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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham  
at Galeed Chapel Brighton  
on Wednesday evening 25 March 1925

SONG OF SOLOMON 4 v 16

"Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits."

This Song sets forth the intimate, the beautiful relationship existing between Christ and His bride. It shows the condescending love of the Lord to her; it shows her fervent love to Him. It also exhibits the amazing baseness, unfaithfulness, and treachery of the bride of Christ; the excessive hardness of heart, which nobody could believe unless they had experience of it, with respect to the beloved; even that when He comes and condescends to knock at the door and ask admission, she says, No, I am in bed; I have put off my coat, I have washed my feet, I am comfortable; I do not want to be disturbed. You would not believe it if you had no experience of it. Even some of you who are young in God's ways, and who have not, as yet, had much experience of your exceeding vileness, may be disposed to think that at any rate you desire you may never behave in so base, so ungrateful a manner as the church did, as it is related in the fifth chapter. Well, if the Lord mercifully will keep you from such an experience be thankful, but if you come into it remember, and may you be encouraged by remembering, that though there is no excuse for your sin, there will be encouragement, because Jesus Christ is so faithful and so good and so abiding, unchanging in His love, that He wont be put off, He will effect an entrance in His own way; a way which, while full of mercy to you, will be also full of chastening,

This fourth chapter is a beautiful part of the Song, largely made up of the commendation of Christ for His spouse, His sister, and among other figures He uses that of a garden. He says: "A garden inclosed is My sister, My spouse". Just a cultivated bit of land in the wilderness and cut off, separated from the wilderness by an enclosure. And in this garden, His garden, His Own garden, there is a

spring, a fountain. This spring is shut up; this fountain is sealed; which does not express a bad state of mind, but shows the property of Christ, and that the spring is in His control, that the fountain sends forth its streams when He pleases; that He shuts it up and seals it against all common uses. That is what is intended by the word: "A garden inclosed is My sister, My spouse; a spring shut up" from common use. Not every passer-by can use it. "A fountain sealed". Not everyone who wants a bucket of water can go and get one there. It is for the peculiar use - as it is the special property of the King - of the Owner of the garden, and for the good of the garden. O, He opens the fountain sometimes to a weary dried up soul. He unseals it and lets His poor people know what the refreshing stream is that flows from this fountain, this spring which He has shut up from all common uses. Look for this water, you who are parts of His garden. You will be refreshed, you will be fruitful, and no other way can you be refreshed, can you be fruitful. In no other way can you bear fruit to His praise and glory. "I", says He in another place "will water it every moment. I will keep it night and day". I wish we might get these constant communications which are indicated in that, so great a promise. "I will water it every moment. I will keep it night and day". We do need it. If we are healthy in body, if we come here constantly, we need it. If, as is the case with some of our friends, we are afflicted, afflicted in body, there is then some sort of special need that this fountain should be opened, this spring, so that we may be refreshed. The Lord is very pleased with His people, with their gracious states, with their sweet heavenly experiences. "Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits."

The first part of the text is intercession; the intercession of the Lord, His commanding word is here. He comes to the wind and says, north wind awake. Winds are in the control of Christ, in the hand of Christ. Think of it. North wind. This may be taken in two ways. First, awake O Spirit of God and come as a north wind to this, My

garden. "The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof and canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit"; so is everyone who is under the influence of the Spirit. But the north wind of the Spirit may be taken to be His reproofs, His rebukes. His awaking to come and tell you of a bad state is wholesome teaching to reclaim you from some backsliding. And this north wind nips, yet it is healthy. "Fair weather cometh out of the north", and a fair state comes from the blowing of the north wind, the blowing motion of the Spirit. Now we need this. Remember that the Spirit of Christ is sent by Him as the Spirit of promise; promised Him by His Father, saying in the promise: "My Spirit which I have put upon Thee and My Word which I have put in Thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed from henceforth and for ever." And this is part of the grace that is poured into Christ's lips: "Grace is poured into His lips". It is part of the tongue of the learned which He has that He may know how to speak a word in season, and it is seasonable teaching when He calls upon the north wind of divine reproof and instruction and correction, and reclaiming a person. It is the north wind, I say; it is in His control. Do you need it? You will never get it without need. He will never needlessly reprove or rebuke or nip or chill any child of His. So if you do get reproof remember you need it, and you will feel your need of it too, and live to thank Him for it.

