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Sermon preached by Mr. J. K. Popham,  
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, Wednesday,  
29th February, 1924.

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Text: Jeremiah 17.v 12.

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"A glorious High Throne from the beginning is the  
place of our sanctuary."

A very solemn chapter this is and were it made to speak to us, in any part of it, by the Holy Ghost, we should have great cause to bless God for it. The beginning is exceedingly solemn. The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron and with a point of a diamond; it is graven upon the tables of their heart, and upon the horns of your alters. The heart in which God put His holy law in creation, that was intended for the Lord, a heart which He claims. A claim which He will never give up. Upon the table of that heart is written the sin of idolatry, an infamous sin, contrary that is to the law. What a sin! It belongs to you, it belongs to me, to every man. God wrote upon our hearts by nature. We have the work of the law still there, seen in the excuses and the accusations which are made by all of us. Upon that very heart is written, deeply engraved, as if never to be erased, the sin of idolatry, rebellion against God. O, when the Lord's people are truly convinced of this, it becomes matter of grief and shame, and they confess with sincerity, their depravity, and this also, this abomination is written upon our religion, for man is naturally religious. There is that in our nature, the writing of God's law in our hearts, that constitutes man a religious creature, but his religion is utterly false. He is turned to idols. He has turned to himself. he has sold himself for nought, sold himself to wickedness, and now upon his very religion is written evil, idolatry.

In the case of the Jews of course, primarily intended here, what an abomination upon the horns of their alters. Horns that were intended to have only the blood of sacrifices on them. As if these wicked idolators had gone into the temple, and engraved on these very alters this wickedness of idolatry.

How about our religion? Is it our own? Is it God's working when the Lord sees us coming in the form of prayer. Is there any of His own work in that, or is it our own only. This sin remember, constantly acted by man, God remembers, and threatens judgement. "O my mountain in the field." O Jerusalem. O thou mountain on which is the Temple of the Lord, I will give thy substance and all thy treasures, all the treasures of thy religion and thy high places, for sin throughout all thy borders, and thou even thyself shalt discontinue from thine heritage that I gave thee; and I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou knowest not; for ye have kindled a fire in mine anger, which shall burn for ever. And they knew afterwards, though false prophets made them think otherwise, they saw idols in abundance and served gods of wood and stone, according to God's fearful threat. And what of ourselves? Is our religion such as will bring upon us the judgement of God? And shall we find that there is no reality in that religion that pleases God. Nothing that He will own. If so captivity is sure to follow. Trouble and judgement must come and then the Lord gives us two cases, very striking cases of what it is to be right. What it is to be wrong.

First, what it is to be wrong- "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man." O if the Lord ever speaks this to any of us, we shall tremble before Him indeed. In how many ways our hearts turn from God. In what particulars do we go to self, or to some other arm of flesh on which to depend, and very serious it is when God meets one of His children with such a word as this, bringing him to a short reckoning, it may be. Making him tremble at this word of the Lord-"Cursed be the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." Have you ever been led to reflect, that every departure of your heart from the Lord, has in it as it were, the very seed of apostacy and has hanging over it this serious word- "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm." If you have, you have greatly trembled and feared and you have searched and tried your ways, and entreated the Lord to enable you to return to Him. This is the case, and this man is like the heath in the desert, and does not see when good comes, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

Then the case of a good man- "Blessed is the man who trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." May we be enabled to

