

were afraid to ask Him. Whenever the Lord spoke of His passion on the cross, He would precede and follow His words with miracles, so that no one could think that He would suffer because He was powerless. And when He spoke sad words, such as, "they shall kill Him," He would add words of joy, "He shall rise the third day," teaching us that gladness always follows after grief, and that we should not anguish needlessly in our sorrows, but should hope for better things.

33-37. And He came to Capernaum: and being in the house He asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves along the way? But they were silent: for along the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. And He sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. And 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 shall receive one of such children in My name, receiveth Me: and whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me. The disciples still were so human in their thinking that they quarrelled with one another over which one of them was the greatest, and was most favored by Jesus. The Lord does not forbid us to desire to become His favorites, for He wants us to desire advancement in the spiritual life. But He does not want us to grasp for honors and privileges, but rather to acquire the heights by humility. The Lord set a little child in their midst, and He wants us also to be like that little child. For a little child neither longs for fame, nor envies, nor bears grudges. And the Lord says, "Not only will you receive a great reward if you yourselves become like little children, but even if you only give honor for My sake to others who have become like little children,⁷ you will receive the kingdom of heaven. You receive Me, and by receiving Me, you receive the One Who sent Me." See then what great things are achieved by humility, and by a simple, straightforward, and guileless manner. For both the Son and the Father dwell within us, and, clearly, the Holy Spirit does so as well.

38-40. And John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one

⁷ This means, give honor to the saints and glorify them in Christ's name.

casting out demons in Thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbade him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man who shall do a miracle in My name, that can lightly speak evil of Me. For he that is not against us is for us. John, who was called the son of thunder, was not acting out of jealousy and spite when he forbade the man who was casting out demons, but John wanted all who called upon the name of Jesus to also follow Jesus, and he wanted all the Lord's disciples to be one body. For at the beginning of the Lord's preaching, there were some who were ruled by the love of vainglory and wanted to work miracles themselves. When they saw that the name of Jesus was powerful to do many things, they called upon this name, and indeed they worked miracles, although they were unworthy of divine grace.⁸ They were permitted to work miracles because the Lord wished to spread abroad His preaching, even by means of those who were unworthy. What then does the Saviour answer? He does not permit John to forbid the man who was working miracles in His name, but says, "Let him be; for there is no man who shall be able easily to speak ill of Me if he shall work a miracle in My name. For how could one speak ill of Me who uses My name as the source of his own fame, and works miracles by calling upon My name?" The Lord here might appear to contradict Himself. For in another place He says, "He who is not with Me is against Me;"⁹ but now He says, "He that is not against us is for us." These words seem contradictory, but they are not. For the first, "He who is not with Me is against Me," was spoken concerning the demons who strive to draw away from God those who are with God, and to scatter them. But here Christ is speaking of men who, on the contrary, by working miracles are leading some to God.

41-42. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward. And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in Me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. Not only, He says, do

⁸ A scholion in the Greek text adds: "Therefore they did not follow Jesus, together with His disciples, on account of the austere and self-denying life of the apostles, and because these men wanted to follow their own will and lead a more careless way of life."

⁹Lk. 11:23