

A MEMORIAL MEDITATION
(Drinking The Cup Anew In The Kingdom)
Br. Ken Rawson

"And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Matt. 26:27-29.

Jesus instituted the memorial service and one of the emblems was the memorial cup. He said that henceforth he would not drink of it again with them until he drank it anew in the Kingdom.

When we speak of the Memorial emblems in a general way we say that in the primary picture, the bread and the cup represent the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf. Therefore the ransom aspect of Jesus' sacrifice is shown to us in the primary picture. I find no objection to this general picture. However, coming to the strictly Scriptural usage of the cup, I would say that it represents exclusively the sin-offering features of atonement. The cup represents the sum total of the sufferings and experiences of The Christ, Head and Body, in pouring out their souls unto death.

To show this unified application of the cup we will consider two seemingly diversified Scriptures. Psalm 116:12, 13, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. .I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people." Matt. 26:39: ". . .O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Seemingly the cup in Matthew applies to the suffering features of Christ's sacrifice and the cup of salvation in Psalms applies to our justification. How can we have this unified concept that the cup represents the sin-offering experiences of The Christ, Head and Body? I submit that Psalm 116 does not speak of the cup of our justification. Rather, we partake of this cup by paying our vows of consecration to the Lord. This cup of salvation is for the salvation of the world. Our partaking of this cup means our sharing in the sufferings and death of Christ which is on behalf of the world of mankind for their salvation.

Our second Scripture, "let this cup pass from me," refers to that portion of suffering that Jesus dreaded, but which was necessary in his pouring out his soul unto death.

How does drinking the cup anew in the kingdom fit into this unified application of the cup? Does the cup strictly speaking represent the sufferings and experiences of The Christ, Head and Body, in pouring out their souls unto death?

In this life the cup is a cup of sorrow mingled with joy. The sorrow aspect is the reality. There is some joy in reality to varying degrees, but it is the hope of the kingdom that puts much of the joy into this cup. In the kingdom it will also be a cup of sorrow and joy, but it will be the joy that will be the complete reality and the sorrow will be a memory.

In Bro. Russell's 1916 article on the memorial, he suggested that Isa. 53:12 gives us the key as to what is meant by drinking the cup anew in the kingdom. Speaking of Christ, "He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." Bro. Russell suggests that the key to understanding the phrase "drinking anew in the kingdom" is that when The Christ, Head and Body, are engaged in that grand and glorious work of blessing all the families of the earth, they will look back on all their past sufferings, the past travail of their soul, and they will be satisfied. Everything that they suffered and experienced will be well worth the work that they are doing. They shall then experience the fruition of their travail. In passing, it is interesting to note that this word "travail" in the Hebrew means not only severe toil, but severe toil with irksomeness.

We will now deal with the different aspects of the travail of our souls. Much is said in jest about the tribulation saints. We're going to talk about travailing saints, and travailing saints are in good company because Jesus was a travailing saint. We're going to consider the travailing of our soul from a broad perspective --the travail that makes us meet for the kingdom work, and not just the sin-offering experiences. We will not attempt to cover all travail experiences, nor the most important ones. Our rule of thumb will be those experiences that are not too frequently discussed.

That brings us to our first travail experience--an area that we don't talk much about because it steps on toes and it comes too close to home. If reflections are cast in our discussion of this point, they are also cast upon myself, since I have a family, I have a home and I enjoy a good many things of this life. A part of our travail is the sorrow, the suffering, the pain that comes from sacrificing the things of this life that we might be better enabled to do the Lord's will.

When we came to the Lord in consecration, we said, "Lord, everything that I am and that I ever will be is yours. My time, my talents, my money-everything is to be used in your service."

When we look out at the world and then we look at the Bible Student Movement, we don't see too much difference in many areas. Especially in the areas of enjoying the good things of this life. The norms of our society have become the accepted norms of the Bible Students in many areas. It is accepted that Bible Students go on to college. It is accepted that we get married. It is accepted that we raise a family. It is accepted that we buy a home. It is accepted that we have one to three cars in our family. It is accepted that we possess the modern conveniences of life: TV, automatic washer, dryer, dishwasher. Don't misunderstand me. These things are not wrong in themselves. There are enough Scriptures admonition-wise and example-wise to show that many of the early church enjoyed comparable things and were considered faithful. But the pursuit of any of these natural things consumes time, money and talents that were already devoted to the Lord.

