

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham  
at Galeed Chapel Brighton  
on Sunday evening 20 April 1924

PSALM 36 v 9

"For with Thee is the fountain of life: in  
Thy light shall we see light"

Every saint is brought, sooner or later, to find in himself a thirst for God; a dissatisfaction, both with himself, and the whole of creation; a realisation too that there is nothing in this whole world that can satisfy the cravings of his soul. He wants God. He enters into the language of the Psalmist - "My soul thirsteth for God as a thirsty land". He sympathises with the Psalmist who at one time expressed his grief at his absence from the sanctuary thus - Yea the sparrow hath found a house and the swallow a nest for herself where she may lay her young, on Thine altars O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God". You are not all ignorant of that I know. Now if neither from self nor from the world we can find any abiding satisfaction, are we to live all our days dissatisfied, empty, thirsty, parched, consumed with thirst, bitten with hunger, miserably disappointed? O, no, we have something better to say of God than that He lets us live so and pine and languish. - "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house, and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures". What are these pleasures of God? He looks upon the world and finds no pleasure in it. He said, not long after creation, It repented Him that He had made man; it grieved Him at His heart. He said that the sin of man had become so universal, so prevalent in all things, and ways, and places, that He would destroy man. And after the flood He said He would no more drown the earth; not because He knew He would have pleasure in man, but because He would not, in that way, vindicate His character. He saw man would prove himself to be what he had been because, said He, the thought of his heart is evil, and only evil, and that continually. So God has no pleasure here. How can He have pleasure since the whole world is against Him, breaking His holy law, desecrating His day, rejecting the Bible, criticising it, taking inspiration away from it. How can He have pleasure with men and in men who, in all their acts, are saying - "We

will not have Him to reign over us". His pleasure is not in the world as we see it, as we know it. The river of His pleasures must be what the Scripture declares, the river of life. His pleasures are in the Person of His Son in whom it pleased Him that all fullness should dwell. His pleasures are in the cross of Christ, for there the sin of the church was ended; there everlasting righteousness was brought in; there He reconciled His people unto Himself in the body of the flesh of Jesus through death. There a broken law was magnified, and the claims of justice honoured, and death swallowed up, and there He saw what He intended to have, a people redeemed, and made holy, and righteous, and fit for His society. There He beheld vessels, empty indeed of good, but vessels into which He would have pleasure in pouring eternal life for ever and ever. His pleasures are in doing good. "I will rejoice over you to do you good with all My heart and all My soul". In subduing iniquity, in giving rest to the weary, health to the sick, bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, and refreshment to those who are sorrowful. His pleasures are in having His people at His footstool, hearing their prayers, and sending down answers of peace, revealing His beauties unto them, manifesting Himself in them, and forming Himself in them the hope of glory. His pleasures are in seeing their emptiness that He may fill it; in beholding their weakness to strengthen them, and, seeing them dependent on Him, guiding, helping, and succouring, and eventually bringing them to Himself. If these are the pleasures of God, you will see that which follows of necessity, that the people of God must drink of them; must drink of them. I have mentioned these pleasures; they are no speculation. I have not taken your minds to eternal Deity absolute - who could? Who could dwell with God, absolute God? - but God in Christ, God in the death of His Son, God receiving all the satisfaction that is necessary; this God I would declare to you. And the pleasures that He has, the satisfaction He feels, these pleasures, this satisfaction, He makes us to drink of. "Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures". How pleased He is to love a sinner, how pleased He is with a penitent sinner, how pleased He is with one who cannot do without Him, and to such He says - "Behold Me, behold Me". "I have redeemed thee, thou art Mine". You are weak, I am your strength. You are blind, I am your light. You are poor, I am your riches. You are unrighteous, I am your righteousness. You are polluted, I am your holiness. You have no abiding city, I have

