

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Sunday evening 27 April 1930

MATTHEW 6 v 11

"Give us this day our daily bread"

This is the first prayer in this remarkable prayer that has reference to self. The three former parts of this prayer have immediate reference to God. The high doctrine of God, the loftiest theme that can occupy the mind of man or angel - God. To believe in Him, to have some apprehension, though feeble, of what He is - "I AM THAT I AM" - of His character - "Just and right is He"; there is no unrighteousness in Him; so to believe is great, and such a belief brings the word - "Hallowed be Thy Name" - into the spirit, and God is honoured. No creature can approach Him in this, as in other things - hallowed, honoured, glorified, lifted up, made high - do you honour Him? Is His Name Wonderful in your hearts? A common sin of man is this - charged in the Psalms upon Israel primarily - "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself". The greatest immorality that is possible to man is that, to debase the infinite God to your own level. Unbelief can rise no higher, immorality can go no further, than that great sin. I wish this may be impressed upon the minds of you young people who today must meet with the terrible modernism that is so rampant in our land; to judge God, to judge what He ought to be, to make His justice level with the justice of man, to say what He ought not to be, and what He ought not to do. Greater sin cannot be. You may judge your brother. You are at liberty and ought, under certain circumstances, to judge your brother, but to judge God is a terrible crime. "Thy kingdom come" - This we considered, and this morning we considered the very high and mysterious, but most solemn, truth that there is but one will that is to be done; only one will, independent, and righteous, and that is God's will. Other wills and minds are in His hand and He turns them withersoever He will, just as the rivers are turned. O proud man, what is your will? No independence in it. You take the most independent mind that you can find, a will determined to do this and that. You will find, if you look closely into it, that circumstances influence that will.

Propositions, openings, appearances of evil, promises of good, these, these determine the choice, these influence the will; there is no independence, no real independence out of God. "Thy will be done", and it will be done whether we will or no. O, but it is good when our wills are brought into subjection to God's revealed will. And I may remind you that I said this morning, the will of God is revealed in the Scripture, in providence, and by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the saints.

Now this following word we have to look at as enabled this evening. "Give us this day our daily bread". Take it literally and naturally first. Two lessons may be drawn from this. First, the lesson that a proud man does not like to learn, namely that he is dependent. Nobody likes to be dependent. As the word is understood, we all, more or less, reject it. Naturally, we want to be independent of others, but we cannot be. It is true that the king himself is served of the field. Paul says of God - "In Him we live and move and have our being". The time to be born was determined; the time to die is fixed by God. What we shall be, how engaged, God has determined

Parents, native place, and time,
All appointed were by Him

What have we to be proud of? We are dependent. He gives health, He sends sickness, He makes families and these depend on Him for their union and their happiness. He opens places for men, He guides them, guides the mind of a youth to a certain business, and nothing else will fit him. There is a dependence on Almighty God. The universe hangs on His will, is sustained by His word. The stars keep their courses because He is strong in power, because there is no failure of His understanding. Therefore they are, as they were, and shall be to their appointed time. Do we like this? Naturally, No. I do not; no man does; but there it is in Holy Scripture - we live, and move, and have our being in Him. and He is not far from every one of us, and He gives proof of this. He has not left Himself without witness, in that He gives rain, and fruitful seasons, and fills our hearts with food and gladness. Look to Him. We who are old have not much more to look for in this world, but you young people here may have many days before

you. You have ambitions, intentions. You reach to this, you stretch out after that. Anything that thwarts you, you fret against. A determination comes into your minds to have this, or that, by any means if it is possible. Now be afraid. Naturally you are dependent. Men may be set over you, and in some way you may think they oppress you. Fall down. You may be raised to a position which would give you authority over men. Mind how you use it. Never forget that whatever position you occupy you are dependent on God, and whatever your pride, whatever your unbelief, whatever your singular and strong wills may be, this is true - it will never be otherwise than true - you are dependent on God. All that is needful for your life, that is comprehended in this word, daily bread, He bestows. That is the first lesson; not unimportant. It might be enforced very much, if ability were given, but take it just as it is briefly, and plainly stated, that you are, we all are, dependent on God.

