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Sermon Preached at Galeed Chapel, Brighton  
by Mr J.K. Popham on Sunday Morning  
6th July 1919

*Text Psalm 99 verse 1*

*The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble: He sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved.*

It will be our mercy, if our minds are gathered up to the Almighty One, who in the text is said to reign. It would be natural for us, to be fixing our thoughts upon, that which calls for our attention, and much gratitude, namely, the great victory, which it has pleased God, to give to us. (The 1914 -1918 World War) And no word shall fall, I trust, from my lips to belittle it, but I think I shall best exalt, and extol that, by lifting up, as enabled, God very high. If things are great or small, and He is in them or not, connected together as part of this great nation and empire, if our minds run in the proper direction, surely we shall put God first. Heaven's greatest, best law, is that God is first, may it not be broken by us, today in respect of that, for which we are specially met together, this morning.

The Lord said "The Lord your God was your King." (1 Samuel 12 verse 12). Happy is that people, that is in such a case; (as to have God for its King) yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord."(Psalm 144 verse 15). "The Lord reigneth". First, because He, and He alone has a right to reign, over people and nations who are His creation. Everything but sin, is God's work, and He sets up a nation, and puts it down, according as it serves Him or not. It is, His right to be the King, His right because He has created all things, and all are dependant upon Him. All creatures, all things, all nations as such in their constitution and policy, are dependant upon the great God, and so He has a perfect right.

O that no one disputed this, that we might never be left, to dispute it, that with gratitude in our hearts, we might entreat Him, to be the King and sovereign Lord, and only ruler of this nation and empire, which the great and blessed God has made, and given to us. He rules because He is determined to rule, He has decreed that He will reign, whether men will have Him reign, or not. Whether they will cast off His yoke, or submit to it, whether they will obey His laws, or cast them behind their back. He will reign, either to do people good, and build, plant and establish them, or He will pluck them up, to pull down, and throw them down, in one way, He will reign. (Jeremiah 31 verse 28).

We shall never sin with impunity, neither as individuals or communities, or nations, no man, no people, shall ever finally sin with impunity. The reign of God will be decreed, and manifested. He has decreed to be King in this nation. He has been, and has been owned, and blessed be His name, today He is owned. Let us remove our gaze for a moment from the profanity, that is today too manifest, and from denial of Him, in various ways, places, and manners. And fix our eyes on the authorities in the land, and remember this, that according to scripture, a nation has ever been in God's esteem, what it and its leaders have been. A righteous king brought blessings on his nation, and a godless king brought trouble, sorrows, famine, and disease. There is no reason to doubt, that this will always be the case. God has reigned here in this land, there was a time, when this sacred book was revered, as it is not to day, when the universities revered the scriptures, when it was not thought, to be beneath the dignity of a scholar to acknowledge the scriptures, to be the word of God. I am afraid that I speak much truth, things literally true, when I say it is far from that today.

It was a noble answer that the late Queen Victoria gave to some who asked, what had made England so great, when she referred them to the Holy Bible. We may well bless God, for this book, and the measure of our love for it, will be the measure of our sorrow, that it is now so disregarded, and that criticism has so impinged on the scriptures, and so dealt with them in a spirit of infidelity, as to take its penknife and cut out the pages of that which it disapproves, casting them into the fire of human anger. (see Jeremiah 36 verse 23). And woe be to the land, that approves of this, be it given to me and to this congregation, ever to hold fast, to the sacred scriptures, as given to us. According to Paul's epistle, given by inspiration, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3 verses 16, 17). Young people, let me entreat you, to hold fast the Bible as God's word, truly absolutely inspired. To some of us, myself among them, it will matter nothing soon what this nation is, we shall be gone the way of all flesh. But to you that are younger, it will matter much, what God does to this nation, and may your part in it, be a good one. That is to say, may you hold fast the holy scripture, as given by inspiration. It will tell you what to do, how to obey your parents, how, if you be masters, you are to rule them, and what you are to do, to your servants, how, if you become servants, how and what you are to do in respect of your masters. This book, if obeyed, would leave no room, for the continual strife and unrest, that we see among men today, between masters and servants.

