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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel,
Brighton, on Wednesday evening 27 August 1924

TEXT: 1 John 1 verse 7

"For if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

The Spirit of God by John in this chapter sets forth the coming of Christ and the knowledge of that coming had by the Apostles. The Apostles were competent witnesses of the Person of Christ because they saw Him. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the word of life. They saw, they heard, they looked upon, and they touched the very Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they knew that He had come from heaven, as the Apostle says in the epistle "We know that the Son of God is come and hath given us understanding that we may know Him that is true and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son, Jesus Christ; this is the true God and eternal life." The love of Christ is in and on Christ, and that love, that is in and on Him, is on every child of God, the whole church, and in each member sooner or later, and what a wonder that the very love of God wherewith He loved His Son should be the same love wherewith He loves His people. If that be made known in us, heaven is ours, and while we are under the power of it, we shall have a little heaven in our hearts. O my brethren, what is to be compared with the eternal love of God given to His Son and to His people in Him. Seek this as you kneel, as you pray. Seek this, that God would let out that love that He let out into His dear Son, into your hearts, and into my heart, and though we cannot have the same evidence in the same manner in which the Apostles had it respecting Christ's Person, because they had it in a literal way, yet we may have, and, if we are under the teaching of the Spirit, we shall have, a knowledge of Christ.

It will be adequate to the full informing of our souls of whom Christ is; of what Christ is; what He came to do; to be; and what He did. No-one can properly rest on the eternal Son of God without an adequate proof that He is the Son of God and no-one can believe in the humanity of Jesus Christ, united to His Deity, without sufficient proof, and when I say this, I do not set you, nor myself to a hard task of diligent study, to find out in some way who Christ is, but I say that the Holy Ghost is sufficient for this great business and He will give to us that evidence of the Person of the Son of God incarnate as shall enable us in a spiritual way to say what John here says of Himself and his brother disciples literally "That which was from the beginning; which we have heard." "My sheep know My voice" "Which we have heard in our hearts". Is it so? Did you ever hear the voice of Jesus Christ? "which we have seen with our eyes, spiritually" Did the sight ever come to us to glad our eyes? The Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ is sufficient for this, that we may say "we have seen the Lord." "We have seen the Lord". Faith sees Him. The presence of Christ with His disciples while He was sojourning here was a privilege, but He told them that there was something better than His bodily presence. His bodily presence was shared by all the Jews. Think of it. But He said "They shall not see Me" "You shall see Me in another manner. They see Me and perceive not; they hear Me and understand not; you shall see Me and perceive; you shall hear and understand." Which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon in the Spirit; gazed on Him crucified; hoped in Him and still hope; look on Him as the glorious Person of the Son of God; as the sufficient and only Mediator between God and man; as that blessed, promised, Saviour, who should bear our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin should live unto God. Which we have looked upon by faith. Newton got the sight and wrote of it saying "I saw One hanging on a tree." The Galatians got it. He was crucified in their

midst, before their very eyes, Paul got it, yea, all sinners have it, and still have it in some measure, not all equally, not all with the same distinctness and clearness, and power and beauty and glory, but all get it in some measure and what a sight; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened. O what an amazing thing it is to get from the Holy Spirit a sight of the Lord Jesus. We have handled.

My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of Thine
Cannot you say that? Are there not some here who have said
it again and again

My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of Thine
While like a penitent I stand
And there confess my sin

Well that is very wonderful and this is the word of life, thus known; thus seen; thus handled, whereby life comes into our soul's understanding and desire and hunger and thirst for the life was manifested and we have seen it and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us. Well brethren this comes into the soul; this comes into trouble. This is the ladder whose top is in heaven, whose bottom comes to the wilderness where poor Jacobs are lying in distress and alone and guilty. This is the gate, the door, that no man can shut; the gate of one several pearl; this is the life of which the Lord himself speaks. "I am the life." Here is the entrance into God's presence; the door of hope; the door of faith. This is the window of heaven, through which beams all that light that the children of God desire, and which, as they receive, makes them glad, for truly the light is sweet and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun. When the Lord has sickened us of all other sights, and especially of that odious, that dreadful, loathsome sight, the sight of self, wicked self, deceitful, loathsome, dead self, then He has fitted us to look on the Lord Jesus. Not only has He thus fitted us to look on Him, but He gives, in His own

time, the blessed sight. One sings, and we have sung
it with him, some of us in our hearts have sung
it

O blessed sight, O lovely form
To sinful souls like me
I'd creep beside him as a worm
And see Him bleed for me.