"Awake O north wind", as if for a time you have been left alone; there has been no rough wind of teaching and reproof in your conscience; you have been going on quietly and comfortably, respectably and coldly, or lukewarmly in a bad state, and the Lord has seen it. You are not in a bad state and He has no knowledge of it. I cannot get into a bad state and the Lord not know it. So at last, when He sees the time has come to reclaim you, He says, awake O Spirit, go to that child; reprove him, nip him, cut off by cold, chilling reproof that false growth of his. Send some affliction into his conscience. It is solemn work, but think of who does it. Think dear friends who it is, who reproves you. "He shall reprove of sin" He shall do it. He sets it before us in the light of His own instruction so that we know it. While a friend, intimate with you, might see where you are wrong and try gently to point it out; why, your armour would be too much for

that. But when the light of divine teaching comes, then it penetrates, it enters into your condition, the condition the Lord will save you from. Remember then, this north wind is in the hand of the Lord Jesus. He holds the wind in His fist. He sends His good Spirit to do this great and solemn work. And here I would remark this, what an honour, what a blessing it is for the Lord to set before us our sins and reprove us for them. I have sometimes felt this; what an honour, what a mercy the Lord has not left me to sin without reproof. O that we could thank Him for the north wind, chilling though it is, apparently killing. Awake, says the Lord, "Awake O north wind". Mark then that; mark every reproof you get; notice every admonition, every instruction, everything that comes across your sinfulness and your sinning; everything that exhibits to your own gaze your worldly mind, your unbelieving heart. If the Lord says: "How long will it be ere this people believe Me?", if He says that, that will show you your unbelief. If He admonishes you not to do some things, that will show you the care He takes of you, as well as, also, your liability to do them, for the Lord never reproves for a sin to which we are not liable, into which we may not fall. Remember then that point. "Awake O north wind, and come thou south". Job speaks about the garments being warmed by the south wind. We are pleased when the south wind blows naturally. This south wind means the same Holy Spirit in different operations. How good it is to have this south wind, when the Spirit comes upon you and you say, by Him, "Lord". "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." And when Jesus sends this south wind and He operates graciously on you, you can say "Lord". Yea perhaps you almost say "My Lord and my God". The warmth of this south wind is very grateful. Think of it. We know naturally, after we have been chilled by the north wind and frost, there comes a change; the south wind blows, everything is different to us. Sense of things is different. So spiritually when this south wind blows then we begin to feel a softness, a warmth, a liveliness, a motion Godward, that we were not feeling when under the chilling north wind, and that is very blessed and very beautiful to feel that you can address the Lord as Lord by the Holy Ghost. Says Paul, "I give you to understand that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed." So if you turn to the Lord Jesus and can call Him Lord from your heart, that is by the Holy Ghost. And every grace rises in response to this south wind, the operations of the Spirit, the sweet

motions of the Spirit. When faith arises, when hope buds, when warm affection prevails, when you run after the Lord in fervent desire, when you can sincerely and humbly confess your sins, when He shines, when His matchless love appears, when His inconceivable sorrows are seen by you in some measure, the south wind is blowing on you. Jesus Christ has sent it. "Awake O north wind, and come thou south" - thou warming operations - "and blow upon my garden".

Now when this south wind blows, we are very sensible of something. It is like a sweet, acceptable wave of God's goodness passing over the soul, an indescribable sensation of love, melting repentance, hope, comfort, a most wonderful motion of faith in you enabling you to go to the Lord about everything, with everything, with the affliction that has troubled you, the burdens that have pressed you down, the perplexities which have worn you, and the fears which have tormented you; why you go to the Lord with and about all these things. No reserve, no shyness, no distance now, but just access and liberty and hope and some peace. That is what Christ will have His people enjoy sometimes.

Awake north wind, come affliction and try these people. Come adversity, wear them down. Blow thou south wind and revive these drooping plants. These are My husbandry; blow upon them that they may show forth what I can do. So dear friends, these two things, these winds coming from different quarters, north and south, opposite each to the other, are very wonderful. They do not blow strongly from both quarters at the same time. What violence there would be if the north and the south wind were to meet together. One comes; the north wind comes and nips you and does its work. Then it whirleth about to the south and revives you, cheers you, and comforts you. It were well for us to have wisdom to observe the different operations of the same Spirit; different dispensations, all of the same Spirit; different times that pass over us, times of affliction, times of mercy, times of distance, times of nearness, by the same Spirit. How much some of us have lost for want of observation. "Much food is in the tillage of the poor: but there is that is destroyed for want of judgement", (Proverbs 13 v 23), and there is much food in your tillage and labour. In all spiritual labour there is profit, but there is a good deal destroyed for lack of knowledge. But this Spirit comes sometimes and

