

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Wednesday evening 25 April 1928

TEXT: PSALM 43 verse 3

"O send out Thy light and Thy truth, let them lead me, let them
bring me unto Thy holy hill and to Thy
tabernacles"

The Psalmist was in trouble, he was oppressed, he was being dealt with by an unjust, a deceitful man. One of the greatest troubles you can have, I should judge, to have to do with a deceitful, unjust person, on whose word you cannot depend. Either Saul, or Ahithophel, or Absalom, may be intended here, but it is, so far, immaterial which of them, if any one. We have just got the solemn fact that a deceitful and unjust man was plotting against an afflicted saint of the Most High. If any of you, if myself, should ever come into the hands of an unjust, a deceitful man, we shall need the pity of God, and if we have faith we shall be guided, as the Psalmist was, to cry to God, and of all dreadful things, this is one of the most dreadful, for a person to be involved in the cry of a child of God for justice and for mercy. I would not be in that person's place for worlds. If an afflicted saint prays against any of you, woe be to you. "Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation. O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man, for Thou art the God of my strength." The strength of his prayer; the strength of his faith; the strength of his hope. "Thou art the God of my strength". Why dost Thou cast me off, seemingly? Why should I pray and get no answers for a time? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? And the text shows that he realised what the remedy was, what would do him good, what would deliver him. "O send out Thy light and Thy truth. Let them lead me, let them bring me unto Thy holy hill and to Thy tabernacles." This petition brings before us the great God of whom it is written in Holy Scripture - "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all". We, through the fall, are blind, blinded again and again by the god of this world, but delivered by the washing of regeneration

and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Our souls want, pant after, and can never be content and happy without this great God. You are happy people who can sing with Berridge

The portion of a beast
Will not content my heart;
The God of spirits only can
Fill up the vast desires of man.

O can you look within and say here's a heart necessarily empty, empty by sin of all that is good, empty in feeling often, and I believe only God can fill up this poor heart? Can you say it?

The text brings before us the Lord Jesus, for according to the proportion of faith in the scripture, we know that there can be no merciful communications of light and truth but by and from Him. "No man shall see My face and live," said Jehovah. If emanations from absolute deity, revealing Himself in a broken law, should touch any of us, we shall be broken to shivers through eternity. O sinner, think of it, all creation could not stand against these awful emanations, manifestations of infinity, eternity, immensity, omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, justice. I think one of the sweetest of Christ's dealings with a sinner is to give him true apprehensions of His divine Majesty in our own nature. I cannot convey it to you, but I thought an hour or two ago I got such a sight, such an apprehension of the glory of Christ as made me worship Him, and I think the older I get, I can say, to worship Christ occasionally is a very high privilege, a very sweet mercy. All God's fulness is in Him; all divine love for sinners is in Him; all grace to save the lost is in Him; all the power of God is in Him. He is the strength of God, the power of God. So if anything from God comes into your vessels to fill them it will come from Christ. All vessels shall be full, there shall be no empty vessels, no empty vessels in eternity. Full, either of indignation and anger in hell, or full of mercy in heaven. Think of it. Here we are; in a little while this congregation will be buried and where will our souls be and with what will they be filled? All vessels shall be full, Paul says in the chapter I read - "We have this treasure in

