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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Sunday evening 14 March 1926

John 1 v 14

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

God has revealed Himself as Three in One and One in Three, not understandable, but believable and believed in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. The unity of the essence does not at all suffer by the distinctions of Persons in that essence and the true and proper object of all divine worship is this blessed God, Three in One and One in Three. It can never be too strongly insisted upon. May the Lord make us Trinitarians. Arias arose and disputed the eternal Deity of Christ. He wriggled and twisted. He was "froward" as the Word of God is, twisted, and said that he could not worship a begotten God. There are men today who are saying the same thing. We do not worship a begotten God. We worship the Father, the eternal Father; we worship the Son, the eternal Son incarnate; we worship the Holy Ghost. Three Persons, divine Persons, in one undivided, indivisible, eternal, mysterious essence; God. And I am of the opinion that if this God were pleased now to draw near to each person in this congregation each person would fall flat as Abraham did, in spirit at least, and worship Him. This would make religion very great to us, would make this service very solemn, would turn out all merchandise and overthrow the tables of the money changers and cleanse the temple. This would make little people of us; no room for human bigness where the eternal God is. "I know not any other" says God, and that awful god, self, the biggest idol you can possibly have, and you have it, would be broken to shivers. Men may set up a Dagon, but God's presence cuts off his head, his hands and his feet and leaves nothing but the stump. Oh it is a great thing to believe in God. Every time you really believe in God you are a miracle. We talk about Him a great deal more than we believe in Him. It is a sort of habit with religious people, a habit

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with us, and not a bad one, to speak about God, but if we only spoke about Him when we had some feeling of Him, some sense of His presence and majesty, how often should we speak? If I only preached about Him when I had a powerful sense of Him, only mentioned His love when it enlarged my heart, how often should I preach? Are you afraid of the habitual, and merely the common, attendance? I am afraid sometimes of an official ministry, but I must preach. May the Lord come to us. That is a great petition in the Psalms "O when wilt Thou come unto me?" The moment God comes, down goes the sinner into the dust. The moment Christ appears, up rises faith, to lay hold of the Lamb, to go out to Him in acts of reliance, attended by love, attended by a train of graces - humility, meekness, gentleness, goodness, hope, faith and love, and away go our lusts as to their dominion. O Trinitarians, do ask the Lord to give you a gracious experience of the Trinity. We shall be a sober people if we believe in the Trinity. But I must, as enabled, look a little more at this, so great a text.

"And the Word", the eternal Word, one with the Father. "There are Three that bear record in heaven, The Father, The Word and the Holy Ghost", and the Word and the Son are the same, and they are used indifferently to set forth the same Person. This Word, this God, this only begotten Son of God was made flesh. When the Son of God made the worlds it was a great act, but an act that needed only the word "Let there be". When the same Word, the Son of God would become Man and take on Him the seed of Abraham, it needed the mighty operation of the Holy Ghost in a singular way, when He descended upon the virgin Mary. If we saw more clearly and felt more deeply, through faith standing in the Spirit's power, the necessity, the beauty, the glory, the intention and the end of the incarnation of the Word, we should, as it were, stand amazed at that doctrine. We should not, perhaps, be so surprised as we often may have been, at the daring and the ingenuity of the devil in raising up men to deny a truth, so wondrous, so mysterious, so necessary to salvation, as the blessed, sinless birth of Jesus Christ who, in His human nature, had no father; in His divine Person, no mother. "Made flesh" means that He took it into an indissoluble union with His divine Person and veiled His glory behind it; took human nature, so that He is truly the Son of Man as well as the truly, the only begotten, Son of God. "Made flesh" means that He took, not a human Person into union with His divine Person, but human

