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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday morning 20 October 1935

Romans 8 verse 9

But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit
if so be that the Spirit of Christ dwelleth in you.
Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.

Some of you may think I have chosen this myself but I did not, and perhaps it is a token that the Holy Ghost is with us in this service.

Everyone born again has had the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, born of the Spirit; yet not everyone, and at the beginning perhaps no-one, thus blessed, understood that it was the divine Person of the Holy Ghost who wrought in him that mighty wonder. Everyone who has the love of God shed abroad in his heart might not at the moment have realised that that was by the Holy Ghost. He it is who sheds abroad the love of God in the heart. Everyone who gets a revelation of Christ gets that by the Holy Ghost and everyone who is sealed unto the day of redemption is sealed by the Holy Ghost, and everyone who receives an earnest of the inheritance receives that blessing by the Holy Ghost. Thus the people of God do possess what some speak of, what I have spoken of as the religion of the Holy Ghost, and yet we may be very far from a very good understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, and it may be a help to us if today I am enabled to deal a little particularly with that glorious mysterious doctrine of the Holy Ghost.

We believe He is a Person in the Godhead; that to deny the personality of the Holy Ghost is to deny the Trinity, for Scripture does distinctly tell us that the Holy Ghost is a Person in the divine essence, in the Godhead. The Apostle John was inspired to say in his first Epistle - "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost and

these three are one"; one God, one God in divine essence; three Persons in divine subsistence. Dear friends do not try to understand it. It is not given in revelation for human understanding; it is revealed for faith; it is revealed to faith. Faith receives it, believes it and at times rejoices in the truth that there are Three Persons in the Godhead. The order in Scripture is in that verse just quoted - "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word (the Son that is) and the Holy Ghost and these three are one". This divine Person has been in the Church, dwelling and teaching and prophesying, ever since the fall and Adam's conversion. Peter tells us distinctly that it was the Spirit of Christ in the prophets who prophesied of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, and these prophets sought and diligently searched to find out, to know, what the matters were of which they prophesied. They were given to understand, according to Peter, that they ministered to the Church, the Church of God beginning an open Church on the Day of Pentecost. "Unto us," says Peter; they ministered to us but they desired to look into the things which they prophesied. Paul in the Colossians teaches this that he desired that the Colossian Church might be increased, be brought to all riches of understanding to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God and of the Father and of Christ; Three Persons, and the Holy Ghost, as it is believed by many, by myself, the Holy Ghost is first. This divine Person was promised to the Church first by the Father, who gave Him to His Son. This is in Isaiah's prophecy - Thus saith the Lord, speaking to His Son, My Spirit which I have put upon Thee, that was in the incarnation of Christ, shall not depart from Thee. My words which I have put in Thy mouth shall not depart from Thee nor from Thy seed nor from Thy seeds' seed henceforth and for ever saith the Lord. That divine Person, the Holy Ghost was given without measure to Christ when He was born of the virgin. God gave the Spirit to Him not by measure and all the people of God since then and before, indeed from the beginning, have received the Spirit through and from Christ. In the Old Testament, Christ anticipated, Christ promised, Christ looked for, and the Spirit in Him, coming from Him. You find the promise in Isaiah that God said He will pour water upon Him that^{is}

thirsty and floods upon the dry ground and His Spirit upon his offspring, and they shall grow as the lily and as the grass. When Christ was about to ascend and leave His disciples He also promised the Holy Spirit saying "I will not leave you comfortless." Of the Spirit He said "Whom I will send " He shall comfort you. He promised Him to be a revealer of Himself. "He" the Holy Ghost "shall take of the things which are Mine and shall show them unto you" and these Scriptures do tell us, teach us, that the Holy Ghost is a divine Person. Today He is either absolutely ignored, if not openly denied, or He is openly denied and this is no new heresy. It takes perhaps a new form, just now, but it is an old heresy. May we, a little congregation and Church be led into the doctrine of the Holy Ghost.

The order, in Scripture which I have named twice and will name again, of the Trinity, is this - "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost and these three are one" but it seems, according to Scripture, that in experimental religion and knowledge the Holy Ghost is first. Ye must be born of the Spirit. The washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost comes first. As many of us as have received that wonderful washing of regeneration received it by the Holy Ghost, sent by the Father, given by the Father to the Son, sent by the Son in His mediatorial capacity to every elect, redeemed, sinner to regenerate him. This divine work then proceeded from this divine Person. May we never relegate the Holy Ghost to a secondary position; in experimental religion He is first. "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 every one that is born of the Spirit." It is a great thing to find, to believe and realise in your own soul at any time that that Spirit that moved upon the waters, the dark chaos in creation has come and moved in our souls. He came and moved and said "Let there be light" and so it was that same Holy Spirit by Jesus Christ is said to be the Spirit of conviction. "He shall convince the world of sin". This conviction is therefore the particular work of the Holy Ghost. He comes in His own light and life giving operation and shows a sinner that he is

