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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday evening 25 September 1927

COLOSSIANS 3 v 11

"Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision
nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but
Christ is all, and in all"

With respect to the standing of a sinner before God, the only thing that is availing is a new creature. Whether that new creature is in you, in me, will be a question that it will be well for us to be asking, if we are not persuaded of it by the Lord. Religion, as an external thing, may very well be without this new creature. Consistent knowledge of the Scriptures may very well be without this new creature. A correct profession may easily be without this new creature, but no pleasure does God take in those things, as they stand alone. He will say to many professors, "Who hath required this at your hand that ye should tread my courts?" Whether He will ever say that to any of us, He knows, but if we fear Him we shall desire to be free from so awful a word as that. Nothing legal helps the matter. Says Paul there is no advantage in circumcision here; no disadvantage holds here. Uncircumcision has no avail, no influence here. Race, the distinguished, favoured race of Abraham holds not here, and the lack of that privilege, that distinction, does not hinder here. A Barbarian is at no disadvantage on that ground here. A Scythian, a Barbarian of all Barbarians, more uncivilised and rude, in that day, is not barred here. No servant is barred by his service; his servitude is no hindrance. And a free man, born free, and living a freeman is not helped in that particular here. It is just this, and this only, a new creature. Born again, born of the Spirit, begotten by the word of truth to be a kind of firstfruits of God's creatures. This availeth and nothing else. The new man created in Christ Jesus after the image of Him that created him. A sinner brought into a new state, delivered from the bondage and corruption of death in trespasses and sins. A sinner made sensible of his sinnership, of his alienation. A sinner made aware, savingly so, of the disease of sin and taught to cry "Heal my soul for I have sinned", this, this alone,

availeth here. It is very solemn; if we are under the teaching of the Spirit it will be very solemn to us. It will cause us to come before God and ask Him to show us that we are born of God, that we have this new creature. No matter how it was given, no matter what means were used or if no means were used; no matter as to the thing itself, whether it came suddenly or apparently very gradually, though it always comes in an instant. The thing is to be a new creature, born of the Spirit; an instantaneous birth, though lingering long in some cases before deliverance comes. Though we may not be able to lay our hand on the time and the means, can we say that a change has come? That we are not what we were, do not feel only as we used to feel; have different apprehensions of the God of all power and glory than we had formerly; that we perceive it is good and only good to have an interest in Him who is Almighty God and yet Immanuel God with us. Come brethren, come my dear hearers, look seriously and honestly at this question. Born here, as it were, some of you; brought here others of you; in the providence of God, sitting here now, is this the one question for the moment - Am I born of God? Have I been sprinkled with the clean water? Has the covenant promise of God been fulfilled in me: I will give them a heart of flesh, a new heart. I will give them a heart to know Me that I am the Lord. If this question be well settled in our souls, if we be blessedly confirmed in this, then we may say we shall be brought well through difficulties, temptations, little hells; well through. And that, that embraces all, that shall be for the good of the new creature, for his sustenance, perseverance and the glory of God, the Spirit of Christ has wrapped up in Himself, put it all in Him. "But Christ is all, and in all". Some may say, we like that. Now before you talk of Christ, think this, ask this of yourselves, have we been made to feel our need of Him?

What comfort can a Saviour bring
To those who never felt their woe?

"But Christ". It behoves one here in the first place to endeavour to say a word about this God-Man. Christ is the Anointed, the anointed King, the anointed Priest, the sent Prophet, the Apostle. Christ is the Person in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily. The Person to whom the Father gave grace before the world began for

