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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday evening 26 December 1920

ISAIAH 9 v 6

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a
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"

The one thing of vital and eternal importance is to be right with God, to have an interest in the Person of Christ, union with Him, and among the mercies, sweetest and best mercies that the saints can have, is a broken and a contrite spirit, called a conscience purged from dead works to serve the living God. And I would, at the outset this evening, exhort every child of God present to seek such blessings as being right, as having a broken and contrite heart, and a purified conscience. The outside of religion, the trappings of a profession, we shall soon part with, but the immortal soul, if covered with righteousness imputed, cleansed by the blood with which God purchased His Church, and indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, will, at death, wing its way to heaven, to be in the presence of God, and go no more out. In my present judgment there is nothing to be compared with such a state. Well might the Lord Jesus say, seek not the things which the Gentiles seek after, but seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all other things - which we do very much seek after, the importance of which we do exceedingly exaggerate, but which have indeed their own place - these shall be added unto you. Why, my friends, what is to be compared with union with Christ? If you have that you are united to the root that will cause you to bear fruit to the praise and glory of God. If you have union you are bonded and united to the foundation and to every lively stone in the building. If you are born again you have union with God in His own life, that blessed life of which Jesus Christ speaks when He says - "I am the life". I am come that they, My sheep, might have eternal life. Now when people possess this great thing then, this blessed mercy of

being right with God, they have in them a Teacher and He teaches them many things. He teaches them to be honest, honest in their confessions. He brings to light pictures and shows them to be idols, and then they are taken down from the walls of the imagination on which they were hung. He brings to light leaven - there shall be no leaven in all your coasts - and He gives an honest disposition to search out leaven and remove it. He gives diligence that we may make our calling and election sure. He does these things and by Peter He says - "Who is he that shall harm you if ye be followers of that which is good". And he is a follower of that which is good; he walks in the way I have mentioned; he is honest and searches out for leaven that he may remove it. He is diligent in confessing his sins and forsaking them, that he may have mercy. If the Spirit of God is in you, He will make your heart soft, as with showers; honest, as living in the light of truth, and gracious, desiring to walk with God in Christ. And as you get older you will see many things in the light that will amaze you, some of your own things, and you will say, O what fools we were, how badly we walked, how foolishly we behaved ourselves, and then your hearts will grow tender, under the Spirit's teaching, and you will want to follow advice, you will need advice, you will need counsel. What are we to do? We cannot undo the things that we have done. What are we to do? Why, says the Lord Jesus - Come unto Me. I will give you rest from these things; I will forgive them; I will remove the guilt of them. Come unto Me. And when you come to Him it will soon be an experience in your heart such as you have in the Song - "I sat down under His shadow with great delight and His fruit was sweet to my taste." Then you will say, O blessed God, blessed counsel; rather blessed Redeemer who has brought me to such a seat as this, to sit beneath His shadow. His Person is the shadow, His atonement is the shadow, His love is the shadow. All that He is and all that He has and all that He says and all that He does and all that He promises, these constitute the shadow under which I sit with great delight. Well, you will be a Christian, you will be Christians, as you get these things. You will understand a little of what it is to be a Christian. The Counsellor, our heavenly Counsellor tells us what way to walk, how to walk with God. How are we to walk with God? Do you know who God is? If you do, you tremble at His majesty. How are you to walk with Him? O, says the Lord Jesus to His Father - "I in them and Thou in Me". If you walk by faith in Christ, and Christ visits you

and dwells in you, then you will walk with God, and if you walk with God, God will have your confidence and O, amazing wonder of grace, He will give you His secret. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His Covenant." He will teach you how to walk in trouble. Trouble makes people stagger and reel to and fro like a drunken man. Some of you, even though you wash your faces, and do not appear unto men to be fasting, may in secret be reeling to and fro and staggering like a drunken man, and have come to your wit's end, and this Counsellor gives good advice, heavenly counsel. He says - "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you". O, it will be very sweet to get that counsel in your heart, for the Lord Jesus to be to you, not only a sin-bearer, but your burden-bearer. To feel even that He carries, not only your cross, but you. Not only has He the heavier end, but He has it all, as it were, and yourself. And then you feel it, only you feel it differently from the way in which you feel it when you are not walking with God. He counsels people how to walk with God. This is it again - "Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit in itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me." He counsels people to seek to walk with a purified conscience. One of the best things we can have on this earth is a purified conscience in which is lodged the mystery of the faith. A pure conscience is a conscience that may have had many dead works on it, much defilement. If a man says, well I have a clean conscience and do not need anything, that man is dead. But if a man says, I know what dead works are, and the weight of them on my conscience; I know what defilement is and its separating power; that man comes, sooner or later, to understand what it is to have a pure conscience. And Christ gives this advice - "Abide in Me". My blood will purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God and My grace will suffice to enable you to fear God and walk humbly with Him. O, my brethren, seek this Counsellor, and grace to walk in His counsels. He will counsel you in all things. He says, in the chapter I read just now - "In all thy ways acknowledge Him". Acknowledge His right to do as He will with you. Not easy, no, if you realise at all that His holy will must be contrary to your depraved nature. "In all thy ways". Thy ways in providence, thy ways in trouble, thy ways in business, thy ways in the church, thy ways in secret, in thy family. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him". Acknowledge His sovereignty, acknowledge His might, acknowledge His wisdom, acknowledge His

