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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday evening 6 February 1927

Jeremiah 17 verses 7 and 8

Blessed is the man who trusteth in the Lord and whose hope
the Lord is, for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters
and that spreadeth out her roots by the river and shall not see
when heat cometh; her leaf shall be green, and shall
not be careful in the year of drought neither shall cease from
yielding fruit

This morning I drew your attention to the ground of hope,
the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, an immoveable
ground. "On this Rock" is Christ's testimony "will I build My
church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." How
solid is your ground, O believer? Then I entered upon how people
become believers, or what particular respects their faith carries
with regard to this ground of trust. A large field, needing much
grace and wisdom and unction from the Holy One. I do not want to
speak so as not to be understood, or in ways that you might not
be able to follow, and I thought I was simple, and I would be
simple again this evening in what I say with respect to the
particulars, respects that faith has to this ground of trust.

There were three respects I named this morning, first the
atonement, the blessed efficacious atonement of the Lord Jesus
Christ. My friends, the death of Christ was vicarious, in the
place of others, and everyone born again needs to have the
witness of God in his soul that Christ died for him. Nothing
sweeter, nothing more happy can ever come to you than the holy
confidence and revelation in the knowledge of Christ expressed as
Paul expresses it concerning himself. "I know whom I have
believed" and also speaking of Christ he said "Who loved me and
gave Himself for me." O happy sinner; you may lose a limb, you
may lose all happiness, you may lose power to earn the bread that
perisheth, you may lose your friends, but if you have this, you
have got a friend in heaven who will never leave you, never

forsake you. Seek to have this made out to you, you who are anxious, concerned, who know you have broken God's law, that you cannot stand before Him in your trespasses, who realise His righteousness in your condemnation. Seek, I say, pray to have this made clear to you, that Christ loved you and gave Himself for you. Then you will be ready to go to heaven, and when the time comes you may be favoured to say I am going to see Him in another manner, whom I have seen here. Nothing like that. ~~At~~ In one's right moments one would rather be able to say that, than to say a kingdom was put into one's hand. O blessed sinner who is loved by Christ and died for by Christ and who knows it in his own soul.

The second respect of faith that I named this morning was Christ's righteousness, justification; justification which, Luther said, is the life of the church and which, as preached or neglected would be the life or the languishing of the church. I wish I could preach this doctrine as it ought to be preached to you. Justification without works meant justification without an excuse, without the Adamic spirit that said "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me and I did eat". Justification that puts, by sincere confession, all the depravity, as known and seen in the bulk, and sins in particular, before God; Justification that comes to a man in that case and says "I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee". "I will remember thy sins no more". Justification which, in your conscience, will enable you to say "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength". Has your faith respect to that robe, that beautiful, seamless, sufficient robe? How beautiful in God's eye is the sinner who wears that robe. Rags, literal rags, and rags of sin done, will never shame the man who is clothed in this righteousness.

The third respect of faith is this, and I named it, the endless, measureless, patient efficacious grace of the Lord Jesus. "My grace is sufficient for thee"; sufficient for flood and for flame; sufficient for sin's rage and endeavour to rule;

sufficient for the devil's temptations, for every thorn in the flesh, for every difficulty in your way, for every indisposition you feel in respect of God and godliness; sufficient for every burden of affliction. "My grace is sufficient for thee". Sufficient to keep thee alive and make thee lively; sufficient to make thee more than a conqueror; sufficient to tread Satan under your feet shortly; sufficient for life, sufficient for death; sufficient for eternity. It is not much of this that anybody has today I think, but what a mercy to have a little of it. O what a blessing to have the grace of Christ in you, grace like a spring that makes prayer not a task to which you are lashed by a reproaching conscience, but springing as from a living spring in your soul. Grace, sweet grace; may the Lord give it to us.

Now in the next place I would speak of this, that God's saints trust Him for His wisdom to guide them, to show them the way wherein they should walk, to teach them how to avoid evil. Remember this dear brethren that Christ is Wisdom. "I Wisdom dwell with prudence and find out knowledge of witty inventions." You may come to be where Jacob was in spirit and in circumstances when he saw the angels of God; he said this place must be Mahanaim. But he might have said, I have no need, so far as I can see at this moment, for two hosts. I am going peacefully on my way by divine direction to my country and to my father's house. But he got an intimation; you may get an intimation of God's goodness that will make you say "What is coming?" You may get something in your heart that will move you to say "What is the Lord about to do with me?" It was not long before Jacob needed the two hosts, for the messengers whom he sent to his brother Esau came back and said, "Thy brother cometh to meet thee with 400 men" and poor Jacob's conscience became lively in a moment and his memory went back for 20 years and he could see then what Esau might be coming for, for Jacob had fled from Esau's anger and threatened revenge. Now his conscience might say "Esau is coming; he has got 400 men and depend upon it they have got swords. Esau remembers what you did". This was the need then for two hosts. O but say you, God led His servant

