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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed  
Chapel, Brighton, on Sunday evening 22 February  
1925

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 4 verse 20

"For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power."

We noticed this morning that this kingdom, in the first place, has a king. The King in His authority, His reign, His majesty, omnipotence; the King of glory; the only King we own, the King of kings, Lord of lords. Eternal Deity clothed in our nature, a suffering Saviour, dying, rising again, ascending into heaven, ruling there in the armies of heaven and among the children of men. Also, whose hand none can stay, to whom none can say, what doest Thou. Happy he who is brought to bend before this King, in unfeigned faith. If it be so with you, with me, everlasting thanks and hallelujahs will become us and occupy our hearts and lips through eternity. A kingdom has subjects and we noticed this point, the subjects being in their natural state children of wrath, enemies, filled with enmity; aliens, alienated from the life of God; wicked men, publicans, harlots, the worst of sinners, gathered, born again, taught of the Spirit. These, these unwilling subjects, these people who had no natural religiosity, no faith, no love, nothing good, nothing to merit esteem, nothing to give the Creator delight, these people, as bad as sin can make them, as black as defilement can make them, these people, they are made the subjects of Christ, clothed, washed, sanctified, redeemed, blessed. O what a kingdom. What subjects. Willing against their unwillingness, humbled against their pride, believing against their unbelief, hoping against all the despair of guilt, looking through the mist of their troubles, and their sinfulness to Him who is sent to open the eyes of the blind. Not good people does Christ get; He gets wicked people and makes good people of them. Devils, as it were, turned into saints; children of wrath adopted into the family of God. Crooked

people, put straight with the will and mind of God.

Natural people turned into spiritual men, by the grace of God, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

These are the subjects of Christ, and these have faith enough to invite Him to come to them, faith enough to submit themselves to Him. willingness enough to come, bending, to His footstool. All this, they have from Himself. Do you know any of these subjects? Are you among these subjects? Have you ever seen the King in His beauty and the land which is very far off? And heard the voice, which is as the sound of many waters, and seen the eyes which are as a flame of fire, and have bent, and bowed, and kneeled, and waited on Him? And these subjects have a great change wrought in them, being born again, not of corruptible, but of incorruptible seed, by the word of God. These extortioners and drunkards and covetous and evil persons, these all washed and sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, these have the glory of God given to them, the glory of justification, the glory of sanctification, the glory of redemption, the glory of wisdom, given to them. Not acquired by them, but imparted by the Holy Ghost, and these hear the voice of the Lord and obey Him in faith. These taste that He is gracious and follow after Him with all their hearts from time to time. These want to know Him. They can unite with the Apostle and say "That we might know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death. These are happy people in their state always, and happy sometimes in their experience. These have a kingdom; a kingdom is in them. The kingdom of God is within you. These have a kingdom in prospect. "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" And, being subjects, they are also kings and also priests. God makes them kings and priests unto Himself by Jesus Christ. Kings, because, by the grace of Christ, they overcome "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am sat down with My Father in His throne. Priests, because they offer up an offering to their Lord God, which is acceptable - The

sacrifice of praise, even the fruit of their lips. Do you know these kings, any of them? Do you know any of these priests? Are you among them? I said this morning that vital religion may be considered in three ways. First in the author of it, second in the subjects of it, and third in the end of it, the intention of it. Let us a little further look, as enabled, at the subjects. They are very helpless. This is a standing experience, if I may so express it, with them all. They are helpless. Then there is something for their King to do. He must defend them. The Lord is our King, the Lord is our defence. The place of their defence is the munition of rocks, and the inhabitants of the rock are called upon to sing, and they do sing sometimes. They sing that by their weakness they prove that Christ is strong. Their weakness is so great in their experience, that they are solemnly persuaded that if the Lord be not their strength, they must be overcome and lie down vanquished by sin, their enemy, but it is their mercy that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. His grace reigns to conquer. His love reigns to subdue, and humble and make them happy. His presence comes and He is a mighty One, riding victoriously for their help. When He seeth that their strength is gone, and there is no helper for them then He looks upon them and hastens to their deliverance. Helplessness marks every step of every child of God as to his own experience. O but this does make way for the King. O these people say - Lift up your heads O ye gates, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory, the Lord, the Lord, mighty to save, mighty to reign, mighty to deliver, knowing how to deliver. This kingdom is not in word. Lip service is a poor service. It is nothing great, externally paraded. It is just in the movements of the Holy Ghost, of Jesus Christ, of God the Father, in their hearts. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, not outward things, not external service. That is only, so to speak, a thing belonging to it, growing out of it. But the kingdom itself is righteousness imputed, peace bestowed, joy in the Holy Ghost, and this is by the mighty power of the Spirit They

