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Sermons preached by Mr. J. Delves at Shaws Corner
on 22nd May, 1953

AFTERNOON SERVICE / eve - p 6.

Text: "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" John 18.11

We cannot read these verses or the chapter that I read, relating to the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ without being very deeply moved in our feelings if there is any life in exercise in our souls. Even the relation of these particular things cannot fail to touch the heart and move the tenderest feelings of those deeply concerned about the salvation of their souls. The Lord Jesus Christ had recently been addressing His disciples and had comforted them, saying to them, "Let not your heart be troubled ye believe in God, believe also in Me." You have probably felt, as I have, that it was an extraordinary thing to say to them at such a time and especially when we consider how troubled He Himself was (for earlier we read that He said, "Now is my soul troubled") and they were troubled because of what He had said to them concerning His decease and being parted from them. There was much that they could not understand and yet it is sometimes very sweet to read how tenderly and affectionately He addressed them even concerning their own future, saying, "These things I have spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation". He was plain with them; He did not mislead them. "In the world ye shall have tribulation", and so they did and so shall we, but He said, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world". "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in Me", And after this there was a remarkable prayer, a prayer such as had never before been recorded. O when we think of the Lord Jesus Christ praying it is a most amazing consideration, to think that often through the lonely hours of the night on the mountain-side He prayed and when He was about to enter into the Garden He prayed as we have it recorded in the preceding chapter.

After that it is said that "He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where there was a garden, into the which He entered, and His disciples." Something was about to take place that will never, never, lose its effect, not even in eternity, for now the foundations were about to be laid of that work which was the means of closing the gates of hell and opening the gates of Paradise. When you read this, it is very revealing:- "Judas also, which betrayed Him, knew the place". He had been there himself doubtless a number of times with his companions and with the Lord Jesus; he "knew the place; for Jesus oftimes

resorted thither with His disciples". What for? Was it not to pray? O how many in this chapel have been carried in the heart of the dear Redeemer into Gethsemane? Oft times He resorted there to pray to His Father. It is so very, very sacred to think of. It was the place of His choice; He chose to go there at that particular time knowing what would follow and what was involved in that visit. He could have gone to another place and avoided being apprehended by His enemies but His hour was come, so He went to the place. It was the place of His conflict; it was the place where the most bitter ingredients of the cup His Father gave Him were to be received. It was a blessed conflict, mysterious conflict, the Son of God standing as it were between the flaming sword of justice and guilty man. There He went to stand between two parties and by His own substitution to bring those two parties together. As a substitute He went into Gethsemane with the load of guilt imputed to Him to be put away by the sacrifice of Himself. What a conflict it was, the place of agony, of wounds, of blood, of grief, of sorrow. It was the cup His Father gave Him. It is a profound consideration this, it was the cup His Father gave Him; although His grief and trouble came, so to speak, from different sources, from Satan, from the chief priests and rulers and others, yet it was the cup His Father gave Him. This was the place of His conflict, it was the place where He was to be betrayed into the hands of men.

A little while before I came here I was reading this and took particular notice of the 5th. verse where it says, "Judas also, which betrayed Him, stood with them", that is with the band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees who came with lanterns and torches and weapons. This is very, very solemn, because it was but a very short time before that this Judas was sitting with the other disciples and the Lord Jesus in the upper room when the Lord was about to institute the Lord's supper. What a change of company in a very, very short time! He stood with them. O what is not possible to one if he be left to himself? O the hypocrisy that is in the human heart! He stood with them. Still, it was the cup that His Father gave Jesus to drink. As to this we read that Peter, filled with mistaken zeal, having a sword drew it and cut off the right ear of the servant of the High Priest. Even under these very, very moving circumstances, nature begins to work. Nature draws a sword, but grace reproves the user. Put up thy sword, Peter, Put it up into the sheath. Why, had not the Lord recently given some manifestation of His glorious divinity, when these men who came to apprehend Him went backward and fell to the ground? But this thought for His disciples is another point - when He said "If therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way." Let these go their way. The cup is for Me to drink, it is my Father's cup. Put the sword up, Peter, into the sheath. What a difference there is, even in a gracious character, as Peter was, what