Well you are a wonderfully blessed people who can say that. You may think it otherwise, but you are blessed people if you can say that. You ask me for a scripture to prove what I say. Yes you are quite right and I will give you one "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." You may know for some time what Rutherford means when he says "The Lord's wise love feeds His people with hunger and makes them fat with desertion," but the day will come when you will say "He spread a table before me, and He took away my shyness by saying in my heart "Eat O friends and drink, yea drink abundantly O beloved." And this that the Apostle saw and which the Apostle John here is declaring, he says he declares unto the people of God, that they may have fellowship with the Apostles. Well, there is only one table for us my friends, the same that the Apostles had. There is only one table. Wisdom hath builded her house. She hath hewn out her seven pillars. She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine, and now she sends out her invitations and says "O ye simple turn in hither" There is no other table for you, for you who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness. You are to have fellowship with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and with all the prophets and the fathers and the Apostles and the martyrs of Jesus. You are brought by the Holy Ghost to the spirits of just men made perfect, to have fellowship with them. But then that is not all. It is great. If ever you get union with the people of God and have fellowship with them, you will partake of one of the chief blessings of the gospel, but there is one that is above them that gives the beauty of communion, the sweetness of it, the

strength of it, the life of it, to all saints and that is our fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. Ye have come to the new Jerusalem, to the spirits of just men made perfect. You have come to these privileges, these spirits, but also he says and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel. Are not we privileged, as many of us as have been brought to the cross, as have felt the power of Christ's blood, as have had a look on Him; gazed on Him by faith; admired, loved and blessed Him? O I say, are not we privileged? Have we not been advanced to wonderful dignity, to partake of a sweet mercy and have a hope for salvation through eternity? People tell us we should live up to our privileges. Whatever they mean I must leave, but I do say this, that we who have been favoured to see and hear and touch Jesus Christ by precious faith, have had given to us the highest privilege that can be given to any sinner on this earth and to live up to it is to walk by faith and to remember the way the Lord has led us. The things He has said to us, the touches with which He has blessed us, and hold them fast, and if that be the way of living up to our privileges, may the Lord help us daily to do it. Live according to His blessed teaching in the heart. As many as walk according to this rule, peace on them and on the Israel of God. And these things we write unto you that your joy may be full. You may be empty of earthly joy. You may be. God may deal with you in providence very solemnly, and you may look around you and say, I have little or no joy here. There is such bitterness in the cup, there is such trouble in my circumstances. You may say, I have little or no joy here. But, if you do receive in some measure, a manifestation of mercy, and of Jesus Christ, then you receive that which, if it does not now fill you with joy, will do. "That your joy may be full." The joy of redemption; the joy of a foundation on which to build for eternity; of a new and living way to God. The joy of having a hope in the Redeemer who put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and the joy of the Holy Spirit to

teach you, having Him for your instructor, and your guide, and your helper, and the joy of partaking of the gospel when you get a promise, or a word, a help, a leading, and the joy of a hope for the future. O what a blessing it is to have such a Redeemer made known and to come into this word in some measure - "We have declared these things to you" Declared Christ's Person and work that you may have fellowship with Him, and with us in Him. And we declare these things to you for this end, that your joy may be full. Here is something the world knows nothing about; something secret that will sweeten every bitter that you have in providence; sweeten all the grief you have over indwelling sin; sweeten the trouble you have by the tempter, telling you that God will bruise him under your feet shortly.

Then the Apostle speaks of the message which he has declared embodied in all he has said. This then is the message which we have heard of Him and declared unto you that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. This is to be understood two ways. First, respecting God essential and that is wonderful, but forbidding. The light, in which God dwells as a divine Being, the Eternal Jehovah, is to all creatures inexhaustable. So the Apostle teaches in Timothy. He says, "He dwelleth in the light that no man can approach unto" He is that Being "whom no man hath seen nor can see." That light is darkness to us, we cannot look on it. Absolute Deity can never be known by a creature. It is to be understood in the next place with respect to the manifestations which God has made of Himself. "I am come a light into the world." "I am the light of the world" "This is that light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world". This is the light that the Apostle here speaks of. "God is light" No darkness in Him; no error, no fault, nothing to dim the beauteous light which He is, nothing. It is not confusing, it is attracting, instructing. It is beautiful; it is good and pleasant for the eye to behold the sun. Also that the soul be