And the second lesson is this, that it is the duty of every man, and woman, natural duty to cry to God for daily bread. Whether a saint or not, it is the natural duty of the creature to seek the Creator; of a hungry person to seek the hand that gives him bread. A striking lesson we have of this in Israel in the wilderness. It was their course naturally to seek God who had delivered them from Egypt and had brought them into the wilderness. But how often they fretted instead of praying. How frequently they went the way of their own minds instead of calling on Him. God has brought us into being, He has brought us into this world. He has given us to live in the most favoured land in the world. He has given us great blessings and mercies. What ought we to do? Constantly to seek Him, constantly to pray to Him. What a spirit it is that turns away from the hand that provides. What a proud heart it is that turns away from the mind that alone can guide well; from the wisdom that alone is able to show man how to walk and what to do. O do not forget your duty, dear hearers. O sinners, do not forget your duty. If you do, God wont forget your sin. He wont forget your pride. He wont pass by your independence. Depend upon it, He notices things. He so notices them that He writes the evils in a book, and if you die impenitent, unwashed, unjustified, then when you stand before the Judgement Seat of Christ, the books in which your lives, your independent, prayerless, proud, unbelieving, God-hating lives, are recorded, will be opened and read

out to your tingling ears, and terrified souls. And then you will hear that awful word - "Depart from Me ye cursed". I wish we may learn this second lesson, that it is what is owing to our Creator, what is good for ourselves, to call upon God. I am speaking naturally now of men's duty, not at all in the spiritual sense for the moment, but just what belongs to every person, young and old, high and low, rich and poor. It belongs to every man; it is an inescapable obligation on all men to turn from the vanities of their natures, as Paul speaks to the Athenians, to turn away from all vanities of fallen nature and seek after Him if haply we may find Him. "Give us this day our daily bread".

Now I shall do no violence to the text if I turn from the natural part and go to the spiritual meaning. Hunger belongs to us. Natural hunger is not disease; it is health, and a healthy appetite needs no pampering. So spiritually, if we are born again we have an appetite after the nature of that new life given, eternal life, and nothing in this world can appease the hunger of a spiritual person. You might shut that person up in a strong room with certificates, and deeds, and gold, and silver, and you might say to him, all these are yours, but he will say there is something that these cannot give me; I want God. I want God for my soul, I want Christ to be my righteousness. I want His blood to be on my conscience, I want His Spirit to dwell in me, I want to know God as my Father, I want to know and possess the Trinity. How many of us here can say as much as that? Look into your hearts. How many could really kneel before God or, sitting here now in this chapel, say this in our heart - As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so pant our souls after Thee O God. Is He the best in your view? Is He the Chiefest among ten thousand in your view? Is it so that you can say, nothing else can satisfy me.

Jesus, my soul's athirst for Thee

O happy man, as to his estate, who can say as much as that, even though he might add of necessity, I am a miserable creature because I do not possess Him. Let us look at this. Every nature has its appetite. This nature has its appetite. What is this bread? The answer is very simple, very profound, very remarkable. "I am that living bread". I came down from heaven; I am the living bread. If a man eat this bread

