

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel  
Brighton on Wednesday evening 16.1.1924

TEXT: Psalm XL verse 5

Many O Lord my God are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done and Thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.

This is a Psalm of Jesus Christ. No mere man can ever be said to come into this Psalm in the fullness of it and we know from the Epistle to the Hebrews that a good part of it is allocated and attributed to the Lord Jesus. His submission to His Father, His sorrowful condition in suffering, we have here. "I waited patiently for the Lord". Waiting I waited, and He inclined unto Me and heard My cry. Christ said that His Father always heard Him. "I knew that Thou heardest Me" What a wonderful mercy that Christ went into the pit, this horrible pit, a deep pit of noise as it is, a pit of noise where the noise of the law was, where the great claims of the law came to Him, where the noise of divine thunder was; where the noise of all the wicked opposers of His divine Person was, and where the noise of the devil was. These noises were in the pit. The noise of the law, the noise of men, and the noise of all afflictions that came upon Him. "Thy waves" said He "Thy billows are gone over Me" When noises came to Him they were terrible, He heard them and cried to His Father in this pit and here He praises Him for bringing Him up - "He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and set My feet upon a rock and established My goings" What could be the rock on which the Rock of Ages was set. What could be that rock on which the Father set His Beloved Son. It must be the rock of the divine promise to His Son, where the Lord in the Psalms said of Him "I will make Him higher than

the kings of the earth. I will set His hand in the rivers" He was made higher than all others, the first-born from the dead. He is the King of kings, and Lord of lords. His sufferings were followed by His exaltation and that involves the coming up out of the evil pit of trouble and sorrow of all the family of God, of every child of God here. And wherever there is a child of God he is interested in, he is involved in this blessed word "I will make him higher than the kings of the earth." "And He hath put a new song in My mouth" He sings of His Father's righteousness in the church. He sings the blessed name of the Lord God who in eternal mercy chose the church and laid her sins on Him. He sings of the grace of God in the hearts of His children, giving them that grace. "Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust and respecteth not the proud nor such as turn aside to lies". Did not Christ trust His Lord and God and Father in the hour, yea the forty days and forty nights that He was in the wilderness, when He was an hungered and was tempted of the devil? How did He meet the enemy but by the word of the living God? And O what a mercy it is to follow Him and to put your trust in Him when afflicted and bowed down and ready in your own feelings to perish. There is a Helper; there is a mighty Helper. God is that Helper. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him". "Whoever trusted in the Lord and was put to confusion?" Poor suffering saint, your suffering Head put His trust in His Father, relied on His promise and He was blessed. He turned not aside and respected the proud devil when he was tempting Him. He turned not aside to those lies that the devil set before Him, when he tempted Him by setting Him on the pinnacle of the temple, when he took Him to a high mountain, when he tempted Him to be presumptuous. The dear Saviour of sinners resisted and overcame and conquered and crushed the devil beneath His divine omnipotent feet, yet He was a suffering man, and, as a suffering man, in covenant with His Father and having His Father's promise to help Him He said "My God will help Me, and I know that I shall not be counfounded. He is near that justifieth Me." Whenever a

poor living soul is tempted and tried, he is on the way, when in that rough and difficult path, he is on the way to prove in his measure, what Christ in an infinite measure proved, the help, the promised help of His Father. You cannot fail. Interested in Christ who can be overcome? Now He says in the text "Many O Lord My God are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done and Thy thoughts which are to us-ward, they cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee. If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered."

And here we have the Lord's people also. For a short time this evening let us look, as enabled, at some of these many works which God has done for which we have reason to be thankful, of some of which we believe we have been the subjects. But we must in looking at this word, go back to eternity. Before the world was made, before angels were made, God did some works, the works of the Trinity in council, the immanent, that is the incommunicable, eternal acts of the Trinity. These are the works that gave birth to all works that are done in time. These infinite, these eternal works in the Trinity gave birth to all works that are done in time, for they are no other and no less than the eternal decree of Jehovah, and wonderful it is that such works were done in eternity. And the Lord Jesus, you will remember, said, as it is recorded in the gospel by John that He came to do the works which He had seen the Father do, to speak the words which He had heard His Father speak, not to do His own works, nor speak His own words. And I think that what is there intended is that He, the dear, the eternal Son of God, came down to bring into being in the hearts of His people, the very decrees of God which had been from eternity. Yes, these things which were all done in the council of peace in the Trinity are to have a being in the hearts of the living family of God and if they have a being in us, O what a blessed people we are. Who can be compared to the people of God for blessedness, for greatness, for all those great works that were done in the Trinity

