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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday evening 16 August 1925

JOHN 16 v 14

"He shall glorify Me for He shall receive
of Mine and shall show it unto you"

All saving knowledge, all holy dispositions, all effectual fervent prayer, all bright hopes, expectations of help and of heaven are the immediate work and operation of the Holy Ghost. A Holy Ghost religion is the only religion that is saving. The bodily presence of Christ and the presence and teaching and indwelling of the Holy Ghost were not compatible at the same time in the same person or church. It was therefore expedient for the disciples and for all who should be believers after them, that Christ should depart from this world, that He should go to the Father who sent Him, and from whom He came. And we a little noticed this morning this particular truth, that Christ must go to heaven in order that the Holy Ghost might come and dwell in, and be with, His Church. It is so, as we see, or shall see, the Lord helping us, in several particulars, beside those named this morning.

The first is this, with respect to prayer. The disciples hitherto had not asked, as the Lord tells them, anything in His Name, had not asked the Father anything that they were needing, and the apparent reason is this, that they had His bodily presence with them. They thought and wondered and inwardly questioned some things that He had said and about matters, and now and again He just revealed to them their thoughts and drew out their minds. They had Him with them so as that it was not apparently before them or in their experience that they prayed to their Father. They had the Son with them and blinks of His Deity, manifestations of His care, touches of His power, and beams of His light entering their hearts gave them what, for the moment, they needed. This was not to be always, for His bodily presence could not be everywhere. His Church was to multiply, and He could not be in Jerusalem and Galatia and Ephesus and in Thessalonica, and all other places where Churches should be raised

up, at the same time, as to His body. So He must enter heaven and there stand at the right hand of His Father and take their cases up and plead for them, intercede. Not, as He said, not that He will pray the Father, because He, the Father, loved them. No, not that He would seem to make an effort to make His Father willing - His Father also loved these disciples - but that He would be in heaven to present to His Father Himself as their Head and Surety and Representative, and present to the eye of infinite justice and holiness, the merit whereby a new and living way was opened for them to come to Him and ask the Father for these things they felt their need of. "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My Name". I have been with you and therefore you have not presented petitions to the Father in My Name. Now I am leaving you, ask the Father in My Name; present My Name to Him. Name My Person to Him and whatsoever you ask shall be given to you. This then is a beautiful thing to observe, the expedience of Christ's going away. "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you" But if I go, then a new way of praying, a new method of coming and asking for the supplies you need, the strength and the perseverance and the understanding and the holiness and the victories you need, you will find, a new and living way, by which you may come to the Father and ask for all those things of My Father.

So there are three things I would bring to your notice with regard to prayer on the ground of the ascension into heaven of Jesus Christ and the consequent coming to His people of the Holy Spirit. And the first is the manner of prayer. Hitherto they had had their Lord and Master with them. Hitherto they had seen His Person. They believed Him to have come from the Father. They believed Him to be Christ by a revelation of that mercy and that truth to them, as the Apostle Peter said, when asked who the Lord Jesus was or rather, whom they thought Him to be. Peter said, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God." What a presence His was. Have you ever wished you had lived then? But if it had been so, you would have had no advantage over a saint today in respect of spiritual knowledge and apprehension of God. While He was with them their view appears to have always been cramped; their horizon was very near to themselves, was not up in heaven, so to speak, but just would they know His bodily presence. Now He was to leave them and they should approach His and their Father,

His and their God, in another manner. They were to come to their heavenly Father in the Name of their Saviour. As it were, a new heaven opened to them, a new way, which the Apostle Paul expresses so strikingly and fully in the Hebrews, where he says: "Having therefore brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say His flesh, and having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near."

