

IT COSTS SOMETHING

It never occurs to many people that it costs to be a Christian. The notion often prevails that Christianity is altogether what God does for us, without any real obligation on our part. It is true that we can do nothing to earn our salvation or to merit it; just as there is nothing we have to offer that God needs. However, being a disciple of Christ does cost us in the sense that there are sacrifices to be made and duties to be performed.

Jesus Christ never spoke of an easy religion. He said: "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:33) Again, in Matthew 16:24, He said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." He told the rich young ruler to sell all that he had and give to the poor. In principle, He requires the same of all disciples. Until we are ready to sincerely declare, "I surrender all," we cannot be His disciples. By worldly standards, therefore, it is very hard to be a Christian.

We lack the time this morning to discuss all that it might cost us to be followers of Jesus. It has cost many the alienation of relatives and friends. We may expect ridicule or persecution from some quarters. Those who follow Jesus must forfeit worldly pleasures. True followers of Christ give themselves completely to Him.

On the other hand, we should be aware of what IT COSTS NOT TO BE A CHRISTIAN. One who hesitates to be a Christian because of the cost should consider the consequences of living in sin. It will cost him all spiritual blessings that are in Christ. He cannot use the avenue of prayer. He cannot know the peace of God that passeth understanding. It costs him the satisfaction of knowing he is doing what is right. (One who rejects Christ must live always with the knowledge that he has refused to obey God.) It costs him the blessing of dying in the Lord and the hope of eternal life. Yes, it costs much more NOT to be a Christian.

The Lord used an earthly illustration to show the need for carefully considering all aspects of our spiritual choices. He asked: "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it' all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish." (Luke 14:28-30) Prospective converts certainly should weigh the cross they are about to take up. Those who choose not to surrender all to Jesus should carefully contemplate the outcome of such a decision.

Those who choose to be Christians recognize that the things it costs are nothing to the blessings received. Paul wrote: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While

we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:1 7-18