Follow this book and all will be well. The Lord reigneth because He has decreed to do so. Now if the nations displease God, if in place of His word, they set up the traditions of men, if in place of His true pure worship, they set up there own religious forms of service, and if in place of waiting on Him, they turn unto themselves, and become sufficient for themselves, and trample under foot His authority, what will He do? Well history will tell us, the history of today, the present condition of things tell us, what God will do with wicked nations. For who, with the scripture in his hand will question this, that God has gathered together, nations on the earth, to pour upon them the fierceness of <sup>His</sup> anger. Yes in His divine power, and awful justice, the great God has done this. The Lord reigneth by men, He useth instruments, He has them all at His disposal, and is never wanting for instruments to accomplish His purposes, and this has been so manifest of late, who can doubt it?

He sent against us a very mighty nation, He permitted them to organise in a most perfect manner, which we as individuals, and a small congregation, can scarcely imagine, such was to be His sword, His rod, His power, against this nation, and the nations allied with her. And He has wrought His great work, He poured out the blood of our best manhood, young manhood, like water, and desolated the nation, in a manner and way, as individuals and small congregations can scarce imagine. For the numberless widows and fatherless children, that mourn the loss today of those dear to them, we cannot fully enter into. Who has done it? If you fix your eyes on a man, your indignation, will know no bounds, and you will loudly call for justice, and public justice too. But if you see God, if you see the sins of the nations, if you see your own sin, then you will fall down in spirit, and confess, and mourn, weep and sob, because of that provocation, which was displayed before a holy God. We little knew at the time, of the critical days through which we passed, and then the very thin wall, that there was between us and a powerful defeat. Again what a sad sight Ezekiel saw, when he saw the glory of God departing from the temple, when he saw the glory departing to a mountain on the east side of the city. (Ezekiel 10 verses 18 to 23).

It was a sad sight, there is no sadder sight, ever to be seen by anyone who fears God, that the sight of the glory departing, from a nation, departing from the church in a nation. And I do not think, any spiritual person would, for a moment hesitate to say, that God has, very, very, very, largely, gone from the church in this nation. And yet He sitteth between the cherubims, and these say, there is still hope, there is a ground of hope, which is a great mercy for us. And is itself an instruction, so I say, it affords us a ground of hope.

Prayer can go here, see God on the throne of flaming justice, by faith, His wrath, and no prayer, prayer is barred. Justice demands satisfaction, justice says the sword shall be made fat in the blood of God's enemies. But if you see Him between the cherabims, then it will say, you may pray, you may go to God. One of the greatest acts you can ever be engaged in this life, is the act of prayer. One of the most solemn, full and blessed acts that a man can be engaged in, is addressing God on the throne of grace, for himself, for the church, and for the nation. And let me repeat it, if God should sit on the throne of justice, for this nation, and not between the cherabims, we are hopeless. But O if He should sit between the cherubims, then we may say to Him, "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock, Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth." (Psalm 80 verse 1). Heal the breach, make up the hedges, train the vine, cast out and drive away the boar, and the wild beasts. "Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved." (Psalm 80 verse 19).

The Lord reigneth to restore. "And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict, so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord." (Jeremiah 31 verse 28). And this is mercy, and a great mercy it will be, should it take place, with respect to ourselves. The Lord reigneth, particularly He reigneth in Zion, to show love and salvation, He is high above all the people, not only naturally, but is high above them in His thoughts. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaian 55 verse 9). Higher than the judgements that men form, either of themselves, or of Himself, either of His ways with them or His ways toward them. Suppose a nation comes, and says, in the spirit by its leaders 'We have sinned Lord, we have brought this war upon ourselves, by our sins, we repent, wilt Thou turn to us?' He will show that He is higher than man. That when men judge themselves, they are chastened, and when a nation turns to Him, He is kind to that nation. He shows mercy to it, and I put this before you, beloved friends, because you are a part of this nation, which God has solemnly visited, which we now hope He will do good to.

Yet, I would not close my eyes to the sad fact, as I believe it to be, that dark days are before us, and may we perceive Him sitting between the cherabims. It seems to me, that the only comfort, that can be felt, by one who rightly enters into matters, as they are, into the dealings of God with this nation, at the present moment, is only, as I see God is seen, sitting between the cherabims, can anyone conceive comfort.

May the Lord enable us to see more there, and, address Him there on the mercy seat, where He reigns, to show mercy. Now I do trust, that it may not have been in vain, in God's sight that we have met, this morning, thus to celebrate peace, to thank Him for the peace, that has been signed. And to ask, that it might be translated into real peace, that it may be solid peace. And that we may see the Almighty, whom we have so provoked, is now propitious to us, for His great names sake.

Amen.