earthen vessels". There, first of all, he means the treasure of the ministry, but it may be also, without any violence, used with respect to every child of God. The treasure of grace, the treasure of divine life, the treasure of faith, we have in earthen vessels, and their preservation is not due to the soundness of the vessels, but to God, whose excellent power is seen, both in giving and preserving the treasure. Do you think you have got a little of this heavenly treasure? O believer, what a happy person you are in your state, whatever you may be this evening in your feelings. "O send". You cannot get it of yourself, it must be sent, must be given as a divine and wonderful gift of the love of God. O how free it is! How free it is! Send, give, communicate, convey to me Thy light and Thy truth. Helplessness in self is what every child of God has some realisation of, and unworthiness to receive anything is what also he feels. This prayer then comes to this - Give, send, communicate. Say something to me; give me out of Thy fulness some blessing; think on me for good. This is how you will pray again and again, wanting and unable to be satisfied without God. I wish that all of our hearts were more and more raised to this, to seek the possession of God. "The Lord is my portion saith my soul". It is a grand thing to be able to say it, a great thing to be able to say that. "The Lord is my portion saith my soul, therefore will I hope in Him." "O send out". Lord, Thou hast everything that I can need, everything I can contain, everything I want for time and for eternity, therefore send out Thy light and Thy truth. "Thy light". That is a beautiful word which I read just now, where Paul, having said that he renounced the hidden things of dishonesty and did not walk in craftiness nor handle the word of God deceitfully, said - God has communicated this light, even the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, who is God. The image of God is only known by faith. He is the express image and character of God as the Apostle says in the Hebrews "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, by whom He made the worlds," and who "when He had purged our sins sat down on the right-hand of the Majesty on high", who is the image of God, "the express image of His Person", the true

character of God. Just whatever God is, Christ is in His divine Person. If we are led to believe this and to perceive this, it will enhance the worth of Christ greatly to us and show us how, that worshipping Christ, we worship God in spirit and in truth. And if any one should at any time be perplexed as to which Person is to be addressed in prayer, may the Lord help that person to believe and follow Hart when he said

When we live on Jesus' merit,
Then we worship God aright,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Then we savingly unite.

When I was a young man, I was perplexed about which Person to address, and the relief, the instruction that I have just named I found to be very great. Worship Him in His Son, there He is love and there alone. If you honour the Son, then you honour the Father and if you honour them both, you do it by the Spirit who proceeds from them both. May we be true worshippers of the living God. When this light shines, then God shines. The light of His love; the light of His grace; the light of His mercy; the light of the atonement; the light of justification; the light of sanctification; the light of a preparedness for heaven, and the light that discovers heaven, in a degree, this is the light that a man of God wants. O send out this light. This light is not cold and naked. It is called the light of life, because it always animates the soul, affects the conscience of the person to whom it is sent. If you are pleased with any sort of intellectual knowledge, you may come to this, to know that that pleasure was not a holy pleasure, and not acceptable to God. Right convictions, right apprehensions of God, will always humble, always. It does not matter where you are, what you are, and what you might have been doing, or may be doing, when this great God shines, you understand Abraham's attitude and feeling when God came to him and spoke to him, saying - "I am the Almighty God, walk before Me and be thou perfect" and so on. Abraham fell on his face, that is the effect. When He spoke to Ezekiel, when Ezekiel saw Him, he found his death. You will always find your death when life comes that way. When he

discovered Himself to Daniel, Daniel said - "Then my comeliness was turned into corruption" Then he fell on his face and could not get to his knees until the glory of God had spoken to him. Men have no courage when God shines except that courage which He communicates, It was so with the Apostle John when he saw the glory of this blessed God in our nature - "I fell at His feet as dead". All this is given my friends, all of it is sent. May the encouragement that this is calculated to convey, be conveyed to you and to me. It is a sent blessing. "O send out Thy light". I am oppressed Lord, I have to do with a deceitful man, an unjust man, do protect me, cover me. We are safe if God covers us with His presence. We see we are safe when He sheds His light upon us. We see a little into that in a later Psalm - "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty," and we see the house in that Psalm, and the refuge, and the habitation, all to be God. He is all of it. And then this light says - now no pestilence can reach you here, no arrow, no fatal dart will ever enter your heart here. Here you are safe. God lets His people see this. Why, some of us have seen it. I have seen it. The sight does make Him precious. "Unto you therefore that believe He is precious". It covers all things; it removes our sins and melts our hard hearts and brings us before the Lord in a spirit of faith and worship, and love and holiness. The light of the gospel, the glorious gospel is a light, and this surely is the Lord Jesus. "I have given Thee for a light of the Gentiles" so that the people which sat in darkness saw a great light, a light that said - here is a way of escape; here is a way to heaven, a new and living way. The light of the atonement opens this way; the light of the atonement, if I may use such an expression, opens a great window in heaven through which beams this glorious light, affecting the conscience, melting the soul and drawing it out to God. How different this is from our natural religion, how different from all our notions of religion, of what is religion and what is right. What a sacred effect it has, O the effect is wonderful. You will say "Here would I constantly abide and every moment live". And dear friends, this is a gift, this is sent. I will keep it all before you. This is sent, not acquired, not bought, not merited, not worked for, but just sent. A troubled man asks

