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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday evening 7 April 1918

JOHN 18 v 37

"Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art thou a king then?
Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this
end was I born, and for this cause came I into the
world that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that
is of the truth heareth My voice".

What a solemn thing it is for you who do not hear the voice of Christ, for you are not of the truth, and can anything be more dreadful in the case of a man than that he should not be of the truth, not born of the Spirit, not have the Spirit of Christ in him, not have the life of God, the fear of God, and not be taught the truth as it is in Jesus. All who are true receive the Kingship of Christ, receive Him into their hearts as their King and submit to Him. They see His beauty, they perceive His worth, they trust in His power, they depend upon His protection. Christ is a glorious King, full of all beauty, all divine beauty, all human excellence. And because of the latter, the former is possible to be known by sinners. God and sinners as such can never walk together, but God and redeemed sinners can walk together in Him. Who redeemed them? The Man Christ Jesus, and He becomes their blessed King. What a sweet state of mind the Psalmist was in when he was led to pen the Psalm I was reading just now (45). What a full, boiling heart he had. The margin reading is my heart "boileth or bubbleth up" of good matter. He had no cold heart at that time. The deadness and the coldness and the distance and the shyness and the unbelief and the unacquaintedness of the heart with God were removed and the Spirit of Christ was in him, testifying beforehand the things concerning Christ, what He should be, what He should do, and who should be His wife, and how He would clothe her. And all these things, belonging to Christ, the Psalmist was indited by the infallible inspiration of the Spirit to write in that beautiful Psalm. And my beloved friends, I would draw your attention a little, by the help of God, to this, our glorious King, whose heavenly reign in the hearts of His children is to be without end. His kingdom is an

everlasting kingdom, and of the government and peace of His kingdom there is to be no end. "I will be thy King" He says. O may He say it of us and to us. "I will be thy King". Thou seekest to be thy own king; "I will be thy King", when thou wouldest walk in thy own ways. "I will be thy King; where is there any other that may save thee?" The King is beautiful, full of all goodness. He is beautiful in His love. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee". Love is stamped on the dealings of Christ with His children. When He rebukes them, it is in love. Love is stamped on all their trials and it is happiness to them to see that love inscribed upon them all, and every one sees it; He is their King in this, His beautiful love. Nothing so wins the love of His children as His love made known to them. Once you feel His love to you, you will find your soul attracted to Him, united to Him, hanging about Him, waiting for Him, and feeling there is none other that you want.

"Thou O Christ art all I want
All in all in Thee I find

And this, His love, brings Him to draw with lovingkindness His children, draw them to Himself, and this is just what the Church wants, as of old she wanted it: "Draw me, we will run after Thee". And when she had been running after Him and had found Him, then she said: "The King hath brought me into His chambers". "He brought me into the banqueting house and His banner over me was love". And it is love in the beginning and love in all the dealings and love in the sweet experience, when there is nothing between God and the sinner but love. And to this end was He born. He was born to be in His people, born to reign in their hearts, and consciences, with His love. God will reign over the wicked. He will find their wickedness out and He will punish them and break them into shivers with the rod of His strength. No creature, human or angelic ever shall escape the dominion of this King, but what a difference between Christ reigning in a sinner in His love and reigning over a sinner reprobated and wicked, in His wrath. Ruling with a rod of iron and ruling with a sceptre of love are very different rules, very different indeed. O what a mercy it is when it pleases this blessed Jesus to come and visit a poor, guilty creature, and say to him, "Yea, I have loved thee

with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee". And the moment that love is felt, the sinner melts, his heart gives way, his spirit yields, happiness fills him, comforts divine flow into his soul. He is happy. All is well with him. Christ is beautiful in His pardons; He pardoneth iniquity and transgression and sin; holds no grudge against a poor sinner who has gone against Him in so many ways. O, He works freely; He is beautiful in His forgiveness. It is a complete forgiveness that takes away every bar and hindrance to communion. He leaves nothing behind; He becomes familiar with a sinner; He takes all death and all guilt and all bands and all fear and all bondage out of the way and comes to this poor sinner in His great forgiveness. There is nothing left, my friends, to hinder communion for the time, and nothing shall be left throughout eternity in this respect. Christ forgives all. I have cast thy sins behind My back into the depths of the sea. When the iniquity of Israel is sought for it cannot be found. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us". And whatever men may think about power and reigning, is there anything on earth can be compared with this, a full forgiveness spoken freely on a sinner's ~~ear~~; and, though you have been shy and distant and afraid and have been thinking that He Himself will be shy and distant with you, and stand aloof from you and have thought that, even though you get to heaven, while you are on earth He will be shy and aloof, that He should so come and forgive sin as to take away the whole of what you felt, thy shyness and distance, and fearfulness again. Look at Joseph's poor brethren. They thought, as they heard him speak, it was dreadful; they were afraid. But when he had spoken to them, when he had kissed them, he said: Come near, come near to me, and they talked with him. There will always be that, conscience recurring in us when fresh guilt comes. These poor men, when their father Jacob was dead, thought now Joseph will treat us badly. And you may think, when some of your comforts are gone, and fresh guilt is upon you and remembrance of your absence comes back to you, what will the Lord do with me. O but how kind He is; He holds no grudge, He comes again and again and yet again to poor sinners and blesses them, blesses them with pardons. Pardon again and again He gives, yea, many a time, and in this our King is beautiful. Sin gives way to Christ's power, the power of His blood. Nothing else can remove it. He is beautiful in His dealings with His children in His sweet mercies, in