eternally, become matters of their experience; they are wrought in their hearts. The love of God is eternal; that is made known to them. The gift of Christ is eternal; that is made known in them. The undertakings of Christ were eternal; these are made known to them. The offices, the substitution, the dying, the suffering, the bloody sweat in the garden of Gethsemane, these were all settled in eternity, that is there were all decreed and fixed upon, and these become matters of inward experience, peace and joy in the saints from time to time. O saint of God, what a wonder that in your own very soul, the thoughts, the decrees of God eternally and internally have become in some measure, matter of your experience! Is it not wonderful? May we be enabled to thank God for it.

And then the works which were eternal do show themselves forth in the Person and work of Christ in time. The incarnation, fixed upon eternally, has become a great truth. "In the fulness of the time," that is the time that the Father appointed, "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law" All creation of angels and world and man, how small, how insignificant compared with this work of God in the formation of the human nature of Christ for the indwelling of the holy Eternal Son of God and the union of that Person and this nature, how wonderful and this is one of God's wonderful works. "Many O Lord My God are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done". I believe the faith of the shepherds and the wise men of the east saw this wonderful work of God. They were not idolators when they worshipped the infant, My friends, it is not idolatry to worship this Babe of Bethlehem. Nothing in creation, nothing in providence, reaches the height of glory and wisdom, the wisdom of God and the power of God, and the love of God, manifested in the child Jesus. O, to see Him, to see all the greatness and glory of God as it can be borne.

And go to the work of the Lord Jesus, the Almighty God. What a work He did, a wonderful work. He "bore all

Incarnate God could bear, with strength enough and none to spare" and if anything will make a sinner hate sin, it is a sight of the Incarnate, holy, separate, harmless Son of God, Jesus Christ, bowed down beneath a load of sin. If anything will beget gospel repentance, it is this wonderful gospel of the incarnation of Christ, and the making of Him to be sin.

Blush, Christian blush; let shame abound;  
If sin affects thee not with woe,  
Whatever spirit be in thee found,  
The Spirit of Christ thou dost not know.

This was a wonderful thing for God to make Christ to be sin. There is the election of grace given to Christ. There is the sin that the election of grace has committed; all sin and iniquities spoken of, he hath laid them all on this blessed Man, and He willingly took the burden, knowing that it meant a curse, that He must sink into the deep pit of noise where all voices would be heard claiming and wounding and piercing Him, the Prince of Life. A wonderful work was that when Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; when He removed the sin of the land, the elect land, in one day and left not a speck, not a transgression, not a sin behind; left nothing of that kind at all, but took the whole away. This is a wonderful work; so wonderful in its efficacy that it will fill heaven with people and glory; fill the whole of the church of God with bliss; that it unites sinners and God; makes of sinners saints; makes of the guilty just persons; makes of the polluted, holy brethren. What a work is this!

Now this is to be made known and God, the Holy Ghost, comes and does a wonderful work. He quickens the dead; He gives them the life of Christ; He condemns them by the law and then shows them how that they do justify and establish the law by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. They believe in Him when He is revealed to them as their Saviour. Then they dont destroy the law but they establish it by their

faith in Christ, for they receive the doctrine of Christ's perfect satisfaction, that the whole debt that was owed by the church, He paid; and that establishes the law and that brings them into liberty, the liberty of the gospel. For, if the law is established by being fully satisfied, there is no reason why those for whom it was satisfied should remain under it. They are brought from under it into the gospel, and what a wonderful work that is! Christ is revealed in their hearts, and He becomes the hope of glory in them; He dwells in their hearts: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the length and breadth, and depth and height and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." This is set before us in the gospel for several reasons. One is to inform us what the Lord can do, of what can be in the experience of a sinner. It is set before us too, that we, wanting these very blessings, may be encouraged to seek them at the hand of God. It is set before us that unbelief shall not have all the say, but that the gospel shall tell us and we should believe it, and do believe it by the Holy Ghost. The gospel will tell us that Christ is above everything, sin, death and hell; that He has now, having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, the keys of hell and of death, amen. And these are some of the reasons why this wondrous work of satisfaction by Christ is set before us in the gospel. And then the Spirit brings this, lays it on the heart with power, reveals it in the soul in His own light, and seals it by His own testimony; and that brings the sweet liberty of a child of God, the glorious liberty of the child of God; it brings it into his heart, he has an experience of it. And so the great works of eternal decree take place in time, in a sinner's experience and so the sinner becomes united to God in the eternal decree, in the covenant of grace. He becomes united to God with a sweet union that shall never be dissolved, never.

