

[R540 : page 4]

HIS WILL, OUR MEAT AND DRINK.

The language of very many grateful hearts, who have realized their sins forgiven through the precious blood of Christ, has been, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. But very few, perhaps none at first, actually realized the full meaning of that covenant or promise; nevertheless the Master declares, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37). But he would have us understand that it is no easy thing to follow him, for his was a thorny, difficult way, promising no gratification to the natural man.

When on one occasion one came to Jesus, saying, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," he replied: "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." (Luke 9:57,58.) That is to say, Are you willing, if need be, to be thus homeless and comfortless that thereby you may render greater service to our heavenly Father. It is my meat and drink to do his will. Shall it be yours also? It might be and sometimes is the case, that some can serve the Lord better by having a home and using its hospitality in the service. When, as was generally the case, the work in which Jesus was engaged called him about from place to place to preach in public, heal the sick, etc., he went, regardless of personal comfort. When near the homes of his disciples he often tarried with them; thus the home of Martha and Mary and Lazarus was often blessed with his presence; but most frequently after the toil of the day he sought repose for the night in the wilderness or on the mountains. Sometimes, however, when the interests of the work required it, he chose a regular dwelling place, for we read (John 1:38,39) that on one occasion two men were following Jesus, and [R540 : page 5] he, turning and seeing them follow him, said to them, "What seek ye?" And they said unto him, Master, "Where dwellest thou?" They wanted to have a personal interview with him,

and therefore sought the retirement of his dwelling. Jesus said unto them, "Come and see. They went and saw where he dwelt and abode with him that day."

We find the same principle governing the actions of the Apostles. As the work generally required them to be traveling, they not only gave up the comforts, but bravely endured the hardships, dangers and fierce persecutions that everywhere awaited them. At times now it might be expedient for the truths' sake that the disciple have a home, as Paul found it expedient for the work, to abide in his own hired house for two years, where he received all that came unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, etc. (Acts 28:30). It should likewise, be our meat and drink to do our Father's will, as the necessities of the work may require it, homeless and friendless, to follow Jesus; or, if expedient to have a dwelling place, to use it in his service, having it entirely consecrated to his work.

Another desiring to follow Jesus, even though, as he had just explained, it would be at the expense of great self-denial, said, "But suffer me first to go and bury my father." And "Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." Doubtless this young disciple dreaded to realize what was so generally the result with those who left all to follow Jesus, that their foes were they of their own household. He dreaded to incur his father's displeasure and **[R541 : page 5]** thought to wait till his father was dead. Possibly his otherwise praiseworthy ambition was to add to the comfort and perhaps to the support and luxury of his declining years.

Such an ambition would seem plausible and has proved a snare to many. They have permitted earthly ties to fetter and hinder them, saying, my family or my parents – those dear to me by human ties – shall have all the comfort, ease and luxury that my time and labor can supply. This has been my ambition in the past, and should I now

withhold any part of that which they have come to expect at my hand, in order that I might follow the Master, my motive, my love would be misinterpreted.

Under this pressure, many come to the conclusion that they will wait until these hindrances are removed, until such no longer need their care; but this is only a device of the adversary, who well knows that procrastination is not only the thief of time, but also of interest and inclination to heavenly things. Now, while our Lord would not have us ignore our natural responsibilities, and teaches that he who does not provide for those naturally dependent upon him is worse than an infidel, an unbeliever, he does teach that our consecration should be to God, and whatever of human responsibility devolves upon us should be discharged as unto him.

Thus, in all we do, whether it be in "providing things honest in the sight of all men" for those of necessity depending upon us, and thus honoring our Master, and improving every available opportunity which, by economy of time and means, may be gained for spreading the good news – the Gospel of the Kingdom; or whether it be possible, by self-denial, to gain all our time, and utilize all our efforts in directly and widely proclaiming the Gospel, if we would follow our Lord it will be our meat and drink to do our Father's will. "Let the dead bury their dead." All the world is reckoned of God as dead, being still under condemnation. Let them attend to their own affairs, work out their own ideas and think what they will of our peculiar ways. We must expect to be misunderstood, misrepresented, and to bear the reproach of Christ. But don't let that hinder us; it is our business to preach the gospel by every talent and opportunity we can command.

"Another also said, Lord, I will follow thee, but let me first go and bid them farewell which are at home at my house. But Jesus said, No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for

the kingdom of God." This one, though also desiring to follow Jesus, cast a lingering look behind to the things and friends once dearest. He thought he was willing to sacrifice earthly comforts and endure hardness as a good soldier; he did not desire to procrastinate and not begin to follow Jesus until his Father was dead, or the prejudices of his earthly friends were overcome. No; he only wanted to bid them farewell, to confer with them, and to gain their approval of his course. To follow Jesus was not yet the chief and all-absorbing thought.

Jesus does not say it will be impossible for such a one to reach the kingdom, but that in that condition of mind he is unfit. And the strong probabilities are, that unless such a one takes a prompt, firm and decided stand, turning his back entirely to present allurements, and setting his face resolutely towards the prize of the high calling, he will soon become permanently unfit for the kingdom.

May those who have consecrated all, and thus put their hand to the plough, be enabled to keep their eye on the heavenly prize, that its glory may keep them from looking back, and that the fascination of former human ties may not hold them in bondage. Like our Lord, may it be our meat and drink to do Jehovah's will.

MRS. C. T. R.