nature which never had a separate subsistence but only subsists in the union it has with the Son of God. So we have not two persons in Christ. One Person, the Person of the Son of God and human nature. Do you need a substitute? You know what a substitute means. It is one person put under, or in the place of, another person. A true substitute is one who takes the place of another in all the particulars in which that other may need one to stand in His place. Whatever liabilities and debts, and duties, the person has and owes, the substitute for him in those particulars, takes on himself. O think of it dear friends, think of it. Our debts, our duties, our liabilities, our sins, the curse due to us, the hell we deserve, these, all these, in every particular, Jesus Christ took. And it is a very beautiful consideration. Just consider for a moment the wonder of God making Himself capable of being a substitute. This could not be in His absolute Deity, in His divine Person alone. He must have the nature of the people for whom He was to be a substitute. Angels could not be substitutes for men. A man must be a substitute for a man, and he must be made under the law of the man for whom he is a substitute, else he could not have sin imputed to him. He must be made under that very law that man broke in order to be capable of having sin imputed to him. Now if this is so, think of the Lord Jesus willingly becoming capable of being a substitute. Then when it comes to you and you get the witness of the Spirit that those sins which you have committed, that guilt which you have contracted, that pollution that disqualifies you for the presence of God, that nature that has revolted from God, and therefore cannot stand in His presence, that all those sins, those same sins, that same guilt, that same disability, Jesus Christ was capable of having imputed to Him, and did receive the imputation of them all when God laid on Him your iniquity, then, when it, I say, comes to you, you say "Is this the manner of man O Lord God?" Couldst Thou love a wretch so as to take his position?

Behold a scene of matchless grace
Tis Jesus in the sinner's place

Hold fast to substitution, consider substitution, study, as God helps you, substitution, what it is, what it involves. Then, as led on, you will see the greatness and the grandeur and the beauty and

glory of Jesus Christ becoming capable of being a substitute and also His love in making Him willing to be a substitute, that He willingly came, saying to His Father, "I delight to do Thy will". "Lo I come, in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will O My God". O sinner, did you ever get a sight of Him in your place, the best sight you can have; as if He, with His own hand, took hold of you and put you away from the law and away from your sins and away from the curse, saying I will put Myself in your place, I will suffer in your stead, I will take on Me your death, I will be responsible for you, to pay your debts and bring you honourably through. Perhaps some are saying mentally, O if we could only get that and be persuaded of that in our souls then we should be happy. Well, there is one in heaven, a great Friend of sinners, who loves Jesus Christ and loves to honour Him, a great lover of sinners. I mean the Holy Ghost, and He is able and He is willing and He waits to be gracious and to bring into consciences that holy, that powerful, that all pervading witness and testimony that shall set the soul at liberty and at rest.

But I must say a word or two about this glory in addition to what I said this morning. I was speaking, when I closed, about the glory of His power and took up one point only, that is the power of Christ to make an end of sin. All human strength, all moral strength, all resolves could not effect this; it is beyond us. It is beyond us in all particulars. We have no legal power. The law says "Pay me what thou owest". It binds us under our sins. A breaker of the law has no power to deliver himself from that law which he has broken. The law has power over him but he has no power to deliver himself from it. O sinner, you who now may be careless about this, you may think yourself at liberty to do this and to do that. You may think you can refrain from that if you wish. You may think much of yourself and your own power and your free will, but depend upon it, this truth will come home to you one day - may it be in mercy in this world - that the law binds you and you have no right, that is no power, no legal power to absolve yourself from your duties, no power at all to say, I am free from that law. God's law holds you. You think it does not because you do not feel it, but you will feel it one day. Ah you will feel it. If it be in mercy to save you you will feel it but you will be delivered then, but if it be in wrath you will feel it through eternity.

