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LaP 812

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Sunday evening 2 March 1924

PSALM 73 v 25

"Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there
is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee"

How well the Psalmist and the Apostle Paul agree; they agree in two things to name no more. They agree in the conflict. In this Psalm Asaph had a sore conflict and he found, the good that he would he did not. The Apostle Paul had the same conflict and found that when he would do good evil was present with him and how to perform that which was good he found not. How well these two good men agree in respect of one Person, Almighty God. Says the Psalmist here, after all his conflict and trouble - "Whom have I in heaven but Thee" And, seeing the whole world is so empty of good, so insufficient for satisfaction - Who is there on earth that I desire in comparison of Thee? Says the Apostle Paul, I esteem everything, myself, my attainments, my privileges, I esteem everything to be loss and dung and dross that I may win Christ, that I may be found in Him. Now can we agree with these two men? They lived generations apart from each other; they are together in heaven now and they see Him whom they saw here; they see Him in another manner, but the same Person they saw by faith and esteemed and loved and clave to. They see Him there without a weary veil between. O sometimes do not you wish to be there, to get rid of this wicked self, this bad heart, this dead heart, this God-hating nature. O what will it be to get away from sin and have all the veils of ignorance and flesh, mortality and every other thing taken away and be with Him and see Him as He is, and, by the sight, made like to Him. You will find that all the saints whose names are given us and whose experience is related in the Scripture agree in these two things and, as we are led and taught, we shall find what Paul says to be true - Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. And only to say another word on this point, I think it is very wonderful and beautiful that God, in His kindness to such as we are, should have related by the infallible pens of His holy

penmen the experiences, the relation of His people to sin, their hatred of sin, their deliverance from sin, their God-given knowledge of the Redeemer, their cleaving to, and following after, Him. We ought to bless God for the Bible. We ought to thank Him for the relation we have of holy men of old. We are here and the ends of the world are come upon us, and there are many corpses in the wilderness for our admonition, left there, and there are many witnesses in the firmament of the Scriptures who, as stars, look down upon us and say, God is good. Cleave to Him, follow Him; He will be with you. He was with us in the low dungeon, in the fiery furnace, in temptation, in flood. He was with us when the earth moved, and when the mountains were shaken and when the sea roared. He brought us through all and now we are with Him. To use the figure the Apostle Paul uses in the Hebrews, we are indeed, dear friends, compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses and they all agree - there are no discordant testimonies - they all agree. Ask them all if they can unite with one and make his confession theirs - I mean with Job - "Behold I am vile", and their one voice is, yes, that is true. And ask them if they agree with the Psalmist in the text - "Whom have I in heaven but Thee" - and they will all, as with one voice, and a loud voice too, say, yes - "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His Own blood and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, unto Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Then we may profitably ask ourselves one question, this namely - Do we agree with that two-fold testimony of Bible saints? Are we sinners? Is sin a plague to us, a burden, grief and shame? Is our prayer that of Paul when he said - "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" , this body of death. If so, then we surely shall also agree with all who say

None but Jesus, none but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good

Now I would, a short time this evening as it may please the Lord to help me, direct your attention to heaven first and to one there. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee". And first of all is there any in heaven save God, God in Christ, who is, or could possibly be, a fountain of supply to us? Surely we shall turn with the saints to Him there, in heaven, for a fountain of supply, a fountain of life, a fountain of

light, a fountain of all goodness; only one fountain, and we have to say we perceive, that is, some of us perceive Him to be the source, the only source of supply. Conscience and heart and will and affection unite here and we say this - God knows, some of us say it sincerely - we have no hope of being supplied with grace, with life to quicken us, with power to sustain us, with wisdom to guide us, with patience to bear with us, except God, God in Christ. And to see Him by faith as that full supply that cannot be exhausted, a supply for every need that we have, is very beautiful, very drawing, very encouraging. It lifts its voice up, so to say, to us, above all nature's deadness, coldness and untowardness and waywardness, and says there is One above who has enough for you. Enough life to keep you alive; life to pour upon your dead feelings; life to help you to move after God; there is One who has an abundance of it, and He said this - "I am the life". I am come that the sheep might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. He said - "I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish." Look then, you who often feel and mourn over your deadness, to this source of life. God hath given His Son to have life in Himself and He gives it to whomsoever He will. Look to Him. You will find nothing but death in yourselves, nothing but death in everything about you. Therefore God will shut you up to this one thing from time to time, the source of life is in Himself. Whom have I in heaven as a source of supply but Thee?