His divine smiles. He does smile; O, He makes a heaven. He fills all places; the fulness of Him that filleth all in all, and that is what He is to His children. The fulness of Him, the fulness that fills them, the fulness of life that fills their souls, of light that fills their understandings, of mercy that melts their hearts; the fulness is all His and out it comes flowing in sweet streams into their hearts at times, whereby they know that this is their King, overcoming everything, and how beautiful He is. His garments smell of myrrh. How beautiful are His garments. There is the garment of zeal. He was clad with zeal as a cloak. What for? To perform divine purposes. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall perform promises. Has He promised to do something for you? this King. O, what difficulties there may be in the way; what unbelief; what solemn, sad providences; what a distance there may be between you and this promise and God. He shall be a performing God. What can stand before the Lord? "Who art thou O great mountain, before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain". The zeal of the Lord, of the Lord of Hosts, shall perform His great word. "I will do thee good". "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee". "I will rejoice over them to do them good with my whole heart and with my whole soul". The covenant of grace secures good to those who are in it, and the zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall do it. He came near His Father by obeying the law and dying and His zeal carried Him through. He comes to bless sinners, and their sin and the devil and the world and all kinds of evil are between Him and those to whom He is coming, but what a zeal He has. Mountains flow down before Him; He touches them and they smoke. His garments smell of myrrh. This zeal is wonderful. O, He wont rest till He has done it. Whatever He has promised to you my friends, whatever He has said to you, He will do, and never rest till He has done it. Blessed be this King for His kingly power and authority over all things, all creatures, all difficulties.

There is the garment of righteousness too. He is righteous and He is our righteousness, and this does smell with such a heavenly savour to His children as that they want no other. And so this, our King, is everything to us.

Look at His kingly power and authority. "All power" said He to His disciples before He left them "is given unto Me in heaven and in

earth". Power to break your heart, to remove the bars, to take away the hindrances, to rebuke the enemy, and the avenger; to raise you up out of your low places; to revive you when you feel so gone as that you have no religion. Power to overcome every difficulty, every devil, every temptation; to sustain you under every burden that He Himself may lay on you; to bring you through the water and through the fire, that you shall, coming through, glorify Him. This is what He can do, our King. Ah, and some can say - they may now be saying - My King, my King, my glorious King; O, He is a kingly King. "By me kings reign and princes decree justice". Zion has this King. God said of Him, "I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion" and therefore, whenever this great One comes to you who are feeble and sinful and unworthy in your own sense, you will find that there is power with Him.

With power He rules, and wonders performs;
Gives conduct to fools, and courage to worms

Our King then was born to do this, to be this. "To this end was I born". Born to rule and bear sway. And if there is any comfort to be had in respect of this fearful world war, it is that all the threats, the intricacies, the entanglements, the sorrows, the horrors of it, are under the control of this, our great King. It was given to Him, as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, to approach unto His Father and take the Book out of His hands, break the seals of the Book and look therein, and all the commotions and troubles and disasters that are now taking place, confusing us and distressing us and distracting us, are under the control of King Jesus. "Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?" If we look to the earth today there is nothing but dimness of anguish and darkness in our houses, our families, our connections in the Church of God; everywhere, dimness and anguish and darkness. And yet there is One who is infallibly moving, ruling, guiding, ordering all things. And, though we cannot see how, God helping us, we can believe that good and glory and honour and majesty and power shall come to Christ and the Church by the means, the very means, that now are so terrible to us to contemplate, even by means of this war. I was born to this end; born to be a King, and He will brook no rival. "I will be thy King", is His Word, and He will be the King over men who say "We will not have this

Man to reign over us".

