

TO SERVE, NOT TO BE SERVED

"The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." – Matthew 20:28.

THE Master was impressing upon His hearers the difference between Himself and other great kings. He had come to be King of Israel, in fulfilment of Scripture prophecy. Unlike earthly rulers He was not seeking to learn how much He could get out of the people, but how much He could do for the people. He was not selfish. He was not trying to see how little He could serve and how much others could serve Him; but on the contrary, how little others might do for Him and how much He could do for others. And this is His expectation in respect to His followers. He and His disciples, called with a Heavenly Calling, called to a Heavenly Kingdom, are not called to be selfish or to appropriate honors to themselves for their own gratification; but they are called to service – especially to the service of the people of God. This is the true meaning of the word minister; namely, one who serves.

It is especially appropriate that all who are followers of the Lord Jesus should remember that we have each been called to service; and that those who are ministering in spiritual things, those who are especially known by the name of "minister," should bear in mind that theirs is an office which calls for service, not to themselves, but to others; and that they have consecrated their lives thus to serve. Our Lord entered upon His ministry at His consecration. Of His life previous to His baptism at Jordan, the Scriptures say very little, so that the more attention may be attracted to His three and a half years of ministry in the Truth, when He was laying down His life for others – for His friends and also for His foes.

The same is true of all His followers. Our ministry begins at the time of our consecration. We are not authorized to minister, or serve,

in holy things until we have entered upon the way which the Lord has pointed out to us. We are not today, however, obliged to wait until we have reached the age of thirty before we begin our ministry; but at as early an age as we can comprehend what we are engaging to perform, we may give our lives to the Lord and to the service of the Truth and of the brethren. This is because we are not under the Law covenant. – Romans 3:19. [R5786 : page 312]

ONLY A SON OF MAN COULD SERVE AS RANSOMER OF MAN

Our Lord speaks of Himself as the Son of Man, who came to "minister, and to give His life a Ransom for many." He was indeed the Son of God, even while He was the Son of Man. The perfect man Adam, before his fall into sin, was a son of God. Our Lord in calling Himself the Son of Man was emphasizing the fact that He was no longer on the spirit plane, but on the human plane. He came to earth for a specific purpose – as He explained, to minister, to serve. He could not have done the necessary service for man as a spirit being. The requirement was that He should become a man in order to ransom mankind. He could ransom *man* only by becoming *man*. He could purchase life for the *perfect Adam* and the race who lost life in him only by becoming a *perfect* man.

"An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a man's life for a man's life," was the demand of the Divine Law. Adam had sinned, and must be redeemed before he could be restored, either physically, mentally, or morally, or could be returned to God's favor. Jesus had come to make possible this full restoration. His life was devoted to the service of others, and He completed this great service in His death on the cross. Throughout His earthly sojourn He gave us a noble example of the proper life of those who would be followers in His footsteps.

OUR SERVICE PARTICULARLY FOR THE NEW CREATION

Many misunderstand the Bible and think that now is the time to save the world. Hence they are spending all their time and energies to comfort and uplift humanity. They are indeed engaged in laudable efforts; for every good work or effort is to be commended. But to those who are rightly informed respecting the Divine Plan there is another, a far higher work, to be done now. The work of God in the present Age has not been the reformation of the world, but the development of the New Creation. This work is not yet fully completed. If we would work the work of God, our works must relate to the New **[R5786 : page 313]** Creation preeminently. We may do good unto all men as we have opportunity, as the Apostle says, but especially are we to serve the Household of Faith.

Jesus was in line for this work of ministry. Although there were no New Creatures as yet, while He was here in the flesh, His work was to prepare for these New Creatures. His work was the gathering out of some who would be faithful footstep followers of Himself, and the laying down of His life on their behalf and on behalf of the whole world.

In the context we note the fact that two of Jesus' disciples were especially desirous at this time of sitting upon the Throne with the Master in His Kingdom, one upon His right and the other upon His left. Jesus did not condemn them for this desire, but pointed out to them how difficult were the conditions, and asked them whether they were able to comply with these conditions. They replied, "We are able." They were willing, at least. That their answer was pleasing to Jesus was manifested by His words, "Ye shall indeed drink of My cup, and be baptized with My baptism." They asked for places in the Kingdom very near to Him. Jesus informed them that He was not Himself able to give them such places – that the places would not be

given according to favor, but according to justice; and that the Father would dispense these.

ARE WE MEETING THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS?

The place that we occupy in the Kingdom will depend much upon the extent to which we become ministers, or servants. And if we simply try to get as much as possible out of others and to give as little as possible, we shall not be such characters as the Lord is seeking for rulership in the Kingdom; in fact, we would not gain the Kingdom at all. He is seeking a very choice class. This class will all be servants, willing and glad to serve, esteeming it a great privilege to lay down their lives in the service of the brethren, to the extent of their ability and opportunity; for the service of the brethren is the service of God, to whom they have rendered themselves in consecration, to whom they have professed to devote their lives.

