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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday morning 5 July 1925

Galatians 5 v 25

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk
in the Spirit"

The dispensation of the Spirit in which we are living is a dispensation of the gospel. The Spirit is a person in the Godhead, one with the Father and the Son, equal in nature, glory, majesty and power. His work in the soul is as necessary for salvation as the work of Christ for the soul. His operations are the only saving operations. The Father sends Him even as He sent His Son and the Son, having accomplished the work His Father gave Him to do, and ascended into heaven, also sends the Spirit and so the Trinity is singularly, beautifully and gloriously manifested in the salvation of the church, and of every member of the church, and if this Holy Spirit be given to us, it is in itself and will be to us later, if it is not now, an evidence indubitable that we are the children of God. The Father gave His Spirit to His Son without measure, and He and the Son concerned in giving the Spirit in measure to every member of the mystical body of Christ, so that that is solemnly true that the Apostle Paul says in the Romans "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His". This is the measuring line, this is the reed of which we are told in the Revelation and by that measuring reed the temple is measured, the altar is measured and all who worship at the altar are measured and the outer court is given to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles. A very solemn passage which, if we are led to notice and apply to ourselves, will be a test to us. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His". He may attach himself to Christ by an open profession of Him; he may name the name of Christ but not having the Spirit of Christ he has no vital union with Christ. He can be religious but he can never have the image of Christ imprinted on his heart without the Spirit of Christ. There were four hearers of the gospel we are told in the parable and only one of them right. We are told

again that in the great day of judgment many will say to the Lord, Lord we have prophesied in Thy Name, done wonders in Thy Name, have been eating and drinking with others even with Thine own, and He will say to them "I never knew you". Such a passage may have shaken some of you as it has shaken me. Here the Apostle gives us two amazing principles, rather one principle, governing, guiding, controlling principle, and then the effects of that principle. "If we live in the Spirit let us also walk in the Spirit". Let us live according to what we profess. May there be fruit according to the principle. Life is principle, action follows it. What the life is the fruit will be. If we live in the flesh, the works of the flesh, as they are called in this chapter, will more or less be manifested by us. Nothing can rise above its nature. Nature can produce natural things, nothing better. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh"; it can never become spirit. It can take on different forms; it can speak and live according to general Christianity; it cannot become spirit. This is to the people of God at times, without doubt, a very searching consideration.

Well let us as helped look first of all then at what it is to live in the Spirit. This is very important. Clearly by this passage and the tenor of the whole of the Scripture respecting vital religion, the root and source of vital religion is by the Holy Ghost. He dwells in all the saints, and to live in or by the Spirit is to have that answerable in you that we read in the Scripture that the Holy Ghost is a well of water in the soul, springing up into everlasting life or as again Christ says the believer has the Holy Ghost and by that divine Spirit there is such a working as is spoken of, rivers of water. Religion in the believer is not kept alive by some external spasmodical operation of circumstances and so on. It is not some pressure brought from without to bear on the conscience forcing it out of the world into a profession, but an inward operation, a life and from life will flow all action. Dr Owen speaking of conscience said "If conscience were dead in all men, then you might pull down your churches and chapels." It is a natural conscience in most people that drives them into a form of godliness. A singular difference

