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Sermon Preached at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
by Mr J.K. Popham on Sunday Evening
21st April 1935

Text: John 12 verse 32

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

What a mercy it is to fear God, coming to the service I was painfully stuck in the traffic, by cars returning towards London, and I felt if people feared God they would have more regard for His honour, instead of pleasure seeking on His holy day. What a different place Brighton is today to what it was fifty two years ago, how it grieves our heart, the town has grown largely in wickedness. We cannot thank God enough if we have His clean fear in our hearts. It will cause us to regard the day set apart for worship, the first day in the week, the Sabbath. Do not break it, cars have invaded the Church, I am afraid many people attend a service in the morning, and then use their cars in the afternoon for pleasure. The fear of God would preserve them from this practice.

Young people do regard God's word, do regard His day, and fear His great name. "For in Him we live, and move, and have your being;" (Acts 13 verse 28), as creatures. You have your well being from Him in His kind and holy providence. Thank Him, ever thank Him as His creatures, for He gives rain and fruitful seasons, and fills us with food and gladness. It is a base thing, a grievous sin not to thank and honour God. Thank Him for your health, thank Him for the comforts of this life which you enjoy. Thank Him for family life, this is a dreadful day, if seems to be coming to a head, when family life will be almost universally disregarded. Perhaps club life and all kind of associated things will take its place. Oh let me entreat you young people, to ask God to cause you to fear His name as His creatures. And more than that, to seek His mercy unto eternal life by Jesus Christ. And if you are tempted to read wrong things, pray for grace to reject, and turn away from the temptation. If you are tempted to read novels and other rubbish and trash, may God keep you from it.

Read the Bible and things that are according to it, and the Lord bless you. I had not thought of saying this, but am glad to say it. I would be clear of the blood of you all, do regard God's holy day, regard His precious word, and Himself as your creator and your preserver. Think well of Him in that beneficent providence which is over you. Which has thus far fed and clothed you, and preserved you in life, and well being.

But to come to our text, which we dealt a little with this morning, regarding the uplifting of the Lord Jesus in His crucifixion, not embracing all that is implied in this word, lifted up, and the words drawing all men unto Him. It is a great word, it reaches to the ends of the earth, it is to be fulfilled where it is not yet known. Christ will have a glorious time in the conversion of His people, He has had it, He is having it a little in our day, although we may not see it. What a day that will be, when "the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it." (Revelation 21 verse 24), the Church of the living God. All men, all conditions of men, all races of men, wicked men drawn from their wickedness, drawn to Him who gives them justification, sanctification and redemption.

As enabled I shall speak to you a little further about the drawing we need. Our hearts are as dull, cold and inert as the earth in the winter. We need a power to attract us, there is such a thing as attraction in Christ, and some of us know it. It is an attraction that is invincible, that listens to no objections, that answers all objections when they are made by poor people, tried people, tempted people. The attraction of the cross is invincible. If you tried to resist it you could not, and when you feel it you will have no disposition to resist it. You may run in the way that Christ has opened, that way which indeed He Himself is. It draws people by various means, He draws them by means of affliction, which is the common lot of all mankind, but all are not drawn to Him by it. Nobody here can be exempt from affliction, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." (Job 14 verse 1). But there is a grace, a power, that will, that does attract some, overcome and bring them to the cross. We are told by the Apostle Paul, in the Hebrews, "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourges every son whom He receiveth." (Hebrews 12 verse 6). This is two fold, first inward, the rebukes of the Almighty draw a man's spirit up, by solemn convictions of sin, particularly in regard to those who have known the Lord. Backsliding is getting away from God, breaking through the precepts of the gospel, breaking away from the fear of God. It is worshipping something other than Himself, you may have no pictures on your wall, but you may have a god in your waistcoat pocket, you may have a god in your safe, in your investments. You may have a god in your own supposed wisdom, strength and virtue. If you have, and God loves you, there will come a rod, a fire into your conscience. God will in effect say to you, "And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor ? or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river." (Jeremiah 2 verse 18). What have you to do to drink these, to walk in this forbidden way ? And when He does so, I know what it means. I am not reading out of a book, except the book of my own experience.

