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28

Sermon preached by Mr. J. K. Popham
on Wednesday evening, 28th. June 1933

Text: Psalm 43. v. 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."

You may have observed in your self examinations, and changing experiences, that your hearts are frequently far from God; from steadfastness, from a fixed following of Jehovah as He has revealed Himself. And while you are not left to any open or persistent backsliding, you have discovered that your hearts are unstable and subject to some very frequent and painful changes. So if you were to come to a conclusion about your state before God, from what you pass through, or the changes you experience, you might readily say, "we are wrong!" But God is good to His changeable, frequently changing people, while He discovers to them their unholiness, frivolity, worldliness, lusts, pride, vanity, hardness of heart and ingratitude. He causes them to perceive, that there is no remedy for these diseases in themselves, but that there is a Remedy, infallibly blessed, in Himself. Pantings after Him are the fruits of His grace and operations. Left for one minute, the soul of a child of God proves that it can understand no spiritual things; proves that it is bent, as the Scripture says, to backsliding. But this panting, though not kept always in very lively, sensible moving of the soul after God, is not allowed to entirely die down. If you feel - and O who does not in the Church of God? - that you are disposed to settle on your lees; disposed to folly, great folly; if you feel that your heart is just as the Scripture describes it, "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," that you only know it as discovered to you, then you find that the Holy Ghost comes, with some reviving touch, some merciful moving, some feeling of your misery, and some desire, fervent honest desire, for the return of God to your soul. Then it maybe you find yourself looking back, as did the Psalmist. He says, "Therefore will I remember Thee from the land of Jordan," through which I went as on dry land. I remember seeing Thy mighty power - feeling it in my soul. I remember Thee from the Hermonites, where Thou didst appear for me, and from the hill Mizar. And therefore that "deep calleth unto deep," in the providence of God, and in the motions of the Spirit, and though I have to say, they are as "the noise of Thy water spouts," which are terrible, and threaten drowning, yet "the Lord" says faith, "will command His lovingkindness."

These changes of mine make room for Him; my sins make a place for the Blood of Christ. Erskine has a very wonderful truth put in his own terse way, "Sin for my good shall work and win, but 'tis not good for me to sin." Each person under the teaching of the Spirit knows that it is not good

for him to sin, and yet he knows also that God does turn his sins to good account, when He chastens for them. When He rebukes; when He hides His face, then sin is made more bitter, hateful, and from it, the soul thus dealt with, would fly constantly. He loves holiness and he brings his case to God. "Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation." And though we have no nation of our own, as it were, to take before God, we have our terrible enemies - the lusts of our nature, the wickedness of our hearts. We cannot judge ourselves. The apostle found in one case, that though he knew nothing against himself, yet he was not thereby justified; so his want for God expresses itself thus, "O send out Thy light and Thy truth." Send them darting into my soul. Send them as new revelations in my heart, that I may know that I have a good God, and let them again conduct me, let them lead me, let them bring me to Thy holy hill, from which in spirit I have wandered, though in body I may not have done; and to Thy tabernacles. "O send out Thy light and Thy truth." God is Light, and that testimony given by the apostle John is solemnly felt, and it is a mercy to realise that there is no darkness in God. Now when you are in darkness, it is out of yourself, it proceeds from the blindness of your nature, and it is a mercy, a great mercy, when we feel this darkness, to understand the source of it, and to complain only of self: "for whatsoever doth make manifest is light." There are three ways in which God sends out His pure light. The first in creation. By it, looking at creation you see the eternal power and Godhead of Jehovah. The second way is in this infallible book - Holy Scripture. His Being, His purposes, His will, His omnipotence, and everything that belongs to Him He has declared, as we can receive it, to His people.

It is a great thing to believe in Holy Scripture, but it is a mercy not to rest there. One may acquire a certain knowledge of the Scripture, and therefore of the God of the Bible. We may be pleased with our knowledge. Our intellect may revel in some particular parts of the Word of God. We may study prophesy and think we know a good deal about it, and yet know nothing about the bright inshining of the Word. Do not rest in your knowledge of the Scripture. Use it as God may help you. Acquire as much of it as you can, but do not rest in your knowledge of the Scripture. If you do, your heart will deceive you, and you will come probably, if you belong to God, into great straits and difficulties and questions; doubts, fears; and become a poor lean creature, needing as you will feel and pray for, an application of truth to your soul. The third way, is that which I believe the Psalmist had, in his heart, mind and prayer, in this petition. "O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me." Leave me not to lean to my own understanding. Let them bring me to Thy holy hill, - I do not know how to find my way there without Thee, - and to Thy tabernacles where Thou hast placed Thy name.