prepared one for you. And all these pleasures, blessed be God, He makes us drink from time to time. My brethren, this is the testimony you will bear sooner or later, more or less distinctly; it will be in you and you will bear - (not distinctly you will say) - I know that there are pleasures in God, God in Christ, in redeeming love, in cleansing blood, in justifying righteousness, and they much more than make amends for any little loss I have sustained, anything I have had to give up in society, I have had to abandon; they are more. He is first and last, beautiful in His Person, in His work. "Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures". But our rivers are apt to dry. A year of drought will make the beds of some of our rivers dry. And may not this river dry up? No. It needs no showers to replenish it. It is in God, it is from God. It is by Christ crucified. It is ever the same, as full as God can make it, as full as Deity can make it. As full of pleasures as the love of God can make it. As full of strength as omnipotence can make it. Endless, timeless, eternal, and thirsty souls are suitable to it, and are welcome to it, blessed be God. O, but I cannot drink, one says, I am not fit to drink of it, I am not fit to come near to it. The mercy is this, that, as Ezekiel saw, this river issues from beneath the threshold of the house of God and runs into the wilderness, into the sea, and it heals the waters, heals the fish, and whatsoever it touches, lives, that is, is satisfied. "Thou shalt make them" - Thou shalt overcome their shyness, Thou shalt bring them to this river, Thou shalt cause them to drink of it. And He says of Himself - This is My blood, drink it. And when an unbelieving heart, a shy sinner, shall say, I am not fit, He says in the endearing terms that you read - "Eat, O friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved". And what is drinking? What is the drinking intended here? Is it not receiving mercy? Is it not the forgiveness of sins, the acceptance of your person in Christ? Is it not the sweet token that you get again and again for good? "Show me a token for good". Is it not the blessed communication that God is pleased to make to you when on your bended knees you cry for mercy, when in trouble you ask Him to sustain you, in your affliction you ask Him to sanctify it to you, in your perplexity you ask Him to guide you, and He hears and He answers these prayers. Drink and for ever bless His Name. "Thou shalt make them to drink" And there is enough in Him. Grace abounds over sin, life abounds over death, and goodness leads poor sinners to repentance, and the Lord Jesus is the bosom of

God upon which they are led to repose. Pleasures are satisfying things. Natural pleasures have a certain measure of satisfaction in them though it be but very tansient. In most cases there is a satisfaction in pleasures, something congenial to the mind in pleasures; something that has been sought, and desired, and looked for in pleasures. May not all this be said in the highest possible degree and sense of the pleasures of God? The pleasures of God - who can express how sweet it is to hear the Lord speak a word of mercy, a word of promise, a word of guidance, a word that brings a supply, a word that gives sweet rest to your spirit, that tells you in the midst of perplexities you have a good God who wont leave you, a great and gracious, and wise Guide who will never lead you astray, a full Redeemer whose fullness shall never decay, never diminish, never dry. A faithful God who will not leave nor forsake you though often you have been a treacherous dealer with Him. Pleasures, O the sweetness of them. You may say you have more trouble than peace, more sorrow than joy, and more pain than pleasure, but I will say this, and I am sure those of you who have had some experience of God's pleasures will bear me out in saying it, five minutes of this will more than make amends for days of trouble. You forget your misery, you remember your poverty no more. You sit at His feet, you are satisfied; there is satisfaction here. And there is always this when there is any degree of goodness sweetly manifested so as that you cannot for the moment question this, there is always this in the pleasure, a prospect of more. Of an earthly pleasure you may say, It is gone, and I do not expect to feel it again, but of this you may say, It is gone as to the sweetness, and power of it, but I think the Lord will bless me again, and I believe He will. There is always a prospect of the Lord's coming again because He has made the promise to do so, and a prospect of seeing the land which is very far off - perhaps so far from you today that you cannot even see it; a mist of unbelief, the fog of ignorance may be on your heart, and mind, and you may say, I cannot see. But sometimes you get a sight of it, and what a land it is. A land of pure delight, a land where the Trinity is; the throne of God, the Ancient of Days sitting on it, the Lamb in the midst of it, and the seven Spirits of God there, the Trinity. A land where He ever is, sending forth those wondrous effulgencies of light, and glory that glad and fill those who see them and receive them unspeakably. And the King in His beauty. O when you get a sight of Him

you do want to be with Him. Let me be near Thee Lord. This is the fountain, here are the streams. This is the good God we have, a great God. I will try, by His help to make Him great before you as long as I live. I say this, that all that God can show of Himself, all that He can speak of Himself, all that He can communicate of Himself here and hereafter, He has shown and spoken, and communicated to the Person of Him whose Name is Emmanuel, God with us. All is there. All that you are to know, and feel, and enjoy in this life, and in the life to come, O saint of God, all is through Christ and Christ alone. Christ the first and the last, the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely. Christ the life, the beginning, and the ending. Nothing before, nothing after. And so we have pleasures, and it is a mercy we have. If we look to the earth today, what do we see? Dimness, and darkness of anguish. There is very little to cheer us today in the world as I judge, and I expect you are with me in it. An uncertainty now rests upon our peace, and everything about us, a grievous uncertainty, and we know too well what is intended by the enemies of order. We know too well what they mean, for they have not been slow to say what they mean. But O, although this be so, there is that, as I have said, that is a pleasure unspeakable, and full of glory, and that is in God.

