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

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EVENING SERVICE

Text:"And He saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup" Matthew 20.23

According to the teaching of the Word of God and of what we have read, there is in the first place on the part of the dear Redeemer Himself the drinking of a cup, and there is also an intimation to His redeemed children that they will drink of a cup. This is as you will know a figure of speech representing suffering in different ways, although I know the term is not always so in the Scripture, for we read of the cup of salvation. "I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord". But the point that concerns us particularly this evening is the cup of suffering, by which we understand that measure appointed by the Father unto His own Son and unto His people. This afternoon I attempted some consideration of what was involved in the drinking of that cup that the Redeemer did drink, saying to Peter when he drew the sword, "Put up the sword into the sheath, the cup which My Father hath given me shall I not drink it?". Was not that an amazing statement to make under these painful circumstances. Truly it must be said it is very, very little at the most that we can know of what was involved in the drinking of that cup. If that cup was received and drunk by the Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf then our heaven is sure, as sure as though we were there but it will mean that we shall have to drink a cup also.

There was never a cup like that which the dear Redeemer drunk to the very dregs; there never was such a cup of suffering as that, never a cup with such bitter ingredients in it as those He so willingly and freely and lovingly received.

We might well pause for a moment and stand in awe before that word, "Shall I not drink it?" To a point your heaven, my heaven and the heaven of all His people hinges upon that supreme moment, "Shall I not drink it?" The fact that He never rebelled, reasoned, refused, objected, the fact that He was determined with a holy determination to drink it, that will affect the eternal destiny of all His people. O if we could lay our head upon our bed tonight and think of that, just that, without anything more, "Shall I not drink it", and measure ourselves, so to speak, by such a holy resolve on the part of the Saviour when we have a bitter ingredient in our cup. O it is momentous! To me His willingness has been more than I shall ever be able to describe. It has at times softened my heart to contemplate the thought that He was as willing to drink it as He was able to drink it. If either had failed then where should we have been? There would have been nothing before us but black despair. O it is great and I know I am speaking about what I do not know much of, but it is great to feel and to believe that there was One who was willing to stand between and bare His holy breast to the awful stroke. "Shall I not drink it?" Even if He had been so willing, if He had not been able to drink that cup then what hope and prospect should we have had; but, (and sometimes it has been very, very sweet,) His ability and His willingness are bonded together with a link that can never, never break. And even now that He is in heaven enthroned at the right hand of God it is not lost sight of, that cup that He drunk.

"Well He remembers Calvary,
Nor let His saints forget."

Is it not our mercy that He was so willing to drink that cup? It could never have been drunk by any except Emmanuel, God and Man" The mystery is profound. Mere Deity could not drink it; mere humanity could not drink it; but Emmanuel was qualified to drink, to drain the cup with all the bitter ingredients, to the very dregs. I hope we may not just let it slide away from us. It would be good for us if we could carry that Word to our graves, "Shall I not drink it?".

It was a cup of penal wrath, a cup in which vengeance sought and found absolute satisfaction. It was not until every ingredient of that cup was received into His holy, blessed, pure Person that He would bring Himself to say, "It is finished". Every ingredient of that cup had then been received, the fires of wrath and the claims of justice, the curse of a broken law, the weight, the intolerable weight of imputed sin was borne away into the land of forgetfulness. O Joseph Hart had a wonderful insight into that cup in his hymn on Gethsemane.

I have been reading it all through since the afternoon service and felt a little softening, and especially where he says,

"In this place He loved to be,
And 'twas named Gethsemane" (802)

Not, 'twas the place from which He kept away, no. O what amazing grace, what condescension, what love, what meekness, what submission, what virtue, what determination. "The place He loved to be". Many times He had resorted there and no doubt always thought of what was awaiting Him, what awful conflict, the groans, the cries. He knew all this and yet He said, "Shall I not drink it?" Have you ever said that once in your life with a cup that the Lord has given you?