are filled with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Ghost, These people, these subjects of the Lord Jesus have, in the next place, what one may speak of as a right of access to the King. We are all aware with respect to our country, that when the throne of England was offered to William and Mary, there was, what was called, a Bill of Rights drawn up and among the many provisions of the Bill of Rights was this - the right of the subjects to approach the king with petitions. Well may this be said of that kingdom one is trying to speak of. Is there any right of approach to our King? May a sinner go to Him? May a hungry soul go to Him? Yes. Listen to what He says - "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Listen, sinner. He says "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it" Listen. He says "Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify Me." And this right is entered in the covenant of grace, and is sealed with the blood of Christ, the blood of the everlasting covenant, and it will never be revoked. There will never be a sensible sinner using, by precious faith, this right, who will be turned back, and told that he must not come and told that there is no mercy for him, never. O sinner, what a right this is, a worm, blessed with the right to approach Jehovah Jesus, a guilty sinner, blessed with the right to go into the presence of Jehovah. In whom, that is in Christ, through whom we have access unto the Father, by one Spirit. Made nigh by the blood of Christ. And when you get this O beloved friends take advantage of it. As much faith as you have, may you be enabled to use. Urge thy claim through all unfitness, press the case. Open the mouth wide. Remind God of His promise. Tell Him of what He said to sinners and what He may have spoken to you. Remind Him of old things that you felt, things He said to you, mercies He gave you, pledges He gave to you. O remind Him of these things. Faith is a great, a living, a wonderful grace. It will never take no for an answer. It will press through the crowd. It will take the kingdom by violence, for the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take

it by force. When you can take no denial, when you have that energy in your faith, it seems to say, help is not far off, as despair and gospel hope live near each other. Blessed be God for this wonderful right to come to God, to come to Him by Jesus Christ, the King of kings. And many here, of this little congregation have had that blessed experience, when the Lord has said "Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God" And you have felt this, have not you, as if the more you asked, the more pleased He seemed to be. And the more you asked, the more He encouraged you to ask, and enlarged your heart exceedingly, and your desires rose right up to heaven and embraced the whole of your life - what you must eat, what you must drink, what you have to do, what you have to suffer, the paths you have to walk in, the difficulties, the temptations, the arduous labours, the sore conflicts, all, all of them, your faith has as it were embraced in a few minutes, and you ask Him to be with you to the end. Perhaps you have been enabled to take advantage of what Mr Great-heart speaks. He said, that they should have asked the King to send him the whole of the journey, and when you get a little of this access, then as enabled and taught by the Spirit, you take this good, this blessed, believing advantage - Go with me to the end. How often have I been enabled to do this. Be with me to the end of my ministry. Be with me to the end of every conflict. Bring me honourably to my grave. O believer, what a door God has set before you, an open door. What a door; sovereign grace, infinite love, the precious atonement of Christ. What a door, and no man can shut it. No devil can shut it. No sin can really shut it, though sin often may shut you out as to your experience, for we cannot sin cheaply. And this is in power. One may say - I will pray and never breathe one prayer. One may say - I cannot pray, and find himself led out in prayer. It is not in parade. It is not in the flesh. It does not belong to the flesh. It is of the Spirit.

