

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel,
Brighton, on Sunday evening 7 September 1924.

"Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 6, verse 54.

If we believe in God, if we believe we are His creatures, if we believe that we are fallen, that we fell in Adam, that we are continually falling in our persons, into this and that sin, and if we believe that Christ is the friend, the Saviour, the High Priest, the Sacrifice, the Intercessor, the effect of all this will be that we shall seek to know Him, to be found in Him, to receive Him into our hearts, and to have that blessed, holy, certainty with respect to our eternal state that is implicit in this text. There is nothing will give eternal life but that that is in the text. Nothing will maintain it in vigour, nothing bring us into eternal glory, but what is in this text declared. And so, for a short time, if the Lord will assist me, I shall bring before you some of those weighty essential things, without which we can never be saved, never enter into God's presence. We are told in the Romans, and some of us have been told in our hearts, that by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Solemn truth, as we know, some of us know. We have felt it. We feel it still. It is more or less a daily, painful, shameful experience. Sin is in us. It mars us, blackens us, hardens us, fits us in our feelings for hell, and brings us to know that we can only be saved by omnipotent love, by the atoning blood and the justifying righteousness of Jesus Christ. Every sinner who feels this condemns himself and justifies God. If we never justify God in our consciences here, we shall never know what it is to be delivered from the law, never know the forgiveness of sins. Now Christ offended His own people by telling them the truth and again and again He escaped out of their hands by a miracle. They sought to stone Him because He declared His eternal Divinity. They sought to stone Him because He called Himself the Son of God, making Himself equal with God and the teaching of this chapter resulted in an exceeding solemn thing with respect to many who heard Him preach. They said, after He told them that

except they were to eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, they had no life in them, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it". From that time, (mark it, my friends, the gospel offends people. Christ is set for the rising and falling of many and by the preaching of Christ, the thoughts of many hearts are revealed) from that time, the time that eternal life was declared to them, the time that Christ drew the line between flesh and spirit, telling them that the flesh profited nothing, but that the words which He spoke, they were spirit and they were life, from that time, many of His disciples were offended, went back and walked no more with Him. What a solemn thing. Multitudes had gone after Him, had listened to Him, and when He told them that everything belonging to the flesh was death, and that only His words were life, that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood, or be dead, they were so offended, that they went away, and walked no more with Him. God forbid that so terrible a result shall ever be as the effect of preaching the gospel in your ears.

Now there is in this word a blessed declaration, but implicit in it is a truth disagreeable to a proud heart, namely that men are dead, dead in Adam, dead in the law, dead in their own souls, dead in sin, living in pleasure, while they are dead to God. Very solemn. What an awful thing to die dead, to die in guilt and sin, to die under the killing law, under the wrath, the eternal wrath of God, to die worse than you were born. Born in sin, born bad, you grow worse, and the end finds you just dead creatures. As I may be helped, I will never shrink from teaching this. I would not, I hope I may never do it with a hard heart, that I may never speak it wrongly, harshly, or improperly, but I will, as God helps me, just declare to this congregation from time to time, that all men are dead, born dead. Death passed upon all men for that all have sinned and born so, they grow worse, go astray speaking lies as soon as they are born, and commit that greatest of all offences, are guilty of that greatest and blackest of all immoralities, namely, thinking God to be such as themselves. I repeat it, it is the blackest of all immoralities to think God to be just like the creature, and this is our condition. How can it be changed? Christ tells us here. Between law and gospel there is no third state. Between being dead and being alive there is no condition. A man is alive or he is dead in the sight of God experimentally. A great deal may be said as between being really dead and feeling dead, being

