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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham  
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton  
on Sunday evening 15 November 1936

PSALM 116 verses 1 and 2

"I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice  
and my supplications. Because He hath inclined His  
ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long  
as I live."

The profession of love and the reason of it we have in the first of these two verses. The result is a solemn, humble, holy resolve to continue calling upon that Name, the Name of the Lord. "Because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live." It is a great thing to say you love the Lord. If you say it rightly, you say it from knowledge. You know Him; you know Him in some of His works in you and for you. Profession is easy, too easy, specially today when God is so absent from us. But to say you love Him, to say so from what you have had of His ear, received from His heart, felt by His power, that is not easy, but it is most blessed.

"I love the Lord". When Pharaoh died, what he said of himself, did not die out of the world. When Moses declared God, said Pharaoh: "Who is the Lord that I should obey Him? I know not the Lord". Perhaps if some of you were to speak the truth concerning yourselves you would say just that, Who is He? I know Him not. Unless divine impressions are made on the heart, of God, of His Being, of His holy Scripture, of our own condition before Him, of His love, of His gospel, how can we say we love Him? Think of it, words are too easy and too cheap. The Lord, almighty God, holy, infallible. Scripture sets before us this Being before and above all else. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. In the beginning Enoch walked with God. In the beginning Noah walked with God. In early days God appeared to Abram: "I am the almighty God, walk before Me and be thou perfect". Great is Jehovah. May this church, may every gracious person in the congregation, have such impressions made on their hearts of God as shall produce reverence. The flippancy of religion

today is grievous to hear or behold. "Holy and reverend is His Name". He is to be had in reverence of all that are about Him. "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth". "He will not hold him guiltless who taketh His Name in vain". Do you know Him? They said of old: "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth". Could you say that in any measure of humble, holy confidence. "We have found Him". Where? In the manger. Where? in the wilderness of temptation. Where? Going about doing good. Where? In Gethsemane's garden, in the judgment hall, robbed of His right, mocked, spat upon. Where did you find Him? On the cross. What did you hear? "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" What did you hear of Him? "Christ was made a curse for us". What did you hear Him say? "It is finished". If we so know Him, we do certainly love Him. What is this knowledge? It is a personal knowledge. Not a picture hung up on the walls of your memory to look at occasionally, but a living Christ in a living soul. The Son of God revealed, His precious blood in some degree made known, His divine robe brought for you to wear, His sanctification made over to you.

"I love the Lord". He is a Man of war, and I love Him because He is. I have enemies. Where? In my nature. O the enemies we have. O how often have I quoted to you Rutherford: "O that I had not a myself" This myself, this wicked self, this infidel self, this proud self, this monster of self. Is that all? No. He has come and subdued it. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God". And this Lord has done it and brought some of us here to understand that Scripture: The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds and casting down of every high imagination and everything that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and brought into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. A remarkable Scripture and very true in the experience of all the Lord's people. And you love Him for the conquests He has obtained. "I love the Lord" He did not let me have my own way; He would not let me destroy myself. I kicked against the pricks. He said, it is hard for you to do it; you kick against omnipotence; you will find it very hard.

I love this refuge to my soul. The Name of the Lord is a refuge

into which the righteous runneth and are safe. O if every minister could lift Him up as He deserves to be lifted up; if in this pulpit He could be lifted up as He deserves. Who is like Him? Who is to be compared with Him? Faith says in your hearts: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee". When a man says that honestly, out of his experience, he says a very great thing, a very great thing. What, nothing on earth but God? My friends, my family and all other things near and dear, none of them? Not one, compared with Him.

Compared with Christ, in all beside  
No comeliness I see

In a sense, no existence. Do you understand it? Some do.

I love Him for His mediations. The Mediator must cover us or we shall be consumed. The Mediator must speak for us or we shall be dumb through eternity, under just punishment. Do you love His mediation? Then you love the Mediator.

The Lord, He will be exalted. And when the Holy Ghost exalts Him in the heart then says the sinner, this is the Lord, I waited for Him; this is the Lord. You must know Him to love Him. I would press that upon you. Do not profess to love Him unless in some measure and in some particulars you know Him. O, but must I always be dumb? Until you can speak with some degree of humble confidence, be dumb in this matter. If nobody spoke as the text speaks but people who really have the reason that the Psalmist had, there would not be many comparatively who would speak for God and about themselves.

