Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor
on Thursday, July 2. 1981.

Lesson. Matthew 26. vv. 17-56.

For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup. Psalm 75. 8.

All those of the Lord's people who are comparatively mature will have an instant appreciation of the holy, sacred, solemn, divine concept of this Scripture; namely, a vessel, and a vessel which is in the hand of God. The vessel contains a potion, and it is put in the hand by Him of those who will drink it. I believe we see in the sublime verse three cups, three different experiences, and the last one is terrible, solemn; it is damnation, the curse, hell, the wicked, the dregs, the grounds in the cup, His fiery indignation, displeasure, His penal wrath, vindictive anger for those who stand not in a Substitute, who know nothing of conversion, regeneration, the new birth; know nothing of smiting on their breasts and saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." How terrible to be wicked, to die in wickedness, die with wickedness imputed to us so the curse of God is just eternally. I have heard from nurses who fear God, how some of their patients, particularly in geriatric wards have spent their last days and moments, and the last moment cursing and blaspheming. They have been warned in the midst of an exposition of the Scriptures, but it had no salutary, vital, quickening effect. So from all the depths of wickedness they spent their last moments on earth blaspheming and cursing God. How awful! and there is a cup for them to drink; to drink and wring out through Eternity in the bottomless pit "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." How unutterably solemn to be a lost soul, a sinner under damnation eternally, to hear from the mouth of God, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels' ..Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Aren't you thankful you are out of hell? do you feel before God that you are miracles of grace? don't you bless Him for the amazing nature of His grace that He saves the vilest? The Hymn says,

"The vilest sinner out of hell,
Who lives to feel his need,
Is welcome to a Throne of Grace,
The Saviour's blood to plead."

a simple, profound Hymn, it has produced by the Holy Ghost a 'who can tell' in the souls of many sinners.

"The vilest sinner out of hell,
Who lives to feel his need."

What a wonderful ray of the Spirit's work this is: to live to feel his need. Nothing on earth can touch the solemn, vital spot in the soul; the intense burning of guilt, a recognition of the burden of sin, knowledge of defilement and a realisation of the just displeasure of God, 'lives to feel his need'. What joy comes to parents and grandparents when they see their progeny in that state. You cannot hide it; you may try to conceal it: this cannot be hidden. 'lives to feel his need of a Saviour, for there is only One. To feel the need of the mercy of God, the love of God, the grace of God, the compassion of God: lives to feel the need of it. I suppose if the hedgerows, the lanes, the barns could speak, in the old days in Dicker land what a story they would have to tell of poor sinners in distress, crying for divine mercy! My friends, beg on for those who are dear to you. They are not cut off, they are stopped, they feel their need, and nothing in the world can satisfy the innermost sense of need. There is only One, the precious One who hung on the tree to cancel the sins of His people: the precious One who gave His life vicariously and sacrificially and voluntarily that poor sinners ready to perish might hear His voice and live. 'Lives to feel his need.' a great thing this. You will never want to get where you become formal, where there is a feeling of officialdom. You want a living cry out of your soul. The Hymn says, and this will do for the saints of God in advanced years. "Is welcome to the Throne of Grace," What do they plead? A Saviour's blood. If you found one or more of your dear children in deep distress concerning their sins, you would encourage them to cry to the Lord for mercy, and it would be your delight to tell them of the compassion and dying love of the Lord Jesus to poor penitent souls, and then to see them receive it. I would rather judge for a Thursday evening those who come to the House of God have a sense of need. To come in the week to the House of God would seem to be

an indication of this: there is a need to worship.

So concerning the wicked and the dregs they will wring out and drink. It means hell, everlasting perdition, banishment from the presence of God. You will say, "Lord, I richly deserve that, to be cast out of Thy presence and be banished to the pit, the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." You go back to the days when you told the Lord He would be just if He consigned you there. Blessed be God you know the mercy of God, mercy and truth kissing each other.

