

A Word on Service

N. Anderson.

It is spiritually natural — if one may use such an expression — for anyone who is the subject of the saving grace of God, having trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, to desire to serve. There is a word given to servants, secularly, in the Colossians 3: 22-25, enjoining a character of service which could well be translated into the sphere of Christian service.

"Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God; and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done; and there is no respect of persons."

If our service is going to be glorifying to God, honouring to the Lord, and effective in blessing to others, whether saint or sinner, this character must ever mark us.

While the Scripture speaks of secular service, indeed, that of the bondslaves, we learn that true service is not merely with a view to personal reward; and it must be with singleness of heart — disinterested service, exercised in the fear of God, and as being consciously under the eye of the Lord. He is the Appraiser of all service and will certainly reward all that is done unto Him. A salutary word, however, is enjoined upon all who serve. We are under His government, we serve under His Lordship. This being so, let us take this word to heart, so that our service in whatever sphere and of whatever kind may be circumspect, righteous, honourable; that it might be as becometh those who belong to God and who are acting in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. May we seek grace to act faithfully in all our service. One constant mark of the true servant is that he ever gives prominence to his Lord. We cannot possibly do this if we seek to exalt ourselves by and in our service.

A shining example of true servant character is given us in John Baptist. John 1: 6: — "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light . . ."

Let us pass on now to verse 15 and listen to John's own words in his service: — "John bare witness of Him, and cried, saying, This was He of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me; for He was before me."

The first thing that John says indicates that he has a very clear appreciation of the greatness and glory of the Person of his Lord. Verses 19 and 20: When asked, "who art thou?" John replied — "I am not the Christ." *Five* words! They persisted, "Art thou Elias?" — "I am not." *Three* words! "Art thou that prophet?" — "No." *One* word! Then in verse 22: "What sayest thou of thyself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." Whilst disclaiming any honour for himself he was true to the service committed to him. In verse 21, on being asked, "Art thou that prophet?" (a reference to Deuteronomy 18: 15) his reply was terse indeed — "No."

Yet he simply, as to himself, confessed to being what he truly was in the service of God, a voice. He was to serve his Lord in witnessing to Him and he hid himself behind his testimony. In verse 26 he said, "There standeth One among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." A most commendable servant was John

the Baptist. He had no exaggerated ideas about himself. He was honest in his admission as to himself and thus he was useful in his confession of his blessed Lord.

"And many resorted unto Him (Jesus), and said, John did no miracle: but all things which John spake of this Man were true" (John 10: 41).

This is blessed indeed, to do nothing spectacular but in the quiet, steady continuance of service and testimony to speak of Him, our Lord, the precious Christ of God! How commendable if this be truly appended to your service and to mine: "All things we spoke of this Man were true." How blessed, too, could there be in our case such a result as that which followed John's witness, "And many believed on Him (Christ)."

"Not I, but Christ, be honoured, loved, exalted,

Not I, but Christ, be seen, be known, be heard;

Not I, but Christ, in every look and action,

Not I, but Christ, in every thought and word."

John did no miracle. In this respect his life was quite commonplace, yet how many true things he said of Christ. He confessed His sacrificial glory in those memorable words, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

He confessed His pre-time glory, "for He was before me." The glory of Christ's Person and work were prominent in his witness, and when John's work was done — he himself foully murdered — those who had often heard him were brought face to face with the Object of his witness and service — JESUS. And this was their verdict, "All things that John spake of this Man were true."

We tend to set a value on the spectacular and sensational in our service. Let us remember that the Lord so often uses the quiet, unpretentious witness of those whose chief commendation is that they are absorbed with Himself. Even the aged widow, Anna, has this recorded of her, "She spake of *Him*."

May we have like grace to serve Him in like manner, for He is eminently worthy.