a difference between the impulsive rising of nature and the subjective movements of grace! O Peter, more than once, would have spared the Lord this, not knowing how necessary it was that the cup should be given Him to drink up. "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Sometimes this has been very great in my eyes. It was the cup His Father gave Him, and He gives His people a cup to drink. Indeed it is but a taste of the cup that the Redeemer did drink up, but He said to His disciples on one occasion, "Ye shall indeed drink of My cup". There must be some conformity between the Lord Jesus Christ and His people in drinking the cup. It may be said that if we are true pilgrims, heaven-bound pilgrims, we shall have tribulation here, more or less; there will be a cup to drink. Naturally we should try to avoid it, escape it, but that is not the Lord's way. Nature would take the sword and would never submit; but grace falls into His hands. But there can be a very, very sweet moment, even with a believer, when He can feel that it is the cup His Father has given him. O that relationship, it is profound, beautiful, blessed,

"Thrice comfortable hope
That calms my stormy breast
My Father's hand prepares the cup,
And what He wills is best."

They are moments never to be forgotten when we can fall at His feet and say, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done". There is a cup to drink; yes, and you can drink it by His grace when you can rightly feel that it is the cup your Father has given you.

By this cup, then, I believe we may understand every bitter ingredient in the Redeemer's sufferings and His death. That was the cup He had to drink. No heart can conceive the bitterness of that cup. But how freely, willingly and lovingly did He drink that cup! "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" How often in the Gospels does the Lord Jesus Christ speak of His Father, especially in His prayer. But this cup was a cup of grief, anguish, pain, trouble, sorrow, wounds, blood, agony, death. One ingredient in that cup was the suffering He endured under His temptations in the wilderness. In fact we can go back earlier than that, to the first persecution when Herod sought His life in His infancy and when Mary and Joseph fled with Him into Egypt and stayed there until they were dead that sought the child's life. I believe you will agree that no sooner was the dear Redeemer of guilty and ruined man born into the world than He began to drink the ingredients of that bitter cup. I believe we can rightly say that all His days were spent drinking the cup His Father gave Him, that He never shrank from it at any time in His sojourn upon earth. Sometimes it has been wonderful to me to read of His holy determination to accomplish all that was necessary to make our heaven secure. "I have set my face like a flint". They are very, very striking words of the Saviour in

the prophecy, spoken as by Himself, "I have set my face like a flint and I know that I shall not be ashamed....Behold, the Lord God will help me;...I gave my back to the smiters." (Is.50) Not 'they smote my back', but "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair." O it is sometimes great to consider His holy patience in committing Himself unto all that was thus appointed to Him and drink of the cup His Father gave Him to drink. It may be good for us when a bitter ingredient comes into our cup, to consider the cup that His Father gave Him. And this is according to the teaching of the Scriptures, where the Apostle Paul says, "Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." (Heb.12.3)

Another ingredient was suffering by Satanic temptations after that signal witness of the glorious Trinity to His divine Sonship in Jordan's water - He was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. O what a strange page can quickly be turned over in the life of a believer! How quickly he may have to descend, as it were, from the Mount of Transfiguration to the depths of darkness and conflict and temptation. But it was part of the cup His Father gave Him to suffer temptation at the hands of the tempter and if you consider these temptations, they are the same temptations in the nature of men that the devil is continually assailing the Lord's people with. It was a bitter ingredient in that cup. He was tempted to presumption, to idolatry, to a presumptuous trust in the Providence of God - and many things, probably more than are recorded. But it was a bitter ingredient in the cup His Father gave Him.

