

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Wednesday evening 19 September 1934

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."

Moses asked the Lord to show him His glory; he got the reply - "I will make all My goodness pass before thee," but My face no man shall see, can see, and live. Probably every appearance that God made to prophets and others in the old dispensation and before the Jewish nation became a nation, He made by the Mediator because the appearances were sometimes those of a man and I think it is observable that neither the Father nor the Holy Ghost was found in fashion as a man, but the point is this - whether that observation is correct or not - the point is this that God has revealed Himself in holy Scripture; that He has made known His decree, His will, His goodness, His love, and His wisdom; that He has been pleased to put all this mercy into the Man Christ Jesus; that whatever a soul born again needs and feels to need he receives, he must receive from Jesus Christ the Mediator. "There is One God" - O what a truth, One God dwelling in the light that no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see. What fearful presumption it is for some men to think they know God. If we are born again I am disposed to say that the longer we live the more we shall feel our ignorance of God, our ignorance of His Word. The Apostle Paul writing to the Hebrews said that he had many things to say to them but they were hard to be uttered; not because he could not utter them, but because the Hebrews were dull of hearing. Writing to the Corinthians he said the same thing in other words. When I wrote unto you I could not write unto you as spiritual but as unto carnal. And the bondage of his heart was not his own or from anything in himself, but from the carnality of these Corinthian professors. Do you feel your ignorance of God? If anyone had told me 70 years ago, when God began to teach me, that I should live to be so old as I am and feel today more my ignorance than I did in those, my earliest days, I would not have believed it. It is so; I am very

ignorant of God. Perhaps I know a little about the Scripture, but even so I know very little of the meaning and of the power and of the sanctifying effects of God's holy Word. I thought today, in reading the 11 Hebrews, what those great men saw in God, in His promises. Separated from the world and called to go into a place that he knew not, what must Abraham have seen in the promise that God made over to Him. And those who followed him, who might have had opportunity to have returned to their native land, but they saw in the promises enough to make them say, No, we are seeking another city, "a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Therefore our faces are set to go to that city, and here we are but pilgrims and strangers. What Enoch saw to cause him to separate himself, so Noah to separate himself and his family through faith. God spoke to them, blessed them with faith. I wish it may please that gracious God to come and speak to you and to me and teach us; lead us, as the prayer, lead us into His truth. "Lead me in Thy truth". Woe unto many professors, even professors of the doctrines of grace, who appear satisfied with what they know, though perhaps they know nothing at all, and could hardly honestly pray this prayer - "Lead me in Thy truth". We do need it. Is there any encouragement in the Word of God for us to press this case, this prayer? Yes, for Jesus Christ, the Mediator, in whom, by whom God will speak and does speak friendly to His people, promised the Holy Spirit - "Whom I will send unto you" - the Spirit of Truth, and He shall guide you into all truth. Well, if some of you shrink into a kind of nothingness saying, O how little has the Holy Ghost done for us, I should be able to sympathise with you.

"Lead me in Thy truth" respecting Thyself. God is first whether we know it or not. God will be first whether we will or not. But if we are born again we do want Him to be first. Only as we see Him can we know ourselves. Only as His perfections shine into our hearts can we see our vileness, wretchedness, condemnation, and believe that we deserve hell. You will never know yourselves by yourselves. You will never know your sins by anything less than this, the knowledge of God, and that knowledge does make man a worm in his experience; worm Jacob. Jesus said of Himself, "I am a worm and no man"; that Holy One of God said that. When God shines into our hearts we then know, honestly confess, that we are but worms. My dear brethren, the Lord

teach you to pray this prayer respecting Himself - "Lead me in Thy truth" the truth respecting Thy Being. Not that we can ever see the infinite One; He dwelleth in the light that no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen nor can see, but in His Son, His only begotten eternal Son He dwells. "I am in My Father" He said; My Father is in Me. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also". If you get a sight of the glorious justice, majesty, holiness, wisdom, love, goodness and compassion toward men, you will get that sight made bearable in the Person of Jesus Christ, for all the fullness of the Godhead bodily dwelleth in Him. If you see God out of Christ when you enter eternity you will see Him as a consuming fire, but if you see Him in His Son incarnate you will see Him to be the God of love. "God is love", and there and there alone is He love. "Lead me in Thy truth". Do you want to know more of the Person of Christ, what He is as the eternal Son of God incarnate, in whom the Lord God, His Father, is well pleased.

