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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday morning 28 September 1919

JOHN IV v 13 and 14

"Jesus answered and said unto her 'Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life'"

I have, in a sense, two minds just at this moment, one caused by vivid recollections, personal recollections. As I look round on this congregation how very few I see in it of the number of people to whom I came 37 years ago. I complete this day 37 years of service among you and the recollections are vivid and a little stirring so that in a sense a sort of inability to preach is with me. I look back and I see two things; I see two persons. I see myself and it might be imprudent, probably would be imprudent, if I were to speak about myself and my services here, for such is my view of self and services, that I should be afraid to express the abhorrence that I feel of myself and the view that I take of the poor services which I have rendered. It is wholesome to me to look back and have this view; it puts me in my right place, the dust. It prevents what naturally one would like to do; it prevents all glory in self - let no flesh glory in God's presence. Least of all should I glory. But I see another; I see a good God; O how good and gracious. And there is more meaning to me in that Scripture today than it was possible there should be 37 years ago. "Yea many a time forgave He their iniquity and did not stir up all His wrath." O what a good God He has been to my own soul and to me in making some use of me. Why, I have buried a chapel full of people; the parents of you, many of you, I have buried, and I have married many of you, and your children have grown up around you and with me. And with all this and many things connected therewith of a spiritual kind, I see a good God and would acknowledge Him. If it were

proper to look forward into the future (one does not know, and does not wish to know in a sense), one would say how little remains to one of life; how little remains to one of the ministry; but one would leave that. It is best to be in God's hand and not take up tomorrow. May we live today. The best kind of living is that which Christ Himself set out when He said - "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof". "Take no thought for the morrow". Well beloved friends may the Lord help me to serve you with all my heart while He spares me and gives me strength to speak in your midst.

We are met today under most awful circumstances, things which are of a nature to create alarm in us; things which have started, the end of which we do not see. May we be preserved from the anarchy which is doubtless attempted by some; preserved as a nation. May men have impressed on their hearts what used to be on men's hearts even where no fear of God was - a respect for authority, for law, for order, and a regard for contract. We are in God's hand; we do not know what will be on the morrow. Things are paralysed; we are affected; I am affected; I am unable, shall be at least, probably, to keep engagements this day, tomorrow, and outside and away from home. But if we have but an eye of faith fixed on God, it will keep our mind. "I will keep Him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Me". But now I will leave this subject, myself, and other things; it is not very profitable to thrust one's self before people, nor pleasant.

Look at this word - Christ must needs go through Samaria, because He had a woman to teach; he had an audience of one person, and in speaking to her He was doing the will of His Father. And doing that was to Him, meat indeed. He asks her for a drink of water from the well, and the request astonished her because that the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. He drew her out; he drew out confessions of an immoral life; He made her say "Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet". He told her of living water which He would give to a person who asked of Him, and that caused her to ask Him to give it to her, not understanding what it meant. Then He says to her - "Whoso

drinketh of this water of which I ask thee to give me a drink shall thirst again. There is a perpetual thirst in nature; we must be thirsty if we are healthy; appetite is part of health; a good, honest thirst, is satisfied with pure water." But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life".

The second part of the text is the important part to notice. If you drink earthly pleasures you will thirst for more. There is an unsatisfying quality in all earthly things. There is that in them, or rather that lack, that prevents anybody getting an abiding satisfaction. Things are pretty much like the bloom on fruit, beautiful to look at, spoiled by the touch. Anticipation as a rule is the greatest part of pleasure in all natural things. Christ sets something better than all that before us in the text. The water that I give him shall cause him satisfaction; he shall never thirst. The man will find himself as two men; he will find himself a natural man as long as he lives, that is to say, a depraved person, with depraved appetites. He will long for this world; the things of it, its vanities; its maxims, he would fain be ruled by often. He would cast, and alas to his shame and grief, he does cast, unlawful looks, and covet things which he should not covet, and he brings guilt to himself; he gets a hurt to his conscience; he gets the wound that Paul got. He did not the things he wanted to, and he did the things he fain would not do. Every good man knows what Paul's trouble is; he knows the sorrow Paul had; he knows the same in his own heart. But the other man, called the hidden man of the heart, the new man created in righteousness and true holiness, after the image of Him that created him, leads him to thirst for other things. He wants in that nature other things, and just as the body must be sustained by food suitable to its constitution, so must the new man be sustained and refreshed by that which is suitable to its nature. "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Not a dug out well, in which the water shall be motionless, always stagnant if not at all used, and impure, but a springing well; living water