take courage from this word, Do you find your hearts going out to Him? Is He attractive to you? Do you need omnipotence and pray to feel its power in your own soul? Do you feel that you can't that you must, that you do at times cast yourself upon Him, sink or swim? Whether He will accept you, which would be to you an amazing thing, or reject you which you believe would be a just thing, yet find yourself enabled to go, The blood of Christ attracts, the grace of Christ draws, the goodness of Christ enables you to pray and the drawing of the Father brings you to your senses, and to His footstool, and you cast yourself unreservedly upon the illimitable ocean of the merits of the Lord Jesus. God says you are a blessed person. The devil may say no, He may point to your trouble. He may point out to you that this affliction comes because you are a sinner, and because in some particular ways you have been a particular sinner. It may be so, yea, and even conscience may come and back up what the enemy says, but then this will remain- "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord." Blessed is the man who cleaves to Christ crucified, who has no plea to make but the blood of Christ; no name to name but the name of Christ and no hope but in the Person and work of Christ; God has blessed that man; and He pronounces him blessed. The Spirit has blessed him with grace, and faith, and Jesus Christ has blessed him by giving him a view of Himself. Blessed is that man; whatever comes against him; whatever threatens him, whatever fears he may have; whatever searching of heart he is brought to, whatever confessions of sin he makes; this is the Lord's verdict, nothing can reverse it- "Blessed is that man that trusteth in the Lord whose hope the Lord is." and this shall be his condition- "For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought; neither shall cease from yielding fruit." And I believe if you are enabled to trace out your experience; the inward moving of your heart, and the innermost feelings that you have, you will find that you answer in some measure to this- you are not utterly dried up, you are not entirely withered, you are not without some touches, and the roots of your faith go toward the river- Jesus Christ in whom is the river of the water of life. It is not to you; it is no mere theory. It is not simply a part of theology. It is a vital truth to every living soul.

There is no hope without incarnation. There is no door of access to Eternal Deity without, the man Christ Jesus. There is nothing to stand upon in prayer, without the man Christ Jesus. There is no way of escape from the wrath to come, without the man Christ Jesus, and there is no way for God the Father and God the Holy Ghost to come into the heart of a sinner, but by the man Christ Jesus. No way of peace with God, of removing and ending the dreadful and the wicked quarrel that we all have with God, but by the man Christ Jesus. No way out of your troubles, no door through which to go to God for mercy about your troubles, and in your troubles and deliverance from your troubles, but by the man Christ Jesus. O, I wish we could by the goodness of the Spirit more prize the Lord Jesus Christ.

"O could we but, with clearer eyes  
His excellences trace,  
Could we His Person learn to prize,  
We more should prize His grace."

O sinner, you will never dwell with God except in the man Jesus Christ. You will never get a smile from God, except through the man Christ Jesus. Never get a hint of mercy but this way. It is all this way, hence this beautiful testimony about His fulness- "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." and "Of His fulness have all we received and grace for grace." "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." The fulness of the Godhead bodily dwells in Him. The Son of man, the Son of God; the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. These are the testimonies of the Eternal Spirit to the Person of Christ:

"What think ye of Christ is the test,  
to try both our state and our scheme,  
We cannot be right in the rest,  
unless we think rightly of Him."

and O, do not His beauties sometimes attract? Have you not sometimes felt something in the hymn we sometimes sing:-

"A man there is, a real man,  
with wounds still gaping wide,  
from which rich streams of blood once ran,  
In hands and feet and side.

"Tis no wild fancy of our brains,  
No metaphor we speak;  
The same dear Man in heaven now reigns,  
That suffered for our sake.

That human heart he still retains,  
Though throned in highest bliss;  
And feels each tempted member's pains;  
For our affliction's his.

Tis a beautiful hymn. It is a body of divinity, and it becomes a rich experience when it is opened and applied by the Holy Ghost. O think of it sinner, poor trembling child of God, poor seeking soul, you who feel far off, and fear you never will get near to God. You who love His character though you see that character with awful trembling sometimes. You who feel that the holiness repels you and yet you would not have Him less holy than He is.- Behold the way to God. See a new and living way, the Son of God taking your nature, that He might have your sins and put them away, and remember what Hart says in another hymn:-

"Let not conscience make you linger,  
nor of fitness fondly dream,  
all the fitness He requireth,  
is to feel your need of Him."

Come then poor sinner, look to this dear, this wondrous, this glorious, this glorified man Jesus Christ, true Almighty God. He knows your weaknesses. "He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." a wind that passeth away and cometh not again. He knows your temptations. he suffered being tempted and therefore this is the conclusion that the Apostle arrives at, at the end of this chapter- "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." Is it not wonderful, how the Holy Ghost in the scripture takes up all the cases of poor tried people and He brings them all to this one point. This is the door of hope. This is the ground on which to build- The Person of the Lord Jesus, and when we, through the Spirit's grace, are led in and by means of our temptations and tribulations and troubles to this Man, see what an evidence there is of the Spirit's work in us. "He shall glorify Me. for he shall receive of Mine and show it unto you." and one thing the Spirit will show to you and that

is the true human nature of the Lord Jesus. When you believe His eternal deity, you may sometimes find it very difficult to think, to imagine, that He who is the true Almighty God, whose throne endureth for ever, can be a man like yourself, and feel your infirmities.