in the beginning at least is between the world in that particular and the people of God. The world will have its external religion. A living soul, with the Spirit dwelling in him, is afraid of making a profession, afraid of speaking of himself, particularly I say at the beginning. The thought of anyone knowing that he is exercised is a sort of trouble. To live in the Spirit then is to have the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, making the soul free from the law of sin and death, not from the inbeing of sin, that is to plague the saint as long as he lives; that is to be the cross for him to take up, that will frequently distress him, frequently defile him; sometimes overcome him; as Paul found - "The good that I would I do not". That principle of death, sinful life, will from time be the greatest affliction, the heaviest cross, the most piercing sorrow, and the deepest shame that the child of God can ever know. Contrary to this is the indwelling Spirit and He, while the flesh lusts against Him, lusts against it. The Spirit lusteth against the flesh and the flesh lusteth, willeth, moveth, operateth, against the Spirit. Going with the stream a man will say I find no opposition. Swimming against the stream will make a man say sometimes I am exhausted and can go no further, struggle no more. In true religion there is a constant swimming against the stream necessary. The child of God finds this in him, either what he wants, what he seeks, must come and conquer what he hates, or what he hates will conquer him and the terrible alternative is to him a moving thing. What, am I to be subject to the flesh, be conquered by the law of sin in my members and so be driven and hurled as in a whirlpool, swallowed up? No the Spirit says, No. The law of the Spirit makes this person free from the dominion of sin, fulfilling that promise, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace." If we live in the Spirit, if this principle of life be in us, a guiding, directing, governing principle, not to our sense active every moment, not to our experience always prevalent, but always present, the trend of the mind, the bent of the heart, the thirst of the soul, the hunger will always as to principle be with you, though as to operation varying from time to time; sometimes energetic, so as to make you say, hinder me not to every

opposition; languid sometimes so as to make you wonder if the principle is present in you. If you judge always by your experience of this you will perhaps often cut yourself off. If you have sight enough to penetrate beneath the crust of sin and the workings of corruption, then you may say though I am vile, and though sin is ceaselessly active in me, and though I am alas often overcome, I find a Godward principle in me; I find that which in my heart rises toward, though I cannot reach God as I would. If we live in the Spirit, we have the Spirit of God with us, in us. This is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, in the believer, and so he is so to speak, he is the subject of two laws; the law of sin in his members, and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and because these two are exactly opposite to each other, of different natures, appetites, aims and ends, there will be a conflict in the soul where these two are. You may feel sometimes as if your hearts were a battlefield, and two deadly enemies at war within you; a company of two armies; as if you had two hearts, two minds, two wills, as if it were so indeed, that you are likely at times just to be torn to pieces by the opposing principles in your hearts. O happy person who has this experience. Not happy often, or perhaps not very often, in his feeling, but as to his state unalterably happy, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus will never give in, never be conquered. Paul, at the close of his relation of his conflict says I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord, so then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; with the flesh, condemned to die, now under sentence of death, the law of sin. Thanks be to God that the old man is under condemnation, the sentence must be executed for a time and therefore the old man will take licence as Solomon speaks in another case "Because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." But I say the sentence is there and one day will be fully and everlastingly executed.

If we live in the Spirit, we have a Spirit of holiness in us. Yes. Holy brethren is one name that the Spirit of God gives to the saints. Wherefore, holy brethren. Infused into their

hearts is the Spirit of holiness hence the fear of God by which they depart from hell beneath. The law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus becomes a living law, in them, to direct them and a loving principle in them to keep them from evil, from sinning wilfully. The man who sins wilfully and constantly is not possessed of this Spirit, but he who can say, though he says it with pain and shame "the good that I would I do not" has the Spirit of life in him; he lives by the Spirit and it is a great mercy the Scripture reveals distinctly that the same Holy Spirit who was given to Christ without measure, is given to every saint in measure. The same Spirit, the stem out of the root of Jesse had given to Him, the Spirit of the Lord. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him as the Spirit of power, the Spirit of counsel, the Spirit of might, and the Spirit of knowledge, and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord. Oh believer, the Holy Ghost in you came from Christ, and as He was in Christ, in those blessed particulars treated of in the 11 Isaiah, so He will be in you, and those very same particulars will be in you in a measure, which were in the Man Christ Jesus without measure.