in it, that shall spring and leap and bubble, and have no rest, so to speak; be on the move always. This is the water that Christ shall give and does give. What is it in this same Gospel Christ says - "that whosoever believeth in Him out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water". This spoke He of the Spirit, the Holy Ghost, whosoever believeth in Him, should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not as yet given for Jesus was not yet glorified. This is the Spirit. As the prophet Isaiah taught, that God speaking in Him, says - "I will pour water upon Him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground". So that that which I have to bring before you this morning is the gift and the motion in the heart of the Holy Ghost, that divine Person, infinite, glorious, loving, equal in the Godhead with the Father and the Son, possessing all the attributes of a Person and all the love of God, and all the compassion of God, and all the power of God and all the goodness of God. And He shall be in a person to communicate what is communicable of God, and be in that person as a living spring, which shall bubble and leap and move and urge and carry forward the subject of His operations. "And shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." All the work of salvation in the soul is the work of the Spirit, even as all the work of salvation for the Church was the work of Jesus Christ in His perfect obedience, in His active death; not passive death, active death, for He, as a Priest on the cross, was most active, when He was suffering. And this water, this well, springs up. Let us look at the object to which this water rises. And first of all the springing, moving power of the Holy Ghost in a sinner is to God. An apprehension of who God is is given and then takes place what Christ says in the same chapter, lower down - "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth". He seeketh such to worship Him. And you may know in a comfortable way that the Holy Ghost is in you if you find your soul lifted up; lifted, not in pride, not in self-sufficiency, not in views of your own goodness, but in a spiritual worship of the great God; in an apprehension of what He is and what He does and is doing both in providence and in grace. You will see Him by faith, follow after Him if haply you may find and have union with Him, worship Him in those

revealed attributes which are His alone and are uncommunicable. We worship Him as the infinite, self-existent God, immense, without any capability of extension in His nature, in His knowledge, in His omnipotence. Worship Him as you see Him in the Person of Christ, and as you see Him reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, for He hath made Him, that is Christ, to be sin for us who knew no sin. You will worship Him there. And in providence in all His awful permissions as well as in His most wonderful working, you will worship God. There is a tremendous greatness and awfulness in God as rightly apprehended. And the water, that is the living teaching and moving of the Spirit in a sinner, cleanses him from thinking that God is such an one as himself, and brings him to think rightly of God. You will never think rightly of yourselves, you will never think correctly of providence, never think properly of eternity, except as you have the Spirit in you, and as you have the Spirit in you, you will think rightly of God, and all things that come from Him. Can you say, if I have rightly expressed the matter, can you say - be this religion mine. What is all outside this? I ask you again what is all that is outside this? Blessed be God for a spirit of worship. And remember this, that worship is founded on knowledge. If one worships as he thinks, an unknown God, he is too superstitious, and there is no worship in the matter at all. And because this knowledge of God, which is necessary to worship, is beyond our reach as we are men and women fallen, the promise in the Covenant is this - I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord. And again says the Lord by, I think it is the same prophet, "Let Him that glorieth glory in this that he understandeth and knoweth me that I am the Lord which exercise righteousness and judgment and lovingkindness in the earth, for in these things do I delight saith the Lord." Well dear friends, you can put all your religion, to speak as Bunyan spoke, into a thimble if you look at it from this point of view, worship. Yea, you may be thankful if you find enough religion to go into something much less than a thimble; but it is a great thing; it is the greatest act you are capable of in this life, the worship of God. There is nothing beyond it that you are capable of and

it has its foundation in knowledge. "I will give them a heart to know Me". It is beautiful to look at and much more beautiful to realise as in your own soul; that a man, who is just a sinner, a piece of sin, hell-born sin, who, though unregenerate, has that in him now; that a man, who has the burden and the deadening influence of this, should at any time rise in his heart and soul to the Almighty in a true apprehension of His Being, and His perfections, and worship Him; prostrate his soul; the inferior, infinitely inferior, worshipping the superior; the atom bowing before the Creator; worm Jacob acknowledging the great God. And this living water will lift you up to this. It will be in you a well of water; it will leap up, irrespective of place or time or circumstances. It will leap up and lift you up. O the blessed elevation of worship. When you had this then you found many comfortable things accompanying it. Let me name one or two.

