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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed  
Chapel, Brighton on Sunday evening  
26 May 1929

Text: John 7 verse 37

"In that last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying - If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink."

You were very happy in your state, whatever your present feelings may be, who could sing, and did honestly sing "I long to taste the purple flood". No person, saying that by the grace of the Spirit, shall die of disappointment. The gospel is an encouraging gospel. Keenly discriminating, beautifully encouraging, is the gospel, the everlasting gospel, and one part of the encouragement is this - it is without money, without price. If a tax were levied, if a price were put on it, who could hope? The state of man in creation was noticed this morning. The state of man by the fall was spoken about, the utter alienation from God, the wicked spirit, the deep guilt. How utterly hopeless our condition is, as considered in relation to the law of God, but Jesus came, the only begotten Son came, and took into union with His divine person, the miraculously born Son, the child Jesus. He ever has been the most disputed person in the world. Great men are disputed about, great works are questioned in some particulars, and the greatness of great men is more or less confined to particular circles and professions, but the Man Christ Jesus stands prominent above all men. Some men say He had a devil, and some say He was not God and some say that He could not put sin away by laying down His life. Some say He was not raised again from the dead, others say He did not really die, but only swooned, and men do dispute, are disputing and will dispute about, and against, Him. But there is a body in which there is no dispute, no controversy, with regard to the person of Christ. That body is the house of God, the church of the living God, the ground and pillar of the truth and with regard to that happy circle, that blessed family, the Apostle says by the Holy

Ghost, without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifested in the flesh. He stands there, He sits there. There He teaches, there He shows Himself. For that church He died to purchase and redeem her. God died and that Blessed One, though at the time when He said this He had not finished all that He was sent to do, but was very near to the finishing, seeing around Him the national joy in the feast, that great feast, in the great day of that feast, He stood up. He saw the emptiness of it, He saw the carnality of the joy in many. He saw the carnal ordinances, that they could not satisfy God, and therefore could not satisfy any conscience. And, seeing the living water brought by the priests and poured out on the altar of God, how that that was no satisfaction to Deity, He cried and used this great word - "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." If he thirst for God, I am God. If he thirst for redemption, I am the Redeemer. If he thirst for justification, I am the Lord, the righteousness of My people. If he thirst for holiness, my sanctification shall be given to him. Let him come and drink of all the benefits of My Person and My work. And this evening, if enabled, I desire to speak of this drinking, for I named the coming and some of the difficulties in the way of coming this morning.

Now, says Christ, let this thirsty man come to Me, and let him drink. And, first of all, let the man who thirsts for a change in respect of his relationship to God, who would fain be delivered from a state of bondage, from a state of alienation, come to Me and drink in, drink in to his satisfaction, that change which he desires. He feels an alienation, let him come to Me, the Son of God, and drink into sonship, into adoption. This is not unimportant. Unless there is a change in our state before, and with, God in this life, hell must be our portion and Christ, who alone can effect such a change, says - Let the man who thirsts for it come to Me. Adoption in scripture is used to express the great change that I would speak about. Adoption is spoken of in the first way with respect to predestination. You have it in the Ephesians "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ according as He hath

chosen us in Him, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children to Himself by Jesus Christ." So, however far beyond and above us it may seem at the present moment, in respect of our experience, there is the blessing set forth - predestinated to it. Clearly, to know this, we must have it revealed to us. Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou by searching find out His purposes? He must reveal them. Adoption in the chapter which I read clearly is related to redemption. Because God would have His people with Himself, He sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. The Redeemer must buy the slaves, slaves to sin. Know ye not to whom ye obeyed, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness. We are slaves to sin, born in it, disposed to it, alive to it. We love it, and to redeem us from it the Son of God came and condescended to be made like unto His brethren, by taking their nature, and taking their nature qualified Him to redeem them. And being made under the law, qualified Him to redeem them from the law. There is no part of Christ, dear friends, no part of His person, no part of His work, that can be dispensed with. It is very beautiful to faith to see the indispensable nature of the whole of Christ. A whole Redeemer, made of a woman. The children, being partakers of flesh and blood, He likewise also took part of the same. Made of a woman. And the slaves of sin were under the law, and so He was made under the law, else He could not redeem them. And this redemption of His had this end in it, and before it, that we might receive the adoption of sons. The blood of God and the sonship of aliens are thus indissolubly united in the scripture, and I believe they are united also in experience indissolubly. Whenever you get the spirit of adoption, you will not be negligent of the blood of Christ. You will find that blood purging your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Now brethren, says the Saviour, let him who thirsts for a new relationship, thirsts to be taken away from the condemning law, and the damnation of the law, who thirsts to say "Abba Father", let him come to Me, the Eternal Son incarnate, the pattern of the Sonship of God's people, let him drink into this Sonship and the spirit of it and the sweet relationship of it and the blessed benefits of it. Let him come to Me and drink,