How many of us who are married seriously wrestled with the Apostle Paul's admonition on this subject first? How many of us who have families seriously wrestled with the Scriptural admonitions along this line? How many of us who bought homes and enjoy other material goods, seriously wrestled with Scriptural principles before we began to indulge in these Things?

Here we get into a realm where the Lord's will can be entirely different for two individuals. The main point is that it is a part of our travail experience to soberly consider the Lord's will in these areas and then to pursue it. There are various reasons why it might be the Lord's will for one Christian to marry and not for another Christian. There might be various reasons why it is the Lord's will for one couple to have a family and not another Christian couple. One Christian could utilize earthly goods as a means of enhancing their devotion to the Lord, whereas another Christian could be stumbled by these earthly goods.

Take a practical example: a Christian housewife might say that she wants an automatic dishwasher, an automatic dryer, and an automatic washer to save strength and time that she could in turn devote to spiritual things. Now this would be good, this would be proper. However, if she buys these modern conveniences to conserve time and strength and uses this redeemed time in pursuit of other earthly things-- then this is wrong.

If a Christian considered from the Scriptures that he should not marry; if a Christian couple considered from the Scriptures that they should not have children; if a Christian considered from the Scriptures that he should not buy a home; if a Christian considered from the Scriptures that he should not have many of the modern conveniences of life; if we make any one or all of these sacrifices and the result is that we look upon our brethren

and begin to think in terms that we are in the club of heaven's favorites--then this sacrificing is absolutely meaningless; in fact, it is harmful.

However, if we make any of these areas of sacrifice and the result is not price, but perhaps sorrow, vexation, even anguish at time, then this is an aspect of the travail of our souls with which the Lord is well pleased.

Crucifixion is a painful process of dying. The Apostle Paul likens our sacrificing of earthly things to crucifixion, a slow process, a painful process of dying. This is a part of the travail of our souls. As an admonition to all of us, whatsoever state we now find ourselves in, it would be well to follow the Apostle Paul's advice in 1 Cor. 7:29-32, which happens to be my Scripture for 1969. The Phillips translation of this Scripture is as follows: "All of our future are so for shortened, indeed, that these who have wives should live so to speak as though they had none. There is no time to indulge in sorrow; no time to enjoy our souls. Those who buy have no time to enjoy their possessions; and indeed, their every contact with the world must be as light as possible. For the present scheme of things in this world is passing away. That is why I should like you to be as free from worldly entanglements as possible."

Another aspect of the travail of our souls is the gravity of our situation, the dire aspects of our consecration. In Luke 12:50 the Master said, ". . . I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Rotherham says, "How I am distressed," and the margin says, "How I am pained" until it be accomplished.

Jesus felt the weight of his consecration all during the three and a half years of his ministry. Then at Gethsemane he was almost crushed by its weight. He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.. nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." In meditating upon the Gethsemane experience and Jesus' praying that his cup pass from him if it could possibly be, Bro. Russell made the observation that Jesus instinctively shrank from this experience. Why? We feel for two possible reasons, both suggested by Bro. Russell. First, he knew that his sacrifice was about to be consumed completely on the next day. He was concerned lest there was some detail of his sacrifice in which he had been unfaithful, if that would be true, it would mean everlasting extinction for him. And not only that, but the world of mankind would not have the provision of the ransom price. A second reason for shrinking back from this experience was the full weight of the ignominy of his death. What would be involved in it came to him at this time. That he who had cherished the precious fellowship with the Father for aeons and aeons before he came here to earth as God's only begotten Son would on the morrow be crucified as a blasphemer for claiming to be the Son of

God. This was a crushing thing to look forward to.

We have a baptism to be baptized with. Are we straitened? Are we distressed? Are we pained until it be accomplished? Are we that concerned about it? Theoretically we accept that we are on trial for life. But do we really feel that our life is on the line? Do we really live as though our life is on the line? Let's face it, brethren. Many are called, but few are chosen. We serve an awesome God. His standards are so high, of the several thousands of Bible Students that might cover the earth, only a few will be in the little flock. Of all of us that are in this room, only a very very few will end up on the 144,000. I do not say this with an air of pride or arrogance. I might not be one of these in the 144,000 in the final picture. But if I can stir you to greater initiative and incentive to fulfill your vows of consecration, it will be well worth the effort.