Backsliding brings its own punishment, and God uses it. "Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when He led thee by the way?" (Jeremiah 2 verse 17). Now when the Lord sanctifies this, it is chastisement. It is not a sword to slay, it is a rod to correct. It is not a burning hot displeasure, it is just a Father's kindness. A disabled disobedient child, having a wise parent, gets shut up in his room, perhaps for a few days. His food is sent up to him, but he is not allowed to sit at the table with the rest of the family. This touches him, this brings a poor chastened soul to his knees. It sanctifies, and God's end in chastening begins to be accomplished. "That we might be partakers of His holiness." (Hebrews 12 verse 10).

Oh the Lord keeps you, who are chastened from despising or fainting, some have despised, some have fainted, but God is not going to be disappointed of His end, it surely will be accomplished. You may be as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, and you may be just like that bullock, always getting away as far as possible resisting, but the goad does its business, accomplishes its God sent end, and the chastened one comes to his knees, however difficult. When God chastened me once, and told me to do what I did not want to do, I wickedly told Him, I would not do it. Oh what a day that is in my life, when I fought against Him, I said many times during that day, I will not do it. The Lord keep you from sinning as I did, but toward the evening a change came, I ran into the corner and said, Lord may I be allowed to do it? A chastened son comes to his knees, God will bring you there, and one day you will bless Him for the rod. And what is the issue of this? "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1 verse 7). "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thy help." (Hosea 13 verse 9). What then? "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously." (Hosea 14 verse 2). Is not it wonderful, a wonderful grace, filling heaven and the Church with repentance, sweetness and glory to the God of grace. "Take with you words" and say to the offended one, to the displeased Father, to the injured Saviour, and to the vexed Holy Spirit, saying, "Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips." (Hosea 14 verse 2). The lips that confess sin, praise grace. The lips that could not utter enough of self abhorrence, now rises up so to speak, and begins to thank God for overcoming grace, for cleansing blood, for reconciling mercy. God draws this to His own gracious self. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." (John 12 verse 32). There will be no rival here when you come to Him. He is God to you, He is God in you, God is for you, and will bring you through your troubles and tribulations, and land you in heaven with Himself.

He draws by the scriptures. I should be sorry to preach a sermon without this great truth, this holy book. Do listen young people, let me say this to you, by the way, do not listen to doubts about God's inspiration of the Holy Bible, which is as the Apostle says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3 verses 16,17). The Psalmist said one great word about himself, may we be able to say it about ourselves, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee". (Psalm 119 verse 11). Take this book if you can as a wonderful jewel given from heaven to the Church of God. Hide it in the casket of your heart, look at it there, use it there, plead it at the throne of grace as given to the Lord Jesus, who is the fulness of the scriptures, the ante type of all types, the fulfiller of the law, and the bringer in of everlasting righteousness. Oh what a book, the word of God is.

In my old age, I am sorry at times, that I have had so little regarded the word of God. I have read it, of course I have read it, yes and very often not only read it officially, and have said to myself, if I had not to preach should I read this book. Mind, and beware of a perfunctory reading, do not deceive yourselves by reading it so often, rather may God help you to kneel down, and spread this book before Him and say, "That which I see not teach Thou me." (Job 34 verse 32). and "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of Thy law." (Psalm 119 verse 18). Oh brethren God in this book has given a revelation of Himself. He needed not to do it, He needed no creature to add to His glory. He is an independent Being, eternity is His dwelling place, He is eternally happy, enjoying communion. Three Persons enjoying Their own communion. Sufficient of Themselves, yet He condescended to man, and gave a revelation of Himself. There is no error in this book, it is a revelation of the Divine Being, of His purposes, His love, His grace, His goodness, and of His justice. It reveals two states of men, a state of salvation in which all the predestinated ones are included, and a state of condemnation, in which the unbeliever will find himself. Two places it reveals, heaven freely given, mansions prepared for all believers, and hell for devils and sinners. God draws His people by His word, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11 verse 28). "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." (Psalm 81 verse 10). "And call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee." (Psalm 50 verse 15). Oh when He speaks thus to sinners, how they run, "I will run in the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart." (Psalm 119 verse 32.)

