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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham  
at Galeed Chapel Brighton  
on 25 December 1934

ISAIAH 9 v 6

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son  
is given, and the government shall be upon His  
shoulder, and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor,  
The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, the  
Prince of Peace."

How any, reading this verse - a child born and a Son given - can deny the eternal Sonship of the Lord of life and glory is one of the mysteries of iniquity. Notice, not only here, to His parents born, but to His nation, to His kingdom. This birth was the only wonderful, miraculous birth that has taken place in the world; all others born according to natural generation; this child born of the virgin Mary by the overshadowing of her by the Holy Ghost; this is the Holy child Jesus. If God has killed any of us as to self-righteousness and goodness and wisdom and brought us into that Scripture "lost", then a manifestation of this child, the holy child Jesus, will be a light, a hope, a peace, and a comfort in God's time. "Unto us a Son is given". The only Son is God's. Having one only Son. He spared not His own Son. In this was manifested the love of God toward us in that He sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him; and these two infinitely different in nature, are One Person, and the government shall be upon His shoulder. One Person. The child born; what for? To be a double representative to His people. A representative of God. A Son given to declare the Name of His Father and preach in the Church His righteousness. The child born to be taken up by the Son given into an everlasting union that He, in that Person, should be the Head and life and righteousness and peace and King and Priest and Prophet in His Church. O, what a birth, what a gift, what a union of these two. When the Holy Ghost reveals this person, Jesus Christ, to a sinner who is really a sinner in his own experience, to a lost soul who is really lost according to that Scripture: "The Son of Man came to save that which was lost" then that soul, that lost soul, is redeemed experimentally, and the

question is this for us - Has this great light, for Christ is the light in the previous verse, shined into our hearts? Paul, treating of this gospel, says: "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ". The light of eternal Deity would shatter us and send each wretch to hell in everlasting destruction and punishment. But that glorious light of God in the Person of Jesus is bearable, and not only bearable, but it is salvation. The people which sat in darkness and in the region and shadow of death have had this light shining into their hearts. You, into whose hearts this light has shined know that I speak the truth when I say that that shining caused you to see God, caused you to see yourself, caused you to condemn yourself, caused you to justify God in speaking against you and judging you, and this caused you to rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh. "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light". And this light manifests many things. It manifests sin, it manifests grace and holiness. It manifests to a sinner his wretched condition, utter ruin. It manifests salvation from all evil and sin and death and hell. "Unto us". Now that is a question with some. It is a statement in the text; it becomes a question when the grace of God is in a sinner - whether the child was born and the Son was given and became one Person for that sinner. The doctrine becomes a question whether that wonder took place for him, and none can answer that question satisfactorily but the Holy Ghost. It is His office to reveal the Saviour and to bear witness with each child of God that he is a child of God, and if a child of God, then an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ. O, it is a great point to be at - the point of redemption, the greatest point you can have in your soul in view of death and eternity - that unto you a child is born. O, the love of the Holy Ghost to beget in the virgin that sacred humanity, that holy child Jesus that never was, never knew, never did, any sin, and unite that human nature thus begotten and born to the eternal Son of God the Father. "Unto you." It was great to his mother to bring forth into the world such a child, but O, when it comes thousands of years after that birth, comes to a sinner in Galilee, and he says, was that birth for me? Was that child born for me? Did that child, that holy child Jesus unite with the eternal Son of God, did that Son take that nature, for me? Did He take that nature in order that, being under the law, He might legally

have my sins imputed to Him; that He should legally suffer what I ought to suffer; that that hell of punishment - not a place - but the hell of punishment should be inflicted on Him that I might escape. Great questions; happy the man who has them in his heart; blessed sinner who can never rest till he knows that the Son of God loved him and gave Himself for him. So God's poor people come to that vital question. Real religion, that is God's religion, has three things in it. First life, that feeling life, for all life is a life of feeling. That feeling life, and, coming from heaven, it feels after heaven and the God of heaven. Then secondly it has in it also power. Yes, think of the power in the Psalmist when he said: "Unto Thee O God lift I up my soul". That was not natural power; it was the power of God's grace in the man causing him to lift up his poor, his needy, his feeble, his guilty, his lost soul to the God of all grace. It has holiness. Every new born sinner has a holy principle implanted in him and these things, these three things, constitute vital religion. You who have them cannot be satisfied without God, can you? Can you live day after day without God and be comfortable? No. You want Him. And where is He to be found? "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them". There He is to be found and good Hart tells us

