

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

CHRIST'S SERVANT—HIS DUTY, AND REWARD.

A Sermon

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REV. C. H. SPURGEON,

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"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 honour."—John xii. 26.

How many persons are of the religion of the Greeks who are mentioned in this chapter! They would see Jesus, but they would not serve him. Impelled by curiosity they would know somewhat of this matter; they would investigate the claims of Christ to the Messiahship and they would consider the special truths by which he professes to illuminate the world, but beyond this they would not venture. They give their minds to criticise; they are not indifferent to the gospel, but they regard it with the same interest as that with which a naturalist would look upon a newly-discovered insect, or a geologist would study a section of the earth's crust; but as to personally feeling the hallowed influence of truth, they know not what it means. Many of these Greeks proceed much further; they feel an admiration for the character, and teaching of Jesus, and they express that admiration in honest encomiums; but see how hollow is their appreciation; they applaud the person whom they scorn to obey; they admire teachings which they will not practice; they listen to the divine Word, but they are hearers only, and not doers of the truth. Probably there are numbers in this assembly to whom the Christian religion has always been a subject of respectful interest; they have never blasphemed the name of Christ; they have not doubted the inspiration of Scripture; nay, they have studied God's Word; they have given a degree of attention to its doctrines, and they intend yet more fully to examine its revelations. How pleasant and hopeful are such marks of interest, but how far are many of these enquirers from true discipleship; for their unhumbled hearts are not obedient to the dictates of the gospel; the cross is to them, too heavy a load to carry; they have not made up their minds to wear "Christ's yoke;" they had rather see his holiness and see his disciples imitate him, than themselves take up the cross daily and follow him. My hearers, allow me to remind you very solemnly, that a speculative religion which has curiosity as its impulse, a search after knowledge as its rule, and self-esteem as its root, can never save the soul. It is not for you to criticise, but to repent; it is not for you to judge, but to believe; it is not for you to admire, but to obey; it is

not for you to praise and applaud, but cheerfully to bow your necks to imitate and follow Christ. Nothing short of a religion which subjects us to personal service of Christ, which gives us a new heart and a right spirit, and compels us to feel that we are not our own, but bought with a price—nothing short of this will ever give lasting peace of mind, or bring us to the place where we shall see the face of God with delight.

Many proudly dream that to serve Christ would be dishonourable, and that they would bemean themselves by becoming humble followers of the Lamb. Let me remind them, that not thus thought those whose opinions we esteem. Even a heathen could say "To serve God is to reign." We know that that noblest of men, before the coming of John the Baptist, the greatest that had ever been born of woman—Moses, the king in Jeshurun, and the leader of God's hosts—has as his highest title—"Moses, the servant of God;" and even our Lord and Master, whose shoe's latchet we are not worthy to unloose, took upon himself the form of a servant, and though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered. Since the days of our Redeemer, the greatest in the Church of Christ have been the servants of all, and those who have attained to the highest dignities and honours which it is in the power of Christ's Church to confer, have been those who joyfully stooped to the most menial occupations, and being willing to be less than the least, became the greatest of all. Let us imitate him who was "King of kings," and yet a "Servant of servants." Let us follow him who is girt about the paps with a golden girdle and wraps the light about him as a garment, and yet unrobed himself, and took a towel, like a servant, that he might wash his disciples' feet. The motto of the Prince of Wales is "*Ich dien*,"—"I serve;" it should be the motto of every prince of the blood-royal of heaven. Let every Christian write this now upon his crest—"I serve," and, from this day forth, wherever he is, let him not seek lordship, let him leave that to the Gentiles and to a carnal world, but let him seek ministry and service, being willing to do anything or to be anything by which he may profit the body of Christ, which is the Church.