for it and gets it. "Light". Whatsoever doth make manifest is light". It is light that manifests God. I hope to see Him one day, and I like to speak of Him while I can. This light manifests God in His gracious character, His merciful purposes, His sovereign love, His covenant of grace. You will see Him, whenever this light comes, you will see Him. The motions of it, the waves of it, passing over the soul and conscience will always produce love to Him. Light is like a wave passing over the soul, bringing heavenly instruction, making a person say - what an empty, what a foolish, what a vile person, I am. The holy light of God discovers sin in the people on whom the light shines. That makes a person alarmed. He says - what am I to do? How can I dwell with everlasting burnings? Then, when it is the light of the gospel, it says - "Ho, ye despairing sinners come and trust upon the Lord." Is not that a wonderful voice? "Ho, ye despairing sinners come, despair no longer." "Lo, the dying Lamb utterly forbids despair to all who love His Name".

I am always having to come to the same thing. I am glad that the people heard Paul one Sunday and desired to hear the same words the next Sunday. I mean I must say, there is the light of Christ's death, that death that is our life. The light shows it to be sufficient for all sin and blasphemy against the Son of Man. It is very kind of God to convince us of our sin, for then He leads to Jesus' blood. It is very gracious of God to make us feel increasingly our sinfulness, our weakness, our frailty and our constant disposition to change. O, but He does not leave us there, what a mercy. "I will not always chide, neither will I keep my anger for ever, lest the soul which I have made should faint before Me." Then He sheds the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, the image of God. He lets you see that the shining is God's shining, that the light is God's light, and made bearable in the nature, our own nature, the nature He assumed. The light of God as He is God, is unbearable and unapproachable, but as it is in the Man Christ Jesus - the light of love, and the light of the atoning work of Christ, O it is a beautiful light, and we enter then even if we do not remember the words or know them, into the language of Solomon in Ecclesiastes - "Truly the light is sweet and a pleasant thing it is for the

eyes to behold the Sun". When Job was without it he said - "I went mourning without the sun" That is what everyone does who has had this shining light. "I went mourning". How could he do other? How can the children mourn while the bridegroom is with them? But the day is come when the bridegroom is not with them and then they mourn. Do you mourn an absent God? O it is a great mercy to mourn when He is not with you. Do not think it is anything short of mercy to be mourning when the Lord is not with you. This glorious gospel, while it tells us of a perfect atonement, it shows the union, the ineffable union, between mercy and justice, the satisfaction of both of them in dealing with sinners. "Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Ah, go to the cross, and you will see it there. O what a meeting! What a meeting!. Deity there; justice there; love there; and sinners there, and God pleased with sinners and justice now standing on their side.

"O send out Thy light" to show me that I am in the way. The light always has two effects. It shows its source; it shows the way to heaven to the person who is favoured to have it. If you are in a right way and the light shines, you will see it to be right. If it is a way of trouble, if you are to deal with an unjust person, if you have to deal with an ungodly world, and the light shines into your heart, you will say - this is the right way. Ah, it will say to you, go on praying. "Seek the Lord and His strength, seek His face evermore". It is very beautiful when this light comes into a subject of grace, for the Lord does own His own work. He has a desire to it. And the beautiful work of the Spirit in a man's soul - the garnishing of the temple of his heart, where God is, is seen in this light. The Spirit works our faith and hope and love. You may say sometimes you are destitute of those graces. A light inshining will show you God and yourself. You will say sometimes - Why, after all, I am a believer. I have wondered if I have been a believer these many years, you may say, but I do believe I am a believer. I believe I am a praying person, though often I am tried about prayer. Yea, you may say, I believe I have love. When the light shines it will shine on the graces which the Lord gives you, and that wont make you more in love with yourself, but more in love with

Him who has given you these graces. I love the Lord, you will say, I love Him for what He has done for me, and love Him for what He has done in me. How beautiful is this shining when it shines on the graces of the Spirit.

