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No evening sermon available)

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel

Brighton on Wednesday evening 15 April 1936

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JOHN 14 verse 6

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"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me"

This was our text last Lord's Day, and I kept all the time in speaking of Christ the Way. I endeavoured to show you that there was no way to God, to any good spiritual thing, but by Jesus Christ, that all approaches to Jehovah must be made through Him, that all communications from Jehovah, come through Him. We do need, and hourly and continually, the covering of His mediation. No safety without it, no peace without it, no comfort without it, no heaven without it. You, who are exercised, go in the power of the Holy Ghost continually to this great and glorious Mediator, Jesus Christ. You will never get to the Father without Him, and you will never reach heaven without Him.

There remain two words to be noticed, and I would as helped bring them before you now.

The first is I am the truth. The truth of all the promises concerning Him, all the prophecies predicting His coming, Person and work. All the types representing dimly, all the shadows of which He is the body, are fulfilled exactly, absolutely, in and by Him, and in this sense He is the truth. The Apostle Paul's contention in the Galatian churches was this, that the truth might continue with them. He speaks to the Ephesians thus, that they should speak the truth in love, as the truth is in Jesus. To the Colossians he speaks also to the same effect, that after they had known the truth, they brought forth the fruit of it. This is the truth, and I will, as helped treat a little of it, as it is in Holy Scripture, and then how, in some measure, the Lord's people are partakers of it by the power of the Holy Ghost. The first gospel word recorded in Holy Scripture is, as you know, that notable scripture in Genesis. I will put enmity between thee and her seed. It shall bruise thy head thou shalt bruise his heel. Now in that, there is implicit, a promise that Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnate shall bruise the devil, destroy, as it is in the Hebrews, destroy the works of the devil. He came to do it, to destroy death and him that had the power of death, that is the devil. That promise implied there was

distinctly given to Abraham, who is the father of the faithful, because, through him came the human nature that the Son of God assumed. A wonderful promise and it was given to Gentiles in him as well as to Jews. In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. May the Lord bless us by granting us to realise that we have an interest in that.

He was promised and made known to the early fathers. Adam knew Him. Abel knew Him, and very clear it is, I judge, that God did teach Abel the distinction between clean and unclean, and Enoch the same and Noah the same. Before the law was given, the ceremonial law, given to the children of Israel, it is clear that the Lord had given what is equal to a promise teaching between clean and unclean, between what He would accept and what He would not have. The truth is there in type and when Israel became a nation, then it pleased God to give them particular instruction with regard to types and shadows. The annual burnt offering, the cloud of incense with blood, going with the High Priest into the Holy of Holies, the daily offering of the lamb, morning and evening, and the various offerings that were, most of them, sprinkled with blood, all testified to that and had in it a promise that the seed of the woman was to come, that the Son of God was to be incarnate, that the reality of redemption should be accomplished by Him. All the prophecies have the same thing, tend to the same end. Isaiah speaks of Him. God, by Isaiah, said that a virgin should bring forth a son and should call His name Emmanuel. Jeremiah was told to write - a woman shall compass a man, a new thing God would create in the earth. Micah tells us that this Man, who?, the Man born in Bethlehem Ephratah, should be the peace of His people. Ezekiel saw the same truth, and all through Holy Scripture promise, prophecy, type, shadow, set forth this great one, Jesus Christ, who here says "I am the truth". Not the truth in an abstract sense but the truth in His very Person. Does not this say to you, to me, in the form and letter - if you are destitute of Christ, you do not know the truth, you cannot. You may be pleased with some knowledge of type, shadow, and prophecy, and be ignorant of the truth. It behoves you as hearers, as readers of the scripture, to look narrowly into this, whether you know the truth, that is to say, whether you know Jesus Christ. I am the truth.

Now this brings me to this point that I named. How do we become acquainted with this? An acquaintance with it is attainable. How are we to attain to the knowledge of Christ as being the truth? Two things bring this to pass in everyone blessed with those two things. First a need. Yes, if you are not empty of yourself at least in some

