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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at
Galeed Chapel, Brighton, on Sunday evening
3 May 1925

TEXT : JOHN 10 verse 14

"I am the good shepherd and know My sheep and am
known of Mine."

Not I am a good shepherd. A faithful pastor is a good shepherd. One among others. He in his ministry attends to the cases brought to him, and by prayer and supplication waits on God for the good of the flock committed to his care. But here we have the emphatically the good shepherd, above all others, raised and set up by His Father, infinite in kindness, carefulness, knowledge of His own; knowledge of His Father's will concerning all given to Him to save. The good shepherd; the great shepherd of the sheep, who gave His life a ransom and was brought again from the dead, by the glory of His Father. To know Him. To know Him in this character, is to know His love, and His care, and His tenderness. His faithfulness. Silly sheep, they break through hedges, and wander away when they have an opportunity and are not held in. But here is the shepherd who has undertaken to bring them all to the fold above and in the exercise of His love, look after them. He visits sinners. He brings His gospel to them. The gospel is a sinner's gospel and they need it. He teaches them to need it, and then by His Spirit He applies it, makes it their own, a gracious experience. God set Him up. "I will set up one shepherd." One prince, one Lord over them, whose heart is with them, whose property, this flock is. The great flock, though here below the flock of slaughter. He is the Father's delight. The Father's delight with respect to His Person, "This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." The Father's delight with respect to His office "I put My Spirit upon Him" "My soul delighteth in Him." "He shall bring forth judgment unto truth" The Father's delight in His death, for Christ

dying, obeyed His Father, "This commandment have I received of My Father" The Father's delight in His resurrection, for while Christ was here below, He was burdened with sin, and He died unto sin once. When He arose from the dead there was no sin on Him. He liveth unto God. He liveth unto God after the power of an endless life. The Father's delight, so that He is now seated with His Father in His throne. He overcame and is sat down with His Father in His throne, and the Father's delight, so as that He gave the Spirit to Him without measure, while He was the Man of Sorrows. So was His Father delighting in Him: always. All the fulness of the Godhead bodily is in Him. It pleased the Father that it should be so. Now when you come to a sinner, blessed with grace you can say, the sinner says sometimes about himself, that he delights in the Lord. The exhortation is "Delight thyself also in the Lord" and that is always the case when this blessed One is seen by faith. You could not see Christ by faith and not delight in Him, in some degree; according to the measure of your faith, and of your persuasion concerning Him, and your hope concerning yourself, so will be your delight in Him. We could not delight in absolute Deity, but we may delight in incarnate Deity. A man like ourselves, God infinitely above ourselves, One Person. O what a mercy it is to know Christ. It was Paul's desire to know Him, because he did already know Him, and it is the desire of every living soul, to know Him, and to have His righteousness, and to be found in Him, and to say as the Psalmist did "The Lord is my Shepherd" If He has come after you; if He has found you cast, as a sheep, unable to rectify things, put yourself right, and done for you what you could not do for yourself; if He has led your starving soul into the green pastures of the gospel, beside the still waters of redeeming love and mercy; if He has restored you from a fall, then, then you have said and said with good reason "The Lord is my Shepherd." What a wonder

this is. To be delivered from the grievous uncertainty that sometimes pains your heart; to be enabled to say with the humble confidence of faith, the Lord will not let me want. I shall not want. Plenty of truth in Christ to feed upon. Plenty of love in Christ to delight your soul and refresh it. Plenty of power in Christ to restore your soul, and to spread a table before you in the presence of your enemies in this wilderness. Christ has plenty

Christ has blessings to impart
Grace to save thee from thy fears
O the love that fills His heart
Sinner, wipe away thy tears.

I am the good Shepherd. Hirelings there are, false shepherds many. One only, one good Shepherd, superlatively good, infinitely good, above all creatures good. Good to the worst. Good to the worst, to save the bad, to take a sinner's badness from him and give him His own goodness; to remove filthy rags and give a perfect righteousness. To take away gloom and doubt and fear and corruption and pollution and powerful sin. To give His own life and grace and holiness. A good Shepherd. Goodness is relative in this case. Good to sinners. O we can never never hear it too often in our souls, that the gospel is a sinner's gospel, to save sinners. The gospel for sinners. The balm is in Gilead, the Good Physician is there, and all centres in Him who here says "I am the Good Shepherd" What a mercy to know that you are His sheep; that He sustains this relationship to you. I know My sheep. "I am the Good Shepherd and know My sheep" It is a mercy He does know us. It is wonderful that He should know us in the way in which He does know us. He knows us with the knowledge of approval. You say, well I cannot believe that. You will if He comes to you and says "You are fair and there is no spot in you" O but my corruptions. He takes them away as to their guilt. He subdues them as to their power. He removes the love of them. He knows His sheep with the knowledge of approval. Whoever condemns, He justifies. Whoever contends, looks on them with