Let us look as enabled then, at this petition, "O send out Thy light." If one may use the expression, it is concentrated in the Person of Christ. Says He, "I am the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life." "This is the message," says John, in his epistle, "that God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at

all." Light discovers, it discovers many things. It discovers to a person in whom it shines, his ignorance, his wickedness, the depth of the fall, in which he is involved; and the abominations that dwell in his heart, so that he is ready to say, often perhaps, "Can ever God dwell here?" He is shocked at the sight, that the light shows him of his fallen nature, and it has a good effect this, namely, it brings him off from his own wisdom, righteousness, and strength, and he becomes a poor miserable creature in himself. He is brought also to sincerity in confessing what he is. He confesses it to God. "If we confess our sins" - which are discovered to us by the inshining of the light; God sending it means, that He darts beams of His eternal pure light into the soul, into the heart. I think it is Goodwin has a word to this effect; speaking of revelation, he said, "Its beams of light, entering into the very depths of the heart!" and that is a proper description of that sending out by God, of His light into a soul. You never will be able to adequately express what the light shows to you of yourself, when it darts into your soul. Suddenly, sometimes, it comes - surprises you. A Scripture falls into your heart suddenly; opens up things that you had not thought of; sins which you had covered, and now God uncovers. But that is not the immediate intention of the light as here prayed for. The light as here prayed for, is to lead the sinner; lead him out of himself. Lead him to the place he had seen by faith, and to which he desired to go. The light is the light of God, the light of His blessed eternal love. "Thy time was the time of love." "I passed by thee." "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." And none can understand but those who receive it, how the penetrating light that here is prayed for, opens the way of God, opens the way He will have a sinner walk, "we walk by faith, not by sight." Opens to him how, left to himself, he must go astray, because he is, by nature, a poor blind creature. The light shows him that there is a way, a blessed way, of which Christ Himself speaks - "I am the Way." The way from hell to heaven; the way from confusion to order; the way from pollution to holiness; the way from death to life. The way from hell to heaven, you can never explain it to nature, but it is so palpable to yourself; this blessed inshining, that you say, "His track I see, and I'll pursue the narrow way, till Him I view." This light discovers to a soul, how it can be made holy, which is a great desire. You, all who are favoured to fear God, feel warm desires at times, to be holy; to be right, - that is in the sight of God, - and this light shows you how you may be. It shows that here, you have no continuing city, that you are just pilgrims; that this is not your home. You understand in the light of this blessed inshining, that Scripture, "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." The tabernacle is to be taken up, one day. Struck. Death will come. And this light shows you the way to eternal life, to "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." The inshining shows the only resting place for a sinner; that is God. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Now we are acquainted with that Scripture, and we may be saying, again and again, "What a beautiful Scripture it is;" but when, if ever, God sends it as a beam of heavenly light into your soul, - you see God. You see His bosom to be the resting place of your soul. And there, you say, you would constantly abide, and every moment live;

and become jealous of anything and everything that would divert your heart and mind from this resting place; the chambers prepared for sinners in trouble. The rest in Christ from all affliction, and burdens, and sins, and unprofitable labour. The beauty of this inshining can never be well expressed. God is this Rest; God in Christ. The arm of Omnipotence is a support of the soul, the support of faith. "O send out Thy light." The inshining of this, shows to the sinner, how he can be an overcomer. He is often overcome. Ungodliness in his nature, threatens to drown him in destruction, but he sees there is now a way by which he can be made an overcomer. Hart well expresses it - "Christ, who conquered for us once, will in us conquer too," and that is the only way. You may see this as a doctrine and not see it to your profit. You may see that Christ's victory must be the victory of the Church, and yet not see it in your own experience. It is this light that is prayed for here - "O send it out Lord, I am in difficulties, I have enemies, I have afflictions, I have troubles, I am threatened on every hand with destruction, let me see in Thine own light, how when one has no might, no strength, no help in self, that the Lord God Omnipotent is the strength of such a person." He increaseth strength when this light shines into your heart. The distinction between an intellectual knowledge of the light and the inshining of the light is the difference between life and death; between naked knowledge and real experience, and it is a great and grave difference. "O send out Thy light," that I may see by whom, by whose teaching, I can walk with God; that is to say - let me see the Lord the Holy Ghost. You may acknowledge it quite well, correctly, and yet not know this inshining. This inshining makes a man say, "I clearly see, and I really feel that the Holy Ghost only, can make me wise unto salvation." So dear friends, if you are really rightly exercised, if you at all can enter experimentally into the changes of the 42nd Psalm which I read, then you will enter feelingly into the petition here - "O Lord, send Thy light into my soul." It is the light of life, not a naked cold light, but a warm, inspiring, quickening light that affects every affection of your heart and sets in motion your soul after God. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God."

