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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Sunday evening 2 April 1922

22 Matthew v 41/42

"While the Pharisees were gathered together
Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose
Son is He? They say unto Him, the Son of David"

These important questions were asked of the enemies of Christ,
were put to the Pharisees. I am speaking to a promiscuous
congregation and by the Lord's help I desire to put these questions
and would say, humbly, that your answer is required, and God will know
what it is.

What think ye of Christ is the test
To try both your state and your scheme
You cannot be right in the rest
Unless you think rightly of Him

Blessed is the man who can unite with the Psalmist - though not
inspired as he was, yet taught of the same Spirit - and say, "My heart
is inditing a good matter" The same gracious man will say, of a
painful necessity, that his heart is often inditing matter other
than, far other than, good. Probably there is no child of God here
who has not, at some time and in some way, since he was born again,
devised mischief upon his bed, and for the same man, with the same
old nature, the same tempting devil, and the same trying
circumstances with, and about, him, to say: "My heart is inditing a
good matter, I speak" or would speak "of the things which I have made
touching the King" is an effect of divine grace, a miracle of divine
grace. And so, in the same person, you will see, as it were, the
company of two armies, two men; the old man and the new man, they are
called in the Scripture.

We will look, as we can, by the help of God at this great
question. What think ye of Christ?" Do you think anything of Him? Is
He ever in your thoughts, or are you dead and utterly indifferent to

Him as well as to your own sad case? But, supposing that you are in some way religious, "What think ye of Christ?" What do you think about His Person? What do you think about Him as the very God as well as the very Man the Scriptures reveal and declare to be one Person? A mystery as expressed by Paul in those words: "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifested in the flesh". Where is that in which there is no controversy? What state is it where the glories of Christ's Person are not doubted? Why, in the Church of God, for it is that place of which the Apostle speaks when writing to his son, Timothy. Giving him directions as to how to behave himself during his, that is Paul's, absence, he says "that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." "And without controversy". Not in the world, not in the Jewish world then, as now, not in the Gentile world can it be said that there is no controversy about Christ. O, what do you think about Him as the eternal Son incarnate? Is He to you Almighty God? Do you ever feel your need of a Saviour and has Christ ever been made manifest to you as your Saviour or, if not, have you sought, and do you seek, that He may be your Saviour? None can save but Christ. Some who know that sing sometimes

None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good

They also say: "Give me Christ or else I die". A mere man, however great and noble and wonderful in life and heroic in death, could do no good to a sinner with regard to salvation. He who saves from sin is the God against whom sin was committed. He who purges sins away is that precious One who shed His blood freely; He is God as well as Man; Almighty God. Do you think this of Him, and, thinking it of Him, do you find an affection for Him in your hearts? Would you fain be united to Him who is this wonderful One, whose Name is Wonderful, Counsellor? The child born, the Son given. Do you desire to have the unsearchable riches of this wondrous Person manifested to you, to know His favour, to see Him smile, to hear Him speak, to feel Him touch your heart? What think you of the Person of Christ? Have you to say you know nothing about Him, and if you have to say that are you indifferent about that solemn matter of ignorance of Him? Does

ignorance of Him trouble you or can you go to bed at night without any prayer to Him? Rise in the morning without any thanks to Him? Do your business without any asking direction and help of Him? What a sad condition you are in if that is your case. What think you of this Person? Shall I tell you what the Father thinks of Him? Indeed you know it by reading or hearing the Word read. This is what the Father thinks of Him as He expresses His thought: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased". And this is what He says of Him to others: "I have set My King on My holy hill". This is what the Father prophesied of Him speaking of Moses: A prophet like unto him will God raise up unto you. Him shall ye hear. What a mercy then if we have thoughts, however poor and contracted, of the same kind as the Father has of His beloved Son. Happy the sinner whose heart is where the Father's heart is, on the Son. Happy and blessed the eyes who look on Christ as the Father looks on Christ, with delight. O, what a mercy it is to know something of the want and the worth of Christ. And if you die without right thoughts of Him you cannot be right and you have no ground to expect to be with Him in eternity. The language of every man's heart after the flesh is this, to Christ, and of Him. "Depart from us for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways", and "We will not have this Man to reign over us". Bless God, it is not the language of all of us here. Some know just enough of Christ and have seen enough of His Person to be led to say - and we have said often to Him -

