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THE DIVINE LAW OF HUMILITY

By Rev. John A. Clark, B.A.

It was at a dinner-table. Among the guests were men who were anxious to impress upon others their own social distinction by taking the most honored places at the table. Christ observed them and spoke some plain words about self-exaltation. "Whosoever," He said, "exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

St. Luke calls our Lord's words a parable. One wonders why. They read like a good, common-sense piece of advice as to how to behave at a wedding, or any important social gathering. "When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest seat. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee." Here surely is good counsel. The fact is, that long-headed men act just in this way, and many a man has greatly honored himself by a judicious humility.

But is this what our Lord meant? Does He say, "The way to get honor is to be modest and self-depreciating?" You and I feel that after all we would rather be the man who was frankly self-seeking, than he who was furtively self-seeking. Our Lord's words do not teach us this, but are a parable and contain something not on the surface.

Our Lord here declares a law of life, a law of God's kingdom, that every one recognizes, that is seen everywhere. The commonest dinner-table reveals it. Children know its meaning and truth as well as adults. Let one child be selfish and grasping and con-

ceited, and the other children feel that he should be humiliated. Let him be hurt or disgraced, and they will say it serves him right. It is their way of saying, "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased."

This law cannot be obeyed, however, by a seeming obedience. To choose the lowest seat, to appear to be lowly-minded, just because we are so self-seeking, is not humility. What is required is a real humility. Not merely a sitting-down in the lowest seat, but a sincere recognition of that as our true place. Not a humbling of oneself that one may be exalted, but a self-depreciation that is an honest manifestation of our sense of unworthiness. This is the teaching of our Lord's parable. His advice about behavior at a dinner-table is only the gloss. Through it He shows us the universal law of humility.

"Give me the lowest place; or if for me
That lowest place too high, make one more
low

Where I may sit and see
My God, and love Thee so."
Calgary, Alberta

WRITING HIS NAME

A poor old negro woman, suffering from a painful, incurable disease, longed for release. She resolved to spend the whole of one night, asking the Lord why He did not take her to the heavenly home, where pain and sickness never come. In the morning, she said, with a shining face, that she knew now the reason why she was being left on earth. The Lord had told her that He wanted her to stay and "write His name."

For some time longer she lived, and no complaint about the delay of her home-going crossed her lips. She was busy every day writing her Lord's name in loving words and kindly deeds.

What a different world this would become, if it should see shining through the speech and actions of every disciple, the name, the gracious and loving character of the Master! We cannot estimate how great an impression would thus be made, or how many would be won to Christ by the beauty of these Christian lives.

We can write His name wherever we are