And then it will shine on the path in which God, in His providence, is leading you. Ah, but sometimes it is very solemn. If you follow the Lord Jesus you will go into the wilderness. You will go after Him in a land that was not sown, and that is very solemn. And while you are there, if the light does not shine brightly, if it is dim, then you may be tempted to think, to feel and say - now I have mistaken the way, I am wrong. The light coming and shining on your soul, and shining on the Lord Jesus, your forerunner, will move you to say - why, I am in the path the Saviour trod, and you will follow Him. You will follow Him in this way - In His affliction He prayed. That is what you will do. You may enter into the language of the hymnwriter who, addressing the Saviour, says

O Thou by whom we come to God
The Life, the Truth, the Way,
The path of prayer Thyself hath trod
Lord, teach us how to pray

and you will pray, and moreover you will trust. You will commit your way to the Lord as the Saviour did. The light will show you this path. He was cast upon the Lord, and He trusted in Him. You will have confidence sometimes - "I know that I shall not be confounded" Why? "He is near that justifieth Me". The Lord will show you this. O sinner, you are safe.

And also this light will show you what to avoid. If you walk in darkness, you do not know where you are going, and you do not know the things you stumble at, but if a man walk in the light, then he has no occasion of stumbling, that is to say, he sees dangers, he flees from them, flees unto the Lord, takes refuge in the Most High. You will see your own infidelity, and you will flee to the Lord and say - increase my faith. You will see your pride and say - clothe me with humility. You will see

some dangers in providence and ask the Lord to protect you, and keep you from making some grievous mistake or taking some step that would, if taken, involve you in great sorrow. The light will show you what to avoid. If thine eye be single, if thou lookest to the Lord, if thou askest Him to guide thee, if thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light, which says - Now it is not your feet that guide you, it is the light that falls on your eye that guides you, and so you will see what to avoid and what to follow. Follow that which is good. An observation I would make here, namely, this text shows us the need of constant communications. If we do not get communications we get very dull, inert, become sleepy and do not know where we shall get to. Oh may we have grace to seek constant communications. Some of us have been very very remiss in this and have suffered for it. Who sends this? Why the Lord who brings it, the Lord, the Lord the Spirit. His bright light shows us things we could never see without it. Now mark this point, I have dwelt upon it because I believe I love it and I want it for myself and want you to have it, the communication of light, the light of life which affects the conscience, touches the heart, moves faith, draws out prayer, and warms the affections. Any light that has not this effect you may well flee from. Call it fleshly or whatever you like, it is a deceiving light. Beware of an intellectual light; beware of an acquired knowledge of things; beware of resting therein. Seek this that penetrates, that makes manifest things, that humbles you into the dust, makes you feel that you can say with Abraham "I am but dust and ashes". That, that is the light.

And I have one more word to say on this point, namely, this will show you not only the way to heaven, but heaven itself, not fully, but you will get a glimpse of the land which is very far off. It will make you want to get there. It will make you say sometimes - O hasten the delaying days. It will make you feel, now I shall be free from sin. Now and again one does want to be free from sin, that hardening, that polluting thing, sin, that separating thing, sin. God and sin can never live together and a holy man, that is one who is called a holy man in the scripture, he can never live comfortably while he has got sin. The only

moments of comfort and peace he has are the moments when the Lord says as it were - sin, let him alone. But while we are here we shall have this burden, this sin, and say - now this light shows the habitation of holiness. Heaven is that holy place. I wish we were longing for it. Longing for it wont shorten the appointed days, but it will make earth a poor thing, empty indeed.

