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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Sunday evening 25 December 1932

ROMANS 10 v 4

"For Christ is the end of the law for
righteousness to everyone that believeth"

The law is for the regulation of man's life; what he should do; what he must refrain from doing; what God is to be to Him, and what he shall render to God. It forbids a wrong look; which of you can claim innocence in that particular? It condemns idolatry. Who here has not had, if he has not now, some idol tucked away in a corner of his heart? It forbids lust. Who in this congregation has not coveted and so been guilty of stealing? It tells you to love your neighbour as yourself. Have you not hated anybody? And if you have hated a person, then you are a murderer. The law, a standard; have we reached it? A balance; how should we be if we were now put into the balance? A line, a canon, a straight line. Bulges in these walls, if they existed, might not be big enough to be observed as you came into the chapel or as you sit there, but put a straight line to them, they would then be discovered. The law is called the ministration of condemnation because it has to do with sinners. The ministration of death, because it cannot justify a guilty person. The law cannot do it. The end of the law, taking the word "end" to set forth generally God's intention, is that what He has said in the law, what He claims, shall be rendered to Him, and if it be rendered to Him He has no more claim and will assert no more claim on the person who has rendered to Him what He has claimed. If the end of the law, which is God's glory, took effect on us as we stand under it, hell must be our portion, and this is fixed in the conscience of every person who is born again. More or less distinctly, sooner or later, in experience that becomes a living, penetrating, condemning truth, and there is an understanding in that Scripture in the 3rd chapter of the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians, the ministration of condemnation is glorious because God is glorified in condemning transgressors. This would be a wonderful congregation, small as it is, if each conscience in it had this rule, this penetrating sentence of the law working. Do not think you will

get to heaven by being ignorant of God's claims on you in the law. Do not expect the comfort of Christ till you have had the condemnation of sin in your conscience. "Christ is the end of the law". That is to say that whatever God claims in the law, whatever He says to man in the law, which man is bound to render to Him or suffer condemnation, that, Christ perfectly answered to. This truth is in that great Scripture which I attempted to speak about this morning - The good tidings of great joy, good tidings from heaven - that, while the law engraved on the heart and conscience brings condemnation and death, the Lord Jesus in the gospel brings life and immortality to light, and reveals that glorious Being in a bearable light, bearable to sinners; that Christ can be looked on and is seen by faith. Jehovah dwells in the light that no man can approach unto. He is a glorious Being whom no man hath seen nor can see. When Moses asked the privilege of seeing His glory, He said: "No man shall see My face and live". O but how wonderful that there should come Almighty God from heaven and take that body that was begotten in the virgin Mary and assume it, take it into an indissoluble union with His divine Person, and so become Immanuel, God with us, and say to Philip and to all who follow Philip in that enquiry - "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us" - "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also". The gospel of the grace of God appointed Christ as the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes in Him. He suffered the law's curse that through the channel of gospel mercy, His people should be made the righteousness of God in Him. Thereby He magnified the law, He made it honourable. If we had grace and wisdom to follow Christ in all His steps while He sojourned here we should see, and seeing admire, the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ, and see in that Scripture what a truth there is. "I do always those things that please Thee". Jesus so spake to His Father. Must a person be righteous before he can dwell with God or God walk with him? Christ is the Church's righteousness. "This is the Name wherewith He shall be called, the Lord Our Righteousness". And so intimate is this, so beautifully made over is this righteousness, that it is written of the church: "This is the Name wherewith she shall be called, the Lord Our Righteousness". The Lord Jesus had to know the curse of the law: it was that sanction that God spake in Eden. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." That cannot be escaped; therefore the Lord Jesus must know that. We have a wonderful

Scripture. "He was obedient unto death even the death of the cross".
You think of it - "obedient". Why, what was the word that made His death an obedient act? It was this - "No man taketh My life from Me. I have power to lay it down..... This commandment have I received of My Father." He was commanded to die. O believer, bind the voluntary, the vicarious death of Jesus to the horns of the altar. In its voluntary nature lies its efficacy. He is the end of the law; so when the believer receives the Lord Jesus Christ he may sing, will sing if he meets with them, these words:

