

FORSAKING ALL.

**"Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath,
he cannot be my disciple." Luke 14:33.**

The question of what is meant by "forsaking all," is seldom given a too literal interpretation by those who have something to forsake. On the contrary, most of the Lord's professed disciples seem to act as though the statement read, He that getteth not all that he can get, cannot be my disciple; for the getting, more than the forsaking, seems to be the aim of life with many, as with the world.

As we are very anxious to be recognized of the Master as true disciples, let us endeavor to grasp his meaning, and then honestly and faithfully put it into practice in the affairs of life.

In the preceding verses (25 to 32) the Master shows that he did not deceive any into becoming his followers by assuring them that it would cost little or no sacrifice, as so many of his professed ambassadors do to allure the unconverted into the various sectarian churches. No; he said, "Count the cost" before you take the step. Let the lines between the world and my disciples be clearly drawn. To hastily leave the world and put your hand to the plow as a servant of the truth, and then to look back and prefer the world, would not be well: for it would unfit you for the world, and you would not be fit for the kingdom of heaven. (Luke 9:62.) Count the cost deliberately first, then, if you like the conditions, come, take up your cross and follow me, in dishonor and sacrifice now, and to glory, honor and immortality hereafter, as joint-heirs with me in the kingdom.

We cannot suppose the statement under consideration (which refers back, more or less, directly to the things mentioned in verse 26) to mean that a man should leave his family to starve; nor yet that he should forsake his "own life" in the sense of starving from neglect of

the necessities of life; nor yet that he should leave "houses and lands" in the sense of abandoning them to go to wreck and ruin; nor yet in the sense of immediately converting them into money and making a wholesale distribution of the results to the poor. (Matt. 19:21.) To so understand the Master would be to suppose his teachings contrary to common sense, and to other statements of Scripture, his own utterances, and also those of the Apostles.

It was Jesus himself that reproved the Pharisees for making void the Law of God in saying that a son who would make a large present of money to the temple, might thereafter be excused from any responsibility to his parents in their support, (Matt. 15:4-6.) and shall we suppose that he would make void that Law in his doctrine? It was Jesus himself who, in his dying hour, remembered his own mother, and commended her to the care of John (John 19:26,27), and shall we suppose that he taught others to neglect their parents?

It was one of the Apostles under the influence of the Spirit of Christ, elaborating the teachings of Jesus, who said that a man should love his wife and cherish her even as his own body, and as the Lord loves and cherishes the Church (Eph. 5:25), and surely he did not contradict the Master in this. It was the same Apostle who wrote that any professing to be Jesus' disciples who neglect and fail to provide for their own households are worse than infidels, and by such a course deny the true teaching of Jesus. (1 Tim. 5:8.) It is the teaching of the New Testament, that we should "Do good and lend, hoping for nothing" as a reward; that we should "communicate" and "lay by on the first day of the week" for the poor and for the Lord's cause generally; and that a man should labor, working with his hands, that he might have to give to the needy. (Luke 6:34,35; 1 Cor. 16:2; Eph. 4:28.) All these injunctions would be **[R855 : page 3]** meaningless if we should understand Jesus' teaching to be that we were to give away every farthing to the poor: for then we should be the poorest of all the poor, and have nothing either to lend or to give.

If then we are sure the Master did not mean for us to literally abandon, neglect, and summarily dispose of homes, families, life and means, what did he mean? becomes all the more pertinent and interesting.

What did he mean then by the statement, "Sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me"? (Matt. 19:21.) We answer that Jesus put the matter in its fullest, strongest light. The conditions of fellowship with Christ in the heavenly kingdom are nothing less than the sacrifice of every earthly interest, and earthly life as well, in his service. But this service and sacrifice is a reasonable service, and never implies that we must become paupers to make others affluent. Had this young man consecrated himself and determined to give up all and follow Christ, and had he come to Jesus, saying, Master, I have determined to follow your counsel, to sell all and give to the poor, and to follow thee – How and where shall I begin? I have twenty houses and three farms and much cattle – which shall I dispose of first, and how shall I distribute the money?

Jesus probably would have said, Present all these things unreservedly to God, and yield yourself as his servant also, and from that moment reckon yourself God's steward, commissioned by him to use all those goods, as well as all your personal talents, to his glory in serving those about you. As a servant who shall give an account, be neither wasteful nor penurious. Think not of these goods henceforth as your own, and talk not about giving them *again* to the Lord; for once given, they are his forever. Such portions of that consecrated property as you have need of, he permits you to use for your personal and family necessities; but a full realization of your sacrifice would not only hinder you from treating it [the money] as your own, and from being lavish in your expenditures, as you might have been when the money and property were yours, but should the necessities of the Lord's work require the last dollar, and leave you dependent on daily toil for sustenance, it should be heartily rendered, with the thought, It is the

Lord's, and I was entrusted with it, to use it as he should indicate. The young man to whom Jesus spoke was "very rich"; and had he become a consecrated follower he might have been kept busy for many years disposing of his goods. There is no reason whatever for supposing that the Lord meant him to sell his houses at once and throw the money into the street to the multitude. The selling of that which he had would go on proportionately, as he could find uses for the money.

This suggests another thought: It is a steward's place to seek and find places where he can dispose of the talents and moneys consecrated to the Lord, to the best advantage, as his sanctified judgment, under the guidance of the Lord's Word, may dictate. This our Lord's parables indicate (Luke 19:13; Matt. 25:15). He should not wait for the Lord or his cause to be hindered and embarrassed for money before giving it. To do so, would be to never give it; for the Lord never gets embarrassed. – Isa. 55:11; Psa. 50:12.

Had the young man consecrated his wealth to the Lord's service as Jesus suggested, and then waited for Jesus to ask him for some of it, he would have waited and would have kept the money, but he would never have attained the kingdom and the Well done, good and faithful servant, enter the joys of thy Lord; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things and grant thee the handling of greater riches. On the contrary, the message to such will be, Thou unfaithful and indolent servant, thou hast been unfaithful in thy stewardship: take from him that which he would not use as he covenanted to do.

Most of us, as God's consecrated stewards, take greater liberties than we ought with the Lord's money and talents entrusted to us. We should not be less careful than if dealing with fellow-men, but more careful, if possible, to be strictly honest. And while rendering unto every man his dues, we should most faithfully "Render unto God the things that *are* God's" – which we presented to him.

If those who have forsaken all – consecrated all to the Lord's service – could but realize the matter as all done, as all His, how it would relieve them of battles with the selfishness which continually magnifies every little disposal of time or money to be a great and new sacrifice. Such a proper realization of the original sacrifice of all reverses the tables upon selfishness at once, and no longer treats the daily course as a self-denial, but a joyful service as Jehovah's steward, and accepts as fresh blessings from his hand all of even the commonest of life's favors. **page 3**

– "Lay not up treasures on earth" and "Take no thought for tomorrow" crowded out this month, – will appear next.

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