

But when the heart can say: I love the Lord, the idea of the Eternal becomes personified. Then God becomes the Shepherd who leads us, the Father who spiritually begat us, the covenant-God to whom we sustain the covenant relation, the Friend who offers us friendship, the Lord whom we serve, the God of our trust, who is no longer merely God, but our God.

For many years we may have had love for God in general and never have known him. He is only known when love for him takes on a personal character; when we meet him in the pathway of life; when He becomes a person in contrast with our own; when we enter into conscious, vital and personal relation with him, so that He is our Father and we his children; not merely one of his children, but his child in a special way, in a personal relation different from that of his other children, even the closest relation conceivable in heaven and on earth; He, our Father, our shepherd, our bosom-friend and our God.

He who has not entered into this can not understand it. It extends farther than his reach. If, however, he is religiously inclined, he soon realizes, on hearing about it, that if he might have this love, it would be sweeter than that of which he is now conscious. It makes him feel that he lacks something and so may arouse in him a desire for it. It may make him crave what would be so beautiful to possess. This craving may prepare him for better things. If there is to be contact with God, it proceeds from both sides. God draws near to us, and we to him. First afar off, then closer by, until distance falls away and we meet each other. The blessedness of this moment can