

## "ARE YE ABLE?"

"Are ye able to drink of the Cup that I shall drink of?"  
– Matthew 20:22.

WE RECALL the circumstances under which these words were uttered by our Savior: It was just a few days before His crucifixion Jesus had promised His disciples that they should sit with Him in His Throne in His Kingdom. So confident were they that this would be as the Lord had said that they were discussing the position they might occupy. The mother of the two disciples, James and John, came to Him and asked whether her two sons might sit, the one on His right hand and the other on His left, in the Kingdom. And Jesus, turning to the two disciples, replied by asking them: "Are ye able to drink of the Cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

We know that Jesus' baptism in water took place at the beginning of His ministry. In harmony with the Divine Plan, He was to die as the Savior of men. And He symbolized this death as soon as He was thirty years of age – as soon as was possible under the Law. During the three and a half years of His ministry, He was accomplishing this baptism, He was pouring out His soul unto death, and this death He finished at Calvary. Jesus said, "The baptism that I am [being] baptized with" – *now* – not a baptism which was either *future* or *past*.

But He spoke differently of the Cup – "the Cup that I *shall* drink of." He thus implied that the Cup was *future* – not in the present nor in the past. He had told His disciples that He would go up to Jerusalem; and that there He would be crucified, and on the third day He would rise again. And He said on another occasion, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." What the Master said about His

being crucified the disciples did not understand. But Jesus understood the situation, and He knew that this Cup was about to be poured for Him. And so He spoke of it again, saying of Himself, "The Cup that My Father hath poured for Me, shall I not drink it?"

## **OUR LORD'S SPECIAL TRIAL**

We might think of the word, *Cup* as representing various experiences of life – that everybody has his Cup of mingled joy and sorrow. But Jesus used the word in a different sense. When He was in the Garden of Gethsemane He prayed, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from Me! Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." And again, the same night He prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this Cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done!" In the matter of His baptism into death, there was no hesitation on our Lord's part. On the contrary, from the very beginning He voluntarily participated in it. The ignominious death was the thing that He prayed might pass, if it were possible. But this was what He learned was the Father's will for Him, and He was content to have it so.

There was nothing in the Law to indicate that our Lord should be executed as a blasphemer of the Divine Law. Yet blasphemy was the charge preferred against Him. The Sanhedrin decided that He was a blasphemer [R5421 : page 85] in that He had said, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it again," and also in claiming that He was the Son of God. Apparently, then, the thing which was specially weighing on His mind and from which He would have liked to be relieved was the ignominy and shame of being crucified as a criminal, as a blasphemer of the Father He loved so well.

Jesus knew that He had come into the world to die, and that He must suffer. But *this* part of His experience He had not fully understood. Evidently He knew that "as Moses lifted up the

serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up"; for comparatively early in His ministry He had stated this in His conversation with Nicodemus. But as He came down nearer and nearer to the time of His humiliation, His degradation, and realized all that it meant, He felt a great shrinking from it and poured out His heart in the cry, "*If it be possible*, let this Cup pass from Me!" But immediately – proving that His affirmation, at the time of His consecration, "Lo I come to do *Thy* will, O God," was not empty words – He added, "Nevertheless, not as *I* will, but as *Thou* wilt!" – Matthew 26:39.

### **ARE WE WILLING TO SHARE HIS IGNOMINY?**

And so to His disciples our Savior said: Are you able to lay down your lives completely, even though this shall mean to you injustice in the taking away of your lives? Are ye able to drink of the Cup that *I* shall drink of? There will be disgrace and ignominy connected with it all. Are ye willing to share with Me in this, My Cup? They answered: "We are able." They were willing.

This, we see, is the same Cup represented in the Communion Service. The bread represents the body and the wine the blood of our Lord. The Cup especially represented the shame and ignominy connected with His death; and the two disciples said that they were willing to share His Cup – they had no hesitancy. At any cost they would be faithful. They would comply with any conditions He would make. They did not, of course, yet know the full import of the word *baptism* or of the word *cup*. These were things all His disciples were feeling after. When Pentecost should come, these things that Jesus had spoken to them would come to their remembrance, as He had foretold. (John 16:4; 13:19.) But they were willing and anxious. And that is all that we can be. Jesus guaranteed that, being willing, they should have these experiences; that, continuing willing, continuing to suffer with Him here, they should reign with Him in His Throne. But as to the

particular place for each in the Throne, that would not be for Him to say, but for the Father.

The courage, the fortitude, of our dear Redeemer in walking the narrow way fills us with admiration. How strong and brave was His character! He had no thought of looking back; His whole being was intent upon accomplishing the will of His Father in Heaven – upon sacrificing Himself in the interest of the world. What a noble Example was set before the Apostles! – greatness in humility, victory through entire self-surrender!

### **DRINKING OF THE LORD'S CUP BY THE CHURCH**

The drinking of the Lord's Cup by the Church, represents our participation in the sufferings of Christ in the present time. None shall be a member of the Body of the great Mediator of the New Covenant unless he come in now under the proper terms. The drinking of the blood, then, is the sharing of the Cup. For if we drink not of His Cup, neither shall we share with Him in His glory. He said, "Drink ye *all* of it." *All* must drink, and the *entire Cup* must be drained during this Age.