Take the Spirit of Life. If we live in the Spirit we have eternal life. It is a beautiful consideration and will be so to us if we are led into it, to consider that the union with Christ which a soul longs for begins in regeneration, and that the image of Christ which a soul pants to wear, begins in regeneration. The Spirit of Christ in a saint has that wonderful, holy, blessed, glorious image of Christ imprinted upon his soul. Life is a hungry principle. Hunger is not a thing you can make. Hunger is a part of your nature. So hunger for God is not a thing a person can make in himself. It is the result of life in his soul, breath imparted by the Eternal Spirit, and it is by this and this only that a sinner can say with the Psalmist, "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after Thee O God." Can you not do without Him? Does He see that is so? Does He hear you say it sometimes, confessing your emptiness, and hunger and thirst, "Lord I cannot do without Thee. I would not if I might. Come to my soul, visit me in Thy love; sprinkle me with Thy blood and clothe me in Thy righteousness.

Discover these to me; let me see them by faith; live on them and to them." Life is the source and root of that hunger. If we live in the Spirit then we have hunger and though it is difficult for me to say it, living as I so often do, far from God, yet I will say it that it is this presence, indwelling and life of the Spirit that will, that must ever find its way toward God. It is a governing, a guiding principle, and it controls, it guides the steps into the way of peace, and what is said in the Ephesians is that the soul longs for as its own experience "For through Him" that is Christ "we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father". I know that a living soul cannot be really happy and at rest away from God. The author and the end of being and the author and end of spiritual being is God, and you cannot be happy without Him. If we live in the Spirit then we have life.

Then we have also the clean fear of God. It is a great grace, and is the fruit of the Spirit's work. If you live in the Spirit, you have the fear of God. If you live in the Spirit, you have the Spirit of knowledge. Knowledge is good. "That the soul be without knowledge is not good" says Solomon and this knowledge is what the soul pants for "Jesus reveal Thyself to me"; none else, none less, no other. There is no substitute for Christ to one in whom the Spirit of Christ dwells, and therefore that you may take as a sign of the Spirit dwelling in you. The Spirit of power also is in all in whom the Spirit of Christ dwells. He came on Christ as the Spirit of power and He will be the same in you in a measure. Hence sin is conquered, not by your effort, but by the working of the Spirit. He comes and lusts against the flesh, resists it, forbids it, disallows it. What a mercy to disallow sin, really in your conscience to disallow sin. Even the sin into which you are alas driven. The good that I would I do not. The evil that I allow not, that I discountenance, turn from and hate, that I do, but the conquest is gained by the Spirit, the Spirit of power and this power is very wonderful as it works in the soul, moving it after God, keeping it waiting for God, hanging on the atonement, pleading the death of Christ, and looking for His righteousness and that alone. Oh great is this work; blessed is this indwelling of the Spirit. If we live in

the Spirit, there will then be this that the sinner will from time to time find in him, that up-bubbling and springing of which we read in the Psalms "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks" My heart bubbleth a good matter; there is a springing and bubbling and rising in the soul where this blessed Holy Spirit is.

Now look then dear brethren at this point as it respects your own cases. There may be much religion without this; there may be an acquired knowledge of the Bible without this. There may be disputes about religion and points in divinity, without this, and it becomes a very searching question with some, whether they have the Spirit of God in them or not. Take one or two more points on this great and important matter. Take that that is written of Him in a way of promise in the Gospel according to John. It is said of Him that He is the Comforter, one who trains, teaches, guides, and brings the comfort of the gospel to a wounded, pained, needy sinner. This is part of His work. This is part of His gracious dealing with the people in whom He dwelleth and who live in Him. Our religion, if it be real, is not one of unbroken trouble and misery. There are comforts in vital religion, The comfort of love, and the fellowship of the Spirit. When He, the Comforter, is come, come to you if you live in the Spirit, you will have plenty of conviction of sin but you also will have some comfort. And how does He comfort? By bringing good news from a far country, giving beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. I say it is not all one side, when you are in a bad case even. The child of God there, you may be like Ephraim, a cake not turned, dough on one side, a cinder on the other, but when the Spirit is working then you will find there will be some comfort "I will restore comfort unto him and to his mourners" and this comfort is the comfort of the gospel; the comfort of love divine, the fellowship of the blessed Spirit. He brings good news, as He did to the Psalmist who said "Oh my God, my soul is cast down within me". Then he said in a minute or two as you have it in the Psalm "Why art thou cast down O my soul". He began to expostulate with himself. Why all this ado? Then

