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Sermon preached by Mr. J.K. Popham  
on Wednesday evening, 9th. January, 1929.

Text: Psalm 25. v. 5.

"Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me:  
for Thou art the God of my salvation;  
on Thee do I wait all the day."

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This is the language of a man who feared God, who was in trouble, who had faith to lift up his soul unto God, to take all his troubles and his enemies to the Lord and to seek this inestimable blessing. "Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me." And the reason that he gives here for this petition, is that God was the God of his salvation, and he expresses and sets forth the condition, the attitude of his soul - "On Thee, do I wait all the day." Not a bad thing, indeed a good thing, as in another psalm it is said, "It is good for me to draw near to God." O what a mercy it is to have a good religion. A good religion is expressed in the book of Revelation. It is expressed thus:- "And I, John, saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem,.....that great city, the Holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God." As many of us as have a good religion have got just that. It may not be that we realise it; perhaps realise it only seldom; but there it is. The religion God gives to His people is thus set forth: "Coming down from God out of heaven." This is "being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God." Born of the Spirit. It is said to be a "new heart," a heart not to turn away from God. We shall never pray if we have not divine life in our souls. If we have divine life in our souls, we shall never cease praying as long as we live here. Ah, it is a great mercy to be a praying person.

There are one or two points that I would particularly draw your attention to in this text. The first petition - "Lead me in Thy truth" - and notice that the truth here referred to, is God's truth. Hundreds of times in the Scripture, this is spoken about. The truth of God. It must be His truth if we are saved by it. Nothing less, nothing else. No additions, no subtractions. Just God's truth. That will shape our religion. That will bring some correspondence to what God said to Moses, "Look that thou make all things according to the pattern, shewed to thee in the mount." There must be that, where there is saving grace - "Thy truth." God is the God of truth and when He began to reveal Himself to men, then He revealed Himself as the God of truth. He made a promise to fallen Adam which has been in the fulfilling ever since he uttered it, the seed of the woman "shall bruise thy head" - the head of the serpent. And he has sworn in truth to David, so David's mercies are sure mercies. He has sworn in the covenant - "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips." The truth of the gospel. So important was this in the judgement of the Apostle Paul, that writing to the Galation churches and referring to the enemies about and within them, he said, "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour." And why this stout response? "That the truth of the gospel might continue with you." Nothing is so important as

the truth of God. One of the subtleties of the enemy to-day is to make professors afraid of what they call controversy. 'O do not disturb the churches by any controversy, just let every man profess what he likes, hold what he likes, so that he is sincere, but do not trouble the churches by anything like controversy.' What is important compared with truth, the truth of the gospel? To the Ephesians, the Apostle writes, "Speaking the truth in love" - as the truth is in Jesus. The embodiment, the fulness, the beauty, the consistency, the glory of truth. It is said in the psalms, "For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven," and the truth of the gospel will make the people in whom it is, firmer in their condition, than heaven and earth. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." O, dear friends, be this our petition, 'Lead us in Thy truth.' If we hold anything else it won't save us. If we cleave to anything else it will do us no good. If we give place to any error by subjecting ourselves to it, it will do us much injury.

"Lead me in Thy truth." The truth God has expressed, that He has revealed, revealed in His Son, in His gospel, in His oath and in His promise. God has condescended to speak to men, and what He says to them is the truth. Think of it! We talk about truth as if it were a cheap thing. We speak of places of truth as if they were ordinary things, whereas it is just the contrary - vital and important to the last degree. Truth..... Jesus is the truth. "I am the Truth." Truth..... The covenant is the truth, which God will not break. Truth..... Why, the Holy Ghost brings it. This Book is the truth. Every part of it as being inspired, is truth. It is truth when the Holy Ghost causes the sins of men to be written. It is truth when God threatens nations with destruction for their sins. It is truth when He threatens to remove the candlesticks of professing churches who have become degenerate and unfaithful to the truth as delivered to them. It is the truth when omnipotence engages itself to bring worms of earth to heaven. When infinite wisdom engages itself to instruct fools and bring them honourably through all the mazes of their ignorance and their difficulties. It is truth when God pledges His fulness to supply the needs of his poor people. It is truth when He tells them that He will bruise Satan under their feet shortly and it is truth when He says to them, "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." It is very striking in my view that the Lord has, in His word, spoken so emphatically about truth. It has its own divine shape and beauty and blessedness and in the Spirit's grace it has its own wondrous power in the hearts of all to whom it is given. Think of it! Truth..... We talk about it. I repeat, we talk about it as if we knew it, and as belonging to certain places which we call Causes of Truth. But now look at this. - There is the Spirit of truth. There is a form. "Hold fast the form of sound words," but do not hold it carelessly, because under that form may be the spirit of error. There is a spirit of error and there is a spirit of truth. The spirit of error makes men restless, unsatisfied, shifty, unstable as water, double-minded, never prevailing in any good thing. "Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." You may generally judge, I think, that when a person is not right in the truth, though he may profess it, you will find that he is restless. Error never settles, never settles anybody who holds it in the spirit. On the contrary, when