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hungry and feeling it; being convinced of sin and having sin forgiven. There is a great deal to be said, but, as to the two states, they are distinct, and can never be made anything less. O sinner, God make you think about it, that if you are dead tonight you are dead and if you die in that state you will never live but be dead through eternity. All the impurity of your nature will remain; you will never see God, for the scripture declares "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God". And if you are not pure in heart through the grace of God and the blood and the Spirit of Christ, you will never see God. [Ah how good it would be to me to see some of you young people as I saw myself sixty years ago when I was convinced that I should never be where God was. O it would be good for you to be convinced of your impurity, of your death, of your guilt, of a broken law. Sovereign grace is able to abound over your sins, and come and breathe eternal life into your souls and then you will want the Lord.] When eternal life comes, it comes from Christ, and it sets up instantly union with Christ, but not felt union, not enjoyed. He who is born again has in his soul that eternal life of which the Lord Jesus Christ spoke when He said in this gospel - "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." Then, when a person is alive, he has an appetite, he has hunger, he has thirst, and Christ says here that His flesh is meat indeed, His blood is drink indeed, and whosoever eateth His flesh and drinketh His blood hath eternal life, and He wont neglect that person. He will look after him, yea when his dust is in the grave, the eye, ever watchful, the eye of Jesus Christ, is on that dust. That dust shall rise again. "I will raise him up at the last day" Now this eating and this drinking, let us look at, and first let us look at the meat and the drink. My flesh and My blood. What is this but Christ crucified. Christ crucified is the glory of divine justice, of divine love, is the removal of sin, the satisfaction of the law, the eternal honour of God, the reconciliation of the church to God in the body of the flesh of Jesus through death. The blood of Christ is the sealing of the covenant, the opening of a door that no man can shut, the giving of access to God of a guilty person. It is the way in which God smiles on a sinner and by which He unites a sinner to Himself, becomes a friend of that sinner, the God, the Father of that sinner, ever watching over him, ever blessing him, doing him good with all His heart and with all His soul. The meat is the flesh of Christ, a holy Christ crucified. The drink is the blood of Christ, a full, perfect atonement, and Christ says "Whoso eateth this bread shall never die" "Whoso drinketh this blood shall never die". The

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Lord Jesus in the scripture is spoken of in so many ways, sustains so many characters, has so many names, and all of them put together, make one glorious Christ, and constitute the glorious gospel of Christ. The eating of His flesh is the receiving of Christ into the heart, receiving Him by faith, so as that you receive everything from and in Him that your immortal soul can need for reconciliation, justification, sanctification, redemption, peace, the peace of God, comfort, divine comfort, and strength. This receiving of the Lord Jesus Christ is in two ways, first by revelation. "No man knoweth the Son save the Father" "No man knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." This is an amazingly mysterious, blessed point in vital religion and nothing else can still the heart, quell tormenting fear, remove hard bondage and labour and bring the sinner to feel in his soul the peace of God which passeth all understanding. You may have many helps, and blessed be God He does give many helps to His people. You may get a good help one morning in prayer, yea you may have such a spirit of prayer poured out upon you as shall last for some hours, perhaps even through a day and more. You may give yourself unto prayer and the softness of spirit, the tenderness of your conscience, the fervent desires of your heart, the committing of everything to the Lord, the casting of your lost soul upon the dear Redeemer, you can never express how you feel these things. Another day you may get a scripture falling upon your spirit like rain. Tender is your heart, soft is the rain, that falls upon it. It gathers you up in your thoughts, in your desires to God. It gives you some hints of the Lord Jesus, and these hints are like the sweetest rain falling upon a dry and thirsty land, whereby desires grow, fervent longings grow, and the soul feels 'Now I can never let the Lord alone till I get the blessing'. Sometimes a hymn will be useful, sometimes two or three sentences in a sermon will be useful, sometimes a little conversation with gracious people, or listening to what gracious people say will be useful, and by these helps people are held on, encouraged to press forward and they get glimpses of a good day whereby they can even cast themselves before the Lord in a feeling of real hope. I do not deprecate these helps, blessed be God I know them and know their value, but they are not liberty. They are not perfect rest; they do not cast out tormenting fear. It comes back and seizes them again, and deathly feelings and hard feelings and self justifying feelings and rebellious feelings, these come again and take possession of the mind, and then