The terrors of law and of God
With me can have nothing to do;
My Saviour's obedience and blood
Hide all my transgressions from view

This is the blessed gospel that every sent minister has to preach. Let us look a little, as enabled, at the believing in the Lord Jesus, so as to prove experimentally that Christ is the end of the law. Faith is God's gift. "All men have not faith". Some men have faith. The men who have faith look on whatever truth it pleases the Holy Spirit to reveal to it and it may help us if we were enabled to take hold of this point, because when a person is under the law, under condemnation felt, realising his transgressions and the guilt of them and his conscience is burdened, he is very apt to condemn himself as an unbeliever, whereas his trouble under the law comes from this, that he believes in God and believes in the word of God and believes in the law of God, and that brings into his conscience condemnation. This may meet some here. Should it, I would say to you, the Lord keep you from condemning yourselves as unbelievers. An unbeliever, in the Scripture sense of that word, is a person who disbelieves God, has no concern about God, no belief in Him that affects his mind or heart or conscience or life, but a believer who believes in God in the law finds that his mind and his conscience and his feelings and his life are affected by the law. He is condemned in everything. His heart condemns him, the looks of his eye condemn him, the desires of his mind condemn him, the wanderings of his thoughts condemn him; his inability to stay and arrest and stop wild thoughts condemns him. On every side, at every turn, in all particulars of his life, he is condemned, because he believes in God; he believes in the law of God.

He knows the penetration of some Scriptures, and then when the Holy Spirit for the moment takes the eye of faith in that troubled soul from that condemning law and turns it on the Person and death of Christ, he becomes at once a believer in Christ. That is to say, though he has believed before all that the Scriptures say of Christ, now his faith fixes here in the power of the Holy Ghost and he says to himself, if that Saviour were my Saviour; if I might be plunged into that fountain which is opened for sin and uncleanness; if that righteousness which I read of and now look on were mine, I should be the happiest person in the world. Faith gives the soul a true estimate of the worth of Christ, and a real feeling of the want of Christ. Do not cut yourselves out as unbelievers who see the beauty and the grace and the loveliness and the fullness and the sufficiency of the Saviour. Look at the effect of such a view of Him. It draws you, does it not, after Him? It makes you say, O if I could but embrace Jesus. If the Spirit would but make me to know by His Own testimony that that Lord Jesus loved me and gave Himself for me, I should want nothing else, could ask nothing more. I would like to make some of you believers in spite of your unbelief; that is to say, if God would show you that your feeling about Christ, your hankering after Him, your realising that all goodness, and all righteousness, and all fitness for heaven He has and must give, it would be good. Better still if the Lord were to bring you into the liberty of the gospel. Now righteousness is just this, that a person meets God's requirements in every respect and this being impossible to a sinner under the law, it means in the text that the righteousness of Christ is imputed. Imputation is a Scripture doctrine, and imputation is a living experience. The imputation of Adam's sin is a Scripture doctrine and a sense of imputation of that sin is the experience of all who come under the law in its operation. I have mentioned before, but I may be allowed to mention it again, what Dr Goodwin experienced when, on a certain night, he was compelled to rise from his bed and kneel down and confess that it was as if his were the hand that took the forbidden fruit. A very heavy, but a very real and blessed experience, that. Then when Christ is made over to the sinner and his faith lays hold of the righteousness of Christ, he may have to rise from his bed and bless God in the night that ever that righteousness was made over to him; that ever his faith received it. And now he stands complete in the Lord Jesus. "Ye are complete in

