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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Sunday morning 9 October 1921

PSALM 130 V 5

"I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and
in His word do I hope"

In vital experimental religion there are three most important points, these namely, first the Object, second the subject, third the relation of these two to each other.

First the Object of vital experimental religion, none other than God. If you are, for the most part, your own object, you are deceived, but if God makes Himself the chief object of your faith, admiration, adoration, and hope for eternity, you may thank Him and look forward to a day when you will be far from sin and every offence and be like the the Son of God. The object of faith is the Trinity as God is pleased to manifest Himself subsisting in three Persons, each Person equal with the other, each Person having His Own part in the Covenant of redemption. The Father is the Object of faith as He is the God of all grace manifesting His sovereign grace in choosing, in electing, electing first His only begotten Son to be the husband of His chosen wife, to be the servant of the Father in redemption, to be the express image of the Father's Person, and the brightness of His glory in the church; to be the great end of faith, the ultimate end of faith when, being redeemed and brought to heaven, God shall be all and in all. Tis a great thing to have this blessed One before your faith. It is a great thing, I say, to have Him before your faith for, seeing Him, you will build well. He builds too low who builds beneath the skies. You will build well if, by precious faith, you build on that wondrous act of God the Father in eternity, when He made choice of a husband and a wife, Christ and His bride. It is a grand thing to have an Object. If you are your own end, what an end awaits you. If you are your own object, what vanity you are looking on; what emptiness and death.

God the Son is the Object of faith as in the Covenant of

redemption His part was to become incarnate. Worship Him brethren. O, it is great to see the Son of God thus; eternal love beaming, gleaming, shining beautifully through the death of Christ on the cross. Purposes of grace to be made known in and through the Man Christ Jesus, and all the beauty of God, as is to be seen by the church, centred in Him who is the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His Person. Unitarianism will never live in the light of any manifestation of God. God's will is that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father, and how the man who denies the eternal Deity of Christ can honour Him and honour the Father, let him explain for himself. It is a great thing, but a mystery, how that God, the eternal Son of God, equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, should become Man; empty Himself, make Himself of no reputation, take on Him the form of a servant, humble Himself unto the death of the cross, but this infallible Book tells us that all that is. It is the record of God concerning His Son that "as the children are partakers of flesh and blood He likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who, through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Hebrews 2 v 14/15) And when God calls a man to be a minister and reveals His Son in him, he does not wonder at the zeal of the Apostle Paul manifested in his perpetually making mention, perpetually setting forth, the Person and the work of Christ, the unsearchable riches of Christ. O what an Object is Christ to faith. Let us sing the God and the Man in One Person. "Let us go forth unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach" believing that He who said - "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me" was at that moment the very God and the very Person of the Son of God whom the Scripture sets forth. Let us believe, by the help of the Spirit, in the face of all the terrible doubts and scepticism of this day, that that Person who said - "It is finished" - though crucified through weakness, did, at that moment, make an end of sin and bring in everlasting righteousness; swallow up death and hell. That at that moment He was infinitely pleasing to His Eternal Father; that He did that which His Eternal Father accepted on behalf of all for whom the Saviour died, stood, and bled. If you pray rightly you pray in this great Name. If you plead properly in prayer you plead the atonement. If you look rightly for salvation, you look for it in Him who is God's salvation to the ends of the earth. If you

properly expect a blessing, you expect it through Him who said He always did those things which pleased His Father. If you look for heaven, you look for it through and in Him whose smile on earth is heaven begun. He is the great object of faith. He says - "Look unto Me all ye ends of the earth and be ye saved for I am God and beside Me there is no Saviour."

The infinite sufferings of Christ are an object for faith. What brought Him into sorrow? Love did. What was His sorrow? Imputed sin and the wrath of God due to it. What broke His heart, but sin and the curse of the law. What made Him cry out that woeful, mournful, that deeply pathetic cry, a cry which we cannot fully enter into - "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Love did it all. Justice bound Him; love gave Him wings. Justice smote Him; love caused Him to receive the stroke. The curse came to Him and He willingly endured it.

