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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Wednesday evening 11 November 1925

ISAIAH 42 v 4

"He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till
He have set judgement in the earth: and the isles
shall wait for His law"

Although over 700 years before the incarnation of the Son of God this prophecy was written, it is written in the present tense: "Behold My Servant whom I uphold, Mine Elect in whom My soul delighteth". The incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, thus spoken of. My Servant in the Covenant, My Servant who shall speak the words He has heard Me speak, and do the works He has seen Me do. And because He, the Man Christ Jesus, shall have the burden of imputed sin on Him, the temptations of the devil, shall be a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, shall be under the law and suffer its curse, and shall have to die, I will uphold Him. O how Christ, the Man Christ Jesus, needed this. Almighty God He was and is, but in the Covenant the Father's Servant. He needed this, He received it; He knew that He would not be condemned. Men condemned Him, His Father justified Him. He was justified in the Spirit. "Mine Elect in whom My soul delighteth." Election - Men hate it; the saints love it and love to see Him who is the First Elect, as Watts says. "Mine Elect". I have chosen Him and set Him up to be the husband of a chosen bride. I have given Him grace for all His children before the world began. "In whom My soul" - I, Myself, delight - "In whom My soul delighteth" because He is just that very Person in and by whom I will accomplish all my purposes. I delight in His Person. The Man Christ Jesus knew no sin, no guile was found in His mouth, and so His Father saw in Him every perfection that the church needed and should have and wear through eternity, and so He delighted in Him. "I have put My Spirit upon Him", without any measure. And dear friends, as many of you as have received, in any measure, the Holy Ghost, you have received Him through and from the Lord Jesus Christ. He sheds the Spirit on His saints, the promise of the Father in this very prophecy. "This is My Covenant with them, saith the LORD; My Spirit that is upon thee, and

My words 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, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever." (Isaiah 59 v 21). Whenever a poor, dead sinner is born again, it is by the Spirit coming to him. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" Whenever a promise warms a sinner's heart, it comes by the Spirit of Christ. Whenever a view of Christ is given, that view is given by the Spirit of Christ. Whenever Christ is glorified in the gospel, it is by the ministration of the Spirit of life. We owe everything that we have of sweet experience, to the Spirit, and we owe the Spirit to the Lord Jesus. O blessed people on whom the Spirit of God and of glory resteth. And if some of you said that He does not rest on you, you would lie against your right. Conviction of sin, hatred of sin, love of holiness, the tender, clean fear of God, walking in the ways of the Lord by faith, these, these come, all of them, from the ministration of the Spirit. And that Spirit rests on every person blessed with grace in some measure, and so the Spirit of glory. O what we owe to God, the fountain; God the Father sending His dearly beloved Son, and through His dearly beloved Son, sending to every new born soul, yea to every one who is quickened, the Holy Spirit. "He shall bring forth judgement to the Gentiles". Send His holy gospel and they shall, all of them, each one, say, judge me by Thy strength, save me by Thy Name. "My Name is in Him". "He shall not cry nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street". But He causes it to be heard in the heart; yes, and each one hearing it says, let me hear. "The companions hearken to Thy voice, cause me to hear it". Speak to my soul. Is not that what you want? Can you be satisfied with anything short of hearing the Lord speak to you in some way? He does speak to His people. "My sheep hear My voice" They know what He says to them when He speaks with power. Job knew, was persuaded of this, that if the Lord spoke to him he would understand what was said. "Oh that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat!" I would know the words which He would speak unto me. He shall not cry, nor lift up His voice, not cause it to be heard in the street, but He causes it to be heard in Zion. The world knows nothing about the secret ministrations of God and the power of His blessed word, but when He comes to you in your rooms, when He comes to you as you may be walking in the streets of Brighton, His voice is not heard in the street, but it is heard in your souls. Saul of Tarsus said "the men