which is by faith, faith receiving the benefit, faith appropriating it in the witness and power of the Holy Ghost. Let him come and drink. There are some places where the devil is. There are some places where unbelief prevails. There are some places where reason prevails, but this holy place, or this divine Person, when a sinner by faith reaches Him, there is no devil, there is no guilt, there is no doubt. All is well with the sinner. The Spirit is with him, the Spirit is in him, and the cry "Abba Father" that once looked to the sinner like presumption even to think of it as being in himself, that same cry is a cry of a filial heart, under the witnessing of the Holy Ghost. Well, what a change, what a state to come into. Says Paul to the Ephesians, - you were strangers, you were aliens, you were strangers to the covenant of promise, without God. You were without hope, but now in Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. That is the change. Nigh to whom? Why, to the Father by the blood of Christ, for through Him we both have access unto the Father through Christ. We have that access by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and therefore no longer strangers nor aliens, but of the household of faith, and are builded together with other saints for a habitation of God through the Spirit. What words the Holy Ghost has heaped one on another to express the ineffable change and relationship that the pople of God have experience of. One may be saying now mentally, but it is a long way beyond me. I have no hope of getting to that. Well, poor tried child of God, the Spirit sets forth this gospel as being more and freer than any mind enlightened can conceive, but I cannot reach it. The thing is this - In the fulness of the time, God sent forth His own Son, made of a woman, made under the law. He did not say, you must reach Him, for that would have been impossible, but He did so. He sent His Son, in the fulness of the time appointed. And it is written that the Son of God came. It is written also that the Son of Man came. Mark the word if you can. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many and the ransom of His life given for many reached God in the merit of it, in the infinite worth of it, and it is in heaven, and the Holy Spirit is given to bring that ransom down from heaven into the conscience of a sinner and when that ransom

is so brought down, the sinner then knows what redemption is. This good gospel will meet the case, the Spirit of Christ will meet the case. "Let him come unto Me and drink." One other thing I would say - The brethren of the Lord Jesus did not believe Him at this moment and they reproached Him for not going up openly to the feast and the Saviour, their brother, when they had reproached Him for doing, as they untruthfully repeated, doing things to be seen of men and yet hiding Himself in a way, said - the world cannot hate you. It is a very solemn thing if that should be said of any of us. It will be terrible - the world cannot hate you but Me it hateth for I testify of it. Now a sinner sometimes under the light and guidance of the Spirit and the teaching showing him divine joys in Christ says - O if I might have these heavenly joys. Says the Saviour to the thirsty - come to Me, the world hates you and some have to say I know it in my family. Others have to say I know it in my business connections, I know it. The Saviour says - come and drink into heavenly joys, into pardon, into sweet comfort. Come and drink. O the fulness of the Lord Jesus. Of Him it is written in this gospel "Of His fulness have all we received" and that fulness is, in the very nature of it, joy. In this gospel, in another place, the Lord Jesus says I say these things that my disciples may have My joy fulfilled in them, and Peter speaks about rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory in respect of the inheritance which is preserved for these believers and for which they, weak as they are, are preserved. There is joy in God. There is joy in God. The Saviour had it shown to Him, as you read in the Psalms - "Thou wilt show Me the path of life". "Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, nor suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show Me the path of life. At Thy right-hand are pleasures for ever more." The pleasures of holiness, the pleasures of God's favour, the pleasures of the Spirit, the pleasures of the Lord Jesus. These are in Him, and says the Saviour to those who are hated of the world and who, feeling their sinfulness, hate themselves, - Come to Me and drink, drink divine things, the gospel in the greatness of it, the gospel in the freeness of it, the gospel in the fulness of it, the gospel in the eternity of it. And connected with this, we have to say, some can say it experimentally, some can say it as believing in

the scripture, there is a full supply in the Lord Jesus. You may thirst sometimes for the grace of perseverance. You have such a sense of weakness through sin in your members, through the deceitfulness of sin working in you, that you may say - O unless the Lord is pleased to hold me up, fall I must.