without knowledge it is not good. "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" He is infinitely removed from all error and everything that is wrong. No injustice, no iniquity, with God. We have said with the Jews of old practically, if we have not uttered the words "His ways are not equal." But He says, "Are not My ways equal?" "Are not your ways unequal?" "If we say that we have fellowship with Him" as in the previous verse, "and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth". If you profess to know God and walk in any known sin wilfully, persistently, constantly, you lie, and do not the truth. Look at it. Will your conduct bear the light of God's truth? Will your dealings with men bear the light of God's truth? If not, may you leave off professing to have communion with Him, if you do profess it. But, if God is your teacher, your Saviour, if He is with you, if He is doing you good, you are not walking in darkness. That is you are not walking in the unfruitful works of darkness, yet you may be walking in darkness. You may be in a dark exercise; you may be in a trouble that is very dark; that looks dark, threatening; that seems to say God is fighting against you. You are not walking in darkness in the sense of this word, because you have light to see the dark state you are in. To see that there is a God who can help you; a fountain of merit to cleanse you; a robe of righteousness to justify you; An arm of power to sustain you and a wise God to guide you. Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that walketh in darkness and hath no bright shining, let him trust in the Lord and stay upon his God. He knows his God, let him trust Him. He is in dark things, dark troubles, let him trust in the Lord. He has now no bright inshining such as he desires, but let him trust in the Lord in whom is everlasting strength and He says "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth in Me should not walk in darkness but have the light of life.

"But if we walk in the light" the text says "as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

A few words upon the light. It is the light of eternal love fixed on Christ and on all who are chosen in Him and predestinated to be the Sons of God. It is the light of mercy. The Dayspring from on high hath appeared in mercy. It is the light of redemption showing the sinner the way from hell to heaven, the way from corruption to holiness, the way from sinning to fearing God. The light of justification, telling a sinner how he can be justified freely from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses. It is the light of God's word, whereby He makes known Himself and His divine purposes. It is the light of the covenant. "I have made a covenant with My chosen". It is the light of God's faithfulness to His promise. "The Lord will not cast off His people, because it hath pleased Him to make you His people" Yea, it is the light of an invitation to come to Him "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden" What a light this is, all coming from the Son of Righteousness, the fountain of this beautiful light, and it beams upon sinners. It enters into their hearts and understandings. It tells them and they sweetly believe it at times, it tells them that there is a new and living way to God. "I am the way, the truth and the life." It tells them that the Lord is ready to pardon. It proclaims in their hearts that He is the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, pardoning iniquity, and transgression and sin." This is the light. It reaches the gates of hell. It gathers the eye of faith to the gate of heaven, so wonderful is it. You cannot be in a dark place into which this light cannot penetrate. No dark trouble will keep this out; no exercise, no fear, no felt guilt, no bondage can keep this light from shining into the place where you are, and I think this was very beautifully indicated to Jacob when he

saw that vision of a ladder whose top was in heaven, whose bottom reached him, on which he saw the angels of God ascending and descending, the ministers, afore chosen and ordained by the Lord to minister to the saints. What an amazing thing. Here was a guilty fugitive; he laid down at night on the ground and took stones for his pillow. God came in that astonishing discovery of His mercy to Jacob and blessed him there, and this, I say, indicates what the light is and can do. It can come from heaven while in all its fulness it remains in heaven, but in the beautiful and ever penetrating beams of it it comes down to where sinners are. Now Jacob walked in that light; he knew God in it, heard God in it, saw God in it, felt his mercy in it; felt that the place where He was was the gate of heaven. "How dreadful is this place." Deity was there, but bearable - Deity was there and spoke. Deity was there and shined. It took all flippancy and hypocrisy and evil away from poor Jacob, at that time, and he heard the voice of the Lord. Now sinner, whatever trouble you are in, whatever case you may be in, exercised, tried, buffeted, fearful, fearing, feeling your sins, and your evils, there is light in Christ, which, as He sends it forth, will reach you, come to your place, come to your condition, come into your feelings, into your fears, speak to your heart. If we walk in this light, we shall walk by faith in it; when it shines it will make us cry to God. We shall walk in it in hope; "hope thou in God" we shall say each one to his soul. As seeing this light, we shall walk by prayer in it, for everyone who sees this new and blessed way in the light of God's teaching will pray "remember me with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people, O visit me with Thy salvation." In this light we shall walk in prayer for safety. Safety on earth; safety when in trouble; safety in respect of guidance and protection and helps and teaching, if we walk in this light. God the Father is in this light, that is to say, He gave this word of commandment to His Son to lay down His life. God the Son is in it "I am

