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

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"

Yesterday morning I made some observations on the first part of
this, so wonderful a text. I spoke of the child born and the Son
given, making One Person, the very son of Mary born, as the Scriptures
inform us, of the virgin Mary; the very Son of God eternally begotten
but equal with His Father; these two making One Person, of whom you
have just been singing:

This wondrous Man of whom we tell
Is true Almighty God

May it please God to grant that each here before Him, fearing His
Name, may be able to say

He bought our souls from death and hell
The price, His own heart's blood

I noticed then briefly that the government is upon the shoulder of
this wondrous Person; heaven, earth, hell, men, all creatures
animate and inanimate, His servants.

And now, if the Lord will help me, I will address you upon the
next member of the text. "And His Name shall be called Wonderful,
Counsellor, The mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of
Peace." To know Him is to believe that His Name is Wonderful. In the
Scripture the word "wonderful", equal with the word "miracle" and
the word "sign", and so on, sets forth the same effect of divine power

in working, working against or above all nature's laws, quickening the dead Lazarus, multiplying a few loaves and fishes to satisfy the hunger of thousands, healing the sick, controlling the wind, and calming the waves, permitting devils to enter into a herd of swine, walking on the sea. Generally, during His sojourn on earth, when He did a wonder men's eyes stopped at the wonder and saw not Him who did it. Ye seek Me, said Christ, not because I am Almighty God, but because by My miracle you were fed, satisfied. They only saw that phenomenon. Himself, its Author, they saw not. Here we have not an effect of divine power; we have Him before us who is divine power, who is eternal, immortal; as to His divine nature, invisible; who is the express character of His Father, the image of the invisible God, and who also is Man, the Son of Man; a creature made, created in the womb of the virgin by the Holy Ghost; and we have One Person. May the Lord open this mystery to us. It will be a blessed thing for us as a people and each one individually, entering into it, to be led to know this Person whose Name is Wonderful. O to be united to Christ, to possess Him, to know Him. This will make you Christians; this will carry you beyond profession. It will make you possessors, but it will carry you beyond profession. It will make you godly; it will separate you from the world, will make you a part of that kingdom which is not of this world; will give you to perceive that you have a treasure in heaven and perceive that your heart will be there also.

Let us look first at this very Person. His Name expresses His Person. Take Him as regards His infinite, pure, eternal Being, the very eternal, only begotten Son of God, the Son of His love. Paul tells us that He is the express image of the Father's Person, glory, character; the image of the invisible God. When we worship Christ, we worship God, the Father of Eternity. "I AM THAT I AM" is His own divine claim. "Before Abraham was I AM". "I came forth from the Father". He was ever His Father's delight. Look sinner, if you have faith, beyond every effect of the power of the God Man, look to Him who is God. View, as the gospel, as the Word of God, and the Holy Ghost enable, view Him as Almighty God who dwelleth in the light that no man can approach unto. He is the immortal, invisible God and yet faith perceives - it does not make a shape to itself - it perceives this blessed One. No similitude will ever set forth God to your

minds. You must have faith, faith in this divine Person, a Person in the Godhead, the only begotten Son, the second Person in the Godhead. This is wonderful. We cannot properly conceive of eternity, much less of One who has no beginning and shall have no end, who is infinite, immense; who can never know accession (or increase) of wisdom, or power, or knowledge, or goodness, or mercy, or love, or hatred of sin. Wonderful, amazing. When the disciples and others saw the effects of infinite power, we read, they were sore amazed, could scarcely bear the effect. And what will it be to us if, by faith, we see Himself, believe that is - "For he that cometh to God must believe that He is". You can never be a Christian unless you believe in the eternal Deity of Jesus Christ. You never can worship acceptably unless you worship Him as He is God. We hear a great deal of Him. Who is He? We want to see Him. Some people, in the beginning of the work of grace, have desire, and if you asked them the nature of that desire they could hardly tell you, but it comes to pass in every case where grace is that Christ becomes the Object of desire. The desire of all nations is He. We would see Him. Ah there is room in the eye and in the heart of every new born soul for the Lord Jesus; there is. If you are born again it is so with you. Sin may blind you for a time, guilt may confuse you, and depress you. Satan may tempt you, ignorance may baffle you, and you may stumble here and there, but the desire is there. "We would see Jesus". Who is He? What is He? What can He do for us? Can He save? Can He remove our guilt? Can He cleanse our pollution from us? Can He bring us to happiness and bring happiness to us? We would see Him. What Object do you long to look on? If taught of God there is one Object you are brought to look on with loathing eyes - yourself. Who so base, so deformed, so guilty, so wicked, so lost, so altogether forbidding, as yourself. And if you look to the earth, what do you see there? Trouble. Look to your own circumstances, what do you see there? Uncertainty. "We know not what a day may bring forth." Things that are apparently solid today may be quite liquid and flow away from us tomorrow. Look into self, what do you see there? A mass of sin and death. If you look everywhere that imagination can point your eye to, what will you see, but death? Out of God, all is death. Then the Spirit comes and says there is One, and only One, who is God's salvation - Jesus Christ. And then you say, we would see Him. We would look into His Person, we would look into His death, we would look into His righteousness, we would look into His