This is the point then in this word I have read tonight which is very, very solemn and yet opens up the thought that there must be some conformity. He said unto them, "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup." "Then came to Him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom." (Matt.20.20,21) What a thing to ask! And the Lord said, "Ye know not what ye ask". That is the case with us. They did not think anything at that moment about drinking the cup, but only to sit on the right and on the left hand in the kingdom of God. But the Lord said, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with? They say unto him, We are able". We need to be careful what we say, do we not? and we need to be careful how we pray and what we ask for. O the confidence, "We are able". They did drink of the cup in that they gave their lives, they were put to death, suffered martyrdom. They did drink of the cup. But O we could not venture to say that could we - "we are able to drink of that cup" - and yet by His grace we are able, not in ourselves, not by any strength that we have but by His grace we shall be strengthened and enabled to drink of the cup that is given us. Then the Lord said to them, "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup". There is something very solemn about this, "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, "Ye shall drink", not Some of my people will have a cup to drink and some will not; I shall spare some any trouble at all and give others plenty. No, Ye shall, Ye shall. The Lord says in another part of Scripture "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me." There will be no failure there, then "Ye shall drink of my cup".

Our mercy in this is that He is an all-wise dispenser, He knows exactly what ingredient to put into each one's cup. Some, it is true, may have more trouble than others outwardly in their circumstances, in their lives, in their souls, but there will be some tribulation that will make up the drinking of this cup. "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup". He prepares it, that is the point, and these

cups are all prepared by the same all-wise Dispenser, by the same hand. He can never make a mistake. Sometimes with physicians and dispensers mistakes have been made in mixing medicines but the cup that a child of God is given to drink is prepared by his Father.

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

I know we are not always there and I would not speak lightly of this because although we each have certain bitter ingredients I know some, and possibly some here, have had ingredients much more bitter than I have, but the point is, it is a mingled cup. In the Proverbs it is said, "Drink of the wine which I have mingled" It is a mingled cup. Naturally we like sweet things, I like sweet things, but sweet things are not always the best for us. Sometimes we need bitter things and sometimes the Lord puts a bitter ingredient into the cup of His children to make them pray, to make them more hungry and more thirsty for the bread and water of eternal life. "Ye shall drink indeed of My cup". Some of the Lord's people in the latter days of their life, or before this, can look back upon some heavy days they have had to wade through. In fact some of us might have to say we do not feel we could survive some things again that we have had to wade through in years gone by but we can survive any ingredient that is put in our cup that the Lord designs and purposes to give us to purge our dross and to refine our gold. Those ingredients in the cup come, in some cases, into the circumstances of our lives, sometimes into a church, a home, a family, a business. And sometimes the Lord drops a bitter ingredient in very suddenly without any previous anticipation, yet sometimes those bitter ingredients in the cup have been the very best things we could have. There is such a difference in this sense between the cup the dear Redeemer drank and the cup He gives His people to drink. The cup that He drank was a cup of penal wrath and O what a cup it was too. In the cup that He gives His people there is a sweet with every bitter.

"His chastening, therefore, prize,
The privilege of a saint;
Their hearts are hard who that despise,
And theirs too weak who faint."

"The lash is steeped he on thee lays,
And softened in his blood."

Perhaps some of you can follow me, the Lord has, at times, in this mingled wine in the cup put in a sweet and a bitter in equal proportions so that in the grief and sorrow and trouble and distress His sweet love has been shed abroad. It is a mingled cup and it can bring you to a very sacred spot. Ye shall drink of My cup but it will not be all bitter ingredients. He brings His people to

Marah sometimes and causes the tree to be cast into the bitter waters to sweeten them. It is a wonderful place for a child of God to be in the midst of trouble and yet to have no trouble. What wonderful judgment this heavenly Dispenser has in mixing the ingredients in the cup.

"At most we do but taste the cup
For thou alone hast drunk it up."

but this tasting the cup can soon bring us to the ends of the earth, distract us and almost kill us, yes, several times in my life things have come to me suddenly that have practically stunned me for the time being and sometimes it is a long time before certain mysterious conflicting things are cleared up and yet you see the cup is mixed by the hand of love. Eventually His dear people have to prove, you will, I have, that though the rod is in His hand, mercy is in His heart. O this heavenly affection in the chastening! Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth. It is not easy to read some Scriptures is it? It does not say whom the Lord loveth He sees they have no trouble, no chastening, no correcting; but whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth. It is a bitter ingredient in the cup and this can come in simple, providential things; but the most bitter ingredient in the cup of a child of God is that sense of their own vileness and guilt and sin which has cost the Saviour so much suffering.

"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."