the light of the world," and God the Holy Ghost is in it to teach poor sinners and reveal in them the Lord Jesus. O what a light this is, the light of the Trinity; the light of love; the light of mercy; the light of salvation. So it is not an abstract thing that we have before us. It is a divine reality, a wonderful truth. How sweet God has made it to some of us. Perhaps in the night watches this has been made a sweet word to us, drawing the heart out unto God Himself "I am the light" I have come a light into the world. I have come a light in your dark case of dark trials and dark circumstances. Walk in this light; walk depending on Me; come up out of the wilderness leaning on Me; come with Me My love, come with Me, come from the lions' den, come from the mountains of leopards. Come with Me, let us go into the villages, let us lodge in the fields and there I will give thee My love. This is what the light will say in your heart, in my heart, if it shines, and then we walk in it. Yes, you may think you are ignorant, but O if this light shines you will walk in it. Lord, you will be saying, I come to Thee, I come to Thee. I have none else. I can go nowhere else, nor do I wish to do, I come to Thee, and Thy fulness must be my supply. Thy strength must be my support; Thy mercy must melt my hard heart and Thy wisdom must guide my doubtful steps and Thy protection must cover me and deliver me. We do walk in it when we walk like this. Then the Apostle says if we so walk we have fellowship with Him and with the saints. First of all with the Lord. Whenever you walk in daylight you have fellowship with the light. In it you walk; in it you see and you feel. Take away the light, take away the atmosphere and what would there be but absolute death and so when you walk in the gospel of Jesus Christ which is called the light of the glorious gospel, then you have communion with Him. You are influenced by it; you are helped by it. It teaches you, instructs you, guides you and brings you some comfort, some peace and some hope of eternal life and blessedness

with God. We have communion with Him. Is there anything to be compared with this on earth? Did not I say what was right? Are not we, who have had this light, and have it, highly privileged? Are not we advanced to a state that angels themselves have not, a state of intimacy with the Redeemer, because He has redeemed us? Advanced to a state of lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ and brought into some sweet nearness to God the Father, in God the Son, by God the Holy Ghost. It is very blessed to know. For some foretaste of heaven you must have this, and if you have this there will be nothing lacking to you, for, says the Spirit by Paul "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." What an amazing thing, the sinner ever full of light, and Christ ever full of all the good things that His saints shall need here and hereafter. We have fellowship with Him in His word. He sent it, His word, and healed them. Fellowship with Him in His resurrection; by the power of that resurrection they rise in their souls and say to their soul, each one, "hope thou in God for I shall yet praise Him." Fellowship with Him in His sufferings. You may have plenty of temporal trouble and have no fellowship with Christ's sufferings. I am afraid some people, even good people, are mistaken largely here when they think that because they have a quantity of temporal affliction, therefore they have fellowship with Christ. Principally, as I judge, fellowship with Christ in His sufferings, is suffering because of sin in you. Suffering the pain of sin, indwelling sin, the pain of its working, the shame of its working, the guilt of it on your conscience. Pained because you have it; pained because you do the things you would not do and cannot do the things you would do. Then you see under the Spirit's teaching how the Saviour suffered. What made Him groan? Sin. What brought Him pain? Sin. Why did His Father hide His face from Him? Because sin was on Him, and if you do suffer because sin is in you and the Holy Spirit brings this before you, you will enter into the truth of fellowship with Him in His sufferings, and so you walk

in the light. Walk in the light of a suffering Saviour's love, a suffering Saviour's kindness and love to you.

But then you say we are always failing, always coming short. Yes, and no minister would ever tell you you are mistaken, that is, no minister of God. But he will tell you this, as led by the Holy Ghost, that your guilt can be cleansed, and will be cleansed by the blood of Christ. We walk in the light as He is in the light, and for all our shortcomings, misdeeds, mis-belief, misbehaviour in the church of God or anywhere else, that all this sin is cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son. "And the blood of Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

Two words here shall be my last. The first is this. We are not to boast of anything. The highest attainment you may receive and walk in, the sweetest fellowship you may have with Jesus Christ in His sufferings, and in the light of the gospel, will be, from time to time as it were marred in your own experience by some eruption of sin. Some dreadful thought will come and in a moment you are spoiled. You are plunged into trouble in a moment. You say O what a poor, miserable, sinful creature I am, though I have a hope in God's mercy. You wont boast. No flesh is to glory in God's presence. And the second is this, that though that be the painful case with us, here is set before us the remedy for all uncleanness and separation. There is a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness and it is sweetly sung in the hymn book

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains

Then they want each one to be able to say
E'er since by faith, I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die

and when we die we shall no longer get defilement, no longer sink under any sin, but be absent from the body and present with the Lord. O what a mercy it is to walk in this

beauteous, sweet, blessed light, so that we may have no occasion for stumbling, no occasion of any sort or kind. Ye are children of the light and not of the night but children of the day. The Lord grant we may walk in this light. Plenty of occasions there will be of sin here and there, but if we walk in the light we shall be preserved. May the Lord grant it may be so with us.