And the second point is this, that you have no will to do. Every unregenerate person sets the seal of his willingness to sin upon the sin of Adam. Did you ever think of it, that every act of sin in you, done by you, is a seal of approbation to the sin of Adam and the loss of will remains with us. We have no will. "The carnal mind is enmity against God for it is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be". Here then is a sinner in a two-fold helplessness. O I wish some of you who have never felt it might come to feel it under the power of the Holy Ghost. Now the glory of Christ's power is this - that He can make an end of sin and did make it so as that it shall be eternally as if the people who sinned had not sinned; that He will make them so just that it will be as if they had never been unjust, so pure, it will be as if they had never been tainted with any pollution, and so acceptable to God that nothing can be added to that acceptableness. Honours rest on our mighty Lord. Immortal honours rest on Jesus Christ the Son of God, who made an end of sin and perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Then, following this, there is this to be said. He has power to forgive sin. O sinner are you burdened with sin? There is one in heaven who has power to forgive sin. "But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith He to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house". And that same Jesus in heaven has power to loose every sinner who is bound by his transgressions which are wreathed and come upon him by the very hand of God. He has power to give liberty to that person from his sins. Is not this wonderful? Does it not open a door of hope? Does it not say, O ye simple, ye hungry poor, ye guilty sinners, ye who have thought there is no hope for you, and who feel truly that there is no hope for you out of Christ, does it not say, O turn to this blessed One, this mighty Jesus, able, able, unspeakably able to save, to forgive sin. A door of hope is a wonderful door. It says to those who look through it to Jesus, no despair; it forbids it. Hart beautifully expresses this The dying Lamb forbids despair "utterly forbids despair to all who love His Name". Now this is one of the glories of the Son of God that He is able to forgive sin, has power in heaven and on earth to loose a sinner who is bound by his transgressions and it shall be said of such a sinner - Ought not this sinner, whom Satan hath bound lo these eighteen years, to be loosed

from her infirmity? Ought not this sinner to be liberated seeing he is a son of Abraham? Jesus liberates His people, looses them from their transgressions and their sins. A full gospel is this; I preach it poorly, but the gospel is not poor. Dr Owen said - "I cannot preach a good sermon, but I can preach a good gospel" - and this is a good gospel, the forgiveness of sins, the loosing of a sinner from his transgressions. And further, this glory of Christ's power is in this, that He is able to subdue the iniquities that are in His people and will be in them as long as they live. Great saint as Paul was, he found himself a sinner. The law of sin which was in him, a law that asserts itself, a law that reigns, that law of sin in him prevented the good that he would and urged and drove him into the evil he would not. And this conflict and the prevalence of sin, the law of sin, brought him into self-despair and into grief and wretchedness. He cried out "O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He could not do it himself. Every saint knows the same. But then he found another law, the law of his mind, and he found faith there and that faith said in him "I thank God through Jesus Christ." He was able to do what he exhorted the Romans to do, reckon himself to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God. Jesus can remove the fever of sin from your spirit. Sin is a kind of fever; the temperature of it rises. Jesus went into the house of Simon and found his wife's mother sick of a fever, and He went and said to the fever "depart" and it departed, and you need that same Jesus Christ to come to you when you are sick of some fever, of some sin, when some lust insists and persists, and claims and is clamorous. You need Him then to come and bid that fever subside. Then you will be holy. O the power of Christ expressed in that word in the Romans "Sin shall not have dominion over you for ye are not under the law but under grace."

And further this power is exerted in all the saints with respect to their afflictions. The burning fiery furnace became the sweetest and healthiest atmosphere that those three confessors ever breathed when they walked in it unhurt with the Son of God with them. He has power over the flames. Honours be to Him. No affliction for the present seemeth to be joyous. No temptation shall come but which is common to man, and this good, this faithful, this mighty God, shall quench the fire, and not the smell of it shall ever attach to one with

whom He has walked in it.

Also, He is able to present us faultless before the throne of His glory. Unto God and our Saviour, who is able to keep us from falling and to present us before the presence of His glory without spot and blemish, unto Him be glory for ever. "We beheld His glory". O brethren have you seen this glory, this power of Jesus Christ ruling over all, controlling all, managing all, working everything to His own glory and the good of your souls? We beheld it. John did, the disciples did; they beheld it in Him and they beheld it working in them and every saint more or less distinctly finds the same. He sees it by faith in Christ; he feels it in his experience.