O it is great to mourn, it is sweet to repent, it is grace alone that brings us to hate sin and to love Him. "Ye shall drink of My cup", and so it has been from the first with the Lord's people. Abel had a bitter cup to drink. If we go to the 11th. Hebrews we may see there the fact that those witnesses of old had a cup to drink of suffering more or less, some with heavy losses, persecutions and sufferings in different ways for Christ's sake. So it was that the Lord said to His disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation", yet He will never lay more upon His children than they can bear by His grace, and sometimes it has been wonderfully sweet to walk with God in a furnace. I can believe what I used sometimes to hear a good minister say about the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace, that they never breathed a sweeter air. Perhaps some of you can understand that. O the passiveness, the comfort, the peace, the joy that can flow into this valley of humiliation. He brings us down, He will bring us down; proud nature must be brought down before we are willing to drink the cup. Then there is some conformity with Christ in drinking this cup. It is not His purpose that His people should be immune from tribulation,

"Shall Simon bear the cross alone
And all the rest go free?
No, there's a cross for everyone
And there's a cross for me!"

Ye shall drink indeed of My cup, My cup, this is a point to come to; it is not our cup, it is the Saviour's cup, Ye shall drink of My cup, this means that by means of the bitter ingredients in the cup He brings His people into some sacred fellowship with Himself in His sufferings. It is My cup, He says "Ye shall drink of My cup." But why should this be? Because the Lord disposes that these tribulations, these afflictions, these troubles, should be a means of preparing His people for that better land that is before them. This fellowship with Christ, drinking of His cup, sometimes it is under strong temptations. I know that we may have temptations without realising that there is any fellowship with Christ in them but sometimes there is a particular experience felt in the heart of sacred fellowship with Christ under bitter temptations. I believe I can say that the very things that have been most sweet to my soul are the very things that the devil is continually attacking. You may have been favoured with some sweet view of the Lord Jesus Christ in His blessed Person and finished work, have admired Him, adored Him, worshipped Him, had a ray of light in your soul that has brought you into the sweet enjoyment of union with Him. Yet that very point may have been most sharply assailed by the adversary, even His atonement, His humanity, His blood-shedding. O if the Lord by His blessed Spirit brings it into your heart the devil will never get it out, but that does not mean that he will never try. O how harassing the temptation, how weakening! Yet there it is when He comes He lays His own foundation and He never allows it to fail in the experience of His people, not if He lays it there. Sometimes there is a little drinking of the cup that is fellowship with Him in persecutions in certain forms, not in the sense that the dear martyrs suffered. They did drink indeed of His cup in yielding up their lives unto death and suffering the most cruel bitter deaths; they did drink of His cup, but in certain ways it may come to us in a more polite form possibly, but even this can be a bitter ingredient. They mocked Him, they may mock us, they derided Him, they may deride us; they reviled Him, they may revile us; and sometimes they come home very close. You may have something in your cup that you could not tell to your closest friend, in fact it can be that some of your friends, without knowing it, may be the cause of it; but there it is, it is My cup. Sometimes even the Lord's dear disciples must have greatly pained Him. I fear I may have pained some of my friends and been the cause of a bitter ingredient in their cup, but this is the point, it is My cup. "Ye shall drink indeed of My cup." That helps you to drink it, that gives a willingness to this conformity. Look at some of the heavy things some of the worthies passed through as recorded in the Hebrews. Then the sufferings of the martyrs; think of the covenanters in Scotland. O what they suffered, when I read of them I feel ashamed of myself. What should we do if we were called upon either to renounce our faith or yield

up our lives unto death, what should we do? "Ye shall drink of my cup".

When God brings His people into conditions of need He gives them to prove what He said to His servant, "My grace is sufficient for thee", but this drinking of the cup has a cup in view in the Lord's purpose and the Lord Jesus Christ had a cup in view in drinking the cup that His Father gave Him, it was the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, despised the shame and is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. "For the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God", and I believe that His dear people think sometimes of the joy that is set before them when they are drinking the cup. The Apostle Paul did when he said, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." What compassion, mercy, goodness, love is sometimes seen even in drinking the cup, what kind forbearance, what a compassionate God, what love, O what love when we think of what we deserve, all our dreadful sins, all our departures from Him, what abominations in the heart, the evil, the wickedness is there, how compassionately the Saviour deals with us, especially when we think of what He must suffer. All is designed in His purpose to bring His children home to that land where sin no more defiles. The last ingredient in that cup will be drunk one day when we breathe our last and leave earth for heaven to dwell where Jesus is. May the Lord in His great mercy support us and guide us and bless us and bring us through this valley of tears to be one day where He is, to be like Him and to see Him as He is. Amen

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