But the Psalmist gives a reason for this, his love. "Because He hath heard my voice and my supplications". A very good reason, a very great reason, a very beautiful reason. There have been communications between you and God, some communications between you and God. You pray; prayer has two sources, first the felt necessity in the soul. That alone would not do the deed. People may have some sense of need, even natural sense of religion. Natural religion is not to be despised but not to be depended on. But when there is a spiritual need, nakedness, guilt, sin indwelling, corrupting

choking you at times. Temptation driving you, distracting you from the service of God here or from reading the Scriptures in private, or almost driving you from your knees. I know what it is to be driven from my knees by temptation. Yet, though thus driven, prayer was not killed, rather quickened and strengthened. The importunate man must have loaves. The sinking soul must have an arm underneath it. The leper must be cleansed, the beggar must have supply, the guilty must be justified, the unclean must be cleansed. And the Lord heard my voice and my supplications. He attended. Solomon's prayer met the case; captivities, pestilence and all sorts of troubles Solomon embraced in his prayer and this was the reason. When they bethink themselves, when they pray toward the house which I have built for Thy Name, then hear Thou in heaven Thy dwellingplace and when Thou hearest forgive. Have you prayed? The source is in yourself, but not only. The second source is the mighty secret motion and inward intercession of the Holy Ghost. That is "praying in the Holy Ghost" according to Jude. "Praying in the Holy Ghost", a word that may frighten some of you. What, such a wretch, so confused, so hard hearted, so distant, so ignorant, so guilty, such a person praying in the Holy Ghost? Yes. If you are born again, if you have the Spirit of life in Christ in your soul you pray again and again under the influence, teaching and power of the Holy Ghost. The Scripture teaches us this. "We know not what we should pray for as we ought" but the Holy Ghost cometh, comes alongside of us, as a friend to help us, to sustain us, and to suggest what we should ask for; puts it into the heart, makes inward intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered. You may pray much more without words than with words. O, but this intercession of the Spirit, it wings the prayer to heaven, to the throne of God's heavenly grace; it perfumes it. That is how the Psalmist prayed. He might not have felt, when he was in the trouble and had the pains of hell and death compassing him, that he was so praying, but the answer proved it. You may not think that you are praying well. When you pray you may say, O I am afraid I only chattered like a swallow. But when the answer comes you will say now know I that the Lord saveth His anointed. He hath heard my voice in my prayer. You may pray without a voice. "Hear my voice in my prayer" the Psalmist says elsewhere. If you have got a voice in your prayer it will reach God's ear. O how wonderful that the Most High God should bend His ear. It is called humbling Himself to behold the things

which are in heaven and in earth. He beholds a sinner. "Behold" said God to Ananias "he prayeth". Did God ever see you in your closet, the door shut about you, and, as far as you could, you shut the world out because you had a real case, and you prayed: "Say unto my soul I am thy salvation".

"My supplications". Not just, O be merciful to me, and then forget what you have said, but such a need, so pressing, and so urgent, so immediate that you begin to supplicate. O hear me, bow down Thine ear and hear me, attend unto my prayer. Although I only chatter, attend unto my prayer. "God be merciful to me a sinner". "Say unto my soul I am thy salvation". A real case brings out real prayer. A caseless religion may be very comfortable to a deceived man, but a religion with a bad, heavy, urgent case will bring you to your knees and keep you there until you get an answer. I do not mean the word "keep you there" literally. You may more pray sometimes when you are walking down Queens Road or doing your business or in your household duties than when you kneel down, but the thing is, you pray. That is the point. The form be it observed properly, what is it if it is without life? "My supplications". You take them. Soul matters are the first because eternity is first, God is first, heaven is first, hell is first and to be told that you are right, that God loves you, that Christ redeemed you, that the Spirit has quickened you, this is the thing, and to have fellowship with God that is the thing. Providence comes in. Floods of ungodly men compassed the Psalmist about. Within were fears, without were fightings, says the Apostle Paul. "In the world ye shall have tribulation". Trouble will come. Not common trouble, that everybody must have more or less of, but tribulation. Mark that word. I have noticed it once or twice recently in your hearing. Mark it. Tribulation has a place and a purpose, and there you will pray. God is separating you from something. That means taking away the chaff because it is of no value. The wheat is that that he leaves, and when you have got the answer, one of the happiest, sweetest possessions you can have. When you can lay your hand, as it were, on your heart and say, here is God's answer. I called upon Him and He heard me out of His holy temple. When, perhaps, you can look on a circumstance and say, there He wrought for me; there I saw His mighty working; there He let me see something of His kindness toward me, heard my voice and my

supplications and delivered me from the pains of hell and of death.