And again, dear friends, what a King He is in His Word. "Where the word of a King is there is power". This blessed Word, this infallible Word, full of goodness, full of promises which are yea and amen to the glory of God by us. And He was born to make it good. Faithfulness is the girdle of His reins. That is a great word Paul has concerning God - "God that cannot lie". Man can, man does; God cannot. Therefore every jot and tittle of this Book must be fulfilled and every promise given out by Christ sealed home on the hearts of the saints must be fulfilled. There was one promise made to Abraham and God was 430 years before He began to fulfil it; before He did fulfil it. They shall come out of Egypt. They were there 400 years and more and the law which intervened and the difficulties that came and the troubles and the natural impossibilities, nothing, nothing came to prevent the fulfilling of the word of God, both as to their coming out of Egypt and entering into the land of promise in His own time. And you may say, of some things spoken to you, they seem dead, and they may seem dead, be dead in your thoughts and dead in your experience for a time, and you may have given up all hope of being saved according to that word that you had given to you. But this shall be true; you will say, eventually, that not one word of all His good promises hath failed and, with Joshua, you will say, I know in my heart, in my soul, that God has fulfilled every jot and tittle of His word to me. Blessed be God, He is King in His word. Men deride it, men reject it, men despise it today, but God is in it and He will magnify it above all His Name. It is a sad and awful thing that the Scriptures should be so rejected as they are today, and I am disposed to think, if I may turn aside for one moment to say it, I am disposed to think and to say that the day may be near to us when it will almost be like a pass-word to distinguish a saint from others that are about him - What think ye of the Bible? Is it God's Word? Is it an infallible Word? And then, when you come close, come home - What think ye of what God said to you? of the word He spoke home and sealed on your heart with divine power? - O, then a saint will say, I know what I felt and whatever I have feared since, I do solemnly believe at certain moments that God will make good every word He has spoken to me.

He is King in His consolations and very beautiful in them. His

consolations are powerful consolations and sometimes they must needs be to be effectual consolations, because there is great trouble, great, anxious, exquisite pain, and poor people, feeling deeply the things that befall them, and naturally they must be filled with distress. And now there comes a consolation, words given to a poor, distraught creature, and sympathies. And yet, says the afflicted one, I am filled with distress; nothing comforts me; my soul refuses to be comforted. And then Christ comes near - that kingly King in His beauty, with His smile, His love, His mercy - and He beams upon that distressed sinner and speaks to the disease and the trouble. And though the providence be not altered, the whole creation is different; the whole of creation is changed. "Behold I make all things new", says our King; I do it. I, the Creator, make all things new. I recreate your feelings, I recreate your joys, I recreate the consolations that you have lost. I make crooked things straight by this great word; I make rough places plain. I am thy God. Fear not, I am with thee; I will be with thee in the waters, in the flames. Thou shalt not be drowned; thou shalt not be burnt. I love thee, I redeemed thee; thou art Mine. And when these consolations come they are so powerful that they dry every tear, remove every fear, and bring the sweetest of all peace and comfort into the heart. Is He not beautiful then in His consolations?

He is beautiful in His assurances. He assures people of things. He tells them things; He tells them of a kingdom to come; He tells them that they are going to it. He says "Fear not little flock for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom". He puts doubting away sometimes, like as when Israel questioned with respect to the priesthood being invested in one family, thinking that all were holy, and all should approach the Lord in that particular way. God settled the dispute and He settled it by making Aaron's rod to bud and to bloom blossoms and yield almonds. Now sometimes our King settles disputes in us. We dispute this and that, but He comes and settles all disputes by filling us with the fruits of righteousness which are by Himself unto the praise and glory of God. If you look on trouble, you will dispute; if you look at your own case, you will think, how can this be and love divine? They are not consistent. He comes and shows you that He has given to His children in all ages the very worst side of His providential face; He has frowned apparently

on them till they could scarcely bear it. A horror of great darkness came on Abram. After he had fellowship with God and God had made a covenant with him, a horror of great darkness fell upon him. You see, when the tabernacle was erected and completed, the covering was of badgers' skins. Who, looking on that outside, would think that there was such glory within, that it covered such treasures, that God's presence was there, and that the glorious symbols of it were there? You may have an outside of trouble and garments, as it were, of affliction put on you, and O, what tears befoul your face. Who would think that you had a King, a God, a Saviour, a Redeemer? But so it is. The hidden man of the heart is touched by the Lord - hidden away from all eyes, hidden from your own sometimes by your own natural things and the troubles and the rough things that come, but there comes the King: O what a King He is, what a blessed King He is - and He makes all things new, brings them to light that is; lets you see His goodness and lets you into what Paul says to the Corinthians: "Ye see your calling brethren"; ye see it; you see God has called you, made you a holy people to Himself. Called you to be saints, called you to the fellowship of Himself, into union with Himself. And so the King comes in this way and recreates in the souls of His dear children what He will have them know and feel and enjoy from time to time. You may be, in your experience, as dead and as corrupt as Lazarus was literally, corrupting in his grave, but that ¹⁵ makes nothing to Christ of difficulty; there is no difficulty with Christ. "He speaks", Rutherford says, "He speaks to stark death". All that He has to do is to speak to you. "He spoke and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast".