While Jesus was living and not crucified, the veil was not rent and the way into the Holiest of all was not as yet opened to sinners. The High Priest of our profession must enter that Holy of Holies by death. He must, as one like a Lamb as it had been slain, enter heaven and thus seeking sinners should have this new way opened to them. "I am" says He, "the way". Come to My Father in My Name. Come into the Holiest of all through the rent veil of My flesh. Come and fill your mouth with arguments which My atoning blood shall fill them with. Come and make a plea before My Father of who and what I am and what I have done. Brethren is not this a beautiful way. You may have longed to have been on earth when the Saviour sojourned here, but if you had not been at Jerusalem you would not have seen Him, and if you had been there and seen Him, I say again, you would have had no great, no spiritual advantage by the seeing of Him. The advantage is with sinners who can say by faith "Have not we seen Jesus Christ our Lord." It is a great advantage when faith says: "I see a Lamb in heaven as it had been slain. I see infinite merit that I can plead. I see infinite fulness from which I may draw supplies. I see eternal life for my soul, eternal justification for my person, and eternal holiness in which to stand before God. And so seeing the Saviour there shows this new way, this new manner of approach unto God. Every Jew in the old dispensation approached almighty God through a sacrifice and by the priest presenting it. Every child of God now approaches God through the Lamb slain and in heaven before the throne and in the midst of the throne. This then is a vital matter, for unless we can get access to, and contact with, the Almighty, we cannot be saved. The only way of obtaining access to God and contact with Him is through a once expired Saviour on the cross, and now the ascended Saviour in the midst of the throne, interceding for all who come unto God by Him. This then would say: "Large petitions with thee bring". It would say

there is here a ground for a guilty person to stand on, for a lost sinner to stand on. Here is a plea that the vilest person upon earth, convinced of sin, may use. An argument which God, the Father of Jesus Christ, will not disregard. Here is a fulness that cannot be exhausted. Ruminates then on the matter, the new way of approaching God, and may we never be permitted to lose sight of Him, in whose Name we are to come and ask of the Father in that Name all that we desire.

The second thing that is so wonderful an advantage with regard to prayer is this, the energy that is given to every spiritual person who prays by the Holy Ghost. Having Jesus near to them, as to His bodily presence, it would seem that they had but to look to Him, had but to express a wish or a difficulty, and instantly in His compassion He taught, He led, He answered. He is in heaven - how can we pray? How can we get near Him and the Father in Him? This we are taught in the Scriptures and specially it is expressed in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, where he says: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought". And who then can teach us how to pray? "The Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered". See the double advantage of an ascended Saviour and a descending Spirit. An Intercessor in your heart, an Advocate in heaven. The Holy Spirit prompting, teaching, energising your soul, and a willing, gracious, tender-hearted, full Saviour in heaven to receive and perfume your petitions, and so present them to His Father. O what energy the Spirit puts into the heart at times. A sigh winged by His grace and power reaches heaven and enters into the ear of the Lord God of Sabaoth. "Out of the belly of hell" Jonah prayed, prayed when he was fainting. "My soul fainted in me". Then he cried and the cry entered into the Lord's ear, entered heaven. You may feel too weak to pray, too wicked to pray, too hard of heart to pray, too constantly sinning to appear before God. You may feel too troubled to pray, even sleep for sorrow at times, and yet there will come upon you that singular, never to be fully expressed, mercy, namely the energy of the Holy Ghost. And this is called by Jude "Praying in the Holy Ghost," which means praying as He prompts and teaches, breathing into your soul His own power. He is called the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. He comes as that Holy Spirit and prompts a sinner and teaches him how to pray. And that

brings that highly favoured sinner to sit in heavenly things in Christ. And then this Holy Spirit in that passage in the Romans is said to search all things, the deep things of God, and He knows the mind of God. This meets our ignorance, this meets our ignorance I repeat. We know not what the will of God in some particulars is. His will, speaking generally, is revealed in the Scriptures, as to His saints and as to their walk and conduct, their internal walk before God, as well as their external walk in the Church and the world. But there are cases, solemn painful cares about which we can say, we know not what the mind of God is. Which way shall we go? is a question, and we know not. What is the will of God in this affliction? and we may say, we do not know. What will the Lord have me to do in a particular perplexity? and the answer may be, I do not know. Well then how shall you pray? How can you hope to get near to God and ask for those things which His holy will is to give you? The Apostle says: "He searcheth all things. He knows the mind of God". Now if He who is God, who is the third Person in the Trinity, who therefore has been with the Father and the Son eternally and in all their councils, if He is in you and prompts you to pray, you will pray according to the will of God. If there is a miracle in Brighton this evening, it is a sinner who thus prays. O the energy that is in a groan born of the Spirit. O the intercommunications that are carried on between heaven and earth when sinners pray thus. Is it not then an expedient and blessed thing for the Lord Jesus to be absent from earth as to His bodily presence that He, being away, should show His care for the church by sending to her His good Spirit to give bread for her hunger and water for her thirst and knowledge for her ignorance, and power to the weak? Why, when this Holy Spirit teaches us to pray, He may sometimes give us to see the boundless resources of the infinite God incarnate. Boundless love, almighty power, infinite wisdom. It is thus that men pray without ceasing. It is thus that the trend of the spirit, the movement, the direction of the heart will be heavenward, no other way. And thus it is too that a person is delivered from a double mind. "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" and unsuccessful in all his prayers, for he tries to look at two things at the same time, which is an impossibility. Looks to the earth - there is dimness and darkness and anguish. Looks to his affliction and that says you will never get out; to his weakness - that says, you must be overcome; to his temptations, and they say you will be conquered one