Jacob. When he had used all the means he could imagine to be the best for his escape from Esau, then he was left alone. And then the Lord came to him. It is a beautiful order and very instructive. There came a man and wrestled with him, and then there were two at the business. If ever God comes to you and gives you power, in wrestling with you, you will begin to wrestle with Him. You may say, when trouble comes, now I will make this a matter of prayer and you may not do it. But if the man comes and lays hold of you, you will lay hold of Him, and then, He will wrestle and you will wrestle, and now who is to have the victory, the man who came to Jacob, or Jacob, who is to have the victory? The worm Jacob! Yes; "What is thy name?" said the man who had said also "Let me go for the day breaketh" and Jacob said "I will not let Thee go". And you may have said it reverently, you may have said it believably, "I will not."

Lord I cannot let Thee go
Till a blessing Thou bestow

Mark every time you get of this. Notice every operation of God with you in your hearts O believers. See if He comes and lays hold of you. If His power comes you will feel it. Then it is said "And He blessed him there." His wisdom was there; His wisdom came to Jacob, it guided Jacob's hand skilfully and this was the word, which is very wonderful - "What is thy name?" Jacob. "Thy name shall no more be Jacob but Israel, for as a prince hast thou power with God and hast prevailed." Did you ever get a blessing like that? Did it ever come from the hand of a seemingly unwilling God? Did you ever feel as if you could not let the Lord alone, as if morning, noon and night there was the one business in your soul - "Lord I cannot do without Thee. This trouble is too much; this trouble brings the worst of my nature out of me. Lord, I do not know what to do, do come and help me." If you get hold, if you get hold, you will keep it till He says "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt". Is not it wonderful that our sins cannot, do not, keep this great God-man away from us? Is it not wonderful that His love is such, He comes over that which we should say would be hindrances, difficulties, but there

are no difficulties with God. He sees the end from the beginning. All wise, He times things just as they should be. He guides us. Now faith will look at Him like this sometimes - "I wisdom dwell with prudence and find out knowledge of witty inventions." I expect some of you have got some of those witty inventions in your own souls, perhaps in your houses, perhaps in your families, perhaps in your businesses and you look sometimes and say "O what did God work at that time". You say "What hath God wrought". Balak meant to curse Israel; what hath God wrought in turning his evil intention into a blessing? There are those that are destroyed because they regard not the operation of God's hands and there are those that grow by the observation they are enabled to make of the operation of God's hands. (Reference being made, no doubt, to Psalm 28 v 5) ^(Prov. 8, v 20) "I Wisdom", Jesus, the Son of God, "dwell with prudence and I lead in the way of righteousness in the midst of the paths of judgment, that I may cause those that love Me to inherit substance and I will fill their treasures." Is it not a profitable business you are engaged in, when you are waiting on God, when your faith has respect to Him. "And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him" said the prophet Isaiah. Faith looks through a cloud; faith looks through impossibilities; faith says, "With men, many things are impossible, but with God nothing is impossible."

And sometimes faith has another respect for this ground of trust, namely, the Word of God. The Covenant of God, the Covenant of Grace is an everlasting Covenant. The Covenant that God makes with a sinner, a child of His, is made in time, but it runs into Eternity, hence that beautiful word "The Word of the Lord endureth for ever, and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you". Did God ever preach a word into your soul? Did He ever preach the gospel into your soul, giving you a promise? Now that word that you have got will live for ever, and take you to its source, where you will spend a blessed eternity. "I will remember their sins and their iniquities no more". If He says that "No more", then you will go to heaven without sins, without iniquities; "I will remember them no more". When you

forget a thing it is as if that thing has no existence to you. When God says He wont remember sin any more, it is that He has just made an end of your sins, made an end of them. This, the Redeemer did on the cross when He finished transgression, made an end of sin and brought in an everlasting righteousness, and when He speaks that in the soul there is just the application of redemption work, nothing else. Experience is not something added to the work of Christ. It is the fruit of the work of Christ. O what a mercy for God to speak to a sinner. You say, I do not know. You would know if He spoke to you. "My sheep hear My voice". The peculiar power, the penetrating unction, the sweet sensations of God's mercy, the enlightening of the understanding in the salvation of God, these accompany the word of God and the sinner says, He spoke to me. 'Tis great for God to speak to a sinner. The sinner says "It is the voice of my Beloved, behold He cometh leaping o'er the mountains, skipping o'er the hills". God's voice. And it is a sanctifying voice too. Well, this comes, comes into the sinner's soul; this brings him and God together, for the written and the Incarnate Word in all things are the same. You may be able to argue about the inspiration of the Scriptures, and go to hell. You may not understand even the word "inspiration" and go to heaven with the inspired word in your soul. The inspired word comes from heaven; holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost and that same divine Spirit takes of a Scripture, a Scripture you may often have read, but never felt, and speaks it to you and it is God's word to you, God's living word in you. One says, I did not feel that power that I should like. He may say, I thought the word had an influence on my soul; it gathered my thoughts up to Himself; it took me away for the moment from the distractions of business and cares of this life; it seemed as if it set my affections on God and on Christ and on the Spirit and I saw divine things to be better, infinitely better than time things, but I did not feel the power I want, or the power that I have heard some people speak about feeling. Well, do not measure yourselves by others. If you can say what I have just been supposing you to say, there was an influence, that it sanctified your affections, that is to say, set them on God, if it showed you the beauty of divine