Does the child of God seek after, desire, to be there for ever and ever? The Eternal God is the refuge and the home of all his children, and each one comes to this- I want this. Time is an empty vapour. Life, what is it? A vapour which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

It were a poor prospect if this were all, of hope, in this life. O, but it is beyond this life. Here we get hints of it, here just passing glimpses, here sips, there an eternity of bliss, because an eternity of holiness. God makes his people holy, and therefore makes them happy. (All the days of my life. Psalm 23.v 6.) and yet what interruptions there are to this experience. Take your own case, any child of God here, what interruptions there are to being in the House of God, experimentally. No interruption to the union, but many interruptions as to the feeling, the experience of the Lord Jesus.

And now there is an occupation in which he would engage - To behold, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord. Yes, there is that in Christ which does attract the attention, catch the eye and hold it at times. This is the beauty of the Lord, namely, first, the Person of Christ. The Person of Christ is the highest expression of the love and wisdom and power and goodness of God. He is the image of the invisible God. In the Man Christ Jesus, all the fulness of the Godhead bodily dwells. In Him the Father was pleased that all the fulness of life, of grace, of justification of pardon, of sanctification and all goodness should dwell. There is not a grace, nor a comfort, nor a moment of peace, nor a sense of acceptance, nor a feeling of holiness, nor any communication of power, that the people of God ever have, or can have, but what they receive from a full Saviour.

Poverty is ours. Emptiness is ours. Sin is ours. Salvation from all these evils is Christ's. O what a Person. God in all His loveliness, in all the greatness and glory and beauty and belessedness of His character. The Person of Christ, the pure, holy man, born of the virgin. beauty, everything. God shown to his people; perfectly represented to them, and man perfectly represented to God- The Man Christ Jesus, true Almighty God. There

is nothing in nature. and when a unitarian will allow the history of Jesus Christ, and speak of Him as a mere man, you can understand by your own wicked reason, how unable he is, not having the Spirit, to believe that that Man is true Almighty God. But when the Spirit comes, and opens the Deity, and reveals the humanity of this Person, then you see He is Almighty God. He is a true man, and here the soul is brought. This is the Glorious High Throne which from the beginning is the place of our Sanctuary. This is the throne of grace. Here is the fulness of infinite love. The nature of God is love. The dispensation of it comes sovereignly in and through the Man Christ Jesus. This cuts of all reasoning. This tramples under foot the pride of our hearts. This says to a wounded soul, here is the healing; to a lost soul, here is the Saviour; to one burdened with sin, here is the sin-bearer. May the Spirit reveal this truth in our hearts. And now see what this wondrous Man did- partaking of the nature of the children without their sin, but having their sin imputed to Him by God his Father He must die. He must die. 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- "Ought not Christ to suffer these things and enter into His glory." Did not He come for this very purpose. Was He not commanded by His Father to lay down His life. Was it not the great object and end He had in coming. "I am come that they might have life." How could they have it except He died for the soul that sinneth it shall die. The man who sins shall die, and if there is no death of a substitute for that sinful man, that man must die. It is inevitable by the very nature of God that either the principle in the offence, or a surety for him shall suffer the penalty;

"Sin to pardon without blood,  
never in His nature stood."

and to let a criminal escape, and to let one deserving hell escape that hell without an equivalent sacrifice, that was not in God's nature, and so the Lord Jesus must die. He must die. O, honours rest on His head that He did die. That He dies willingly; that He died voluntarily; that He gave up the ghost Himself, that no man took His life from Him; that He offered Himself a sacrifice to His Father; offered Himself in the place of you who are His. Came to take a stand in your very place, in your precise condition and position under a broken law, and have your own very sins, your wickedness, your transgressions all laid on His holy Person, so