"And Thy truth:" - Truth! - Well, one may say, that is clearly revealed in the Bible. So it is, but that revelation may leave you cold, unimpressed. May leave you to sin; leave you in the world; leave you to be swallowed up of various cares and things, driving you, though you may not know it, away from God. Truth shining in the light of life in the heart, is different. Then truth is seen to be in the Lord Jesus. "I am ... the Truth." Truth is seen in Genesis. The promised Seed of the Woman who should bruise the serpent's head. Truth is seen in the righteousness of Christ, which alone can cover a naked sinner and justify him. It is seen in the blood of the everlasting covenant; that alone can cleanse us from our pollution. It is seen in the blessed Person and work of Christ, as covering the whole of the soul and making him acceptable to God. Truth is then beautiful. How great is His beauty who is the Truth. Send it out, Lord! Do not, dear friends, do not measure your knowledge of the truth by what you have concluded by study. Measure it thus, - what has been the power and the effect of it in the soul? What has it done?

What has it said? What has it discovered to you? Has it made you see yourself an abominable creature? You believe in the fall then, your own fall. Has it discovered to you the Lord Jesus? So that, if you were asked the question that was asked by Pilot, "What is truth?" - you would say, "Truth, as far as I know it, is in Christ!" The God of truth without iniquity, just and right is He. Truth respecting Christ is this also; the fulfillment of every prophecy. The fulness, the antitype of every type, every type; and the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The truth is the revelation to you of the will of God, so that while you say, naturally the will of God affects everybody, does He not rule "in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth?" - that is very true, but the Apostle Paul says something beside that. He said to the Romans, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service," and also, "that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Now that was something different from notion of truth; something different from what you can easily acquire of the truth: it was a living work of God the Spirit, by the means of the truth, as the truth is in Jesus. There the will of God was done perfectly. There it shines in its beauty. There it is seen in all its justice, and all its blessedness, and all its power, ruling in heaven and in earth, and particularly in your own soul. Then the Lord's prayer has some meaning to you in your own experience - "Thy will be done." "Now," you say, "here am I, Lord, I bring myself; I offer myself - a poor creature - but a sinful person hoping in Thy mercy, and I submit to Thy holy will, in Thy dealings with me. I grieve over my wilfulness and now submit entirely, as far as I know myself, to that will which I believe I have, in measure, proved to be good. Good for me, though some of its movements have mortified me. Acceptable; acceptable to my heart. I would not have my own will in place of Thine, and approve in my soul's judgement, so that I would lie down in the will of God." And if you meet it, you will approve of and understand Rutherford's word about it. "The will of God," he says, "is a bed to lie down on in a fire." The man who has proved that, has proved a great deal. The truth "sent out" not the truth fetched in by yourself, into your intellect, but "sent out" by God the Spirit into your own particular heart, and particular case. "Send out Thy light and Thy truth." Is this petition yours?

Next, - "let them lead me:" - Ah, when you have led yourself, when you have done that which was pleasing to yourself, you may have said, "Well, the Lord is very kind to me in this," but you have got to prove things! Everything has to be proved. Every step you take will be proved sooner or later. Whether God led you to take it, or whether you took it yourself. "Let them lead me." "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." Is there any sinner in this congregation that would say he had never been a fool? I have been a fool often, woe to me! "Let them lead me." "Let them," as it were, come to a blind creature, take him by the hand, and lead him where he should go. "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another," - fellowship with God - O what a mercy! what a privilege! What an honour! Fellowship with God! He letting out His goodness, and His mercy, and His love to you, and you

receiving the same, and worshipping Him in Spirit and in Truth, and living on the word which He gives you. "I am the bread of life." If you walk in the Divine Light, the bright inshining of God to your soul, by the truth; that will be one effect; you will have communion with God. "Let them lead me." Whereto? - "Sweet the moments, rich in blessing, which before the Cross I spend." That is where a living soul wants to get. That is the place he would live in. That is the sight he would ever be having. Always gazing, by faith, upon it. That is the experience he wishes to have. As Paul expresses it, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Let them lead me." You cannot find your way to Christ by yourself. You may think you know it. You may know it in the letter of it. You may be very pleased with your knowledge of it, but you cannot get to the Cross really, without this inward shining, and leading of the Light and the Truth. Christ is the Light, Christ is the Truth, and that Light and that Truth, beaming into your heart, will lead you to the Cross and there you will say, "Here would I abide and every moment live. God forbid that I should trust in anything but this; boast of anything but this precious death of the Lord Jesus." "Let them lead me." But he has an end before him - a distinct aim.