How willing was Jesus to die
That we fellow sinners might live!
The life they could not take away,
How ready was Jesus to give! (159)

His resurrection is an object for faith. If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, we believe that they also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him (Thessalonians 4 v 14). "If Christ be not risen, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15 v 17).

His intercession is an object for faith. He is able to save all that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.

His glory is an object for faith, and the saints above look on Him with eyes that can bear the glory. Here glimpses of that glory are given to the Lord's people, and they see Him and join the heavenly host, as seeing that glory, singing "Worthy is the Lamb". Worthy of the honour His Father has given Him, of the Name which is above every name, of the universal sway that now is in His hand and power. Worthy to control providence, to rule the world. Worthy to command angels in

heaven. Worthy to control devils. Worthy of all that power that God has given to Him in heaven and in earth.

And the heaven which He has promised to His children is an object for their faith. They want to be with Him. They unite with the dying thief, they rank themselves by his side, as by the side of a brother whose prayer they can unite with, whose confession is their own. They say - "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom". And likeness, absolute likeness with Christ is an object of faith. To be like Him is a great thing, and to believe you can be like Him is very wonderful. "We know not 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"

The Holy Ghost is an Object of faith, the Third Person in the Trinity, no way inferior to the Father and the Son. The Third, He is spoken of as being, not to set out any inferiority, but to express the order of subsistence in the Godhead which the Scripture reveals. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." If you believe in the Father, you believe in the Son also, and if you believe in the Father and the Son, you do equally believe in the Holy Ghost. One God. He has His part in the Covenant of redemption. He has a great part in that Covenant. His part was to prepare the sacred body of Christ for the Son of God to inhabit. Hence the declaration of the angel to Mary that she should be overshadowed and that the holy thing which should be born of her should be called the Son of God. This was a great part of the Spirit's work and office in the Covenant that there should be prepared for the Son of God that sacred body, the Man Christ Jesus who should never have a separate subsistence from the Person of the Son of God. And His part was also to be in the Man Christ Jesus without measure, and to be in Him, as the prophet Isaiah says, as the Spirit of wisdom, and of counsel, and of might, and of the fear of the Lord. So was the Holy Ghost in the Lord Jesus Christ. And His part in the Covenant also is to quicken every blood-bought sinner, to convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement; to be in each new-born soul as a Spirit of grace and supplications, to manifest to each longing sinner the Lord Jesus and to be in each one, in His Own gracious time appointed of the Father, as a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ; to seal a sinner up to the day of redemption, to

produce in him the conformity that was eternally predestinated, as Paul teaches in the Romans - "Predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son", and to speak the word home with power, to bring the blood of sprinkling, and sprinkle it on the guilty heart, so as that the sinner should, in his experience, know what it is to be clean every whit. This is the Object of faith, God subsisting in three Persons. Not three Gods, but one God mysteriously subsisting in three Persons. An Object, not for our corrupted reason to grasp, but for a divinely given faith to believe. An Object for a mourner to look on; an Object for faith to fasten in; an Object of hope, a ground, a foundation for building; a house for a refuge, and for society, and for intimacy. Well, my friends, if you have a good religion, this is the Object of your faith, and you will be brought off from all other objects. When you look at yourselves you will be very apt to say, I can hardly bear what I see in myself. But when you are led out to Christ, you will say then, here is all I need, all I crave, all I desire. See then if you have that important point in your religion, an object, the Object.

Secondly, there is the subject. The subject of vital, experimental religion is the sinner, a lost person whom the Son of Man came to save. A sinner who, by the grace of the Spirit, confesses his sin, unites with the Psalmist in humble confession of what he is; how he was born, his misshapen condition in birth, his wickedness in life, the depravity of his heart, the corruption of his affections, the defilement of his conscience, and the burden of his guilt. And each subject of vital religion is apt to say to himself - "Can ever God dwell here?" Apt to say, as he looks into his own heart, and finds such wickedness there, surely since I can hardly bear myself I must be infinitely offensive to God. In himself a convinced sinner sees darkness, ignorance, corruption, alienation, distance, and death. He feels he deserves hell. He believes that if he were to be assigned to that dark abode and abyss of misery and curse, God would be most just. He believes it with all his heart. But he has faith, yes he has faith, a blessed faith that cries with the thief - "Lord, remember me"; with the publican - "God be merciful to me a sinner"; with the Jailer - "What must I do to be saved" You wont find the Lord's people high-soaring with the Pharisee as they are under the teaching of the Spirit. They are glad of the society of confessing sinners in the