Worship God then in His Son  
There He's love and there alone  
Think not that He will, or may,  
Pardon any other way

Therefore, Unto us the child is born to be a representative of God to sinners; then He is the representative of sinners to God. You will never stand well on your own bottom poor sinner. No; but if Christ is your representative, if you come to know that Scripture - "If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" - then you will, in God's time, be a happy receiver of salvation. How does Christ represent a sinner before God? First, as his High Priest, his great High Priest. The priest had to offer; he must offer. The priest's office was that of a mediator, and Christ offered Himself as the Mediator between God and man. He represents them also as their prophet to teach them the way from hell to heaven, from the wrath of God to forgiveness, from the justice of God to imputed righteousness,

from the weakness of the creature to the power of God. He represents them in all these particulars. And, as a King, all power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth and He rules, being King of kings and Lord of lords. Now when grace is in exercise in your souls, those of you who have it, what do you want? what do you seek? Self? No; that is your greatest plague. What do you seek? "To be found in Him not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith"; that I may win Christ, that I may be found in Him. Well, what a birth is this. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given". Here, may the Lord cause us to fix, and comfort take. All the goodness and the wisdom and the love and the power of God are manifested in this Person; two natures in One Person. The human nature was not absorbed or taken up into the divine nature so as to be divine; it ever is human. That human heart and that human body He still retains though throned in highest bliss, and when He is described in the Revelation as the Lamb and as the Lion, we find a distinction in the Godhead.

"And the government shall be upon His shoulder"; the sign of authority worn on the shoulder. "And the government". What government? There can be no government if there be no subjects; if there be no kingdom. Well, what does this mean? It means this, if you are going to heaven you will be a subject of Jesus Christ. It means this, that if you are going to heaven, you will be willing and anxious that He should be your King here. When that hymn has been sung in this chapel, how many of you have sung it honestly?

#### Reign o'er us as King

Think of it; reign o'er us sinners, wretched, wicked, wilful, hard, unthankful, unholy people. Reign o'er us; what does it mean? It means the communication of grace to you, the touch of divine power on you, the shining of divine light in you. It means what the Scripture says, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power" Ah there are moments - and God gives them- there are moments when people do say that honestly. Here am I, by fallen nature a rebel; Here am I, a poor wretch; yet here am I, a willing subject. What do you want, your own way? No. Your will? No. Yet you have your way and you have your

will, and these you are brought to give up. Ah that is a Scripture that I have thought of at times, and have felt. "The offering up of the Gentiles is acceptable" What is it for a Gentile to offer up Himself? To go by the grace and by the Spirit of power and life and love to the throne of grace and there prostrate yourself before God, begging of Him to take you and make you what He will, only not leave you to yourself. Can you say that? Have you said it? The government of what? What, your circumstances? O, no. O yes, if you have grace, it will come to that, your circumstances. I want them in my own hand. Yes, you do; I do. What should we do if they were given up to ourselves? Ruin ourselves. We should rush into perdition if we could have our own way and have our own things. Did you ever give yourself up to Him? Yes; gladly, humbly, thankfully, sometimes. O, you know the difference between self-will and a gracious will. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power." It is just a touch, of which the soul is sensible; a touch of infinite mercy, of Almighty power, of gracious wisdom; a touch that will affect you deeply. Government? Of your body, to give you health or sickness. Government of your soul to give you a will and a love and a submission, giving up everything to Him. Government of your body, of your soul, of your circumstances. O, what a King He is. There are certain societies in England, the General Baptist Union, who have a peculiar privilege of access to his majesty the king, to the reigning sovereign of this realm. Ah, there is no exception here, when you come in to the kingdom of grace. The Holy Ghost gives each subject the gracious, grace-given right of access to the King. "Therefore", it is written, "let us come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need". Now when this government is in your soul you have the unction of the Holy One, and that unction destroys every yoke. The yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing. What a blessed destruction that is. "The government shall be upon His shoulder". Then there is the government of the Church. Each particular Church and all visible Churches together are under His government; the Lord and Master of His Own house. And blessed is that Church, that visible Church, where Christ rules, where His holy gospel is, where His divine precepts are, where His gracious and infallible promises are. There He reigns. Blessed Church, where Christ is King.