These three works, if I may speak of them here for the moment are very wonderful. "Many O Lord My God are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done". A trinity of persons in the covenant you will find working a trinity of works in your soul. If you belong to the Lord the day will come when these three works will be done in your souls and so you will find union with God therein. O how wonderful it is to find union with God in His own works and may these mercies be so set before us as to make us hunger and thirst after having them wrought in us.

Then there are other works which are very wonderful. There are the works of providence by which the saints are exercised and established, reprov'd and comforted; works which are very wonderful and they are done by a wonderful God. They are done by a wonderful Saviour to whom the Father has committed all power in heaven and in earth, to whom is given all rule and all authority and to whom are subject powers and angels and dominions, wonderful works. And here, if we are enabled to come down, so to speak, to our own cases, cannot we, some of us, say that we have seen some of God's wonders. Wonderful works in providence; He has made ways for us when none appeared possible; He has delivered us out of six troubles and we have reason to believe He wont leave us in the seventh. He has wrought wonderfully for us: we have had daily bread, we have had many comforts, we have had troubles, sorrows, heavy sorrows, we have had chastisement laid on us, we have had many difficulties but what has the Lord done? Has He left us? No, He has not left us in providence. He has not left us to cry in vain. He has not left us, when He has given us power to cast our burdens on Him. He has not left us, but has given us some sense of sustaining grace, sustaining power. Many are His wonderful works in providence. Here you must look at your own cases, as you have them, and you will be enabled to look, each one, at that case which has exercised you and that wonderful way God led you to pray and to bring you to understand in your own case, something of the

Psalmist's experience. And it was Christ in the tenth Psalm who, when He was in deep waters, cried, and He found this, "He sent from above, He took Me, He drew Me out of many waters".

None but the people of God understand what power there is in prayer, what efficacy in a groan which is wrought in the heart by the Spirit. One look to God's Holy Temple cast up out of the very belly of hell will bring the thunder and lightning and deliverance to a poor creature who is in that woeful case. One look. "Yet will I look again toward Thy Holy Temple" Jonah said he cried out of the belly of hell and then God commanded the fish to vomit him up on dry land, and you, when you are locked up in some trouble, or when some waves and billows of sorrow and perplexity are going over you and your little faith sends a cry to the God of all grace and that cry reaches His merciful, His patient, His ever-open ear, you will find He sends from heaven: thunder comes, lightning flashes, enemies are confused, deliverance is wrought. O what wonderful works some have seen! I have seen some, some wonderful things in the providence of God and I am not alone. May we praise Him because - here let me interject a remark - the works of God are for His praise. And who shall praise Him? The people who are the subjects of them. The subjects of grace shall sing "Sovereign grace o'er sin abounding". The subjects of some wonderful providences shall sing "Many O Lord my God are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done" Many, many a time has God appeared for me says the child of God; many a deliverance has He wrought; many a supply has He sent; many a stream in high places and deserts has He commanded to flow to me and for me. And now if this has been the case, what about the future? Says unbelief, you wont get through. Says faith, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

Can He have taught me to trust in His Name



And thus far have brought me to put me to shame

Have you walked at liberty? Have you walked in the Name of Christ? Have you found Him revealed to you? Have you had some tokens for good? Have you seen the bow in the cloud in the day of rain? That bow, that is seen, and the man who is sitting on the throne, the bow in the cloud in the day of rain, that says "I will never drown the earth again" Well, if this has been your experience, you may sing "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me" and with the Apostle Paul in another case you may say in your case I can gather assuredly that it is the will of God to bring me through. And this wont make you vain, it wont make you careless, it wont make you indolent in your spirit. It will stir you up to seek God, to fear Him, trust Him and wait upon Him.

