

Christ In Our midst

math. 18:2 } math 18:20

The first of these texts is the acted beginning of this discourse of Jesus while the second is the spoken ending of the same discourse. He begins by placing a child in the midst and ends by promising that He Himself will be in the midst. "In the midst" is exactly the same phrase in each case. And the words of Christ after He introduces the child are uninterrupted till the climax comes when He promises His own presence.

These verses are often quoted but we hardly ever hear sermons on them. "You have often heard them from ~~preachers~~ ^{lips} that have gone back to dust and from voices that have trailed off into silences. Their very vastness restrains us, much as we would hesitate to seize a net with one slender hand. Yet our hesitancy will be some what overcome if we allow the beginning to interpret the ending and so make the discovery that the little child leads us into the presence of Christ.

All the promises of Christ are great and consoling but perhaps none is more so than math. 18:20. "where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them." you don't need the big crowd to have Christ in your midst. This is very consoling on Sun. nights in New Albany.

This promise is rather abrupt and you wonder why it comes just here and what relation it has to the second verse where He sets a little child "in the midst" of them. In ver. 2 Jesus is with the child and as so

follow the discourse you see a picture of child life. The child appears and Jesus talks some about it then Jesus on talking of offenses and suddenly the child appears in ver 10 "See that ye despise not one of these little ones." The child was likely playing around and came back and Jesus saw the look on their faces that it was getting on their nerves and He easily goes back to that topic and so in ver 14 "Even as it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

All this discourse begins by the asking of the question "who then is greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?" Jesus answers with a "little child". Listen to Him. Read 18:3-6, 10, 14.

These words are the great prelude to His promise in ver 20.

As we think of the faithful teachers in our churches and pulpits we must vision Christ standing by the teacher for He is.

The two statues of Philip Brooks in Boston.

1. One just a plain figure of the great preacher.
2. The other has him dressed in clerical robes in his pulpit and behind him the image of Christ as if Jesus indeed ministered on coming to the sacred desk with His mighty servant.

His presence is promised in a special way to those who teach His truth and not the doctrine of Buddha etc. "Go ye and preach the Gospel - my message and I am with you always even unto the end of the world." His truth finds its most fertile field in childhood. We enjoy it as grown people but all delight to think with the poet when he sings;

1. Voted beginning (2:22) ~~spoke~~ ending (2:25)
2. v 20 apt quoted - lips - dust & tongue alone
3. v-20 counseling
4. promise abrupt - picture of child life
It appears (v-2) (v-10) - (v-14)
5. Discourse begins because of question "who is greater - K of Heaven?" People like to get an first floor answer.
6. V2 is prelude to v 20
7. As we teach and preach we must envision Jesus standing by us for He is
8. Pictures of Phillips Brooks
 1. By himself
 2. Christ with Him
9. Presence promised - special way to those who teach His truths truths most fertile field fruit in childhood
10. Presence of Christ leads us into child-hood and Childhood into presence of Christ
11. near childhood - near Christ.

God bless the children