that it became a necessity, painful to Him, glorifying to God, a necessity that His Father should punish Him and He in His love said, as one has it in a poetical allusion he said,—"Inflict it all on Me." All the wrath and the piercing sword, inflict it all on Me. And now when you come to this, what a death was the death of Christ. No common death. It was no common death my friends. It was full of ignominy. He was covered with shame, and yet the ignominy and the shame had, in respect of His offering of Himself to His Father, became the most glorious act. See shame, ignominy and glory mingle on Calvary. O, of the Lord would only bath our souls in the infinite merit of Jesus Christ, what happiness it would fill us with. What peace would reign in our consciences, that through death, a voluntary death, a wondrous death, a vicarious death, a death in the place of others; a death that was so truly voluntary as that, though they pierced Him, nailed Him to the cursed tree, He did not die from the effects of that, but He gave up the ghost in all the strength of His human nature. He dismissed His spirit and went to His Father. He did not die in the dark my friends. The darkness was passed before He gave up the ghost and He went to glory, having conquered death and now—"O death, where is thy sting. O grave, where is thy victory." Does this death shine in your eyes.? Did it ever, coming, flowing as a stream of life and peace and goodness and love into your souls? Was it ever like a wave of God's mercy passing over your conscience and your spirit like a light shining from the throne of God into your heart that hitherto had been dark. The death of Christ. Through death. No man taketh My life from Me. The Lord help us to meditate on that—"No man taketh My life from Me. I have power to lay it down of Myself and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father, therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life." O my brethren, this is the heaven that the people of God want. Heaven on earth is by the death of Christ. Life in their souls, peace in their consciences, access to their heavenly Father, the liberty of the gospel and the coming of the Spirit, all these are the benefits of the death of Jesus Christ.

The atonement, what a bed it is for a sore soul. O what a rest for a wounded conscience. O what a sweet heavenly peace it is when opened and applied by the Holy Ghost to one who has no peace and who feels often that he is like the wicked. The wicked being like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, casting up mire and dirt,

but the atonement applied takes all that away. I hope we shall die on the atonement. I hope we shall live resting on the atonement, and when we do lie down on it, then we can say, "I will lay me down and sleep." Sleep here. You have peace with God. No quarrel with Him. No quarrel with His providence. No quarrel with His nature. You do not wish Him to be other than He is. O the glory of God's holiness, and the glory of a sinner's peace unite here,"..That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil:"Heb.2.14. and took away his power. He had the power of death. Death destroyed his dominion. Now this must be a real experience in every child of God sooner or later.

You know the devil is called the god of this world, and that he leads with violent impressions, so the word is, to idolatry all his subjects, and we were his subjects if we are not now. We were led captives by him at his will. We knew not what God meant in His word, nor cared to know and is it different now. Do we want to know Him.? Do we fear Him? Do we tremble at His word? Do we think of Eternity with fear and trembling? Do we believe in heaven, and wish to get there in God's own way? In hell and confess we deserve to be sent there and yet cry to be delivered? Do we pant after God sometimes? Can we say, "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks,so panteth my soul after Thee o God." O sinner, you may not believe it now, you will one day. God through the death of Christ has taken away the dominion of the devil from you. Sin does not have dominion. It seems to have, to your own feeling. It seems sometimes as if the more you strive against it, the more you fall under it, but it is not so really. The dead know not anything. A living person is capable of pain as well as of pleasure. A living person is necessarily hungry and thirsty. A living person has sensations of things, and a living soul you may say, has all that kind of thing spiritually- feeling, hunger,thirst,sensations concerning God and heaven and hell and why is this? Why do I sometimes say to the Lord, either kneeling or moving- "I am sorry for my sins."? Why do I fear lest I should die without knowing God, and by that fear, why do I cry out, "O when wilt Thou come unto me"? Can you answer the question for yourself? Perhaps not, but I believe I can answer it for you out of the word of God. "The living, the living he shall praise Thee." Isaiah 38.v 19. The living, the living. A living soul, a hungry soul. You can no more truly say that a living soul can be without an appetite, than you can say a living

body can exist without an appetite; there must be an appetite if there is life, and if there is a spiritual appetite it arises from spiritual life, and if there is spiritual life, then there is spiritual nourishment, and that shall be given to deliver them from the dreadful dominion, and now the dreaded dominion of the devil. Look up poor sinner, there is a living God to look after your living soul. A gracious Saviour to give you bread after which you are crying, and water for which you are thirsting. There is a gracious Redeemer who says, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." There is a great High Priest who knows your guilt and distance from God, and separation from Him, and how that you cannot get to the Lord but by blood, and that blood He freely shed. There is a living and a great High Priest, and when He sees you overcome, He sends help, help from the Sanctuary. To deliver a sinner is the work of God. To forgive sin is the work of God. To snatch a brand from the burning is the work of God, and to rebuke the devil and take his usurped power from Him is the work of God, and this work was accomplished by Jesus Christ on the cross, and that work on the cross is effectually applied to every living soul by the Holy Ghost.