"And Thy thoughts which are to us-ward" Said the Lord to some captives of old "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you an expected end" "I know them". We do not know them, perhaps today; thoughts which are to us-ward, directed toward us, have not yet reached us in manifestation, everlastingly set upon us, on their way to us, like the angel sent to Daniel, hindered for three weeks before he reached him. Some of these thoughts are on their way, they are directed, they are toward a sinner and shall they be always diverted and never reach him? Shall some thought of a deliverance that you are to experience be diverted into another channel and not reach you? Can a deep thought of God fail? The thoughts of His heart are established to all generations, the thoughts of His heart directed to, toward a poor sinner. Said God to the angel, "Go to Daniel" Said an enemy "I will go and oppose him" and he opposed and fought him for three weeks, but at last the thought took effect, the angel came, came to Daniel, speaking the message that he was sent to speak. And God, in His providence, may delay to bless you, may allow some intervening trouble, something will come apparently to turn away a deliverance from you that you have hoped was

coming, a deliverance of which you may have said to somebody "I know it is coming" Then it has been delayed and you have thought "I was mistaken" This is not an uncommon experience, I think, amongst the Lord's people. Who has not had, who I say, of you sitting here, has not had some such experience. Faith has said in your heart "It is coming" then reason begins to work and build here, and says "You will have it now or soon, in a day or two" and then you have had to wait for months perhaps and thought "What a mistake I made" "What a foolish thing I did to think that God spoke to me. And what a foolish thing it was for me to tell my friends that I knew that God was going to deliver me". O but dear friends, you have got to prove it; you have proved it and you have got to prove it again. Some hindrances are not real hindrances to God. They are trials to us. Thoughts toward us must reach us. God is not to be put off. Never shall one person elected by Him in eternal love miss a blessing which was given to him in Christ before the world began. "Blessed, be God" says Paul "who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." And shall these remain in Christ and never reach the objects of them, never reach the people for whom they were designed? That cannot be. We must leave people to say God wants to save people, if only they will let Him" We must leave them in their foolishness. We, having the scriptures with us and the Spirit's teaching in our hearts as we hope, must say this "The thoughts of His heart shall stand fast to all generations, and they shall take effect, a blessed powerful effect, in those toward whom they are. "Wonderful are Thy thoughts which are to us-ward. Wonderful. Wonderful is the thought that God will turn an alien into a child, make of a child of wrath a child of love and mercy. Wonderful is the thought that God will justify the ungodly and reveal melting mercy and form His dear Son in the heart of a sinner, the hope of glory, and give the sinner an ear to hear His voice, His voice that shall say, "My thoughts toward you are thoughts of peace and not of evil." What a subject for praise is a deliverance, what a subject for praise is the

sweet thought of God taking effect upon a sinner! In the multitude of our thoughts within us we get distressed, distracted and turned aside often, but then it comes to pass that we have to say "Thy comforts delight my soul" His thoughts will turn ours out when ours are wrong. His thoughts will be established in our experience and we shall see that they have brought us good and not evil; brought us an expected end, God always expected and gave us some reason to expect from time to time, and these all innumerable as to us. They cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee. If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. No minister can tell them all. I can say very little about them because I am so straightened and so unwise in things, but O what thoughts are these in the heart of God. What thoughts of love, condescending love, that will take a poor beggar out of the dust and lift him off the dunghill and set him with princes, even with the princes of God's people. Is not that a wonderful thought of God, too high for you, for me, till it is revealed in us? The infinite distance between a beggar and the Eternal Jehovah. The infinite disparity between a person, a beggar, sitting on an awful dunghill and the eternal purity of God, and yet that blessed God had the thought from eternity, which means an intention, a decree, that that beggar, that defiled person, should be lifted up out of the dust and taken off the dunghill and set near to Himself, sitting on His throne. "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am sat down with My Father in His throne." You cannot reckon those thoughts up. When they come, even a few of them into our hearts, they have a great effect; they humble, they melt, they conform the sinner to Himself; they bring him into a blessed, a predestinated conformity to God in His dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

Now what am I to say? We have commenced a new year. Years are reckoned by us, they are not Gods. His time is one eternal now. We reckon these days and years; our lives

are measured by them. The year on which we have entered we know nothing about, we are just on the threshold of it. It is all dark to us, we are ignorant of to-morrow, yea of an hour hence; we know not what a day nor an hour may bring forth. I do not know if you have ever blessed God for your ignorance of a day, I think I have. O how glad have I been that I have not known a day beforehand.

