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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday morning 8 August 1920

REVELATION 7 v 17

"For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne
shall feed them, and shall lead them unto
living fountains of waters and God shall
wipe away all tears from their eyes"

There is, in the context, an amazing truth stated. John looked on a great company, a great multitude that no man could number, and it was asked of him: "What are these which are arrayed in white robes and whence came they?" and he said unto the questioner: "Sir thou knowest", and the answer given is: "These are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb". So this great multitude came to this place and this state through great difficulties; the separating flail of God; men, wicked men, drawing over them the cart-wheel to separate the chaff from the wheat they had to experience. Not only martyrs by loss of their lives, not loving them unto the death, but also, as Hart has it:

All contained in that red list
Were not murdered martyrs

Saints, who feel the load of sin, yet come off victorious, suffer martyrdom within, though it seems less glorious. All who come to heaven come through some tribulation. If not outward persecution and trouble, then inward, such as the Apostle Paul expresses concerning himself: "When I would do good, evil is present with me, and how to perform that which is good I find not"; moving him to say: "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death". If you never experience a conflict between two different and contrary powers in your own souls, do you know why? Shall I tell you why it is? Yes, and I will do it as God helps me faithfully and affectionately. It is because you are dead in trespasses and sins. Because there is no power within you to oppose that horrible power,

sin. There is no grace to turn your face to heaven, to Jesus Christ, and therefore, like the dead fish, you go down with the stream, and if you never move and swim and struggle against the stream, an awful gulf, the gulf of death and hell, will swallow you up. Do not, therefore, think it is well with you because you have not the trouble that God's people have. It is not well with you. There are no bands in your death; you have no changes, therefore you fear not God. May you not die as you are living now. And these who passed through tribulation washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Faith in the bleeding Lamb brought them to understand what it was to be purged from their sins, washed from them in the blood of Christ. They were thus saved, and everything that they had, and everything that they did, washed in the blood of Christ, so that they stood, and stand eternally before the throne, in white robes. And they had palms in their hands, and they had harps with which they harped and praised God. And they cried with a loud voice saying: "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb", and all the angels joined the blessed chorus; joined, as they were able, to sing with these - "Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen". It would be well if the hearts of the saints here were carried away by the Holy Ghost to heaven, and kept there, for their only treasure is in heaven. You have got nothing here really substantial and abiding. A moment's pleasure, and it is gone. You touch the blossom; you spoil it. You get a favour; it dies in the enjoyment of it. You lose it all soon. There is nothing here worthy of the love and the hope and the confidence of the Lord's people. What is your life, O saint of God? What is your life? "It is even a vapour", so unsubstantial, "which appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away". And yet we live as fools, thinking this will do and that will suffice us, and if we could only attain to some thing, then we should be satisfied.

There's nothing here can satisfy
Not house, nor gold, nor land

And these innumerable people are, because their robes are washed in the blood of the Lamb, before the throne of God. They used to get there when here betimes, as do all saints. Some here have had many

sweet times before the throne of God, glimpses of His well-pleased face, touches of His gracious power, whispers of His love, views of the Person and work of Jesus Christ; power over the angel to prevail and bring blessings down, to obtain promises, to subdue kingdoms, to work righteousness, to bring in good things. O, the moments spent before the cross, before the throne, are wonderful moments. You wont forget them as you have had them. They may pass away for a time from your memory, but you will never really forget them, nor give them up. "Before the throne." Ah, but there are a good many people who know nothing about this. If all in this chapel now knew what it was to be before the throne, even for five minutes, it would be the most wonderful congregation, perhaps in the world. But you do not all know it; I wish you did. I wish you all knew what prayer is, and what it is to get access and to have acceptance in the Beloved, and what it is to see the well-pleased face of God in Christ. To be before Him as the Apostle says to the Corinthians - "We all with open face as in a glass beholding the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image, from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord". Only people who get there understand what business is transacted there; what temporal matters are dealt with; what enemies are overcome; what supplies are brought in; what favours are got at the throne of grace. You must have the business to understand it. To speak with God with all that reverence that faith in Him will beget, to speak with Him with all that freedom that reconciliation will beget, to speak with Him with all that hope that the blood of Christ made known will beget, is no little mercy. O, thanks be to God for prayer; thanks be to God for the throne of grace, for that blessed Scripture in Jeremiah, and ever so little experience of it: "A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our Sanctuary". There we have lived, there we have loved, and there we have been loved. And there we have answers in the spirit often, in some cases, often long before the blessing has been actually experienced. Well, to be before the throne, this glorious high throne, Jesus Christ, the throne of God, for a short time means that all, who are so blessed, shall one day stand before the throne without interruption, never to go out again. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also have overcome and am sat down with My Father in His throne." What a solemn, sweet, powerful experience it is to be before the throne of God. These are before the throne, and they serve Him day and night; always worship

