

SH 11
359
1397-25
La P 812

25

**LIBRARY OF THE
GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS**

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday evening 3 March 1929

PSALM 37 v 4

"Delight thyself also in the Lord and He
shall give thee the desires of thine
heart"

The existence of God is the foundation of religion, true religion. It is impossible properly to imagine any worship if there be no God to whom homage and worship must be paid. His Being is the cause of all being. It is impossible properly to conceive of any being, any world, any creature, if there be no God. This will be terribly manifested to the evolutionist one day. You cannot pray unless you believe in the existence of God. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is "Some conception, however faint, must be in your hearts of a Being eternal if you are to worship rightly. Worship is founded upon the great, the eternal fact of the existence of Jehovah. May you not worship blindly but have some true conception of that Being in whom you live and move and have your being. And necessarily this great God is eternal. If He were a begun God, He would be capable of dying and a religion based upon a begun God must one day perish. He is eternal, the eternal God and of Him the apostle, inspired by the Holy Ghost, said that He "only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see" in His essential, glorious Being. And this eternal God is omniscient. He knows our hearts. We may tremble, as we believe that, and yet there is comfort to every saint in the omniscience of God, because while it is true He sees us through and through, it is equally true that He sees all creatures. He sees devils sitting in the gate taking counsel against His Christ. He sees enemies around the camp of the saints, and He compasses those enemies. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord". He is omniscient. He said in His omniscience that it was in the heart of the king of Assyria to destroy cities and that, not a few. A trembling Hezekiah

may not have known that, but God knew it and so He said that later He would punish the stout heart of the king of Assyria. Commit your way to Him. He is omnipresent and this is a matter of comfort to the people of God. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even for ever". Take comfort, my brethren, in the omnipresence of Jehovah. "I AM THAT I AM". He is likewise omnipotent. A nation wandering for 40 years in the wilderness, incapable of producing nourishment for itself, dependent on God, His food day by day, manna, falling from heaven, and water following them from the struck rock. "Is there anything too hard for Me, saith the Lord". Enemies are mighty; God is almighty. The devil looks on the people of God here and there perhaps and sees that they are dwelling securely and says, I will go and possess these cities, whereas the Lord is there. He does not know it but he comes to know it. Omnipotence belongs to the Lord. True worship is thus placed on a very high plain, and every worshipper, worshipping God in spirit and in truth is acceptable, and happy the people who, looking on Jehovah in the ways in which He manifests Himself, are enabled to say - "This God is the God we adore". This Jehovah, the Lord's servant Moses proclaimed, saying to Israel - "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord". If this God is to be known it must be by a self-revelation of Himself. "Who by searching can find out God?" But He has been pleased to reveal Himself. He has been pleased to reveal Himself in the Person of His eternal Son incarnate. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son" This is the greatest manifestation of God's love that He Himself is capable of making. Having one only Son, He sent Him. And all that God will have His church know of Himself He has put in His Son. It is said by Paul to be grace given to the Church by Jesus Christ. And when He came Christ said He came not to speak His own words nor to do His own works or will, but to speak the words He had heard His Father speak and to do whatsoever His Father taught Him. This expresses the covenant subordination of the Lord Jesus. His Father's equal, as He is God; His Father's servant as He is the Saviour of His people. And thus our Lord God, Jesus Christ, condescended to be made sin. A great mystery, an infinite mercy. "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him". It pleased the Lord Jesus

