

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTION. Please give for the benefit of others as well as myself brief explanations of the following Scriptures: – Matt. 10:10; 1 Cor. 9:7-14; 1 Thes. 2:6; Gal. 6:6; 2 Thes. 3:8-10.

Answer. We reply to your questions as follows:

Matt. 10:10. – This instruction was to the twelve apostles sent forth to announce the Kingdom. It was not a general instruction for all time, but particular to the occasion. It is not applicable to the present time. The object in sending them forth in this dependent manner was largely at least to teach the apostles the lesson of the Lord's full ability to care for them under all circumstances and conditions, and they learned the lesson. Subsequently the apostles acted very differently; the Apostle Paul, for instance, making tents, etc., and their change of course was under the Lord's direction. – See Luke 22:35,36.

1 Cor. 9:7-18. – We understand the Apostle here to teach that it is the privilege of the Church to support those who are giving their entire time to the ministry of the Gospel, as was the Apostle Paul, and as some are doing now. But this does not seem to us to imply that all the elders in all the churches were supported without doing any manual labor themselves. So far as we have any knowledge of the matter, the elders generally, as the Apostle expresses it, took the oversight of the local congregations, not for filthy lucre's sake, but of a ready mind – of a desire to serve the flock. – 1 Pet. 5:2.

The Apostle's case, and that of others who did a like service, was different, and yet he did not demand support, and if it was not voluntarily rendered, he made tents, or otherwise labored with his hands, understanding that to be the will of God concerning his course – that he should not make request for support or any carnal things. This he explains in the very verses under consideration. – See vss. 15-18.

It would seem to be a feature of the divine law that whoever has received a spiritual blessing must make some sacrifice of an earthly kind, and thus show his appreciation of the spiritual favor received of the Lord, if he would grow in grace, knowledge and love. While therefore we deprecate everything akin to money-begging, and carefully avoid it in our columns, we do believe most sincerely that those who will receive the greatest blessing at the Lord's hands are those who are using their means in the spread of the truth – to the extent of their ability, if that be only two mites, as in the case of the poor widow. The salvation purchased at the high cost of our dear Redeemer's life is offered free, and the Lord refuses to permit any to pay for it, but he does not refuse to permit us to testify our love and appreciation of his grace by little self-denials. On the contrary, he appreciates these, and causes his face to shine and his spiritual blessings to fall upon those who take delight in devoting themselves **[R2500 : page 182]** and their substance to his service and the service of his cause, the service of his people. On the contrary, those who have never learned the blessedness of giving are informed that "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver:" and those who have not the love which leads them to respond with gratitude have not the condition of heart which the Lord loves, will not grow in grace and, because of the cultivation of the spirit of selfishness, instead of the spirit of benevolence, such are apt to grow cold, indifferent, and to fail to make their calling and election sure. "The liberal soul shall be made fat." – Prov. 11:25.

1 Thes. 2:6. – This is in harmony with the foregoing. In justice the Apostle might have said to those to whom he had brought the glad tidings: – You owe to me, as the servant of God, more than you will ever be able to pay in the present life, and it is as little as you can do to care for my temporal necessities to the extent of your ability. But the Gospel message is not given along the lines of justice, but along the lines of love and compassion, and hence the Apostle was careful not to mention these things when with the Church (tho after he had gone from them he thought it his duty to write as we have seen, to the

Church at Corinth, setting forth the facts). When with the Lord's people he neither coveted their silver and gold, nor asked for it or their praise, but was gentle and loving, "even as a nurse cherisheth her children: being so affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us, for ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail; for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable to any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God." – Vss. 7-9.

Gal. 6:6. – This injunction, "Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things," might properly be understood to mean that the taught were to support the teachers; and yet just as reasonably we might understand it to mean that those receiving instruction should not fear to communicate to the better instructed teaching-brother any thought that they might have respecting the Lord's word of grace. Nothing in the connection would seem to imply of necessity that it meant to communicate in carnal things: the good things with equal propriety might be considered good spiritual things. However, even if it were clear that this referred to temporal good things, we are to bear in mind that the Apostle did not impress this upon the Church on his own behalf, for he was not with them at this time. Very evidently he never spoke in such a strain when with the Church, and when his words might be understood to mean a personal appeal for money, for charity, for support.

2 Thes. 3:8-10. – "Neither did we eat any man's bread for naught; but wrought with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you; not because we have not power [authority, as the appointed apostles of the Lord, to demand support], but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. For even when we were with you this we commanded you, that if any should not work, neither should he eat." **[R2501 : page 182]**

It would appear from this that it was never the Apostle's thought, nor the meaning of any of the types or instructions of the Word of God, that a clergy class should be created or should create itself, and abstain from work and insist upon being supported in comparative idleness. Any such interpretation would evidently be contrary to the example of the Apostle, as above stated.

It may be sometimes difficult to draw the line on questions of this kind, which have two sides. The only safe way is to seek the mind of the Lord, and on the one hand to cultivate generosity and restrain selfishness, and on the other hand to give needed assistance to ministers of the truth, without doing anything to encourage them in idleness, which is a foe both to truth and to grace.