God's creature, God's subject, under God's law; that, though fallen in Adam and sinning in his own person, he is accountable to God under that law, that he must give an account of his life, not only of his outward conduct, but of his heart life, the life of his mind, the life of his thoughts, of his wishes, of his intentions of his actions. This conviction tells the sinner that his sins are more in number than the hairs of his head, tells him too that he cannot flee from the presence of God - Whither shall I flee from Thy presence; whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Everyone under that teaching owns that he cannot escape God, cannot escape the eye of omniscience, cannot escape the awful presence of Jehovah, cannot escape the sentence of the law, and he fears that the sanction of the law will come upon him to his eternal destruction. The same Holy Spirit, whose doctrine I have just tried to enounce to you is also a merciful Spirit. O the mercy of the Holy Spirit coming to help the infirmities of a praying sinner, a sinner who says sometimes, I wish I could pray; I wish I could pour my heart out before God; I wish I had liberty to get near God; but I have not, I cannot. He little thinks, what afterward he will thank God for, that these aspirations and wishes and groans and longings and pantings came from that divine Person, the Holy Ghost. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities " of ignorance, and all kinds of infirmities, "for we know not what we should pray for as we ought but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" and this should, and if we rightly enter into it will, make us more or less indifferent to words in prayer. Perhaps speaking generally with regard to the Church of God more prayers ascend to heaven without words than there are sent to heaven with words, and after all words are but the dress of prayer; the form, the life, the spirit, the energy, the meaning, the direction of prayer you will find to be in your heart. O the groans of men who feel the bondage of sin; O the groans of a man who would often leave himself and lose himself, but cannot. " Lord help me" He does not excuse himself but he is bound and cannot break away from certain things. The Spirit helps his infirmity from time to time. Let us attribute every godly motion, every holy desire, every prayer that ascends up to heaven, gets into the

golden censer and mingles with the much incense there, to the Holy Ghost that blessed Spirit who condescends to come and dwell in the sinner's heart.

Then again the Holy Spirit is given to the Church by Christ and by the Father of Christ to be the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. Christ is the mystery of God, the wisdom of God, the power of God, yea He is the image of the invisible God, unknowable to men by their natural condition, known to men by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. Now Christ in the matter of our common salvation is everything, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord. How are we to know Him? Eye hath not seen nor ear heard neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that wait for Him and that love Him. How then are we to know Him? In the Corinthians the Apostle Paul says this - Had the princes of this world known Christ they would not have crucified Him. They saw Him to be a man and only a man and they rejected Him. Because He was the promised Messiah and made it known that He was, they rejected Him. Then says Paul - Naturally, a man in a natural state, cannot receive the things of God. The things which belong to God are Christ's things for God gave all things to Him. He cannot receive them because they are spiritually discerned. This brings us to a point. If ever we come to know the Lord Jesus Christ we shall come to that knowledge by the distinct teaching and revelation of the Holy Ghost. Revelation is taking away a veil, a covering, from a thing that has been kept secret. That blessed apocalypse is by the Holy Ghost. What a wonder that any sinner ever gets a sight of the Lord Jesus Christ in His divine Person, His complex Person and in respect of what He is in that Person. How are we to know Christ is the representation of God to the Church? How are we to understand that He is the image of the invisible God and the representation of God in His divine purposes and love and mercy and goodness and wisdom and power? We read these things in the Bible and it may be we do not dispute them, do not deny them, but how are they to be brought into our hearts so that we can say for ourselves, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write, Jesus of

Nazareth. Paul tells us in the Ephesians that he desired and prayed that the eyes of the Ephesian Christians should be opened, that their understanding should be enlightened, that they might know the Lord Jesus by revelation, the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. And Christ, as I have named before, promised the Spirit to be a teacher and revealer of Himself. He shall take of Mine, receive of My things, and shall show them to you. O is it not wonderful that this divine Person, the Holy Ghost, sent by the Father, given by the Son, and sent by the Son and given to His disciples, that He should take of His things and show them, reveal them and make them quite clear, clear to the spirit and clear to the understanding, illuminated. "After" says Paul to the Hebrews "After that ye were illuminated". The illuminator is the Spirit; the illumination is His light, His instruction and His bringing from heaven to the heart and soul and conscience and understanding and affections of a sinner the Person of Christ; the glory of His Person; the glory of His Priesthood; the glory of the gospel. There is a passage in the Hebrews like this - "For the law maketh nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did." The law finds fault with all fallen creatures; it condemns them. The law observed by the Jews, the Mosaic law and the Levitical law, all typical, particularly the sacrifices and the priesthood, all typical. But says Paul these could not, did not, make anyone perfect. Very solemn for those of us here who are under the law. You will never be made perfect by it; you will never therefore be acceptable to God by it. May the Lord cause you to think of it. It can never make you perfect. The typical law, the sacrifices, the Day of Atonement, the annual day when the people were atoned for, everything was typical. The law was a shadow of good things to come not the very image of the things, not a perfect representation, but the gospel brings in a better hope, that is, it teaches how a sinner can be made perfect, how he can be without blame and spotless, unrebukeable, unblameable, before God. We need faith to get hold of that truth - unblameable, unrebukeable, when we are lively, always finding fault with ourselves, condemning ourselves, yea ashamed sometimes of our chattering, which is called prayer. And yet one in that condition, that state of mind, is brought to know the Son of God so as that