to say on the cross "It is finished". Then Satan fell as lightning from heaven. Then an end was made of sin, everlasting righteousness was brought in. Then and there mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other. It pleased this great Lord, who thus destroyed death, to rise and enter into heaven and there He is. He alone was worthy to take the book out of the hands of His Father and loose the seals and open that book whence come providences, tumults, thunders, lightnings, and all the solemn dealings of God with men. And because all this was done by Him He is worthy to receive blessing and honour and glory and power for ever and ever. It pleased Jesus Christ who had, and has, the fulness of the Spirit, to promise the Spirit, the Holy Ghost proceeding from His eternal Father and Himself, that that Holy Spirit should be in the saints the Spirit of life, the revealer of Jesus, the sealer of the saints unto the day of redemption, that He should bring the blood of the everlasting covenant and purge guilty consciences by it. In the Lord of our text then, there must be seen, known, and loved, the eternal Trinity. In you who know the Lord and who are seeking a city which hath foundations, there is necessarily a faith that reaches this God. If you have faith you will never rest satisfied short of Him. This faith that God gives, for it is called the gift of God and also the operation of God, this faith reaches God, brings the soul into a living contact with Him. Brings a sinner, with his sins, to the fountain of infinite merit; with his rags to the Lord Jesus that He may strip them off him and put on in place thereof that perfect robe which is the righteousness, the justification of a person and his title to heaven. Also this blessed faith of God's elect reaches Christ as the ruler in heaven and in earth, in whose hands are all things, providences, losses, crosses, trials, mercies, deliverances, protection, provision and heaven and if you have faith, I say again it will bring you to this Lord and you will deal with Him. It has pleased this Lord to give the gospel, the gospel of His grace, the glorious gospel, the everlasting gospel. And, as He gives this to certain persons, they find the two necessary qualifications of salvation in their hearts - repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance toward God is not natural remorse. It reaches God's character. It says with David "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight". Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ reaches His divine

Person, His vicarious death, His justifying righteousness. Now if I have spoken the truth according to the Scripture, you will see that there is an infinite reason in God for this text, this exhortation - "Delight thyself also in the Lord". Have you complied with this word? Have I done so? What is it to delight ourselves in the Lord? First of all it is to find in our hearts a hearty closing in with God's terms of salvation. What are these terms? That we shall be nothing but lost persons and Christ a perfect Saviour. Easily said, O but the difficulty of being lost utterly, only lost. But a lost person in this sense, in the Scripture sense, finds himself capable of being saved. Not a small matter. To believe really that you are capable of being saved will be a very great help under the feeling of sin and the load of guilt. Mary found this; she made choice of the one thing needful and Christ confirmed her in that choice and said that she should not be deprived of what she had chosen. Have we been brought to this? Is there in us, from time to time, a real and hearty feeling that we, as lost sinners, are enabled, prompted, urged, moved, and led to this great One, this glorious Lord? People who are never brought to this will never delight themselves in Him, for, in order to come to this point, you will perceive by faith that the Lord has everything in Himself that is necessary for your salvation. Not a little thing that, that there should be in the almighty God, against whom all sin is committed, everything necessary to remit sin, to justify the ungodly, to sanctify the polluted, to instruct the ignorant, to give life to the dead, to guide the foolish, to protect the feeble and ultimately bring him to glory. O to see all this. Well, you will see it if you have faith. If you have not faith you may see it and not see it. There are many people who see and do not see, hear and do not hear, neither understand.

To delight yourself in the Lord; prayer will come in. Who that knows the worth of prayer but wishes to be often at the footstool of mercy, that wishes to be frequently calling on the Name of the Lord, and doubtless, when the Spirit says "Pray without ceasing" He intends this, the trend of the mind, the bent of the spirit, the soul's appetite, longing desire, hunger, thirst. Lacking such a state of feeling, there is no coming to God.) "Praying in the Holy Ghost" is praying under His gracious direction and influence, and prompting. He makes intercession for the saints with groanings which cannot be

uttered and according to the will of God. Ah, a praying person is a wonderful person, known to God as such, though unknown to men as such. An acceptable person too, acceptable to God for, coming in the Name of the Lord Jesus, the Lord cannot but be pleased with him. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him", and in that verse you find in the first part of it "Without faith it is impossible to please Him". And you may say, if you cannot please Him without faith, you can please Him with faith, and this will meet objections that are more or less constantly rising in the mind on the ground of sin, on the painful ground of the very frequent eruptions of sin in your mind and thoughts and affections and desires, for Christ meets all that in His precious and sufficient atonement.

In this delighting in the Lord, there is also this, namely that you receive from Him answers to prayer. The Psalmist had this - "I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live". A pleasure inexpressible is felt in a spiritual mind again and again. If you have received something from Him it is in response to prayer and that will excite thankfulness, and move you to continue in the path of prayer.