And then he says in the next number of the text - "In Thy light shall we see light". And this is a very important word, and may the Lord help me just to speak of it. Of the christian, looking back upon him as he was in this world, under the reign of the god of this world, and in his nature's state, this is said - "Ye were sometimes darkness", and that word is expressive, "darkness". Not simply in the dark with eyes sufficient to see light when we get it; not that, but "darkness". That is the state, and what a state. Man by nature, that is by the fall, sees neither God nor himself. He thinks he sees both. He says, as did many of old to Christ, "Are we blind also?" Do not we see? Do not we know? Some of you may say to me mentally, But are we so? We have always heard the truth as you speak. We read the Bible and we do not contradict it. Are we blind? Yes, unless you are born again, you are blind, you do not see, you are "darkness". The God of whom you hear, of whom you read, and perhaps even of whom you speak sometimes to your most intimate friend, that God is strange, and unknown to you, and yourself, so intimate though it is with

yourself, is nothing but darkness. Therefore when I tell you you are depraved, you cannot believe it, though you do not contradict what I say. When I say you are ignorant, ignorant of God, you may not understand it at all because you are educated, and you think, and you meditate, and you read. O, but it is all resolved into this "Ye are darkness". No minister can give you light. He can tell you about the light, but he cannot convey it into your conscience, and understanding. "Ye are darkness". There is only one sun for our earth, and there is only one Sun in whom all the rays of Deity, and all the goodness of God, and all the purposes of God, and all the love of God, and all the salvation of God is; only one Sun. And if the rays from that Sun reach you not, you are darkness. "In Thy light shall we", the people who put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings, the sinners who see their ruined condition, and confess, and mourn over it, the sinners who embrace the rock for want of a shelter, the sinners who say, None but Jesus can do us good; who say, O that He were ours, O that we could reach Him; these, these say, these know, these confess out of feeling hearts, that the only light that can enlighten them, the only beams of light that can cheer them, that can show them their way from hell to heaven, from evil to good, from unrest to repose; the only light that can declare God in their hearts, is God Himself. Now dear friends, let us attend to this a little. The testimony of the Apostle John in his first epistle is very striking. He says, you have heard this, we have declared it to you "that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all". So "if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (1 John 1 v 5 and 7). Fellowship with God if we walk in His light. And here I would come to one of my favourite things. If we walk in this beautiful light, we see God as He is seeable. We see Him. God is seeable, and in this, His Own light, you see Him. As gracious people get older God becomes more and more necessary to them, and as He shows Himself to them, they cleave more and more to Him. There is a kind of loosening in respect of this world, and this life, and when they are at all favoured in their souls, they are very apt to say to Him, for substance, O that the day may soon come when we shall lose this poor mortality, and enter into Thy gracious, and glorious presence. They see God as He is seeable. And where is He seeable? There are three lights, just to say no more, in a general way there are three lights of God discovered by the Scriptures. In the light of the first, men may

see Him as He is seeable in creation. If you here, any of you, do not see God, do not behold His invisible things, even His eternal power and Godhead, as they are discovered in creation, it is because you are wilfully blind in this particular. You do not like to retain His knowledge and you are given up to blindness, wilful blindness. There are His invisible things stamped indelibly on all His works of creation. He said, "Let there be light". He said, Let there be fruitfulness, let there be a sun, let there be a moon; and all His works He said were very good. I know it pleases men today to talk about evolution, and so on. I say this, they ask me to believe a greater miracle than creation is, if they ask me to believe in evolution. If they ask me to believe that an infinite number of atoms fortuitously float about, some of them coming together, and uniting, and so on, without any guiding, any hand, without any wisdom, without any power extraneous to themselves, and forming what we see in creation, and ultimately man developed somehow, I say it is asking that one should believe a greater miracle than asking that one should believe the Scripture account that God has, in infinite condescension given to us of the work of creation. There is His light, young people, there is the account, listen to it. I know you are brought into contact with men, and books which contradict this Book. You cannot live today in the world and not more or less come into contact with contradiction of the Scripture account of creation. May the Lord grant that you may believe His blessed Word. Believe what He says - In the beginning God made heaven and earth. In the beginning He brought the world into being out of nothing. And remember what the Apostle Paul says. Think of the crown he puts on faith, think of the honour he puts on faith, in respect of the creation- "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear".

There is the light, in the second place, there is the light of Sinai. O, what a light it was; lightning, and thunder, and fire, and the voice of a trumpet, and the sound of words, so that mount shook; the whole mountain trembled at the presence of God. And there was a light, and the people, though they saw no similitude, saw God and heard Him, and they trembled, and they fled, went to a distance, and, feelingly unable to bear the weight of Deity, as it was seen and felt

by them, they said to Moses, be a mediator between us, stand between us and God. Speak to us, but let not God speak lest we die. Ah sinner, if you come to that mount, if you see those lightning flashes, if you hear the awful thunders of God's majesty on that mount, if you hear Him speak, the voice of words as through a trumpet, saying - "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me"; thou shalt do this; thou shalt not do that; then you will tremble, and you will want a Mediator.