Heaven is that holy happy place
Where sin no more defiles
Where God unveils His blissful face
And looks and loves and smiles

And that gives a right desire for heaven sometimes. Some of us have said - O we should like to die, and if we examine the reason of that wish it was that we might get rid of some trouble, but grace in the heart says - "Wait on God", the day is coming, the happy day is coming when you will be freed from sin. Now you are Christ's freed man, then you will be free from sin. Now you are bought and know it in a measure, then you will be perfectly liberated from that which has hindered you, hurt you, been shackles to your feet, blindness to your mind, deadness on your affections, you will be free from it all.

"O send out Thy light and Thy truth" The truth of the gospel, the true grace of God. But here it would seem by the context - the trouble that this good man was in, who was able to say "Thou art the God of my strength. Why go I mourning all the day?" - that it has a particular eye to God's faithfulness. One of the greatest words a believing, broken-hearted child of God can say to the Lord is - "Do as Thou hast said". David had a word that assured him that God would make him a house for a great while to come. Then he said - "Do as Thou hast said" Now if you can descend into your hearts and find God's word there, given you, made over to you, sealed on your hearts in certain circumstances, perhaps of trouble, of persecution or evil, and then take it up as it were to Him and say - This was given to me at such a time, I got it, I felt I got it from Thine own mouth. It affected me, humbled me, assured me that matters would turn

out well (very ill they appeared to be) "Do as Thou has said", is not it great? Is not it great that a poor sinner should ever be able to go to the Lord like that? Take His own word to Him, appeal to Him and say "Do as Thou hast said". He wont rebuke you, no repellent frown will appear on His well pleased face. He is a faithful God. Send it out. Send out, that is communicate to me that Thou art a faithful God and that what Thou hast said to me Thou wilt perform in me and for me. O, how safe are the saints, but they do not always feel it. How happy they are when the light shines on them. How humbled they are and therefore humble when the light shines on them. How confident they are when His faithfulness is brought to them. Then they can say with the Psalmist in an earlier Psalm - "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life of whom shall I be afraid?" Also you can continue saying in that Psalm - "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life and to enquire in His temple." Reference of course is had to the temple where the Psalmist worshipped. There was the beauty of holiness in a type, the Holy of Holies, the Ark of the Covenant, the pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, all to show the everlasting faithfulness, freshness, beauty and strength of the Lord Jesus. Now says the Psalmist - I want to live here and behold all this beauty. Bread that never, never, never gets musty; a rod that ever buds when before the Ark; the covenant ordered in all things and sure, the covenant in the heart of the Lord Jesus.

"Thy truth". Thy truth in Christ; Thy truth in the Covenant; Thy truth in a promise made over to me. Send it out, make it over again, let me hold it fast, enable me to keep it and preserve me from casting away my confidence which now I believe to have great recompense of reward. "Let them lead me". I do not know the right way of myself, let them lead me; let them take me by the hand and lead me. Where to? "Let them bring me unto Thy holy hill" where Thou hast set Thy king. "I have set My King on My Holy Hill" and "to Thy tabernacles" where Thou art worshipped. "To Thy tabernacles" All pointing to the Lord Jesus "the minister of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and

not man". Let them lead me there. My brethren, what is your end? What aim have you? The end the Psalmist had in view, the aim of his faith, his desire, his prayer, is here - Let them bring me where I may worship Thee, serve Thee in the Spirit. Where I may find Thee to be my all and in all. Now we are poor sinners, the chief of sinners in the chapel is speaking to you. We are poor sinners, but there is this left us, given to us. May it be sent out again and again to our hearts. We have a good God to deal with. I would honour Him if I could in your midst again and again. I would proclaim with all my strength - "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble and He knoweth them that trust in Him." Affliction is not a sign that we are wrong. O if I could always believe what I believe; affliction is not a sign that we are wrong. "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten". "In the world ye shall have tribulation," but now come to Me. You say - I cannot get to Thee Lord, send out Thy light and Thy truth, let them lead me, let them bring me, uniting in their operation. Let them lay hold of me, not an unwilling sinner. Let them lead me, anxious as I am and desirous to be near Thee. Let the truth, let the light together bring me to Thee. May the Lord help us to walk this way, pray this prayer, and wait for answers.

AMEN.