We will now endeavour, as the Blessed Spirit shall aid us, to expound its three-fold teaching. You will mark, first of all, *plain directions for a very honourable office*—"If any man serve me, let him follow me;" in the second place, *most generous stipulations from a noble Master*—"Where I am, there shall also my servant be;" and thirdly, *most glorious rewards for imperfect services*—"If any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

I. We have here PLAIN DIRECTIONS FOR A VERY HONOURABLE OFFICE. "If any man serve me, let him follow me." A golden precept, written on a tablet of ivory.

I speak the sentiments of the majority of those present when I say, *we would all of us like to minister to Christ*. We feel that if he were here now, there would be nothing which we would not do for him. The word used in our text three times might very properly be translated thus—"If any man would act the part of a deacon towards me, let him follow me; and where I am there shall also my deacon be; and he that acts as a deacon towards me shall be honoured of my Father." The word "deacon" in the original Greek means nothing but a servant.

and every deacon should be the cheerful, laborious, and faithful servant of the Church. Now, what was the part of a deacon in the early Church? It was service to the people of God of all sorts and kinds. Who among us would blush to be the deacons of Christ, his body servants, his attendants? Would we not wait upon him? We would be his servants to the very fullest extent. I think we should consider ourselves ennobled for life if we might cast our garments in the way, that He might be saved from a miry place in the road. Would we not feed Him? There should be such a feast in our house as never was before. We would submit to hunger for ourselves, if we might but supply his wants; and I think if the twelve poor fishermen were with him, we would not shut one of them out, but ask them all home. We ourselves would leave our houses, and stand in the street all night, to let them have rest; for we feel that, if the Blessed One were here, it were so high an honour to contribute in any degree to his comfort, or to show in any way our respect for him, that nothing would be too hard,—nothing impossible for us to perform. Permit me to say, however, that very much of this is mere sentiment; that, in fact, we do not know ourselves; and that, in the case of many here present, if Christ were here in the same guise in which he came the first time, they would not receive him, but the reverse; their doors would be shut in his face, and, peradventure, they might even join in the blood-thirsty cry of "Let him be crucified!" All this talk of generosity and homage to be offered to Jesus is to a great extent mere sentiment—mere talk, and we should do no such thing when it came to the practical push. For, mark me, if we really would do these things, we can do them now. If it be true that we would minister to Christ, and be servants and deacons towards him, it is in our power to do so now as much as if He were on earth; and, inasmuch as we live in the neglect of this duty, we must not delude ourselves into the notion that, if such-and-such a thing should happen, we should act differently from what we do now. This sentimentalism about entertaining Christ has at the bottom of it the idea that we should be *honouring ourselves* by it. Now this is not the spirit that gives a worthy friendship towards Christ. He that loves Christ really serves *him*, not to be honoured *by* him, but to give him honour. We, forsooth, would gladly receive the Lord into our guest chamber, because men would say of us—"He entertained the Lord of glory! He was honoured with his company!" But, oh! if, instead, men would say—"Yonder fool disgraced himself by harbouring the mendicant impostor. He entertained the man whom we call Beelzebub." I think there are many who now talk so well of Christ who would decline the privilege of entertaining Jesus if all the world were against him.

But, dear friends, I say again, if any of you would serve Christ it is now in your power, for the directions given are meant for all time, and may be carried out *to-day*. It seems from my text that to follow Christ, or to imitate him, is really to serve him. I think we can plainly see this. "Oh," saith one, "I should like *to do something to prove that I really would obey my Lord*;" I profess to be his servant, and I would show that I am not a servant in name only, but that whatsoever my Master saith unto me that will I do." Well, the opportunity is before you

to-day; imitate Christ, and you then prove your obedience. This command to you may be summed up in this—"Be like me." If you would know what he would have you do, see what he did himself. His own life is your law, written in living characters. No better proof can you give that you are not a lip-server, but a real disciple, than by diligently and scrupulously copying Christ even to the least jot and tittle.

