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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
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JOHN 6 v 37

"All that the Father giveth Me shall come to
Me, and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise
cast out"

I begin by asking what may appear to some to be an impertinent question - Do you believe in God? Has there ever been on your hearts an impression of the awful truth of the Being of God? Of course, we all believe in Him in a sense, but to believe in Him so as to reverence Him, so as to tremble at His majesty, and in the light of His Being see, and feel our sinfulness, and the infinite moral distance that sin has made between the divine Majesty and our souls, this, this is another thing. I would ask another question which is involved in what I have asked, but which may be put separately - Do you believe in the sovereignty, and justice of God? Spotless is His Being, glorious is His every attribute. Sovereignty - among men, limited properly; in God - illimitable naturally. Justice - not bought; bought among men, very often - justice, spotless, immutable, ruling. It was for God to determine whether He would make worlds or not; whether there should be angels, or not; and whether, determining to make angels, He would determine that some should not fall, but, as it is written, keep their first estate, permitting the remainder to sin. It was for Him to decide whether He would create the world we are in, and man, and beast. As I feel, there is an awfulness in the Being of God, in the sovereignty, in the justice, of God. And, as from a fountain, everlasting, exhaustless, flow all the manifestations of God from His sovereignty, and His justice. He is love; He is just in His love. He is good; He is just in His goodness. He is impartial; He is no respecter of persons. He is a Being to whom we cannot rise in our imaginations properly, and yet who has condescended to make Himself known in the Man Christ Jesus, His only begotten Son, equal with Him, incarnate. It were well for us if we were more and more brought into very serious, believing considerations of that God in whom we live, and move, and have our

being. We are frivolous creatures for the most part; live in trifles, deal with them as if they were substance, and going to continue. What foolish creatures sin has made us. But alas, worse than that, guilty, condemnable, and condemned creatures by the law which we have broken. Now one more question - What does God owe to you? Look at the question - What does God owe to you? Every instructed understanding, every enlightened conscience, every new-born soul, says, What God owes to me as I am His creature, and His subject, and a rebel against His revealed will in the law under which He created me, is this - death. That is all. Death - not of body only, nor most importantly - the death of the soul, which means separation from God, and separation from God means eternal emptiness in us, and yet not emptiness absolutely. Emptiness of good, emptiness of happiness, but fullness of Divine wrath. "The wages of sin is death". Have you been brought to submit to this truth? Has, and does, conscience say, He is just. Whatever He does to me, whatever becomes of me, does conscience say, He is just in all? It must have been a very powerful impression on the heart, and understanding of Abraham who said - "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Looking on what was now set before him by God, who called him His friend, that was the conclusion he came to in the form of a question - "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Looking at yourselves, each person - O, I say it seriously to you - have you been brought to submit to that holy sovereignty, that infinitely just Being - God - in respect of what He may do to you, or what He may give to you, or what He may withhold from you? If you live in trifles it wont be a trifling thing for you to die. If you spend your years as a tale that is told, and the pleasure of listening makes you oblivious to the time occupied in the telling of the tale, the end comes. A full stop will be put to life one day. And what will it mean? What will it be? When Jesus was teaching, as related in this chapter - and throughout the gospels we see it- there were always men to oppose Him. Disbelief may contradict Him, malign His character, blacken Him. Are we better than they? He said to the people who were listening to Him, You have seen Me, but you do not believe Me. You have recently seen a wonderful thing; I took five loaves into My hands, and I blessed them, and I multiplied them into a sufficiency for 5000 men, beside women, and children, and twelve baskets full of fragments you took up, yet you did not believe Me. You asked a sign of Me, though I gave you that

