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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday evening 13 April 1924

AMOS 3 v 3

"Can two walk together except they be agreed?"

We noticed this morning something of the characters of the parties implied in the text. The parties are Jehovah and man; Jehovah, infinite, eternal and man, fallen, corrupt, whose foundation is in the dust. Jehovah, in all His jealousy and glory; in all His requirements of man, His claims on man; Jehovah, in His inexorable character. Man, weak, proud, lustful, at enmity with God; having a quarrel with Him. Man, saying to the God-Man, and of Him, "We will not have this Man to reign over us". Can these two come together and walk in amity? On all the grounds that could be imagined, conceived by us, the answer must be, No. On the ground of God's infinite mercy and goodness, and His good-will in Christ, the answer is an emphatic, Yes, with respect to the Church. And, after some observations on these two points, one laid a Scriptural foundation for a friendly walking between these two parties, not only dissimilar, but at a great distance, the distance of an awful quarrel on our part. The ground is the Person of Christ, the vicarious death of Christ, the justifying righteousness of Christ. That will bear your weight and mine; on that we may stand; on that we may find ourselves in the presence of Jehovah. There we may plead, pray, confess and look and hope, and there God, according to His covenant promise, comes. He says, I will meet with thee, and I will talk with thee; I will commune with thee. There is the glorious high throne which, from the beginning, has been the place of our Sanctuary; the throne of grace to which sinners, searched and tried by the Word, are invited. There these two love each other, these two mutually embrace, these two open their hearts, each to the other. They walk together. The ground of it in respect to ourselves is the new birth, the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost giving, according to the covenant promise, a new heart and a right spirit, making one born again a new creature, according to Paul: "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things

are become new". And with this wonderful provision on the part of God, and this miraculous change in a sinner, there is no reason why they should not walk together. A sinner convinced of his sins stands, trembles, fears God, trembles at His word, justifies God in His condemnation, knows and confesses that he has no claim on God, that God's claim on him spells condemnation because he, the weak and the wicked sinner, is unable to meet those claims. Then God comes and graciously speaks to him and says: "I even I am He that blotteth out as a thick cloud thy transgressions and as a cloud thy sins", and so these two come together. Were you ever near God? Was God ever near you? Did you ever hear His voice out of heaven? Did He ever hear your cry out of the low dungeon? Did He draw near and say: "Fear not". And did you draw near to Him and in the efficacious blood of Christ, find access, entrance into the holy of holies? Before you can walk with Him you must get near Him; you must be friends. He who is not the friend of God does not walk with God. So He takes away the enmity and makes a friend of a sinner and calls him His friend, calls him brother. This being cleared, let us now, by the help of God, look at this walk.

We are to walk, if we are the Lord's people, with Him in agreement. Now the agreement is this, that a sinner's prejudice against God and Christ and the Spirit and the Scriptures and salvation, and God's own terms shall be removed. Do you answer to that? Have your prejudices, bitter, strong, inborn, growing with your growth, strengthening constantly with your strength and your education and your surroundings, have these all been broken down so as that, when you have got a sight of Him, of Jesus Christ, you have said: O, if He were but mine; if I might come to call Him mine; if He would but say to me: "Thou art all fair My sister, My spouse", that would be all I could ask, all I could wish. Happy the sinner whose prejudices against Christ have been broken down. You may say you are not conscious of them. That may very well be, not because you have them not, but because you are not born again and do not know yourself. If you are born again and know yourself, you know, you subscribe to the truth of that solemn Scripture - "The carnal mind is enmity against God" and such a man is always ready to pick a quarrel with God. He can do nothing to please men really. So that is one thing in the way of agreement; the prejudices are broken down, enmity

