

"ASHAMED OF ME AND MY WORD."

– LUKE 9:26 –

ONE of the first thoughts to strike us in connection with this text is that our Lord so highly exalts and honors his Word as to put it on a parity with himself. We are not at all surprised at his declaration that those who are ashamed of him he would be ashamed to own as his joint-heirs in the Kingdom – ashamed to own or recognize as of his Bride class. All that is what we should expect, and yet as we look about us how many we find that seem to be ashamed of the Lord. Some may be inclined to controvert this and say, "No Christian is ashamed of Christ; even the nominal Christians, the tares, are glad to own him Lord of all. The name of Jesus is no longer a name of shame and contempt. God has highly exalted him, and the whole world is coming to adore him more and more every day."

Let us not be too sure that this is the right thought, dear friends. Our own thought is that a certain ideality has been exalted before the minds of civilized people, and that to this ideality they bow and render praise. Our thought is that the real Christ has never had the love or esteem of the world, and that he will not have it until in God's due time the true knowledge shall have filled the earth, and the clouds of ignorance and superstition shall have rolled away, and when the world in general shall have learned some of the great lessons which the time of trouble introducing the Millennial Kingdom will surely teach.

The Christ whom the Jews did not love or esteem or honor, but on the contrary crucified, was holy, harmless, separate from sinners. He was not wealthy, was considered a fanatic because of his loyalty to truth and righteousness, and because he gave his time and energy to loving services for his fellow-creatures and

especially in providing spiritual nourishment for them. Therefore his brethren hated him and hid as it were their faces from him – in shame. (Isa. 53:3.) And hence it was decided that they could not be of the Bride class, and as a nation the Jews were cast off until the elect should be found.

The Lord is still present in the world in the flesh – in the flesh of his consecrated members – and the world in general still despises him as at first and as he foretold – "Marvel not if the world hate you; ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world the world would love its own." (John 15:18,19.) The world is still ashamed of Christ. Nominal Christians, nominal Spiritual Israel, are as much ashamed of him today as Natural Israel was ashamed of him [R3777 : page 152] eighteen centuries ago. When we consider that our Lord is represented by his members in the flesh we see that love for the brethren means love for the Lord, and hence as the Apostle states this is one of the great tests of our relationship to him and to the Father. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (I John 4:20.) "Love one another as I have loved you," is the recognized test of discipleship, and he therefore who is ashamed of the brethren is ashamed of the elder brother. He counts all the younger brethren as himself, saying, He that despiseth you despiseth me; he that rejecteth you rejecteth me and him that sent me. – Luke 10:16.

It may be a new thought to some that in despising the brethren they are despising the Lord; that in being ashamed of the brethren they are being ashamed of the Lord; and that thus they would be demonstrating that a wrong condition of mind and conduct prevailed: that they were not fit for the kingdom; that they had not reached the mark of perfect love; that they had not only not learned to love their enemies but had not even learned to love the brethren – those who are striving to walk in the footsteps of the Master.

ASHAMED OF THE LORD'S WORD

How the Lord's terms and conditions of discipleship do sift and test our very innermost thoughts! He does not address those who burn the Bible nor those who neglect to have a Bible in the house, nor those who neglect to read the Bible, nor those who fail to take their texts from the Bible, nor those who quote the Scriptures incorrectly when they do quote them, but those who in their hearts are ashamed of the Word of God and give evidence of that shame, that lack of appreciation, by their failure to take their stand in support of the Truth. Let us test ourselves, let us prove that we are not ashamed of the Lord, of the brethren or of his Word.

The Word of God is not merely the Bible, but it includes sermons, tracts, books, etc., in proportion as they contain and truly represent the message of God's dear Son. This brings the matter still more closely home, and it implies that we are not to be ashamed of any of the doctrines presented in the Bible, nor to be ashamed of any literature which in the Lord's providence has been prepared and which represents his Truth and expounds and illustrates it. The Lord would have a free-minded, open-hearted people, whose hearts would be so loyal to him and to the Truth which he represents that they would gladly surrender everything, even life itself, rather than in any measure impede its progress, rather than in any measure bring dishonor or discredit upon it. On the contrary, those who are not ashamed of the Lord and his Word, and who realize that there is nothing in them to be ashamed of, but on the contrary everything to rejoice in, to exult in, will seek to lift high the royal banner, to tell the good tidings of great joy to the extent of their ability, **[R3777 : page 153]** to cooperate with all others who are thus showing forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. – I Pet. 2:9.

Such are the Lord's jewels, whom in the end of this age he will garner in the Kingdom and ultimately associate with himself in the great and glorious work of the Millennial age, the uplifting and refreshing of all the families of the earth. Only those who so love the Lord and his Truth as to be willing, yea, glad to suffer reproaches on their account – only such will be counted worthy of the grand and glorious conditions, opportunities and privileges of the Millennial Kingdom.