Now a few words on the second verse. A holy resolve, not an Arminian sort of thing - O I will always pray. When people lightly talk of that, the probability is they know nothing about prayer. But when one has been answered - and I think perhaps I have had some answers that go back further than any of you because I am older - when they have found this and that and they have said again and again that promise has been made good, that testimony in my conscience has been confirmed, that answer to prayer I hold fast because I cannot let it go; God appeared to me, manifested Himself in my heart as my God and Saviour; now being encouraged by the sweet remembrance of all this, I will call upon Him. I do not expect to get through without trouble; I do not expect that I shall be without temptation the rest of my days, or that God will make my path smooth all through from now, but as need comes, I will pray. As the Spirit is in me I will pray. As I see God's kindness and willingness to help, I will pray. I am encouraged by what He has done for me. I will go on praying. A beautiful spirit, this. It has in it a good deal which one can only hint at. It has in it, first, humble confidence in God. You may have many fears about your case, many questions about God's purposes, which you do not know, concerning you and concerning your path. Perhaps your family, perhaps your business, and most of all your soul, but this will come, again and again: I have proved the Lord to be good, I will go again, I will take His word: "My grace is sufficient for thee"; given to Paul, continued with Paul. No doubt he carried the thorn to his grave, but grace went with him to make the thorn, not bearable only but a matter of glory. "Therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live". All my days, while I am here, I shall be needy. Creatureship says that. A creature is a dependent thing. An independent creature is a contradiction, a monster to be afraid of, an independent spirit, my friends. If such a spirit is in you it will lead you astray, it will carry you away from God. It will lead you to despise Him if it prevails. Be afraid of an independent spirit. The Holy Ghost reproves it by the Apostle James. "Go to now, ye that say, Today or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour that

appeareth for a little time , and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that". Again, I say to you be afraid of an independent spirit. If you have that spirit prevailing and you belong to God He will break it somehow. Ah He has a method of touching a sinew and it withers and what will you do then. "Therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live". There is an attraction in Christ and God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. If you love Him you want to be near Him. If you love Him you want to hear His voice and if, for a season, He be silent, this will be your cry: "Be not silent to me lest if Thou be silent to me I become like them that go down to the pit". O the fear of that. Do you hear His voice? I will call upon Him and ask Him to speak to me. "Be not silent". A silent God to a loving soul is a very serious and solemn matter. The voice of the Lord is full of majesty and full of mercy and we who have heard it want to hear it again and again. He does speak. If you should ask a person if he believes that God does speak to people today, and his answer should be no, you would have no reason to believe that that person feared. Go to a child of God, ask him if he believes that God speaks. O, perhaps he might be under the law, and he will say, I have heard His voice in the law and I am under the curse. I want to hear Him in the gospel. The law hardens. If you hear God's voice in the law, it is in mercy to you, but you will get very hard, and have very hard thoughts of God sometimes, and wish you had not been born. But you will pray, O you will pray of necessity. The Spirit will lead you to pray: "Say unto my soul I am thy salvation". "Pardon mine iniquity O Lord for it is great", "God be merciful to me a sinner". And when you find that in your heart, go on calling upon the Lord as well as you can. He thinks a great deal more of you than you think He does.

"Because He hath inclined His ear". This tells us of His goodness, beholding the things that are in heaven and in earth.

Now may the Lord help us to look at these words. I know I have very inadequately dwelt upon them, but what I have said may help some of you; the Lord grant it. "I love the Lord" - O it is good to say it, to feel it; I have felt it at times - "I love the Lord because He hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live. The sorrows

of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold on me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the Name of the Lord; O Lord I beseech Thee, deliver my soul".

AMEN.