

Bible reference—*i. e.*, having a Scriptural foundation in all its suggestive hints. A Sunday school teacher having the grace of God in his heart and a zeal for the work, need not be a dull teacher at the present day, when so much is provided for his use, and thus make him a workman that needeth not be ashamed. Therefore, let us remember the short text we have taken for a little consideration, "Apt to teach."

[For OUR MISSION.]

## The Power of the Believer's Position.

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### 5.—FOR SERVICE.

**B**Y our acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Saviour from sin and all the power of evil we become servants of God. And it is well that we should see the meaning of this in its entire sphere. To-day, we often put into the title "*Servant*," only that kind of service that is rendered to modern masters, which is an exceedingly free and easy and independent kind of service, having in it much of one's way, being little guided by the will of a superior, and doing, save for mere form's sake, very much as one likes or chooses. The service of to-day has been dignified with the title of "help." I fear that this is very largely the thought that rules in Christian minds too. Indeed, often would Christian service seem only a reflection of this, and that not always perfectly made. But that is, neither in its spirit nor in its action, Christian service. The servants of Paul's day were *slaves*, the property of their masters, entirely subject to their will. They had no self-choice, they did not presume to act from themselves, they were not their own, they were bought with a price, hence they were entirely surrendered to the will of those who possessed them. And this is the thought that rules in the New Testament in relation to Christian service. It is on this principle throughout. It is taught to say, "Not my will but Thine be done." It cries in genuine response, "Lord what wilt Thou have me to do?" "As the eyes of servants look unto the hands of their master, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God." This is the prevailing thought and feeling in Christians who are instructed out of the Scriptures. And this entire self-abnegation and dependence on the Lord, is realized very deeply in the place where God has set the believer in His Son. There, self will and self confidence and self itself is subordinated to the Lord, who is LORD, in deed. There the true relation is seen and felt and acted upon. And Christian service takes on a distinctive and peculiar character.

*It is full of love.* It is not mere duty service, it is the outcome of a true and pure affection, Christward.

We love Him, and His commandments are not grievous. The mother's toil for her loved child is light, because she loves. The son's labor to cheer the hearts and lighten the burdens of his parents' lives is not oppressive, because he loves them. Love transforms everything into sweet and gladdening privilege. It asks not how little it may do, but rather it seeks to do as much as it may be permitted to do.

*It is full of joy.* It is a service that brings gladness with it. If the Christian is commanded to rejoice, and to rejoice evermore, then his life must be such as shall minister joy by the consciousness of God's presence, the knowledge that His will is law, and the great object of His law is everlasting life. He seeks in all His dispensations the good of men. His will is good will, to carry it out therefore is at once to communicate and to enjoy good. What a power lies in Christian joy! "The joy of the Lord is your strength"—strength within and strength without. It is in its influence upon others like the charm the flowers have, as they emit their aroma, taking captive two senses at the same time,

*It is full of obedience.* It has respect to every word spoken by the Lord. It does not dare to discriminate against anything that is enforced. It regards all with equal concern, and carries into effect the minute as well as the majestic and great. And this is an important organ of knowledge. "He that doeth the will of God shall know of the doctrine,"—that it is of God. What an encouragement is this to a cordial and consistent obedience! It is not only a doing of duty but it is the carrying forward of discoveries in the deep things of God. As practice reveals the nature of a thing, so does obedience.

*It is full of fruit,* It is like a sowing of seed that in due time comes to an abundant harvest. It is impossible to serve God without result. Has not God said, assuring us of this, "My word goeth forth out of My mouth; it shall not return into me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days." We do not labor for nought. We do not go on a warfare of which we see no outcome. Time and eternity shall tell of words spoken, deeds done, consideration entertained, and worthy resolves determined upon, that have not been fruitless, but that have made Edens in hearts that were desolate, and paradises in homes that were ruinous through disrespect of God and eternal realities.

*It is full of inspiration.* When one enters on it in the right spirit others are moved to follow the example set them. When Peter said "I go a fishing," his example was contagious. "The other disciples said: "We also go with thee." This is a leaf from human life. It types human influence. "No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." We are continually affecting others for good or for evil. But Christian service cannot fail of beneficial results, for in it we are co-workers with God.