sign indubitably. You asked a sign of Me; the asking was from unbelief. Many a man may ask a thing of God in unbelief. But now, if their unbelief is so powerful as to make them thus speak - What of God? What of His purpose? - shall their unbelief make the faith of God of none effect? Now says the Lord Jesus, You will not come unto Me that ye might have life. "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me". This may sound very harsh to some, but see what follows, the compassion, the kindness, the love, the sweetness - "And him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." A heart of infinite compassion, an eye of the tenderest pity, a hand of omniscience toward a sinner who, trembling, comes to this gracious Lord. "All that the Father giveth Me" Whose Father? His Father, His Eternal Father. I, His Son, am His equal, and yet in the Covenant of Grace, in the great plan of salvation, the Three Persons in the Trinity had each One, His Own particular work, and part. The work, and part of the Father, we have set before us here - "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me." If you quarrel with this right of God, you wont injure it, but you will hurt yourself. You may take a delicate piece of china, and hurl at a rock in mad raging; all you do is to break the china; the rock is untouched. Do not quarrel - God save us from quarrelling - with this. Yet if any man here rises in his heart and says, I cannot receive it - I can understand that. I hated this myself, and, alas for me, I spoke against it, which, afterwards, was a wound that now, even in my last days, is opened, though the guilt of it is removed. This is a beautiful word in this gospel concerning this. In His prayer to His Father, as recorded in the 17 chapter of this gospel, says the Lord Jesus - "Thine they were". The people for whom He was praying, the disciples with Him, the other sheep that were to come after Him. "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me". "Thine they were and Thou gavest them Me" in the Covenant. It is a grand question for a sinner to be asking, whether he was in that wondrous gift of sinners by the Father to His Son. It is not an idle quest; it is a grand quest, and if we are in it, the end is certain, most certain. When you go to the school of experience, you begin to learn. You learn the A.B.C. of your fall that stops the mouth of cavilling. You become experimentally acquainted with your condition as a sinner; you come to the lowest form, and the older you get, the lower you will get, until at last you will come to the dust. Then you will say, It is an infinite mercy for

such a person to have a hope in God. "Giveth Me". Jesus Christ received a gift; He received a gift of sinners, a great gift, and they were given to Him for a purpose. They were given to Him to redeem. As you have it in Galatians - "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons". (Galatians 4 v 4/5). This was what He came for. He was a Substitute, given to be a Substitute. A Substitute is a person who voluntarily takes the place of another in certain particulars. He takes the precise place, and condition; liabilities, responsibilities; it may be debts, it may be a variety of things; but as a Substitute he just stands in the precise place of the person for whom he is a Substitute. The two do not stand in the same place together. The one who has a Substitute is removed from that place, and the Substitute stands in his place. Is this the gospel? Is this revealed in the Bible? If it is not, you cast it aside. But, if it is, listen - "He hath made Him" - speaking of the Father and of the Son - "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" - will that do? It is here, my friends; it is in this Book; may it be in your hearts, and in my heart, and all will be well. The Father did not part with them absolutely; He still retains them. Speaking of them in another chapter in this gospel, the Lord Jesus said - They are in My Father's hand, and no man can pluck them out of My Father's hand. They are in My hand, and no man can pluck them out of My hand. Happy person who is in the hands of the Father, and of the Son. Sin and devils will do their utmost to destroy that person, but omnipotence secures him. And now what? These persons shall come to Me. "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Their coming to Christ is secured by the gift of them to Him. "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me". So will providence order matters, their birth, their parentage, their conditions, their movings, or their standing here; all ordered. And the day comes when there happens something inexplicable, strange, and the subject of it does not know what has happened to him. Only he knows what he did not know before, though he may have talked about it a great deal. He knows there is a God and he also knows that he has sinned against that God. That is a point in a man's life, that is a great point. He knows there is a God. It is an awful thing to know, and yet a wonderfully blessed thing to know. He

knows that he must appear before this God, and that he is not fit to do so. Nay, he is not willing to do so, because he is a sinner, and yet the knowledge that there is a God stops him from living wilfully in sin. It brings this also to pass, he cries for mercy. Now to get alongside the publican, to him, this sinner, would be a great thing in his own judgement; yea to rank himself by the side of the dying, praying thief, would be to him a privilege. "God be merciful to me a sinner". Now look at this coming; according to Scripture, seeing Christ, and believing in Him, and coming to Him, are just synonymous terms; they mean the same. If you see Him, you believe in Him. If you believe in Him, it is because you see Him, and if you see and believe in Him, then you come to Him; that is, the affections of your soul, the desires of your soul, the longings, the hungerings, and pantings, and thirstings, these are all so many acts of faith coming to this great One, this glorious Lord Jesus. It is not a local motion; it is the casting of the eye of faith, it is the uprising of a longing to belong to Him, to be saved by Him. It is the feeling that if you get but His blessing, you are blessed. "Cometh to Me". But it is not a coming unaccompanied, not an absolute, and unopposed motion. Every step is opposed. If he could do it, the enemy of your soul would cast a cloud always between your eye, and the Lord Jesus. Coming is worship, and the enemy says, Worship me. Coming has love in it, and the enmity of your heart rises against that. Coming is hungering, and thirsting, and the enemy says, Look at this world; this will be a satisfaction that will quench your thirst; and a variety of things will be set up as against coming. To come has an invincible influence behind it, an invincible attraction before it. There is the Spirit of grace and supplications in the soul. Bunyan speaks well of what he saw in the Interpreter's house. He tells us he saw a fire and he saw one pouring water on it, and his amazement was great when he perceived that the fire was not quenched, until one took him behind and showed him there was oil being poured upon the fire. There is something behind every gracious prayer, every divine motion of the soul Godward, every feeling of hunger and of thirst for God. There is the grace of the Holy Spirit behind. Praying people little know the sacred power that is in them from time to time. It is not every prayer that is thus blessed with grace, but when the Spirit moves, influences, teaches, and there is an invincible attraction before this coming person, and that is the Lord Jesus, the suitableness of His