"And His Name shall be called Wonderful"; and this is His eternal Majesty above all natural wonders, and there are many wonders in nature, but above all of them this Wonder is Jehovah - Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Then it comes to the Person of Christ in whom all the Godhead bodily dwells and in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. "Wonderful". Wonderful in His love - "Who loved me", says the Apostle Paul, who was an injurious person, and whose religious zeal made him a persecutor of Christ in His saints. That man said of Christ - "Who loved me and gave Himself for me". Would it not be a joy to some of you if you could say that now. O, but you say, I am a sinner, I am a wretch, I am undone. Yes, and so was David, so was Saul, so was Peter, and yet each one was loved and each one knew it, and many myriads have known it since and some of us here have known it and have said "Who loved me". The greatest wonder on earth and you think it will be the greatest wonder in heaven when you get there, that you, once so vile, the vilest creature living, should be as holy as Christ Himself is. No heaven for unholy people; no hell for holy people; and it is a wonder to be made righteous. How can a sinner be made righteous? That is what the wise men of the world are puzzled about and what they deny. How can a sinner be made righteous? "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength". There is the mystery, there is the mercy. Surely shall one who has no righteousness of his own, who never could get any of his own; being born in sin he can only sin, but being born again and brought naked to Christ, Christ gives him His Own righteousness; that is a wonder.

A wonder is that a vile sinner should be made holy. How can that be? By the holiness of the Lord Jesus. Hart says

That we're unholy needs no proof  
We sorely feel the fall,  
But Christ has holiness enough  
To sanctify us all

"Counsellor". Ah, people are very wise in their own conceit and you think you know what would be the best for you and that thinking shows how foolish you are. Blessed is the man who can say that God gave him counsel. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire

and white raiment and eyesalve. If ever Christ gave you that counsel, He was this in you - "Counsellor". He counsels a wretch to flee from the wrath to come; He counsels an ignorant creature to go to Him for wisdom, for in Him dwelleth all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He counsels you in your weakness to go to Him for strength and in your folly to go to Him for direction. "Show me the way wherein I should walk for I lift up my soul unto Thee". O, what a blessing.

"The Mighty God" to keep a poor sinner from apostatising, to keep him from living in sin, to keep his heart and eye up to God, to keep him from temptation's power, to keep him from presumptuous sin. O, we do need the power of God for this.

"The Everlasting Father; The Father of eternity, and to be as a Father to all His people.

"The Prince of Peace". Well, it is very wonderful to have peace in your soul, the "peace of God which passeth all understanding" keeping your heart and mind by Jesus Christ. Peace with God, peace with His providence; all the quarrel of your nature for the time being subdued and you have just that holy, sweet peace in your soul. Peace with everything that He does. The stones of the field do not offend you and the boulders and the difficulties that stand in the way do not offend you. I do not say this because I am ignorant of the opposite. Too well, I know what it is to have just the opposite, but this peace; O, this peace; when sometimes you can lie down, put your head on your pillow and feel that God has no quarrel with you. There is nothing more wonderful to my own experience than this, to feel that God has no quarrel with me; it is a wonderful thing; and then you feel you have no quarrel with Him; He has taken the enmity and subdued it; He has taken the fretfulness and subdued it and brought you just to be a poor, passive child in His divine hand, under His divine government, moving by His divine counsel, living by His mighty, own light and moving in His power. And all this is in the child born and the Son given - One Person. Sinner, would you be right for eternity? Would you be righteous? Would you be holy? Would you be a child of God? Would you be reconciled to God? Would you live the life of God and would you be fit to die? If the answer to those questions be,

"yes", then one would say to you, there is only One who can do all those things for you - the child born, the Son given, the glorious Person on whose shoulder the government is and whose ineffable Name is Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." And do notice this, it does not say "Names". "Name", because every excellency of divinity, every excellency of human nature, unite in this Person and all these wonders, these wonderful Names are one glorious thing in Himself.

AMEN.