holy Scriptures. They are glad to get by the side of the thief and each one would say, though among men I deserve not such an end as his, yet before God I am as guilty, or much more guilty, than he. Glad to go with the publican in the temple who was smiting on his breast - "God be merciful to me a sinner". "I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people" and they shall call upon the Name of the Lord. And they are led to do it, they are taught to do it. Then they are inside that promise - "Whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved". Now the subject of vital religion then is - you may not believe this, some of you, for yourselves, but it is true - each one is the temple of the Holy Ghost. You may mentally contradict me as to yourselves, though you believe what the Scripture says about the saints in that particular. Still, I wont give way, I will maintain that every child of God born again, be his experience what it may, be his convictions of sin deep and his pain acute, and his defilement complete, he is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and if God will help me, and you will give me your attention, I will try in a few words to prove this, and I will do it by asking you a few questions, you who think you are not, and cannot be, in your present condition, the temple of the Holy Ghost. First of all, how did you become acquainted with your sinfulness? You wont say you always were acquainted with it, and since you were not always acquainted with it, and there came a time when you did perceive your sinfulness, how did you become acquainted with it? How came the light, and from whom, into your heart and conscience? Who was it that showed you God, your Lawgiver, that pressed on your conscience His claims? that brought to you the law, the law that told you, and tells you still, what your duty as God's creature and subject is? Who told you all that? When Adam was afraid of God, God put a question - "Who told thee that thou wast naked?" May I be permitted to follow so wondrous a Questioner and ask of you - Who told you that you were a sinner? Who made you believe it? Who gave you to see, in a light you could never describe, a penetrating light, a light that entered heart and soul, joint and marrow, like a two-edged sword, piercing, dividing, dissecting, analysing your very soul, and your thoughts, and the imagination of your thoughts? Whence did that light come? Then secondly, how is it that you became a praying person? Afraid of God by your conviction of your sin, how have you dared to pray? Go to the dying thief, polluted in his life, wicked among men, not fit to live longer - how did such a

man dare to pray? Prayer is not a common thing. It is not natural to pray, I mean as we are fallen. It was for Adam to approach God because he was pure, but for fallen men it is not natural. We are alienated, we are enemies, we are rebels. Then how did you become a praying person? Whence your courage to do it? the feeling you must do it? that you could do it? that you do remember to do it? And further how came it to pass that on a day, perhaps you will never forget, you felt in your heart that you were not repelled, that God listened to you, that your prayer entered, that there was some acceptance of your prayer? and with that feeling an amazing, to you, an amazing, hope rose in your heart. And next how is it that Jesus Christ, whom men despise; Jesus Christ, unknown to men by nature, as they are fallen, has become known to you, so as that though you cannot yet call Him your own, you dare to plead with the Father for forgiveness through His blood, for justification in His righteousness, for acceptance in Him, the beloved; for union with Him as a branch with the Vine; for the full forgiveness and acquittal of you, a guilty person. How is it that you have got that plea on your lips, in your heart that even God respects, will not turn aside? O, sinner, may I tell you, may I answer my questions for you? May I not say that the Holy Ghost has made you His temple? You love the Lord's Name, do not you? Have not you said more than once

Jesus, I love Thy charming Name
Tis music to my ear

O, the love of Christ, the love a sinner feels for Christ when he gets a view of His Person and His work, wonderful it is; all sin taken away, iniquity not imputed. All the turpitude of a sinner's life, as well as the unspeakable depravity of his nature, all the uprising of sin's abominations within him, these all under the blood of the Lord Jesus. And the sinner's unworthiness put away, and he becomes worthy of God's notice in the Lord Jesus. All his utter crookedness done away, and he made straight with God's will, and love, and purpose, and requirements, in the Lord Jesus. And all his unbelief conquered, and his stubbornness, and untowardness, however intense, done away through the grace of the Lord Jesus. And all his poor prayers which often he himself feels he must despise as having nothing in them that can please God, these ascend to God so perfumed with infinite merit