day by the enemy. And he tries perhaps, being a professor also, to name the Name of the Lord, but he is unstable. Now he is swayed this way, then he is turned that way. But when the Holy Spirit teaches a sinner to pray, he fixes his heart on one Object, one source, one only Saviour, one good God, one Holy Spirit. So he prays. Well it is great to have this energy, the energising of the Spirit in your weak heart.

And the third point to name in this particular is the success that attends or follows such praying. God said of a prophet that his prophecy should be tested by the event coming to pass or not. If it came to pass, God spoke by the prophet. If it did not, he was a false prophet. Your praying will be tested as to its nature, whether or not it is accepted of God, by the success attending it. You may say thousands of times over: "God be merciful to me a sinner", and never get the mercy. Few things may perhaps be said to be easier than to say such words, but, when they are winged to heaven in the gracious power of the Holy Spirit, mercy comes down. Prayer from heaven, given by the Holy Spirit, enters heaven and answers come down. This is not perhaps universally true, what I have just said. I mean that there is often in a saint a time when he is more or less formal and cold and distant in prayer, when there is no particular apprehension of God, when his needs press him but faith does not assist him, the Holy Spirit being absent. But there are times when it is otherwise, when he does wait on God, waits for an answer; when he can say: "My soul waiteth for the Lord" And it is this that will prove his prayer to have been prompted by the Holy Spirit. The sinner prays, but the Spirit is the teacher. The sinner groans, but it is the Holy Spirit that gives him grace to do that, and then the Lord hears. He says sometimes in the experience as He says in His Word: "And it shall come to pass, before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear". And I am certain there is, there has been a consciousness and still is in some saints of an acceptance of their prayers, and a belief that answers would come. It may be long before they have come, but there has been the feeling, solemn, sacred, peculiar feeling. It has been like king Jehoshaphat who, going out to battle and, as men would say, to an uncertain thing, set singers before the army to sing praise to the Lord whose mercy endureth for ever. And you may have sung that an answer was coming before it came. I have done so. I have said on more

than one occasion, an answer is coming, deliverance is to be wrought. Hannah got a blessing. David got answers over and over again. And you, helped to pray, taught and led to pray, will get answers, answers in your soul, answers about your health, about your family, about your business. Answers for time and answers for eternity; they will flow into your soul and become a part of your experience when you pray through the Holy Spirit and in the Name of Jesus, calling on the Father who without respect of persons judgeth every man according to his work.

Now the second great advantage that comes through the Holy Spirit I would draw your attention to and that is this, namely, the sealing of the covenant by death and the administration of the covenant by the Spirit. The death of the Testator is necessary in every testament, every will. A testament is of force after men are dead. The covenant must be sealed with blood. The covenant of grace largely consists of promises as it is expressed in the Hebrews where the apostle tells us of the new covenant. He says it is thus, that God said in those days I will make a new covenant and this is the form of it and the manner of its working: "I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Here are legacies, but a testament is of force after men are dead. Jesus died; His testament was sealed, that way became of force, and all its provisions, all its legacies, every blessing given to the Church in that testament became of force by reason of His death. There is a vast difference between the testament of a man becoming of force after he is dead and buried and never rises again with respect to that testament, and the testament that the Lord Jesus sealed by His death. This is the difference, that He lives to convey the blessings of His own covenant. He lives to see that every legacy is given and received by the legatee. He lives to see that every provision of His covenant shall be fulfilled and carried out to the very letter. But how are these provisions and legacies to come? He says, My Spirit shall come. I will put My Spirit upon all flesh. I will give you a new heart and a right spirit. I will put My laws into