the spirit of truth is in a person, not only is the form of sound words held, but there is a stability, there is a weight in truth that will keep a person from being carried about with every wind of doctrine. Truth wont lead you to be like the chaff driven away with the wind. It will bring you down in your own esteem, and raise up God in your esteem, so that you will want Him and you will wait on Him and you will love Him. The truth is a girdle. "Having your loins girt about with truth." God's truth. Nothing will bind us but that. We may think we bind ourselves with good resolutions but they are no more than tow in the fire of sin, but the truth of the gospel will gird the loins and keep the sinner safe and steady, and make him comfortable and peaceful and happy, again and again.

The truth is a sword, the "sword of the Spirit" and that, in the hand of faith, will do good in execution, in the fight of faith. "Fight the good fight of faith," and it will bring the soul to that word, "My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," and error will have no quarter whenever you meet with it. It wont make you rude and vulgar in defending the truth, but it will make you humbly firm and be as the Apostle, "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." Now this is just a feeble word about the truth. Look at the petition with respect to it. "Lead me in Thy truth." That is to say, according to the word. Cause me to tread the path of truth, to walk in the truth. Lead me so as that my feet will be in the way of truth, and here it is "as the truth is in Jesus," which means, the truth respecting His Person; the truth respecting His death; the truth respecting His resurrection: the truth respecting His ascension into heaven and His prevailing intercession there. "Lead me." Cause me to walk in all that truth, and this will be the shape of a sinner's spirit, the trend of his mind, and the desire of his soul. Make me afraid of error, error of spirit. I expect some of you have many-a-time done this in secret - said, 'Lord graciously keep me from receiving any error.' O the times that that has been my petition. Do not let me receive any error, any error of doctrine, or any error in experience, or walk in any wrong practice. You may well be afraid of yourself. He is safe, who is afraid of himself and in that fear, cries to God to teach him, to lead him. Error is natural to us. To be led into the truth, is to be led in a way of mortification of the flesh. Error is beautiful to a blind sinner. He thinks he sees, and does not. Truth is beautiful light, and efficacious life, in the hand of the Holy Ghost. Do not be afraid of seeing your ignorance. Be afraid of ignorance. Be afraid of being led astray by ignorance. Ignorance is a terrible thing when it rules, but do not be afraid of seeing it, of feeling it, for that will cause you to cry, "Lead me in Thy truth and teach me." 'O let me hold nothing wrong; nothing wrong concerning God; concerning the Trinity; concerning the counsels of God; concerning the purposes of God; concerning the truth of God; concerning the gospel of God: let me hold nothing wrong.' You will find the Apostle John in his epistles is as firm, as clear, as exclusive, as severe as any writer of the Bible, though he is spoken of, and rightly so, as the Apostle of love. Yet, when he has to do with God's truth, there is no man firmer, no man more distinct in his declarations against error. "I have no greater joy," said he, "than to hear that my children walk in truth." What is the truth there? The truth of the gospel and especially as in his epistle, the truth concerning Christ and His work - His precious blood. May the Lord make

us as a congregation very particular about this and may we not think that we know it. I was foolish and wicked enough when a young man to think I knew something about it, when I was brought to see it. O but I have learned this, - it was pride, it was not knowledge that made me think I knew, it was pride. And now, that suits me to-day immeasurably better than it did when I was a young man, - "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law" - "That which I see not teach Thou me."