measure, how can you be filled with another? God does not invite full people to a feast. He does not call upon people who have no thirst to come and drink water. If you are full of yourself, you will never hear in that case the word of God inviting you to come to Him. "The Saviour", says Berridge, "empties whom He fills" Better still the scripture says "Ho everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" You never take a full vessel to the tap to draw water. God is wise, He will have empty vessels. The emptying is a sore business to those in whom it is wrought. What, be nothing, do nothing, have nothing? That is just the point. You resist it, I resist it by nature. Nobody wants to be nothing, nobody wants to be poor and destitute. God says I will teach you. He instructed Isaiah with strong hand. That is how He has dealt with some of us. The Saviour empties who he fills. And, when that is done by the Holy Ghost, who as He is doing it gives conviction of it, and prayer and desire, and hunger and thirst, when that is done, then the feeling begins. Not all at once. Do not, those of you who have just a little, conclude that you have nothing. You may be rich without possessing millions, you may be christians and not know it, but you will want to know it. Then, when the Holy Ghost manifests Jesus in some way and degree. and you get that sight of Him that makes Him attractive to you, that you Lydia-like attend to the things spoken in the scripture, that you look for Him, wait for Him, then every glimpse you get of Him carries with it some assurance, some hope. Every glimpse you get of Him strengthens faith and you begint to say - I know I shall perish without Him. I will venture to pray, I will venture to ask. I deserve hell, but I will venture to seek for heaven. Jesus is the heaven the soul seeks and ultimately finds. I am the truth. They said of old "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth." When you find Him there is not a thing you have got you would not part with for Him. The pearl of great price is such to you that you sell all you have to get it, to buy it. You buy wine and milk without money and without price, and you enter somewhat into that word "Herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him," And that brings vital religion just to this - an empty vessel filled with heavenly treasure.

I am the truth of redemption, I am redemption itself. I am the truth of wisdom. I am wisdom to show fools the way from hell to heaven. I am righteousness to justify the guilty. I am sanctification

to make holy the polluted. I am redemption to give liberty to captives. "Who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

Now that is how people become acquainted with the truth and know the truth and the truth makes free. If ye know the Son, the Son will make you free and then you are free indeed. You look into the perfect law of liberty, and you continue looking into it, and the more you look into it, the more pleased you are with it, the more satisfied that that is right and nothing else is. O what a Christ He is. And when you get near to Him you embrace Him, you love Him, you weep to the praise of the mercy you have found. You admire what He has done in dying, you adore Him for what He did in dying for you, as you hope, and you cleave to Him with full purpose of heart, knowing that there is no good but in Him. The truth of the gospel, every line of it is true. What an awful thing it is to deny it. What a dreadful thing it is to be ignorant of it. The Apostle laboured that the truth of the gospel may continue with the church of God, for he knew there was no salvation but in that truth. What is the gospel? The substance of it is Jesus Christ. Good news from a far country. The way to God, the life of God, the truth of God, the smile of God, the love of God, the patience of God, all in Him. You could not name one gospel word that is not in Christ, of which He is not the fulness. Promises? They are true. A promise is an engagement made with somebody to do something for that somebody. If it be a promise a parent makes to a child, it engages the parent to do what is promised. How easy it is for a man to promise more than God will give him power to do, but when Christ promises a thing He means it, and more He has power to fulfil it and He will do it. Faithful is He that promised, He also will do it. And the Apostle Paul speaks in the Corinthians a word which seems just to have fallen incidentally into his discourse or letter. Some of the Corinthians seem to have doubted Paul's sincerity in promising to go to them. He said the promise was not made lightly. Then he comes to that which is a golden word. The gospel preached by him and Silvanus was not yea, nay. This is the truth, all the promises of God from Genesis to Revelation. All the promises of God are yea in Him and amen to the glory of God by us. If you have ever had a promise whispered into your spiritual ear, you are in that promise stronger, surer than heaven and earth. They shall pass away, but the word whispered into your heart must be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away till it be fulfilled.

O how rich is that sinner who has a promise, and Christ is the truth of it. I may say this with truth, there is not a promise in the scripture that does not contain something of Jesus Christ. There is not a promise in the gospel of which He is not the substance. That makes the word of God in promises very great does it not. You must live to get the fulfilment of a promise that belongs to this life and you must die to get the fulfilment of a promise that belongs to the life to come. Godliness is profitable for all things having promise of this life and of that which is to come. If the Lord promises some supply of a temporal nature you will live to need it. If He promises heaven you will die to find the good of it, the fulness of it, the permanency of it. I am the truth. O believing friends, cleave to it, that is, to Him who is the truth. Cleave to Him. I would exhort you to this and charge you to regard it and remember it as being heaven. Holiness here, heaven hereafter. All the good you need is stored up in Christ.