he realises that he is spotless, blameless, unrebukeable, not amongst men, that may very easily be; your moral conduct may make you unblameable before men; but Paul puts it thus - "in His sight". If God counts you blameless, you are blameless, but if He never does then you are blameworthy under the law and you will suffer. So we owe the knowledge we may possess of Christ, the inklings we get of His Person, the glimpses we have of Him, the sights we get of the cross of Christ, the sense we may have of the infinite value of His precious blood, to the Holy Ghost. Shall we not praise Him for that. Ought we not to bless Him for that. Paul, in that passage in the Hebrews which I have just quoted "For the law maketh nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did" then says "By the which we draw nigh unto God". The law is a bar, the gospel is an open door. The law is a prohibition, the gospel is an invitation. The law says you may not come, you are a sinner; the gospel says you must come because I am a Redeemer, and this the Holy Ghost shows to sinners.

And this doctrine leads us further on; it leads us to the sealing of the soul. "A garden inclosed is My sister, My spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." God seals His church unto the day of redemption and that is not only a general word but a particular, a personal word. In the Corinthians, Paul says that these Corinthian Christians had the earnest and the sealing of the Spirit. In this chapter he says that the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. One day you may be very depressed, very distant, yea cold, hard, in some bondage, bondage to some sin, with great fear and trembling. An awe of God is on you and yet you cannot get near to Him nor are you persuaded you belong to Him. That very same day there may come to you such a solemn sense of acceptance in Christ, such a sweet persuasion that you have passed through the washing of regeneration and that, although your feet have been defiled numberless times, they now are washed and the witness in your heart that you are the Lord's is so gracious and powerful and weighty you cannot doubt it. "One shall say surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength" It may not be much more than

a flash, but it was real though the feeling has gone, the effect remains. You may be accused by the devil later on of presumption or of hypocrisy. When you come to look at it you may say, what is hypocrisy? You may say when I speak of my experience I only speak of what I know was true. What is presumption? Rushing madly on the thick bosses of God's buckler and claiming to be what you know you are not. Was that your case? No, you say; I never was more humble and never more fearful of being wrong than when I was persuaded I was right. The sealing of the Spirit, that seal no devil can break; that seal no sin can remove; that seal nothing will make invalid. It will always be a good, valid thing before God. He wont disown it.

Then there is the earnest of the Spirit, the gracious earnest of the Spirit. When a minor is under tutors and governors he does get some things from his father and he does know, as he grows, what he is an heir to, but he gets some things in his hand, as it were pocket money, something that comes really out of the estate, not different from the estate and not very much of the estate perhaps, but it comes out of the estate. When you get some gracious word from God, some sweet smile in your soul, some blessed access to God to pour your heart out before Him, and He owns you, recognises you, you get an earnest, the earnest of that to which you are an heir; an heir of God, a joint heir with Christ. And you may sometimes be led and enabled to look at it. This came from God. Is this part of the inheritance? Am I kept for that inheritance? Is that inheritance reserved in heaven for me? O the sweetness, the value, the blessedness of an earnest of the Spirit. Whatever you get in the way of persuasion that you are the Lord's, whatever you receive as from Him in Jesus Christ, you may regard as an earnest, and that earnest says there is an inheritance awaiting you and you are kept for that and one day you will enter upon the inheritance undefiled that fadeth not away reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God.

May I pursue it a little further briefly. What is communion with God? How do we get it? The bread which we break is it not

the communion of the body of Christ? The cup which we bless is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And we may not confine that entirely to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. It belongs to it, but you may eat the flesh of Christ without that. Yea, many a time between one month and another or perhaps once or twice or once only you may receive by faith the Son of God. What is that? Eating His flesh. You may receive the atonement into your conscience. What is that? Drinking His blood. That is communion, sweet communion; union felt by that communion; union discovered by that communion. The image of Christ to which you were predestinated is brought by that communion. "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Speaking of the operations of the Spirit, the Apostle Paul in the Corinthians says all these are by the same Spirit. One God, the same God, works repentance; the same God gives faith; the same God gives all good things out of the fulness of Christ. That same God in that chapter is the Holy Ghost without whom no man can say that Jesus is the Lord.

Another word and I close this morning. Who is it that clothes the Scripture with power, that gives any word authority in your conscience, such authority as forbids you to disobey or such sweet authority as assures you that the word on your mind came from heaven? The Holy Ghost. He inspired this Book; He gives it authority in every passage of it that comes to the Church by application and He gives the authority of it; He gives the reality of it, the sweetness of it, the efficacy of it, the guidance of it; it is all from Him. Now says Paul, and I have not touched the text really in a sense, - If you are not in the flesh, and the flesh in this verse, in this chapter, is to be taken for the old corrupt nature that we have. "Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you". "In the Spirit"; the Apostle Paul explains in the Galatians "If we live in the Spirit". If we live in the

Spirit we are born again; led by the Spirit, we are under the influence of the Spirit; He guides us from time to time. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His". I close this morning with a question. Come to the text; put yourselves by the text if you can and ask this question; I put it to you - Does He dwell in you? Have you got the Spirit of Christ?

AMEN.