From fear of death. "To deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." There may be two kinds of fear of death in a child of God. One is the fear of eternal death, the fear that, after death to him, will be the awful judgement, and this is a heavy fear. O it is a heavy fear, when a sinner has hell before him and hell within him, the hell of sin and the hell of condemnation, and no comfort, no relief, no ground to stand on as he thinks. O it is heavy. Some of us have not that fear prevailing. It comes sometimes. I do not live in the fear of hell myself, though I have often had that fear. Christ suffered, as Rutherford so beautifully expresses it, - Christ suffered an innocent hell. He, a holy man suffered the righteous wrath of God. Hell as it is made by God. Hell as it is the curse of the law, has only righteousness in it, and this hell, how you may fear. Hell as a place for the lost is a terrible place, and how you fear this, yet you may have that sometimes and even mentally said it, if no other way - "Lord I will justify Thee if I am sent to hell. I deserve to be there." But Christ

came to deliver such people. "Fear not." He said, "Fear not." He swallowed death up. He took it out of the way, nailing it, with all the ordinances and hand-writing that we had against it, he took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. Yes my friends, He drank it up, the very dregs of it, and when the Holy Spirit takes this salvation and puts it into your heart, you will take it as a cup full of blessing and praise and thanksgiving to God. "I will take the cup of salvation and will praise the name of the Lord." And Christ came for this very end. You think I am too strong in my statements about you perhaps. Well but I won't withdraw them. I will say this in addition, you cannot imagine, nor will ~~you ever~~ be able, or anyone fully, to understand the infinite satisfaction and pleasure and delight of the Lord Jesus when He sees, coming to His throne of grace, a burdened, a distracted, a distressed, a guilty, a bondaged soul. O, but you will know it one day. May the Lord grant that day may soon come, even now if it please Him. It will be a wondrous day. It was a wondrous day with us who have had it. Sometimes I vividly remember it in my own case. A wondrous day when death was swallowed up of life in the conscience, when the smile of God made heaven, when the peace of God pervaded the soul, when the love of God was shed abroad. O when you get that, you will say, Why, if you think of me and think of what I am saying, you will say to yourself, he did not tell us half of it, nor can I. The glories of Jesus Christ. The greatness of His precious death. The wonders of His redeeming love. The efficacy of His precious blood. The sweet union you get to the Lord Himself when this comes to you. No tongue can fully describe what it is, but I must hasten.

The second sort of fear of death that many feel, many of the Lord's people, perhaps most, or all of them, at times, is the fear of the article of death, but now if you get a sweet, blessed assurance that it is well with you, I believe that would enable you mentally, with faith in your heart, to look into your grave and say that will be the softest bed I shall ever repose in and the Lord is the author of this. "To deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Now have you been in bondage a month or two, or a year or two, or for a longer time. "All their life-time." is longer than you have had bondage. A good deal longer perhaps, but the Lord liveth. The Lord liveth. "Thy throne O God shall endure for ever." "Thou remainest."

Thou remainest the High Priest, the King of Glory, the fulness of God, Thou remainest a King, a conquerer of the devil. The overcomer of death. Thou, the Lion of the tribe of Judah hast prevailed and overcome. Thou remainest. What then? All your fears will fly away one day. All your bondage will be broken up one day and Jesus Christ will come in answer to your many prayers and you will know that He put your tears into His bottle. That He cared for you when you thought He did not. That He loved you when you thought He must hate you. That He had prepared heaven for you while you were thinking He was only waiting His time to send you to perdition. Wait on Him. Make your case known as well as you can to Him, and the day will come when this great word will be fulfilled in you.

"Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death, His own vicarious death, He might destroy Him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage."

The good Lord hear us. The good Lord come to us and say-  
"Behold Me. Behold Me, I am your life. I am your righteousness. I am your holiness. I am your peace. I am your All and in all." Amen.

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