It is a very great privilege that we are permitted to have a share in the sufferings of Christ. "If we suffer [with Him], we shall also reign with Him." We shall participate in the inauguration of the New Dispensation, and in dispensing its blessings. The Antitype of Moses, who will do the sprinkling, is Christ the Head and the Church His Body, glorified, of whom we read in Acts 3:22: "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me" – that is, Moses was His type, on a smaller scale. The Body is now being raised up. Jesus was first raised up, then all the Apostles; and following after, the remaining members of His Body.

As Moses sprinkled *all* the people, so this antitypical Moses, when completed, will "sprinkle" the world of mankind; and this

will mean the bringing of them into harmony with the Divine Law. It will require the thousand years to "sprinkle" mankind. So there is a great difference between the drinking of the Cup and the sprinkling of the blood. The sprinkling with the blood represents justification, while the drinking of the Cup by the Church represents, not only justification, but sanctification.

## **OUR LORD'S RECOGNITION OF THE DIVINE PURPOSES**

Our Lord, in His memorable words to St. Peter – "The Cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" – referred, evidently, to His dying experiences, which were severe in the extreme. He was dishonored of men and reckoned as an enemy of God – a blasphemer. His physical sufferings He knew would be intense, but to His perfect mind the shame and desisted, the opprobrium, added greatly to the poignancy of His anguish. Yet this was the Cup the Father had given Him; it was the Divine purpose respecting Him.

Our Lord had all the experiences necessary for proving and testing His loyalty; for it was necessary that He manifest His loyalty before both angels and men. The whole matter had been Divinely arranged from before the creation of man. He was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev. 13:8.) Everything pertaining to that slain Lamb was foreknown by the Father. Jesus was to drink the Cup which belonged to the sinner, in order that He might redeem man and might thus be a faithful and merciful High Priest. This was the Cup of suffering and death. It was necessary that Jesus should suffer the death of the cross, in order that He might redeem the Jew.

## **LOVE AND LOYALTY MANIFESTED BY SUBMISSION**

All His sufferings were foretold in the Scriptures. The crucifixion was pictured by the lifting up of the brazen serpent in

the wilderness. All of His experiences were foreknown, forearranged and necessary. When He came to earth to do the Father's will, He did not know of all that was to come. But He learned obedience by the things which He suffered, the things which were "written in the Book." He submitted Himself to all the Father's will, and thus He proved His loyalty. As He Himself declared, "I came not to do Mine own will, but the will of My Father which sent Me!" As the hour of the consummation of His sacrifice drew near, in the lonely shades of Gethsemane, the Master prayed, "My Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from Me!" We are not to suppose that He prayed for the Cup of death to pass away; but He wondered whether or not the ignominious experiences of the crucifixion might pass. Yet we find that He did not murmur nor rebel, but said, "Not My will, but Thine, be done!"

### **SPECIAL SUPERVISION OF OUR CUP**

We see that our beloved Lord drank of the bitter Cup to its dregs, and did so thankfully. And we are to remember **[R5422 : page 86]** that He gave the Cup to *us*, that *we* should all drink of it – not that we should all have exactly the same experiences that He had, but that we must all drink of the Cup of suffering and death in the Father's own way. Jesus was the Perfect One, and the Father dealt with Him in a very particular manner.

In our cases the experiences would be different; because of our imperfection we could not be dealt with from the standpoint of perfection. We are, therefore, not to think of our Cup as a definite, fixed program as was the Master's, but rather that the Father permitted us to have a share in the Cup of death with His Son. Our Cup is supervised by our Savior, although it is the Cup poured by the Father; for it is the Father's Program.

In the Master's case the Cup was necessary for the sins of the whole world. In our case it is not necessary, but it has pleased the Father to grant us a share in the sufferings and glory of our Lord.

Jesus makes good our deficiencies and develops our characters, fashioning us into His own glorious Image. Without this supervision of our Cup by our Lord, we might be very poorly developed in many qualities; therefore our Cup needs to be specially supervised. And so He assures us that, while the necessary experiences are coming to us, at the same time His grace will be sufficient; and His strength will be made perfect in our weakness, and all things will be made to work together for our good.

Let us never forget that unless we partake of His Cup, unless we are immersed into death with Him, we can have no share in His Kingdom of glory, we can never sit with Him in His Throne. Let us then count all the things of this earth as loss and dross that we may attain this Pearl of Great Price. As the experiences of suffering come to us, let us not be affrighted, nor "think it strange concerning the fiery trials that shall try us, as though some strange thing happened unto us"; for even "hereunto were we called," to suffer with our beloved Master now, and by and by be glorified together with Him in the Kingdom eternal!

"Are ye able to walk in the narrow, strait way,  
With no friend by your side, and no arm for your stay?  
Can ye bravely go on through the darkening night?  
Can ye patiently wait till the Lord sends the light?"

"Ah, if thus ye can drink of *the Cup He shall pour*,  
And if never the banner of Truth ye shall lower,  
His beloved ye are, and His crown ye shall wear,  
In His Throne ye shall sit, and His glory shall share!"

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