

Unnamed Servants

F. A. Hughes.

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Quite recently I read of a brother who, whilst resting in a Swedish forest, became suddenly aware of a delightful fragrance around him. Searching for the cause he found that beautiful tiny flower, the 'Linea Blomma', a flower smaller than an English daisy. It was, he said, almost hidden by the surrounding growth — but yet was filling the air with a fragrance at once refreshing and delightful.

As I thought of this incident there came to mind several persons in the Scriptures whose names are not given to us, but the encouragement of whose service remains until today. They are mentioned but once in the Bible; they are found in unusual and even uncongenial circumstances, but the service they rendered in obscurity has been a source of cheer and strength to many.

One such incident is recorded in 2 Kings 5, "The Syrians . . . had brought away captive out of the land of Israel *a little maid*". She was in enemy land; she was a slave, probably she had lost her loved ones and may have seen her home destroyed. But the firmness of her faith and the affection of her heart gave power to her testimony, with the result that not only was Naaman cleansed but he was secured as a worshipper (v. 17). The little maid passes from the page of Scripture, still unnamed — but the result of her service was commented upon by the Lord Himself (Luke 4: 27), and we may be assured that He still takes account of every service, however obscure and unnoticed it may be by others. It was not the little maid He spoke of — but what her testimony had produced.

In 2 Samuel 17 we have the account of a plot against David's life in which Ahithophel and Absalom were involved. God so ordered that, through Hushai's counsel, word as to his danger should be sent to the king. In the face of the treachery seen in verse 18, we have the action of the *unnamed woman* in verse 19. We read no more of her, but loyalty to her rejected king resulted in every one of his people being found in safety (v. 22) and the complete overthrow of the enemy (v. 23). Let us be assured that every act of loyalty to Christ in this day of His rejection by men has a lasting, though perhaps for the moment unseen, effect upon His interests here.

In 2 Kings 11 we have recorded the conspiracy of Athaliah, called in 2 Chron. 24: 7, "that wicked woman." For six years Israel was subjected to her frightful rule (v. 3). In verse 1 we see that the object of her enmity was 'the royal seed', the line from which, in manhood, our Lord came. Thus, behind this wicked queen's actions we see the malice and hatred of Satan the arch-enemy of Christ. The position, outwardly, was desperate, and the continuance of the 'royal seed' hung upon the slender thread of one boy — Joash. The name Athaliah means 'whom Jehovah restrained', and we are truly thankful for the way in which the mighty hand of God is apparent in the restraint of evil designs. But again God is pleased to use an *unnamed nurse*. She, together with the wife of Jehoiada the priest, took Joash and hid him from Athaliah for six years, until the moment when he was presented to the people as the "king's son." Six years of obscurity (and doubtless of some danger) marked the service of that devoted unnamed nurse. She is not heard of again, but the results of her service were immense. The house of the Lord was repaired, wealth poured into it "day by day," and for sixty-nine years, (forty years during the reign of Joash and twenty-nine years during the reign of his son) a king who "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord" sat upon the throne. We may encourage ourselves in the knowledge that acts of loyalty and devotion in our day, however obscure they are, may, under the Lord's hand, result in the promotion of His rights beyond our thought or understanding — "All of the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet (2 Chronicles 23: 21).

These three devoted women supply sufficient material from the Old Testament to show the subject in mind, and if we turn to the New Testament we shall see the same features there.

In John 6: 9, we read, "There is a *lad* here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes; but *what are they* among so many?" Now Matthew, Mark and Luke in recording this incident do not even *mention the lad at all*, and yet it was he who had the provision which under the Lord's hand could feed the multitude! Beloved brethren, let us be content to be thought little of, even perhaps completely overlooked, but let us place that which we have, however small, at the disposal of the Lord. It is not the name and renown of the servant that matters, the lad is unnamed; what is of importance is to have that which the Lord can use for the sustenance of His own. The lad disappears, but he provided that which supplied the need of two dispensations, in a moral sense the present one, and dispensationally the one to come.

Acts 23 records the plot of the Jews to slay Paul, the outstanding servant of his day. More than forty men bound themselves with an oath to neither eat nor drink until they had slain the apostle. The position outwardly was fraught with danger, but God had another unnamed person available, *Paul's sister's son*. It required courage, as well as affection for Paul, on the part of that boy to enter "into the castle," the stronghold where Paul was. The plot was discovered, and the servant of the Lord preserved. No more is heard of this boy, but what tremendous results accrued from his devoted service. The wonderful truths contained in the Pauline epistles were written after this incident, and who can measure the blessing to the saints and the praise to God which the reception of these truths has brought about. Even in our own day there have been those who "have hazarded their lives for the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 15: 26), but it is open to each one of us, as constrained by the love of Christ, to devote our whole life to His interests, and we may be assured that blessing will be the result.

Finally, there is the *unnamed* "brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches," (2 Cor. 8: 18). Some have conjectured as to who he might have been, but let us leave him where this verse puts him — unnamed. It was doubtless the ability and power with which he extolled the Name which is the very essence of the gospel — the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, for which he was praised. Truly he was in accord with Paul's own words — "we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord," (2 Cor. 4: 5).

May the feature of contented obscurity mark each one of us more and more. Power for blessing rests not in "ourselves," but in that Name which is above every name, the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.