He gives knowledge and so we are profited. "Awake" then "O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden". Both these, as I judge, do emphatically set forth the operations of the Holy Ghost. Before passing on I might say, in addition to what I have said about the north wind, that it may also mean adversity in circumstances, in providence. God may see us fat and flourishing and kicking, and He may send adversity to reduce us. He may see us easy, too easy, and send trouble to awaken and arouse us. But if it be so, if this should be our experience, may we be enabled to remember this, that Christ sends it, Christ sends it. One may say, O but Mr so and so did it. Who gave him the power? "Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground". Therefore, "hear the rod and who hath appointed it". The man of wisdom will hear it and hear who hath appointed it. And if you are a man of wisdom, when the Lord bids some affliction come and be as the north wind, you will hear what the rod says to you.

And then in the next place the Lord says "that the spices thereof may flow out". This is an end. Affliction has an end. It is not an end in itself. The north wind is for a purpose; it is not a purposeless blowing. No, there is a purpose and a time for everything under the heaven, and when God says, Awake north wind, He has got something in view, some purpose, and when the south wind blows there is a purpose in it. Do you believe it? Things come, and God has an end. The Lord help us to believe it. He has an end in sending affliction. He has an end in sending the south wind, and this is the end, that the spices in the garden may flow out. Ah these spices, the graces that the soul has, graces of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, faith, hope, meekness, gentleness, goodness; these, as the Apostle Paul says in the Galatians are the fruits of the Spirit; these are the fruits of the Spirit. Now, says Christ, O north wind, O south wind, blow on My garden. Here are spices, but they are dormant. Blow on them that they may flow out, send their aroma, their sweet savour, that I may be delighted therewith.

Look then at these spices. Take love; love is of God; a principal grace. God gives it, God delights in it. Love has several particular objects and each one, as love goes out to it, is beautiful, and the love is a sweet spice to God. Love, first of all, has this

Object, God Incarnate. Ah, whenever the south wind moves you, or when affliction nips you by the sweet purpose of Christ, you will find, in the long run, this will be the effect; you will love Him, kiss the hand that smote, bless the wind that revived you. This is a sweet thing when Christ is first and Christ is last and Christ is all in all. First in His Person; last in His Person. Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending. First in His merit, the only hope of a sinner. First in His blood-shedding, the only cleansing and pardon of a sinner. First in His righteousness, the only clothing of a naked, wretched, guilty creature. First in His mercy to melt a hard heart; in His compassion to comfort an afflicted soul; and last in all these things; Alpha and Omega, nothing before, nothing after. Do you love Him? One says

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

O what a mercy to have that, to love the Lord with mind and heart, that there shall be none like Him, the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valleys, the excellent of all, the most excellent, the only excellent One; fairer than the children of men. The refuge for the oppressed, the throne of grace for those who are needy, for those who are pursued by the man-slayer. The sweet, blessed hiding-place for all poor, wretched creatures. The burden-bearer, having been first of all the sin-bearer, the Comforter. "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you". This is our Lord Jesus, God and Man in One Person. The spice of love goes out to Him and hangs about Him, and He is delighted with it. He smells it, it is a sweet savour to Him. "Love is of God". See if this is so, see if it is so with you, that your souls run out in that fervent affection for Him that is born of the south wind, that is to say, of the Holy Ghost.

And then the truth is an object of love. This Book, this inspired, infallible, blessed, suitable, stooping, descriptive, encouraging, strengthening Bible, opened and applied and explained in different passages of it by the Eternal Spirit who inspired it. What a Book it is; O what a plaster for your sore boil may some passage

be, and then the spice flows out. You love Him and you love the word; you cleave to the word. It is not an ordinary word; it is one of thousands of passages, but to you it is the very immediate word of the living God to your soul; a comfort to your heart, the guide of your steps, a light in your understanding, love in your affections. A word that is prophetic, a word that shapes your course, a word that tells you of your Lord, of His intentions to do you good. A word of promise, promising you everything you need. And you love it; the spice flows out. Of all the dreadful things that today mar our land, and blight, for the most part, the religious profession among us, this is one of them, the denial of God's blessed Word as being inspired. O but when you get that indubitable witness in your own conscience, some holy word made over to you, then you say, Now I know, I know, and you love it. And you love the throne of grace; love goes out to that. There would I be; I have been there and still would go. It has been a little heaven below to some of us. Ah, what a thing it is to pray; what a wonder to have a throne of grace to go to; a glorious High Throne. To have One there whose ear is open to your cry, whose eye is upon you in compassion, whose hand is ready ever to help you, whose promise is - He will not forsake you but do you good. O the throne of grace; could you live without it, you who know it? Could you get on without it? No. Well then the spice flows out to the Word of God. Yes, precious Bible, you may say sincerely, precious Bible, what a treasure, and faith embraces it, trusts it. Hope is built upon it. Love keeps round about it, looks at it and loves it.