*but perhaps in some degree*

And there is a thirst for grace to help you on, to hold fast, to hold fast by Jesus Christ. To hold fast to the ignominy and shame of His cross, to hold fast to Him who destroyed death by dying and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel. Now He says - Come to Me and drink. Let the feeble say - I am strong. Come to Me and then you shall say in your own time, in God's time that is, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give unto me, and not to me only, but unto all them that love His appearing. It will be a great thing to finish well. I believe to every child of God at times it must appear a great thing to finish well, but when the people of God get that and get near to eternity, then it would seem that each one must feel that it is more important than it used to be. One step without God, O what might be the consequence of it. Therefore the cry is - "Hold Thou Me up and I shall be safe". And the Saviour says - Come to Me. All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Come and drink into this spirit of power. Let the feeble say I am strong. Sometimes people are thirsty for a living and daily religion, some communication made constantly and the cry is "O continue to draw out Thy lovingkindness unto them that know Thee". There is the lovingkindness which abides in the Saviour, an eternal fulness, but faith says - O Lord we are needy, we shall fail without supplies through sheer weakness or unbelief or temptation. O draw out, that is the marginal reading in that place in the Psalms. O continue to draw out Thy lovingkindness unto the people who know Thee. Says the dear Saviour, - Come to me and drink this lovingkindness which is better than life. Let Him come to Me and by precious faith receive new supplies of power and of grace to live in a continual exercise before God. A presuming spirit will turn the fulness of Christ, and the faithfulness of Christ, into lasciviousness, will make a man say

it is all settled. If you are born again, heaven is yours, why all this bondage and fear and exercise. Depend on it, the sinner, the professor who thus speaks is not in a healthy state, if he is born again. Now one who is conscious of the liability of his spirit to fail and fall here will cry out quicken me in Thy righteousness and cause me to escape, and leave me not to walk in an unexercised state of mind. And says the Saviour to him - Come to Me, drink of my grace, drink of my life, of my fulness, of my mercy and of my compassion and you shall be satisfied. It is a good thing to say with the Psalmist "The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want" And he had a present exercise "He leadeth me" not He did lead me. That would be true, but He leadeth me in green pastures and by the still waters, which tells us of a real case, a daily exercise, and a spiritual life moving in the soul. And whence these living waters, still, that is waters of peace and quietness, but from the Saviour. It was a very beautiful sight that John got by revelation of the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. And the same healing waters, the prophet Ezekiel got a sight of. He saw the waters flowing from beneath the threshold of the door that looketh to the east and he saw the beneficent effects of those waters. They made everything live that they touched and so every child of God comes to that. He has to find that, he must partake of that life, that pure life. Also John had a sight of the tree of life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, whose fruit is for the sustenance of the nations.

There is a thirst, a good thirst, for a growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. There is a scripture which troubles me at times. It is in the Hebrews, I am painfully conscious of being in it - "When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you, which be the first principles". In the same Epistle there is another word The Apostle was crippled, not by the withholding of the Spirit from him, not by any lack of knowledge in his own soul, but he was crippled and unable to open more deeply and fully and clearly the mysteries of Christ's person. He said of whom we have many things to say and hard to be uttered seeing ye are dull of