conquered, killed and willingness wrought according to the Scripture promise: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power". Now let us look at two or three things in this agreement. Come to your knees - a fine place that, a fine attitude that - come to your knees, where you deal with God. Men do deal with God; seriously, solemnly, they do deal with Him. In what ways? First, in adoration of Him; idolatry is broken down. "Thou shall have no other God before Me". In confession of sin: "Behold I am vile". In praying for mercy: "God be merciful to me a sinner". The throne of grace is a wonderful spot, a wonderful place, for agreeing with God; a wonderful place for finding your heart completely drawn out to Him and finding your affections won by Him, enchained by His own beauties, particularly the beauties of Christ crucified, so that you are not quarrelling with Him, but you are anxious to be reconciled to Him in the body of the flesh of Jesus through death. Mind your heart in prayer. It is easier to take the Name of God in vain than most of us think. It is one thing to kneel and pray, as we suppose, as we profess. It is another to have your heart engaged, another to find that your whole soul is kept with God. It is not at all an unlikely thing that some of us, many and many a time have been found building, digging, planting, buying, selling, taking pleasure, when we have been using words called "prayer" before God and that is not far away from taking His Name in vain is it? O, but when He wins a sinner; when the beauties of Christ, when the need of Christ, the worth and the want of Him, as Bunyan puts it, you perceive; when, in the light of the Spirit, you walk in the light, in the light of this precious gospel, in the light of how a sinner can be reconciled to God, his sins removed, his guilt taken away, and his heart melted out of him and he finds his whole soul in heaven, wishing, from time to time, wishing that he may be one with the Lord, that is something very great, and very wonderful and all flows from the riches of God's grace manifested. Did you ever agree with God on your knees, praying in the Spirit on your bed? Did you ever agree with Him? It is not an impertinent question is it? It relates to our soul's condition. Happy he who has said, at times, that he has felt himself willing to be saved in God's way, willing to come to God's terms, willing to be a sinner, to be a vessel, to have poured in what mercy God may be pleased to pour in. Then you walk with Him in prayer, for the agreement and the walking will always go together. You walk with Him in prayer. Come to Me, He says. Bring

your case to Me and I will give you something. Bring your weariness to Me and I will give you rest. Bring your wants and come with your rags and your condemnation and your weakness and all your failures. Come to me with them all, and I, ever gracious, and always able, will give you rest. What a great thing it is to find that you are dealing with God; that God is dealing with you; that He does not let your heart alone, comes to comfort you. You are not an orphan, but just one to whom the Saviour comes, and to whom the Spirit is sent. "I will give you another Comforter", and there He is, an intercessor, an advocate in your heart and you, being thus dealt with, are fully in agreement with God. And I think it is a very remarkable thing when a person realises that he agrees with the holy nature of God, as that nature is revealed in the Person of Christ. Remember some of those golden Scriptures on this point. It is said, in the Hebrews: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son whom He hath appointed Heir of all things." God revealing His nature in Jesus Christ is a mystery and a mercy. This Person is there declared to be the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His Person. In the Colossians, it is said by the Apostle Paul, that Christ is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature . And, as you see the nature of God, which is love, and the dispensation of that love flowing in the doctrines of the gospel, does not your heart close in with that, and you can say honestly, as far as is apprehended - not comprehended - as far as you apprehend that nature as seen, as revealed in the Person of Christ, you do agree with it. I may repeat a question I asked you this morning, may not I? It is this - Would you have God other than He is? It may be a searching question to you, as it often has been to me. Would you have God other than He is? Less holy, less just, less powerful, less wise, less strict, less good? If He could be other than He is, He would be no God. Unchangeableness belongs to His nature. O then, when He, who is so wonderful, so incomprehensible, so eternally glorious, reveals Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ, then faith approves of Him. But there is this thing in it which is very wonderful. This approval of God's Being, what He is, flows from our being blessed with a new heart, a new nature; our being partakers of the divine nature, our having dwelling in us the Holy Ghost. No agreement with God unless we are partakers of the divine nature.

Next, we agree with Him and walk with Him in the forgiveness of sins, in the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. The blood of Christ, the precious blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. Is it possible for a person who has committed sin, on whose conscience guilt is, to find the sin forgiven and the guilt removed? Yes, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." How else could God walk with you? How else could you walk with God? Until sin is forgiven, until sin is forgiven to a sinner who feels his sin very much - the Lord may touch very often; He may bless very sweetly; He may draw that person - there is no comfortable communication, no comfortable walking. The sin must be put away. O, I do like what I have mentioned to you many times, the atonement terminates in the conscience. First, when it was made on the cross, it terminated in God; then, when the application of it is made to a sinner, it terminates in his conscience. Then, to walk with God, there is no reason why he should not, is there? You have felt you have had forgiveness have you not? No quarrel on His part with you. He does not bring the law and say, now pay me this debt and that debt. He does not bring up and rake up against you, and bring into your mind and thoughts and conscience, this failure and that failure, that commission and that omission. He says: "I have blotted out as a thick cloud your transgressions and as a cloud your sins". He has no quarrel with you and you have none with Him. You do not look at some untoward providence and say to Him, but how came this to be? How can it consist with divine love to me? You do not look upon some want and press it upon His attention and say, how can this be consistent with Thy goodness? Everything is straight; all His crooked ways, that is strange ways in providence, all straight to faith, and now there are two together. O, the sweetness, the friendship, the blessed amity, that a sinner perceives in his soul toward God as he perceives the love of God in him, and the blood of Christ on his conscience. A very striking passage that is in the Hebrews where, speaking of ceremonial uncleanness and consequent unfitness for the service of the Sanctuary, the Apostle says: "If the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." My brethren, it is wonderful to have this holy peace