as that the ear of God is pleased with the sound. Music in heaven there is when a sinner on earth prays in the Name of the Lord Jesus. Pleasantness in heaven there is when there goes up to it a cry from a sinner who is displeased, unspeakably displeased with himself. You will never disparage yourself sufficiently, and when you are at that business, saying, Woe is me, I am a sinner, then you will find yourself brought to the Lord Jesus and He will be everything to you that your soul needs, and craves. The subject of vital religion receives Christ, Christ by revelation. The Spirit of Christ comes as the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. Dr Goodwin somewhere speaks to this effect, that the ray of light that the Holy Spirit brings when He reveals Christ gives more knowledge of Christ in one minute than a lifetime study could. The latter might well enough end in criticism and infidelity. The former brings the soul into an acquaintance, sweet intimacy, and likeness.

The subject of religion has the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel. He has also some measure of intimacy with Christ, that is to say, he receives from the fullness of Christ, and grace for grace, and Christ receives his prayer and his praises; receives his petitions, and sends answers. Two are engaged in communion. O what an infinite disparity, yet what a wondrous intimacy; the Almighty God, Jesus Christ, and an unspeakably wicked person, brought together. They mutually embrace, they mutually love, and they mutually praise each other. It is difficult to express this, partly because I know little of it - but I do know something - and partly because of the vastness of the love, and the wisdom, and the condescension, and the grace of the Lord Jesus to come to a sinner and not be ashamed of him. Come to one who is too ashamed of himself to lift up his face, as Ezra said. We are ashamed and blush to lift up our face; yet that that blessed One should say, look to Me, and He draws the eye, and the heart, and lifts the face up, so as that the glory of Christ's grace, shining on that face, the sinner is no more ashamed. "They looked unto Him and were lightened and their faces were not ashamed".

And the subject of this religion is led on by the Holy Ghost, led into the truth, taught the truth, kept in the truth, preserved by the truth, and conformed to the very image of the truth as it is brought

home by power divine.

Now I have only a short time left to mention the third point, namely the relation between these two, the Object and the subject of vital religion. It is this, dear friends - "Bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, and members of His body in particular". But experimentally what weary steps there are, what long waiting there is between the beginning of hope and its consummation. The Psalmist in this Psalm cries to God. He is not near his God, but he wants to be. Is not that rather a common experience today, that the Lord's people are not near Him, but they want to be? And sometimes their desires are not lazy desires; they are not the desires of the sluggard which kill him. They are not the desires of the sluggard who thinks it much to take his hand from his bosom to convey meat to his mouth, whose cry is, a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep; so his poverty comes as one that travelleth, and his want as an armed man. (Proverbs 24 v 33/34). Said the Psalmist, "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord. Lord hear my voice; let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications" (Psalm 130 v 1/2). Out of the depths of felt sinfulness, and guilt; out of the depths of painful desertion; out of the depths of a backsliding condition; out of the depths of true, but very painful, conviction have I cried unto Thee. If Thou Lord, to whom I cry; if Thou, most just Lord; if Thou, holy Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord who shall stand? Can you go with this, can you unite with the Psalmist here, can you look at your own iniquities, as it were, take them up and present them to the Lord in confession, and say, Lord if Thou shouldest mark these, if Thou shouldest deal with me collectively, singly, I could not stand. I ask again, can you go with this? Are your eyes led back at times to see how basely you have behaved yourself to God? Can you go back and look upon mercies countless and see, as set against them, unthankfulness infinite? Can you go back to murmuring, to wishing things other than God has made them for you? To wishing that some sweets which He has kept out of your cup were in it, and that some bitters which He has put into it were taken out of it? O, how I could enlarge upon these iniquities, as out of my own experience. And can we unite then with the Psalmist and say, Lord if Thou shouldest mark these, if Thou shouldest put against each one, I will deal with him on the ground of