"Oh," saith another, "I would joyfully *assist him in his wants*. I would supply him with bread; I would give him the cup of cold water to drink; I would not let him say again 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head;' I would never let him want." Imitate him, then, and you can do it, for what did he do but distribute of his substance to the poor? Did he not care for the wants of all men? Is it not written of him "He went about doing good?" If you would supply *his* wants behold him in his poor saints; if you would feed *him*, see the mouths of his hungry children; if you would clothe *him*, see the backs of his naked ones; if you would succour *him*, relieve the poor, the widow, and the fatherless, and those that have no helper. Imitate him in the generousness of his life; care for the wants of men; follow him in this, and you will have served him in supplying *his* wants:

"Lord, thou hast brethren here below,
Flesh of thy flesh through grace;
Teach us to see *thee* in thy saints,
Thy sorrows in their face."

"In them thou may'st be clothed and fed,
And visited and cheer'd:
And in their accents of distress
My Saviour's voice is heard.

Thy face, with reverence, and with love,
We in thy poor would see!
O let us rather beg our bread
Than keep it back from thee."

"But," saith another, "I would *do something to cheer him*; I think, if he were here, I would endeavour to smoothe a few of the furrows from his marred brow; I would labour to make the heart of the Man of Sorrows rejoice in some measure, and be glad in some degree; I would lay down my life to give him peace who is my soul's peace and rest." You can do it; you can do it. If you would serve him thus and cheer his heart, *follow him*; for this is the solace of his sorrow, the reward of his labours—the obedience of his children to his command. This is the spoil which he divideth with the mighty; this is the prey which he taketh from the strong, that all his saints should be like himself in all righteousness and true holiness. This is the travail of his soul which he seeth and is satisfied when you are conformed to his image, and show forth his character among the sons of men. Oh! if you are Christ-like, you have done more to make Christ happy than all the songs of the angels. If men shall say of you, "That man has been with Jesus, and has learned of him;" you have given Jesus better music than cherubim and seraphim can yield.

"Yes," I hear another say, "but *I would honour him*. If he were here I would climb the trees and strew the branches in his way; how would I gladly run before, and cry, "Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" Would you thus serve him, by honouring him and extolling his name? You can do it. Follow him; live as he lived; act as he acted; and you have honoured him more completely than by strewing palm-branches or throwing your clothes in the road. For when is Christ most honoured? When his saints are most sanctified. When is his name the most esteemed? When the sons of God walk the most carefully, the most prayerfully, and the most closely with their God. You *can* to-day serve Christ if you will to-day humbly take his plain directions, exactly imitate his example, and closely follow in his steps.

Beloved friends, I think we have made it clear enough that there is a possibility of serving Christ, of deaconizing towards Christ by the imitation of his character. Now I quoted the Greek word "deaconizing" because it was the means when I was looking into the verse, of giving me an illustration of this subject. You remember that on the first sabbath of last month we had in our midst, the venerable Mar Yohanan, a presbyter of the Nestorian Church at Oroomiah, and with him a deacon whose name was Mar Isaak. These two men had performed an almost incredible journey. They had walked the entire distance from the borders of Persia; over the mountains of Armenia and Circassia; across the steppes of Russia; and from Russia right through Prussia, Germany, and Holland, till at last they arrived in London. Now, I could but notice how the deacon, the servant, carefully attended in all things to the venerable presbyter whom we saw amongst us, how he marked his every look that he might not for a moment appear to neglect his reverend leader. Probably on that day when Yohanan the presbyter, first thought of this journey, he addressed Isaak thus—"Isaak, art thou a true servant?" "Yes," saith he, "ever since the Church made me deacon I have loved thee as my own soul, and I would gladly do aught for thy comfort." "Then," saith he, "If thou wouldest serve me, *follow me*." But must I leave my children and my household?" "Verily," saith the presbyter; "it must even be so, for I also shall leave behind me my wife and children, and go forth a long and weary journey; many a hundred miles, to Britain, where there are many who love our Lord, and who may help the persecuted saints in this region." Now came the pinch, and Isaak, if he would serve the presbyter, must *follow* him. He does not decline the service. When he accepted the office of the deacon, he resolved to be really the servant of the Church, and her minister, and he is now ready to undertake the journey with his presbyter. I think I see them sallying forth. They journey among the Kurds, a savage people always thirsting for the Christians' blood, with more than Mahometan hatred of Christ. Perhaps Isaak is faint-hearted, and would fain turn back. "If any man would serve me, let him follow me," says the hoary presbyter, as he strikes his staff upon the ground and advances fearless of the foe. They pass one danger but to encounter another. A mountain is in their way lifting its snowy crest even to the sky; the grey-bearded preacher goes first, and he cries, "Isaak, if thou wouldest serve me, follow me;" and on they go,