As a source of supply of grace. "My grace is sufficient for thee" "Thou therefore my son" - says the Apostle Paul to Timothy - "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Grace to conflict with sin, grace to hate sin, grace to pray against its prevalence, against your indulgence of it. Grace to confess it and to forsake it. Grace to move you after the Lord Himself. Grace to bear burdens, to submit to the will of God when that will shall be contrary to your will. There is plenty here my friends. God gave grace to His Son in eternity for His Church and the eye of faith spying this out will again and again speak to you and say, seek my soul grace there. Seek it at His good hand, seek it in all the measures of it that you need and desire; seek it. Grace is Christ's; He is full of grace and truth. John got a sight of this; a sight of it is very wonderful; John got a sight of it and he said - "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only

begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." "The law was given by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ". "And we beheld His glory". O the glory of a precious Christ is that only source of grace and of all supply and outpouring of it that we daily need.

He is the only source of power; He is the fullness of it. "All power", said the risen Saviour on the eve of His departure from His disciples to heaven - disciples who were weak, as we are; who would daily need protection, as we need it, though in some particulars very different; disciples who were constantly exposed to danger - "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth". "I send you forth as sheep among wolves", but be not afraid. "Fear Him who, after that He hath killed the body, hath power to cast into hell." Look to Me for protection; depend on My arm for support. O my brethren the supply is here. We are poor, feeble things, and we learn it more and more, and that word in the chapter which I read just now belongs perhaps more to later experience than at the beginning, where he said - "And have no confidence in the flesh". Young Christians may think, and probably they all do think in early days, that they will get on better as they get older. Well, time will tell them. I know I thought so, when I could think that I should get through. O but how different it is now. No confidence in the flesh, no confidence in yourself. Sure that you would fall if you are left. Certain it is that you will fall if you are left; that your heart and your thoughts and your affections and your will and your understanding will all lead you astray if the Lord permit. No confidence in the flesh. Then in whom may we have confidence? In the Lord. "Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." O trembling saint look to this blessed, this Almighty One. He said to Abraham - "I am thy shield and exceeding great reward". "Walk before Me and be thou perfect", depend on Me. Some say that that word is "I am God all sufficient", and certainly it is true. He is all sufficient. With favour He compasseth His people about as with a shield. And His omnipotence is here - O it is for a shield to defend a person, and Christ defends His people. "I send you forth as sheep among wolves." Not that they may devour you, but that you may know that I am sufficient to maintain your life and to preserve you. I send you forth that you may, though feeble, bear a testimony and none shall hinder you from bearing it. So every child of God has to prove in his

way and his circumstances that Christ is sufficient for him. He has all power. One more word on this point. He is sufficient for our nourishment. "I am the bread of life". Faith must be nourished and if you look within you will get no nourishment there. You will find such failures, such feeble grace mostly; you will feel such mistakes made by your heart, such errors formed in your judgement, or warpedness in your will, such darkness in your understanding, I say that if you look within for nourishment for your faith you will be disappointed; you wont get it. O but sometimes there is a spread table and wisdom's voice is heard in the soul. Wisdom says I have built my house, I have hewed my pillars, I have killed my sacrifices, I have mingled my wine. O turn in hither ye simple. And what a favour it is when faith hears wisdom speak so and she turns in to the Lord Jesus. She finds what is said in the Hebrews true - "We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle". That means we have an altar whereof we have a right to eat. What is that altar but Christ? What is that sacrifice but Christ? What is it to eat of that but to receive Him into the heart by faith. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood ye have no life in you". Can we say this then - Whom have we in heaven for these mercies, these supplies, but Thee. Dear friends, you commit a great error when you look into yourself, but when the Holy Spirit comes and turns your eyes another way to Jesus and His blood, then you are right, then it is well.

