appointed for their development.—Presbyterian.

Serves in fellowship;  
Ceases not it's vigils;  
Knows no rest, till wondering feet,  
Turn their steps God's face to seek;  
Knows no joy like service.  
Love—God's love in friendship.