

## A LESSON IN HUMILITY

Beloved of the Lord:

In Mark 9:33 the Lord asked His disciples - "What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?" - for He was an unseen listener to their conversation. Their silence indicated their shame - "for they held their peace, for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest". Their natural minds and hearts were concerned with nothing but glory in the coming Kingdom. Yet He had taught them of His approaching rejection, suffering and death (Mk.8:31) but it was carelessly ignored. Other thoughts pre-occupied them, hindering understanding of the work of His Cross. They neither apprehended it, nor welcomed it. How even saints today may fail in the proper understanding of the great work of His Cross! The Lord knew it; He exposed it and their silence to His question revealed their guilt .

What were their thoughts and disputes about? Ideas of position and power filled their minds and like modern politicians they wrangled over the spoils of office. Did Peter think he should be the Prime Minister? Was he not the foremost speaker? Did Judas expect to be the Secretary of the Treasury? Did John a favorite disciple, believe he would be the greatest? Andrew, the first disciple, did he suppose he deserved the precedence? So they bickered on, vain glory filling their hearts and minds in expectation of the coming Kingdom, caring nothing about the Saviour's coming sufferings!

Are we the same today perhaps? The trend often is to seek official recognition - to be leaders, elders, deacons, trustees, pastors of popular churches, etc. manifesting the same spirit as did the disciples of the Lord. Sometimes the conception of being a great Christian is to be PROMINENT! Why such scrambling? Do we ourselves seek it? Certainly we should know that FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS OF THE LORD will be true leaders! Yet to aspire for it, let the words of Jesus counsel us - "If any man desire to be FIRST, the same shall be LAST of all" - Mk.9:35. The natural desire to be first is nothing but SELF!

THE LESSON IN HUMILITY - The Lord teaches a gracious and faithful lesson, as "He took a child and set him in the midst of them; and when He had taken him in His arms, He said unto them, whosoever receiveth one of such children in my name, receiveth me, and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but HIM that sent me"-Mk.9:36,37.

Note that the Lord did not speak until the child was "in His arms". This picture of the Lord with the child in HIS arms is our object lesson, telling us where WE should be. The encircling arms around the child reveal His love, His tenderness and protection. The child preaches the sermon! as though to say- "Look at me! Rid your minds of pride and become single-minded and child-like". Is it not written - "the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath (encircling thee) are the everlasting arms"? - Deut.33:27. How literal was this with the child! Even so, the Saviour would carry us through this world, through life and death, with the eternal arms of His strength! Is not our complete salvation and our Christian life represented by this little child "in HIS arms"? His bosom is the place of warmth, affection, intimacy, confidence, and His encircling arms our place of safety, support and shelter for all the days before us!

Look at the picture from the child's side. His attitude speaks of trust, confidence, rest, peace, love, joy, etc. - all the feelings that believers should know "in HIS arms". Yet the words of the Lord also imply not only nearness to Himself, but also with "HIM that sent me". For "truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ" - 1 John 1:3. Is not the bosom of Christ our resting place in danger, storms and sorrow? Yes, even in death (Psa.23:4). Blessed it is to know that the Only-Begotten Son "Who IS in the bosom of the Father" (Jno.1:18) came to earth so that a sinner finds a resting place on "Jesus' bosom" (John 13:23). Surely, dependence upon HIM, humbleness of mind and confidence in Him, exemplified by the child, will assure us of enjoying HIS fellowship through the coming year in the spirit of humility. Humility is the leading characteristic for a Christian! When this prevails, we need not fear a rebuke from the Lord at the end of the way, for it is written - "He that humbleth himself, shall be exalted" - Matt.23:12.

With sincere wishes and prayer the Lord will give you a HUMBLE and HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Faithfully yours in Christ,