the people given to Him to save. He is the Person to whom the Father bears witness. He bore that great witness at the baptism of Jesus. "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased. Hear ye Him." He bore the same witness on the Mount of Transfiguration when His disciples, the favoured three, heard this. "We heard", says Peter, giving an account of that wondrous day, We heard the voice from the excellent glory. This is My beloved Son, hear Him. This is the Man who shall stand and feed, or rule, and both of them in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the Name of His God, His Father. (Micah 5 v 4) This is the Man who shall stand against all the false shepherds, and shall be the peace of His people when the Assyrian comes into their land. (Micah 5 v 5) This is the Man who, having been obedient to death, even the death of the cross, is now exalted at the right hand of His Father, being exalted for a two-fold purpose, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And this is the Man who rules all the world. Angels are His servants, made ministering spirits to His people. Who rules, wherever a creature is, in heaven, in earth, in hell. Who ordains everything, arranges everything, manages everything and works everything according to the purpose of His Own will, He being one with the Father and the Holy Ghost. This is the Christ of the text. O wondrous Person. Sometimes I would in my spirit just like to live gazing on Him and then fly away to be with Him. He is worthy of being praised and honoured and every believer honours Him as he honours the Father, for this is the Father's will concerning Him. And He Himself said this, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." If I am lifted up on the cross - for He spoke of the death He should die - I will draw all men to Me. Though all men despise Me by nature, I will draw them to Me. There, there sick souls shall be healed. There, there injustice shall be taken away and they shall be justified. And there, there pollution shall be washed away and there, there iniquities shall be subdued and there they shall find all their fitness, and meetness and title for heaven. Do you know Him? Do you know Him? I wont say, do you love Him, because I am sure if you know Him you love Him. I do not like the form in which the question is put generally by many free-will people about loving Christ. You cannot love Him if you do not know Him, and you cannot know Him if you do not need Him in your soul's feelings. You must be poor, you must be ruined, you must be lost, in order to know this Lord Jesus Christ. Do you know Him? I have often put Erskine's

question to you; let me put it again

Dost mind the place, the spot of land
Where Jesus did thee meet

There is to be a contact with Him; there is to be a contact. Have you found it? A seeking soul values the Physician when His skill has been proved. A lost soul values the Saviour when salvation has been made known in ever so small a degree. A weak creature values the mighty God when that omnipotent hand has been laid upon him for good. A blind soul values the Guide who guides him into all truth, who is the truth, the very truth. So if we know Him we love Him and we desire to trust Him and follow Him. O it is one thing to think these things, one thing to approve them in our judgement, and another to be hungering and thirsting to have them in our hearts, and a still further blessing is to really have them, even to have Himself in our hearts.

"All, and in all". An inclusive word, an exclusive word. Inclusive; holding, containing, possessing everything that the church can need. Exclusive; cutting away and altogether rejecting everything that nature has, and would produce for acceptance. "Christ is all, and in all". All these things that follow and an infinitely greater number than we can imagine. But all life in the first place, all life. "I am the life." A living soul in this matter is a miracle of divine grace and mercy; born again, possessed of a life that was not known, even before the Fall. It is of a different nature from that pure natural life which Adam had and which all had in him. This is a pure spiritual life, unchangeable because it is eternal. "I give unto My sheep eternal life". No vicissitudes of experience can touch this life; it knows no change in itself. Whatever differences are experienced with regard to it; it knows no change. It could not be eternal if it could know a change. I give this to My sheep and all the supplies of it, all the motions Godward, of a new-born person, all holy desires, all gracious affections, petitions, all worship, adoration, all rising above the earth and above the things that come and affect us and afflict us, all these things are but the motions of that one life that is given by Jesus Christ and that He is in and for His people through eternity. This came as a sovereign gift, was imparted by the Holy Spirit sovereignly, and all the increases of it are from Christ. All its

victories over death come from Him. You can never add to this; nature can never rise into spirituality. A man can only be spiritual if he is born again, blessed with a divine nature. And this is the explanation of exercises, of fears, lest you should be wrong. The explanation of all desires to submit to the will of God, and of submission from time to time. Of all that abstraction from the world, leaving it, hating it; and of all that hating of your own life that you may find it. This is the explanation - life, divine life. Bunyan, when blessed with it, though he did not know at that moment that he possessed it, found himself leaving wife and children and putting his fingers in his ears as they cried after him to come back. And this was his cry, life, life, eternal life. And God has given all this life to Jesus for His people. The Father has life in Himself and He has given the Son to have life in Himself and He giveth it to whomsoever He will. O brethren, what favoured creatures you are in possession of this everlasting life. May you remember when you are troubled, when the languid life that you feel in your own souls - even if you can feel you have it - seems to be getting more and more languid; when sin tramples you under foot, when the devil drives you into some wilderness; when you seem to be a prey to all the lusts of your fallen nature; then may you remember this, "I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish." Happy the man, whatever his state may be here, whatever changes he passes through here, who possesses this blessed, holy life. It is pure; it never can be other than pure; never. It is holy; it will always separate you from yourself and from the world. It is a holy life; it could not be other coming from Christ, for He is holy. The holy child Jesus, the holy Son of God, the holy and only Saviour. He is all that.