I would say another word about this glory, namely the glory of His love, the glory of the love of Christ. The Apostle, writing to the Corinthians says "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again". Now the Apostle says in one place ".... scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die," a righteous man there being one who is righteous, straight with the claims of the law. A good man is one who, beside that, is also kind and generous and such a man might have a friend who would die for him. But what of the death of Christ? When we were enemies, when we were sinners, when we were ungodly, hating Him and saying in our whole nature to Him "Depart from us for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways", He said He would and He did give His life a ransom for many. The love of Christ. The love of Christ is known to His people in its jealousy. O I have been thankful that Christ is jealous. Of whom? Why of His dear bride, of His people and if we belong to Him and we turn aside from Him we shall know that "His Name is Jealous". It is amazing, but it is true; He is jealous of the love of a poor heart. Hence His graciousness in rebuking, hence His mercy in hedging up a way, the way of a wayward sinner. Hence His kindness in putting wandering feet into stocks and laying a rod on a fool's back. O the love of Christ in such mercies. Also His love in granting encouragements. When the heart is ready to faint He says, "Fear not". When wants stare us in the face and perhaps there are no apparent

supplies, then He says "Fear not". When the enemy is ready to boast against us, then He gives power to the faint to say "Boast not against me O mine enemy". He gives promises, He sends invitations, He administers rebukes; all because He loves. Whom He loves He never leaves and the glory of this is very great inasmuch as it comes to the unworthiest of all. Ah, Paul's chief sinner lives still without contradicting Paul. The chief sinner lives still and I expect if some of us were put to it to find the chief sinner in this chapel we should not be at a loss. We might well contend, and it is a just and good contention, and each would say, I am the biggest, but then, of all that, this is to be said, He came to save such. "Of whom I am chief". Are you the chief? Happy person, you will get the chief sinner's Friend for

Christ is the Friend of sinners
Be that forgotten never
A wounded soul and not a whole
Becomes a true believer

Then hail ye happy mourners
Ye shall of life be winners
By Jesus' blood the righteous God
Now reconciles poor sinners

and He saves them. What more shall I say? One other word on this point I want to say, namely regarding the glory of His wisdom. He is "God only wise". Think of it. They said in amazement when the Lord taught amongst them, whence has this Man His letters? He has never been to school; whence has He His letters? He is "God only wise", and dear friends this wisdom is manifested in the witty inventions that Christ finds out. He has knowledge of witty inventions and the best of all, the highest of all, the deepest of all is that He made a new and living way to God. O, if you have set one foot, taken one step in that way you are favoured. "I am the way". Consistent with divine justice is the exercise of divine mercy. The two go together well. You see in the Psalms how there is an agreement in Christ of attributes which, in themselves, are not to be agreed taken absolutely. Think of them. Mercy and truth; truth in the law, truth in the being of God, truth in the threatenings, truth in the curse;

and mercy, mercy to the same people. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness", the exacting righteousness of God, "and peace have kissed each other". And where have they kissed each other? In the Person of Jesus Christ. Wisdom found out this way; wisdom found it out. Inflict justice on Me, then shall there be a channel for mercy. Deal righteously with Me, then shall there be a way of peace to sinners. They met in Him. There is another place where they meet. O yes, they meet in the conscience of the sinner. That is beautiful; they meet in the conscience of a sinner. They have met in my conscience; they have met in the consciences of some of you. And some can say, we wish they might meet in our consciences. Happy meeting place, happy meeting, wondrous company, a sinner, in whom these perfections of Deity, which in themselves could not agree, are all agreed, and they meet in this place, the conscience. Conscience that is a plague to an honest man, conscience that is the best friend of a convinced sinner, conscience that would not accept a deliverance contrary to God's character, that conscience gets divine satisfaction in Jesus Christ. Now here we have this glory of the only begotten Son and I hope you see more in it than I am able to express. "We beheld His glory the glory as of the only begotten of the Father". Brethren a sight of this will help us to say "O God my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise". Trouble cannot keep from this praise; afflictions wont hinder you from giving this honour. The devil will not be able to prevent you from glorying in that which is Christ's glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. O think of it. See how the very Person of Jesus is as a window through which Deity, with all its perfections and glory, can shine benignly into the heart of a sinner. God can look on us, speak friendly to us, deal mercifully with us and powerfully, and all in the Person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This constitutes the attraction of the Saviour. I am rather fond, as you may have observed, of the word "attraction" as applied to Christ. He is attractive and if you were to put the world on one end, with its attractions, its promises of pleasure and of good, and make a huge mountain of them all, and then the cross of Christ, with its ignominy and shame and reproach and the difficulties and tribulations of the way, on the other end, and in between them a poor sinner, ruined, helpless, miserable in himself, feeling his guilt and being bound by his transgressions, which do you think would pull him? One would pull