that, and I will deal with him on the ground of the other, and God should bring up this before your eyes, and say against each iniquity that you remember I have a rod, a judgement, an affliction, a trouble, who would stand? Who could stand? I have a congregation of sinners, have I not? and I have a congregation partly made up of men and women who can go with the Psalmist and say "Lord, remember not against us former iniquities". Deal not with us after our sins neither reward us according to our iniquities. Then the Psalmist had something else before him; mountains of guilt and iniquities, but above them all, forgiveness. Forgiveness, this he saw to be with the Lord. "But there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared", with a reverence and a filial fear most sweet. Forgiveness, it suits some of us, for we need it greatly, very greatly. Forgiveness is two-fold when spoken of in respect of God. It is a single thing, painfully single often, when spoken of with respect to us. We may forgive, or think that we do, and say - and practice it too - though we forgive you, we will have nothing more to do with you. Well, that is not forgiveness, and with us one thing in forgiveness is impossible. We can never do away with the offence. We can never cleanse the person whom we may forgive from the sin which we forgive. With God it is otherwise. O, blessed be His Name, there is a double thing in His forgiveness. There is not only a remission of punishment, but a cleansing of that which deserves punishment, a removal. A man's iniquities are forgiven, and there is no iniquity imputed to him. The lip of truth says - "Thou art all fair there is no spot in thee". No blemish, no wrinkle, nor any such thing. Sinner, will that do? It is all that God can give; He can give no more in respect of forgiveness. Put away the sin, remit the punishment. Clear you, cleanse you, and make you beautiful in His Own sight so as that He praises and commends your beauty. "Thy beauty was perfect through My comeliness which I put upon thee". And the effect of that sweet view that the Psalmist got of forgiveness being with the Lord is expressed, as I judge, in the text. "I wait for the Lord". I earnestly wait for Him. Waiting has in it some expectation. If you absolutely despair of a thing you will never look for it, never wait. But if there be a hope, however faint, in you of obtaining what you want, that hope will be accompanied, very pleasantly accompanied, by this waiting. Waiting is looking. "Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto

the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that He have mercy upon us" (Psalm 123 v 2). Is it not wondrous sweet to find a spirit of hope and expectation in you? What did the Psalmist wait for? O, for the Lord's coming to him again. He says in one Psalm - "O, when wilt Thou come unto me?" Lord, I am looking for Thee. Thou didst come once, perhaps you can say oftener than that. Thou didst come; Thou camest when I was not expecting Thee. Thou gavest me a love visit. I cried unto Thee out of the pit and Thou broughtest me up out of the pit. "I waited patiently for the Lord" and the Lord heard me. "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth". Lord, I have got into the pit again. I have plunged myself into mud, and mire, and sin again, and if Thou shouldest deal with me according to my conduct I cannot stand, but there is forgiveness with Thee, and I wait for it, I look for it, I hope for it. Here the sinner casts an anchor, here he finds a ground for his anchor, hope. He says to his soul - "Hope thou in God for I shall yet praise Him". "My soul wait thou only upon God for my expectation is from Him". You cannot properly say you have a hope if you do not wait. But if you can wait, you cannot properly say you have no hope. Hope and waiting are friends. The Lord grant we may hope; hope in His mercy, hope in His Name, and then, then will be manifested the relation there is between God and the sinner, between the Object and the subject, between one who is ruined, and the Saviour, between a guilty person and the Forgiver, between a guilty one and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus, and sweet it will be. O, when God and sinners come together how beautiful, how wonderful it is. I have no word to express the beauty, and the wonder of this. It is something you must know in your own soul, must feel that God has done in you; that He really brings you near to Himself. That, as Joseph - one may say this in respect of that as a type - as Joseph said to his brethren: I am Joseph, come near to me. O, but they blushed, they were ashamed, they were then convicted of their sin as they had not been before. O, they blushed, they were afraid, they trembled at his presence. So to assure them he took another step - God is always first - he fell on their neck and kissed them and, when he had done that, they talked with him. That is the order that will be observed by God in our cases, as we may be His. Come near to Me; and we shall tremble. He will fall

on us and kiss; then we shall speak to Him. Then I say will be manifested the sweet, the ineffable relationship there is between God and our souls. That is the beginning of heaven, and may we know what it is.

AMEN.