And this brings me in the third place to speak of the light in which we see light and can bear it, yes bear it. We can bear the light of Deity through our own nature shining, veiled, as it is; we can see it. The light of God's love, the light of His goodness, the light of the mediation of Christ, the light of Christ bearing the wrath due to all His people, this light we can bear, and Christ gathers it all up to Himself, saying, as John reports it - "I am the light of the world". "I am come a light into the world that whosoever believeth in Me should not walk in darkness but have the light of life." This is the light, and we see, in this light we see light, and it is beautiful. "Truly the light is sweet and a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun". What do we see, In this light what do we see? I will tell you, and you know it without being told if you indeed have seen it. You have seen, in the first place, God in Christ. The Apostle declares Him in the Corinthians, 2 epistle, saying - "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them". Of all the sights that would glad the eye of a sinner, that will raise a living hope in his heart, that will make him eventually fit to be the guest of God through eternity, this, this is the greatest, God in Christ, God in the Person of Emmanuel, reconciling enemies, making them friends, cleansing the polluted, justifying the ungodly, sanctifying all who are His; God making them happy in Himself. This, this to be seen is wonderful. Why, the sight will say to you, Call upon the Lord in the day of your trouble for sin; call upon His Name for mercy, call upon Him and ask Him to bless you. You will see when this light beams upon you. These prayers will rise up as if spontaneously in your heart, and you will cry for mercy. "In Thy light shall we see light". Nor is this a transient thing. Our view may be very transient, and the effect also be, as it were, for a moment only, but the thing abides, and so new sights of it will be given. There will be renewals of this, as when our sun hides himself,

as it were, behind clouds we cannot penetrate, as when we go for days without any direct beams of the sun to glad us, and then there comes a rift, and there comes a day when the sun asserts his power and absorbs the clouds, and there is a morning without clouds. So there come days of trouble, and darkness, and confusion to us in our spirits, and trouble in our heart, but some day arises, and there is no cloud, only the Sun shining. I have known that; so have some of you. Only the Sun shining. Circumstances have not changed, the Sun has changed your view of things. It is beautiful in nature to watch the effect of sunlight on nature. I have looked over and over again, and seen the same trees which, on a dark day, are not, as it were, distinct - leaf confused with leaf - but the shining of the sun cuts everything clean apart, so to speak, sets it out; every leaf and fibre almost you see. O what the sun discovers is wonderful. So spiritually, with the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His wings, you see wonders, wonders of grace, wonders of love, wonders of redemption, and forgiveness; wonders of sovereign mercy coming over all the aboundings of sin. You see God in Christ. Well now, that is a great thing. Note it as you have had it, bless God for it. Then you see reconciliation; in your own case you will find it so. You, an enemy, alienated by the fall; you, distant from God, reconciled. Ah that is very wonderful. All your arguments against Him taken out from your mind. All your prejudice against Him removed. All your hardness dissolved, and you a receiver, you a receiver of mercy, reconciled, and feeling now what a wretch you were to speak against such a God. What a fool, what an ignorant thing, to speak as you did, and think as you did, and argue as you did, against this God. And He did not cut you off for all that, but has come, come unbidden at the first, undesired, and now come desired, and sought after, come and spoken to you, and blessed you, and delivered you from the state that you were in, and brought you to lie before Him, a sinner reconciled in the body of the flesh of Jesus through death. And this is very wonderful too, that the more you speak in confession and sorrow about and against yourself, the kinder He is to you, and the more you find fault with yourself, He leaves off finding fault with you, and lets you know that He has no fault to find with you; that He has reconciled you in the body of the flesh of Jesus through death, and He has no fault to find with you. You see all this and feel it in your soul, for you can never be in the rays of the Sun of Righteousness and not feel,

any more than you could be in the rays of the natural sun, and shiver, and feel as if you were in the depth of winter. O the beams of our sun touch our bodies as well as glad our eyes, and so the beams of the Sun of Righteousness affect our souls and bring living feeling and hope, and comfort.

