

## **THE MEMORIAL CELEBRATION**

THE annual celebration of our Lord's death, rather than a more frequent one, commends itself to the Lord's people more generally every year. At Allegheny the number participating this year was much larger than ever before. Anticipating this, Carnegie Hall was secured for the afternoon discourse on Baptism, as well as for the Memorial Service of the evening of April 16th. The death-baptism was symbolized in water at Bible House baptistry by 10 brethren and 31 sisters, after their public confession of faith in the redemption accomplished by the precious sacrifice of Christ, of their renunciation of sin, and of their full consecration to walk in Jesus' footsteps in self sacrifice, even unto death.

### **THE EVENT AND THE DAY**

At the Memorial service explanation was made of why we celebrate the greatest event of history annually – not weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc. Not that the very day or hour or moment is of special consequence, but that it was meant to be a yearly celebration, and that so observed it is more than proportionately impressive. In fact, as all are aware, it could not be celebrated throughout the world at the same moment or hour or even on the same day, so great is the difference of time. For instance, the brethren in London had celebrated, and it was past midnight and they were asleep while we at Allegheny were celebrating. And for us to have partaken at the same hour with them would have been a day too early. A similar difficulty is met with by the Jews in their celebration of the Passover. History tells us that the early Church met with the same difficulty and that it was partly to correct this that it was decided to always commemorate our Lord's death on the day of the week nearest to the Passover date – "Good Friday." This arrangement has three advantages: –

(1) It groups the events of that momentous week more accurately before the mind's eye: Palm Sunday, when our Lord rode on the ass as King of the Jews; Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at the Temple teaching; Thursday preparing for the Passover Supper eaten that night and followed by the institution of our Memorial Supper, the lessons and prayer of John 14-17, the experiences of Gethsemane, of Caiaphas' court, and on Friday morning before the Sanhedrin, and at Pilate's and Herod's palaces. Then the scenes of Calvary and Joseph's new tomb. Saturday our Lord lay dead, hope being buried with him. Sunday, the resurrection day, with its new hopes, then comes in most appropriately – an Easter-day of new hopes and impulses.

(2) It would bring us into closer fellowship and sympathy with those who celebrate Good Friday and Easter Sunday, and our celebration of the Memorial on Thursday night would suggest the appropriateness of that date and cause them the more to question the authority for and the wisdom of more frequent celebrations.

(3) In civilized lands Good Friday is quite generally a legal holiday, and all the associations and precious memories of our Lord's death-day would find the better opportunity for exercising our minds.

Since it is impossible for all to celebrate on the *same* night and hour anyway, the congregation was asked to consider these arguments for hereafter having the celebration on the Thursday night before Easter Sunday. And now the same thought is offered to all the dear friends scattered abroad.

### **THIS DO, REMEMBERING ME**

The occasion was, as usual, a very solemn one as we communed respecting our Lord, the "Bread from heaven" broken for us. Nevertheless we rejoiced as we recognized in it a token of the "Love divine all love excelling." We rejoiced afresh as we assured our hearts that if God so loved us while we were yet sinners, much more

does he love us now as he sees us daily striving to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, – "not *after* the flesh but *after* the spirit."

The bread spoke to us of the human rights of Jesus sacrificed for us and of which we who believe may eat – appropriate by faith to ourselves, reckoning ourselves justified to all the rights originally possessed by Adam. Then we took the further lesson suggested by the Apostle's words, – "The loaf which we break, does it not signify the communion [fellowship] of the body of Christ? For we being many are one body: for we are all partakers of that one loaf." – 1 Cor. 10:17.

The "cup" we recognized as symbolic of our Lord's blood – his life poured out during the three and a half years of his ministry and the dregs at Calvary. It was shed for us, yes, "shed for many for the remission of sins." Not the blood which flowed from our Redeemer's side when pierced by the soldier's spear. No, he was already dead then. Blood is used symbolically to represent life, and our Lord's life or being or soul was poured out unto death before the spear was thrust. We saw the necessity for this under God's law, that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." While we sorrowed we again rejoiced, singing in our hearts unto the Lord –

"His blood can make the foulest clean.  
His blood availed for me."

Then we got the still deeper meaning of the "cup" from the Spirit's teaching through the Apostle's words, – "The cup of blessing for which we bless God, is it not a participating [sharing] of the blood of the Anointed One?" (1 Cor. 10:16.) Viewing it thus our Lord's words would have a deep meaning to our hearts, "Drink ye all of it;" – partake of my shame and death, walk in my steps; so shall ye be my disciples indeed and where I am there shall my disciples be.

We thanked God then for the privilege of being broken with him as part of the great loaf; and for the privilege of drinking of his cup

and so filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ; assured that "if we suffer with him we shall reign with him."

About 550 were present and probably 525 partook of the emblems of the broken body and shed blood. Then we sang a hymn and went out to remember the scenes of the night of the betrayal, and of the day of suffering which followed it.