Then also you will find that your love will go out to sovereign grace. Go out to salvation, to justifying righteousness, to a fountain of holiness, a fountain of merit. It will go out to omnipotence. It will run out to the wisdom of God which is Christ. The whole of these wonderful parts of salvation your love will go to and hold. It is a spice, a sweet spice.

Then take faith, that great grace, that blessed grace, that gives God credit; that, along with love, wont hear a wrong word about Him. That faith that does go out to Him, cries to Him, and longs to have Him. Faith that will wait and wait and wait till He comes, till His word is fulfilled. If you have got faith you will never leave God. You will never leave Him; He wont let you quite leave Him; He

will never leave you. Faith does please Him; it is a wonderful spice.

Faith in the bleeding Lamb  
O what a gift is this

Just think of this great thing. It brings you into union with Him; it makes Him everything; it renounces self and denies self. It rejects utterly and entirely everything that old nature would turn into Pharisaism. It brings a sinner, a naked and wretched creature, to the throne of God's heavenly grace. The merit of Christ, the matchless love of Christ, the great, the vicarious sufferings and death of Christ, these, these are the objects of faith. These, these are the support of faith. These do draw faith out and faith then is a spice; it flows out. Yes, nothing pleases Christ more. The Syrophenecian woman pleased Him much and had this commendation: "O woman, great is thy faith". If you, at any time, can believe that God is above nature, above all apparent impossibilities, above all that the devil says, above all that your heart says, above all the rebellion and wickedness of your fallen heart; if you can believe that a good God in Christ is above them all, can come over them all, subdue them, annihilate them, so to speak, then, then your faith honours Him, and that is a spice flowing out from the influence of the Spirit, the south wind, and a blessed spice it is. Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. O sinner, if you have got this faith, you do please the Lord. Abraham was strong in faith giving glory to God. Timothy was exhorted to be strong here. "Thou therefore my son be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." This faith credits contradictions. It says it shall be done when there appears to be no possibility of it being done. It believes God. It believed God in the Apostle Paul; above all present appearances, above all the wreck and ruin that was to come, it believed God. How are all these men to get to shore when the ship is broken to pieces? God said it. A naked faith will sometimes so move under the influence of the south wind, the Spirit of God, that, though death and hell and world and old nature should rise up and say, the thing cannot be, faith would say, it is done, for God calls things which are not as though they were, and faith which He gives follows Him in that.

And joy is set forth also as a fruit of the Spirit and this is also a spice. Joy? Why there is strength in joy. If you have ever had five minutes heavenly joy in your heart through the atonement and righteousness and love of Jesus Christ, you have had a flowing-out spice. This is the strength of a child of God. When Israel saw their sins, under the reading of the Scriptures by Ezra - they were hearing the Scriptures read one fourth part of the day - and they mourned and wept because of what they had heard, Nehemiah said to them: "Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength". O my friends, a little of this, the oil of joy for mourning; Jesus Christ viewed by precious faith; a wave of His love going over your soul; a sense of His interest in you; a feeling that you can commit everything to Him and believing that He wont leave you, wont forsake you; I say this, this will create in you the spice of joy. "That the spices thereof may flow out."

And gentleness and meekness and long suffering, all these are spices which the Lord has in His garden. A gentle spirit is a spirit that will enable you to endure everything that may come. A meek spirit will make you a teachable person. A quiet spirit is, in the sight of God, of great price; and the south wind will awaken these spices, cause them to send out their sweet aroma, and the Lord is pleased therewith. Mark these good things that God is pleased to create and when He smells them, He smells a sweet savour and is pleased with them.