In this delight there is love. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha". A very solemn word; listen, listen, O sinner here, without love to Christ - "Let him be Anathema Maran-atha" - accursed. If you have love, you will love the Trinity. I have no doubt that every child of God, sooner or later, more or less distinctly, feels love in his heart to each Person in the Godhead, and there are reasons for it. The first is this, that "God", the Father "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son". He spared Him not. And can you have received the Lord Jesus and not have felt love to the Father for sending Him? Can you have seen the beauty of Christ, the loveliness of His Person, the sufficiency of His death and of His righteousness, the tenderness of His heart, and the coming to you with timely deliverances and sweet mercies and comforts, and promises, and not have felt love to Him?

When Jesus, with His mighty love,
Visits my troubled breast
My doubts subside, my fears remove
And I'm completely blest

There is love to the Lord Jesus. He is the Sent of God; He is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. Sent from heaven with good tidings, anointed to preach the gospel," to preach good tidings unto the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified." Have you received such a Preacher and such preaching into your hearts? Then you love Him and delight in Him. And have you received the Holy Ghost? They did not think it an impertinent question of whom it was first asked by Paul. It may not be impertinent for me to ask it of some of you. Have you received the Holy Ghost? I will tell you this, if you have not received Him, you have no religion worth the having. You have no faith, for faith is of His operation. You have no knowledge of Christ, for He is given to reveal Him and make Him known. But if we have received the Holy Ghost we have received what John, in his epistle, calls the anointing. "But ye have an unction from the Holy One" This is the anointing that destroys every yoke, that supple the conscience and will, and that brings an understanding to know Him that is true. It enables a man who has had it to say I "know that the Son of God is come, and hath given" me "an understanding, that" I "may know Him that is true, and" I am "in Him that is true, even in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life". (1 John 5 verse 20). Delight thyself in the Trinity, delight thyself in mercy's streams coming to refresh sinners, in God's grace to help thee in time of need. Delight thyself in unchangeable promises. Promises cannot be changed as they come from God's mouth. They are, in Christ, yea and in Him amen. And this was the character of the gospel that Paul delighted to preach. He said our preaching was not yea and nay, not an uncertain thing, not a

sound one day of pleasantness and the next day just a doleful story of a broken promise. Yea, yea; all the promises of God are in Him yea and amen to the glory of God by us.

And delight thyself in the manifestations of omnipotence. O if naked omnipotence touched us we should be broken to shivers, but when omnipotence in Jesus comes to a sinner it comes to his aid, his support, his protection, and the Spirit of Christ manifests Him in those particulars so as that a sinner says, now all that I need is in Christ's omnipotent hand. Delight thyself in the prospect that this great and glorious One sets before you. He set two things before His people in one word - "In the world ye shall have tribulation". Gloomy, forbidding indeed, to nature. But, said He, "In me ye shall have peace", and the prospect that I have in my mind to name is this - "I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto Myself that where I am there ye may be also". What an arm Christ has to reach from heaven and take hold of a sinner whose mortal race is finished and carry him to heaven. [Our sister, Lydia Greenway has just proved that . A very short time since, her sister died, and now they are both absent from the body and present with the Lord.] That prospect is before every saint. Whatever your troubles may be, O believers, this is before you whether you realise it or not, "Where I am there shall also my servant be". Now with all this it may be plain enough to you who know the Lord that there is infinite reason in Himself why we should delight in Him. I know there are objections, painfully felt, the objection of a body of sin and death that was such a maul on the Apostle Paul's head, such a grief in his heart, such a hindrance to all his spiritual movements. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" There are here men and women who can sympathise with the Apostle Paul, who can unite with Rutherford, when he exclaimed "O that I had not a myself"; who can say "Woe is me that I dwell in Meschech"; woe is me that I am so absent from the Lord again and again, so distant from Him because of sin, but the prospect is the same. Our horizon is very near to ourselves, and we frequently only see what belongs to this time state. The Apostle's horizon was further away, and he said on one occasion - "Our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are

seen, but at the things which are not seen " There was no present cloud to obstruct his view of the future. You may often find clouds obstruct your view, but they do not blot it out. The thing is there whether you see it or not. The prospect is in Christ Himself, in His promise; it must be made good; He has said it. "Where I am there shall ^{also} my servant ~~also~~ be". Well might Paul say to the Roman Christians who appeared to have gone to sleep - "It is high time to awake for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed". Lift up your heads, my friends, delight in the Lord. His care is never intermitted, His wisdom is not darkened, His purposes are never altered, His promises never change. Therefore, there is in Himself, infinite reason why we should seek to walk in this Scripture "Delight thyself also in the Lord."