fountain of infinite merit. We would see Jesus. Can you go with those Greeks, dear friends, can you join company with those Greeks, Gentiles? Can you unite with their desire? Sir, we hear of One who is talked of as being God, spoken of as a Saviour. We hear of One who recently has, on entering Jerusalem, been sung to, but we hear that they have taken branches of palm trees and gone forth to meet Him and strewed branches of palm trees and their garments in His way as He triumphantly rode on an ass into the city, and we want to see Him. We are sinners, Gentiles, ruined. We are not worthy, no, but we want to see Him. Bless God, He is seeable. Bless God He is findable, but He must be discovered. Who can discover Him? Who can make Him known? O, says Christ, there is One who shall teach you, the Holy Spirit. "He shall glorify Me for He shall receive of Mine" - the things belonging to Me, My very Person, My blessed work of redemption, My perfection as a Saviour, My suitability as a Rock, My suitability as a Refuge - "He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you". And when you get it shown you like that, then your ignorance, of which you complain, will vanish in the measure of the manifestation. Then your unacquaintedness with Him, which you deplore, will be taken away from you in the measure of the manifestation. And Jesus answered this, not directly, by saying bring them to Me and let them look on Me, but He answered in a gracious way - "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified". These, My fellow countrymen, have despised and rejected Me; they have said that what I have done, I have done by the agency of devils, but the hour is come now when I, so despised, so dishonoured, so disgraced by them, should be glorified. But how? He is alone now, as it were. How shall He be honoured? How shall He be set forth as being glorious? How shall men come to see Him other than a poor man? Why, by His dying. "Verily, verily I say unto you except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone". If you kept a sample of wheat in your sample bag for a thousand years it would not grow by one grain, but if you take one grain out of that bag and sow it in the ground it will multiply, and Jesus could only have a harvest by dying. He could only be glorified by dying. We will then, as the Lord helps us, look at this great thing; first the death of Christ and second the effect of that death.

First the death of Christ, the death of all deaths, the only voluntary death that ever was or ever will be. The only death that

ever took place by a definite and efficacious act of His own will. The only death by which God shall be glorified and the dier Himself glorified in an unspeakable manner. The only efficacious death, the only death that can remove sin, and give infinite pleasure to God and justification to sinners and sanctification to the polluted, and heaven to the lost; the only death. Ah, if it be revealed to us we shall fix in it. "There", we sing, "There we fix our trust". There are several remarkable things to be noticed in the death of Christ. First of all this, His designation to it. It was designed, it was decreed from eternity that He should die. It was fixed upon in a Covenant in the Trinity that Christ should die. The death of Christ is found in its proper place in the Covenant, the Covenant of Grace. It was covenanted that He should die. O, what a wonder of electing love, what a wonder of divine compassion and wisdom and power is the death of Christ in its designation by the Trinity; by the Father, by the Son and by the Holy Ghost. And this is an exhibition of the eternal love of God to His elect people. They owed a debt they could not pay; had contracted guilt, which was very death. Had wreathed themselves in pollution, which shut them out from the presence of a holy God, and the Word of God is - "The soul that sinneth it shall die". Therefore, if any one sinner of all the multitudes of sinners who have descended from Adam's sinful loins shall be saved, that one must be saved by the payment of his debt, by the removal of his guilt, by the cleansing of his pollution, and this can only be by death. So God designed His Son. Men, wicked men, took Him and by wicked hands they slew Him. How? "According to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God". It is worth your close attention, dear friends; it is worthy all the study on your knees that you can give to it, this designation of Christ to death; this delivery up, in the purpose of God, of His only begotten Son to death. O think of it, you who believe in it; think of what it is in that eternal decree of God, that God spared not His Own Son, spared Him not, in His purpose, from shame and spitting and from the cross. Ah, it was no haphazard business that brought Jesus Christ to the cross. It was no after-thought in God that Jesus Christ should die. No, it was in the eternal counsel of God Himself to fix that death.