climbing from crag to crag, along the unfrequented path where scarce the wild goat has found a footing; soon they travel through the valley, and across the barren, snowy, pathless wilderness, the presbyter saying continually, "Brother, if thou wouldest deaconize towards me, follow me, for now it is that it shall be proved to the world that thou art a true servant of the Church, and art willing to follow the presbyter to the world's end." He did follow him right faithfully, and they reached their journey's end together. Now, this is just what Jesus Christ says to us. We are all his deacons, his servants. We all engaged, in the day when we gave ourselves to Him, that we would take up our cross and follow him; and he points to-day to some high mountain, saying, "If thou wouldest serve me, follow me." He asks you not to lead, he himself has gone before; he calls you to no labour which he has not himself already accomplished. Oh! can you say in your heart to-day—

"Through floods and flames if Jesus leads,
I'll follow where he goes;
'Hinder me not,' shall be my cry,
Though earth and hell oppose?"

This is true service, the best that can be rendered, to follow where he leads the way, let the way be never so rough or arduous, to persevere to the end, even though the end be a martyr's death.

Come, brethren, and especially those who are beginners, and have but lately enlisted in Christ's cause, let me mark you out Christ's way, and then, if you would serve him, follow him. I know the proud flesh wants to serve Christ, by striking out new paths. Proud man has a desire to preach new doctrine, to set up a new Church; to be an original thinker, to judge, and consider, and do anything but obey. This is no service to Christ. He that would serve Christ must follow him; he must be content to tread only in the old footsteps, and go only where Christ has led the way. It is not for you and me to be originals; we must be humble copies of Christ. There must be nothing about our religion of our own inventing; it is for us to lay thought, and judgment, and opinion at the feet of Christ, and do what he bids us, simply because he gives the command. Look then disciples at your Lord. I think I see the Saviour; oh! that you would follow him to-day! I think I see him coming. 'Tis his first public entry on the world; and whither goeth he? 'Tis the beginning of his manifest ministry among men, he is about to show you what should be the beginning of yours. He goeth unto Jordan; there stands the Baptist, and the willing crowds are baptized with the baptism of repentance. As John standeth there, lo! the Son of Man himself appears; and John says, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" But our Master, whom if we would serve we must follow, says, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." He descends into the stream; he is buried beneath the water; and as he cometh up from that immersion, the heaven is opened, and the Spirit descendeth upon him like a dove. If thou wouldest serve him, follow him. "But—but—but—" Alas my brother, this is not a fitting word for a disciple, you forget your service when you begin to question. If you would serve him, follow him. Your business as a servant is not to

object but to obey. Imagine that you ask your servant to fill a bath with water. "But—" You say, "I must have it filled;" but she questions again, and again, and again, and at last flatly refuses to do more than sprinkle it with a few drops. Do you call her a servant any longer? Methinks no. So there are some of you who see most clearly that your master was baptized at the commencement of his public life, and yet you will be raising questions where there is no room for questions; you *will* neglect a duty which is as plain in Scripture as the very Deity of Christ; you will turn aside from a baptism which is as plainly taught in express words as even the doctrine of justification by faith: you do not take up your service as you should. "But, it is not essential," say you. Is that a servant's business? "But what good will it be?" Is this a question for a servant? "If any man will serve me"—Christ does not say—"Let him question me; let him be asking me why and wherefore I command him to do such a thing." No, no; but, "Let him follow me." "But I dread the publicity, I fear the ordinance." It is your proud flesh that feareth it; subdue it under your feet, and take up your cross, for there are far heavier crosses than this to carry. Thus your Master puts it—"If any man will serve me, let him follow me."