contempt, He looks on them with approval. They look upon themselves with abhorrence, then He looks on them with approval, and makes them know it sooner or later. They possess part of heaven when He tells them that He loves them. Yes, and the mark of the celestial seal, which He makes, shall never be erased. I know My sheep; in this way He knows them, never makes a mistake. A sheep is a sheep. You may think yourself a reprobate. You may feel you have more marks of being dead than of being alive. You may fear He has had nothing to do with you. You may be greatly troubled by infidelity, and various evils and lusts in your nature. You may be growing in a knowledge of yourself, and therefore growing in a knowledge of that which is most shameful and dreadful, and yet He may come to you and say - all this knowledge I like, I approve of it. The things you know in yourself I hate, but your knowledge is good, only we cannot always distinguish between these things, between the things themselves, and the knowledge of them, but it is a distinction with a difference, a great difference. The reprobate has the things, but he does not know that he has them. We have them in a sad equality with him, but we know them, and Christ knows that we know them, because He has given us the knowledge. Ah, if you know yourself, if you really know your sins, that knowledge came from heaven, given by the Holy Spirit. There is such a thing, I would say it very seriously, advisedly, affectionately, there is such a thing as a holy knowledge of sinful self, and Christ gives it by His Spirit and He knows the person who has it. "I know my sheep" How many of us does He know in this particular way? How many of us look with sadness upon ourselves? How many of us look at our corruptions with shame, and feel as if sometimes we almost are compelled to ask the question - Can anybody possessed of grace, feel as I feel, have the sins that I have? He knows them, not only approvingly, but He knows them intimately, in every particular of their being, and of their life, and of their exercises. He knows them most intimately. You may say of a friend - now he is an

intimate friend of mine. I tell him my mind, and heart and he tells me his. But, you say, perhaps qualifying it, there are some things that I tell nobody and your friend may say, I tell him all that I have, but there are some things, I must say, I cannot tell him. You will keep some things to yourselves of necessity. But Christ knows them, and we can speak of them to Him. What a mercy this is; a full confession, He receives, He listens to patiently. He knows us. The wickedness we have; the unbelief and the hardness of heart, and the ingratitude and all these evils, He knows them, and He knows because He has given it to us. He knows the shame we feel, and the pain and the sorrow, and the fear arising out of the knowledge. He knows these things. We can say to Him - Lord we would not be like this, if we could help it. We can say with the Psalmist - I said I will be sorry for my sin. I have not hid my transgression. What a mercy not to cover them. "Whoso covereth his sins shall not prosper, but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy", and He does know all this. When you would be meek, He knows the uprising of some passion, some passionate pride. When you would believe, believe Him, He knows how unbelief comes up and enters and hinders and pains, and when you would love, He knows the enmity that rises and works. When you would submit to His holy will, He knows how again and again some feeling against His providence will rise up in you - why has He done this and why did He permit that. But then also He knows the sorrow - how grieved you feel at times, because these wicked things rise up, and what is worse, receive entertainment in a badnature, a ruined corrupted nature.

He knows them in their desires. You may say things, and we do speak, and we are known by our speeches but we are not known to each other in our desires unless we express those desires. But the Lord Jesus knows what is in the heart, and when the soul can say inly - "O that I were right" He knows it. When it says - "O that I knew the Lord" He knows it. The movement in the

mind, the language in the heart. "When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." He sees the heart as clearly as we can see the face of each other and much more so. He knows the desires. "Lord all my desire is before Thee and my groaning is not hid from Thee". What when you groan because you are a sinner? It is not hid from Him. He approves of it. He is pleased with it. Things that look to us scarcely worth noticing, scarcely bearing the image of grace, are to Him beautiful because the fruit of His grace, the work of His Spirit.

"And know My sheep". And He knows them as His sheep. As His sheep first of all being the purchase of His own blood. "Feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood". He knows His own purchase, 'tis His property. The flock belongs to Him. He has folded them; they were eternally folded; they are purchased at such a cost, Oh such a cost. He knows them as His own purchase; bought with His blood; bought with that precious, that wonderful, that infinite price - His own life. The good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep, and shall he purchase that of which He has no knowledge? There is nothing random in the purchase of Christ; nothing uncertain in His purchase, nothing, Infinite in knowledge, He knows His own. Infinite in love, He knows for whom He laid down His life. "I lay down My life for the sheep." My Father commanded Me to do it and I have done it. He knows them in their wants. "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things". And if such things may be spoken of as being providential, we may also add and much more - He knoweth the spiritual wants of his children. They want righteousness and He knows it and has wrought a righteousness for them. They want forgiveness and He knows it and He has forgiveness and power to bestow it. They want holiness and that belongs to Him and He gives it to them. He is made righteousness and sanctification to them. They want power and He giveth power to the faint and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. They want light, and He is the light of life, and sheds that light upon their souls from time to time, and upon their circumstances and upon His