brought by the blood of Christ. You walk with God in peace and equity. This Man made peace, peace by His cross; by the blood of His cross He hath made peace. And this peace flows like a river, so abundant is it. And this peace keeps the heart and mind as in a garrison. So powerful is it that, for the moment, nothing disturbs it, nothing overcomes it. Consistent with affliction, consistent with many things that are painful to flesh and blood; it is a wonderful peace, God's peace. "My peace I give unto you"; the peace I have in Myself, having overcome, having made an end of sin. "My peace I give unto you", and if you have Christ's peace you are one with Christ in that, and you walk with Him. Ah, some may say, but this is beyond us. It is not beyond you in one sense. It is beyond you as to reaching it of yourselves, but O it can easily, and by God's mercy will one day, sweetly come and take possession and fill you. As you may have been all but drenched in sorrow for sin, you shall be drenched with this holy peace; bathed in it, comforted in it, strengthened by it; "The peace of God which passeth all understanding"

We walk with Him in righteousness. The righteousness of Christ is the covering and the title to heaven of the Church of Christ. It is unto all and upon all them that believe - Jew and Gentile, for there is no difference. It is a robe pure, perfect, wrought out by Christ with infinite skill and pain, brought in by Him when He was raised from the dead by the glory of His Father. And so He who was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief - to trouble, and punish, and pain whom, it pleased the Father - He now has this wonderful Name, "The Lord our Righteousness", and if the Lord puts this upon you you will walk with Him in it. Mind your covering. O, it is an eye that looks from heaven upon men. Mind your covering. And if you think well, according to your judgment of things, to go in with other guests to the feast, beware of your coat. Beware of the robe, for if you have not on this righteousness, seated though you may be between two saints who have it, away from them you will be carried - "Bind his hand and foot". Mind your robe. Not some fancied goodness, not some vamped up religion in your mind, not some knowledge of the Scripture acquired by you and pleasing to you, not that kind of thing, but a soul stripped by the law, a soul painfully aware of its condition before God, standing before Him in filthy garments, favoured to

receive this blessed, sufficient robe for justification. Justification is God's act, not the act of the culprit. He who justifies himself is condemned. The sinner to whom the Lord speaks the word of justification is justified and who then can condemn him. Can you walk with God if you are not justified? Can an unjustified person walk with a holy, just God?

If you agree with God in respect of the truth, the gospel, the doctrines of the gospel, the doctrines of Christ, of His incarnation, His vicarious death, His all-sufficient obedience, His resurrection, His ascension into heaven, His intercession there, all prevailing; if you agree with God in these things; if you agree with God in His gracious promises, all those holy words which have proceeded from His lips; if you agree with the precepts of the gospel and the admonitions; if you agree that grace makes a person of whom it takes possession the best master and the best servant, the best husband and the best wife and the best child; if you agree with the gospel that produces these effects wherever it comes, then you will walk with God in the truth, and as you walk you will answer to that word in the Revelations spoken to the Church at Sardis. You will find this true of you that was true of some there: "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy." May the garments of our profession be kept white.

We agree with God in respect of His omnipotence. Omnipotence terrifies the guilty person who feels that he is guilty. Omnipotence clothed in our own nature is attractive to one who is weak in himself and unable to stand alone. It is a great promise that God made to worm Jacob "Fear not worm Jacob". God could, as it were, go no lower in describing the feeble and repulsive condition of His people than that - "Worm Jacob" - yet He says to him "Fear not". Why not? Jacob has enemies, many, powerful. Ah, but Jacob has God, and Jacob sometimes, though a worm, as he thus is spoken to, has power with God and prevails. Jacob had power over the angel and prevailed, and when you walk with God you sometimes will find that in your own case, that you will have power in prayer. Power to take evil cases, to take your sins and lusts, take these things and deal with God about them and you will find omnipotence grateful to you, acceptable to your heart.