him. Which do you think would pull him? I can tell you; the cross would. O his eyes would be fixed here. There would his heart be. He would say, let me get to the cross. What of the cross? The Son of God is there. What of the cross? Sin is put away there. There God is; there grace is; there grace reigns; there love, in all its blessedness is. And so the sinner gets to the cross. The Holy Spirit gives him all the motion of his soul by springs of fear and love. "And we beheld His glory". "I knew Him not" says John, yet he came to see Him. He said "Behold the Lamb of God", and you will say to yourself, O behold that wondrous Son, the Son of God incarnate, suffering. And when you can say, suffering for me, then you are happy.

And one more word with regard to what follows. "Full of grace and truth". "Full of grace and truth". And the fulness of grace is, as I apprehend it, expressed in the Psalms in a very beautiful manner, a manner that has some very appropriate language in it, namely this - "Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into Thy lips". And the beauty of it seems to lie here. We use our lips to communicate our thoughts. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh". Now grace is poured into Christ's lips for that very purpose, that He may pour it out. Now if He is to pour something out, there must be empty vessels to receive it. If He is to speak comfort there must be miserable people to hear Him speak comfort. Think of it. Think of the suitability of Christ. Think of the blessedness of those lips into which grace is poured. What is this grace? It is the love of God and He is to speak it. It is the covenant of grace and He is to discover it. It is the promise of eternal life, and He is sent to speak that promise. What He heard in eternity in the Council of peace He is now sent to utter, to express in His teaching and in His communications. "Grace is poured". A full Christ, full of grace, grace given to Him, as Paul expresses it to Timothy. "Who hath saved us", speaking of God the Father, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began". Why, sinner, you could not receive much of this; it is infinite. How poor, how small, is the vessel of a sinner, and yet all vessels shall be full. There shall be no empty vessel. Good it is to feel empty, to receive out of this fulness. "Full of grace and truth". "And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace". "Full of grace". Truth expresses Himself and what He is.

What is truth? Jesus is the truth. "I am the way, the truth and the life". And what is truth here then? It is Himself in those wondrous perfections and possessions and riches which He has. "Durable riches and righteousness" belong to Him. O sinner, if you are poor enough for Christ, you will do. He has plenty to give, plenty. Plenteous grace, plenteous redemption, plenteous mercy and forgiveness. These are with Him. "Full". Then when you get emptied out, come again and when again you are emptied, come to Him. He says "Come unto Me". He will have us come. Begging is a good business here and an honourable one too and God's mercy has made it so to some of us. We are not ashamed to beg, not ashamed to ask a favour of the King, not ashamed to ask forgiveness from Him against whom we have sinned, not ashamed to ask that He will be with us. Dangerous is the way, full of difficulties. Let us come to Him and ask Him graciously to be with us, that every step may be well taken. "Full of grace and truth". Go begging, and when you beg do not excuse your poverty. Confess that it is your sin. When you go to beg do not excuse any thriftlessness, any wickedness, any waywardness of which you have been guilty. Confession goes well with Him; excuses, never, never! "Full of grace and truth" to give away; alms to dispense; mercy to reign over every poor sinner's fears and to remove and wipe away all the tears from his eyes.

Now if the Lord accepts my feeble effort to exalt Him, may the same effort be acceptable to you, and may the Holy Spirit reveal this Jesus to you and to me, that we may believe in Him and believe that we have everlasting life.

AMEN.