the helps are questioned. The knowledge that they gave, the encouragement that they administered, are questioned, because the person says 'I have not got what I wanted. I have not got liberty. I have not got forgiveness. I have got no revelation of Christ in my heart.' O but God was good to you in doing what He did and giving you what He did. He was good to you and what He gave you was like a harbinger, like a voice saying there is more to come. The God who gave you these has more to give you. Yea, they say, raise your downcast eyes, look to the Lord, go to Him with your needs and feelings and your fears. Go to Him. I mention these things because I know between the new birth and being born into gospel liberty there are many intermediate, intervening things, blessings, helps, touches, leadings, and so on, but they do not satisfy and if the Lord keep me labouring at this point the remaining days of my speaking among you, I will not set you down short. I know what you need, I have been there. I know what you will perceive when you receive a revelation of Jesus Christ in your hearts. Now I will speak of this by the help of God. There is a revelation. Peter made that noble confession when, in reply to Christ's question, "Whom say ye that I am" he said "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God" and Christ informed him how he received that knowledge. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven" One may say 'But we are in a better position than Peter was. We have the scriptures. Peter was an unlearned man, he heard the scriptures read in the synagogues but he did not know them. We are in a better position. We have the scriptures and we can read them. We do read them, and we hear preaching.' And what has your better position done for you? Has it formed Christ in you the hope of glory? Has it removed guilt from your conscience? Has it brought sensible union between you and God? Has it given you the glorious liberty of the sons of God? Has it put you into the covenant? I speak now experimentally. You say 'No' Then may the Lord help you just to cleave to Him insofar as you have gone. Remember what you received when you got a blessing, when you got a help, when you were raised to a hope. Dont give these things up. The Lord help you to hold them fast as Christ said "Remember how thou hast received and heard and hold fast". And when you look at another and see another walking in liberty, do not say, that is to say, the Lord keep you from saying 'why should they have it and I not.' Anybody who speaks like that shows this, that they have not yet been properly, entirely killed; that legality and self righteousness still live in them, for when a person says 'why should

I not have the blessing' it only says he thinks he ought to have it, whereas when the Holy Spirit kills a sinner he says 'I deserve nothing but hell' That is one of the surest things that a person feels when he is thoroughly killed by the law. He is killed by the law. Says Paul 'I am dead to it' But there is another death, this person must die. He must die to the law by the body of Christ. When the law kills a sinner it does not relax its hold of him. It says 'I must bury him' When the law kills a sinner, I say, it does not relax its hold of him. He has yet another death as it were to die. I am dead to the law by the body of Christ. How does this come to pass? By revelation. What is this? The coming of the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ to a sinner and revealing the Lord Jesus to him in so gracious, so clear, so sweet, so wonderful a manner, that that sinner's faith at once lays hold of the revelation of the Person revealed, and between the Lord Jesus and that soul, union is formed, liberty is felt, pardon is enjoyed. This is eating the flesh of Christ. A broken Christ, broken by the law's loud thunder, broken by the wrath of God, raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. This Jesus is revealed and is received into the heart and dwells there by faith. Then the law has nothing to say to this sinner. If the sinner says "The terrors of law and of God, with me can have nothing to do" the law cannot say 'but I have to do with you'. Why? "My Saviour's obedience and blood, hide all my transgressions from view". That is the way. Now beloved friends, you who have longings, hunger and thirst, be not discouraged, but God help you to lift up your cry to Him. Send out a strong cry that you may have this revelation. When one has had it, one can tell whether a person, a friend, a godly friend, has had it or not. Wherever this liberty has been it leaves its mark. Wherever this revelation has been made, it leaves its mark. An honest man says 'I have never had it' Yet he is a godly man. If you are with him you will find that he is walking in tenderness in the fear of God. He has a hope in the Saviour. He looks to Him, but he always says 'I want that, that revelation'. It does make a mark. It leaves it, an indelible mark. The mark of indelible grace is never erased, never shall be. God is the God of that person. Christ is the Saviour of that sinner. He is in that sinner's heart, the hope of glory. At the moment death has no terror. O when I got it how glad would I have been to die. O it would have been a sweet thing to me for one to have said 'Now the end is near, you are about to die'. When you feel this then you