Depart from Thee, 'tis death, 'tis more,
'Tis endless ruin, deep despair

If, when you pray to Him - if you do pray - and He seems to take no notice, how does that affect you? If you think well of Him, if you think the thoughts of faith about Him, well, for Him to take no notice of you is death indeed. Yea, it is an affliction to pray and get no answer for a time.

Next, what do you think of His blood? The whole of redemption is put into that word by the Holy Ghost - the blood of Jesus Christ. What do you think about that? It is written that if we confess our sins God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And it is written also: "These things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an

Advocate with the Father" and also "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin". The blood of Christ satisfied God, pleased Him, satisfied divine Justice for the saints of God. It, when applied, satisfies the conscience. What do you think of that? Have you any peace without it? Are you at peace with yourselves? The confession of a good many people is this, one fears, that they have no real quarrel with themselves; they quarrel with God but not with themselves. When a sinner hates himself, when his sins are bitter to him, when he feels the separation that sin makes between his soul and God, when he perceives that he cannot, with his sins, get near to God as he would, then when he hears it, the sound of the blood of Christ is the most heavenly sound that can fall on the ear of his soul. The blood of Christ brings peace into the conscience, brings submission to the will of God into the will of the soul, brings an acceptance of God's dealings into the heart, brings genuine humility into the spirit, brings love to Jesus Christ for living and for dying, brings a lively hope in the mercy of God. Do you think that, do you know that in any measure, or are you destitute of this precious blood in the efficacious power of it? What think ye of the blood of Christ? It was the purchase price paid for the church. Do you wish to know that you were purchased by it? It puts out the power of sin in the affections. Do you wish to know that? It is an open door to God, an open and new, living way. "Having therefore brethren boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" It is the soul's strength in conflict. It binds Christ and the sinner together; it cements, in the sweet experience of the sinner, his soul to Christ. It is a solid ground on which He stands, an efficacious plea which he makes before God. What think you, my brethren, of the blood of Christ? Because a poor, unworthy man puts the question to you, do not turn away from it. It affects you. If you are born again you will want it, pray for it, and if you are indifferent to it who can express the sadness of your condition. O, poor sinner, if you have no high thoughts of the blood of Christ it is evident that you have no proper thoughts of your sins. And if you have no proper thoughts of your sins here, what will become of you through eternity?

What think you, in the next place, of the power of Christ? And the power of Christ is not stated in the Scripture as being simply omnipotence; it is expressed in the word "grace". What think you of

the power of Christ as it is expressed in the word "grace"? Grace to conquer sin, grace to bear with the waywardness of a sinner, grace to deliver him out of trouble, or to sustain him in trouble. This was power as Paul experienced it when, seeking the Lord thrice that the temptation, the thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan sent to buffet him, might be taken away, he got, instead of that - and he found this better than that - "My grace is sufficient for thee". And, expressing his soul's condition under this, he said that he would gladly glory in his infirmity that the power of Christ might rest upon him. The power of Christ there is the grace of Christ. "My grace is sufficient for Thee" Sufficient to stem the torrents of sin as they rise and rage in your own heart. Sufficient to bear with all your waywardness and to bear with what, alas, is so grievous to some of us, to bear with our sleeping and slumbering, and saying to Him, we cannot arise from our bed, for we have put off our shoes, washed our feet, and we are quite comfortable without Him. And yet grace bears with all that. My friends, does this attract you? Is it one of the things you ever make in your heart concerning the King, that He has grace, great grace, more grace, efficient grace, abiding grace, abounding grace. Abounding, so abounding, as to be abounding over sin. O, what grace has Christ manifested to me. All the years of my profession and the years of my faulty ministry, grace, free grace and precious grace, and effectual grace, has borne with one all through. What think ye of grace my friends? The power of Christ is the grace of Christ in this matter. The power of Christ is wonderful, that is the grace of Christ. There is nothing that can be compared with it for blessedness and beauty and glory; all sufficient is it. Take that Scripture in the Romans; this embraces much of the experience of the saints. "Sin shall not have dominion over you". It tries, does it not? And sometimes, sadly, some of us have had to say, as for our iniquities they prevail against us. Yes, temper prevails, unbelief prevails, rebellion prevails. We want to get away from the things God has put us in, the troubles He has laid on us, and out of the path into which we have been placed by Himself and have to walk. Then says the Lord, "Sin shall not have dominion over you". Why? Because you struggle against it always? Because invariably you hate it and loathe it and resist it? No! No! No glory to your own will and your own resistance and your own invariable disposition Godward and against sin. No! This is it: "For ye are not under the law but under