own will concerning them. They want peace and He says "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you" They want submission to His will and He enables them to say "Thy will be done". O how sweetly does His fulness meet the emptiness of His people. How wonderfully adapted is His grace to the wants, the needs of His poor people, who fear often that they are all but graceless. He knows them in their wants. He knows them in their trials and adversities. Said the Psalmist, of this Shepherd - "I will be glad and rejoice in the Lord" Why? For He hath known my soul in adversity. He hath considered my trouble. Think of it. He hath considered my trouble. Took it into account in all its ways; all its communications. He has considered my trouble - how much it is; how little I can bear; how long it is to last; the end it is to accomplish. He knows. He has considered it all. Thou Most Upright dost weigh the path of the just. He weighs out all pains, our sorrows, our adversities. Therefore He knows. Poor sinner, the Lord Jesus knows you, knows your hope in Him, your trust in Him, your need of Him, your trials and difficulties, they are all open to His gaze. You sang just now that beautiful hymn "God moves in a mysterious way" Look at the big clouds, pregnant with trouble as they seem to you, and to me, but pregnant with goodness, deliverances coming and He knows. He knows our souls in adversity; adversity is His, pressure. We are pressed sometimes almost out of measure, and He knows it. He sends relief, swift relief sometimes, very swift sometimes. "In the world ye shall have tribulation" He knows it. You see He has promised it. The measure of it; its continuance, He knows all. He knows His sheep as overcomers. He sees them all conquerors. They were raised from the dead when He was raised from the dead. Bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, members of His body in particular. He knows them. He sees them as they cannot see themselves. They can only see themselves in this particular in His light, by His testimony, but He sees them and knows

them as conquerors. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne," and He sees them all. Through Him they are more than conquerors, more than conquerors. I know My sheep. I am acquainted with them, intimately, lovingly, with all the care of My heart. I know them. With all the power of mine arm I know them. With all the intentions of My Father and of Myself and of My Spirit as to their eternal welfare I know them. And that is on His side.

And what of these sheep, what do they know? He says "And am known of Mine". There is a mutual knowledge. If you know Christ, you are a very favoured person, and it is the fruit of His knowledge of you. "And am known of Mine". Let us as enabled just take a passing look at this. It can only be passing, its depth is infinite; its glory is eternal. "For this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." "And am known of Mine". And where shall I begin? If I were to begin with the washing of regeneration, some of you would say - but we do not know when we were born again. We do not know that the life that came to us was the life of Christ. Let us begin then with some manifestation of mercy, and some answers to prayer. Let us begin when it pleased the Lord to raise us to a good hope through grace, when it pleased Him to make us acquainted with the wonderful suitability of His Person to us. Take that beautiful scripture in Timothy - "There is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." And, when we only knew one God and trembled, there came a sight of the man Christ Jesus, the Mediator, and what a sight. A real Man - Almighty God, standing between offended Deity and an offending sinner. We knew Him. It was real knowledge; it affected us as the medicine your doctor gives you, when you take it, affects you. More or less distinctly and directly it goes to the malady, it affects you. The knowledge of this Mediator is a penetrating knowledge, it comes to the disease. It meets the case. The sinner is no longer altogether and only alone. There is one God, and the sinner dreads Him, trembles at Him; one Mediator between God and this sinner, and then the sinner finds that he is not alone, that he may and that he does

draw near to God with some hope, is his experience. He does draw near with some hope in this Mediator, think of this. It is beautiful to all who have it. "And am known of Mine" "I in them and Thou in Me" They know that I meet their case; that My Person is suitable to them; that My Mediation is just that which they need, and they know it, they see it, they feel it; it comes into their hearts, it reaches them in their trouble, their trouble of standing before an offended majesty. O it is a great mercy to understand this much about the Lord Jesus.

"And am known of Mine" We do not guess then. Guessing in religion is terrible. Supposing in religion is most terrible. A child of God dreads it. He longs to say "Now know I" Now I know. Like the disciples - Now we know, we believe, that Thou art come from God. So you want, as born again, as under the teaching of the Spirit, you want to say "I know there is a Mediator" Job wanted one; when Elihu came, then he knew, he knew for himself, and so you want to say in your own soul "I know there is a Mediator, and the sight of Him has made me hope that He is a Mediator for me; a Mediator suitable to me; a Mediator in my own nature. A Mediator in the very nature of God, One Person, with two natures, able to take my case up; full of compassion and of pity and of power. A Mediator, an Advocate, who takes the case up and says to the sinner - no excuses, only confession. He takes the case up. When you make excuses you get no access. When you make confessions the Mediator takes the case up.