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have Christ in you and you feel it because He is in you. Whoso eateth My flesh; whoso receiveth Him into his heart in the revealing light of grace and power of the Eternal Spirit, he has eternal life. Christ is his; Christ's life is his. The love of the Father on and in Christ belongs to the sinner. "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me, may be in them". The oneness of Christ and the sinner is wonderful in its sweet power as He is received. One may say I shall never get that. Who told you so? [Many years ago on a Friday night there sat in the chapel one who greatly feared, and as I was speaking he was saying 'It is not for me, it is not for me' and I felt an impulse to stop, turn away from what I was saying, and I said 'Someone here is saying 'It is not for me, it is not for me' and what I remarked was this 'There are but two voices to which a child of God should listen, first the voice of the scripture, and second the voice of the Spirit'. 'Now' I said, 'neither of those is saying that to you' and this gave him hope. I went on speaking and in a few minutes he began to sink and to say 'It is not for me, it is not for me' and again, through the goodness of God, the impulse came on my mind and I stopped, turned from what I was speaking about, and said 'There is someone here saying it is not for me, it is not for me,' and I made the same remark and that brought him up to a living hope. Now if any of you should be saying that what I preached is not for you, I would just make the same remark that I made, now considerably more than thirty years ago.] I would say that there are but two voices for you to listen to, the voice of the scripture - and I know that does not tell you that - and the voice of the Spirit, and He will never say that to a seeking sinner, never. O if a sinner is blessed with grace to seek he will never be disappointed. He may be sick at heart, faint with fear, grievously discouraged, give up all hope at times in his feelings, but he will never die disappointed. I have not the slightest feeling of hesitation in my mind in saying that. I know I shall never prove a false teacher in that. You will never die short of Christ if your heart is set on Him. The Lord help you to wait on Him. The Lord Jesus come in the revealing light of His Spirit and help you to look to Him, yea and may He come in and you will say 'Come in, come in, thou much desired guest'. Then you will find Him in your heart and when you find Him there you will hold Him and wont be willing to let Him go.

"Whoso drinketh My blood". What is this, but receiving the atonement, the forgiveness of all your sins in your conscience? That is what it is - "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed

with corruptible things, as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ", and that wont leave a sin there when it is applied. It wont leave a stain. You will get many a stain afterwards alas, but you wont have a sin left when you have that on your conscience. To drink it is then to receive the full atonement of Jesus Christ into your conscience. And death, the law which is death, and sin, which is filth and pollution, will be taken away and you and your God and Saviour Jesus Christ will be friends. And what Hart says is beautifully true

Close in with Christ by saving faith

And God's your friend for ever

You will often lose the sense of that, but He is your friend for ever. He will look after every child of His. He may dwell solitarily, he may be tried, he may have sore temptation, many difficulties concerning him, many snares to catch his feet, many devils in his heart to destroy him, attempting constantly to do that, but none of these, singly, nor all of them, unitedly, will ever attain the end they have, for, says Christ, "I will raise him up at the last day". "I will raise him up." They tell us there is no resurrection of the dead possible. A bishop of the Church of England has dared to utter that blasphemy and say that chemistry has proved the resurrection of our flesh is impossible, but that does not make it so, my friends. That does not invalidate this blessed book. "I will raise him up". What an awful thing to deny the resurrection. "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins", and we are of all men most miserable. But "I will raise him up" Ah, will He who has raised you out of the death of sin, who has brought you out of the death of the law, who has brought you into living union with Himself, and given you so many helps and encouragements and testimonies, will He let all that fall? Every man shall appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that he may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad, and when you prayed in this poor body, and laboured in faith and hope and love, and walked with the Lord in peace and equity among His people, and feared His great Name in the assembly of the saints, and when you have seen Him working deliverance for you and watched His kind hand, His mighty power working for you and in you, is all that to perish, all these manifestations to die down,