Praying in the Holy Ghost. Are you poor? Seek infinite riches. Are you ignorant? Ask the Lord to teach you. Are you conscious of failing in everything? Pray the Lord to help you, and hold you up. Do you stagger, and do your feet totter and stumble? Ask Him to sustain you. There is a right of access. O I wish we were not so prayerless. I wish we were not so indifferent to this high privilege, but that through the Holy Spirit we were made earnest in prayer and supplication. When the disciples enquired of Christ why they could not cast the evil spirit out of the son who was torn by that spirit, Christ said "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

Let me proceed to another point, this, namely, that the King must defend His subjects. It is part of His work and Kingship. He must look after them. There are enemies on all sides of the city, as Dothan was infested, and the prophet's servant saw that, and said "Alas master, what shall we do" and the prophet said "Lord open his eyes" And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw chariots and horsemen. And John says "Greater is He that is in you, than all that be against you." He that is our God, is the God of salvation, and unto God, the Lord, belong the issues from death. Ah we little know at times, we little know, how we are surrounded by God, surrounded by the atonement, surrounded by the mercy, by the promise, by the oath, by the covenant of God. No death can come here. No defeat can be sustained here. They you say "I am wrong" Why? Because you are often suffering defeat. So will every well instructed soul confess, but this makes the more room for the conqueror. This makes the greater need for defence, and when really God, Jesus Christ, comes, then, as faith is led to see Him, to see His power, His sword, to see Him riding upon a white horse, conquering and to conquer, to see how that He conquered death on the cross, conquered death in the grave, removed the corruption from the grave, to see how He ascended into heaven, and rules there, and rules over all men upon the earth, and devils in hell, and all angels, all

wickedness, flying about the saints, O faith then says in the heart "Be of good courage". This is power. This is not profession. This is not a form. This is not a certain way of expressing things. It is just the power of God in the soul, the power of God defending His own work, His own people. And it is again and again like that voice which is as the sound of many waters, above all waves and all noises of archers, and all devices of devils in the gates of hell. Above all of them. It says "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you" "He shall tread Satan under your feet shortly." He shall not permit sin to have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace. So the feeblest saint shall win the day, though death and hell obstruct the way. This is the kingdom of God. It is for the king to see that peace is in His kingdom. Take this point. It is the business of the King to see that peace is in His kingdom, and mark this scripture, O saints of God, mark this scripture. "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." "This Man shall be our peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land." He will see to it that there shall be peace in your conscience at times by His blood. Peace in your spirit, by His grace. Peace in the prospect of this, which no sin shall be allowed by action to cloud and cover. It is His business to do it. He calls His subjects to His feet. He bids them trust in Him. He becomes their righteousness, their holiness. He becomes their victor and their victory. He is their conqueror, having overcome them with His love. He will be a conqueror for them, when all their enemies come against them, and they shall have peace. Peace by His cross. Peace in His love. Peace in His presence. Peace in His power, and they shall feel it sometimes. Our King is God, our God is King. King of kings, and Lord of lords.

And now dear friends, one more point here. The King is in His beauty in glory. Is He to be alone there? No. It was never designed that Christ should be alone. There is a wife, whom He will have; a kingdom in which He will reign, and we are told in the gospel of Matthew that

when the Lord shall hold the grand assize, and when all nations shall stand before the throne, then He will divide them into two parties; sheep and goats they are called. What a solemn thing. Look at that scene. Did you ever picture it, in an exercised soul? Did you ever wonder on which side, the right or the left, you would stand? which description will be yours, a sheep or a goat. Did you ever say - I am a goat by nature. I am a child of wrath even as others. I am no better than others. And did you ever say, if it can be Lord, make a sheep of me, make a saint of me, make me one of Thine. Put me on Thy side. Many poor people have pictured this scene to themselves, looked at it, trembled, trembled at the thought of being a goat, at the thought of hearing that voice, which is as the sound of many waters, saying depart from Me, and many have been the prayers - Lord never say it to me. Many have been the fears that some have had in their hearts, that He would say - I never knew you, but their fears often are a contradiction of their experience, because He has known them; He has brought them to His footstool; He has heard their cries; He has answered them; He has looked on them; He has smiled on them. How then can He say to them - I never knew you? How could He say it? How could He say it to some of us here, when many and many a time He has blessed us. Amidst all my fears, and they are very many, and very heavy at times, I can never get over this, and you will not be able to get over this, when it is put before you. You must say, you must own, if you speak the truth of your experience, and of God's goodness, He has heard your cry, and sometimes you have joyfully said it - I love the Lord because He hath heard my voice and my supplications. Well then, there is this great assize, this day of days, to which we have looked, sometimes with hope, sometimes with trembling fear, and there are two parties. There are the sheep, happy people, and there are the goats, and He will say to the one "Come ye blessed". This is the point "Come ye blessed of