And the second thing to consider in it is this, that all the sins of His people were to be effectively atoned for and put away by that

one offering of Christ without spot unto God - all of them. The Word of Christ on the cross imports no less - "It is finished". In the 17 chapter of this gospel, He says to His Father - "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do". In the chapter which I read, this is the work - "Thou art My salvation unto the ends of the earth". In the 53 Isaiah the work is again set forth - "He made His soul an offering for sin". That is the work, the doing away, putting away, absolutely and for ever, of the sins of the people for whom He undertook that great business. O, if you feel the load of your sins, your personal transgressions; if you feel the baseness of your nature; if you feel the pollution of your vile thoughts and affections, you will say, what a load; what a sinking load you feel it to be. If such a load then falls to you personally, what must that have been that fell on Him, Jesus Christ, when the iniquity of us all, as Isaiah speaks, was laid on Him? O, it was a great thing for incarnate Deity, a great thing for that meek and lowly Man, without sin, a great thing for Him to have the sins of all His people imputed to Him. O, the love that brought Him to it. O, the willingness He had in His heart to bear sin. O, what sin must have been to that Holy One. To think of it. Why, when you have gracious affections in your souls, active, when your affections are set on God, is not it bitter to you to be a sinner? Is not it bitter to you to follow after any vanity? Bitter to you to neglect prayer? To you, how bitter to be a poor, miserable, earthbound creature. Then if that is so in the saint, what must imputed sin have been to Him who knew no sin, in whose heart and spirit was no guile? And yet He bore it. "I delight to do Thy will" said He to His Father. ~~I delight to do it. I yield Myself~~ with infinite pleasure to Thy will in bearing sin, in putting it away. May the Lord set this upon our hearts. Doubtless he who knows most of the death of Christ for him feels the greatest hatred to sin. Men may cry out against sin because it is to be punished, but the saints cry out against it because they are not to be punished for it. It is put away from them. No sword is cutting them off from God because the sword of justice pierced their Surety. No separating curse will reach them and separate them from God because that curse fell on their Surety. That makes them hate sin. I have sometimes thought the greatest grief of my heart and my soul that I have ever felt, ever can feel, I have thought is just this one thing - sin. Sorrow comes to us, sorrow comes to our houses, to our circumstances, comes to our nearest and

dearest ones. Death enters and takes away objects we fain would keep. But O, if we are born again, that that causes us the greatest grief is sin.

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

Another thing to notice in the death of Christ is the voluntary nature of it. The voluntary nature of the death of Christ is essential to its efficacy, to the vicarious nature of it. O, my friends, you feel willing sometimes to suffer, do you not? Willing to bear God's will; willing to give up things sometimes. You have said in your hearts in affliction, "Thy will be done"; given up everything, and sweet it was, was it not? O, how sweet it is to be passive in God's hands; to feel His will becomes your choice; to feel, not that you have lost the will, but that grace has conquered you, and made submission sweet. Better to submit you have felt, better to submit to God's will, though contrary it be to mine, than have all I could wish and have no God. O, but what is willingness to suffer, to submit, to give up, compared with this willingness of Christ to die, for what was it to Him to die? It was not to be hated of men; it was to be smitten of divine justice. It was for the Father to hide His lovely face from His dearly beloved Son. It was for the holy Man, Jesus Christ, to suffer the wrath of God. And when you consider this, O then what will the willingness of Jesus Christ to die appear. How willing was Jesus to die. Yes, how willing. He said - "I delight to do Thy will, O God. Thy law is within My heart". I delight to suffer. To His disciples He said, on the eve of His death, "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you". If the Lord should lead us into this subject it would make us sit down in meditation sweet. It would make our hearts weep, our spirits soft, our consciences pure and tender. It is a great thing to see a suffering Saviour, willing to suffer. "Now" said He, "is My soul troubled". A troubled Christ; innocent Christ troubled; pure Christ troubled. And yet, though innocent and pure in His Person, yet, I say, there was a guilt upon Him - imputed sin. What was it for Christ to die but to be punished, wounded and bruised and chastised and smitten with stripes? What was it for Christ to die, but to be put

to grief? It pleased the Lord to bruise Him, to put Him to grief. Brethren, this was a part of what Christ went through. And when He died, when He died, O, what a day was that when Christ was crucified. Hart speaks thus :

That day when Christ was crucified
The Mighty God, Jehovah, died

and as Watts also says:

When God, the mighty Maker, died
For man, the creature's sin

There were several parties at the cross. There was Christ there; there was His body, the election of grace; there was the Father, there was the law; there was the curse; there was the sword. All these at the cross; all these at the cross. Around it were men, enemies, shooting out the tongue, shaking the head, mocking Him, tempting Him to come down from the cross to prove to them He was the Christ. These were around the cross. As He was hanging on it, there were these parties. He had undertaken to do a work, and the people for whom He had undertaken it were virtually there with Him. And the Father was there demanding from Him all the satisfaction He had undertaken to render. There was the sword of justice hungry for His blood, that is for His life. O what a cross was the cross of Christ. The Papists cut it up and distributed it all over the world, as they say - enough to make forests of wood - but if a sinner sees the cross, the cross, that is Christ crucified, he sees as much as he wants, as much as he desires, as much, and more, than he can hold. The death of Christ, this was the corn of wheat. He said - "It is finished" and He dismissed His spirit; He gave up the ghost; it was a voluntary death. He dismissed His spirit; He willed it. His Father commanded it and He willed it. "No man taketh My life from Me". I have received a commandment of My Father that I should yield My life. No man taketh My life from Me. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of My Father. And when He in Himself knew that all things were accomplished He said "It is finished", bowed His head and gave up the ghost. What was it in Him

that made Him know that all things were now accomplished? He had had a frown; He had suffered the hidings of His Father's face; He had the sword piercing Him; He had had the wrath of God poured like fire into His bones. Now what was it in Him that made Him realise that all was finished? The passing away from Him of all that pain of soul, of all that darkness of desertion, of all that sorrowful sense of being under the curse, and instead thereof, the smile of God. I do not want to speculate - it is too solemn a scene and too wondrous a truth, and too profound a mystery for speculation - but one can but believe, in all sobriety, that this is included, involved in that knowledge which He had in Himself that all things were now accomplished, that no burden oppressed Him of guilt, that no weight of sin hung upon Him, that no curse was within Him, no darkness was within Him, but all light. Ah, He did not die under sin; that is, His spirit did not leave His body till all was finished - "It is finished" - and then He went to Paradise. This, as I understand it, is just a brief word about a mighty subject. We must die to enter into it at all fully. I wish I lived in it, I wish it lived in me. I wish I could never remove from the cross and always be hearing that wondrous word that spells justification and sanctification, and regeneration, and happiness and peace and joy and heaven, for "It is finished" spells all those things to the Church of God. O that it would please God to bring me, to bring you, to this cross and see this blessed One dying and hear Him say - "It is finished". "If it die it bringeth forth much fruit". What is this? I must briefly speak of this. What is it? It is nothing more, it is nothing less, than the whole Church living by Christ's death. Then it takes in some of us, does it not? Have not some of you lived on the death of Christ? Is it not your life still? And it will be to the end of life and through eternity. What other life have we but Christ's death? "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." What is this life but union with God and a manifestation of the interest of the soul in the death of the Lord Jesus? "Much fruit". This is what in Isaiah is called Christ seeing of the travail of His soul and being satisfied. In experience what is it? It is a sinner being justified and sanctified in the Name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. It is having perfect soundness of soul and conscience; it is having the smile of God upon your spirit; it is hearing the voice of the Lord - "Thy sins are forgiven". It is having the sweet witness of the Spirit

with your spirit that you are a child of God. It is having the earnest of the Spirit in your heart. It is having "Christ in you the hope of glory", and having some access to God, some humble feeling that God loves you. It is having some sacred realisation of an interest in God and a belief that God is interested in you. "Much fruit". And so those poor Greeks got a sight of Him; Gentiles got a sight of Him. O it does glad the eye, does not it, when Jesus is in view. It does warm the heart when He is seen, when His death is at all entered into by faith and the peace and sweet effect of it felt in the conscience. That is the fruit. And what is the glorifying of Christ but the setting of Him up, the investing of Him, in the eyes of His poor people, with His glory. His beauty celebrating itself, His being lifted up to faith, the drawing of the soul to Him and the discovery of Him to the soul. Then He is seen to be what the Church saw Him to be - "The chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely". Then He is your Rock; then He is your house of refuge, your house of defence. Then He is a refiner of silver; then He is your husband, your brother born for adversity; the Rock of Ages, the Sun of Righteousness. O He is wonderful. If I had a thousand tongues and a thousand hearts of love to speak well of Him I would be glad, for He is worthy. He, Jesus Christ, He is worthy. In heaven they sing "Worthy is the Lamb". May we be allowed to join with them in that song - "Worthy is the Lamb". Now He says the hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified, and every time your eyes look on Him and your heart receives Him, and your faith cleaves to Him and your conscience has peace by Him, every time, I say, that you get thus blessed, the Son of Man is glorified in you. Now can you come with me and can we go together with the Greeks and say with them - We would see that Jesus, this Man, this glorious One. If so, then there will be an answer sooner or later, for He never sets a sinner seeking Him to let that sinner die disappointed. If you want to see Him through the grace of the Spirit working in you, depend on it, you will not die till you do see Him in some degree of clearness. May the Lord stir us up to seek to see Him, to seek such a sight of Him as shall cause us to say:

Yes, now I know, 'tis He, 'tis He,
'Tis Jesus, God's dear Son,
Wrapped in humanity to die
For crimes that I had done

May the Lord bless us.