"Lead me in Thy truth." Cause me to walk in the truth, "as the truth is in Jesus." And remember it is written as a divine promise, "I will strengthen them in the Lord; and they shall walk up and down in His name, saith the Lord." That, as in another place it is said, is walking by faith. "We walk by faith, not by sight." Does He lead us? Do you get heart humbling views, perhaps very transient, of some divine truth concerning your soul, your salvation? Hold that fast. Judge everything that is brought before you by what God has taught you in that way. Do you get sometimes a view of the Person of Christ, the Son of God incarnate? Hold fast to that. Is it opened to your view, sometimes to your comfort, that there is a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness? Keep close to that. Keep close to it. Do you now and again see the beauty in that repentance that God gives? Follow that and whereto you have already attained, in that particular, as in other particulars, "walk by the same rule .... mind the same thing." Truth! O there is nothing in the world so valuable as God's truth. The lips of our High Priest keep the truth. Everything froward is an abomination to Him. "The froward mouth, do I hate." A froward mouth speaks untruth, "but a lying tongue is but for a moment." The truth of God endures for ever. Human nature will die in its sinful state. It cannot continue, but this endureth for ever - the word of the Lord, and this is the gospel, the truth as it is preached. Therefore, go on my brethren, may we travail together in this prayer, "Lead me in Thy truth." 'Cause me to tread the way of truth. The way the prophets went.' It leads to heaven.

"And teach me." A meek man is a man whom God teaches. "The meek will He guide in judgement: and the meek will He teach His way." A meek person is a teachable person. A conceited one, "is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason." Meet a man who, whatever you talk about in the word of God, knows all about it: be afraid of him. And you meet a sinner, who says, 'Well, I do not know. I am afraid I shall find myself wrong everywhere. I am a poor ignorant creature and what I have thought I have known of the word of God does not stand me in good stead.' Now exhort that one to hold on. "Exhort one another daily." Exhort that poor person to hold on in prayer: "Teach Thou me." - "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." Saving religion is not to be measured only by the full assurance which some have, but by the nature of that truth that God has given to them, however small the measure of it may be. It is good to be fully assured, and I wish some of you who are not so, may soon become so, that God may reveal Himself in your souls, but this is the thing: a little of the grace of God is better than the revenue of the wicked. "Teach me." There are some lessons that seem to contradict each other. When God teaches a sinner that he is a sinner, that seems to say that God has anger and only anger against him. When the depth of iniquity is broken up in a man's heart, that seems to say, 'Now the flood of sin will drown you in the pit of perdition.' When

the law in its terrors comes and strikes a sinner's conscience, then he thinks the fire of eternal vengeance is lighted and will consume him for ever and when the majesty of God is revealed, the sinner shrinks and shrivels and withers and dies. Now that teaching is to make way for another teaching. A teaching which, if set before this person while he is under the terrors of the Almighty, may seem only to be mocking. It makes way for this teaching - that there is a Saviour in heaven, a Saviour of whom Richard Dore spoke. You have it in that beautiful account of him:- Walking to his work one morning at 6 o'clock, in London, he stopped and said, "There is a Man in heaven who loves me and whom I love." What a teaching, was it not? O, what a teaching! Think of it. You would like to stand in the street going home to-night, some of you, and be able to say, 'there is a Man in heaven whom we love, who loves us.' 'Tis very wonderful to be taught there is a Saviour in heaven - Jesus Christ, who was a poor Man here and had nowhere to lay His head, but "who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." O to be taught that! A sight of Christ in heaven, by faith, unites the seer to Him; unites the soul in this way: it fixes it. 'This is the Saviour I need; His is the righteousness I need; His, the merit I need: His, the power I need.' And it unites the soul sooner or later in a way of comfortable assurance; for as sure as faith is given to a sinner, that faith will give, in God's time, a sensible persuasion, a sweet, holy, humbling, heart-melting persuasion that that Saviour is the sinner's own Saviour. We need to be taught this. A minister can tell his friends this but the Spirit must teach it. This teaching of the Spirit is a penetrating teaching. It leaves, for the moment, no place nor room for doubt. It brings a persuasion, it is powerful, persuasive, humbling. It brings a sinner the sweetest comfort imaginable. Nothing in all creation to be compared with it. It is a teaching that enters the heart; that touches the spring of life and faith within: a feeling that brings its own beauty and shape and form, so to speak, and imprints them on the heart. O dear friends, this blessed teaching that makes a sinner wise unto salvation - this is the teaching that Solomon must have had in his mind when he wrote these beautiful words, "The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips." That is very true and very beautiful. Very beautiful! Everything else in the way of learning or acquisition is just hay and stubble, and a good man is brought to esteem it as just that. A very learned man said to me the other day, "All this is just hay and stubble, there is one thing only, and that is the teaching of the Holy Ghost, that will make you wise." O, but it is very humbling, sweetly humbling. The sinner who receives it becomes a little child and that name belongs to him - disciple! He is a scholar. One of the Lord's disciples, and he covets that that he already has in some measure. He covets that word, "All His saints are in Thy hand: and they sat down at Thy feet; every one shall receive of Thy words." There is a difference between words recurring to your memory and words spoken to your heart. The former may just come and go; may be like a few drops of rain on a stone; pass away: absorbed soon into the atmosphere by the sun. But words spoken by God in some heavenly instruction, answer to that:- "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, My speech shall distil as the dew."

