

EVIDENCE OF FRIENDSHIP

"Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth, [his plans, etc.] 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.

The end of Jesus' earthly ministry was come; during those three and a half years he had uttered truths which served to test his followers, which proved to some causes of stumbling, to all who were not "Israelites indeed:" – truths which had brought the opposition of the nominal Jewish church, and of which even some of his followers, had said: "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" and walked no more with him. But now this work of separating was all over; even Judas had gone out, and Jesus and the eleven are alone. He has been telling them some things regarding their new and high privileges, their new relationship toward God about to be purchased by his death, into the enjoyment of which they should enter after he should ascend to the Father, and His work as ransom be recognized as perfect. Then would come the "power from on high" – the Spirit which would endue them with ability to understand spiritual, or heavenly things.

It may have escaped the attention of some that at this time the disciples were not begotten of the spirit, though they were justified by faith – justified human beings, but not begotten new creatures, consequently Jesus' teachings contain little reference to the highest things except in parables; he explained little concerning the "high calling" of the Bride, but said: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." How this corroborates Paul's statement: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of

God," "neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2:14. Though justified men, they must be begotten of the Spirit to comprehend things above the human plane.

After telling them of the future unfolding of truth and of his words he tells them why his revelations are for them, viz: because he will henceforth treat them as friends and reveal all things to them.

There are two important lessons conveyed in these words of the Master, as applicable to us as to the eleven Apostles: first, the rule by which He judges who are His friends – "ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." If we submit our wills completely to his will, thus becoming dead to the world and alive toward God – then he reckons us friends; second, the rule by which we may judge whether he reckons us among this class of special "friends," viz: If he reveals his work and plans to us, even all things which he has heard of the Father.

Now apply these rules to yourself. If you can say, "Not my will but thine be done" – not my plan of saving the world, not my plan relative to the preaching of the Gospel – not my will regarding the nominal church – not my will regarding myself and what I shall do or be – but "Thy will be done" in all these things, then you are a "friend" in this special sense spoken of by Jesus. Now try the other rule, have you evidence that you are a special friend? Is the Spirit leading you daily into more and more of an understanding of his words and plan – revealing more and more of the "mystery" kept hid in former ages, and showing you "things to come." Do you say yes? Very good, then yours is the blessed experience of heavenly wisdom, which at the same time is a proof that you are a special "friend." Continue and if possible increase your consecration, and you shall continue to abide in his love and to have fresh evidences of his friendship by growth "in grace and in knowledge."

If the Word and plan of God are not opening before you: [The Spirit often uses human agencies for communicating truth.] If you are not being led of the Spirit into all truth – if he is not showing you "things to come," (John 16:13.) then it looks indeed as though you were not of the special friends, and it should be your first work to gain this divine friendship by self-surrender – consecration.

All who believe themselves acceptable servants of our Master should look for and not be satisfied without this witness of the Spirit that they are Christ's friends.
