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HONORABLE SERVICE.

"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor."
– John 12:26.

THE idea of service is one which is becoming more and more obnoxious to the minds of all classes of people. Both nations and individuals seem permeated with such a spirit of antagonism that their service one to another is only that which self-interest demands, and is generally rendered grudgingly and stintedly, the understood motto being – The least possible service for the largest compensation.

But the very reverse of this is the spirit of Christ, whose pleasure it was, in the execution [R1708 : page 301] of God's plan of salvation and blessing, to render the greatest possible service without money and without price – making himself a living sacrifice, not receiving even the thanks, but, on the contrary, the reproaches, of those he served. "If any man serve me, let him follow me," he says. To serve Christ is to enlist under his captaincy in the very service to which he devoted all his energies, even unto death, – the service of mankind along the exact lines of the divine plan. Therefore he refers us to his own sacrificing service. He does not say, *Go* in yonder way of humiliation and self-sacrificing service; but he says, *Come, follow*, where I have led the way! I have not despised humble service, and the servant is not greater than his Lord. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart." A proud spirit cannot follow Christ. The current of thought and feeling must be changed to that of meekness, gentleness and love. The proud, haughty spirit must be converted, and with that conversion will come rest, peace and joy in following the Master's footsteps of faithful, untiring and self-sacrificing service.

Those who despise service, and long for release from all its restraints and its supposed dishonor, never made a greater mistake; for the only men and women worthy of remembrance when they have

passed away are those who have faithfully and ably served their fellow-men. It is only such persons whose names come down through history covered with glory, while those who lived in selfish ease were long ago forgotten.

Among the shining lights of the world in their day were such noble servants as Moses, Elijah and Paul – men who braved every danger and hazarded their lives to serve God's purposes in the interests of their fellow-men. Consider Moses, burdened with the care of that mighty host of stiff-necked Israelites: with what indifference to his own ease or rest of mind or body, he gave his whole energy to the service of his people. Then consider Paul, with the care of all the churches upon him, and the great work of spreading the gospel among the Gentiles in the face of determined opposition and persecution which constantly imperilled his life and never allowed him the quiet ease so desirable to all men.

Then, in more recent times, we have the noble examples of reformers and martyrs and guards and defenders of human rights and liberties at immense cost to themselves. Prominent among the latter are the honored names of Washington and Lincoln, two men whom the providence of God evidently raised up in times of great peril and conflict, the former to secure this great American asylum for the oppressed of all nations, and the latter to deliver it from the curse of human slavery and defend it against disunion and disintegration.

With the divine plan in mind, one cannot read the history of this country without seeing in it the over-ruling power of God in providing and keeping in this land, for the elect's sake, a safe asylum where truth untrammelled could be freely disseminated and some measure of the glorious liberty of the sons of God enjoyed. Especially is this noticeable in view of the fact that the harvest work began and centered in this country. Grandly in the dawn of its existence, when it was menaced by a hostile foreign power and by savages within its borders, that noble Christian soldier, George Washington, self-sacrificingly threw himself

with all his energies into the breach. Looking to God for help, and urging the nation to do the same, he became the human instrument for the salvation of this nation from the power of oppression. [R1708 : page 302] Then when slavery had defiled the land, and the wails of oppression from four millions of our fellow-creatures came into the ears of the Lord of armies, he raised up Abraham Lincoln, who nobly bore upon his heart and mind the burdens of all the oppressed; and, looking to God and urging the nation to do the same, Lincoln sacrificed himself in the interests of his fellow-men and thus in the service of God.

But aside from these there are many more or less widely known who have considered service an honor, following the example of Christ. "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be." The reward of a close following of the Lord – partaking of his spirit and entering heartily and self-sacrificingly into his service – is the sharing in due time in his glory and kingdom. "If any man serve me, him will my Father honor." "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Those who have proved their devotion to God and to his benevolent plan for the salvation and blessing of humanity will not lose their reward. God's eye is upon all such; he is marking their conduct in all the peculiar circumstances and conditions in which they are placed; and no one who is faithfully and diligently acting his part, however humble that part may be, can escape his notice. All such will receive abundance of honor in due time; but the crown must not be looked for until the cross has been borne to the end. On this side the veil that separates the present from the future lies the pathway of humiliation and self-sacrifice, but beyond are glory and peace and praise and joy forevermore. Beloved, keep the promises in mind that you may gather from them the inspiration you will need more and more as the trials of this present time and service increase in number and severity. – 2 Tim. 2:3; Rom. 6:4,5; 8:17,18; 1 John 3:3.