Secondly, Christ is all and in all in respect of sanctification. The word itself may be a startling and troublesome word to you who have this life because you are so painfully conscious of sin and get so defiled by your thoughts, and are so crushed at times under the weight of trouble. But it is, notwithstanding that, a truth that every child of God is sanctified, and Jesus Christ is his sanctification. "Who, of God, is made unto us sanctification". For this Christ prayed for all His people - "Sanctify them through Thy truth" and the Holy Spirit effects this to Christ's glory. It stands well with God; it is effected in just that measure that Divine wisdom

ordained to teach you that in Christ you are accepted - He is your sanctification. This, under the Spirit's blessing excludes boasting so that when you speak of experience you come to a changing experience. One day how separated you feel, how holy in your desires, how gracious in your aspirations. Who is desired by you, but God? How honestly you can appeal to Him and say to Him: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee". But another day just the opposite is your experience. The world, in something belonging to you, some earthly interest, something that draws you away from the throne of grace, hardens your heart against the Lord, making you wish you were independent of Him; something that says, I should wish, I do wish that; I wish I could get it; I wish I could do it, and prayer is not in you. Sanctification of the Spirit seems all but crushed out of you. Now if you had to stand before God with this changing experience, what awful fears you would have. It is difficult to come into that Scripture in the Romans "Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God", most difficult. It does trouble one to look at a word like that sometimes when one is in exactly the opposite condition; alive to self, alive to the world, alive to many an interest of this world, things which it is proper for us to be interested in, but which we abuse. But O, when the Lord says, now Christ is made sanctification to you, when your heart receives such a doctrine as that, such a truth as that, then you have got another standing, then you see that though the Spirit works your graces in you, though He gives you faith and hope and love, though He clothes you with humility, though He breathes prayer into you now and again, though He gives you occasional glimpses of the Lord Jesus, the thing that stands immoveable, unchanged, unchangeable, is this doctrine: "Who, of God, is made unto us sanctification." O believer, rejoice in this, Christ is all of this. The whole of it in time, as it is conveyed; through eternity as it is to be enjoyed. "All, and in all".

And thirdly He is "All, and in all" in every victory that a child of God obtains over any enemy in this world. We have to learn that word that Hart has, a good word

Christ who conquered for us once
Shall in us conquer too

He shall subdue our iniquities; He shall do it. Well, what a wonderful blessing that is. We have enemies and they are in our hearts. A man's foes are of his own household; there they are. An unbelieving heart, a worldly disposition, a lustful mind, a covetous mind. O what enemies we have. One need not enlarge here; every child of God can supply out of his own painful experience all that is necessary here. But what a wonderful thing it is that you are not always under the foot of your enemies, that they are not always trampling upon you. That although perhaps very frequently you say you have no strength to rise, there are occasions when you can say, I rise; - "Rejoice not against me O my enemy; when I fall I shall arise, and though I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me" - when you can commit everything to Him, when you can say - "Begone unbelief, My Saviour is near", when you perceive the grossness of unbelief and the beauty of faith; when you perceive the Lord near you and about you and in you, compassing you with favour as with a shield. He is the Captain of our salvation and has engaged to bring His people to glory; He has engaged to do it, and He shall not fail nor be discouraged in this matter. He is the mighty God and He travels in the greatness of His strength. He will come to every poor, downtrodden saint of His, every poor devil-tempted and afflicted saint of His. He shall come to them all and give them victories. Here they get them by occasions. O sweet it is to get a victory, a single victory, by the Lord. "All in all". You say, Not unto me, not unto me; I could never have got this victory over my covetousness, my hardness of heart, my unbelief, my unfaithfulness. I could never have given the world up, never have given it up in that particular. I could never have cast my care on Him and left my matters with Him of myself, but He came, He said cast all your care upon Me, I care for you. He said "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass." O brethren, what a captain we have.

And in the next place, connected with this, but yet separable in respect of speaking, He has all power in heaven and in earth; all power in heaven and in earth. And this belongs to Him in two respects. First it is His by nature. He is the Lord God Omnipotent; would have been if He had never made a world; if He had not become Man He would have been the Lord God Omnipotent reigning. It is His in respect of