he shall never die. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you". It offended many people into whose ears it was spoken. Then went back many of His disciples and walked no more with Him because of that saying; it was so hard. They understood it carnally and therefore were offended. Does it offend you, or is there in it an attraction? This bread is Christ and the gift is in His own hand. He has the bread to give. Do you believe that, that, diligently as you read this Book - I wish you all did read it diligently - you cannot, by doing that alone, get this bread. "Which I will give" He gave it for the life of the world. He gives it to living people. Unbelief, hardness of heart, guilt on the conscience, a confused mind, a legal spirit, they all rise up and say, you will never get it. O, but kneel before God and ask Him, according to this direction - "Give us this day". Lord, we need it. If there be hunger for a time and no bread, strength fails. If there be no communications from God, spiritual strength fails. A hunger-bitten soul becomes a weak soul. Mind this; you cannot be spiritually healthy and strong unless you receive some communication from the Lord Jesus from time to time. Vital religion is not at one dead level. It goes up and down; strong and weak, according as food is given or withheld. Everyone knows that who is rightly exercised and led of God. This bread is nothing less than a broken, crucified Saviour. You must know Him if you have spiritual life and are to be spiritually healthy and strong. You cannot live on your exercises. You cannot live on your hunger. You cannot live on your desires. If you have hunger of a right sort, be thankful. If your desires are good, bless God for them, but you cannot live on them. They are not given to be your nourishment; they are not intended for your strength. They are intended, they are given, that you may go to Him who alone can satisfy you. "Give us this day". Jesus Christ crucified will ever be the nourishment, the peace, the strength, and the comfort of the church of God, of individual members of that church. Christ crucified means that He died the death due to guilty people; that He stood in the room and precise condition of guilt; that He received into His soul the very punishment due to His people. That He paid the price for their redemption; that the curse of God due to the church was exhausted when He said - "It is finished" and dismissed His spirit. And this doctrine of Christ crucified answers to bread. The bread that nourishes the soul, the precious bread of

life. If you realise the truth of this, if you feel you cannot live without this, then this prayer will suit you, this divinely directed petition - "Give us this day". How many in Galeed have this day prayed for this bread? How many of you have gone into your prayer room, or in moving about, have said, Lord bless me with Jesus Christ; give Him to me, that I may be a believer, and have union with Him. Questions not to be put aside; do not avoid them; look at them. How many of you have done this and that? This precious bread is the Word of the living God. Said Job - "I have esteemed the words of Thy mouth more than my necessary food". That is a great thing to say, when you think of what necessary food means and then say - and say to God too, not to some friend, but say it to God - "I have esteemed the words of Thy mouth more than my necessary food". What, has God made Himself so needful? Has He made His word so absolutely needful to you that when you get it you say, this is more to me than my daily food. It is not a little thing to say. Jeremiah tells us what the word of God received will do. He said - "Thy words were found and I did eat them, and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart". Do you know what that means? To mourning people, people who had heard the law and were sorry because of their sins, and shortcomings, Nehemiah said - "Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and be no more sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength". The joy of the Lord is the pardon, the peace, the goodness that He gives to sinners; the justification of their persons in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, and that joy is indeed their strength. By that they carry burdens, by that they fight their enemies, by that they are made strong enough to leap over a wall. This daily bread. As the body is nourished by food, and so fitted for its labours, so the soul is nourished by the bread of God, and fitted for those exercises, and afflictions, and trials of faith that are appointed it. We cannot escape tribulation. It is as sure as the promise. Surely you cannot escape what Christ promised, what He has said - "In the world ye shall have tribulation". Now the Apostle Paul speaks thus to some - to the Colossians I think it is. He prayed that they might be strengthened with all might by the Spirit in the inner man, to all joyfulness and longsuffering. That is what the bread will do for you. It will help you, it will strengthen faith, it will give you spiritual courage, it will enable you to wait on God. Enable you sometimes to expostulate with an impatient spirit and say - "Why art thou cast down O my soul,