This word reveals particularly for the moment, let me say, a refuge. Cities of refuge as you know were set apart by God's commandment for any and all who had killed a person unawares. And the poor murderer, understanding family feuds and quarrels, and how one relative of the murdered man would hasten to overtake him before he reached the city of refuge. Some here have known the danger of sin, the awful condition of sin, and have been drawn to flee from the wrath to come, and to flee to God. This is a beautiful type of Christ and the safety of one who reached that city of refuge, during the lifetime of the high priest who was living when the refugee reached the city of refuge, and entered it. He was safe as long as the high priest lived.

When you reach the city of refuge, which is Christ Himself, you will find, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." (Proverbs 18 verse 10). You are safe as long as the High Priest of your profession lives. How long will He live ? "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." (Hebrews 13 verse 8). To be drawn to this refuge is an infinite kindness on the part of the Holy Lord Jesus. He will have His people coming to Himself, He addresses such hungry people, "I am that bread of life." (John 6 verse 48). We all naturally hunger for pleasures, we are worldly, and are in the world that lieth in wickedness. Now to be drawn out of this, and away from the, seeming satisfactions that are here, to be drawn by hunger after the bread of life, which is Christ, is a great blessing. Think of the grace which made you dissatisfied with the world, and of the grace that cried death upon all things here below, of the grace that taught you that there could be no life and no satisfaction in you, except you had found and enjoyed Jesus Christ. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." (John 6 verse 53). Oh what a life creating word that is in a sinners heart, who may be saying, can I get that bread ? A legal spirit says, you have nothing to buy it with. Faith says, can I get that bread ? are there any conditions ? No, except one which is, given freely and powerfully, that is hunger. And sometimes it will be with you, as it was with the man who had a friend come to him at midnight, and had nothing to entertain his friend with. So away he goes to one who was his friend, and asks for three loaves. Sleep drowsiness, indisposition to be disturbed made the friend say, "Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth." (Luke 11 verse 7 & 8). You try that at the throne of grace, hungry soul, go to the door and knock, "To him that knocketh it shall be opened." (Matthew 7 verse 8).

If you ask for the bread of life, you will find that God will not then give you a stone. Oh the kindness of Jesus Christ to give a man spiritual hunger, and then to give him the bread he asks for. God draws hungry souls to Himself, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (John 6 verse 51). I say there is no bread like that, happy is the man who gets a crumb of it. You may say, a crumb is not very much, well as I have said before, one crumb of bread is all bread, not all the loaf, but all bread as to its constituents. When you get a little of Christ, you get a whole Christ, not fully experienced, but you taste that crumb and it is life in your soul.

He draws people who are diseased, it is beautiful to read in the gospels, how the people took afflicted relatives to Him for healing, diseased lepers and those that were blind, maimed, lame holt and poor And He healed all that had need of healing, all who were taken to Him, He kindly regarded and healed them. And when poor Peter's wife's mother was sick of a fever and could not be taken to Him, He went to her and healed her and immediately the fever left her. Friends go with your diseases to Him, He is a wise physician and there is balm in Gilead. He asks no price for all He gives, and what a touch, its effects no tongue can fully utter."And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, (the leper), saying I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." (Matthew 8 verse 3). The centurion had faith that made Christ amazed, he came to Him about his servant who was grievously afflicted with a palsy, and Christ said I will come and heal him. Humbly the centurion said, "I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard this He marvelled." (Matthew 8 verses 9 & 10). Did you ever notice the point of that man's faith ? it was this, simply, just as his soldiers and his servant implicitly obeyed him, so, if Jesus would speak to that disease, it would obey Him. Go with your sicknesses, soul sicknesses are the worst of all sicknesses, and Christ will heal them, He is the only one that can do so.

Go with your poverty, I would say it wisely and properly if I could, I believe I may say it properly. Do not my brethren be afraid of spiritual poverty. You say, but why not ? we are afraid of it. I say this, if you are poor enough for Christ, He will enrich you. If you are poor enough, mind that, it is not talking about being poor, it is really being poor.

Nay, the word goes further than that, but destitute. A man may be poor tomorrow morning, and yet have quite enough to buy a breakfast with, but if he is destitute, if there is not a coin in his pocket, or anywhere belonging to him; if he is not fed by charity he must die. That is destitution as I judge, and "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer". (Psalm 102 verse 17). Go with your poverty, He is kind to the poor, good to the poor. He said to one, "I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee:" (Exodus 33 verse 19). Goodness from Him means satisfaction in Him.