One of the reasons so many miss out is that they are not as straitened, they are not as distressed, they are not as pained as Jesus was in fulfilling his vows of consecration.

You'll notice an intentional distinction I'm making between Bible Students and those who will end up in the 144,000. Just because we're Bible Students doesn't mean that we are going to end up in the little flock. From one standpoint we are also the nominal church. We are a church in name only. Not all will finally end up in the little flock. Bible Students tend to be so overwhelmed with the love and mercy of God that they can be lulled into a false sense of security. Bible Students can readily quote the love-of-God Scriptures. Our Fundamentalist friends can readily quote the fear-of-God Scriptures. Both sets of Scriptures are in the Bible.

You might say "fear" of God means "reverence" of God. This is true. There is a Hebrew and Greek word that means reverence of God. But Paul also uses a Greek word when he speaks of the fear of God that means alarm and fright before God. Bible Students do not accept fear as a proper motivating force. But how else would we describe the emotion of Paul when he wrote 2 Cor. 5:10, 11, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body. . . knowing therefore the terror of God. . ."

The most that we can mitigate the phrase "the terror of God" is into "fear of God" which is the Greek word that means alarm or fright before God. "Knowing therefore the terror (or fear) of the Lord, we persuade man."

The same Apostle in Heb. 10:30, 31, says, "For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his

people." Heb. 4:1, "Let us therefore fear, (and the word does not mean reverence-it means fright or alarm) lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

Bro. Russell always had the rounded out picture. He made the observation that a Christian should not have fear in his heart. But on the basis of Heb. 4:1 and 2 Cor. 5:10, 11 he says that fear should be a watch dog outside the door of the Christian's heart.

It would be healthier for us as new creatures to have periods of anxiety as Jesus and the Apostle Paul concerning our faithfulness. We would re-emphasize that this fear is not to be within our hearts, Paul said that we are not given the spirit of fear. This concern, this alarm is to be a guard outside the door of our hearts, urging us on lest we fall short.

Whatever else fear might be to the immature Christian, to the mature Christian it will be coupled with love--a delicate blending of the fear of God with the love of God. In the same chapter of 2 Cor. 5:11 where Paul speaks of knowing the fear of God, he couples it with the love of Christ in Verse 14, "For the love of Christ constraineth us." For example, we see at times such an extreme love between two individuals on earth, that one person actually fears lest he hurt or offend his loved one. He is that concerned. And our love for the Lord should be so great that we would actually fear, we would be anxious, we would be alarmed lest we would displease or offend him. This fear, this anxiety, this concern about making our calling and election sure is a part of the travail of our souls.

Another aspect of the travail of our souls is the mental struggle of learning: (1) who God really is in our live, and (2) the ways of God in our life. To make some observations on this point we'll fall back on some examples of the men of God in the Old Testament. We're going to deal again with areas that perhaps aren't too popular: areas of honest doubt and areas of even arguing with God. One of my favorite lines of poem is, "He that has never doubted has never really thought."

In the thirteenth chapter, Job said to his comforters, "Lo, mine eyes hath seen all this, mine ear hath heard and understood it. What ye know, I know also; I am not inferior unto you. But I would speak to the Almighty, and I would desire to argue my case with God. As for you, you whitewash with lies. Worthless physicians are you all. O that you would keep silent! and it would be your wisdom. Hear now my arguing, and listen to the pleading of my lips."

Later in chapter 36, Job says concerning God, "Surely now God has worn me out. He has made me desolate. He has made desolate all my company. He has shriveled me up.

He has torn me in his wrath. He has gnashed his teeth at me. God gives me up to the ungodly. I was at ease, and he brought me asunder. He seized me by the neck and dashed me to pieces."

What did God think about Job expressing these honest thoughts in prayer? We have the interesting observation of God in the last chapter of Job. God said that Job's friends had not spoken the truth about God, but that Job did.