that were with me saw indeed the light but they heard not the voice that spoke with me." It did not reach the companions; it was Saul, Saul, and that is just what everyone realises when he hears the voice of the Lord. It may come to one of you in the chapel this evening, and the person sitting next to you may not hear anything. He may come to you in trouble and in sorrow and in difficulty, and you know what He says. A bruised reed, a fragile cane; not a strong oak but a cane, a reed that is easily crushed under the foot of one passing by; not broken, but bruised. When you get a conviction that bruises you, when you receive a reproof that bruises you, when some solemn providence comes that bruises you, but it does not break you; it does not destroy you, nor will the Lord, who sees your bruised condition, break you. He wont break you off from the root. Himself is the root, He wont break you off from that. He wont break you off from the throne of grace, but call you to it. Nor will He break you off from a living hope. "A bruised reed shall He not break" That is negative. "The smoking flax shall He not quench". He will pour oil upon it. The wick, with little oil, smokes and becomes offensive, and the cure is not to put it out, but to give more oil, and that is what the Lord does. When you have but little grace, and you feel perhaps that you have none, He does not come and put an extinguisher on it, but He pours fresh grace, fresh oil. He shall not quench the smoking flax. "He shall bring forth judgement unto truth"; bring His holy and blessed gospel into the soul, into the church, in power. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgement in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His law."

He shall not fail in the work given Him to do. He shall not be discouraged on account of the difficulties and troubles and the sorrows that will come, for they are no difficulties to Him, and though He is a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, He is not so crushed, not so put out, nor turned aside, as to give up. "He shall not fail". If enabled I would wish to speak a little about the work that Christ had to do, in which He did not fail. The work He had to do was to redeem His people. I have given Thee for a Covenant, a light of the Gentiles. It is little for Thee to raise up these people; I have given Thee to do it. Now to save a sinner, justice must be satisfied. If we are going to heaven the hell of our sins, the hell of our punishment, punishment due to us, must be endured by another.

Reflect for a moment sinner, must be endured by another. O it is a solemn consideration that my sins, black as the confines of hell; my guilt, all that I have done; all must be laid on another if I am not to be punished for them. And if I am not to sink into the bottomless pit, the punishment that would plunge me, and keep me, there - which is a hell indeed of punishment; not only a place, is hell, but a state - that punishment must be borne by another, and that other is that blessed Jesus Christ, the Man of God's right hand whom the Father made strong for Himself. That is a wonderful passage in the Psalms: "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself." The purpose of God in salvation must be accomplished, can only be accomplished, by the Man Christ Jesus. He is the Man at God's right hand. Imputed sin was the burden that the Lord Jesus had to carry, that made Him a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. When you have some holy influence on your souls, then every temptation to commit sin is bitter to you, more bitter than when you are in a deathly condition. The holy Son of God had no sin. How bitter then to Him must have been the imputation of all the sins of all His dear elect people. This made Him a Man of sorrows; this made grief His acquaintance, and on that was this, the curse of the law, and on that was this, the desertion of His Father. I thought of those three things this afternoon as being the most solemn, awful, terrible weight of grief and sorrow and shame and death, and Christ had them all; He had them all and His holy frame felt the weight of it, so as that blood was pressed from every pore when He was in the garden. Blood, squeezed by the grief of His heart, squeezed from every pore of His sacred body. O our heaven cost Him much and the sweet leapings of faith that sometimes people experience by the Holy Ghost come by the pressing of the Saviour to the very ground in Gethsemane's garden, and fixing Him to the cross. Sorrow was infixed in His soul; this was His work and it culminated in having to lay down His life. This was the commandment given to Him. This was the work He freely undertook, to give His life a ransom for many. So my friends, if ever you get sweet relief, if ever you feel a pure conscience, if ever the peace of God flows like a river into your souls, if ever the love of God comes down in sweetness, and power, and melting influence into your hearts, if ever you feel persuaded that you are going to heaven and that God is your Father, and the Lord Jesus your Elder Brother, and the Holy Ghost your Teacher, indwelling your heart, all these mercies come