Person, the greatness of His love, the infinite sufficiency of His precious blood, and of His justifying righteousness, the omnipotent pity of His heart, His gracious word, His loving invitations, these, these attract invincibly. You know, some of you know, what I mean. You have said, again, and again -

Lo! glad I come; and thou, blest Lamb,
Shalt take me to thee as I am;
Nothing but sin I thee can give;
Nothing but love shall I receive. (144)

Dear friends, this Jesus is known. Not only is He knowable, but He is known. "This is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." We do not go on guesses, and conjectures, when we go to this Person. We may fear He wont kindly receive us, but when we go, we go because we know something. I like Luther's definition of faith. He says, "Faith is a knowledge", and Hart equally well defines it; he says "Faith is by knowledge fed". Every sight of Christ feeds faith; every word of Christ nourishes faith. Every influence of Christ strengthens faith. And faith comes, ventures. prays, pleads, argues, urges. There is a fervour, a power, an influence in faith; even though you may not be conscious of all that, there it is. It stands in the power of God, not in the persuasion of men. "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men". If a wise man could argue you into believing, a wiser man perhaps could come and argue you out of believing, but if the Spirit bears witness of Christ, then you believe, and nobody can make you an unbeliever. O, it is a blessing to be a believer, that is to say, a coming person, coming to Christ. But now this is not general; it is particular. You come to Him in some particular regards. For instance, you are a captive, you need redemption. Jesus Christ is the Redeemer. You come to Him hungry; "I am the Bread of Life" says this great One, the Lord Jesus. You come to Him thirsty, wishing to have your thirst assuaged; He said, by the Apostle John - "He showed unto me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal". To the woman of Samaria He said - "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink: thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water". (John 4 v 10). This is the water; the bread of life, the water of life, is the Lord Jesus. You

feel guilty, really guilty; you now realise that great, that penetrating, that all-covering word - "The thought of foolishness is sin". You are not at liberty to sin; God's law gives no liberty to sin. It takes notice of all the sins you commit. Christ speaks of the thought of foolishness. He speaks of foolish words, idle words, all sorts of sins, and now the sinner who has a view of himself in those particulars, having also Christ manifested to him as having made atonement, the sinner comes to Him for forgiveness. "All manner of sin and blasphemy against the Son of Man shall be forgiven." The coming sinner says, Lord I feel very dead; he comes to Christ for life. One says, I am very worldly; O, make me spiritually minded. He comes to Christ for spirituality of mind. Another confesses that he is the slave of certain sins, and cannot deliver himself. He comes to Christ for deliverance. One is intensely worldly, and he comes to Christ again, and again to be delivered and to have his affections set on things above, and not on things on the earth. And, then says the tempter, you do not come rightly, and our foolish hearts listen to him. He says you should come in such, and such a state of mind; at any rate you ought to come humble, but you are very proud. You ought to come with a tender conscience, but it is a hard conscience. You ought to come lovingly, but you have not love. You ought to come with repentance, but you have no repentance. You ought to come quite sure that you have got faith, but you are not sure that you have faith. O, the objections; some of you know them. I would ask this question - You find the Scriptures that tell you that before you come to Christ you must have such and such tempers, feelings, compunction, repentance, softness of heart, tenderness of conscience, and love. I think if you could get them, you would be able to go and say, Now Lord, pay me what Thou owest. I have brought these things, now pay me, bless me. But when you have got none of them, when you are full of the opposites; when, instead of grace, you feel a mass of sin; then, even though, and in that case, without any amelioration, any lessening of sin, any breaking of its power, then to come believing that Christ is the Friend of sinners, that "This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them"; Ah, this is faith; and you wont come without faith. Newton has a good word for Christ. He says in one of his hymns

Thou art coming to a King
Large petitions with thee bring

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"Him that cometh to Me" as he is, what he is, what he feels, what he fears, what he lacks; "Him that cometh to Me" in those conditions. Did you ever get near to Him? It seems very gracious of the Lord to speak of the sinner and Himself in terms of distance and nearness. He says, Now come. "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden". You labour with your sins, and against them, labour in weariness till you get worn out, as the word there is - worn out, tired, weary, even weary of opposing, and of being opposed. Come in that case, heavy laden with many things, guilt, and care, and trouble, and a variety of evils; with those things; with your old experience, or with no experience. Come to this blessed Lord Jesus. But what treatment must you look for? What do you expect at His hands? Such a guilty person, what can you expect? O, says the Lord, I wont cast him out. I will welcome him. I came to save the lost. An open door is set before a coming sinner. "I am the door", says Christ. A door of faith is open. God hath opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. A door of hope is opened and this blessed door is not shut day or night, and there is no night where this Lord Jesus is. What treatment? I say. This, I will in no wise cast him out.