We want to make some practical lessons from Job's experiences. At times the Lord might cause everything in our life to go wrong just to teach us one supreme lesson. That supreme lesson is that He is the Sovereign of our life.

You know how I feel about those who devote full-time service to the harvest work. But even at this we might come to situations where we have arranged every detail of our lives in harmony with the Scriptures so as to devote as much of our time or all of our time to the Lord's service--and then the Lord shuts the door. On occasions like this He might just be saying that as important as activity is, there is some-thing even more important--that we learn that He is the sovereign, and the complete authority in our life.

Another observation to make from Job's experience is that all that Job had learned about God prior to this experience was entirely inadequate to answer the incredible experiences which God now called upon him to pass through.

And another lesson from Job: much, or some of what Job's comforters said was true in a general way. Job and his friends were natural men. Often in God's dealings with natural men--as we see in connection with the nation of Israel later on--temporal blessings were rewards for faithfulness to God. Job's friends could not fathom how Job's experiences could be so vastly different from theirs. There was only one explanation--Job was unfaithful to God.

We all tend to be like this to varying degrees, We can become skeptical of our brethren as Job's friends became skeptical of Job, if we see that they are having experiences and feelings that do not fit into our own puny mold of experience. Just because our brethren can vividly see the hand of the Lord in their life does not mean that we are any less faithful because seemingly the Lord is nowhere to be found in our lives.

We learn from Job's experience that we must allow God to do what He wants to do in our lives. If you think that you know the will of God for your life and that you are anxious to do it, you will probably come in for a rude awakening; because nobody knows the will of

God for his entire life. And if you think that things will just fall into place because you are doing things according to the Scriptures, you may again be rudely awakened. If your faith rests on what someone else has told you about the Christian life, rather than in personal experience with the Lord, then it might well be that the experience you have been told about will not be fulfilled. God will go to any length to bring an acknowledgement of who He is to us.

As we study the lives of the faithful men of the Bible, we begin to see that God says the same thing over and over again to them. Usually He says it after He has put them into a position of aloneness. God says to them, "I am the Lord. I am the Sovereign of your life. And nothing else much matters. My higher purposes are being accomplished in your life, whether you can discern them or not."

My favorite chapter in the Book of Job is the 23rd. It is beautiful in the Living translation. At the writing of the 23rd chapter, Job was in despair. He couldn't find God no matter where he went. Whether he went backwards or forewords--God wasn't there. But still he didn't discard his belief in God. He didn't discard his concept that God was dealing with him. He followed his bewilderment of where God was with these words: ". . . He knoweth the way that I take; and when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

Job couldn't see God at all in his life. Did this cause Job to lose faith? Job hunted for God. He wanted to find some evidence of God in his life, but he couldn't. So then Job concluded, "He knoweth the way that I take." Job didn't; you don't; I don't know the way that God takes always. You may never understand this side the veil why God does what He does in your life. But if you believe Him that is all that is necessary.

We have some misconceptions concerning what God has promised us. God has not promised to solve all of our problems. God has not promised to answer all of our questions. God has not even promised to go visibly with us. He has promised to help us bear our problems. And even here, the way He has promised to help us bear our burdens and our problems might not be too discernable or appreciated at times.

Job could not possibly understand the reason for his suffering because God was demonstrating something on a higher level. God was giving an observation lesson to the adversary. This was something that was completely out of Job's realm and ability to comprehend. Let us learn to trust God for who He is. Let us not be afraid to face the facts of our life and even to question God plainly as Job questioned Him. How many of us would have the courage to say to God what Job said to God? But Job took this risk because he knew in the depths of his heart who God was.

The Christian who doesn't have difficulty with the way that God does things at times has not taken the full measure of who God is. We just can't get our finite minds around God's ways and God's works. He works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform. If God is God we should at times have questions as to what He is doing in our lives. We tend to think of prayer in terms of just telling God what He wants to hear. But the prayers of some of the men of the Bible were too honest for that.

The prophet Habakkuk, for instance, was troubled by God's apparent injustice in judgment. God's people Israel were violating the laws of God in every turn of the way and they were escaping, they weren't being punished as was promised under the Law Covenant arrangement. Habakkuk pleaded for judgment. He pleaded for the vindication of God's name. And then God promised to Habakkuk that judgment would come--but Habakkuk fought it. Why? Because God told Habakkuk that He was going to use the Babylonians to punish Judah. Habakkuk began to argue with God. He said, "How can it be just to use an even more wicked people than Israel to punish your own people?"