Take the ideology, the metaphor of a cup, and a cup containing a potion. I speak to you as I have seen it faintly. It seems to me there are three presentations of a cup, and they are all in the hand of the Lord. They will never miscarry and the Lord knows who He will bring the cup to. Take the first, "For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup." Have you experienced it? do you fear it? do you fear that to night in the hand of the Lord there is a cup for you He will bring for you to drink? Do you feel troubled and anxious about it? "For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red." Very solemnly, reverently, soberly, in adoration and wonder and astonishment I believe we may see here the darling Son of God in His suffering Suretyship, as we read in the Lesson. In the first place the colour red would seem to signify the wrath of God, all His vindictive anger, the penal wrath due to Zion, and in the great love of God His dear Son incarnate became our Substitute. We deserve to drink the cup of red wine. "The wine is red," the fierceness and wrath of an offended God. O this Substitute! this Surety ! this precious One who came for His beloved people, 'made of a woman, made under the law in a penal sense from His birth, and in a federal sense. We have said how the holy law of God and divine Justice scrutinised every thought, word, deed of His Son. It was faultless, perfect because of His glorious Person and His impeccability. All He thought, said and did, all relating to Him was holy, spotless. Into the hand of the dear Lamb of God, the precious Redeemer did the Father put a cup. "and the wine is red." We have been reading together the account in St Matthew, how the storm clouds had been gathering, and now they break. He could see them enveloping Him. He said to the favourite trio of disciples, "Tarry ye here, and watch with me." He took them to the precincts,- they could not penetrate into

Gethsemane,- and He said to them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." You will know why He said that. He was about to suffer as He had never suffered before; at the hand of His own beloved Father. What must it have meant to the darling Son of God! So He left them and went a little further, and the weight, as the Father imputed the sins of the election of grace to Him was such that He fell on His face. O that this may call forth such increased love to the dear Saviour from your souls and mine! He said, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Don't ask me to try to expound, it is beyond me, the insupportable load He felt, the curse due to sins, and it was to be consumed. O the cost of our salvation, friends! He gave His disciples a charge to watch with Him. I wish we could! Would that it might be said that we watched with Him one hour! We don't hear much concerning the sufferings of Christ to day. O that we might watch with Him one hour and be brought to the fringe of Gethsemane. Think what hell would mean to you and me! to be eternally banished, to be cursed justly by an offended God in eternal punishment, no mitigation, no relief, no deliverance after a thousand years, for ever and ever in the experience of just punishment for sin! Listen, my friends, if you get a guilty conscience, which is as the pains of hell, your Saviour freely took the whole, and He said, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." He drank it. Let us bless God to night that our Saviour drank the cup dry, exhausted the vengeance of God due to us and died for us freely, sacrificially, so we might live eternally with Him. His side and His heart were pierced, the fountain opened so we might be forgiven and our sins atoned for. "For without shedding of blood there is no remission." A sanctifying effect this has on the people of God. Some have desired every night to fall asleep at the foot of His cross with a sense of forgiveness, cleansing, a recognition of standing in the Lord Jesus. Do you pray to? Think of the waking! and it will be with His likeness, no sin, holy, pure like Himself. Your Saviour drank the cup of the wrath of God and shed His vital blood. There is one other aspect of this. When He said triumphantly on the cross, "It is finished," and bowed His head and gave up the ghost, the soldier pierced His side, His heart, and the fountain was opened, the

crimson ocean. All the people of God are in the crimson ocean: this is virtually true, and it is a spiritual experience to be coveted and prayed for, that He will put you in with His own hands. It is a lovely feeling when you have been working hard and water laves the body, and as far as possible you are clean. It is wonderful to go to the House of God and be able to say, "I'm clean, just God, I'm clean!" Your soul is clean; you have been washed in the fountain; you are ready for Heaven. Do you know what it is to be washed in this precious fountain?