He now cometh from Jordan, and the Spirit leadeth him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. You, too, must be tempted. Do not think when you are tempted that, therefore, you are out of Christ. No; if you would be his servant, you must follow him, and must be tempted too. You must be assailed in many points; the arrows must fly from above and from beneath; you must be tried on all hands and in all ways. Run not from the conflict, for if any man would serve Christ, he must follow him through the hottest temptations as well as through the brightest joys. Now the Master comes forth boldly and begins to preach, and teach, and labour. If you would serve him, follow him; labour for him; in some way or other teach his gospel. If you cannot teach it to the thousands teach it to the tens; if you cannot converse with multitudes, converse with one upon the well, as Christ did at Sychar. If you would be his servant, let his life be your life written large, and let your life be the miniature, the condensation of the life of Christ. You see the Master bears bold witness before his adversaries. He beards the Pharisee to his face; he upbraids the hypocrites who oppose him. Follow him, if you would serve him. Let there not be a single foe before whose face you would fear his cause to plead. Speak up for his name; let no blush suffuse your cheek; speak his name before kings, nor yield to sinful shame. But see, the Master cometh into the black cloud of reproach; they say he hath a devil and is mad. Follow him there. Now, ye servants of God, now is the trying hour; now follow him; be rejected, and despised, and hooted at with him, and sing as you go through it all—

"If on my face, for thy dear name,
Shame and reproach shall be,
I'll hail reproach, and welcome shame,
If thou'lt remember me."

See he comes to die. If thou wouldest serve him, follow him. Be ready to be brought before the judgment-seat for his name. Be

ready to yield thy life up at his command, and if the martyr days should ever return, give thy blood as freely as thou wouldest give water from the well; or if they come not, spend that blood, and the life it gives thee, devoting every hour of every day, and every moment of every hour to his cause, whose thou art and whom thou dost profess to serve. No new fashions, no new views, and opinions—the imitation of Christ is the only mode of service, and the Master lays it down before each of you—ask your consciences whether you have ever really served him—“If any man would serve me, let him follow me.” Walk in the way of Christ, it is the King’s highway. I pass the question round these galleries and this vast area—Are you serving Christ? “Well, I subscribe to a charity.” Are you serving Christ? “I intend to build a row of almshouses.” My dear brethren, you may do all this, and yet not be serving Christ, for your Master tells you that to serve him is to follow him. Have you followed him? Have you believed in him? Is he all-in-all to you, and do you now make his life the guiding-star of your life; and do you desire to be, and are you, as far as is possible to man—made like unto him in all things that you may be obedient unto his will? God help us that desiring to serve Immanuel, we may do it by following him!

II. We must come to our second point—**GENEROUS STIPULATIONS FROM A NOBLE MASTER.** “Where I am, there shall also my servant be.”

Whoever heard of such conditions as these from an ordinary master? The master is in the drawing room, the servant is in the kitchen; the master is in the parlour, the servant is in the workshop; the master sitteth at the table with his friends, the servant girdeth himself to wait thereat. What, I say, what generous stipulations doth the master make—“Where I am, there shall also my servant be!” Well now, to return to the illustration we used before—“Where I am, there shall also my deacon be”—still using old Yohanan and Isaak as your pattern, you will recollect that wherever the old presbyter went, there was Isaak at his side. I dare say many a night they slept under the broad shadow of a tree, and where Yohanan was there the deacon was too. Were they entertained by generous friends?—they shared the same couch. At times they sat around the genial fire, but they sat together; anon they shivered in the winter’s cold, but they shivered side by side. Their lot during the long journey was the same, and when they arrived here they sat with us at the same table; we spoke to them as to those who were intimate friends, and I know that throughout the whole of their romantic voyage, where the presbyter was there the deacon was also.