In Habakkuk 2:1, when we get into the marginal references and some of the other translations, Habakkuk speaks of his arguing with God, and God dialoguing back with him. The ways of God in dealing with and judging His people at times might raise questions in our minds. We might at times wonder why brethren who are seemingly way off doctrinally or wrong in other areas have such, perhaps, greater evidences of God's dealings in their lives than brethren we might consider more sound in the truth. Habakkuk's grappling with the way that God deals with His people is a practical lesson in our day.

And there is Jeremiah. Jeremiah was upset by the demand that his prophetic office required--Jeremiah was called of God to witness in HARD places. God made him proclaim an unpopular message--one that cut him off from friends, family and the leaders of the nation. He told God that he was going to quit preaching. He was going to quit speaking for Him. But God would not let Jeremiah quit.

At times we might feel that God took advantage of us; that when He called us to the high calling, and we made our consecration, He did not reveal to us what the cost of discipleship might really be.

Each of these men of God--Job, Jeremiah, Habakkuk—voiced his feelings and his problems in an attitude of faith. These men argued with God. It was not to keep Him at a distance, but to draw them closer to Him. The very reason that they were willing to raise

these doubts and concerns and take them to God was because they knew that God had the answer for these problems and questions. They wanted to yield themselves more fully to Him as He would explain His ways to them.

The 73rd Psalm is one of the most noble expressions of honest doubt found in the Bible. In the first three verses the Psalmist complains of the prosperity of the wicked, whereas he was suffering. Verses 4 through 12, he tells the Lord how he hates the way of the wicked. In verses 13 and 14 he tells that there is a personal grudge in here too, because although he was trying to be righteous, he knew he wasn't as righteous as he should be. Here he was striving so hard and failing, and the wicked were not even trying and they were prospering. This hurt!

But the Psalmist gives us a beautiful lesson concerning our questions and our doubts. In the 15th verse he says that he would not speak of these matters to the generation of his time. Why? Because he did not want to stumble them. But these were questions and problems that he was grappling with, so he spoke to the Lord about them. And he found his answer in verses 16 and 17.

He went into the sanctuary of God. Usually the answers to the perplexities of the Christian life will come when we go into the sanctuary of God, the Holy, into the spirit of greater, fuller consecration to the Lord. Little by little, using ourselves more completely to the will of the Lord in the sanctuary, receiving the light of the candlestick, feeding upon the bread on the table and offering our devotions to the Lord on the altar--these questions, many of them, will be solved.

Then in verse 23, the main lesson that the Psalmist learned was that there was just one thing that really counted--the Lord was continually with him and was always with him even in this period of doubt.

The distress and perhaps at times the mental agony of learning the majestic greatness of God in our lives, and His ways in our lives, is a part of the travail of our soul.

Responsibility toward others is a part of the travail of our soul. Paul is an outstanding example of responsibility to others. Paul felt a personal concern for unbelieving Israel. Although their unbelief was their fault and not his, yet he prayed with great sorrow and unceasing anguish in his heart that he would be willing to become accursed from Christ if Israel could come into the high calling. He carried on his heart the weak and shallow brother endangered by the free conduct of the stronger Christians. For Paul, sinning against one's brother and wounding their weak conscience was sinning against Christ. "If

food is the cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat lest I cause my brother to fall.”

Paul had the same sense of responsibility in preaching-- "Woe, if I do not preach the Gospel." He had to an infinite degree the Master's heart. "Apart from all other things, there is the daily pressure upon me--my anxiety for the churches. Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?" These same costly identifications with the problems of others were sharp and intensified with anguish and many tears.

In Acts 20:19, Paul said he served at Ephesus, yearning over their salvation with many tears. In Phil. 3:18, 19 is his mention of those whose end is destruction, who caused him to give way to weeping. And with anguish and many tears he warned those at Corinth that their Christian life was hindered by their unholy walk.

Responsibility might seem too cold a word for so compelling a motive force as we see in Paul's life. Care, concern, good-will, sympathy and love were all implied. Like Paul, we should feel a voluntary spiritual obligation towards others which will drive us as it drove Paul to endless labor, unflinching patience and great sacrifice. At times it will weary our spirits. It will sap our strength to the breaking point. It will cause despondency over the plight of others. It will vex our heart because of our limitations to help. And it will result in misunderstandings among the brethren. But this--the sense of responsibility towards others is another aspect of the travail of our soul.

Another part of the travail of our soul is losing our identity in the body of Christ. In any ecclesia arrangement or operation of a group of brethren, there are prominent names. As less prominent brethren in any group, we might make suggestions and ideas or perform a task--and others get the credit. When we consecrated, we consecrated to do the Lord's service--not our own service. This is a part of the crushing of the grapes whereby we lose our identity in the body of Christ. This cup is composed of many grapes, but it is only as each grape is crushed and loses its identity that it becomes a part of the whole body of Christ.

Why must we lose our identity in the body of Christ? We are being prepared to work in a kingdom. But it is not our kingdom--it is the Lord's kingdom. Our work in that kingdom will be for His glory and not for our own. Others getting the credit for work or an idea that we had is another aspect of the travail of our soul.

Opposition from the brethren could be another part of the travail of our souls. In the

world, we expect opposition when we do the Lord's will and are faithful to His cause. But it is more difficult to receive opposition from the brethren. And because it is difficult, it is well that we do not become opposers of the brethren.

At times we might have to take a firm stand for doctrine, truth and righteousness. But when we take this stand, let us speak the truth in love. Inevitably, there will be times when opposition to the brethren will become so fierce that there will be character assassinations, gossip, bitterness. In might involve those with whom we were very close. Jesus had this type of experience in the kiss of betrayal by Judas.

The Scriptures show that Jesus loved all of the apostles. He loved Judas. And even when Judas came to the garden that night to betray him, Jesus greeting him with the affectionate term "friend". But that night and the next day when Jesus' face was marred in many ways--furred by bloody sweat, bruised by blows, spat upon, torn with thorns--nothing hurt him quite so much as the betrayal, the vanity, of that kiss.

The Psalmist has well expressed our feeling when we are opposed by those who were once very dear to us in Psalm 55:12-14, "For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him; but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company." Opposition of the brethren, especially of those who were once close to us, is another aspect of this travail of our soul.

We want to apply this Scripture, "He shall see the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied," in an accommodated sense to Jesus when he was on the cross. The cup that Jesus drank on the cross was sorrow mingled with joy. As he was experiencing the depth of travail, by hope he was satisfied, Jesus was on the cross longer than three hours, perhaps six hours. He was already on the cross a considerable time when darkness covered the earth from the 6th hour (noon day) to the 9th hour. Mark 15:34.

From noon until 3 o'clock Jesus was completely silent. Before this time he spoke to his mother, he spoke to John, he spoke to the thieves on the cross. But during this three-hour period of darkness he did not utter a word. And then he spoke. The fact that the first words Jesus spoke when he broke his silence were a quotation of the first verse of Psalm 22, and the fact that the last words that he said on the cross, "It is finished," were a quotation of the Last verse of Psalm 22 provides a clue of Jesus' thoughts. It indicates that at least part of this time he meditated upon the 22nd Psalm and his mind transversed the whole of the Psalm.

The 22nd Psalm was a Psalm of great comfort to Jesus as he meditated upon it while on the cross. In it is contained three pictures that partially explain Jesus' suffering and a description of what would be accomplished by his suffering. The first picture given is the words that broke Jesus' silence at 3 o'clock is in verse 1, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?". During the early years of Jesus' ministry he was popular among the multitude. Great crowds followed him. But when he began to speak harsher truths, the crowds began to dwindle. Oh, but his disciples said they would never forsake him. Yet when we come to the Gethsemane experiences, even Jesus' closest three would not bear up with him. And then he was arrested, and we read that his disciples forsook him, and fled. Earlier in the Gospel we read that they forsook all and followed him. Now they forsook him and fled.

The crowds were not with him. His family was not with him. His loved ones were not with him. God alone was beside Jesus on the cross. And then God turned His face from him and he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Jesus, in taking the sinner's place, had to experience everything that a sinner experiences. Disfellowship from God is a part of the sinner's lot. It was necessary that Jesus in taking the sinner's place also experienced disfellowship from his father.

The second picture concerning Jesus' death is given to us in the 6th verse. "I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people." Why the image of a worm? Why this unusual symbol? There are a number of reasons, Jesus in speaking of righteousness said that even he wasn't righteous – only the Father was righteous. So from this standpoint he was just a worm. We feel that because he was despised by men this symbolism is given. It shows that to these who were crucifying him, he was but a worm.

But there is a deeper meaning here which is revealed in the Hebrew word for worm. It has come to refer almost exclusively to a special worm from which the people of the near East derive a special crimson dye. The worm was a "tola" and the dye was formed from its blood when it was crushed. In the Hebrew the word "scarlet" literally means the "splendor of the tola."

The tola is referred to in the Scriptures several times. The scarlet dye for the linen in the Tabernacle came from the blood of the tola. It is said of Saul in Second Samuel, that when he dressed the women of Israel in scarlet it was the scarlet of the tola. All of this illuminates the verse. When Jesus thought of himself as the worm that was crushed, it was the tola worm – the worm that was crushed to provide scarlet blood-- the ransom price.

The third picture of the death of Christ in Psalm 22 is in verse 21, "Save me from the lion's mouth; for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorn." Where do you get a unicorn? The animal mentioned here is not literally a unicorn as it does not exist. Actually it was a species of a wild ox that had long pointed horns which were always symmetrical. When you looked at this particular wild ox from the side profile, the horns were so aligned that they looked like one horn, Hence it got the name unicorn. The interesting thing here is that because of the length of the ox's horns, criminals were often tied to them as means of execution. As Jesus pondered the picture of God hearing him from the unicorn's horns, he thought of criminals being executed on the horns. This brought to mind the fact that he had to die as a criminal because he was taking the sinner's place.

If this was all there was in the 22nd Psalm, it would be very inspirational to Jesus to realize that his death was so detailed in prophecy. It would bring great comfort in his hour of stress when he was hanging on the cross. But other details are given. They parted his garment. They looked on him naked. They cast lots for his garment. But the picture doesn't end here. We receive a better one. The Psalm goes on to say, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." Verse 22.

Not long before his crucifixion, Jesus prayed for his disciples in John 17. He extended that prayer to include us and all who would become his disciples. And even when he was dying on the cross he again thought of his church. He said to the Lord, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." And then in his mind Jesus passed beyond the church--verse 25, "My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation" -- not just in the congregation of his brethren. Here Jesus' thoughts passed on into the kingdom time which is verified in verse 27, "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee."

So as Jesus hung on the cross and experienced the dregs of his travail of soul, by hope, through this 22nd Psalm he was satisfied that his death would accomplish the salvation of the church and the world. That is why he could conclude by saying, "It is finished." If you look in the King James it doesn't say, "It is finished>" But "It is finished" is a literal translation of the Hebrew in the last verse of Psalm 22.

To convey what is involved in our drinking the cup anew in the kingdom, we will close with a quote from the Fourth Volume. It conveys in graphic detail what a glorious work will be accomplished. On page 639 is one of the classic writings of Brother Russell: "No creature of the redeemed race will be too low for divine grace to reach, through the all-

powerful. and blessed agency of the kingdom. No degradation of sin will be too deep for the hand of mercy to fathom, to rescue the blood-bought soul; no darkness of ignorance and superstition will be so dense in any heart but that the light of divine truth and love will penetrate its gloom and bring to it a knowledge of the joy and gladness of the new day, and an opportunity to share the same by obedience. No disease that can attack and pollute the physical system will be beyond the prompt control of the Great Physician. And no deformity, or monstrosity, or superfluity, or redundancy, or mental imbecility will be able to resist his healing touch.”

Do we suffer? Do we have anguish? Do we have misunderstandings? Do we feel the travail of our souls? What we have quoted here is the work that you and I will do if we are faithful in our sacrifice unto death. As we are engaged in that grand and glorious work of pouring out the blessings of God upon the world of mankind we will look back upon the travail of our souls and we shall be satisfied. Amen.