His privations were another painful ingredient in His cup through His life upon earth, "Foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." He did not reside in a palace with every comfort; the ordinary comforts of daily life were not given to Him. It was the cup His Father gave Him that He was to drink, many privations, hunger, suffering, weariness of body. But there are many ways in which the Lord's people get just a flash of fellowship with Him in drinking that cup. Another ingredient of His cup was the oppression of enemies that continually confronted Him. In every way possible they sought to trip Him up, catch Him in His talk, attributing His miracles to the agency of the devil. Nothing was too cruel, nothing too blasphemous for His opposers continually to hurl against Him; but it was the cup His Father gave Him. A very sweet thought sometimes this, when the way is rough and hard and when the Lord's people are shown a few hard things, as we are sometimes. It was the cup His Father gave Him. O to get just a moment - have you had a moment when a flash of a sight of that bitter cup has prostrated you in the dust, especially when you could feel that He drunk it for you with

all its bitter ingredients. Although it was the cup His Father gave Him, yet He did not drink it for Himself, but it was a cup that He drank for His people's sake.

Another ingredient in this cup was the wrath of offended Justice - that Justice unsheathed its sword to thrust it into His very soul. You may have a bitter ingredient but have you ever thought that the most bitter ingredient in your cup, if you are a child of God has no penal wrath in it, none whatever? But His was a cup of penal wrath, justice seeking vengeance in the Person of the Substitute. O what love, what mercy, what meekness, what tenderness filled His heart. He bared His breast to the stroke. "Awake O sword against my Shepherd, against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts. Smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered." But He says, "My Father hath given it to me. Shall I not drink it?" I have sometimes felt somewhat moved in my very soul to read that in relation to the Lord's sufferings, the Lord's hand is referred to as in the 53rd. Isaiah where we read "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him" O that seems such an expressive word there, it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. How could that possibly be that there should be a holy pleasure on the part of His Father who loved His Son for we read "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth". And yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him and to put Him to grief. It is an amazing expression - but it was the cup. Not only was it a cup of wrath but it was a cup of bitterness, of sore anguish, of grief. There were some bitter ingredients in the cup from Gethsemane to the judgment hall and to Calvary. O the bitter ingredients of the cup, and yet He says "Shall I not drink it?" Another bitter ingredient was the darkness that came over Him when He was suspended upon the Cross. O those three terrible hours when He cried "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Was not that the bitterest of all the bitter ingredients of that cup, "Why hast Thou forsaken me?" His disciples had forsaken Him and fled for the time being in their fear but "Why hast Thou forsaken me?" What could be more bitter than that?

Another bitter ingredient in this was the load of guilt that was laid upon Him. He knew no sin but was made sin. "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. It was a bitter ingredient, was this intolerable load of imputed sin. Yes, it was, and if we are going to heaven we contributed to that bitter cup. It is a very solemn consideration this. One hymn-writer says,

"My sins, O how black they appear,
When in that dear bosom they meet!
Those sins were the nails and the spear
That wounded his hands and his feet."

and if we could realise this we might well turn aside and weep all our way to heaven. "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow". And yet

He said, "Shall I not drink it?" So one bitter ingredient after another was put into the dear Redeemer's cup until eventually we read that He said "It is finished". He had drunk the cup to the very dregs with every bitter ingredient in it necessary to deliver His dear people. And why did He drink that cup? Because His Father gave it to Him. He did not resist at all. How soon when a bitter ingredient is put in our cup we resent it. But O, if the dear Redeemer had resented it, where should we have been? O where should we have to go to? "Shall I not drink it?" Have you ever felt you could say that for a moment? I do not believe anyone lives in it, but just for a minute perhaps, after the hardest struggle you have ever had in your life, just for a minute, when favoured to feel in your soul that it is your Father's cup - my Father's cup that He has given me - then you can drink it. And truly one of the sweetest paths into which a believer can be brought is to say "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done". May the Lord give us some comfortable reflection upon this amazing statement "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Amen