things as above things of time, if it made God precious in Jesus Christ, if it set you on heaven, then do try to thank God for such a word. Praise Him for speaking to you. The word is intended to do certain things for us. First, in Christ's prayer, it is to be a sanctifying word. "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth". Set them apart from evil, set them apart from this world, separate them from it; that is the intention of that word "Sanctify them through Thy truth", as the connection will show you. Keep them from the evil of the world, keep them from evil that it may not grieve Thee. It is also intended for direction - "Show me the way wherein I should walk for I lift up my soul unto Thee". It is intended for an encouragement and for sweetness. "Thy word was found and I did eat it and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart. It is intended for satisfaction - "I opened my mouth and panted for Thy testimony" Does your experience answer to any of these intentions in the Scripture? What a mercy if it is so.

Then one word more on this point. It relates to what we have to attend to this evening; it relates to the Church in her obedience to her Lord. He says "If ye love Me keep My commandments" and this is one of them. "Take, eat, this is My body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of Me." "Take this cup, drink ye all of it. All of you My disciples, drink of this cup, for this cup is the New Testament in My blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins". Now I have some attachment to the old Scotch method in regard to the Communion. They used, the old ministers, and indeed some do it today, they used to, what is called, fence the tables. Fencing the tables meant, showing the godly the qualifications for communion, and the Apostle directs us to this. In the Corinthians he said "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup". Faith will have a respect to this; it will. If you have faith, when you come to the Lord's table, there will be some respect to this. Your faith may say "Lord wilt Thou bid me welcome; wilt Thou give me a welcome to this table; say to me "Eat O friend, and drink, yea drink abundantly O beloved"; help me to do this that I now do in

remembrance of Thee. Help me in this particular." One says, "but I am so hard". Jesus will thee soften. One says "I do not know that I ought to go", I examine myself; and what do you find? I find sin,unbelief, hardness of heart, distance, turning away from the Lord. And after that examination, can you find anything else? Is there a love to His great Name? Is there a desire to have His precious blood on the conscience? Is there a hope in His mercy, that mercy which is full of righteousness? Do you go to the table with the feeling, Lord do condescend to meet with me? Self-examination is according to Scripture and the more spiritually minded a person is the more will he examine himself as to whether he ought to go to the Lord's table. The one outward qualification according to the Scripture is baptism. That being done the Scripture opens the way to the table, says, "Come my friends; Peter, you will soon deny Me". "Come my friends, My disciples you will all flee from Me". "But come My friends, eat and drink. Eat the bread which is a symbol of My broken body. Drink this wine which is a symbol of My shed blood." My brethren, we are to come to the table; we are to come to this table tonight to do what we do in remembrance of a dying Lord. Remember your dying Friend; remember the love that brought Him from the bosom of His Eternal Father, flying on those wings of love and willingness to die; remember that He endured the cross, despising the shame; remember that he bared His heart to the sword of divine justice, and though He knew that He must die, He was willing to do so. Remember that He received a commandment from His Father to die and He said "I have power to lay My life down; I have power to take it again, this commandment have I received of My Father". May we remember these things. May His love be in our hearts and obedience in our minds, and affections, and our souls. O blessed is the man who, though a sinner, though a sinner in his feelings, though a sinner gross in his unbelief often, remembers this, that it is a blessed thing to trust in the blood of Christ, a blessed thing to be at His table, a blessed thing to say there is no hope for him but in that shed blood, no hope for nourishment but from that broken body, no hope of getting honourably through but by hearing Him speaking His mercy into my soul. Blessed is the man that

trusteth in Thee". O blessed God, may He help us to trust Him.
"Whose hope is in the Lord his God"