Go with your ignorance, you say, I cannot find my way into the city: Go with your ignorance. What provision is there made for that ? This is the provision, the promise that Christ made of His Spirit, whom He would send, and this is the mission and work of the Holy Spirit, "He will guide you into all truth:" (John 16 verse 13) truth you could not find your way into, truth that no perceiving intellect can get into, truth that no study can get you into. Truths for "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent." (Matthew 11 verse 25). You have it in the Corinthians, "But 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." (1 Corinthians 2 verse 14). But He, the Spirit of truth shall guide you into all truth.

Suddenly sometimes, when you may be before the throne of grace pleading the cross, the blood, the death of Christ, some divine word may fall into your heart and understanding, prayer is answered for you in a measure, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, and you say, I never saw this before. Of course you did not, how could you, before it was opened to you. Oh, take care you do not try to force a door into the truth, you cannot really do it. Kneel before your God and ask Him to open the truth to you. When He does, the light, the sweetness, the efficacy, the blessedness and suitability and power of the truth will be found in your heart, and you will thank God for divine teaching. Take the case of Peter and the disciples, and Peter's confession. "Who do men say that I the Son of man am ?" They told Him the various conjectures that were being made concerning Him. He saith unto them, "But whom say ye that I am ? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." What did the Lord say then ? "Blessed art thou Simon, Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." Matthew 16 verses 13-17). "and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him."

(Matthew 11 verse 27). And the Son is revealed by the Spirit, when you get tried sinner, tried by your ignorance, troubled because you cannot get into the truth, go as you can to the throne of God's heavenly grace, and say, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." (Psalm 119 verse 18). Will He hear me ? Did He ever turn away a sinner who, led by the Spirit made mention of Christ ? "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." (John 14 verse 14). I am afraid of my own ignorance, while I exhort you not to be afraid of yours, but that fear is good. Lord teach me, open Thou mine eyes, teach me to know Christ, who He is, whose Son He is, why He was sent, why He came into this world, what He did whilst living here. Even when He went about doing good and healing all those that had need of healing. Reveal to me His precious person, that I may know Him. As one Puritan said, mind the Person of Christ, for if you are wrong with respect to the Person of Christ you are right nowhere. "For if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8 verse 24).

Oh my brethren, as God the Spirit may help you to the throne of grace, to the cross of Christ, pray to be instructed and this teaching will be given. And lastly pray, and ask to be drawn to the cross of Christ so that you may persevere. Some who are sensible of their weakness and liability to fall by temptation and indwelling sin, may often be afraid of apostasy. I could not tell you how often I have feared apostasy. What a preacher you say ? Yes one of the most terrible falls that any living man can know is a fall from the pulpit into hell. How I have feared it. Do you fear apostasy ? Turning away from Christ, turning your back upon Him. One says, how could I do that ? Easily if God left you. One thing may be noticed on this point. Some may have feared they will be like Judas and betray Christ. Oh I was glad to notice this point, "He sought opportunity to betray Him". (Matthew 26 verse 16). I have said, Lord Thou knowest I do not do that. Can you say it ? Have you never sought opportunity against Christ, and had no thought of turning your back upon Him, and apostatising. Has that been a grievous thought to you ?

Go to Him, He draws, He will draw a weak sinner, He will draw a fearing sinner to His cross, to Himself. He shall come to you, and rule in you and for you for this is what one may say is intended in that text, "That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven." (Genesis 22 verse 17). When He draws, it is that He may bless, and when He blesses then one is blessed. Now I will leave the text with you, may the Lord put it into your hearts, and never may He let you lose sight of the death of Christ, never may He let you lose sight of the burial of Christ.

And never may He let you lose sight of the resurrection of Christ, and of all that is implied in that. Men and devils and the world will pass but, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men to Me". All kinds of men unto Me, and when He does that, it is that He may bless them, "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Ephesians 1 verse 3). Bless them with His fulness, His goodness His love, His mercy, His righteousness, and His salvation.

Amen.