When you worship God in Christ, and men do worship Him there, then you find your heart fixed; a fickle mind stayed. "O God" said the Psalmist "My heart is fixed, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise." Christ said where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. It does not take much to pull us down sometimes, and but little to hold us down. A little bit of tinsel dangled before our eyes is enough to take hold of, catch our silly hearts away, and bring us to answer to that word of Ephraim. "Ephraim is like a silly dove without heart". You understand what I mean. O how soon we are caught away, how soon. And yet the moving of these living waters makes a sinner say - well, but I am unwise, a foolish person; what is there here worth my attention? What is there here worth my best affection? What is there here worth my trust, worthy of my confidence? So the Lord catches the affections and binds them sometimes very fast. Toplady asks that he may be bound by love's resistless chain to the ignominious tree, and the people of God would fain have their hearts bound, enchained, fixed on Christ the better part; on His Person. You will find the Spirit will be working in you giving you that gift of faith and exercises of faith that will make the Person of Christ the best of all, the centre and circumference of all that you move in. Luther said that the

church would stand or fall as the doctrine of justification was preached or neglected and that is true. But I apprehend there is something beyond justification and that is the Person of Christ. Whether the Church of Christ has all but lost the knowledge of Him today, God alone fully knows, but if we may judge by appearances, and if, alas, we are judged by what we know of Him for ourselves, some of us must say we have all but lost the knowledge of Him. Still, this living water will raise the soul up to an exercise upon the Person of Christ; not two Persons; One Person, with human nature united to Himself, the Person of the Son of God; what a Person! Think of it, what a Person! Almighty God, one in the the Trinity with the Father and the Holy Ghost, equal with them, possessing the whole of the divine nature. The fulness of the Godhead bodily, says Paul, dwelleth in Him, that is, in the Man Christ Jesus; united to that Person, His nature, human nature, begotten in the womb of the virgin by the Holy Ghost. And this Person Jesus Christ possesses all fulness. Grace, life, love, righteousness, holiness, strength, wisdom, compassion; all the fulness of a Priest in His priestly offering of Himself, and His priestly intercession in heaven. All the fulness of pardon; He was exalted at God's right-hand on His ascension into heaven to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And when this fulness is apprehended by faith in the teaching of the Holy Spirit, then Christ becomes the treasure, the all and in all. There is neither this nor that, male nor female, Jew nor Greek, rich nor poor, bond nor free; all, all distinctions of this kind abolished; and He, the blessed One, is all and in all to the sinner and to God, on behalf of the sinner. And the water shall be in him, who shall never thirst, shall never be destitute of this Holy Spirit. His operations some days are less than others in clearness, in efficacy, but He is never really absent. Now judge yourself by this then. Do you find your hearts gathered up to Christ? Is He brought to you in an apprehension? Do you see Him by faith as that One who alone can save and sanctify? Are you brought to depend on Him, to look for satisfaction, look for acceptance with God, for help in your daily troubles and life and difficulties, look to Him for supplies of His Spirit and of His

love and of His compassion. He is a Christian in whom Christ is and he by faith lives on Christ. Let My Name be named on Israel. May the Name of Christ be truly named on us, that is to say, may we receive Him by faith, live His life, believe with the faith He gives, and love with the love which is born of His love known in the heart.

He shall be in Him a well of water springing up to the great and necessary and all sufficient office of Christ as a Priest. You will never do without a Priest if you are a Christian and never want another Priest than Christ, and never have another. He is a great High Priest. You will always need one between you and the Father and here He is represented to us, set forth in the Holy Scripture. Here on earth, on the cross, He offered Himself without spot to God. He did the great work of a Priest on the cross. I would repeat what I just now said, Christ was never more active than when on the cross. I do not like the distinction that is made by some between the active and passive obedience of Christ. Christ was active on the cross; He was enduring punishment; He received the curse and He took as it were His own life out of the hands of His murderers and died a voluntary death and offered Himself, His own self, as bearing sin. He offered Himself in all the efficacy of His sufferings; offered Himself in all the beauty of His holy manhood; offered Himself a sacrifice. The old dispensation tells us whenever blood was shed a life was shed, poured out; a life was poured out at the altar. And part of the life or the life was put on the horns of the altar. It was a life that was given. And when Jesus died He gave His life; He poured out His soul unto death. Now who can know this but by the Spirit. When He comes and shows it, O what a sweet demonstration, to use Paul's word, what a sweet demonstration there is of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, this work of the Priest. He was ordained to serve in things pertaining to God for men. O bless God for it; for man, for sinful man. And here is the beauty of His offering that it was vicarious. When you see in the up-bubbling and moving of the Spirit's teaching in your heart this great work of Christ you will depend on it, depend alone on the sacrifice of Christ; rest