through the wounds, pains and griefs and agonies and death of Jesus Christ. And He must be buried. The Apostle in that wonderful summary of the gospel in the 15 chapter of the 1 Epistle to the Corinthians, tells us that he delivered to the Corinthian church that which he had first received from God, "how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" And this was all part of that that He had to do. Can you think of dying and of the grave when you are in a dark, and distant state, without some fear and trepidation of mind and great discouragement? Can you feel at any time that, as long as you live you must carry this pestilence, indwelling sin; can you feel sometimes persuaded that, as long as you live you will have the devil about you in some way to devour you, either by deceit or by violence, and not feel discouraged? And yet here was the dear Saviour, the Man Christ Jesus, incarnate Deity, with all the sin of the church on Him, with the prospect of death before Him, knowing what the curse of the law meant, for He was the Lawgiver; with all that before Him and on Him, it is written: He shall not be discouraged; He shall not fail. He did not give up. He said: "Think ye not that I could pray to My Father and He would presently send Me twelve legions of angels, but how then should the Scripture be fulfilled". He did not fail, He did not give up. O blessed be His great Name, that, having undertaken, He went through. "Nor be discouraged". He did not stop to consult any man. His work was with Him, His reward was with Him, and before Him. His faith was strong and He said: I know that I shall be justified; who shall condemn Me. I know that My God will help Me. This, as you have it in the 50 chapter of this prophecy, this was His blessed confidence. He did not fail. Discouraged. Men rose up against Him and a devil was one of His disciples, but He was not discouraged for the Holy Ghost dwelt in Him without any measure. He prayed whole nights on the mountains; the midnight air witnessed the fervour of His prayer.

And why, dear Saviour (one says) tell me why
Thou thus would'st suffer, bleed and die
What mighty motive could Thee move
The motive's plain, twas all for love

For love of whom? of sinners base
A hardened herd, a rebel race,
That mocked and trampled on Thy blood
And wantoned with the wounds of God

My brethren there is another thing I want to name to you which, if Christ could be failing, and could enter into the word "discouragement", surely would make Him fail and discourage Him. And what is that? The blindness, the waywardness, the folly, the corruption and the wickedness of His poor people. How often has He had to tell us the same thing because we have forgotten it. How often has He had to call us back from some folly which we have smarted for again and again. How often has that vile thing, unbelief - which has been crushed sometimes under His gracious power - risen up again as if it had never had a wound, with all the vigour of youth, and gone against the dear Saviour. How often have we rebelled against an affliction, and a stubborn will made us say we wont bear it. How often have we turned away from the throne of His heavenly grace, though we have experienced a little heaven there sometimes. I do not know what you feel about this, but I know enough of my own sad case to feel this, that if anything could quench divine love, if anything could discourage a Saviour, and if anything could make Him fail, who had undertaken such a business, what I have done, what I have in my heart, would certainly do it.

Now let us look at this mercy. If He does not fail, then He carries on. If He does not fail so as to give up the work, He carries it on. He carried on the work of redemption. He went through all, and when the day was approaching He set His face stedfastly to go to Jerusalem. And He carries on the work in the soul. We forget Him but He does not forget us. He says, you have forgotten the Lord. Looking at a poor creature who has perhaps given you some trouble, you are afraid of him; afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man whose breath is in his nostrils, and hast forgotten the Lord, forgotten thy Maker, thy God, thy Covenant God. Were you ever guilty of that folly? Were you ever guilty of that forgetfulness? How soon we should be tired of a person who was constantly going against the best counsel, the kindest intentions and the most beneficent acts.

How soon we should get tired. And now here is the great and blessed God, against whom we are daily, in some way or form, sinning and He does not fail. He has oil, my friends, for the smoking flax, not an extinguisher. The devil would put the smoking flax out, cut it off, throw it away, but the Lord Jesus has oil for it, and He does not fail. Even when, for a time, He does not pour fresh oil on that flax, He does not fail. It is in His heart and wisdom is guiding Him so as that at the right moment there shall be another supply of oil. Do you get the supply? Does He come again and again and, either by reproof or by kind words, speak to you, that is, say something that shall be to your faith what oil is to the smoking flax? If so, there is an evidence that He is carrying on the good work. Paul said to the Philippians, he was confident of this very thing, that He which had begun a good work in them would perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. There are new communications, there are fresh touches, there are sweet influences, renewed again and again, so that the poor, smoking flax is revived.