Him. And, as I have remarked on other occasions, vital religion even here may be summed up in one word "worship", and if you worship here you will worship hereafter, worship the same God, and have the same love, the same smile. A smile here makes a summer in a moment; the same Sun shall shine eternally in heaven without a cloud intervening before it and the eyes which it glads here. "And serve Him day and night". There is no night there; therefore it is an eternal day that these people have, in which they serve God in His temple. Solomon's temple was magnificent, but there is not a stone left upon a stone now. Other temples have been; places of worship are; but this temple is not made with hands. The Lord God and the Lamb are the Temple of the place here mentioned, and they worship in it and in His Temple. O, the reverence! The cherubims set this forth. Each had six wings; with twain he covered his face and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. This is all that reverence and love and conformity to God that the saints shall have through eternity. "And He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them". This may have reference to the Shekinah, an allusion to the Shekinah, the presence of God. His presence was Shekinah in their very midst and the symbols of it were known to the people. And now this people, having come through great tribulation and reached their destined place, and entered upon their God-given, their grace-given, inheritance, have with them that blessed One, who is their inheritance, who is their life, who is their All. Of Levi, God said: "I am his inheritance", and so when He dwells among His people, that is fulfilled. "God shall dwell among them". When He dwells with people here, they have a piece of heaven; a little of His presence is a little heaven. The fragrance of the Rose of Sharon is then shed on the soul. The good ointments of Christ are then poured upon the soul and the fragrance of Christ's Name is known to the soul. O, the presence of God here is very wonderful; the experience of it will mark you. It is a great event in the life of a person. Here He comes and goes; here, His glory dwells for a moment, and then some sin in us moves Him away, so to speak. He goes from the house to the threshold, and from the threshold to a mountain, and we miss His presence. You who know God's presence also know His absence, and you know what sins have brought His absence, what sins have procured your hardness, what gadding of spirit, what vanity of mind, what indulgence of self, what walking according to the flesh, even if it be

good flesh, there has been to bring this absence. But hereafter, He dwells. It is not a tabernacling for a day, a month, or a year and then further movement, further conflict. but a remaining, an abiding. "And God shall dwell among them". "They shall hunger no more". They used to hunger, used to eat ashes like bread, used to feel, at times, they would give all their pleasant things for food to relieve their souls, used to feel pinched with hunger and there was none to give them bread. You have had times of hunger, have not you; you who have had also times of feasting? A time of love is a time of feasting; a time when God is bear, when Christ is near, when the Bread of Life is partaken of and when hunger-bitten souls once more have that word: "I will satiate the weary soul and replenish every sorrowful soul". 'Tis a great thing to get bread. A crumb is wonderful because a crumb of bread is all bread as to the parts and it gives a taste of bread. A crumb of mercy, a little of Christ will be to you such a relish and such a ministration as to what Christ is, and who, and what He can do, that you wont easily forget. O, that crumb of the gospel, that little of Jesus Christ, that came at a certain time. Well, it is just the same bread that they are eating in heaven, not another bread. Another manner of eating it, and another measure, and no interruption to the feast, but only the same provision. We shall know the same Christ in heaven we knew here; hear the same voice there we heard here, and see the same Person there we saw here. The difference will be in the manner and the measure. Ah, bless God, we are not going to see a stranger when we leave this world. Some of us can say, we are going to see One we have seen here and love One there we have loved here, only in a different way. "They shall hunger no more"; never say again: "O when wilt Thou come unto me?"; never say again "I went mourning without the sun"; never say again: "O Lord, do come", for He is with them and "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more". No more consuming thirst shall affect them and afflict them; they shall always have that that they need. "Neither shall the sun light on them - that is persecution - "nor any heat", to wither. A gracious man who is planted by the rivers of water shall not see, in the year of drought, the heat, the withering, consuming heat, for he shall have the nourishing waters of life taken up by his faith to keep his soul and his leaves green. "They shall thirst no more"; no sin shall afflict them, nor any heat wither them, and the text is the reason of this, "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the

throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes". I judge there is no state of soul, no state of any church on earth, can answer fully to this word, this great, this energetic, this wonderful word. It relates to heaven. There have been good times on earth; Apostolic churches were wonderful churches, but there was an Ananias and Sapphira in the first Church. There was a Demas in the Apostle Paul's day and in his life. There was a forsaking in the Apostle's day; all men forsook him. There have been hypocrites, apostates, in all ages, plaguing, afflicting, hurting the churches, and the one church, but here there is nothing of the sort, no hint at imperfection, but eternal satisfaction and satiation. "The Lamb", which is not only here, first, in the midst of this company, but is "in the midst of the throne"; "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne" O, that is wonderful. It shows, not only, His presence with, and amongst them, His union with them, but it shows that He, being in the midst of the throne, is one with God who sits upon the throne. It teaches the Deity of this Lamb slain before the foundation of the world; the ineffable union in the Godhead of the Father with the Son. And, as the seven Spirits of God are before the throne, we have the Holy Spirit in all the perfections of His work and graces. And so the adorable Trinity is here. But this Lamb is in the midst of the great multitude that no man can number. Then they see Him; they do not need, not a single one of them, to run, like Zacchaeus to a tree because of the shortness of his stature, that they might get a view, climbing up that tree, of the Lord who is passing by. No, He does not pass by. He is in the midst and they all see Him. Every eye shall see Christ. The eye of the enemies shall see Christ and the eye of friends shall see Him. Which are you, an enemy or a friend? You will see Him if you are an enemy. Yes, if now you are saying in your heart to Him: "Depart from me, I desire not the knowledge of Thy ways", you will see Him. And if you are a friend and are saying "O, if I did but know Him; if He would but come to me", well, you will see Him. "If a man love Me he will keep My words". He will hang about my promises, about My covenant, about My Person. If He love Me he wont let Me go lightly. It will be a trouble to him that I am not with him. If he love Me he will follow Me; wherever he thinks he can find Me there he will be, and what then: I will love him and My Father will love him and we will both of us come to him and We will make our abode with him. You

shall see Him on earth one day, O seeker: "They that seek shall find". But there, it is different; there, always is the presence. Presence is wonderful; absence is terrible. But they shall see Him; in heaven there is no absence, no absence; He is in the midst of them; they are around Him; their eyes are all drawn to Him. He draws all eyes here, which He creates, for the seeing eye the Lord makes, and He draws that eye. Yes, even as the sun draws our eyes, draws every flower and plant and tree, and everything in creation, so to speak, to himself, so Christ draws the eyes of His children to Himself. Did you ever feel drawn to Him? O, but to see Him there, just to have your eyes fixed and to feel, not only that you have to pray to the Lord to take your heart and keep it, but He has got it now and you are near to Him. In this sad, dull, wet summer so far, how we have longed for the sun, how we have welcomed the rays from him, but now, this morning, as he shines in his strength, some of us, as we walked to the chapel, walked, so to speak, right into his rays and got as near to them, to get them about us, as we could, for their influence was grateful to the body. What will it be to be where there is an eternal summer, an eternal Sun? No candle needed here, no created light needed here, "for the Lord God and the Lamb are the light thereof." This Lamb is the light, is the Sun. He is all the brightness, the effulgence of heaven. Blessed be God for a hope of getting there. "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them". Feed them; what with? The very bread of heaven, the very bread they ate here betimes. They received it by faith and their souls were satisfied. There, it is an immediate vision of God, of the Lamb; no veil of any sort between. No weary veil of the flesh, no veil or cloud of sin, but always the wondrous emanations that come from the deity and the humanity of the Lord Jesus shall glad their eyes and satisfy their souls for ever and ever. Their creatureship, O how blessed it is. Their satisfaction, O how unending it is. Their glory, O how full it is. They shine in, not their own light, because their own is by gift, but in the light of Him who is their Lord and their Saviour and their All, and this light beams on them. The sweet rays of it are direct rays; they do not bend from the east to the west, but they fill all. The Sun of Righteousness is there and His wings are over all. Happy, happy sinner who is going there. O blessed, blessed saint, who is there, like our recently departed sister Mrs Kensit; she is there. O, what a wonder to think of one who recently was suffering in this poor crazing flesh,