goodness. I would like to have grace to commend Him to you; He is so lovely, so excellent in His counsel. Excellent in counsel divinely so. Never spake man as this Man spake was the testimony of some who heard Him in the days of His flesh on earth, and surely some here can say, never was another voice in the heart like His voice, so penetrating, so soft, and softening, so sweet and alluring, so tender, so wise, so fitting. Acknowledge Him in all thy ways. By the Apostle James, the Holy Ghost rebukes our independence - Go to now ye that say we will go into this city and dwell there a year and buy and sell and get gain. What is your life, it is even a vapour which appeareth for a little time and vanisheth away, You do not know what will be on the morrow. Therefore ye ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall live and we will do this or we will do that. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him". An independent spirit is a hateful spirit to God, and a hateful spirit to the saints. It is hiding itself in you, lurking and whispering and muttering and peeping sometimes, and yet trying to hide itself under some plausible, pretty names. God give you grace to search out and face it and forsake it, and to be depending on Him on whom you are dependent. He counsels well and mercifully, and He counsels His people respecting both Himself and themselves. How to treat Him. Mind how you treat Him. Said the Lord to Israel, by Moses, concerning Christ - "My Name is in Him". Walk before Him becomingly. He will hear your words, but He wont pardon. I would say, mind how you treat this Counsellor. He is a great God and a great King, and full of goodness and mercy, but He does resent slights offered to Him by His people. I wish I had never slighted Him; I wish you had not. I wish we may not continue to slight Him, but to regard Him as He deserves to be regarded. This is His Name then, Counsellor. He counsels respecting time and respecting eternity. We, through sin, put matters upside down. Time is all to us; eternity nothing but a name. Christ puts things right, puts them right. He says - "Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore with all thy getting get wisdom". What do you think about it? What is wisdom? Jesus Christ. "I wisdom dwell with prudence". Are you more anxious for gold than for eternal blessedness? That is what we all are naturally. In some form we seek this life and not that which is to come. May the Lord give you wisdom to regard the counsel of Christ in this. Seek wisdom, get wisdom, with all thy getting, get understanding. Wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things that

thou mayest desire are not to be compared to her. Nothing so valuable. Wisdom is like a precious stone; whithersoever it turneth it prospereth, and wherever you go, whatever you do, if you have heavenly wisdom for your guide there will be spiritual prosperity. Yes, though there may be a good deal of temporal adversity, there will be spiritual prosperity. This is a precious stone. He gives counsel respecting time; 'tis very short comparatively. He says - "Heaven and earth shall pass away". The heavens shall be rolled up as a scroll, the elements shall melt with fervent heat. He tells His people in the Scriptures what they are to be. They are to be an everlasting foundation. God shall build eternal praises on them. By them He will be glorified through eternity. His Name is Counsellor. May we have hearts to come to Him. May we have ears to listen to Him. May we have minds to receive His wisdom. May He speak it to us by His good Spirit.