Take it in two views. First, I will for no reason that this sinner can produce as against himself, cast him out. Nothing that he may argue against himself. None of his sins shall I have mentioned to him. All the turpitude of his life, all the thoughts of his heart against Me, every bit of anger he ever felt against any fellow-creature, and all the wrong things he has done, none of these, nor all of them together, will induce me to say, I will have nothing to do with you. Is it not gracious of Him? Here is the conscience that is always accusing the sinner. Here is the memory that is active in going back and bringing up before the sinner past misdemeanours - not among men, or against them, but against God - and he says, What a creature I am. He enters into the word in Job - Man that is abominable and filthy. (Job 15 v 16). Now, says Christ, "I will in no wise cast him out." None of these reasons.

But then there is an adversary, as you see in the case of Joshua, related by Zechariah. Joshua stood before the Lord clothed in filthy garments. That was bad enough. O, but there was an adversary. Satan

stood there to accuse him. The adversary. Now what does the Lord do? As it were, He turns away from Joshua for the moment; turns Him to the adversary and says - "The Lord rebuke thee O Satan". So Satan shall not induce the Lord to cast out the coming sinner. Have you accusations in your conscience? Have you the accuser of the brethren? Neither this, nor that, shall induce Me, says the Lord Jesus Christ, to cast out the sinner who comes to Me.

Take it in this view next. It means, I will be kind to him. I will receive him. I will eat with him. That which offended the Pharisees and the Scribes, is the honour of Christ, and the good of the sinner. "This Man receiveth sinners and eateth with them". How apt we are to forget that the gospel is the gospel for sinners, and

Sinners can say, and none but they
How precious is the Saviour

I will receive him. Wonderful is it not, the Lord Jesus stretching out His hands to receive a sinner, and, because the sinner is about to fall, laying hold of him, and bringing him in; into Himself, into His atonement, into His grace, into His fullness, into His love. He receives the sinner. Ah, coming sinner, look for Him, and look for His love, and mercy. You cannot expect too much. You cannot expect too much at His hands. You might easily expect too much from a friend; yea, from your nearest, but you cannot expect too much from Him, who is full of grace and truth, and the word "full" there, means "everything". "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ". "And of His fullness". Of whose fullness? The fullness of the Word that was with God and was God, that was made flesh and dwelt among us. The fullness of Him who tabernacles with men, who has all love, and all mercy, and all merit, and all power, and all goodness; not to be measured by time, nor received into the limited soul of any sinner. "In no wise". Now appeal to your own experiences, those of you who have experiences. Did He ever frown you away? Did He ever tell you not to come? Did He ever hint to you that He was tired of your prayers? O, what experiences some have. Think of the years of kindness He has manifested to some; the times of nearness, of communion; the helps, the blessings, the favours, the pardons, that

He has bestowed. And yet, we must be coming. Peter has a word that gives an intimation of this - "To whom coming". Not, to whom you did come; not to whom you may come; but - "To whom coming", intimating a continuous act of the soul, like as the Psalmist said - "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after Thee O God". And did God ever say to the thirsty earth, I am tired of your barrenness, and, Never again show me the cracks, and chaps that you have for lack of rain? No. Nor will the Lord ever say to a sinner who presents a bad case to Him, and the emptiness, and the chaps, and the cracks in his soul for want of rain, Come to Me no more. Ah, but, says one, You do not know how I have misspent mercies. He gave me gold, and silver, as it is in Ezekiel, and He covered me with His Own robe, and gave me wine, and oil, and flax, and I poured out all as a libation to some idol. What then? "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself". Turn again to the Lord. Turn again to Him, and go and say to Him - "Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips". "I will in no wise cast out" this man who comes to Me. I see in him the choice of My Father. I see in him the purchase of My blood. I see in him the grace of My Spirit. I see in him a need that I can supply, a wound I can heal, a soul I will save. This is a gracious word. May the Spirit of Christ open it to our hearts, and understandings, and give us to receive the encouragement contained in it; that the shyness of unbelief, and the backwardness born of a sense of guilt, and unworthiness, may not keep us from coming to Him.

AMEN.