"Teach me - Lead me in Thy truth." 'Enable and cause me to walk in it and teach me what it is, and teach me that I have an interest in it, an interest in the truth.' People may say, 'Of course everybody has that with the Bible in their hand.' Yes, but

to have it in the heart is the thing. It will put its own shape and image upon you, according to the word in the Romans. It is a beautiful word. You have it in the margin, where the Apostle Paul says, "God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine into which ye were delivered." The text is, "that form of doctrine which was delivered you," but in the marginal reading it is given as the original word, "that form of doctrine into which ye were delivered," the figure being of molten metal run into a mould. The shape of truth, the spirit of truth, the beauty of truth, the holiness of truth, the power of truth, God's people are brought in some measure to understand, and then they find that the whole is reflected in their experience and in their life. You have this again, where the Lord Jesus says in prayer to His Father, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." It sets the man, who gets that prayer answered, apart for God. Separates him from sin and separates him from himself. The most wonderful separation that, that you have in the whole of the world. There is nothing to be compared with it for beauty and for blessedness and for wonder. Separated from self which, in the word of Christ, is denying self; taking your cross up and following Christ; and He says if a man is short of that he "cannot be My disciple." "Teach me." 'Teach me my personal interest.' O my friends, that is grand, when the persuading life and light of the Holy Spirit enters a sinner's heart and as it were says, 'Christ died for you. He rose for you. He ascended into heaven for you. He intercedes for you. He cares for you. His eye is on you, over you. His power is engaged for you to save you, to defend you. His love is your convoy. His promise is your stay. His heaven is your everlasting home.' "Teach me!" My brethren, let us go constantly to the Lord in prayer and supplication, to have this mercy made over to us, and if we are tempted to give it up, may it be with us as it was with Hart, who says,

"And oft-times when the tempter  
Sly affirms it fancied, forged or vain,  
Jesus appears, disproves the lie,  
And kindly makes it o'er again."

"For Thou art the God of my salvation." Salvation, as the purpose of God's grace, takes its rise in eternity. Salvation as it becomes an act of God in manifestation, takes its rise in the coming down from Christ of the promise of the Spirit, into the sinner's heart. And when you have been saved once, you will want to be saved again and again, for you will agree with me, I believe, we need a great deal of saving. One act of Christ did it. "It is finished." That was a complete thing. Never to be added to; never to come into any risk or danger. 'Tis eternally done; but when you come to experience, then you will find, you need a great deal of saving, because you have a great deal of sin, and sin breaks out into wicked thoughts, worldliness, hardness, pride, vanity, corruption; you can fill in here for yourselves. You know, who are taught of God, what it is to backslide, and you need a great deal of saving. It is a beautiful word that the Lord used to Peter, "When thou art converted." He was born again and never to die. The life then imparted was eternal life, but he needed converting and we need converting. How often has the Lord converted some of us, thanks be to His name.

O the times He has come and with a look turned us from our vanities; from our waywardness; our rebellion; our hardness of heart; our unthankfulness; and we need this conversion again and again. "The God of my salvation." Well, you will never be away from His eye, as you will never be out of His heart; never be away from His care, "He careth for you"; never be without His protection, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." What a God we have! O what a God we have! My brethren, you have a good God. He will never leave, He will never forsake you.

"On Thee do I wait all the day." I understand this to be the trend of the spirit; the bent of the mind; the motion of faith; when you are engaged with your hands in labouring for the bread which perisheth: or when you are engaged in some way, while the mind is bent toward God. And some of you must say, that is true of you if you speak the truth about yourselves. "On Thee do I wait." "As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that He have mercy upon us." Is not it a beautiful attitude? Is not it a beautiful bent of the mind? Is not it wonderful that a worldly man should wait on God? A proud sinner be thankful for his dependence and be looking again and again to the fulness of the Lord Jesus? Is not it wonderful that a proud person should sometimes be able honestly to say,

"Yet would I glory in the thought,  
That I shall owe Him most."

So may we find our souls bent toward the Lord. It wont be in vain.  
"They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me."

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