And in the next place, and lastly, the courage, the gracious courage that the church has now under the influence of the wind blowing upon her. She says to Him: "Let my beloved come". She is glad of the Spirit, thankful for the Spirit, but she says, let me enjoy my beloved's presence. Let Him come into His garden. He calls it His garden and she owns it too. "Let my beloved come into His garden". He says, "blow upon My garden. He has it, it is His property, it is His own inheritance; His Father has given it to Him. "Ask of Me and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance." Poor Gentiles in Brighton, Gentiles here, these, these are His inheritance; so He says My garden. Now He has caused His Holy Spirit

to come, He has sent Him, and that Holy Spirit has wrought mightily and sweetly; nipped nature and nourished grace, and the child says, Now Lord, come Thyself; come Thyself. And if you have the Spirit of Christ in you, He will be the great Object of your desire and while you thank the Holy Spirit for coming, thank Him for His graces, His operations, His mercies, this will be the great end of your prayers and your desires, the presence of the Lord with you. You will be sorry for any distance as between you and Christ. Distance will be a sorrow, a grief to you. Now faith here goes out in this petition - Let Him come. But He wont, one says, I have asked Him again and again. If you have real faith you will go on and on asking and asking until He says: "Be it unto you even as you will". The graces of the Spirit are beautiful; the presence of Christ crowns everything. The presence of Christ is all-filling, all-satisfying, all-comforting. The graces of the Spirit garnish the soul, but Christ is its life, Christ is its health, its beauty, its acceptableness, before God. "Accepted in the beloved". "Let my beloved come" that is, do condescend to come. It is condescension when He comes. He teaches us how unworthy we are. We are not fit for Him, as we judge, and we are unworthy that He should come, as we feel, quite unworthy, and some of you may have, at times, been, as it were, frightened at the expressions used in this Song. "My beloved", "My spouse", "My sister", "My undefiled". O what words to be spoken to sinners. What words to be spoken to worms of earth, polluted creatures, lepers, and yet He says them; He says them. They are His names, His own names, chosen to give to these poor people by Himself. But He can never say one to me, you say. Why not? Why not? Then you will have to be silent. If you look at yourself you will see all reasons why He should not, but then you are not the one to be the judge. He judges; it is Himself who does this, not on the ground of a sinner at all, but simply and alone because He would do it. He will do it. O what a favour to have such words as these then. Let my beloved come in His condescension, let Him come in His power over mountains and hills, let Him come in His sovereignty because He will. Let Him come in His love because nothing can overcome that. Let Him come in His faithfulness because I have been a treacherous dealer. I have no ground to stand on but this. Let Him come because He will into His garden, His own property. Let Him come and claim it again, lay a fresh claim to it; open again the riches of His grace in this, that He will have a sinner for His Own and a garden for His Own

delight, His Own pleasure. "And eat His pleasant fruits". Then the same things that are called spices will be His fruits and He does take pleasure in these. "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied". This is the meat He has, this is the pleasure and the satisfaction He has in His Church, and what He produces, that is His delight, that is His meat. So it will have to come to this, the whole of it is derived from Himself, and the whole of it goes back to Himself.

Well, if we are His church, part of it, what a wonder, and if we have this mercy, Christ calling on the north wind, sending the Holy Spirit to instruct and to reprove us, and to teach us, and if He sends affliction in His kindness and love, then we are honoured. And if then this south wind blows producing that softness and warmth and new life and a resurrection, as it were, bringing fruit where none appeared possible, O what a favour. And then to think that He cares for these stumpy, scrubby plants, as we feel ourselves to be, and says, now south wind blow on them that the spices which are latent there, that the spices may flow out, that they may be truly Christians, and true Christians, and that the Christian graces that they have, which are dormant often, may again be in exercise. That the great grace, Christian grace of faith, and the Christian grace of love, and of hope and all other graces may flow out to delight the Owner of the garden.

And then she says, gaining courage from His kindness, do come; come into this garden. Lord, Thou didst walk once in Eden and Eden was defiled and then Thou didst leave it and cast out Adam and Eve. Now come into a defiled garden and make it clean. Come to stubby and scrubby things that have apparently no root or life; come to them and make them fruitful. Come into Thy garden; claim it, dwell in it, turn out strangers, cultivate it, let it be Thy husbandry. Can you say it? Have you courage to say it? Do you see enough grace, enough in Christ to make you think it is possible for Him to come? Do you see enough love in Him, enough merit, enough mercy in Him to encourage and embolden you to say, O come and save my soul, and bless my soul and be intimate with me and cause me to be intimate with Thee. If you look at yourself you wont have any courage. If you only are the object of your gaze, if your sins and your unworthiness stand before you and

there is no other object, I am sure you wont have courage to ask Him to come. But if you see His love, if you see His goodness, if you see infinite merit in His death, in His righteousness, if you see bowels of compassion in Him, then you will have courage to say, Lord come even to me. May He give us this mercy.

AMEN.