grace" That is the reason that sin does not conquer every man in the world. My hearers, what do you think of this power of Christ that can overcome your sins? Do you kneel and ask Him to give it to you? O, happy is the sinner who prays for grace out of his very heart's feeling of necessity. "Grace, 'tis a charming sound". Grace will never leave its subjects under the dominion of sin. "My grace is sufficient". "Sin shall not have dominion over you for ye are not under the law but under grace", and the beautiful Benediction, as we call it, and which is used always at the close of a service, expresses the same great matter: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you". What this is, none can tell, but the people who feel it. When grace comes it softens the heart, sweetens the spirit, humbles the mind, and brings a sinner in lively exercise of faith and love before his God. What think you of the grace, of the power of Christ, ~~that is?~~

And what think you of Christ as a faithful, blessed Saviour and Friend, "who keeps His love from first to last, and Jesus is His Name"? Have you any faithfulness you can boast of? Have you never had Peter's fall in your spirit? Have you never been shocked at the dreadful things and thoughts that have worked and wriggled and struggled for the mastery in your own breasts? Have you never felt that you have dishonoured Him exceedingly in your spirit? Are you not chargeable with that unfaithfulness with which the people of old were continually charged by their God in the national covenant? Have you never had commerce with any false gods, never turned aside to any vain jangling? Have you never thought that He had forgotten you, that His mercy failed and His promise failed for evermore? What saint will plead innocence here? Then if we have been unfaithful, how is it we stand? How is it that we are not cut off? have not been, long and long ago? How is it that again and again we get to the throne of grace and get access and get answers and get mercies? Why, He is faithful. This is His Name. He is faithful; He changes not. What do you think of One who never changes? What do you think of Him who, in His divine nature, cannot change? In His human nature united with the divine Person of God, the second Person in the Trinity. Of Him who, in this, His complex Person, keeps His love, hates to put away, turns with double love to His poor, erring, and unfaithful children, and says, Return to Me, for I am married to you. What think ye of Christ

here?

A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation of our hope
In oaths and promises and blood

O I wish the Lord would give every one of you, if it could please Him, right thoughts of this blessed Lord Jesus. I have wished today that I could speak well of Him; He is so worthy of being lauded, lifted up. Our highest and best thoughts of Him are poor and unworthy to be even noticed by Him.

What think ye of Christ as the blessed Lord God who, having died for His people, says this to them: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also". O, does the Lord, as being in heaven, ever draw your affections that way and to that place? Once, when I was a young man, I did earnestly hope that I should soon die. When the forgiveness of sins filled me with bliss, then I wanted to go, and I lost all my comfort soon after that when I found, not only that I had sin remaining in me, but, alas, that I loved it, and I have had struggle, and trouble, and conflict ever since. But, in these latter days of my life, there is now an attraction that was not often in earlier days felt, an attraction to that place where He is. It would not be heaven to the Church to be without Christ. It will be heaven to be where He is. What think you of Him as having prepared a place and, as having done this, taking care of His disciples for whom He has prepared the place? As, having prepared the place for them, constantly taking care of them and looking for the day when all His enemies, their enemies, shall be subject unto Him, and He, with them, will be crowned with eternal bliss. I dare say some of you are attracted by certain prospects that you have in this world and it is quite lawful for you. No man is to be condemned for holding dear to his heart a given prospect and looking for the accomplishment of his desire if that be kept within bounds. But what if that is all? If you have no God but that, no ambition beyond that, no desire beyond that? Why, that will