He wont fail to keep His word. You may long wait for its fulfilment, but He wont fail to keep it. He is the God of truth. He never says a word that He does not intend to fulfil to the letter, and give power, power beyond the highest expectation. I am not the only one here, I believe, who has found that Christ's word had more in it than they could think of when first it was spoken. We do not half know what a word means when we receive it at the beginning, nor will Christ fail to accomplish it. If Abraham waits 20 years for Isaac, Isaac comes according to God's promise, in God's time. If Isaac is to be offered up, as the Lord said: Take thy son, thine only son whom thou lovest and offer him up, still the word of God shall be fulfilled: In him shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. And whatever word you have received, though it may have slipped from your memory, though your faith has all but given it up, and you have said with Abram: "What wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless?" (Genesis 15 v 2). And you say what is everything to me if this word fails? What is everything that I have hoped for to me, if this word fails? It wont fail. It wont fail because He is faithful. It would soon fail if it depended on our faith. If it depended on our abiding fast by it and holding to all the expectations we have felt, it would soon fail, but depending, as it does, on Him for its fulfilment, how can it fail?

Why He has said this my friends: "Heaven and earth shall pass away but My Word shall not pass away" unfulfilled. I have said, and I believe it, that the feeblest saint on earth who has a word of God in his soul, is firmer than heaven and earth and he will last longer than heaven and earth, and all his expectations which have been properly founded on the Word of God shall be realised. "He shall not fail". Time is nothing to Him. One day with the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. The devil can never hinder. He bruises him under his feet. Providence cannot hinder because it is His servant to do what He will, just to obey Him. Adversity cannot hinder, for that shall be turned into prosperity. Everything is in the hand of Christ; therefore the word He has spoken shall stand.

His word is this, poor sinner hear,
Believe on Me, and banish fear,
Cease from your own works, bad or good,
And wash your garments in My blood

Everything is here, dear friends, in the hands of this blessed Jesus Christ. There have been many false prophets in the world, and there are many today, but the great Prophet of the church is not a false Prophet and what He has prophesied to you - that is, said of good things to come, for that is prophesy - He certainly will make good. So whenever you have a word from God, you have got then something in your soul which shall be fulfilled. If heaven and earth shall fail, if men and devils shall oppose, this, this shall stand. Poor sinner hear

His purposes will ripen fast
Unfolding every hour
The bud may have a bitter taste
But sweet will be the flower

He shall not fail to cause the soul to realise the hopes which He has raised up in it. He is the God of hope. O but hope sometimes gets very dashed. It sometimes seems as if it cannot be fulfilled. What have we hoped for? What do we hope for? I may put into two words what that hope looks for, and the first is we hope for help, we hope for

guidance, we hope for support; we hope that the Lord will stand at our right hand to save us from him that would condemn our souls. Now this hope gets dashed, when, instead of being helped, we seem forsaken; when, instead of being supported, we sink lower and lower in our feelings; when, instead of light shining, we are in a dark place and there is no bright shining, no steady light at all; yea there is no light. What then do we feel? We are discouraged and we say - sometimes perhaps some of you may have said it mentally to yourselves if not to a creature - I am sorry I have talked about my hope to any, even to myself. You may say, I am sorry I mentioned to my husband, or to my wife, or to my friends, what I felt the Lord had said to me, and what hopes I had in me. You may have felt and said all that kind of thing because you have failed, you are discouraged. You thought the Lord would come, and He has not, because you fixed your time for Him. You thought He would help you, and He has not, because you expected Him to help you at such a time, and perhaps in such a way, and you have been discouraged because He has not come just as you thought He would. The best experience that we get in some way we mar because we add to it something. We add some expectation, something that the Lord has not really spoken to us about, and that is one very great source of discouragement to some of us. But "He shall not fail". Why the very darkness that has troubled us has been made the means of good to us, for in darkness we have been enabled to fly to Him who is the light of life, and when He shines on us we do not need the shining of some creature, nor even of a circumstance. When you see light in His light, then you say, it shall be done and you can really, as one expresses it, laugh at impossibilities and say it shall be done. "He shall not fail". He will give you what you expected, and yea, more than you have expected. If anyone had told me a word spoken on my heart more than 50 years ago meant some things, I would have said, at that moment, No, I do not believe it, but I have proved it to be so. Things I never anticipated, mercy I did not look for, were in that word. God has brought to pass what He said to me. So I can say, and some of you can join me, thus far not one word of His good promise has failed. He wont let it fall to the ground. If He did, what would He do to His great Name? If He failed you in the things He has spoken to you about, what would He do to His character? My friends, where would His honour be? Where would be His faithfulness? We may expect trouble, but we may also expect the blessed faithfulness of the Lord