and is this word to be false "I will raise him up at the last day." The resurrection is the keystone to the arch. If this be not, then we are of all men most miserable, but, says Christ, "I will raise him up at the last day". Why, He would lack part of Himself if He did not raise this person up who is favoured to eat His flesh and drink His blood. Can Christ lack part of Himself? Can He be in heaven and leave some of you to rot eternally in the grave? You say, 'but the soul may be there'. Not without the body eventually. When a child of God dies, his happy spirit, like the Spirit of Christ when He left the cross went into heaven, so does the spirit of a child of God enter into that blessed place, But then he is not a person, he is only part of a person and Christ bought the whole person. He bought the church. He bought an entire person and so, if He is not to be disappointed, if He is to be a complete Christ, and the complete Head with His body, and the Bridegroom with the Bride, then every person eating His flesh and drinking His blood must, according to His promise, be raised at the last day. What a rising it will be; O what a rising. Here we read in the scripture of our vile body, the body of our humiliation, as the word means, the body of our humiliation through sin. This shall be raised and fashioned like unto His glorious body according to the working whereby He is able to subdue even all things unto Himself. What a resurrection. The very Lord Jesus Christ raising the dead and making the bodies of His people like unto His own body. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" Even here is a blessed likeness to Christ in the soul. "But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image". When you get a view of Christ revealed to you, looking on His glory, your whole soul is affected by it, is it not? You feel it, you enter into it. But, when we see Him as He is, then we shall be like Him, in His own image. We shall be like Him for ever and ever. "I will raise Him up at the last day". Now I judge there are three sorts of people listening to me. The living, born again, and these are divided into two classes. One class, the people who have received a revealed Christ, who have had liberty, justification, sanctification, wisdom and redemption by Jesus Christ. O happy people, blessed people, you are the Lords and you have known it, if you do not at this moment know it so comfortably; blessed saints. Then there are the

Lord's people who are not in this case. They are not less dear to Christ. They were not bought with less. No, the same price was paid for them as for others, as for the Apostles, and all the holy prophets of Jesus Christ, but they have not yet got this sweet knowledge. [What then? They are to be cared for, watched over. A true pastor prays for them. I was thinking this afternoon about the Apostle Paul praying night and day without ceasing for the people of God. I am immeasurably beneath that, and yet I have thought that I could appeal to the Lord and say two things - night and day I pray for you that God would form Himself in you the hope of glory, and the names of you are often on my lips in the night season and in the day, those of you who I know have not yet received this blessing. You will get it one day I hope.] May the Lord stir up your hearts to seek it and make you so hungry for it that you will never be at rest until He says in you "Fear not, I have redeemed thee, thou art Mine". And then I expect you will say, if you think what I have often spoken concerning Christ revealed, you will very likely say, he did not tell us half the truth, and how can I? How can I properly, adequately describe Him who is fairer than the children of men, into whose lips grace is poured? Who is loved of God eternally, and who comes to express His Father's love and to show His own beauties. No poor minister can do that properly, adequately. Well may the Lord bless you. Go on.

Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness He requireth,
Is to feel your need of Him
This He gives you,
'Tis His Spirit's rising beam.

And the third class is made up of those who are dead in sin and have no care about God or themselves. May the Lord quicken you into life. Let mighty works show themselves forth in you. Life divine, power divine, a holy, just law, may they all seize you and then you will cry "What must we do to be saved". May the Lord Jesus bless you, do you all good. Bless you who are His saints, comfort you on every side, and give you to realise the sweetness of forgiveness, the sweetness of pardon, the sweetness

of the blood of Christ, the preciousness of his flesh.