says he I shall praise Him, I shall praise Him. Do not yield to this unbelief; give not way to these questions and these fears and this sinking. Why all this ado? Trust in the Lord, hope in Him, for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God. Do you not find this in your souls at times? Do not you find yourselves saying "Begone unbelief my Saviour is near". A gracious exhortation in your souls will be a sign of good in you, that the Spirit has not given up working and has not altogether forsaken you. He comforts by bringing the truth to the heart, perhaps by giving you a very reviving remembrance of something God said to you in the past. If you live in the Spirit you will find He is working this with you. He shall bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you. Perhaps you take it as a very grave mark against you at times that you forget the things that you have enjoyed. Perhaps sometimes early in the morning some passage will refresh your spirit, and help you, and in a few hours you have forgotten it, and then your own heart and the tempter will be saying well but it did not come from God. If it had done you would not have forgotten it. I remember this coming to me many years ago and the relief I got. They remembered His word. It is a relative term. It has reference to something you have forgotten. As Paul speaks in the Hebrews, we should take earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest at any time we should let them slip. Then the Spirit brings back what was said to you; some rebuke which has brought conviction and shame to you and some comfort which lifted you up sweetly and made the Lord again your hope. He brings back these things and you say what a foolish creature I have been. I have lived as if I had never heard His voice, in such and such things. I have lived as if He had never spoken to me. I have suffered a good deal this way. The forgetfulness of my heart of God and His things has been a trouble. Solomon says, a word which is very solemn, "There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise, but a foolish man spendeth it up" and the foolish memory is just like a spendrift, lets everything go, and the Spirit brings it back to you, and you get hold of it afresh. Then you fulfil what the Lord has said and commanded in His gracious Word. Remember how thou hast received

and hold fast.

Then also if you live in the Spirit, you live in and by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and of all the sweet things that a child of God gets this is the sweetest that he gets. New views of the Saviour, and from these views come the most comfortable meditations he can have. He looks at himself and says here is a lost sinner. His eye of faith is turned by the Spirit to the Saviour and faith says in Him there is a Saviour I need, every way suitable to my case; rich and His riches are for my poverty; righteous and His righteousness is for my justification; holy and His holiness is my sanctification; a door to the Father, and I am enabled to go through Him to the Father by His Spirit. When you get the revelation then you get this meditation. Then faith moves up and down in His Name as it is written "I will strengthen them in the Lord and they shall walk up and down in His Name, saith the Lord". If you live in the Spirit you will one day get that revelation in some measure. It is a great thing so to live.

Also if we live in the Spirit we shall drink into the mind of Christ. We, says Paul, have the mind of Christ, and you know in that connection it is the difference there is between nature and a spiritual perception of Him. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." What then? He that is spiritual knows all these things, and he says, "we have the mind of Christ". The mind of Christ is His love and His goodwill to a sinner. The mind of Christ is known by the free gospel of His grace flowing in its sweet streams into the soul, and it is thus that the sinner, blessed with this indwelling, lives in the Spirit. One word more on this point. If we live in the Spirit, we live in the truth, for He is the Spirit of Truth. O what a difference there is between the letter and form of sound words, and the Spirit of Truth. It were good for us to be enabled more constantly to consider the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error. Doubtless the spirit of error can live and thrive under a profession of the

form of sound words. A professor of the doctrines of grace may say I believe them, I would not give them up. All the arminian teaching in the world would not move him to give them up. And he may be suddenly tempted and forget and forsake his profession, and forsake the Lord like the many disciples of whom we read - then went back many of His disciples - and like them also, walk no more with Him. Beware of resting in the form of sound words. I do not say this because I have no appreciation of the form of sound words. I believe it is a good thing to have it and hold it. A mercy to be convinced of the form of sound words, a form embracing the whole doctrine of the Bible, the doctrine of the Trinity, an ever blessed truth that emanates from Him as the God of all grace. But, O, you may hold it, you may be able to split hairs in contending for it, and yet live in the spirit of error, neither knowing God nor yourselves in a way of gracious experience. Let me again say to you, beware of resting in the form of sound words. If you apprehend it, value it, and thank God for it, but ask Him to give you the Spirit of Truth. The Spirit of Truth dwells in the soul where the Holy Ghost is. A sweet Spirit He is; the Spirit of Truth; and what will He do where He dwells? Guide you into all truth. "He shall guide you into all truth".