your heart; I will write them there. I will give you pardon; "I will bring near My righteousness and My salvation it shall not tarry. I will place salvation in Zion for Israel My glory". O what a blessing, covenant blessings administered by the Spirit through the death of Jesus Christ. He leads them with supplications and they come into possession of the legacy of forgiveness. I will forgive their sins and remember their iniquities no more. He brings them into a good land and large where there is plenty of room. He was anointed to do it and His Spirit makes that preaching effectual and gives the sweet blessings of the gospel to the poor and binds up the broken-hearted and gives liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to all in bondage. He proclaims by His Spirit in their hearts the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God. He comforts all that mourn. He gives unto them beauty for ashes the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. O sinner, part of the purchased possession, interested in the testament of Jesus Christ, how can you fail of entering into possession of what the Lord Jesus bequeathed in His testament? "It is expedient for you" says the Saviour, "that I go away". Then when I am gone the Comforter will come. Listen to the gracious word sent to His disciples after His resurrection. "Go, tell My disciples, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, to My God and your God". Now that message is brought in the sweetness and power and the efficacy and blessedness of it by the Holy Spirit. He brings the blessing down. The blessing of adoption, the blessedness of this new relationship is felt by His ministering in the heart. He it is who takes away the veil from the heart and brings the very image of Christ and stamps it upon the soul by giving a faith's view of the glorious covenant blessings. The covenant sealed with the blood of Him who died made certain, the Spirit administering and bringing all those, sweet, very great, inestimable, everlasting blessings into the hearts of all to whom they were given in the covenant.

And lastly, it is by the Holy Spirit that the love of God in Jesus Christ is made known. It is that Divine Spirit who sheds abroad in the heart the love of God. In the 17 chapter of this gospel you know how our dear Saviour prayed for His disciples. In that prayer is an account of, or fortelling of, the intercession that the Lord would carry on in heaven. How He prays that His disciples might

be kept in this world, prays that the glory which His Father had given Him might be theirs, prays that they might be sanctified through the truth, because the Word of God is true; it alone can sanctify those who have it, and then also asks that the love of the Father to Himself may be in His people who are in that love. Think of it. You feel too wicked to be loved of God very likely as being born again. Too crooked in your disposition, too evil in your thoughts, too carnal in your mind even sometimes to think that God can love such a person. If He loved sinners or persons who, though they might be called sinners, were very toward, very docile and pure and obedient, is there anyone in this chapel could hope that he would be one of the loved ones? But He loved the thief, the murderer, Manasseh, Saul. He loved Solomon; He loved the publican and He would send to them His good Spirit who should reveal in them that love and shed it abroad in their hearts, that they should know, sooner or later, that the love wherewith the Father loved the Saviour was the love that was given to the sinner and this is wonderful. What? Am I, a wicked person, loved of the Father with the very same love that He loved His Son incarnate? Is it so? Well brethren, the Holy Spirit brings this precious truth in in His own power and light and glory, and then it has a mighty influence. It instructs, enlarges, takes away that cramped view of things that otherwise we have of God and His dealings. If you are in tribulation, if God's way with you is in the sea and His path in the mighty waters; if He is thundering in providence so as to alarm you; if He is walking to you in a mysterious way and His love comes by the Spirit into your heart you will trust Him. You will believe Him. You will wait on Him. You will put your whole case into His hands. The Spirit will enable you to trust that hand that mixes the cup for you

"My Father's hand prepares the cup
And what He wills is best"

And so the Holy Spirit's presence in the Church, in a person's heart, is the sweetest of all blessings, for by Him the gospel is administered. By Him promises are spoken; by Him love, divine love is shed abroad in the heart. By Him holy confidence rises, faith is emboldened, hope is brightened, and our weak love is fanned, sometimes into a flame. "He shall glorify Me." He sets

these, the Holy Spirit sets all these blessings before sinners and says, this Saviour is your Saviour; this dying Lamb died for you. The blessings of His covenant are for you and, now that He is in heaven, I, His Spirit, come from Him to speak concerning Him and to reveal Him and make Him known, and I will be with you even to the end.

This gospel is called the glorious gospel of Christ, the everlasting gospel, and surely we may say this is the gospel promised by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that the Holy Spirit should come and not put Christ out of His place but bring Christ to His place and give Him His own, give Him His own. And while Christ is incapable of any increase in any way, He is capable of an exaltation in the hearts of sinners and the Holy Spirit is sent to exalt Him in their hearts.

Many other things could be brought out of this as I judge this beautiful text, but what I have said must suffice at this time and if it please God to make these utterances, although feeble, very feeble, useful to you, you will know to whom the praise belongs, on whose head to put the crown.

AMEN.