Well, dear friends, what should a child of God want? What should he seek? "Large petitions with thee bring" says one, "Thou art coming to a King" Petitions for the Holy Spirit's indwelling. We can never be right without the Spirit. We can never keep right one single minute without the Spirit. Remember the promise of God. See how near He brings it, how He reckons it. "I will keep it every moment" We need keeping momentarily, and the Holy Ghost is the Keeper as to our experience. Christ is the Keeper and the Father is the Keeper, but they both have the sheep in their hand; and the Spirit is the Keeper for He takes hold of His children, takes hold of everyone of them individually, and leads and guides into all truth. May the Holy Ghost be given to us. I wish I were filled with Him. "Be filled with the Spirit; be filled with the Spirit." He is a good man who has the Holy Ghost in him. Sometimes the Holy Ghost stirs up faith powerfully and the sinner blessed so, lays hold of eternal life, whereunto he is called. Sometimes He comes and is a spirit of grace and of supplications, so that the sinner thus blessed says to God "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me" Sometimes faith is so mightily strengthened that the sinner lays hold of God in providence and he says "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life" Sometimes that blessed Spirit works so that the child of God can take up his cross and follow his Lord and Master and Saviour. Sometimes the Spirit so supple the will in affliction that the sinner says "The will of the Lord be done". Sometimes trouble is so sanctified that the poor creature says "Bless God that ever he brought me into trouble; blessed be the rod that He has laid on me;

blessed be the evidence that He has given me of sonship by the rod" "For as many as I love I rebuke and chasten" and "if ye endure chastening God dealeth with you as with sons".

What can we want in our houses but the Holy Ghost coming into our hearts and being with us; and Christ in our hearts the hope of glory; and the Father in us drawing us unto His dearly beloved Son. And what can we want in business, what can we want in the church but this great Jehovah, Father Son and Holy Ghost. And what shall we want if we come into trouble, if national calamities befall us, and there are appearances of such things coming. If these should befall us what shall we want? Only this refuge. "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe". What can a poor minister want? God with him to be a sufficient help. "We are not sufficient of ourselves, to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God". And what can a poor pastor want but wisdom from above to show him how to walk and how to behave himself in the church of God, which is the pillar and ground of the truth? What can deacons want but wisdom which is from above, to enable them to use the office well and so purchase to themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith? And what can individual members want but this, the presence of God? The presence of God to humble them, to make them godly, to keep them lively, to exercise them, to give them love one to another, to give them humility so that each shall prefer the other before himself. What can we want in trouble but grace to sanctify and omnipotence to sustain us? And what shall we want in the hour of death but the presence of Him who said "I am He that was dead and behold I am alive for evermore and have the keys of hell and of death amen?" And these the Lord hath, these thoughts to us and all these necessities that dwell in us, that are in our offices and our various positions and troubles. I say, all the thoughts that are in the heart of God, if we belong to Him, embrace these things and have made provision for our necessities, provision for every trouble that comes, for every death that torments us, for every sorrow that lays hold of us, for

all griefs that may sink us in some way. He has made provision, ample provision. And if here we do sing sometimes "Many O Lord my God are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done and Thy thoughts to us-ward" if we can sing of them in, if I may so speak, in the great bulk, if we can sing of one here one there in a particular way, O what favoured people we shall be through eternity! Let us pray one for another. Let us remember each other continually as the Lord has told us. May He teach us to love one another. Remember the absent ones, for a goodly number are sick and the weather has kept some at home this evening. Let us pray one for another. If the Apostle Paul said to the church "Brethren pray for us" what need have we to say this each to the other, "Pray for us". And if you can, pray for me, that my last days may be my best in my own soul's experience, and that my last preaching days may be the best of all my preaching days and God help us to pray for the whole church of God and for all the ministers, men whom God has sent out to preach and who have to go whether they like it or not. And may the Lord give to His servants a preaching spirit, that they shall find a love for the ministry and that they shall take the oversight of the church of God here and there as He directs them with a willing mind, not as a painful necessity, not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind. If we have grace, if we have prayer, there is plenty for us to pray about according to scripture, and if these blessed thoughts of God are in a measure or in any particulars opened to us, then we shall find a good deal to delight us, a good deal to humble us, a good deal to strengthen us, a good deal to confirm us. May the Lord help us. Dear brethren, look at these things, and the Lord bring them with sweetness and power and unction into your souls and, when you are enlarged, remember me.