My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." That will fill all who hear it with infinite joy. May we hear it. This then is a word about the kingdom and the King, the King in His beauty. The King seen in His beauty, the King known in His loveliness. The King speaking and pouring out the grace that was poured into His lips, as the Psalmist speaks. The King, loving and covering in His love, all His subjects. Caring for them and in His care providing for them, and protecting them and helping them and bringing them honourably through their difficulties. The King, filling the empty places, sanctifying disappointment and losses and crosses, and bringing good out of evil. This King, we some of us know just a little and love very faintly.

And now I must come to my third point, namely, the end, the intention of God, the glorious Trinity, in respect to this kingdom. The Apostle Paul in the Ephesians tells us what it is. It is for the glory of His grace, for the glory of Him that worketh all things after the pleasure of His own will. The lifting of Jesus on high, the exalting of the Man Christ Jesus. And then in the next place, and intimately connected with it, the exalting of His people. Dear friends, the doctrine is this, that God has married our nature, exalted human nature unspeakably, by taking it into union with His divine person, and I say here, this is the foundation of all experience of union with God; this is the foundation of that intimacy that is to be had, and is had, more or less by all the saints on earth. This is the foundation of all the communications from God to sinners, of all the communications of what is communicable of God to sinners. This is the foundation, and in all your exercises, as God may help you, be very careful about the foundation. Every gospel truth has a foundation, and all gospel hope has a foundation. All gospel union with God has a foundation, and this is it - the taking unto Himself, by a union never to be dissolved; an intimacy we cannot enter into fully in our own nature; I wish I believed it more. I wish it had a greater power and effect on my soul, this great doctrine - the blessed union of my nature .....with the infinite

God; the Word was made flesh. Now from this comes what the Apostle teaches in the Ephesians again, namely, the glory of God, by Christ Jesus in the church, world without end. This is the end, the intention of God in having a kingdom of saints, a church, a bride, the Lamb's wife, and I will, as enabled, for a few minutes, show in one or two particulars what this glory is, and first of all it is the glory that God gives, when He gives washing - "But ye are washed" . Washed from your filthiness, washed in the blood of Jesus Christ. Tears never wash away sin, though tears are good, when they are for and about sin. Repentance never removes transgression, though repentance is a necessary thing in real religion, but the washing is by blood, and that is the glory of God. It is said to be the glory of a King to cover transgression. It is the glory of God to cover sin. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute iniquity and in whose spirit there is no guile." And after this washing every quickened soul pants and seeks. Filthiness is a grief to a living soul who loves cleanliness. Cleanliness of spirit is the delight of one born again, and the Apostle in the Corinthians speaks of having promises, and he says "Let us therefore cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh, and of the spirit. Now this is first of all by the blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonder it is to be clean, clean in the judgment of God, and clean in the experience of your conscience. To be enabled to say I am clean, just God, I am clean, is one of the greatest experiences. O sinner, this is God's glory. Who can forgive sins but God only? Who but God can purge the conscience from dead works? Who can take away all that filthiness of spirit that you feel at times, and from time to time? So this is one great thing in the glory of God, that He covers sin, puts it away, casts it behind His back, that it does not cleave to the sinner, that it will never be laid to the charge of him who has contracted it. It is so entirely removed, honourably removed, gloriously removed, that Christ's glory is largely here, and the glory of God in Him, in the church, is largely here, that the church is washed. She was

