

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

*Question.* – (1) To what extent should the Lord's people take literally the statement, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment?" – Matt. 6:25-34.

(2) How much time should the Lord's people take from the duties of life for Bible study and in general the service of the truth?

*Answer.* – (1) The words of our Lord which you quote must be interpreted in harmony with other declarations of the inspired Word. They must not be interpreted so as to conflict with other statements. Other Scriptures instruct the Lord's people to labor with their hands, that they may have to give to those that have need (Eph. 4:28), and this implies forethought and provision in the way of laying up of money earned. Again, the Scriptures declare, "The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children" (2 Cor. 12:14) – implying some reasonable forethought and provision on the part of the parents for those whom they have brought into being. Again, the Apostle implies that the Christian who is fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, will not be slothful in any business (Rom. 12:11), and declares that "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." – 1 Tim. 5:8.

Interpreting our Lord's words in harmony with these other Scriptures, their sense would be that the Christian is not to take *anxious* care respecting the future, in matters beyond his control. He is, however, to take thought for every matter that is subject to his control. He is to seek to order his life so that it shall be useful to himself and to others. He is to remember the Scriptural injunction, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise," and is to

follow the ant's custom of laying up provision in advance of necessity. This lesson is taught by all of our Lord's providences; for instance, the plowing and the sowing are to be done bountifully and in faith, not doubtfully and fearfully. So also the cultivation is to be done with patience, waiting for the harvest: and when the harvest comes the lesson of nature is that the reaper shall not merely reap what he wishes to eat, and let the next day look out for itself, but that he shall gather into barns, making provision for the winter and for the next seedtime. Our Lord's remark that the fowls of the air do not gather grain into barns, and yet are fed, nor do lilies spin, yet are clothed, was not intended to teach that his followers should adopt the method of the fowls respecting their food, nor expect to be clothed as the lilies. It was intended to teach confidence in God as our care-taker, and thus permit his faithful children to plow and sow in faith, to labor in faith, and to reap with faith, to lay up in store with faith, and to use with faith; recognizing every good gift as of the Lord (through the sun and rain, by plowing and reaping), the same who provides for the birds, tho in a different manner. The Christian is ever to remember that man shall not live by bread alone: that he is not wholly dependent upon his own energies; that his affairs are in the Lord's hands for supervision, and that the promise is, "Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Putting this confidence in God's supervision of his affairs, while making a true Christian restful in mind, will not make him slovenly, careless or idle in doing with his might what his hands find to do, as unto the Lord.

(2) Duties may at times seem to conflict, but they do not really do so. A Christian's first duty is his **[R2488 : page 156]** hearty acknowledgment of his Creator and Lord, in all his ways. His second duty, if he be a husband and father, is toward his wife and children; or if she be a wife and mother, it is toward her husband and children. In the divine arrangement the husband is made the *provider* of the family, and is not obeying the divine law if he neglect this duty – no matter for what reason, unless it be disability through sickness. Likewise, the wife's first duty is that of *care-taker*; looking after the comfort and

encouragement of her husband and children along the path of duty. The marriage contract, by divine arrangement, comes in as a first mortgage upon every husband's time and upon every wife's time – the demands of this mortgage must be *reasonably* met before anything can be properly done to or for outsiders.

It is a great privilege for Christians to study the Lord's Word, yet a great deal of study is done to no purpose. Study which is not put into *practice* in daily life is worse than a waste of time. It is not he that merely knoweth the Master's will, but he who patiently and perseveringly seeks to *do* the Master's will, that shall be approved and win the crown. Every reasonable opportunity should be used by the Lord's people to obtain a knowledge of the divine plan – even to the extent of sacrificing; but the child of the Lord will be particular to see that it is his *own* conveniences and comforts that he is sacrificing, and not chiefly the conveniences and comforts of others. The Bible study which is done merely at the expense of others is a sign of selfishness rather than a sign of a rich indwelling of the Lord's spirit of love.

To make our studies of the divine plan as profitable as possible, we should spend as much time daily in dispensing the truth to others as we spend in seeking to feed ourselves, and Christian experience proves the truth of the words of Scripture, "He that watereth shall be watered also himself:" so that gradually the servant of the Lord will become more and more interested in handing forth the truth to others and finding that his own growth in knowledge and in grace came either in preparing to dispense the truth to others or while dispensing it to them. A state of lethargy, indolence, etc., respecting the duties of life, and respecting opportunities for presenting the truth to others, is a sure indication of spiritual poverty. It is well that all of the Lord's people keep ever before their minds the inspired words, "Not slothful in business, fervent [warm, zealous] in spirit, serving the Lord."

As to the *amount* of time each can devote, no rule can be laid down except that of *fervency* of spirit. One fervent in spirit will be

serving others temporally and spiritually nearly all the time – with his might, as his hand finds to do.

**Question.** – Who is the "spoiler" denounced in Isa. 33:1 – "Woe unto thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled"? Do you consider that this verse is in any sense applicable to the present time of harvest?

**Answer.** – The connections seem to associate this with the coming great time of trouble. No doubt when the time of trouble is fully on or nearly over it will be very easy to distinguish who is referred to by this verse. It does not seem easy to distinguish with certainty at the present time.

**Question.** – Please give a thorough definition of the words *sheol* and *hades*.

**Answer.** – We hope to furnish such a definition in the fifth volume of the DAWN series, now in preparation.

**Question.** – Do you consider the history of Joseph, recorded in Genesis, as typical?

**Answer.** – Yes; to our understanding Joseph was a type – various features in his history seem to be separate and distinct pictures of the experiences of Christ, Head and body. **(a)** Joseph was hated of his brethren, beloved by his father; so with Christ. **(b)** Joseph was cast into the pit by his brethren, as Jesus went into the pit of death for his brethren, the Jews. **(c)** Joseph's *life was sold* into servitude to the Egyptians, but became ultimately the means of the preservation of his entire family, as well as of the Egyptians; so Christ gave himself a ransom not only for his brethren but also for all mankind; and during the Millennial age will furnish "bread of life" to all who famish for it. **(d)** Joseph was sacrificed, sent to prison, because of his purity; so our Lord Jesus, "holy, harmless, undefiled," was treated as a transgressor, and went into the prisonhouse of death. **(e)** Joseph was delivered in due time from the prison, and made the associate of the

king upon the throne of Egypt; so our Lord Jesus was raised up from the prisonhouse of death by the glory of the Father, to be set at his right hand in the glory of power, on the throne of earth; agent and representative of the Great King for the blessing of all the families of the earth, typified by the Egyptians.

*Question.* – Do you understand from the prophecy of Ezekiel 40:40-46, that sacrifices of animals will be resumed after the establishment of Christ's Kingdom and when Israel is again in Palestine?

*Answer.* – The "better sacrifices" of the Gospel age having taken place beforehand, we think it unlikely that typical sacrifices will be restored. We consider it more probable that antitypical sacrifices are referred to – the broken and contrite hearts of the people, and their consecration to the Lord's service being thus represented. However, we are to remember that God considered these typical sacrifices of bulls and of goats a good method of presenting important truths to the attention of fleshly Israel, and we can see that if such sacrifices were restored now, they would have much more force and meaning to similar classes than they had before their antitypes had come. We may not, therefore, be sure that the Lord will not adopt some such plan as this of instructing the ignorant masses of mankind, as preparatory to higher lessons – as illustrations of spiritual things.

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