And "lead me in Thy truth" respecting the Trinity. Young people of God may not be much led into this for a long time, but it comes to pass and they see what they cannot express. The Trinity was known to the Old Testament saints - God revealed Himself in a Trinity of Persons - and the prophet Isaiah like a gospel Apostle teaches this truth. Christ, speaking in that prophet said - "The Spirit of the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings". Three Persons at once, Christ, the Spirit, and the Lord who anointed Him with the Spirit. In an earlier chapter in that prophecy we are told by the Lord Himself that there shall arise out of the root of Jesse a Branch and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him. Christ, by the same prophet, says, "Now the Lord God and His Spirit hath sent Me." Now if we only know these things in doctrine, we may be as hard as adamant, as cold as ice, but if this prayer be in us and is answered, we shall see the holy, holy, holy Three as John in his first Epistle speaks and teaches. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost". What will be the effect on us? Just the same as it was on Abraham. He fell on his face. We fall on our faces, our hearts kneel down - perhaps when we are walking in the street - and worship this Three One God. But we know very little. Just like a flash sometimes the truth will come into our hearts and pass away. Sometimes a little more than that, it will abide with us for some

hours, yea it may be for a day or two. Lead me into the blessedness of it. There is no doctrine, no heresy concerning Deity, more terrible than Unitarianism, a personal God, one Person only, no fellow, no "I", "Thou", "He", "Me", just "I". Put a creature alone, let him have no friend and no relation, no company, just put him alone, no-one with him to exchange a single thought or a word. Can you imagine a creature more wretched? Unitarianism says God is like that. Now the Holy Scripture teaches this, a Council of Peace; that means more than one. "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness"; that is more than one. Creation has this Trinity in the very beginning of Genesis. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth". Paul says that by the Son of God the world was made, and in Genesis we are told that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. Now this glorious Trinity is engaged in the salvation of the Church. There is a beauty, a reality, a weight, in the truth which, as opened and applied by the Spirit, makes the Trinity very wonderful, very glorious. Well dear friends, you will bear with this, I hope you will receive it, that there is a needs be in us to pray this prayer respecting the Godhead, respecting Jehovah in His Trinity of Persons. We cannot see Jehovah but we may see Him in Christ. Jehovah in His eternal essence and Being dwelleth in the light that no man can approach unto, but that same eternal Being, one in essence, three in Persons, has come forth from those infinitely inaccessible depths of light and revealed Himself in the second Person as the God of salvation.

Then another word I would say here "Lead me in Thy truth with regard to the incarnation of the Son of God. There is a singular and beautiful order in the Trinity. It was not the Father, it was not the Holy Ghost who became incarnate. It was the Son, the second Person in the Godhead. "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifested in the flesh" - have you seen Him - "seen of angels, believed on in the world, received up into glory". Have you ever had a glimpse of that wondrous birth? I think the devil never had greater power in some respects in the world than today. He has got men into pulpits, dignitaries in the Church of England and leading ministers in the Non Conformist bodies to deny that blessed virgin birth on which the Word of God stands or falls, and on which depends our salvation. The beauty of it, can you explore it? The

depth of infinite love manifested and brought to light in that wondrous overshadowing of the virgin, that that holy thing which should be born of her should be called the Son of God; that His Name should be called Jesus because He should save His people from their sins. I want to see this more; there is a beauty, there is a reality, there is a glory in it. It is one of those things of which the prophet Isaiah speaks, and the Apostle Paul quotes - "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him". Is it revealed? Yes, "God hath revealed them unto us - that is the Church - by His Spirit". Should the Spirit take your faith by the hand, so to put it, and lead you to the manger and show you that infant born of the virgin mother, and at that moment give your heart a believing view of His blessed Person as the Son of God, what would you do? In the Spirit you would follow the wise men; you would fall before Him in holy worship, in spirit and in truth; you would open the treasure of your love and adoration and admiration and pour out your blessing on that wondrous child Jesus. And there is no getting near to God the Father without Him. "I am the Way". "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be which go in thereat. But straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life and few there be that find it." Very few comparatively, but when they see Jesus they find the Way. They say in faith "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth." And when you find Him like that you will hold Him a little. Then you will say O that I could see His beauty more, O that I had faith to meditate on Him, to see Him as possessing all that a guilty wretch can need to save him. To see in Him all I need to make me a new creature; and therefore "in Christ", "complete in Him" To see in Him that power that will make this dying body of mine like unto His glorious body. Blood to cleanse us from sin, righteousness to justify us entirely, power to raise us up and make us walk after, yea walk with Him. And the incarnation was the open beginning of all that work which had been decreed in eternity. "Lead me in Thy truth" respecting this. Hang about this truth dear friends, and as you can kneel before the Lord and entreat Him to lead you into the mystery of the incarnation. Heaven hangs on it, salvation depends on it, justification must flow from it. Justification is what every soul seeks; they must receive it through this Man, the God Man. In the incarnation one truth is

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this, that there more wisdom and more power were exerted than in the creation of the universe. It needed but for God to say "Let there be" in creating the universe, but it needed love and wisdom and omnipotence to constitute that body inhabited, taken up into union with the divine Person of the Son of God. The glory of this, should it be given us to see, will wean us from all the carking and cavilling of a fallen reason. It will unite us to God in Christ. It would bring us to see that whatever the wisdom of man could devise it falls infinitely beneath this, the wisdom of God. Christ is that wisdom and that wisdom is manifested in Him and by Him as it can be manifested nowhere else, in no other Person. May the Lord lead us into this.