"In Thy light shall we see light". We see the Scriptures, a beautiful Book this, full of all that is grand, and glorious, full of all miracles of grace, and love. We see the cross, the greatest miracle that ever was, or will be. We see the dying Saviour, the greatest sight that eye can ever look on. We see the Saviour there, the Saviour crucified through weakness, and when you see Him then your lusts are crucified, and your heart is dissolved, and your mind is raised up, and hope lives in you, just as you see this blessed sight. To see this - Ah, the Lord Jesus, when He had a crowd about Him, looked on His disciples and said privately to them: "Blessed are your eyes for they see and your ears for they hear" Sinner did you ever get this sight, the sight of the cross of Christ, the sight of this wondrous Person hanging there in all helplessness, as men said. Hanging there omnipotent; there reconciling the Church of God to God, making an end of sin, killing death, sealing hell, conquering the devil. There was omnipotence. O what was omnipotence effecting when on the cross? the Man Christ Jesus suffering for poor men, dying for wicked men. "In Thy light shall we see light" in the Scripture, see truth there, see promises. And some day you find your eye light on a promise, and it comes into your heart. It is no stranger to you now, nor you to it. It is yours, it is God's Word in you, His promise to you. Or you may see an invitation. It is not outside you, as a picture, but it is in you, a life, a power, an influence.

And in Thy light shall we see the light of chastisement. Trouble has two aspects and faces to the people of God, according as their eye is. If their eye is fixed on the trouble, and on the source of it, as they think, and on the reason of it, as they feel, namely, their sins, then O, it is trouble. It is like a double weight of trouble. The thing is heavy in itself, and then that which belongs to it, the source of it, as I have said, and the cause, the procuring cause, of it. And you may go like that for days, and weeks, looking at your trouble. Was ever any sorrow like unto my sorrow, and I, wretch that I

am, have procured this to myself. These feet, these stocks that hold my silly, wandering feet, are indeed good and yet I cannot feel the goodness. The flail that is laid on me, something to intend separation of the chaff from the wheat, only hurts me and I find no separation as I would. But now when the Lord Jesus comes and says - My son, you have forgotten the exhortation that speaketh unto you as a child. You have forgotten that, you have forgotten what I said - "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten". You have forgotten that I intend good to you, that you are not to have two heavens, one here, and one hereafter, that here all your sorrow is to be, none hereafter; that here all the difficulties you are to experience you are to have nowhere else; you have forgotten that you need this, you have forgotten My wisdom in laying it on, and My love to you. You have forgotten that I intend to bless you in this, and by this. Now when He begins to shine, we see this. Then we look on trouble with another eye. Trouble - O, it is mercy you say, it is mercy, God's mercy to me. "It is good", said the Psalmist, viewing things in the light of God - "It is good for me that I have been afflicted that I might learn Thy statutes" and walk in Thy blessed limitations, and not at large as my nature desires.

And we see deliverances in His light. Will I get out of my trouble, so and so? A child of God says, I cried unto the Lord, and He heard me, and He gave me two salvations. He saved me first from my fears. This poor man cried, and He saved me from all my fears. "This poor man cried and the Lord heard him and delivered him out of all his troubles". And you can see the hand that delivered you, the love that snatched you out of that fiery affliction. "In Thy light shall we see light". Blessed be God, there is a light that shines on a rough road.

Now in the next place, and briefly, you will find this is naturally true, that the light that comes from our sun more or less distinctly draws our eyes towards itself. We think of the sun, and though its direct beams would soon blind us, yet we have that in us that makes us love the sun, and I may say, this is true spiritually. You will always find, when the light is shining, that you are directed in your heart to Him who is the Light, sweet light. "Truly the light is sweet and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the

sun". If one says he has light, and never blesses the Sun it is a poor light he has. But if we really have the light of Christ in us, then we know what it is to value the Sun, to praise and bless Him.

And also there is this, this light sets before us a prospect. It says, more or less distinctly, at times, You are to come and be where I am. O, the prospect is wonderful, glorious, full of unspeakable glory, and blessedness. Have you got a hope of this? I am sure some of you have, and I know at times I have a blessed hope.

A hope so much divine  
May trials well endure

A hope in God, a hope that the day is coming when we shall see Him as He is and, by the sight be transformed into His very likeness, a hope that we shall get to that place where the Sun is, where, as John had it revealed to him, where there is no need of a temple, for the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple of that place; and no need of the sun, for the Lord God and the Lamb are the light of that place. There is worship, pure, unmixed by nature. There is light always shining. Now a little of this in our hearts does us great good, and we see then that it is all entirely, from the beginning to the end, in God. "In Thy light shall we see light". See ourselves as lost, see Him who is the Saviour, see our hearts wicked, and see Him who can save us from such hearts. See ourselves ignorant, and see Him who is wisdom itself. And, so seeing the light, we walk in it, and have no occasion of stumbling. May the Lord give us to see this blessed light.

AMEN.