hearing. And to the Corinthians he says the same things in other words "I could not write unto you as unto spiritual but as unto carnal even as unto babes" and he could not did not relate to his own pen or mind or spirit, but to their condition. Think of it. It plainly shows that a ministry may be dulled and a minister may find it very hard to say some things which he has known in his own soul by reason of the dull condition of his hearers. May the Lord make us as a people believe that. Now says Peter - "Grow in grace". Having spoken of their falling from their steadfastness, he says "But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ". To grow in grace is to take root downward, to be rooted and grounded in love. It is to be made more and more out of conceit and love with yourself and more and more to be falling in love with the Lord Jesus. It is to see His beauty more and more clearly. It is to be receiving out of His fulness and grace for grace. "Grow". If you are near the river of the water of life, the roots of your faith will strike themselves down deeper and deeper to draw nourishment and sap and fruitfulness therefrom. And "in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" is to have the operations of His Spirit opening and alledging that He is the Christ, that He died, that He rose again, that He is in heaven, that He is interested in you, that His care for you brings trouble and chastisement and that His kindness to you may be expressed in affliction. It is great to grow in grace and in knowledge. If you see one, of whom you have hope that he is a christian person, yet remaining year after year in the same state of mind, with no increase in knowledge, you may well reason that there is something wrong. The root may be there, but a long way from the ground, and the water of life, and hence the barrenness. Let the sinner who would be fruitful come to Me, says the Saviour. Let him come to Me. Let the thirsty person, who would glorify God, come to Me and drink into My Spirit and grace. In the gospel of John, the Lord Jesus said "I am the true vine, My Father is the husbandman". "I am the vine, ye are the branches. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me. Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be My disciples," that is, fully manifested. How does it stand with you? Let him

come to Me. Let him bring his barrenness, and he will do it with many a tear. Let him bring his dryness, and hardness and unfruitfulness and unprofitableness. Let him bring to Me what he feels about his unfruitfulness in his family and with respect to those he is connected with, and let the poor minister bring his barren ministry. Let these poor people come to Me, the root and fatness of all spiritual life and grace. O my brethren, do you feel how little you answer to the gospel, how little of the gospel you have in your souls? Do you feel that the explanation is very distressing to you, even that, though you profess that the root of all is in Christ, you seldom go to Him? Do you feel it? Let him come to Me. Let him come to Me who thirsts for a revival. They went of old in this way; they went to Him who had "unhedged" them, who had permitted boar and beast to come out of the wood and forest to trample down and destroy the vineyards. They went with that condition, in that condition and they said (it was coming to Christ) "Let Thy hand be upon the man of Thy right-hand, upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself". And what was the effect of that? O they said "So will not we go back from Thee. Quicken us and we will call upon Thy name. Wilt Thou not revive us again that Thy people may rejoice in Thee".

Lastly, let him that is athirst for a good blessed death-bed come to Me. It is written (O how attractive that may have been to some of us at different times) "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord". O it is a blessed thing to die in Him. Stephen died thus, and martyrs of Jesus have died thus. The papists have been drunk with the blood of the saints, but the saints have gone to heaven and sinners who suffer martyrdom within by their conflict with sin, when they die, will die in the Lord. What a blessed thing it is to die thus. Solomon says - Better is the day of one's death than the day of one's birth". Beautiful it will be to die thus, to breathe your immortal soul out, and to leave this poor, crazy, sick, weak body and enter into the joy of the Lord. One says - but I am too carnal, I am too deeply involved in the things of this life. I am too attached to certain things. There is one who knows all that, go to Him, confess to Him, and seek grace from Him to wean you, so that, as

the end approaches, you may be able to say with the Psalmist - "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty, neither do I exercise myself in things too high for me; surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a weaned child, as a child that is weaned of his mother". God is able to wean us from this world, and to loosen the ten thousand ties that bind us to the earth. If any man thirst for a good end at the close of a good course, let him come unto Me and drink. Receive by faith the promises, receive by faith the blessed gospel of Jesus Christ. Receive by faith these holy truths which are connected with, and essential to, the person and the redeeming work of Christ, for thereby and thereby alone can any sinner live on the Son of God and die in the Lord.

May this great text, uttered by the great Saviour, with a great meaning, wide and deep and high, be opened to us by that divine Spirit who was with the Saviour without measure. And may you, my brethren, hear this great word in your hearts, and so hear it, as to feel that it is an invitation to you, moving, attracting, helping, teaching, emptying and saying in your hearts "Be not afraid of poverty, there is a rich Saviour, tremble not too much at your weakness, your Saviour is the Omnipotent One. Think not too exclusively upon your ignorance, remember the eternal Son of God is wisdom. And look not too much into the hell of sin in your nature, but cast looks, believing, loving, desiring looks, upon Him who said "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."