"Let them bring me unto Thy holy hill." - Where is this? Above the mountains! What is on this hill? My King! "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill." This King is Christ. Let the Light and the Truth bring me here. This will teach you that there is no rest in yourself; no rest in any creature; no rest in any possession; no rest in your intellect; no rest in your naked or acquired knowledge; no rest in a general profession of Christ's name. The objective will be this; God's holy hill. Of this He speaks in another Psalm, "This is My rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." This is the Church of the living God. The house of God built upon the top of the mountains to which, nations shall flow, saying one to another, "Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths." Well, dear friends, do you pant to get here. Is this the great and grand object of your desire? Vital religion consists largely, if I may say it, entirely, on these two things. Subjective and objective. The subjective religion is wrought in the soul by the operations of the light and the truth, which is sent forth, and the great Objective is God, and He is reached when you reach His holy hill. Here He shines, yes, here He shines! His smile makes a summer, ends winter, winds and cold; creates the flowers and causes the songs of the birds to be heard, and the soul rests. "Let them lead me." Do not trust to anything of your own. Trust alone to what God gives you; to His bright inshining into your heart. I said it comes sometimes suddenly. "Sudden," Hart says, "Sudden He stands confessed; we look and all is light." So it is! When you reach this hill, when you reach the King whom God has set on it, then you are at home. "Here it is I find my heaven." You are at home here. In the world you are not at home. If a child of God, you can never be at home in the world. For Christ's prayer, "Separate them from the world," being answered in you, will never leave you to rest there. You have some things in it which attract you, which are lawful and proper in their place, but they wont be your home. O you will say, I love this and I love that, but do

"John 1
verses
16&17.

not let me live in them. Graciously keep me from resting in them, and if your prayer be sincere, and God answers it, He will disturb that world of yours, put a thorn into it; put a trouble, yea a death, and you will find everything in it that is deceitful. And when you reach the King, then you will say, "Here is what I love, - Jesus, I love Thy charming name; tis music in my ear." Well, dear friends, is this the point? Is this the aim? Is this the great Object, Jesus Christ? Let the light, let the truth, of the everlasting Gospel, shine into my heart, and lead me to the hill of God. The hill of God is His blest abode. The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and He does dwell with one into whose heart He has started the beams of His love, and grace, and power, and wisdom, bringing him in His own time, to this place; this abode; this blessed abode. He has given the world - if I may so say - He has given the world up to utter destruction; it lies at the present in wickedness, and the man who is in it, and is never brought out of it, will die, and be destroyed, with it. Ah, but if the Lord loves you, He will take hold of your hand, by the light and by the truth, and pull you out of this Sodom, that you may get to the mountain, and to the hill of God, and there find your rest. "Let them lead me, let them bring me unto Thy holy hill."

"And to Thy tabernacles." - This may represent particular Churches where God dwells. He says He will dwell in His people, and walk with them, and be their God, and their Father. And if this be so, it is an important question for every Church to ask itself; does God dwell here? Have I found Him here? His tabernacles are very beautiful. A living Church is a beautiful thing. A living Church is a very beautiful thing in God's eye. "A garden inclosed is My sister, My spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." A vineyard, out of which He has gathered the stones, planted the vines of a goodly hill, a hill of oil, and there He has His pleasure. God has His pleasure of His own hill, and in His tabernacles. "I am come into My garden, My sister," expressing Christ's pleasure in His people. What a wonder it is, to be in one of the tabernacles of God. It is an unspeakable favour really to belong to a living Church, a Gospel Church, for there God is, walking in the midst. Walking in the midst to discover wrong; to tell the Church of the wrong He has discovered. To prescribe the Remedy. All this is favour, and when the light and the truth of God shine into your hearts, you will find that what follows is true, in your own experience. "Then will I go unto the altar of God." What is that altar? "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." This is the Throne of Grace. "Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy." The gladness of my joy; God will make you glad with His own gladness. I will go "unto God my exceeding joy;" and when you feel this, you want nobody else, nothing else. I once in my life said to Him, "Lord I do not want a creature." If you have Him with you, you will say it, more or less distinctly. And perhaps some of you have often said it, "Lord I do not want a creature, I have got enough." Thou art "my exceeding joy; yea, upon the harp will I praise Thee, O God, my God." May the Lord grant us this prayer, and then the answer to it. Amen.