Now a few words upon the second part of the text, a promise - "And He shall give thee the desires of thine heart". A word about the desires. You have got them; there are people here who have got desires of a right kind, whose desires answer to Solomon's description of the righteous desire - "The desire of the righteous is only good". One may say, well I have many desires that I could not think of calling "good". That may be; no doubt it is true, but a good man out of a new heart, has righteous desires. What are they? One is this, union with the Lord Jesus. "I am the true vine, ye are the branches". "Ye are God's building". He died to "present to Himself a glorious church having neither spot nor wrinkle nor any such thing" And if many of you speak the truth about yourselves, if, for the moment, you can get beyond the questioning that is perpetually hurting you, you will say this - Now that is one of my desires, union with Christ, to be a member of His body in particular. This is a desire that you will find in every saint. Another desire is for justification which is the act of God passed on a sinner, pronouncing him just straight with God's requirements, with His holy, just, good and spiritual law. To stand well with God you must be justified, justified by faith in the Redeemer, justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. It is the desire of every saint to be holy. Called to be saints, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling. These words belong to all the people of God and every one of them has in him a desire to answer to such words. This holiness is not something wrought by yourselves,

but given by the Holy Spirit. Holy affections, holy conceptions of God, holy conceptions of His providence. O, it is a beautiful thing, this holiness, but it is beyond nature, better than nature, beyond its powers. It is just a gift of God. Jesus is made sanctification to His people as well as redemption and justification.

Another desire is to walk with God. Enoch walked with God. A good man walks before God when, in sincerity and simplicity, he commits himself to the keeping of the Redeemer and the same man occasionally walks with God with the peace of God in his conscience, and there is no difference, no disagreement between God and him, a poor, needy sinner, yet a happy, blessed soul. The desire is this, to come honourably through your troubles, the better for them, and to be well laid in the grave. To be honourably buried in that way is indeed a wonder and every saint desires it. I must not proceed further in this way, just notice the promise, "And He shall give thee the desires of thine heart". Some have already been given. Every believer here must say something at least about it. He has been favoured to receive some tokens for good, some touches of mercy, some hints of the favour of God to him, and every good gift of God in that way is like a promise of more to come. "He shall give thee". Certainly the promise is infallible, unchangeable, must be made good by Him who gives it. It would not be difficult for me to promise more than I have power to perform, but it is impossible for God to promise what He cannot do. "He shall give thee the desires of thine heart". Wait on Him for this. Go to Him again and again for this. Seek His face, seek His strength. Put Him in mind of His promise; it has been done before this. "Remember" they said of old "Remember Thy holy promise", remember the Covenant. Put Him in mind dear friends of these things, and God help you, with me, to walk in this Scripture - "Delight Thyself also in the Lord". Can you put your hand on any possession, any pleasure, any good, any relation or relationship in life and say - now here is something solid? All we have here is liquid, passing away, and if you could say, now this, I have no pain with, there is one thing you must say about it if you reflect, namely that there is a period put to it. I think the thought of a full stop put to this and that and eventually to life itself will say in the heart, no solid, abiding delight can be here. But if God makes Himself over to you as your God, if you can say - "Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and

strength" - if you can say, He has revealed Himself to me, and He is my Lord, my righteousness, my ground of hope, my hiding place in trouble, my support under burdens, my guide through difficulties, my supply of all needs, then you have got ground enough, reason enough, to say - I delight in Him. O may we say, Jesus our soul's delight is in Thee. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee". He is a poor man who has not this. If it could be said of him that he has millions of gold and silver, he is a poor man who has not this Lord. But if you be poor in this world, if you do not know how you are going to get through tomorrow because of its difficulties and needs, yet if you have this God, what more can you need. He won't let you perish for lack of any good or necessary thing in this world. Delight in Him as your portion, as your Saviour, as your God, as your Redeemer, as your righteousness. Delight in Him.

AMEN.