And our King is beautiful also in this, His faithfulness. Faithfulness is God's alone. We are fickle, false; we are false to Him. Faithfulness belongs to Him. "I knew thee", is His word to a treacherous wife, "I knew thee that thou wouldst deal very treacherously". And what will He do? the same? O, no, "I am the Lord I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob", treacherous dealers, "are not consumed".

Since in love I took thee in
My promise I'll fulfil

Lying children have an unchangeable God to save them, save them from all their false way, and false things and false words and false spirits, and to come to them and reign in them and reign over them. Blessed be God for His faithfulness and blessed be God that He cannot lie. Blessed be our King that He never tires of reigning. An earthly king may; he may get so tired, so weary of intrigues and of treachery and so disgusted with all his surroundings that he may abdicate. Our King cannot; He undertook the work of saving a sinner. He knew all it meant; He knew what He would have to do, what traitors He would have to deal with, and He knew how to make them loyal to Himself. He knows it today; He knows how to get our hearts. Blessed be our King for His faithfulness. He gets us, captures our hearts and attention and sometimes we can honestly say to Him out of our hearts - each child of God can say for himself - "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed. I will sing and give praise."

"To this end was I born", born to sit on a throne - "Exalted at God's right-hand to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins" - and to occupy that throne of glory to which He is exalted, for ever and ever. And around that throne and on that throne shall be a multitude that no man can number; He is born to bring them there. Said Reuben to Jacob, concerning Benjamin, "If I bring him not again to thee, I will bear the blame for ever". May one not use that in a way of commendation to the Lord Jesus, and say that He has made Himself responsible for the safe bringing home of all His children to His Father. "If I bring them not I will bear the blame". O, but see what is in the Scriptures. He says to His Father: "Behold I and the children whom God hath given Me". "Not one of them is lost save the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled". And that is true still; not one of them is lost, not a saint. "Not a bone of Him shall be broken" it was said in the spirit of prophecy, and it is true mystically of His body: "Not a bone shall be broken". This ensures the safety and the glory of every child of God. "If children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ". One writes thus:

In heaven there's not a vacant throne
He hates to put away

And to this end was He born. Here is the glory of God; the glory of the Father in sending His Son, the glory of the Son in voluntarily coming, and the glory of the grace that He bestows when He gives His good Spirit to His children to bring them all home to His Father. I was born to this. What a favour it will be for us to know this concerning Him and to be His subjects. I will tell you one certain sign of His kingdom in you if you have it, namely, that by the weapons of warfare which He uses you will find imaginations cast down, high looks and high thoughts brought down, and every thought brought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ, and you will be like Mary then. O, sitting at His feet is a sweet thing; no thought of independence; no thought of being righteous in yourself; no thought of sanctifying yourself; no thought of getting honourably through by yourself; no thought of glorifying Him by any effort of your own old nature; no thought of overcoming the world; but all the thoughts concerning these things brought into obedience to Christ. My life, my hope, my righteousness, my sanctification, my wisdom, my power, my goodness, all in Him; that is, as I understand it, somewhat of having every thought respecting salvation brought into obedience to Christ. O, bless our King, this King Jesus; born to be a King, brought forth by His Father to be a King, set on Zion's hill to be a King. And now, reigning in His house, He gathers His children, teaching them to say: "Come, let us go up unto the mountain of the Lord's house and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths", for the law shall proceed from Him. This, I repeat, this is our King. And should any stranger say, well why do you make such an ado about Him - Because there is no other beauty, no other God to us; because there is no Saviour but Christ and no salvation but His blood and righteousness; and because there is no happiness but that which He bestows and no safety but in Him; because the Lord His Father hath put all fulness in Him and He is pleased with Him that it should be there, and because He has committed all rule and all authority and all power unto Him and set Him there to rule; because of these things, we say, we will have no other King, we want no other King, there is no other King, and we make this noise about Him, and I wish we could make a greater ado about Him. That we we might want Him so much as never to rest without Him; that we might have such an appetite for Him as to be miserable until He is pleased to come again and again to us and say: "Behold Me, behold Me."

Here now I must leave off, praying the Lord to mercifully commend to our hearts His King whom He has set on His holy hill of Zion, and that we may be His willing subjects, sitting at His dear feet, with every thought brought into captivity unto His divine will.

AMEN.