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to go before us and to be glorified in us. "Nor be discouraged". "If we believe not yet He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself". Perhaps you have got something in prayer on one occasion, or many occasions you may have felt something and you felt, now I have had His ear, I had His smile, I am persuaded He listened to me and I am persuaded He will do what I asked Him to do for I got no rebuff, I got no discouragement in prayer, but I was drawn out and felt persuaded that my cry entered into His ear. And then perhaps the next day you expected the answer and it did not come; did not come in a month, nor a year; may not have come as yet, and you say, I am afraid I was mistaken, and you are ready to give it up. And if you did speak to a friend about it, and of that you expected, now you say to him, I was wrong I am afraid; do not think any more about it. You fail. Will He fail? It is so long since, you say. Is it a thousand years? One day with Him is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. But it seems naturally impossible. Well, what does that matter to the Lord? That makes no difference to Him. It makes a difference to you, but it makes no difference to Him. It may be naturally impossible to you; with the Lord all things are possible. And when your faith gets a reviving then all things will be possible to your faith. "To him that believeth all things are possible." This is a great encouragement, when we receive it, to hold on. Oh but I am not sure. God listened to what you said and gave you some persuasion. Now that is sure, though not to you; it is sure enough to come to you in a sweet experience in the Lord's time. "He shall not fail".

Now the other thing is this, He shall not fail to bring His many children to glory. "Behold I and the children whom God hath given Me". He will put down corruption; He will bruise Satan under the feet of His people. He will carry on the blessed work; He will make providence subservient to their good. Why He will rebuke nations for them. Everything shall be subservient to the saints, worms though they are in their own experience. And then there is this to come; this is to come; the best is to come. I speak what some of you know. You have felt some blessed hope and that hope has been as an anchor to your soul which has been cast into that which is within the veil. It has held you to Him. It still holds you to Him. There it is; it is a union between you and Jesus Christ. The devil and sin and everything in the world may seem to say, you will get loose, and you will be

uprooted one day. May seem to say, the cable is not strong enough to bear this storm, and you will not outlive that trouble. If we listen to reason, if we listen to unbelief, if we listen to appearances - and they all seem to have great and powerful voices - we shall never be settled for an hour. But if we are enabled to listen to God; if we feel a blessed hope in our souls, which is as an anchor; if we are enabled to hold fast to His gracious promise not to leave us nor forsake us, but guide us with His eye, and afterward receive us unto Himself; then we shall have a gracious settlement in our spirit, believing that "He shall not fail", that He cannot give up, wont let go the people whom He has redeemed. They shall all come to glory. "They go from strength to strength - the caravan travels through the wilderness; there is a track in the desert, and the company goes one day from one well to another and they find nourishment and refreshment - and "every one of them in Zion appeareth before God" (Psalm 84 v 7) "They go from strength to strength". They dig here and the rain comes and fills the pool. Some sweet shower of mercy satisfies them and refreshes them and "every one of them in Zion", born there, "appeareth before God". And the reason is this - He began the work, He commenced the good work in the soul, He has carried it on and He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ, and then judgement will be eternally sent unto victory and we shall sing "Victory, victory, through the blood of the Lamb" We are poor creatures, we do fail, if I may speak so. If you are in that weakness that you may often have spoken about, you will find yourselves saying you are poor creatures, can do nothing without the Lord, and He says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

"And the isles" - the distant places of the world - "shall wait for His law", for He sends His gospel to the ends of the world.

May the Lord help us to hope in Him and look to Him, away from this weak self, as the Apostle says "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of" the Majesty on high. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged".