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Sermon Preached at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
by Mr J.K. Popham on Sunday Evening
24th January 1926

Text: Hebrews 8 verses 1 & 2

Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

These words set forth Him who's praises can never be sufficiently sung, Oh for a well tuned harp, Oh for grace to sing to this Blessed One, Jesus Christ I wish we may have, by the grace of God, such a view of this our great High Priest, as shall fill us with admiration of Him. With such a persuasion that He is our High Priest, as shall cause us to put our whole trust in Him. Such a sense of His love, as shall, make us say with good Samuel Rutherford, O for a well tunes harp, Glory, glory dwelleth in Emanuel's land. The person of Christ is He with whom the Father is well pleased. "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3 verse 17). The office He was called to, He gloriously fulfilled. The work He was given to do on earth, He did so completely, as to say to His Father, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." (John 17 verse 4). And of the people given to Him to save, He said, "Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled." (John 17 verse 12).

The place He had gone to is heaven, there He is, and there the Apostle says, "Who (He) is set down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens". Here He was a poor man, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:" (Isaiah 53 verse 3). He was shamed, pained, and sweat blood. and His judgement was taken away from Him in His humiliation. He was scorned by men, and was cursed by the law, He was forsaken by His Father, His enemies wagged their heads at Him, they taunted Him. They said, He saved others, Himself He cannot save. If He be what He pretended to be, (the Son of God) let Him come down from the cross and we will believe Him. This is the man, who is now sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. On that throne, that a conqueror alone can occupy. Now no more insults, no more crown of thorns to put on His brow, and pressed into His flesh. No more insults heaped on His head. A crowned Priest, a glorified Saviour, presenting Himself and His merit to His Father.

"Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7 verse 25). This is our Priest, if we have faith to put our cases into His hand all must be well. We fail, failure is stamped upon everything we do, sin mars every act of our life.

My best is stained and dyed with sin;
My all is nothing worth. (Gadsby's 959 verse 2)

How solemn is this to those who feel it, how painful is a back look of your best things, what corruption has marred everything you have done. How can you bear to look on your failures, you would not, as one expresses it,

That, had I not Thy blood to plead,
Each sight would sink me to despair. (Gadsby's 740 verse 2)

But though we fail, and though we feel much discouraged, though we may be ready to give up and say we shall see no more good, our Priest does not feel discouraged. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He hath set judgement in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His law." (Isaiah 42 verse 4). This is the man, this is the God we adore, and this is the sum of the teaching of the Apostle in this Epistle. And go back to the first word of the gospel in the book of Genesis, we have the seed of the woman, not the seed of the man, the seed of the woman, and you have that same seed in the Galatians, where the Apostle says, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, (His only begotten Son) made of a woman, made under the law." (Galatians 4 verse 4). And this is the Man of whom the prophets spake, of whom the psalmists sang, a Man pointed out by all the types and shadows. This is the sacrifice that every beast offered, under the Levitical dispensation pointed to, His is the blood shed, which is spoken of, and He is the Priest. This is the crowned Priest now in Heaven, and this Priest is the Son of God in His Divine Nature. God sent forth His Son, His only begotten Son, the very and only begotten Son of God. Hold that fast brethren, it is essential, never forget this, that if you touch that doctrine, if you mar that doctrine in your minds, you touch, you mar the Trinity. For if there is no true Son, there can be no true Father, and if there be neither Father nor Son in the true sense of that word, what becomes of the Spirit who is said to proceed from them both? This is not a mere doctrine or quibble, it is a vital truth, essential to the salvation of the Church, and essential to her building. "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Corner Stone." (Ephesians 2 verse 20).

And this blessed Son of God took into union with His divine Person, a body prepared for Him, which never had a separate subsistence in and of itself, apart from Him. And this Person of the Son of God, with the body prepared by the Holy Ghost constitute one Person, even Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ is that Priest, called of His Father, "So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, today have I begotten Thee. As He said also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. (Hebrews 5 verses 5 & 6). He took not this honour on Himself, but was called of God who gave Him that honour. Oh I would say to you brethren, and I would say it constantly, and affectionately, hold fast to the Person of Christ, the very Son of God incarnate, and do not think it indifferent, it is vital, absolutely necessary. And this Jesus Christ having suffered death entered into heaven with His own blood, "Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High." (Hebrews 1 verse 3).

If we are seeking after heaven, we shall only reach that blessed place, through Him. If we are seeking, a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God." (Hebrews 11 verse 10). We shall only get there through His sufferings, His priestly agony, His priestly sacrifice, and His voluntary death, there is no other way. And if we want help, the King is there, the crowned Priest. If we seek protection, He must bestow it, if we need support, He will give it. If we need some particular supply, it is His power to produce and give it, if we need deliverance, He must command it, and such is His heart, and such His love, mercy and faithfulness that none can fail who go to Him. When His poor people try to be good, He blows on their efforts, and makes them feel bad. Then they wonder what it is that has happened to them, but they will find out, and comfortably find out one day, "Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. (Psalm 90 verse 3). When He destroys the goodness of a sinner it is that He may give him His own righteousness His own mercy, His own love, His own salvation. And what can He not do, because He is a minister, the anti type. "A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man." And in this He ministers, the ministration of our Lord Jesus Christ extends to all things. First it extends to all spiritual things, in the Epistle to the Ephesians the Holy Ghost says by Paul, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Ephesians 1 verse 3). The same Apostle tells us in another Epistle.

"That God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (2 Corinthians 5 verse 19). He was there, dealing with the election of grace in the Person of the Surety, and here we have the Surety, the Lord of Life and Glory, ministering in that true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. Which means that the Lord's body was begotten and born in the virgin. He is emphatically the seed of the woman, that was so begotten and born. He is the true tabernacle, which God pitched. And brethren let me say here, for this is for our edification, if we can receive it. The emphasis that God laid on the instructions He had given to Moses respecting the tabernacle is very remarkable, having given all particulars respecting the construction of the tabernacle and all that pertained to it, and what was to be in it. This was said to him, "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount." (Exodus 25 verse 40). And the marginal reading is as you will see, that thou make all things "which thou was caused to see".

You may see many things without being caused to see them, you may see scriptures rationally, you may see them intellectually, you may see them with a notional faith, and yet you may say, why this particular point, why is that doctrine stated so ? You would like to take off some corner, or you would like to put something that would be, as you think a little more orderly, you would reverse God's order. The tabernacle had an ungainly exterior of badgers skins, but internally it was beautiful. Now a professor would have it just the other way, give him a clean outside, as a professor he does not mind the rottenness and the dead things and corruption within. Be careful of your exterior, as far as your conduct goes toward men, but remember what the Psalmist said, "Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom. (Psalm 51 verse 6).

And remember that every clean beast that was offered in sacrifice, when it was slain and parted according to divine direction, must be washed, and the inwards must be washed. And does not this point to the internal operations of the Holy Ghost ? You may take many things as a sacrifice, and they may never be washed by the grace of the Spirit, and never acceptable to God. But a minister who ministers in the sanctuary ministers in spiritual things. First of all he ministers life to a sinner, He gives life. "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." (John 10 verse 28). "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mark 10 verse 45). And that same life He conveys to the hearts and souls of His people.

So that truth comes to pass, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10 verse 10). And the fulness of that abundantly is reserved for heaven, but even here they receive this life. He gives it out of His own fulness, He pours it on the faint hearts of His people.

He to the needy and the faint
His mighty aid makes known;
And, when their languid life is spent,
Supplies it with His own. (Gadsby's 828 verse 3)

This is the way He moves, Almighty God once sighed human breath, but now without the sighing, He ministers to His people, He gives them His life. Now perhaps some of you say, we wish we were Christians, we wish we could behave better than we do, and live differently from what we do. We wish we could walk as we ought to walk, and that we could thereby and therefore please God. Now mind the root, the root is life, actions spring from life, and if your actions in secret are natural, it is because you have only natural life. But if you have desires, motions, urgings moving after God, crying to Him out of your felt necessities, if you have that in you, what many seldom think of, it is a moving that glorifies God, a moving that is pleasing to God. He ministers this to His living people by faith, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith;" (Hebrews 12 verse 2). He strengthens faith by His ministering.

He gives a demonstration sometimes, He opens His hand, He shows His face, He speaks His truth, and He lets down His mercy. He sheds abroad, by His Spirit, His love and His kind mercy in dealing with and for the sinner. This greatly strengthens his faith, demonstration leaves no doubt about the thing demonstrated. You may not get everything demonstrated at the same time, but mark this one thing, even if it be only one thing that Christ demonstrates to the sinners faith. Do you see His atonement, which in a moment clearly reveals its sufficiency for your souls salvation, and it is sufficient to appease your conscience and give you peace with God ? Do you see His blood, as a new and living way, by which you may go to God. Do you see that His mercy is much greater than your sin. Do you see it so clearly, that for the time you have no doubt about it ? Mark that, who ministers this persuasion ? who gives this demonstration on this particular point ? Our High Priest who ministers in the true sanctuary. It were well for us if we could oftener mark this point, that God works, and demonstrates His truth in particular things for His people.

It is establishing to observe how the Lord deals with sinners, how He comes to them, making a way even to Himself, clear to their faith. He ministers the grace of hope, and gives it to the sinner. It is a great grace, you may not think much of it sometimes, but to have a living hope is a great mercy, and it is a great pleasure to the Lord wherever it is found. You may think perhaps I ought not to speak so positively, but then the scripture does, and why should not I ? "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy." (Psalm 147 verse 11). What is hope in His mercy, but looking for it ? It may be an unperceived expectation of it, but it is grounded on what Christ has done, and arises by some gracious operation of the Holy Ghost. Mind this, Jesus our Minister. I may use the word, but would use it humbly and reverently, Jesus our Great High Priest, our Minister, ministers this, He gives it, Himself the giver, Himself the object of this grace of hope. He is the God of Hope, and He is the great giver of hope, and hope saves the soul, "For we are saved by hope:" (Romans 8 verse 24).

Mark this in your own experience, those of you who have not yet attained to a full assurance, mark it. Does not hope keep you praying ? does it not move you to go to the throne of grace day by day ? does it not cause you to secretly say, O that God would bless me, that He would save me ? It is the opposite to despair, for despair would lock you up. there is no prayer where despair reigns, and no hope where despair holds the sceptre. O sinner with hope in your heart, in the mercy of God observe that moving that you get at times to go to that blessed One for salvation. Our Minister Jesus Christ, sheds abroad by His Spirit, His love in our souls at times, He gives justification, He imparts sanctification, He speaks home His truth. He gives promises, He gives out His doctrine concerning Himself, and concerning His Father, He lets down His own light, and that leads those to whom it comes, to His holy hill, and to His tabernacle.

A Minister of the Sanctuary in heaven, O it is a glorious truth dear friends, that the man Jesus Christ is in heaven, yes the God and man Jesus Christ is in heaven. Oh for a well tuned harp to sing His praises there, of His beauty, His efficacy, His attention to all our needs. What was the priests duty under the old dispensation ? what was he priest for ? Why did God ordain him to be a priest ? First to offer gifts and sacrifices, the anti type of this is the Lord Jesus Christ offering Himself. He had nothing else to offer, but that was sufficient, gloriously sufficient. Then the priest had to do with the people, who took their offerings and gifts to him, and he had to do with some who took no gifts or offerings, and these may better compare with some of us than the other case.

First he had to do with lepers, although they must exclude themselves from all others, who were not afflicted with that loathsome disease. He must by God's commandment go to the priest, no other earthly physician could take the case in hand. I feel that the Lord excludes all human means in His teaching concerning leprosy, that the sin that it typified shall be known to be a hopeless thing, and that the person afflicted with it shall find no refuge in any earthly remedy. And if that is so, you cannot say your case is hopeless, you are not to make this pronouncement yourself, it belongs to the priest to make the pronouncement on your case himself. Did you ever notice that? It was not the man's judgement, even respecting the leprosy that was in the man's house. He must go and say to the priest, "It seemeth to me there is as it were a plague in the house:" (Leviticus 14 verse 35). Then it was the priest who should make the decision and the pronouncement upon it. Oh poor leper,

He will not pronounce thy doom;
Smiles are seated on His face (Gadsby's 956 verse 2)

The priest also had to be a teacher, "And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah." (Deuteronomy 33 verse 8). Here is light and perfection, and what of this in our High Priest, is He not the light of the world? Is He not perfect in His Person, and in His righteousness, and how can your case be hopeless, if you feel ignorant? How can your case be hopeless if you feel that you are not just in your ways? both injustice and blindness in the creature will be fully met by Him who is light and perfection. And the priest's lips should keep truth and knowledge, and the lips of our Priest do keep and speak both knowledge and truth. Does He say, "Come unto Me," that is truth and He means it, does He say, "My grace is sufficient", that gives knowledge of His sufficiency. So this ministering in spiritual things is very beautiful, it is unlimited, meeting every possible need, trouble, disease, and death.

And the priest in the Levitical dispensation stood between the sinner and God, and it was as if, when the sinner's offering was taken by the priest and presented to God it was in God's stead. And that prefigured the redemption of sinners by Christ between the sinner and God. One writes, and you would perhaps like to sing it in your hearts this evening

Tis He, instead of me, is seen,
When I approach to God. (Gadsby's 119 verse 3)

Oh it is very wonderful to realise for any moment of your life, that when you come to the infinite God, the terrible Majesty of heaven, that there is one between you and Him. "Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed." (Psalm 84 verse 9). And the second thing the priest has to do, our High Priest in this ministering to His people in all other things is, remember that He is Crowned. "having on His head a golden crown). (Revelation 14 verse 14). "King of kings and Lord of lords). Revelation 19 verse 16). John saw Him in the Revelation under the character of "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, (who) hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." (Chapter 5 verse 5) "And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne" (verse 7). "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." (Matthew 28 verse 18).

Here we are in this world, poor helpless sinners, with many things in providence to teach us our need. Troubles come, afflictions come, perplexities come, burdens are laid upon us, temptations affect us greatly. Men may oppress you, and sometimes you will say where will all these things end. You are unable to manage them, neither are you told to do so. God has never laid burdens on His creatures, which He does not intend to manage Himself. Let me show you scripture example of how he takes His peoples burdens.

David was hunted, persecuted, afflicted, driven hither and thither by King Saul, with the whole kingdom behind him. David was oppressed with a few turbulent followers who were discontented debtors, but David had God with him. Yes this great and glorious Priest was David's protector. You see in David's life how the Lord looked after him, so that the providences that afflicted him were turned into a blessing, the crosses prepared for him worked out for his good. That the apparent deaths that came on the anointing and promise of the kingdom, all wrought well for him. He was not in his own keeping, and how thankful he must have been that it was so. The Lord turned all the plans and wisdom against him to foolishness, brought defeat, shame and death upon Saul. Whilst he preserved David and brought David to the kingdom. So this is what Christ will do for you, who belong to Him, know Him and hope in His mercy. Take your case to Him, nothing is too hard for Him, and there is nothing He is unwilling to look into. No unwillingness ever moves Christ to turn His face away from an urgent case, from a praying sinner, nothing. If sin cannot turn His heart away, no trouble can. If your sin cannot turn Him away from you, no affliction that comes upon you, nor any providence can do it. You think of it, a minister of the Sanctuary, ministering providence.

Now take Abraham's case, and see how the Lord wrought for him and made His mercy known. He gave him a covenant and a promise and was with him in his wandering, when his own folly put him into the power of the king. Then the Lord wrought and brought deliverance, and this is what the Lord Jesus is still doing.

Take the case of Job, the Sabeans, the Chaldeans and a great wind from the wilderness, all under satan's control, took away the lives of his sons and daughters and his cattle. He was deprived of his substance, and then was smitten with disease and his poor body was covered with sore boils. He was left uncared for, unthought of it would seem, and yet this man feared God above many and eschewed evil. Had he a God? Was this the care that God took for him? The Holy Spirit says "Therefore judge nothing before the time," (1 Corinthians 4 verse 5). Judge righteous judgement, if you judge Job's state and case by the affliction, you will form a poor judgement, even as his foolish friends did. But James takes the case up, he says "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of he Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." (James 5 verse 11). The Lord all the while working for his good, He ministered to him and took care of him.

The most illustrious case of all you will find in the scriptures, is how the Lord took care of Saul of Tarsus, when he was an enemy to Christ. He was well cared for, when Christ said to him Saul, Saul why persecutest thou Me? And see how time after time later when he was renamed Paul, the Lord Jesus took care of him.

Now my brethren, if we are enabled by faith to look at these cases, they may be to us, what Paul speaks of in the scriptures, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (Romans 15 verse 4). Hope thou in God, hope in this great Minister, this Jesus Christ. Hope in His sufficiency, hope in His ministry, hope in His mercy, hope in His providential dealings with you. And hope when sin and the devil and the world rise up against you, still hope in His mercy.

This is then what the Apostle teaches, at least I judge He does, and though I have spoken so very poorly about Him, it may, if the Lord will use it so, lead you to look more into this ministry. And then this mercy, that every poor afflicted, but blood bought soul on earth, who is troubled with spiritual poverty and many spiritual needs, such as, justification, sanctification, wisdom and redemption, and who needs the Holy Spirit, and Christ's ear, will find peace. You will then see that He is a Minister for all these things.

Called of God to be a Minister of the Sanctuary and the true tabernacle in these things. And the same Person exalted on High, to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth, the same Person rules in providence, so that neither pope nor devil, nor sin nor corruption, nor providence however adverse, however bitter in opposing and persecuting shall overcome. Because we have this glorious Priest, the sum of all things, We have such an High Priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and therefore may we be enabled to obey the heavenly instruction.

Come boldly to a throne of grace,
Ye wretched sinners, come; (Gadsby's 675 verse 1)

Come boldly in the face of all opposition, in the face of every legal argument, in the face of all guilty fears, in the face of all your weakness, come boldly to the throne of grace. And let not unbelief and the devil prevail here. May the Lord help us.

Amen.