Him", which means that God can ask nothing at your hands as your own doing to make you more complete. When a person is complete in God's eye he is eternally complete, and this is the fruit of a sinner's reception of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, and we have this experience set out in the prophecy of Isaiah. "Surely shall one say in the Lord have I righteousness and strength". He has paid everything. Just as a simple illustration of this point, let me say that the law of England respecting rent asks nothing more of you than the payment of your rent, and when you have paid your rent the end of the law in that matter is attained. And as you follow this by faith, when Christ is made over to you and you really receive Him, then the law can never say you owe me something. No, the law has nothing to do with you. It is a new law, a law of grace, under which you live. No wonder that, seeing this doctrine of justification, Luther said that the life of the church would be, or not, as she believed and held justification, or otherwise. O dear friends, nothing will make us fit to live, and nothing will fit us for death, but this justification. There are many phases of experience, many exercises of the soul, many ups and downs, many sinkings and risings, painful workings of corruption, helps of the Spirit, but the one thing that will fit me, fit you, for a dying bed and for the judgement of the great day when Jesus shall judge the quick and the dead according to God's appointment, is this blessed, this perfect righteousness. It is not sought by works; God brings His people off from that business. The Jews had some knowledge of the insufficiency of their own righteousness; they found it to be weak and rickety, and so, wanting righteousness, they went about to establish a righteousness of their own, and did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God. The Gentiles, not under the law given by Moses, immediately having faith sought righteousness not by the works of the law, but the righteousness of faith, and they attained to it; they received it; it became theirs. Ah it is a grand thing to be a justified person. Many people are religious but not justified. Many are sinners, but are justified. Sinners are high in the esteem of Christ. And, having stripped them by the work of His Spirit, pulling away their filthy rags from them, He gives them this change of raiment. If we judge by inward experience, often we shall judge ourselves destitute of every good thing. We shall judge ourselves corrupt, evil, lustful, proud, envious, false, hypocrites; everything that is evil; and it is a

mystery, and it is a mercy, that one with so painful an experience, notwithstanding is enabled to say, I am a righteous person. I have never done a thing to make myself righteous; I have done everything to make myself vile and wicked and a condemned creature, under the law, but God has taken His Own way to save me. He has taken my rags and given me His beautiful robe. He has taken away my badness and given me His goodness. He has taken me from under the law, and placed me under the gospel. He has removed me from condemnation and brought me under justification; and therefore you will praise Him. "Christ is the end of the law to everyone that believeth", which is to say, that believeth in Him. And in this beautiful chapter it is written - "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed". Then some may say, we cannot be right, because we are ashamed. If we more knew ourselves, deeper, deeper, deeper would be our shame, but it is not intended that way in this verse. It means that Christ will take away all cause of shame by removing our unrighteousness and making us perfectly righteous in Himself. We shall not be ashamed. O believer, when your faith is strengthened to receive this revelation then you will understand that Scripture in the Psalm: "They looked unto Him and were lightened and their faces were not ashamed." If you can, by precious faith standing in the power of God, look, if I may use so familiar a word, look God in the face, you are not ashamed. It will enable you to look men in the face; it will enable you to look death in the face; it will make you strong and bring you into an experience of the word in Daniel. "The people which do know their God shall be strong and shall do exploits." And so you will have victories.

I asked them whence their victory came
They, with united breath,
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb
Their triumph to His death

Now may the Lord make this out to us. Are you praying people? Then salvation is sure, for "Whosoever", as it is written in this chapter, "Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved." When you know Him, you will pray to Him. You are sure to do it. People cannot know God and not pray. They cannot know Him as He shows Himself in the gospel and not speak to Him. They see that He is a good God, and want Him to show His goodness to them. Now may the Lord look

upon us. If I am to preach twice on Lord's Days generally now I must preach short sermons, and I must leave off now, and if I have said anything worth hearing in the gospel there is enough for you to go home with and meditate upon. Take, if you can, take the text even if you forget every word I have said, for it is a beautiful Scripture and it is true. Christ, the divine, glorious God-Man, is the end, the completion, of the law, leaving nothing for it to say against a sinner or to claim at the hand of a sinner, for Christ is the end of it for righteousness, for justification, and for salvation.

AMEN.