Now you young people who fear the Lord, listen to these. When you hear old godly people talk about their experience which may be, to speak in terms of distance, miles and miles beyond you, do not conclude that you have never taken one step in the divine way and life. It is not seemly for a child to talk like an old man, is it? Nor is it seemly for one newly entered into the way of God to speak as if he had been travelling 40 years. Wait on God. He will teach you little by little. He will teach you. Now one day you may get such a view of the blessed Trinity as to make you say I love the Father, I love the Son, I love the Holy Ghost. If ever you get that do prize it, hold it as fast as you can, for the knowledge of the Trinity is the most beautiful and wonderful knowledge that ever can possess your soul. At another time you might get a view of the Lord Jesus incarnate and say

I love the Incarnate Mystery
And there I fix my trust

How good is that. And another time you may get such a view of the Spirit of Christ as to say O if that divine Spirit would but indwell me; if He would but be my teacher, and my guide and my guard; if He would but warn me and reprove me, and lead me and comfort me, I would have all that my soul desires. Value that. The Trinity is dearer to me nowadays than it used to be and I do wish to be thankful that very frequently my mind is attracted to this wondrous doctrine, the Godhead, the Being I adore and would love and hope to dwell with for ever. O glorious Being; O wonderful, mysterious Being; Almighty, Eternal God. Meditate on this as you can. Now the Spirit of Truth will lead you and lead you gradually. Do not make haste. Wait on God. The greatest, the best, the safest speed for you you will find to be on your knees. You will get on best there; you will get through troubles safely that way, and you will enter truth well that way and walk in the ways of peace that way. O if we could but live on our knees; speaking metaphorically, if we could but live on our knees. The Spirit of Truth then guides into all truth.

One word more and I close, and that is if we live in the Spirit we shall live in love. The religion of Jesus Christ is a religion of love. Love to God and love to His will, even when that will crosses yours. Love to the Saviour whose Name is named on the Church; love to providence when providence is wounding and emptying, and weakening and crossing you in its mysterious movements. Love to holiness, by which you will be saying again and again, I would be holy. Love to the Bible, inspired, infallible. Love to the ways of God; love to His ordinances; love to the saints and love to heaven. Love to heaven. I believe there is a heavenly principle in every regenerated person so that he really loves heaven. Introduced, were it possible, into heaven, an infidel would find it to be a horrible torment to him; he would howl in heaven if he could enter there, because his nature and the nature of heaven are opposed. Let a saint reach heaven and then he will understand the principle that lived

in him here and panted and took the form of hunger and thirst. Now he who used to say I would be holy, says I am in my element. How a little of it here makes you like one who can swim in his element; live and thrive and delight in his own element. When he gets to heaven he is there; no impure atmosphere to bring poison to his lungs; the holy atmosphere of heaven; holiness, beauty, loveliness, all emanating from God, whose effulgence delights and fills with bliss all who are there. If we live in the Spirit. Do we? We are here, a congregation of sinful people and the Spirit of God is a Spirit of holiness. Do we live in Him? If we are searched it will be well for us. Some years ago we had one godly member; she has been in heaven for a long time now; good Mrs Longhurst. She used to say to me at times, what searches us the most yields in the end the sweetest comfort. I believe it. Therefore may we not ask a searching question. Do we live in the Spirit? We are either in the Spirit or we are in the flesh entirely. Let us live in the Spirit; let us walk in the Spirit; for if we live in the Spirit we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

AMEN.