Then His Name also is "The Mighty God". Of course, some may say, we do not doubt that. But then the question is - Do you believe it? Now I shall mention only two or three works which demonstrate Him to be "The Mighty God", and the first is the putting away of sin. Only God could do this, God in human nature, Jesus Christ. Sin which - if punished when we die will infallibly sink us into a pit of endless woe - that sin, if put away from us, was put away by "The Mighty God". It cost Him wounds and sighs and bloody sweat and, to us, inconceivable anguish, exquisite anguish, shame, sorrow, spitting, and death itself. "He bore", says Hart, "all incarnate God could bear, with strength enough and none to spare". In one part of His anguish there was sent from heaven an angel to strengthen Him. He was so exhausted in His human ^{frags} nature, so pained and troubled in His soul, so anguished at what was immediately before Him, and the weight of guilt was so tremendous, and the terribleness of the curse which was now to be poured out upon Him was so awful, that blood oozed from His skin and fell in great drops on the ground. And while He was thus prostrate and weak an angel was despatched from heaven to strengthen Him. O Christian blush, as Hart well says - I would say it to myself

Blush, Christian blush, let shame abound
If sin affect thee not with woe
Whatever spirit be in thee found

The Spirit of Christ thou dost not know

It is a grievous reflection that may come to you sometimes as you go back in your memory to your days, your professing days, when here and there, there was a lack of tenderness to Christ; a tenderness to sin, a nursing of it in your spirit. Some act you can remember when you were unchristian, some deed you did in which there was no Spirit of Christ. Now when you are brought to see what sin cost Christ, to see that you were brought to afflict Almighty God, that you, so to speak, did that which became a burden to Him, a sweating burden, a grief, a shame, an ignominy that brought Him to the cross and brought from heaven the darkest frown that ever could come to any man, and the most terrible curse that could ever flow into any soul, and the deepest shame that could ever veil a heart and cover a face, and into a death that we cannot conceive for terribleness, I say, if you are brought thus to reflect, you will see more than you can express. Who bore all that load? Almighty God. He shall be called "The Mighty God". His Name is "The Mighty God". Why, we can hardly bear the thought that He died for us. It is so sweet and so penetrating and so humbling. Did He die for me? says one. Why, when you believe it, it will be almost more than you can bear, that this Lamb of God, this Mighty God, should have had imputed to Him, laid on Him, that intolerable load, that guilt, that death, that brought separation from His Father and the frown of His Father to Him. It will be, I say, more almost than you can bear. Well, that is one wonder, one marvel, that will demonstrate this blessed Jesus Christ to be "The Mighty God". May the Lord make it out to you who are concerned about your souls, that the Lord Jesus did bear your sins in His Own body on the tree, that you, being dead to sin, may live no longer therein.

And the second act that He does which demonstrates Him to be "The Mighty God" in Zion is this, that He quickens the dead. The Father hath life in Himself and He hath given His Son, as the Mediator and the Head of the Church, to have life in Himself, that He may give it to whomsoever He will, and He quickeneth. Even as the Father quickeneth whom He will, so also does the Son, the Lord Jesus. "And the hour is coming, now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and live." Why, dear friends, this is a work of omnipotence, and there is more in it, in some very important senses, than there was in

the work of creation. Out of nothing the world came, but our Lord Jesus Christ, when He comes to quicken the dead, He comes to men who are sinners, living in sin, loving sin, hating God and following after the vanities of this life; who are disposed to resist Him and turn from Him and say - "We will not have this Man to reign over us". He finds opposition strong, yet He does the work; He accomplishes it. "Live" He says, "Live". "When I passed by thee thy time was a time of love and I said unto thee, live" - and this living one became His - "and thou becamest Mine". A mighty God; "The Mighty God" to quicken a dead sinner and be in Him a life that shall never die. "I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish". How sweet is the mercy, how great is the act of grace that Jesus Christ performs when He comes to one in the grave of spiritual death and says, opening the grave, "live", to the creature who is lying in it. Men talk about making a new world but they will only make confusion. But when Christ comes to make all things new to one of His own blood-bought ones, He accomplishes the thing. A sinner comes out of the grave and things are new to him as it is written by Paul in the Corinthians - "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new". And this quickening is likened to creation. Created anew, created in righteousness and true holiness after the image of Him that created him. Therefore to every child of God this can be said - "And you hath He quickened" and "Ye are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God before ordained that ye should walk in them". Do you know what this means? Are you the subjects of this blessed work, this new creation? I do not ask, if you ask, when this was done, but are the fruits of it about you? Can you say two things, to mention no more now; can you say two things? One is that you see and feel yourselves to be poor, lost, depraved, ignorant, polluted creatures in the sight of God. Well now, that will grow with you. I can say to you now, after many years of profession, and I trust of God's mercies to me, I am viler today than I was 50 years ago, not in my life before men, but in my experience. Can you say that for yourself? It is going on, not going to end when you are blessed with pardon; it is going on to the end. Increase of light will show you more of your sinfulness. Increase of life will make you feel your vileness the more. It is going on. But the other thing is this, can you say

