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QUESTION COLUMN

Ques.—Some are disposed still to question the necessity of the outward symbol of Baptism. Can you tell us whether the apostles were ever immersed?

Ans.—A number of Jesus' disciples were previously the disciples of "John the Immerser" and it is scarcely within the limits of reason to suppose that while with John and Jesus they would baptize others and neglect it themselves. Paul was not a whit less than the chiefest of the apostles and he was baptized forthwith by the first of God's children he met. (Acts 9:18.) The Eunuch to whom Phillip preached but one sermon caught the force of baptism to such an extent that he embraced the first opportunity of sufficiency of water to be planted in the *likeness* of Christ's death. (Acts 8:33-39.) When Cornelius and his house believed and after they had received the Holy Spirit, Peter *commanded* the symbolic, water immersion. (Acts 10:48.) Is it probable that he commanded others to obey the Master's example while he himself neglected it? Do those who now question the "necessity" of this symbol, command others to thus follow the Master's footprints and fulfill all righteousness?

But we have never presented this question as one of "necessity," but as one of joyful *privilege* to all who really see its force and are really buried with Christ. To treat it as compulsory is the very opposite of its spirit. That which is compulsory is not a sacrifice. Hence the propriety of this being presented both by the Lord and by us as a privilege.

Another letter inquires whether the fact of the Lord's *presence* does not in some manner relieve them from the necessity of performing this symbol. We answer here, that so long as the *sacrifice* is in process, it is certainly proper as it ever was for those who have never done so to symbolize that sacrifice. When the sacrifice is over and the whole "body" glorified with the head, there will be neither opportunity nor propriety for either the actual drinking of the "cup" of Christ's sufferings and being "buried" with him, nor will there then be propriety in drinking the symbolic "cup" (wine) or performing the symbolic baptism, in water.

No; there is no *necessity* laid upon you to be baptized, either actually or symbolically; neither is there *necessity* that you should be of Christ's Bride and joint heir; neither is there *necessity* that you must sit with him in the throne and share his crown of glory and honor and immortality. The Lord will find a sufficient number to complete the "little flock" without forcing or urging anyone. But if you are in the race at all, "take heed, let no man take thy crown." See that you have the spirit of sacrifice burning within you and you will not seek what you can avoid, but cry "Lord what

will thou have me to do." As in the beginning, so it must be now: "They that *gladly* received his word were baptized." Acts 2:41.

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— June, 1885 —



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