Second, whom have I in heaven but Thee as a Priest. There is a Priest in heaven. There is our great High Priest there. He entered heaven with His own blood. He went there for us. Says Paul "Wither our Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." This is the High Priest of our profession. You know that under the Levitical dispensation - it was a dispensation of priesthood - the priest was the person who was between a holy God and a sinful, often sinning, people; that the people were only accepted of God as they offered their sacrifices; that sin was typically put away from the people by blood; "Without shedding of blood is no remission". This spiritually points out the Priest Jesus Christ, the sacrifice Jesus Christ, and a great and glorious God satisfied and pleased with Him. Satisfied and pleased with all who come to God through Him. Now dear friends, if you feel sin what hope have you apart from Christ. No access but through

the Priest and His offering; no communications made to sinners by God but through the blood taken into the Holiest of all by the High Priest. No shining forth from between the Cherubim but as you view the Mercy Seat. O the sweetness of this when opened and applied by the Eternal Spirit. Here sinners have access; here they have acceptance; here the Lord speaks to them; here they may speak to Him; here their prayers, feeling as they do about them, sin stained, are acceptable. Here God is good to them and they perceive Him, all through the Priest. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee" as the High Priest of my profession. How many of you can say it is so indeed; that go to Him. How many of you really go to Him as a Priest. Not merely say some words which seem to be prayer to you and more or less satisfy you, but really in heart and by faith go to this blessed High Priest, believing, occasionally at least, what is written of Him in the Hebrews - "Such an High Priest became us who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." Who - as again in that chapter - ever liveth to make intercession for His people and is therefore able to save all unto the uttermost who come unto God by Him. Come unto God? Yes. Faith comes, faith brings burdens and sins and necessities and weaknesses and fears. She brings all, she speaks in the heart of a sinner and says go to this good God through the High Priest. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee", the great High Priest of my profession. And remember this, the Lord help us to remember it, that all manner of sin and blasphemy against the Son of Man shall be forgiven to every sinner who comes to God by the High Priest, Jesus Christ. And further, that every sinner who flees to the city of refuge is safe, being in that city, as long as the High Priest lives in whose lifetime he entered into that city. And how long then is he safe who takes refuge in the Lord Jesus and goes to God by Him as the great High Priest. As long as Christ lives the sinner is safe. Whom have I in heaven to go to, whose Name, whose blood may I plead. whose sacrifice may I depend upon, whose intercession may I look to and rely on for answers and for success and salvation? Why, only this One. We have this High Priest, we have this Altar, we have this sacrifice. Will that do? If you get into this mercy it will take you to heaven, notwithstanding all that you have that is against you; notwithstanding all the fears that may distract you. You will get to heaven if you can say from your heart - "Whom have I in heaven as a Priest but Thee". No Priest, no salvation, for

"Without shedding of blood there is no remission". Therefore no Priest in heaven, no hope for us, but we have this High Priest. He has entered heaven for us. May we bless the Lord for this.

Next, whom have we in heaven for a King, our King, save this blessed One. In Zechariah you find that the Priest had a crown, a crowned Priest. We have a crowned Priest, Jesus Christ, a conqueror, a King, a King sitting on His eternal throne, sitting on His mediatorial throne. A King commanding heaven, all angels being His willing servants, and made by Him ministering spirits to His people. Devils under His authority, men doing His will. What a King. Perhaps you have taken your poor, wild heart to Him sometimes and have said; Lord I cannot manage it, it is not a fit throne for Thee, but O if Thou couldst, condescend to make it Thy throne and to be King on my heart. Have you gone so? It is a great thing to go with your weakness and your fears and your defeats and all the shame of your defeats to this King. You have nothing better to offer Him have you than a poor, wicked heart. He knows, and when poor people in their exercises and their fears, do go to Him and with a loyalty which they would hardly dare to speak of to Him, but which He yet sees because it is His own work, with a loyalty which He recognises, and say to Him - "Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it", do seal it, do take hold of it, reign in it; well He does not disdain that. A King? It belongs to a King to rule. A King? It belongs to Him to take care of His subjects, to be solicitous for them and for their good; to defend them. Will this, our King, do those things for us? Will He not? What is there that they need that He will not take care they shall have? What enemy is there they have to meet whom He will not enable them to meet and overcome? You take that beautiful word in Isaiah (26, verses 5 and 6) - "The lofty city, He layeth it low; He layeth it low, even to the ground, He bringeth it even to the dust." Well then, what follows? "The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor and the steps of the needy". And there are moments when that is realised, when the power of this King comes into your faith and you can say - Begone unbelief, begone lust and pride, begone rebellion, and discontent, begone every evil thing from my heart and affections, Christ alone reign here. O what a wonder it is then to find the Kingly authority of our Lord Jesus Christ exercised in our hearts, otherwise so wild, so rebellious.