And next, throughout His whole life He - who was sent in love, and came by love - ever magnified the law, for "love is the fulfilling of the law". He did not come to destroy the law but to fulfil it. How different the persons of Christ and Adam! the Creator and the creature. Adam dishonoured the law of God; Christ magnified it. He made it honourable. Its sanction, holy sanction, the threat of death, Christ made honourable. He received its curse into His very heart and bones, for the curse of the law was poured like fire into His bones and nothing could make the law more honourable than that, that Jesus did not deny any iota of it but fulfilled every precept and when He came to that - man deserved the curse; the election of grace given to Him - He said, for these people I take this curse, and so the law was magnified and made honourable.

Lead me into the truth of the crucifixion, the voluntary, the vicarious death of Jesus Christ. Ah sinner, if you have got a burden of sin on your conscience it will bend you indeed. You will be like a man with a burden on his back which threatens to throw him to the ground and crush him by its own weight. The burden bearer of the East probably was before the Psalmist when he said his sins were a burden too heavy for him, for the burden bearer of the East will take on his back a load that covers his entire person and if he stumbles under that he is crushed by it. If we stumble under the load of sin we shall be crushed to death and hell, but if we are led to the Saviour and see Him bleeding for us, O what grief it will fill us with, as well as joy. What sorrow we shall feel that ever we sinned so as to bring this

trouble and grief and death to Him the holy child of God. The blaze of glory - William Gadsby was very fond of that term - the blaze of glory. It is a blaze. It is the glory of justice, of holiness, of wisdom, of love, the glory of mercy and truth, of righteousness and peace meeting in the Person of Jesus Christ, and uniting and embracing and kissing each other. And when a sinner is favoured with a sight of that then he says he can hardly bear the sight of his sins, and the sight of the death of Christ is so weighty, so humbling, so blessing, so liberating, so comforting, that all he can say is - if he meets or thinks of the Scripture or if it comes into his heart - "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world". If the Holy Ghost comes, according to the promise of the Saviour, and leads us into this truth, then we shall know. We may guess without it; we cannot know without it. We may think without it; we cannot know without it. Knowledge is more than thinking, more than conjecturing. It just is a knowledge in your heart, an adequate evidence. Adequate evidence? What is that? "In Thy light shall we see light". You will need nobody to tell you who Christ is and what He is and what He did when you are led by the Spirit to the cross. O then you will say, I know Him; then you will feel I love Him. Many a time you may say I do not know that I do love Him but you wont say that when you are at the cross and have the powerful evidence in your soul. You will understand a little of that - "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" You have got the evidence in your heart, and you can say in some measure of humble, holy confidence - "And we know that the Son of God is come". Ah, and you can say, He has come to me. Christ and His people are not always to be strangers to each other. God in Christ and His people are not always to be strangers to each other. The Holy Ghost in Christ in all the fullness of His operations and His people are not always to be strangers to each other. If we are led into the truth we shall really know the Trinity. In these my latter days sometimes I find this to be very good to me; there is a Trinity. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost". And one says, I wish the world were crucified to me. I will tell you how it can be and how it would be in an instant if you got it; if you are led by the Holy Ghost to Calvary; O the emptiness of the world at that time and for that time you are there. "Lead me". He does not drive,

He leads. Leads gently, leads according to the state and case of the person whom He is leading. He takes the child and leads him on and gives the milk of the gospel so that he is strengthened and is fully grown. He takes a young man and leads him and causes him to know that his sins are forgiven. And He leads the fathers a little further, still further, and they say we know Him that is from the beginning. We know Him by the visits of His love. You may not know how that He comes to you, but when He is with you, you know it. "As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil" so the Lord comes and gets to Himself a great Name, above all other Names, and you say this, I hope I now know a little of that Scripture - "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, for them that wait for Him." I do not like people who say they know a good deal, but I am never troubled when I hear a person say, O I am so ignorant, I do not think I am born again, I do not think I may say anything properly. You ask that person what I would ask him. Where do you go to in your trouble? What do you do in your doubts and fears? Well he might tremblingly say, he would say, I try to pray. I ask the Lord to teach me. I cannot know things without Him. I am like the man spoken of in the Scriptures who handed back the book given to him to read, saying I am not learned. Well, go on that way, you are safe that way. Turn away from speculations and as the Lord helps you wait and pray, pray and wait and one day the answer will come and you will say, I waited for this. Lo this is the Lord, I have waited for Him. Now you will draw water out of the wells of salvation.

"Lead me in Thy truth", the truth of the Covenant of Grace, ordered in all things and sure, an everlasting Covenant. There are many other Covenants, but all subordinate. Adam apparently soon forfeited his right to live even in an earthly paradise. He partook of the forbidden fruit and so transgressed the law. That Covenant was broken. Another Covenant God makes and by Jeremiah He says, I will make a new Covenant with them, after those days, saith the LORD, not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers, which Covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them. This is the Covenant that I will make with them saith the LORD, I will put My law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people..... for I will forgive their

iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. Lead me into this. But I must leave it; it is such a full text that I do not know how to speak about it, but these little hints may help you to meditate on the great subject. "Lead me in Thy truth and teach me. Thou art the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day." AMEN.