And the life. I give unto My sheep eternal life. He is the life of the scripture and this life is called the light of life. In Him was the light and the light is the light of life. He is the light of the Word of God. Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law. You may see them intellectually and admire these things, but they are not a light in your understanding, in your soul. It is when that beautiful light comes quietly and calmly sometimes into your mind that gives you an understanding. You will have more understanding than your teachers in some particulars, if the light shines into your heart. The Apostle, writing to the Hebrews, speaks of them thus "After ye were illuminated ye endured a great fight of afflictions". They could not have endured any affliction but for that illumination. When the light illuminates, you see God in it, you see yourself a poor wretch, a worm, worthless because of sin, but you see God. "With Thee is the fountain of life; in Thy light shall we see light". And I think it is to be much admired that the Lord puts life and light together, the light of life, because the light never shined into any child of God's heart without life coming with it. It is not a cold light like the moon. It is a living light, like the sun. It comes from God. It warms, it teaches, it humbles, it strengthens, it guides. I am the life of the scripture. The only way rightly to receive and understand the scripture, is by the Holy Ghost bringing from the fountain that light. He is the life of all the dealings of God with His people. Whatever does your soul good, has life in it.

Whatever humbles you, has life in it, a feeling. It is not a cold thing, a living warm feeling that brings you before God. A teaching that brings you into the dust, is a wonderful teaching. There is life in it. Lately I have said where is the lowest place I can possibly get into, to be nothing in myself. When ever you get down in a right way, you are just a living soul, living in humility of heart, because Christ is the life of that teaching.

He is the life of all sanctified afflictions. Many troubles come, that are not sanctified. Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. But when the Lord sends trouble as He did to Job, what is the effect? See the effect in Job. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord. His affliction had life in it, attending his spirit, humbling his soul, and bringing him to a contentment with God's dealings with him. There was life in that affliction. Have you not found that? Cannot some of you say, that when trouble came, life came, giving you power to submit to the dealing of God with you? Whatever rebellion your nature might have felt, moving, rising, there has been that in your heart, that has said - God is right. You have said in heart, if not in word, He exacteth of me less than mine iniquities deserve. Look for this. You will find what Paul says is true - No affliction for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous, nevertheless afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, unto them that are exercised thereby. Watch narrowly the working of affliction on your spirit. If you do, you will find wisdom teaching you to look to God and wait on God in the affliction and there is life there. There is life in every precept of the gospel, when it comes from Christ. A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another. Now, should that meet your eye and no more, you wont care for it. But, should it be dropped into your heart, by, the Holy Ghost, there will be light in that, and life in it. Then you will say - I do believe what the hymn writer expresses

Love is the golden chain that binds  
The happy souls above;  
And he's an heir of heaven that finds  
His bosom glow with love.

Love to Jesus Christ first, and then it flows to His people. He is such a light of life in this, that all who receive it, desire to walk worthy of God. To walk worthy of God, is to show the worthiness of religion, the reality, the power, the separating influence of God's religion. It is to walk worthy of the precepts.

I am the life. Just as He is the life of the whole Bible in a spiritual sense, (every child of God believes that) so He is the life of all His people, in His dealings with them, and when you get this, when it comes right into your soul, when the light gathers your eye, if I may so express it, and draws it up to the source, and you see Jesus, the fountain of light, and the life of light, then you cleave to Him and admire, if it comes into your mind at that time, this word "I am the Way." The way you are walking is right, the way you are going is right, the end of your way will be heaven. "I am the Way". Look for no good but in Me, expect no mercy but from Me, look for no mediation but Myself. Look for no cloud to cover you, but the incense of My merit. Look for no pardon but by My blood. Look for no communion but in My Person, through My death. Look for the Father in Me. Look for good from Me. Look for heaven by Me. May the Holy Ghost bring this to you and to me. If I had grace and ability I could preach better than I do, yet I am sure the Lord is pleased, when any of His servants try to exalt the Son of God in their ministry. I have felt at times, several times lately I think, a kind of sweet, solemn feeling, that the Lord has been rather pleased, with my poor effort to lift up His Son in your midst, and I hope you will find the drawing power of an uplifted Christ, lifted up in the wilderness, as the brazen serpent, a beautiful type of Him. Lifted up on the cross, a wonderful declaration concerning Him. Lifted up in heaven our great High Priest, ever living to make intercession for us.

Now may the Lord forgive all imperfections in thus speaking, and bless the word to you that you may be benefited, Christ exalted, and your love drawn out to Him, your faith empowered to lay hold of Him, and keep Him and your hearts with all diligence. You will find that out of it are the issues of life.

Amen.