Do you not see that this was the rule which Christ carried out all his life long? He went to a wedding; is it not written, the disciples of Jesus were there. Jesus once rejoiced in spirit over the elect ones, the babes and sucklings to whom God had revealed himself: yes, but his disciples shared the joy because Satan fell like lightning from heaven, and even the devils were subject to them. The Master often went to the house of Lazarus; and Martha and Mary made a great feast, but the disciples were always there. Sometimes they went to a Pharisee’s house—a very respectable gentleman—and if Christ had been an ordinary man he might have said—“I cannot take those poor fishermen with me; it will lower my character if they see what tag-rag follow

at my heels." But no, where he was there his servants were. And you know, beloved, once on a time he rode in triumph through the streets of Jerusalem, but he did not say to his disciples—"Now you had better keep out of the way; this is a day in which I am to be honoured, and I think you will rather spoil the pageantry if they see you in your fishermen's dress walking with me." No, but where he was there were his servants also. And when the multitudes cried "Hosanna," and welcomed the Master, the welcome was shared by the disciples. Then there came his last great feast. "With desire," said he, "have I desired to eat this passover with you"—it was "*with you*"—he could not enjoy that last supper except with them. "Where I am, there shall also my servant be;" share and share alike; their lot my lot; my portion their portion for ever.

Mark, beloved, if the Lord thus shared his comforts among his disciples, he expected them to share his discomforts. He was in a ship in a great storm, and the disciples must be with him, though they are sore afraid. He goes to Gethsemane; he sweats, as it were, great drops of blood; his disciples must be with him there, even though they cannot bear it, and are asleep. And though in his last passion they could not be with him, for he must tread the wine-press alone, yet, mark you, his disciples were with him afterwards, for if he was brought before kings, so were they; if he stood falsely accused, so, in after years did they. If he died upon the cross a martyr, so did they; and so, for three hundred years, where Christ was *in death*, there his Church was too, for the gibbet, and the cross, and the stake, and the block, and the bloody axe, had stern work to do with Christ's Church, that it might be fulfilled—"Where I am, there shall also my servant be."

Beloved, this stands true to you and me this morning. Where Christ was we must be. "The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord." Blessed be his name, he is gone to heaven now, and where he is there shall his servants be, in the same heaven in his Father's house. Yes, he has mounted to his throne, and where he is there shall his servants be. "To him that overcometh will I give to sit on my throne, even as I have overcome and have sat down upon my Father's throne." He is in the joy of his Father; and where he is there must his servants be; we also must be partakers of his joy that his joy may be full. Lo, he cometh! The trumpet soundeth! Jesus cometh; the second advent draweth nigh; but when he cometh, all his saints shall come with him. My God shall come, and all his saints with him. He reigneth, kings and princes, your sceptres are not your own; he comes to take them from your hands, and your crowns from your heads, Jesus comes to "reign from pole to pole with illimitable sway," and we shall reign with him, for "Where I am, there also shall my servant be." I think you understand, then, that the conditions of the service are these: fare ill or fare well, we are to have joint stock with Christ; we are to take him for better or for worse, in shame and in honour, in reproach and in esteem, in riches and in poverty, in life and in death, in time and in eternity. "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." I love my Master's conditions! He is a noble Master! Shall I ever blush to go where he goes? God forbid, for if I do, I may be afraid lest at the last he should deny me, and should not permit me to be where he is.