Hope is a great grace and it is a grace that has respect to the Father. Hope and present possession are not compatible; you cannot have them both together. If you have got a thing in your hand, you cannot possibly hope to have it, you have got it. But if you have a thing in your mind and in your desire and in your hope, yea, in your heart, yea, in your spirit, yea, even if you say "I believe it is coming", it is in the future, and now hope stretches out her neck and looks to see whether the Lord is coming - "Whose hope is in the Lord", yea "Whose hope the Lord is". There is a word in the Psalms like this - "Happy is the man that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God which made heaven and earth, the sea and all that therein is, which keepeth truth for ever." I think it will be about 50 years ago, since, when in an exceedingly low condition, both of body and mind, one day I said, when I threw myself on the couch, I shall rise no more. But He came and spoke to me; He said that in my heart - "Happy is the man that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope the Lord is, which made heaven and earth, the sea and all that therein is, which keepeth truth for ever." He wont leave you, nay, He cannot leave you if He has come to you and told you you are His; He cannot leave you. He could not leave one of His people and be a faithful God. How signally loved is a sinner for whom the Saviour died, and to whom the Holy Ghost has come. And could God be faithful and leave that sinner to himself and to be ruined? Is your hope of getting honourably through in the Lord, your hope of being delivered from the power of indwelling sin, in the Lord; your hope of getting well through your troubles by the sanctifying grace of Christ, in the Lord? Is your hope of lying down in death and entering into heaven, in the Lord? Have you ever thought and hoped the day of your death would be better than the day of your birth? Have you looked forward with some warm, glowing anticipation in your soul to that eternity upon which one day you are to enter and which, you felt, for the moment, would be a blessed eternity to you? Is that hope in the Lord? Is your hope of one day having Satan put under your

feet, in the Lord? The Lord shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. O blessed is that man. Wherein is this blessedness? It lies in God's election of the man. It lies in the atonement of the Saviour. It lies in, that Christ put an end to his sin, and brought in for him an everlasting righteousness. It lies in the operations of life by the Holy Ghost and the revelation of Christ by the Holy Ghost, and the timely helps of the Spirit and the working of prayer in the heart by the Spirit. All these things have a place in this word "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord". He has the God of Jacob for his help. O there are Mahanaims still in this world, some in your rooms, some in your business places and some perhaps in the streets of Brighton. You have seen, as it were, God on your side, the hosts of angels sent to minister to you, and you have said in spirit - this is Mahanaim. I have got a good God to help me; three friends in heaven, the Father, in His electing love; the Son, in His effectual work of redemption; and the Spirit in His gracious teachings and operations in my soul. Dear brethren, hang about the Trinity. That good God has blessed you and will bless you. "I have blessed him and will bless him."

The man's state is good, his experience is good, though his troubles may be many and heavy. "He shall be as a tree planted by the waters." The river of water of life, that will nourish the roots of his faith. "That spreadeth out her roots by the river" where she perceives nourishment. "And shall not see (or be too anxious - the word "see" may be "anxious") when heat (trouble, persecution, evil) cometh; but her leaf shall be green" being nourished by grace. "And shall not be careful in the year of drought; neither shall cease from yielding fruit". And perhaps this last word may be a trouble to some of us. You may say, I say, my barrenness makes me see it more than a little sometimes, how can that word be true? Here am I a poor barren creature. You say it in the pew and I have much more reason to say it than any of you. Is this true? It is a trying word to some, as that word in John may be a trial to some, it has been to me - "Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit". You look for it, no, it is not there. But there is a word that

will meet the genuine sorrow of one who feels an unprofitable servant, and what is that? "From Me is thy fruit found". I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himself; I have heard him say -" Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses; neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in Thee the fatherless findeth mercy". He says "I am like a green fir tree. From Me is thy fruit found." But is there no fruit? Have you a living faith? Does that faith go out to the Lord Jesus? Does it say Lord I cannot keep alive my own soul? I would be separated from myself, I would deny myself, I would seek Thy favour and walk in Thy fear all my days". Does your faith so speak, and so act and so live? One thing is certain to me; you may call yourself barren and you no doubt are in many things; you may so live sometimes, your temper may get the mastery and evil things may come out of your mouth and you may stumble some people for which you will be very sorry; but there is one thing will never, never take place. You will never hear the Lord say - "Cut down that tree; why cumbereth it the ground?" O but it could not be, you say. My friends, if you have a grain of faith in the Lord Jesus, and believe in the infinite efficacy of His death and that that death can remove all your sins and transgressions, that is a fruit that will please God; that will be Christ's seeing in you the travail of His soul; that will be glorifying to God. Rivers of oil, all the beasts of the forest for sacrifice, yea, the fruit of the body, could not be acceptable to God, but the act of living faith on the dear Redeemer, cleaving to Him, and saying "Entreat me not to leave Thee", and saying boldly sometimes "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me" that is fruit. May the Lord help us to believe it.

AMEN.