"and the wine is red," He drank it, He "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Beg of the Lord to plunge you in so you feel no sin. You are washed, clothed in white robes. O this crimson ocean! Friends, there is no other hope for you. The vilest sinners brought to repentance are plunged in the fountain and all their sins are washed away.

"The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there have I, though vile as he,
Washed all my sins away."

Are you one of them? Pray search well . Do you feel clean tonight? are all your sins washed away? I wanted to feel it in prayer; to know heavenly unction, cleansing power. A glorious gospel this is: there is no other.

Another aspect of this is, when you are favoured on Lord's Day to come to the Communion Service, the wine is red, and it sets forth the shedding of vital, sin-atoning blood. It is not the wrath of God. He suffered it so you should know the wine is red, and when by precious faith you see the dear Saviour in His substitutionary sufferings, see Him in the gloomy garden, at Golgotha; see the precious fountain and partake of His gifts, the special emblems by faith, you will experience the cleansing of your soul. This is one of the great purposes of the Communion of His body and blood. You might say, "Surely it is to remember Him." but to spell it out, what does it mean to remember Him? To receive divine efficacy of atoning blood in your soul, and to give Him all the praise and glory. "The wine is red," I have spoken as I felt led, friends The Lord give us on His Day a sense of this in the sacred service, another application of precious blood in the crimson ocean, so next Lord's

Day or tonight you go to your bed washed, clothed, ready for Heaven. These things are indispensable. What will it mean to you to go to your rest a saved sinner; to feel if death comes and you never wake in the world you will see the King in His beauty? Do you get it? a holy, angelic sensation in your spirit, there is nothing between the Lord and you, only love,- not a stain, blemish, not a sin left. "and the wine is red."

And thirdly, there is that concerning the cup which relates to the Lord's people exclusively, as what we have preached in the second part is exclusive. The third part is the path of a child of God through the world. What is it? It is a cup, and it is full of mixture. It will be your path from the ~~kin~~ time the Lord quickens you to the end of the journey: you will have a cup of mixture. No lost sinner ever tastes this because it is a cup of mixture. It contains all the afflictions, trials, sorrows of a child of God, but it is a cup of mixture. It contains the wisdom, peace, love, mercy, grace, compassion of God. It contains your most heart-rending sorrows, your most exalted joys; your griefs, mercies, blessings, favours. The cup is full of mixture,- what a wonderful thing it is to drink it. I know this is something you are well acquainted with: it is blessed to come to the spiritual experience of, "Not in anger, But from His dear covenant love." You taste the love in it. If your ~~your~~ cup is a cup of mixture you can hope in reference to sorrows, trials, difficulties, because there is love, wisdom, infinite goodness in it. The children of Israel after they were delivered, came to Marah where the waters were bitter, and some thihgs are very bitter to you as a man or woman. You do not care to express to any how bitter some things are to you. According to temperament some things are exceptionally painful and bitter to you. They are so bitter and you feel you <u>cannot</u> drink ~~nor~~ let your dear ones drink. You might say you could pass through this or that: this is too bitter to pass through. The preacher knows what it is. You do not speak about it: you try not to show it. The cup is full of mixture. The Lord showed to Moses a tree. Only one tree has efficacy for a child of God. When the tree was cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet. The tree is the cross of Christ, my Saviour's dolorous, vicarious sufferings cast in, and the bitter waters are made sweet. We know it: the Lord has done it. It is a miracle; it is out of this world, yet you are

in the world, and the Lord does it for you. You may have said, "Lord, spare us this blow. Don't let us pass through it." This cross of Christ, communion with a suffering Saviour, His dying love makes the waters sweet. Do you know why? Because of the victory of Christ, because He loves you with an everlasting love, and there is a blessing in it for you. You did not know it: it may be the blessing you have prayed for. You will find yourself in a blessed posture, in the arms of Jesus, and those soft arms will carry you through the bitter waters. They are made sweet because Christ comes, He is with you. His left hand is under your head, and His right hand embraces you. You will get a sense of this, "I love thee well, My child." Blessed be God.