I have heard an old story, somewhat amusing, which will illustrate this point, and then I shall leave it. I have heard that a noted Methodist preacher, who commenced his ministry very early in life suffered not a little at first because of his humble origin, and unpromising exterior. Being sent on the circuit plan to a certain house on a Saturday night, to be in readiness for preaching on the Sunday, the good woman, who did not like the look of him, sent him round to the kitchen. There was a serving-man, who served them at odd times, and also worked in the coal mine, or at the forge, who was surprised to see the minister in the kitchen with him when he came from labour. John, rough as he was, welcomed the despised preacher, and tried to cheer his heart. The minister shared John's meal of porridge, John's bed in the cockloft, and John's humble breakfast, and walked to the House of God with John in the morning. Now, the preacher was a notable man, though then unknown, and he had not long opened his mouth before the congregation perceived that there was somewhat in him, and the good hostess, who had so badly entertained him began to feel a little uneasy. When the sermon was over there were many invitations for the minister to come home, and the hostess, fearful of losing her now honoured guest, begged he would walk home with her, when, to her surprise, he said "I supped with John, I slept with John, I breakfasted with John, I walked here with John, and I'll walk home with John." So when dinner came he was, of course, entreated to come into the chief room, for many friends wished to dine with this young minister, who was so much admired and esteemed, but no, he would dine in the kitchen; he had supped with John, he had breakfasted with John, and he would dine with John. They begged him to come into the parlour, and at last he consented on the condition that John should sit at the same table. "For," he said, very properly, "John was with me in my humiliation, and I will not sit down to dine unless he be with me in my exaltation." So on they went till the Monday morning, sleeping at night with John, and persevering in the same rule—"I supped with John, I slept with John, I breakfasted with John, I walked with John, I'll walk home with John, and I'll dine with John, for John was with me at the beginning, and he shall be with me to the end." Brethren, this story may be turned to account thus; our Master came into this world once, and they sent him into the servants' place; they sent him where the poor and despised ones were, and said "Live with them; the manger and the cottage are good enough for thee. He lived with poverty and supped with toil." Now the name of Christ is honoured, and kings and cardinals, popes and bishops, say, "Master, come and dine with us." Yes, the proud emperor and philosopher would have him sup with them, but still he says—"No, I was with the poor and afflicted when I was on earth, and I will be with them to the end, and when the great feast is made in heaven the humble shall sit with me, and the poor and despised who were not ashamed of me, of them will I not be ashamed when I come in the glory of my Father, and all my holy angels with me."

III. We have, thirdly, A GLORIOUS REWARD FOR IMPERFECT SERVICES. "If any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

I am persuaded that if any man will serve Christ in the way Christ

bids him, that is, by following him; if any man is content, not to do as his father or grandmother did, but will follow Christ and not man; if any man will break through all customs, all regulations, all rotten proprieties, and just do as Christ did, and imitate him in all things—that man will have honour, first of all, *in his own soul*. He shall have such blessed peace of conscience, he shall have such sweet fellowship with Christ, he shall have such profound peace from the Father's right hand, that it shall be apparent to him that the Father honours him. Look at John Knox, who never feared the face of man; he followed Christ as far as his light went, and how greatly the Father honoured him with unruffled serenity of heart. What calm that gigantic spirit had; when the world was all in uproar against him, how peacefully he smiled in the face of the roaring of the multitude, for God honoured him with an indwelling consciousness of being right before the Lord.