soon be gone. Those of us who are old can well remember our prospects and anticipations, but most of them have passed away and there is not much left to us now in this life, but there is something beyond. O, the solid hope, the solid hope, the blessed expectation that is sometimes felt in the heart. What, to be with Him, David's Lord, David's son, and David's God; to be with Him who is the Father's delight, the Father's pleasure; to be with Him who has sometimes appeared to us here in such beauty and glory as to overcome us completely. What a prospect it is. What think ye of Christ? O, what said one to Him of old, when He appealed to him and to his brethren; "Will ye also go away?" Numbers had gone away, they saw no beauty in Him; they were offended with His teaching; there was that in it that was repulsive to them. A kingdom which they could not understand because they saw it not. A King, whose claims were all divine, but whom they knew not to be a King. His teaching offended them and this awful word is recorded of them. "They went back", many of His disciples, "and walked no more with Him". I have trembled at that word, "and walked no more with Him". Profession withered, withered away. "Will ye also go away?". Peter answered: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life". Poor sinner, do you feel something like that, utterly unworthy of His notice, unworthy to pray to Him, unworthy to think of Him, unworthy to have His Name in your thoughts, and yet again and again you say, Lord Thou canst heal my soul if Thou wilt and save me if Thou wilt. O do so, for Thy Name's sake. Well, press on. Who gave you the knowledge that He could do it? Who made Him shine in your eyes? Who made His Name sweet to your spirit, better than all earthly music? Press your case. What a wonderful congregation this would be if each member of it could say: "Christ only I seek". But it could not be said, could it? Some of you, if you are honest, would answer my question mentally and say, well it is too true, we do not want Him, have no desire for Him. Why? Because that is true. He is as a plant out of a dry ground, withered looking, no attraction. Without form, without comeliness to such people, is this Lord Jesus. O, what a mercy that some can say, He is all over glorious to us, all over glorious. We can never say what we have seen in Him. Well, I would leave these questions with you. A poor, sinful man puts them to you as questions that are of everlasting importance. You cannot be right in any other thing and all other things if this be wrong, if your thoughts of Him are not right

thoughts. This was the test; "What think ye of Christ?" A good many people think little of Him. May it please the Holy Ghost to give us high thoughts of Him; gracious and tender, believing, humble thoughts of Him. It will make us little in our own eyes if He does so. As Christ rises in the esteem of a sinner down he goes in himself; he is vile. When God appeared to Job, then Job said: "Behold I am vile". And when Peter was convinced that Christ was risen, when John said "It is the Lord", then Peter cast himself into the sea. "Depart from me", said he, on one occasion, "O Lord, for I am a sinful man". He had great thoughts of Christ at that moment and everyone blessed with great thoughts of Christ has just the same feeling of vileness and hatred of self. "What think ye of Christ?" Now look at the question. As I said, do not put it away because one who is sinful puts it to you. Here you will stand, here you will fall, as you think of Christ. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he". Just as a man's heart is, so is his character; it is his character before God. Well, may we praise God if we have right thoughts of Christ. He came into the world to redeem His people, and He did redeem them. He has gone to heaven, having done that great work, to intercede for them, and to bring them to Himself at last. where He will, having them all before and around Him, present them to His Father saying: "Behold I and the children whom God has given Me".

Now I pray the Lord to bless this congregation, to bless and comfort the living in it with many tokens for good, and that those of you who, at this present time, have not right thoughts of Christ and therefore not right thoughts of yourselves, may be blessed with grace. There is a living way to God and this is it. "There is one Mediator between God and man". This is He, Jesus Christ. One foundation on which sinners can build. This is the foundation God has laid in Zion for His people, and on that one foundation He builds them; builds them up on their most holy faith. May God bless you. May conscience be instructed to answer this question: "What think ye of Christ?"