"And am known of Mine." Blessed is this knowledge. I say again it penetrates. It will ^{distill} percolate like rain soaking down into your heart and into your own case and you will say, blessed Mediator. You will put your case into His hands with humble confidence. You will ask Him to take your case up and to deal with it for you, because you are dumb. Guilt has made you dumb, and your sinfulness makes you dumb. But now this Mediator takes the case up, and deals with it. They know Him again in the virtue, the efficacy of His vicarious death. Christ died to save the lost. He died for sinners, died voluntarily. I would that

we might ever keep that before us. The voluntary death of Christ is a vicarious death, and when you see this by faith, you behold a scene of matchless grace, Jesus in the sinner's place, and that truth has a place in your heart, a place in your prayer, a place in your hope. It is the ground of your hope. It is the plea you are taught to make; the argument you are enabled to use by faith. Come, poor sinner, knowing this you cannot despair can you? A dying Saviour forbids despair to all who love His name. All manner of sin, all manner of blasphemy His precious death removes.

"And am known of Mine" as a sin-forgiving God. The Son of Man hath power to forgive sins, and between a forgiving God and a forgiven sinner, there is this to be said - they are one. When your sins are forgiven then you are near your God, as it were there is nothing but a speck of time between you and heaven and you know for the moment, it is one of the most solemn moments of a sinner's life on earth, when God forgives his sins. I have had many good times, many blessed times I trust in my experience. The beginning of them was the most solemn of them in some senses when I knew, when I did not imagine nor conjecture, but I knew that my sins were removed. You look for them and will not find them. When the sins of Israel are sought for they shall not be found. I will pardon whom I reserve. Blessed language. "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

"Am known of Mine" O what a thing, Brother Saul the Lord Jesus who met thee in the way as thou camest hither has sent me unto thee that thou mightest receive thy sight, arise. The forgiveness of sins was then his. Sealed upon his very conscience. God and conscience can come together in peace, when the atonement is on the conscience. The atonement that went to God comes to the sinner, terminates in his conscience, its last resting-place. Peace, liberty, comfort, joy in the Holy Ghost come this way. Come poor sinner, this is how you will know Christ when He says "Thy sins are forgiven" This is how you will know Him. That He came to put them away and

did it; and came to save you and did it, and has come to comfort you with His love and His blood and there is nothing between you and God, of sin, of guilt.

"And am known of Mine" as their life, and the door of access to their heavenly Father. "And am known of Mine" as that Comforter whose love comforts, and whose presence comforts and whose Spirit comforts.

"I know My sheep and am known of Mine" Just look at this then dear friends, it is one of the most sacred things you can have in this world, the coming in some measure and manner of the Lord Jesus Christ to you. Take it as it is set forth in the Psalm I read the 23rd. "The Lord is my Shepherd" O what a great thing it is to say it. Not a Shepherd, not the Shepherd of my friend, of my husband, of my wife, but my Shepherd. To come to know it experimentally. Why, by what He has done. "He leadeth me beside the still waters". He leads me into green pastures. He restores me when I am fallen. He heals when I am sick. He brings me back when I have foolishly wandered away. Silly sheep, we are so apt to wander. Silly sheep, without understanding very often, and yet this Shepherd comes and brings them back. And think of a fold that has been in existence since Adam and Eve were the first sheep of Christ in this world when they were restored from their fallen state and were justified. From that day to this there has been a fold. Many folds in visible churches, but one fold. Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, not of this people then living. Them also must I bring. There shall be one fold and one Shepherd. And I shall be known of them even as I know them. I will speak to them. I will comfort them. I will give them My love. I will give them My grace. I will indulge them with My presence. Now this text then expresses the mutual knowledge of Christ and His people as well as it sets forth also the greatness of His office that He stands alone in it. Though He has other shepherds, under shepherds He is the Shepherd. Under His eye how can you wander into hell. O sheep of Christ, under His protection, how can you be overcome and torn to pieces by wolves

and lions. I give My life for these sheep and therefore take care of them. I hope the Lord will bring us to say this in our hearts. Very far from saying it we may feel, at times, very troubled by sin and by Satan, and whatever dangers may appear to us in the way, I trust that He will enable us to look to Him and say - Well, though we are full of trouble, we have a Shepherd; we have many wants, but we have a Shepherd; many dangers, but we have a protector, the Lord Jesus, the King of Kings, the Lord of lords, and though our needs are many, He has green pastures enough, and still waters to nourish and refresh us. If we are brought to this then we shall be indeed happy. I am the good Shepherd, I know My sheep. He will know you into heaven, He will know you into heaven, that is bring you there, and you know Him here and hereafter and sing "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father. Unto Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.