His office. Having finished the work His Father gave Him to do, now He holds that great office of King. All power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth. What a blessing this is. He gave proofs of this while here, a poor Man, in that He raised the dead; that He opened blind eyes; when He fed, of a few loaves and fishes, thousands of men, beside women and children. He gave proof of this when, immediately after His baptism He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil and there He overcame the god of this world; a pledge of that victory, of all His victories, He should later obtain in His people. And the rule of the devil, that foul, fallen spirit, the god of this world, who bruises sinners in their hearts and best affections at times, who harasses them, who perplexes them with many questions, who hurls terrible things and thoughts into their minds. This devil, this accuser of the brethren - who may have come to some of you and accused you of hypocrisy when you have named the Name of the Lord and accused you of serving Him for certain wrong objects and ends; that accuser of the brethren who comes and accuses you of disloyalty because now and again, and very painfully, you find yourself moving in contrary directions; contrary to obedience, the obedience you would render; this accuser of the brethren who comes and points out to you your filthy garments and says how can you think of being accepted? think of standing before the Lord of the whole earth - this accuser is sometimes cast down. That Scripture is made good - "God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly". He shall do it. Then faith says: "Rejoice not against me O my enemy. Though I fall, I shall arise." O tempted soul, Jesus is the God of the devil, the Ruler of the devil. More powerful is He than the god of this world. All your providences, all your changes, all your good things, all your evil things, your afflictions and your healings your troubles and your blessings, your chastisements and your restorations, these are in the hand of this ever blessed Immanuel, God with us. So He speaks to floods and rivers, and to His people He says they shall not overflow you. The waters are in the hollow of His hand. Yea, He controls the fire. It is very probable that if the three Hebrew children who confessed Him and went into the fire for His Name, had been asked to say what was the pleasantest walk they ever had, what the easiest and sweetest they ever had, what the most beneficial air, health-giving atmosphere they ever breathed, I think they would say, when we were in the burning fiery furnace. I think

they would say that. They certainly never had anything pleasanter, for the Son of God was with them, and nothing can be pleasanter to a soul fearing God than the presence of the Lord Jesus; that great and glorious One, walking with the soul. You will never be better in health, you will never be stronger in faith, you will never be warmer in affection, you will never be brighter in hope, never more courageous than when the Son of God is walking with you in affliction. This is His power. He can say this to a sinner. When you are in the water, you shall not be drowned. When you are passing through the fire you shall not be burnt. I am with you. He calls things as they are; He says, water is water; flood is flood, and flame is flame, but He makes them nothing by His power. At least He makes them instruments for good. "All, and in all".

And dear friends, in the next place, He is All, and in all, in respect of intercession. I must name this, because without it I have no hope. Dull feelings and failings, shortcomings, sinnings, these, these make me dumb. Do you find the same experience? Do you feel dumb when at times you would seek the Lord and a remembrance comes into your mind of this and that evil? Do you feel that you have not a word that you can say, no excuse, no extenuation, No. The Adamic spirit is killed again and again. You cannot say, Lord that trouble did it, and that temptation effected my ruin here and there. No, you have to say, guilty, guilty, only guilty. Therefore Jesus Christ in heaven interceding for His Own, opening His mouth for the dumb, in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction, He opens His mouth, He pleads righteously. Toplady has it very beautifully in one hymn

Founded on right, Thy prayer avails
The Father smiles on Thee

The right on which His intercession is founded is His death, a perfect atonement. On that is founded His ever prevailing intercession. "All, and in all". All their righteousness, all their hope.

Now lastly, all their perseverance. Faint, yes often faint, yet pursuing. The reason is the Lord Jesus pours fresh life and courage on His people. Mr Interpreter showed pilgrim one wonderful

thing. A fire burning and one pouring water upon it, yet the fire seemed to increase notwithstanding, and this was explained when the pilgrim was taken to the back-side of the fire and there he saw one pouring oil in, which was more effectual to increase the fire than the water was to put it out. So the people of God persevere

Perseverance in our race
We draw from Jesus' blood

He gives it by His Spirit. We may say with David, I shall one day fall by the hand of my enemy; we may think we will give it all up and must do so, as David said he must get out of the land; because there was but a step between him and death, therefore he would now make good his escape, but God was with him. And you may think, I must give it all up. I am full of discouragement, and my circumstances are discouraging, and my sins are discouraging, my ignorance is discouraging, temptations discourage me and put me out of countenance; I must give it all up. And yet you kneel down and get fresh courage, get a new help, some sweet token for good. Some comfortable truth comes into your heart, and you say, I will hold on. I will cleave as long as I live; I will be the limpet, I will cleave as fast as I can, as close as I can, and always if I can to this blessed One, the Lord Jesus Christ. "All", in our perseverance, and we shall get to the end honourably, as we have prayed often, and all in the Lord Jesus. So everything is wrapped up in this Person. And when we look at self and see so much there to be ashamed of, and discouraged by, then the Spirit turns the eye another way, to the Lord Jesus. Now may the Lord help us to believe this word.

AMEN.