your soul secure there and feel all is well, sooner or later. His precious death, His precious death, His precious death, will bring life and peace and comfort into your soul. O sinner it is great; 'tis great to have this up-bubbling teaching of the Spirit, leading you to the Lord Jesus. And then, through that, one day you will get another thing, another inestimable blessing. Some here may be panting for it even now; the blessing of saying "Our Father" my Father "which art in heaven". A risen Christ sent that loving message you remember to His disciples "Go tell My disciples I ascend unto My God and your God to My Father and your Father". And the Apostle Paul in the Galatians tells us that in the fulness of time God sent forth His Son made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them that are under the law, and that they, being sons, should receive the Spirit of the Son into their heart, the Spirit of Adoption, crying "Abba Father". One of the sweetest of all things that can be felt by the children of the Most High is that they are His children and the Apostle, speaking of the Spirit's work in the Romans, says "As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God" and He bears His witness with their spirits that they are the children of God and goes on to show their position and their future. If children, then heirs, says God, and joint heirs with Christ. If you get this living testimony to your sonship, then with broken heart, and probably weeping eyes, you will say "My Father". "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me My Father thou art the guide of my youth". Happy, ineffably sweet relationship, this. It is more sweet than words can ever express when realised. "He shall be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life". So what a gift you get from God when you get the Spirit of Adoption. O what a rich gift you get when that Holy Spirit sweetly works moving away all the unbelief, and, without contradicting it, overcoming your sense of unworthiness which kept you often back and made you feel - No, I must not: I dare not. Moving all that, and taking away all the guilt from your burdened conscience, removing the whole load of dead works, enabling you with humble faith and boldness to say "Father". It is one of the sweetest words in our language, and when used by faith to God, when faith claims this blessed

relationship then the sinner is at his best. His person is accepted, being justified in Christ's righteousness; his conscience is purged from dead works by the blood of Christ, and now His spirit receives an infallible witness to his relationship, his sonship. It overtops all. Here is a sinner who has had a sense, and still has a sense, of his alienation, of his being a child of wrath even as others, in the fall, and now he realises that he is cut out of the old dead stock and united to that blessed One, Jesus Christ, and has the Spirit of liberty. The Spirit of Adoption is a Spirit of liberty. Liberty to go in as David did. "Then went king David in and sat before the Lord and said 'Who am I O Lord and what is my house that Thou hast brought me hitherto'". And when you get this liberty, you are a free person. It answers to that that is promised. "I will strengthen them in the Name of the Lord and they shall walk up and down in His Name saith the Lord". And this has a very beautiful reflex action. It causes a subject of it to look at his circumstances, all his things, family, business, health, sickness, friends, enemies if he has any, providence, in all its tangle, tangle never to be touched by human hand; he looks upon all these things as they affect him and his faith says - these are in my Father's hand; these are in the hand of Jesus Christ, to whom is given all authority and all power and all rule; and now the sinner is without care with all his care. He walks in that Scripture for the time - "Be careful for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God"; the bubbling of the Spirit, the sweet up-leaping of the Spirit's power in the heart, carrying the heart to this blessed condition. Well, beloved friends, however low you may feel, however far from this you may realise yourself to be, there is just one thing, only one thing, needed, and that is this living water, this well of water, springing up in your heart in new acts of grace, in sweet fresh operations, and then you will say - Why the preacher did not tell us half of it. And the preacher will gladly say he never would be able to. Living tongues are dumb at best here to speak of what God is; to speak of what Christ is to the soul, as revealed by the Spirit. It never can be fully expressed. May the Lord grant that we may not

be ignorant of the experience.

AMEN.