Jesus is the one thing needful

I without Him perish must

Come to this point. What says your heart? O sinner, what says your conscience? What say your affections, your judgment? Who is needful to you? Whom do you seek? Whose presence do you long for? Whose blood would you fain feel? Whose robe would you wear? Whose Name would you have named on you? Whose Spirit would you have to move and guide and conduct and rule in your heart? 'Tis good to come to points, come to this point. Is Jesus Christ needed? Do you feel your need of Him? - "This He gives you, 'tis His Spirit's rising beam". O bless God if you know the want and worth of Jesus Christ. "The Mighty God". One act more to prove Him to be God - the forgiveness of sins. "That ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, said He to the sick of the palsy, arise, take up thy bed and walk." "Forgiveness, 'tis a joyful sound". It is a great part of the gospel, the good news from heaven. It is a great work of God in the soul, a great act of the Saviour when He passes it upon a conscience, removing sin, giving pardon, sweet pardon, full pardon, wondrous pardon. O, if we are wrapped up in pardon how happy we are. If we fly from time to eternity pardoned, how blessed we are and shall be for ever. Brethren, it is the one thing, to know sin forgiven. The blood of Christ brings this:

The blood of Christ, a precious blood
Cleanses from all sin, doubt it not,
And reconciles the soul to God,
From every folly, every fault.

"The Mighty God". Ah, you will say it of Him then. Often before then you will say it, but then particularly, especially. "The Mighty God" has done it. He, against whom I committed sin, has forgiven sin, all sin. It makes us love Him, it makes us fear Him, it makes us want to please Him, it makes us fear to offend Him. And when one knows that he will never be in hell, that sin will never hurt him hereafter, then he wants so to live as not to grieve the Holy Spirit, as not to wound his best Friend, "The Mighty God", Jesus Christ. Well, what a wonder it is. I must name one more thing to make it evident that Christ is "The Mighty God", that the child born, the Son given, is "The Mighty

God". And what is that? Why, this, that He keeps a sinner from finally falling. I think it is Romaine who says that it would be a miracle if a torch light should live in a tempestuous sea, and it is just that, as a figure, that will express the miracle that a child of God is in his perseverance, persevering in the course, in the way of life. O what a sea of corruption, what waves of sin dash against him. What spray covers the little torch, what threatening to overcome and quench the spark a child of God feels at times. Yet the life is there, grace is there, God is there, Christ is there, the Spirit is there. Says the sinner, I am afraid of apostacy, and his fear makes him cry - "Hold Thou me up and I shall be safe". "Hold up my goings in Thy paths that my footsteps slip not". Keep me to the end. And when you get near to the end, you will still more and more cry out - O keep me; keep me when infirmities come on, when old age overtakes you. When eternity comes nearer and nearer and time seems to be receding perhaps more and more rapidly, then you will say, O I do want to finish well, I want the mollifying grace of Christ, I want the tender feeling that love begets, I want to walk with God in peace and equity and I want to fear death no more than I fear laying my head on my pillow at night. You will want to feel like that and many a time you will pray about it. I believe the more the Lord is with people, the more they are concerned about finishing well their race. Well, lastly here, and this evening lastly, it will be a proof that He is almighty God if He takes us to heaven, and there, so to speak, at the head of that wondrous procession of creatures redeemed, He shall go to His Father with a glorious boldness and say - "Behold I and the children Thou hast given Me." This Everlasting Father will say it; "The Mighty God". He travailed here, He travailed in pain and shame and woe, and was troubled in His soul. There the same glorious One, "The Mighty God", will head His people and present them to His Father. O, who but God, could do it? Who, but God, could save us? Who, but God, could redeem us and quicken us and justify us and sanctify us and preserve us and then take us to be with Himself at last? Who could do it, but God.

Raise thy downcast eyes (O poor sinner) and see
Numbers do His throne surround
These were sinners once like thee
But have full salvation found

and we hope to find it too. Sweet is the hope, O sweet is the hope that we shall one day be with the Lord and then, therefore, like Him. "The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" to bestow that heavenly gift as He will, and where and when and in what measure. May the Lord commend Himself to us and if it could please Him use the feeble words I have uttered to commend Him to you and may He be held in the galleries by faith, that we may gaze upon His beauties and admire Him and worship Him and praise Him and glorify Him in our hearts and in our lives and in our death and through eternity.

AMEN.