Why, you will be saying sometimes, I could not get through without that. You may take a retrospect now and again and say, I could not have stood but for the support omnipotence gave me. I could not have overcome unless the Lord had been with me and in me, and so, to the end, omnipotence will be needed. "I am with thee Israel passing through the fire". I am with thee when thou walkest through the waters and through the fire. "I am the Lord thy God". "Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength". This will do.

The Apostle Paul approved it, and he so approved, he so agreed with it, as even to glory in his infirmities that the power of Christ might rest upon him. All that was on him, the pain and the thorns - not the scratch of one of our thorns, but the piercing of an eastern thorn, sticking in his flesh - that he could bear, because the Lord said to him, and proved it, made it good: "My grace", my powerful grace, "is sufficient for thee". You can agree with omnipotence.

You can agree with distinguishing love. You can say sometimes: "Why me, why me". Lord, how is it that Thou wouldest pass by myriads of sinners and take hold of me?

On such love my soul still ponder
Love so great, so rich, so free
Say, whilst lost in holy wonder,
Why O Lord such love to me?

It is sweet to feel the love of God, sweet to feel it coming down, if I may use the word, in solid, heavenly comfort into your heart. Sweet to feel that, although here you may be full of trouble, you have One in heaven who, because He loves you, will look after you, take care of you, and who, because He loves you will, again and again, gather you to Himself, for the gathering of the people is to be to Shiloh.

You will walk with God in His blessed promises. His promises are sweet beyond all expression. They are made to certain characters. He promises to guide His people with His eye. "I will guide thee with Mine eye". We would rather, if we could choose after the flesh, walk in our own wisdom, choose our own path, but grace makes us say

Guide me O Thou great Jehovah
Pilgrim through this barren land

Makes us willing just to be fools, willing to be, not at our own disposal, but the Lord's. Willing that He, having chosen for us an inheritance, should choose our way to it. Do you agree with God in this and with His gracious promise - "I will guide thee with Mine eye". Yea, how often you may have coveted that guidance, how often you may have asked Him to favour you, to take hold of you and guide you just where He would have you go, into what paths He would have you walk; that you may not walk astray, nor go into some hurtful snare. And when you are brought to this state of mind you really walk with God. You will agree with Christ in His faithfulness, His faithfulness to His word and to you to whom the word has been made over. "I will never leave thee". "I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." How the heart will hang about this. And I would say to you who are perhaps often troubled because you do not feel the presence of God as you want to, hang about this promise and plead it as well as you can. "I will never leave thee". As to some operations He may sometimes be distant, absent, but as to His faithfulness, being in you as your life and as your light and as your strength, as your righteousness, as your holiness, He will never leave you.

Now walking with God has in it these things; something mutual. Communion means that at least two parties shall be engaged in it. If you have only your own heart to commune with you will sometimes be extremely dark and unhappy, and in bondage. In communion there are at least two parties and these two parties make inter-communications. One speaks and the other replies. And when it comes to God, O, the condescension. These two parties will open each his mind and heart to the other. Does God open His mind and heart to you? Will He do anything and not show it to His servants? "Henceforth, I call you not servants" - to show the remarkable intimacy of this - "I call you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you". Has God ever conveyed something of His heart, and His mind, His love and His grace, His pardon and His justification to

your soul? And, on the other hand, what have you communicated to Him? You have given Him the best you have got; a poor heart, all your confidence, your love. The hope that you have centres in Him. He is the very centre and circumference of your soul; your life, your hope, your strength, your peace, your prospects for the future, all in Him. And you have gone to Him and laid out everything before Him in your heart. "Pour out your heart before Him". These two parties, these walk together. Happy he who knows what it is to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd - "My sheep know My voice" - and who, knowing that voice does reply. "Lovest thou Me?" "Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee".

Well, may the Lord bring us thus to walk with Him, to make our hearts bare before Him, receiving from Him some sweet and blessed communications of His mercy.

In communion there is in the next place a mutual joy. Surely, one may say, you have gone too far in this. No! The word of God is with me: "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee" (Isaiah 62 v 5). Yes, we have little conception of the joy that the Lord feels in His heart when He has a child of His at the throne of His heavenly grace, when the submission of the will and of the understanding, when the warmth of the affections, when the confidence of faith, when the addresses of a weak sinner, all are going out to Him. Then, and in that sinner, Christ sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied. He rejoices to do that sinner good. "I will rejoice over them to do them good with my whole heart and with my whole soul". (Jeremiah 32 v 41) And that is God's part. Now what is the effect of that? Do not you rejoice in Him? "Finally my brethren rejoice in the Lord, and again I say rejoice". Christ speaks His words to His people with this intent, "that your joy may be full". And what is there in Him to rejoice in? O, everything that you can imagine, wish and pray for. Love to comfort you, power to sustain you, bread to nourish you, wine to refresh and exhilarate you, promises to enlarge you and to bring you well to the end; everything in God. His love, His favour, His peace, His mercy, His goodness, His power, everything opened and revealed by the Holy Spirit to the eye of faith will cause this person to whom such favour comes, to rejoice, rejoice in the Lord. There is not anything in the creature, except

what comes from heaven, to rejoice in. The best we have is bad. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it". And when the disciple has done all he has been told to do then he is to say, he is an unprofitable servant. No flesh is to glory in God's presence. Therefore that Scripture, that great Scripture, in the Corinthians is wonderful, when received and felt to be true: "Who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, according as it is written, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord." No flesh shall glory, but, O, when God comes and says, "I am thy God"; "I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward"; The Lord God is a sun and shield and He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly; then, in what measure of light, life and glory, the word is spoken, a sinner rejoices in the Lord, and it is mutual. O, how sweet it is when these two come together; when a forgiving God and a pardoned sinner come together, when a loving Saviour and a sinner who loves the Saviour are walking together in sweet friendship. "I call you friends". It may not be common today; I think, at least, it is not common today, but the time has been, when it has been well with the church of God, when there have been the sweet experiences I am mentioning, more lively, more powerful in the church than now; still it is not altogether gone. Are not there some here who have walked with God and who do walk with God? One says, but I am too busy. I am occupied all the day with my affairs, and I seem to have no time even to think of God. Is it always so? Must a person, in order to walk with God, be sequestered, separated, brought away from all the business of this life? No. Enoch walked with God, but Enoch had a family. He begat children, sons and daughters, lived so many hundred years, and walked with God. And so you, by divine grace, can - O, that it might be so - walk with God in your business. You can be diligent in business and fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

Are we in agreement with the Church of God, as God has constituted her? Are we in agreement with the Ordinances of God? Do you agree with the word of Christ, with the commission He gave to His disciples when, just before He was leaving the world, He said to them - Go into all the world and disciple them. Preach the gospel. Make disciples and baptize them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Do you agree with it? If it were my word you might easily

and properly quarrel with it but it is not my word. It is His word and until you can find in this Book something to warrant you to say that He did not mean all He said, something to warrant you to think that this great commission, with all it contains, can be, at least partly, dispensed with, you are not obeying Him. That, as the people of God, is certainly a sign of your non-agreement with Christ in that particular, and how can you walk with Him in it. Do you agree with the ordinance of the Lord's Supper? Did you ever see any beauty in it? - A crucified Saviour condescending to say: Now take this bread, a symbol on My broken body; eat it; and because I would be remembered, I would have you commemorate My death often, and as often as you do it, do it as a commemoration; do it in memory of Me, your dying Friend. "This do in remembrance of Me". Do you agree with Christ in this? Do you agree with Him respecting eternity? What about eternity? There are two places and preceding the entrance, for ever and ever, into this or that, there is a day of judgment, a great assize seat, the Judge sitting and the world assembled and men divided; some put on the right side and denominated sheep; some put on the left side and called goats. And to these a word is spoken, an awful word, tingling word, a word enough, when believed, and it has been believed by some of us, to make our ears tingle and our hearts shake; a word to inspire terror, a word that opens the pit, a word that hurries unwilling creatures into outer darkness where there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, and, on the other hand, a welcome extended to people who say, Lord, we cannot remember this that Thou dost commend. When did we do this and when did we do that? But He says "Come, ye blessed of My Father". If you, who are not born again, could for one moment be admitted into that glorious place where the Trinity is, where the Church is, where elect angels are, and where harps are, and palms and songs, and living fountains of waters, you would not be at home. The place and your nature so different, you could not feel happy. You would howl, you would wish to depart. But, to people who feel that their hearts are after God, hankering for Him, and praying to Him with a new nature, O, what a welcome place will that be. How like their wishes, how like their hearts, how like their prayers. And God will welcome them, and they will be at home. Do you think you will be at home? How can two walk together except they be agreed? Look at the searching text and God cause it to speak to you and to speak to me, that we may search and

try our ways before Him.