Whom have I in heaven but Thee as my great end and all. Every person has in some way, an end, an object, something he wants to attain. If he can but attain to it then he thinks he shall experience some satisfaction. There he will rest, in that he will take repose and pleasure, and satisfaction. Put this spiritually; have you an end before your faith? Have you an Object? Have you One to whom you go and to whom, at times, you can say, if Christ be mine, if Thou wilt but take me, if Thou wilt but make this over to me, and cause me to realise that I am Thine, that Thou art mine, I could go no further; I want nothing else. Can you say it? There are many things here to enchain us, to hurt us, but is there One above to whom we can thus appeal as in some degree of sincerity and say, Lord there is none, none beside Thyself, chief of all, object above all others

Object of my first desire
Jesus crucified for me
All to happiness aspire
Only to be found in Thee

Ah five minutes of this experience will make a mark on your heart that will never be erased. It will be the same satisfaction that you will have in heaven; the same kind. The same love, the same Person, the same glory, the same mercy, the same wonder that you will have there in another measure and a different manner. There is a great end, yes a great end. What will it be to get to heaven without all the hell of sin that is between us and that abode of peace and rest. What will it be to get through all the mazes of our ignorance and errors of spirit; what will it be to get through all that our mortal condition opposes in the way; to get to heaven, to enter into that place out of which we shall go no more. But here we are. Now what about earth. We have to do with it, we are not all spirit; mostly we are more flesh than spirit. We have to do with terrestrial things and have much more thought about them than for celestial things for the most part. Now what about earth. Your relations, dear and precious to you, giving pleasure; your possessions, your support or means of support, your families, your businesses; what of all these things. And what of your will on earth, of your affections; what of these things. Says the worldling, my lips are my own; who is lord over me? Says a child

of God, Lord, I would give thanks for meaner things; I would thank Thee that Thou givest me such and such things richly to enjoy; may I richly enjoy them. I would give Thee thanks that my lot is cast among Thy people and Thy people who have peace among themselves. I would thank Thee for all that. But - I hope I express what is right here; I believe I do - says the sinner, do make Thyself first in all these things. God gives us these things and it is not wrong naturally to ask a continuance of them - Give us day by day our daily bread - but when faith is in healthy exercise, then, as far as I know in this thing, that faith would have God first in all of them, and it seems as if the Apostle Paul had this before him when he said - "Whatsoever ye do, whether ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God". That is the spirit in which a child of God may speak this text, the latter part - "And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee". No first Object but the Lord, no last end but the Lord, no middle but the Lord. In these things Paul had it again when he said - "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." One may say, that is too high; I cannot live like that. I know you cannot without grace, without the Holy Ghost, but I know this, that if that blessed Spirit comes and lets down the love of Christ into your heart, you will find that to be true - "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5 v 17). And as in the same chapter he speaks - "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again". (verses 14 and 15). Whom have I on earth but Thee. He did not want himself any longer; he had had enough of self and so some of us can say. He had had quite enough of reason and the power of reason, and the astigmatism of reason; he had had quite enough of these things. O how reason had mauled his peace, how it had warped his judgement. Why, he said I cannot understand why God should do so and so; why He should prosper the wicked and afflict the righteous. So he had had quite enough of himself and doubtless there are some here who can say with Rutherford - "O that I had not a myself". I shall be glad when I have done with myself, and some of you will say the same. Well, lift up your heads my brethren, the day is coming when you will have no more to do with the wicked man, self, with a perverse will, with a blinded reason; no more to do with rebellion and self-pity and

discontent; when God will be All in All. O what a prospect, and when it comes to pass, what will it be. We do not know, except a little we get here gives a sort of inkling; it enables a Christian to have a conception of heaven that no other person can possibly have. Spiritual things give spiritual knowledge, and spiritual perception and a little heaven on earth, namely the presence of God in Christ, will make you anticipate that wondrous time when there will be no earth to you but all heaven and therefore all God. May the Lord bring us to this. If He does we shall be enabled to hold with a loose hand the whole of the world we have, our own world, our own earth. God grant it may be so with us. We are poor creatures; I do not take this text because I am all spirit, but it suits a sinner sensible of his sinfulness, to find that there is One who, in heaven, can be to a sinner on earth, all that he needs, and may that be our experience continually.

AMEN.