diseased by sin, being now for ever freed from all that and absent from the body and present with the Lord. I wish the Lord would take our hearts, and take my heart, and just put them in heaven, that we might live there. "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also". And I was thinking this morning about this, and wondered how many of us, if we were brought to it, could bear the test of that Scripture: "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also". You know where your treasure is perhaps. Ah, some people's treasure is locked up in their safes at home, or in the strong room at the bank, and if that were robbed and taken away, what would you have left? What would you have? There was a young man of old who had a god in his house, and some people came to the house and took away his god and took away the priest that he had got. He went after them mourning and crying and said: "Ye have taken away my god and ye have taken away my priest and what have I more?; you have left me nothing." And if your wealth and your health and your home and your comforts of home were taken away, what else have you? Poor sinners have something more if they have the Lord. Well, but now that is done with here; no complaint of that kind here; they always have Him and He always has them; they are with Him. "Where I am there shall My servant also be". What an attraction is heaven to some people. How they long to get there. A little view of Christ, a taste of Him, makes it very difficult for them to repress the wish to go and be absent from the body, present with the Lord. He shall feed them with Himself, and the wondrous effulgence of His love and His grace and His care over them here, and His precious blood washing them from their sins, and all the sweetness of His Person and the perfection of His deity and of His human nature, these emanating, as it were as great and wondrous beams of light from Himself, shall satisfy, shall satiate them, and there shall be no night there because there will be no withdrawing of this Person from them. He is their life and when Christ who is their life shall appear, they shall also appear with Him in glory. And all this shall make them like Him; not as a Lamb slain, no, but as sons of God. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. And it doth not yet appear 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".

"And shall lead them to living fountains of waters". There was a

smitten rock that supplied Israel for forty years in the wilderness. A living rock, that is to say, smitten and made living in its water. And Christ was smitten and from Him gushed, and still gushes, the living water that refreshes saints below and shall refresh them, that is to say, ever satiate them, through eternity. A creature in heaven, made holy and sustained in his holiness, satisfied and sustained in that satisfaction; a creature, blessed with eyes to see and a nature to love the Lord of life and glory, and sustained in that case, in that condition; this is, as far as I have judgment of it, what is set forth here. No loss of creatureship shall be sustained by the people of the living God. The loss of sin, O, yes. No loss of dependence, but loss of an independent spirit; a great and a good loss that. And there shall His saints ever be "and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes". What tears did they shed? O, some shed tears because sin prevailed on a certain day; tears because the enemy overcame them; tears because they rebelled against some providence of God and wished things other than God had made them. Tears because of indwelling sin, rampant lusts prevailing, outbreking corruptions. These are good tears, grace-produced tears. They are not ever to leave their stain on their faces, for God shall wipe them all from their eyes. Well, there is a laughter that shall be turned into sorrow; there is a joy that is no better than the crackling of thorns under a pot; and woe be to the people who have that joy, and that laughter. But there are tears that are sweet and pleasant to God; there are tears He puts in His bottle. There are sorrows which He records with a very sweet tenderness. Yes, and the day shall come when, as with our departed friend and sister, there shall be no more of this kind, but God shall wipe all tears. And we may well say here, in wiping these tears, God removes the causes of them. It would not be much to be there if we had the causes of all our tears with us, but if we get there, the things that made us weep, shall no more be there; be with us. They will be done away for ever; for ever, for ever, done away. Sweet hope is this, and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes. May we live to reach this place

Heaven is that holy, happy place
Where sin no more defiles
Where God unveils His lovely face
And looks, and loves, and smiles

Where Jesus, Son of Man and God,
Triumphant from His wars
Walks in rich garments dipped in blood
And shows His glorious scars

and there Jesus, Son of Man and God, leads the song and the song of the redeemed shall be sung without interruption: "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.

AMEN.