polluted. She did lie in her blood. She was loathsome and loathed. But God loved her. He came to her, He said to her - "live" and then He washed her and He clothed her. And the glory of God in the next place is in the imputation of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. This is God's glory, that He gives a covering to a sinner. The Lord God made coats of skins and with them He clothed naked Adam and Eve, and Jesus made a righteousness by His own infinite labour and skill, and brought it in, and then He gives it to all His dear followers, His living children, They are righteous. "Thy people shall be all righteous" God is pleased with righteousness. He never finds it in you; He never finds it in me, but He gives it, and then He sees it. Then He praises it; then He says there is no spot in the people to whom He gives it. He sees nothing wrong in them, nothing unrighteous in them. He sees them just straight and clean, and conformed to that law which He gave them in creation and which they violated "That the righteousness of the law should be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." This heals the broken-hearted. This delivers from death. "Righteousness delivereth from death" This delivers from guilty fear. This brings people into the presence of God. This wins His admiration, This brings forth His praise. "Thou art all fair there is no spot in Thee" This gives youth and freshness to the spirit, to the soul. Therefore God sees no wrinkle, no blemish, nor any such thing in the people to whom this righteousness is imputed and, says the Apostle, it shall be imputed to us if we believe, for it is upon all, and unto all that believe, for there is no difference. And if we have faith we shall believe in this, and believing in it, seek to have it imputed to us and put on us, that we may stand righteous in the presence of God. This is His glory. This is the end of His quickening a soul. This is the end of election, the election of a sinner unto Eternal life, that he may be made righteous notwithstanding all his transgressions. This is God's glory. It is upon a sinner. It is upon some in this chapel. Some sitting here have on them, and they have known it and felt it - this blessed righteousness

which God imputes. Then another thing in this glory is the indwelling of the Spirit. "Thy God thy glory" is with thee O saint of the Most High God. "Thy God thy glory" The glory of a sinner is Christ. The glory of a sinner is the Father. The glory of a sinner is the Holy Ghost. And this Trinity dwells in the soul. The Holy Spirit, He is in a sinner. Think of it. O what a temple is the saint of the Most High. What a temple, And think of the great love, how high. It has its origin in the Trinity. It has its fulness in Christ. It has its greatest expression on the cross. It comes down from the cross into a heart and melts it. It comes down as a river of life and pleasures, to give happiness and all goodness. This love knows no beginning; it can know no end. Its works are wonderful works. It cannot be purchased. It cannot be drowned. It cannot be kept away. It comes sovereignly, and powerfully, making its own entrance and getting its own welcome. This is the end of God, the grand end of creation, the grand end of the world being made, of man being created, and coming, walking in the world, that God out of them should take a church, a people for Himself, and unite them to Himself, in a way nearer and dearer and more intimate and endearing that was known in creation. This is the end, the great end, and all for the lifting of Jesus on high, that in heaven, He should be as the bridegroom, and these people His bride, that, in heaven, there should be the marriage supper of the Lamb; that there should be that wonderful company, led by the Lord Himself, to living fountains of waters. And on earth there is something of this, little indeed, comparatively, but there is something of it. A touch, a touch of the Holy Spirit, a beam of mercy, a glimpse of Christ, transient only. There is something here. He who has this touch, this beam, this glimpse, has the glory of God, glorious grace, glorious love, glorious blood, glorious righteousness, glorious operations. The least measure is glorious, not perceived, not felt by the sinner, but really it is so. A matter of doctrine, it cannot be otherwise. As a matter of experience, it is only an occasional thing, and in a very small measure, but it

is real. You are not to measure the reality of a thing by the quantity. The quantity differs, the thing is the same in all measures. Gold is gold, whatever be the use to which it is put, whatever be the quantity that is used here and there; gold is gold, grace is grace, glory is glory, and when this blessed end is accomplished in a small degree on the earth there God's end is accomplished in that measure. "Glory in the church by Christ Jesus, world without end." Now beloved friends, if this end is in any measure accomplished in you, then see what you have on you, see what you have in you. The grace of God, the grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost; that is what you have in a measure, and though it be not done throughout, hope on. Look to the Lord to accomplish it. He will not be in rest, He will not sit down with this thing half done, but He will work and accomplish that which is in His heart. Accomplish that which is decreed shall be, and then this kingdom shall be completed, and the subjects of it shall be with the Lord for ever. The kingdom of God then is not in word, not in much speaking, not in pretences, not in an open profession, not in notion, but in the power of God. Faith stands in the power of God. Love comes in the power of God, and all good things come this way. Now may the Lord grant that we may know what this kingdom is, even in our own hearts, that that may be true of us, that Jesus Christ said to some "The kingdom of God is within you." it cometh not with observation.

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