

Beloved of the Lord:

"Man's tendency is to exalt himself. He loves reputation. He likes to be somebody, to do something which will attract the esteem of people to himself, to be of importance in his own eyes as well as in the eyes of others. In the very discharge of spiritual functions in the Church, man is apt to forget that all he is and does is to be surely and solely for the glory of Christ, that Christ is the one Head, controlling everything, and imparting everything of life and energy to the Body in all its members" - W.E. Vine.

True spiritual greatness was exemplified by John the Baptist in John 3:30, saying of Christ, "He must increase, but I decrease". It mattered not that more disciples followed Jesus, but that Christ increased in His greatness. This also was true in the life and service of the Apostle Paul. Note the three occasions recorded of his conversion: -

- 1 - THE TIME OF IT - recorded in Acts 9:1-6. Note in verse 3 that "there shined around about him A LIGHT from heaven". It was the glorified, risen Saviour!
- 2 - HIS TESTIMONY OF IT - in Acts 22:1-11. Note verse 6 - "suddenly there shone from heaven A GREAT LIGHT round about me". After some years the glorified Lord increased in His greatness!
- 3 - HIS LAST TESTIMONY - in Acts 26. Note this last confession declares in verse 13 - "I saw in the way a light from heaven, ABOVE THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE SUN". Christ continued to increase in His greatness to the heart of Paul. But let us note how he decreased in his own estimation!

First, in 1 Cor. 15 - "For I am the least of the apostles". Though called of God to his apostleship, he humbly acknowledges his unworthiness. It was only "by the grace of God" done - note verse 9.

Second, in Eph. 3:8 - a later confession. "But unto me, who am LESS THAN THE LEAST of all saints". In the greatest Epistle that reveals the fulness of the Church in its position, Paul takes his place beneath the LEAST of all believers. Christ verily increased, but Paul decreased!

Third, in 1 Tim. 1:15 - last of all, near the end of life, he writes - "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, OF WHOM I AM CHIEF". He could go no lower. Beyond the members of the "Body of Christ", he confesses himself the most unworthy sinner in the world! The more that Christ increased, the more Paul decreased!

Ecclesiastical presumption prevails in the profession of Christendom today! It is a very dangerous condition, especially because it concerns the care and guidance of God's people. The true glory of Christ is obscured when man's greatness is prominent. At such a time, the servants and children of God are exposed to "the wiles of the Devil" - Eph. 6:11. The words of John the Baptist should be taken to heart -

"HE MUST INCREASE, BUT I DECREASE"

For he that is too big to be little, is too little to be big - Luke 14:11.

"If He does it, I am nothing -  
Just a channel. That is all,  
He's the worker - I'm the vessel,  
This I covet and implore!"

Faithfully yours in Christ,