and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God." There is enough in Him, enough grace, enough mercy, enough peace in Him. "Hope thou in God for I shall yet praise Him". I cannot do it today, but "I shall yet praise Him". Now there was something given. It would seem that the Psalmist got - when he said, my soul is cast down within me - some sacred communication that strengthened his faith, and raised his heart, and head, and eyes. He could look up to God above his troubles, and all the things that were against him apparently, and say to his soul - "Hope thou in God". Ah he is a great believer who, in time of trouble, has his faith so nourished as to say that - "Hope thou in God". You get the same mercy in another Psalm where the Psalmist, considering mountains moving, earth shaking, and all kinds of trouble, a roaring sea, he says - "There is a river"; there is a peace; there is a peace that passeth all understanding. Nourishment, my friends, nourishment, divine nourishment. Going to God as Moses did, according to divine direction. Come now - you have made the Ark according to My order and fashion - now come, and I will meet with thee on the Mercy Seat. My dwelling is between the cherubims; come to the throne of grace. I say again, nourishment, my friends, and we need it daily. If you get once in your experience enough bread for forty days trial and travelling, you will be a wonder, but that is not the constant way of God. It is not the uniform dealing with His people. Singular troubles bring singular mercies, but ordinary things come day by day, and they need ordinary communications, touches of the Spirit, beams of mercy, gleams of God's glory, bearable beams of His glory coming, and these nourish faith. They answer to bread, they give strength. Do you seek it daily? It is a great thing to do it, but he who does it is under the power of the Holy Spirit. One of the saddest things a child of God can know is the indisposition of his nature to prayer, his aversion to the throne of grace, his horrible wish to be independent. O, it takes a divine weapon to bring down this imagination, and high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. But He takes trouble with us - O, He has taken great trouble with me - to bring a proud heart down again and again to the throne of His heavenly grace. O, if God takes trouble with you, you will need eternity to thank Him for doing it. This is to be daily. That is to say, it is a daily application to God for bread, a daily coming to the throne of grace. What a favour, when you get there, you find it to be, and what a wonder

to your faith it is that you find God willing, willing to bless, willing to give strong consolation, and willing to do it by two immutable things revealed and made known to you - His promise, and His oath. Two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, that you might have strong consolation. Two immutable things to give a weak creature courage; to give a fainting heart nourishment; to strengthen faith. Then faith can do exploits. "The people which do know their God shall be strong and shall do exploits." One is to leap over a wall; another is to have your hands taught, and your fingers taught, to fight. One is to say with the Apostle Paul when a shipwreck is inevitable - I believe God that He will bring us all to shore; that no life shall be lost. Not a little faith that is, when you can see something must be destroyed; when God shakes the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. When there is no herd in the stall, when the fruit of the olive fails, O, then to find God enough for you. That is a good religion, it is a grand religion. It is independent of the creature, and hangs on God. May the Lord give it to us. "Give us this day our daily bread."

One word in conclusion. Think of the character of Him who says this. "God that cannot lie". He holds the world up, and He says the gold, and the silver, and the cattle on a thousand hills all belong to Me; and more, spiritual life, eternal life is in Him. No scant supply here. No scant supply. But a prodigal may say, I have sinned all away that He gave me; and very true, but you have not sinned away what He did not give you. He did not give you the whole. It seemed to be your share and you spent it all up, but there is something remaining. Love not exhausted, goodness not dried up, supply in His house, plenty of bread, plenty of bread. You spent your pocket money but there is a good store left. Yes, but I am ashamed; but shame gives way to faith. "I will arise and go to my Father and will say to Him, I have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son". It was very true, very true; painfully, shamefully true, but the fatted calf was there, and the ring was there, and the shoes were there, and the best robe was there, and these all came out by divine order to clothe, to forgive, and to feast the prodigal. Heaven's best given to earth's worst. Heaven's goodness poured out into a worthless heart. Go, dear friends, go to this good God. Go to this good God. He does not repel people. He does not say, you must

not, you may not, come. He does not say, I am weary of blessing you. He has blessed His people with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. He will never trust any sinner with a stock. He trusted Adam with it; He wont trust a sinner any more. He just gives all to Christ, and Christ gives out according to His goodness, and His wisdom. "Give us this day our daily bread". Prayer was appointed. God appointed prayer. It would have been easy for Him to give the new birth and carry a sinner away from earth to heaven at once, but He ordained the wilderness, and the trouble, and the difficulty, and the trial of faith. And then, having ordained all that, and made a Covenant, He said, for these things, these needs. these blessings that you are hungry for, I will be enquired of, that I may give you the blessing. Prayer is appointed; it is an ordained means; it is God's method. A praying man is a living man. A praying man must be a conqueror through faith in Jesus Christ, and heaven, heaven will sound again, and again, with the song of the redeemed- "Unto Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His Own blood" - who nourished us in the wilderness, who kept us by His Own power, who let not our shoes wax old, nor our clothes - "Unto Him" - who did all these things - "be glory and dominion both now and for ever. Amen."

AMEN.