Then, again, I am persuaded that God will honour such a man *by success, by prospering him in his ministry, and in whatsoever he may attempt for Christ*. Why is it that so little success rests on some who labour for God? Because they do not serve Christ in the way he would have them serve him, by imitating him. Ecclesiastical courts, rubrics, rules, forms, liturgies, and such like bonds confine too many, who if they would snap the fetter would be honoured of the Lord. If there were in connection with this Church anything which I thought to be unscriptural, I could not expect to have God's blessing in it; and I do think if any man here be a member of a Church, of which he can say, "Well, there are many wrong things in it, but I do not think I ought to come out," you cannot expect God's blessing. He that would serve Christ, must follow Christ in little things as well as in great things. Whenever we say—"Well, there are some things wrong in my position, but I can do more good where I am," we set ourselves up for masters instead of servants. Our business is, conscientiously to follow, as far as our light goes, the example of Christ in every respect and in all things, and if this should entail the giving up of our present position and usefulness, we must not consider results, but instantly obey imperative commands. I claim for my Master immediate, unquestioning, unqualified obedience to all his words; and I demand of you in his name that ye renounce everything which prevents your rendering perfect, unhesitating service to his person and doctrine. Whether as members of a Church, or a community, or in a trade, you have anything that prevents your following Christ, leave everything and come right out, for you cannot expect great success from God till you have honoured Christ by following him in all things. If you think you know better than Christ, why then I have done with you. If you think that you can lead a better life, or set a better example, ye are proud indeed! Or, if you imagine that in your position you may tolerate yourselves in disobeying his command, you talk as one of the foolish women talketh, but not as a disciple of Christ. I say again, if you would be honoured of God, you must serve Christ by following him.

And lastly, such who thus serve Christ, by following him, *shall have great honour at the last*. We will suppose that the Prince of Wales is wrecked on a certain voyage, and is cast on shore with only one

companion. The prince falls into the hands of barbarians, and there is an opportunity for his companion to escape ; but he says, "No, my prince, I will stay with you to the last, and if we die, we will die together." The prince is thrown into a dungeon ; his companion is in the prison with him, and serves him and waits upon him. He is sick—it is a contagious fever—his companion nurses him—puts the cooling liquid to his mouth—and waits on him with a mother's care. He recovers a little ; the fond attendant carries the young prince, as he is getting better into the open air, and tends him as a mother would her child. They are subject to deep poverty—they share their last crust together ; they are hooted at as they go through the streets, and they are hooted at together. At last, by some turn in Providence, it is discovered where the prince is, and he is brought home. Who is the man that the queen will delight to honour ? "Make way for this man ; he was with my son in prison—he was with my son when he was near death—he nursed him—he suffered with him—he was reproached for him." I fancy she would look with greater affection upon the poor servant than upon the greatest statesman ; and I think that as long as she lived she would remember him above all the rest, for she would say, "He was with my son in all his sorrow and affliction, and I will honour him above all the mighty ones in the land." And now dear brothers and sisters, if you and I shall be with Christ, the King's Son, if we shall suffer with him, and be reproached with him, if we shall follow him anywhere and everywhere, making no choice about the way, whether it shall be rough or smooth, whether it shall be green sward or miry bog—if we can go with him to prison and to death, if such times come, then we shall be the men whom heaven's king delighteth to honour. "Make room for him, ye angels ! Make room ye cherubim and seraphim ! Stand back ye peers of heaven's realm ! Here comes the man ; he was poor, mean, and afflicted ; but he was with my Son, and was like my Son. Come hither, man ! There, take thy crown, and sit with my Son in his glory, for thou wast with my Son in his shame !" Oh that the Holy Ghost would teach us how to follow Jesus, and enable us to tread in his steps.

I conclude by again putting this important question—Are you with Christ to-day ? Have you put your hand into Christ's hand to be Christ's for ever ? My hearers, the speaker wants to make this question ring in your ears—Are you with Christ to-day ? For he that is not with him is against him, and he that followeth not with him scattereth abroad. Dost thou trust Christ ? Oh, sinner, if thou dost not I beseech thee trust him now, and thou art saved. If thou hast trusted Christ is it the true trust ? for if it be it will make thee follow him, and thou wilt be obedient to his every wish and word. Faith, such as the Holy Spirit gives, always leads to obedience. Is it so ? Is it so ? If not, humble thyself before God. Believe thou in him who is the only foundation upon which a sinner's hope can be built. Take up thy cross daily, and through evil report and through good report follow thou the Master even to the end, and the Lord God, the God of heaven and earth, the fountain of honour, shall glorify thee when Christ cometh in his kingdom.