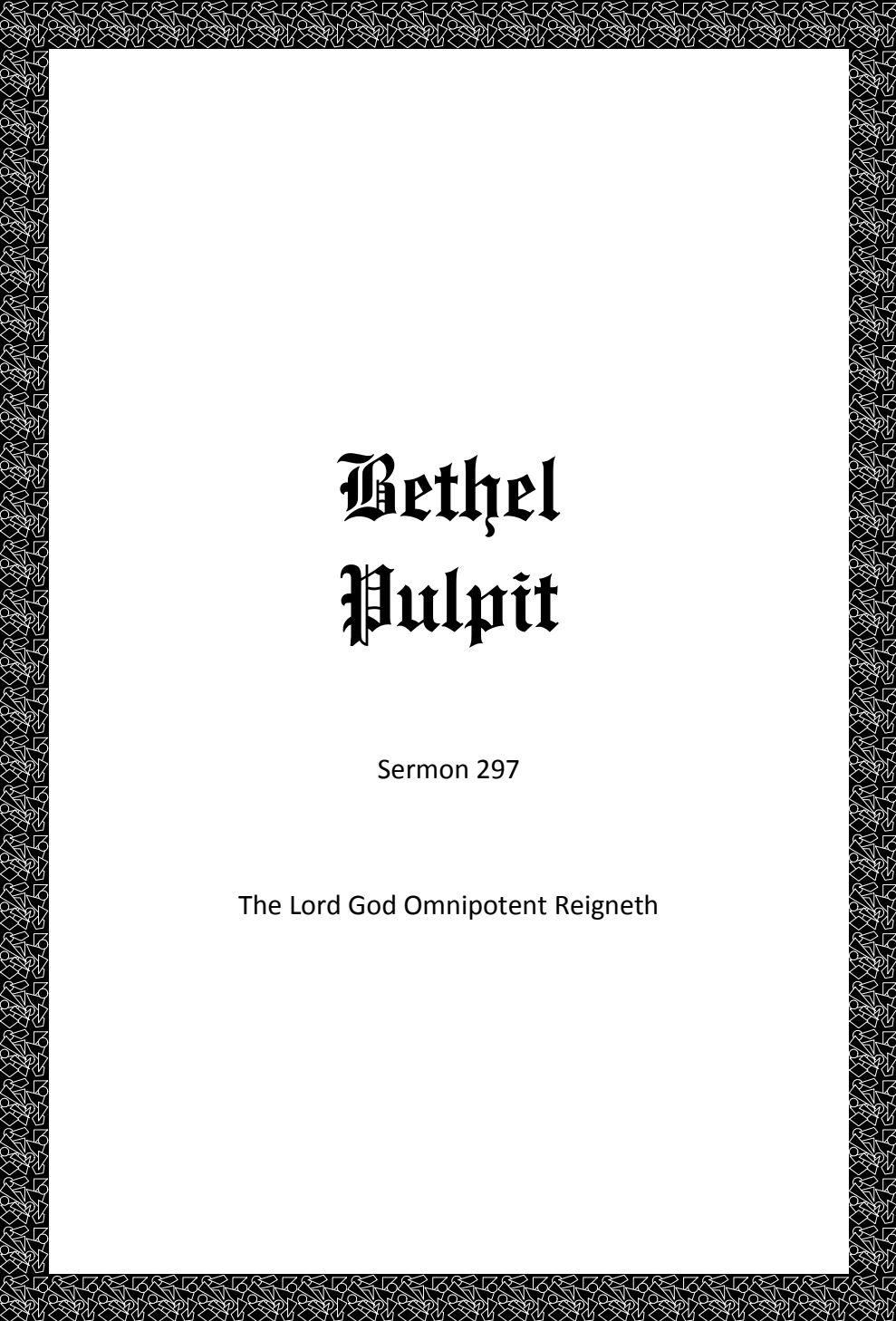




Bethel Pulpit

Sermon 297

The Lord God Omnipotent Reigneth

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,
on Lord's day morning, 28th February, 2010**

Text: “*The Lord God omnipotent reigneth*” (Revelation 19. 6).

This is the fourth time they sang, “Alleluia,” and well they might, this wonderful truth: “The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” Three glorious truths – first that the Lord is God; second that He is omnipotent, He is almighty; third that He reigns King of kings and Lord of lords. So well might all the hosts of heaven, the redeemed and the angels, join in this glorious, “Alleluia.” And the reason is this: *For*. “*For* the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

This chapter and the chapter that follows, (really to the end of the Book, the end of the Bible) deal with the consummation, the solemn, awful, majestic end of all things, the end of time, the ushering in of a never-ending eternity. And what has been the point of the whole of the Book of the Revelation is this: that there is a conflict going on between God and Satan, between Christ and the devil, between the church and the world. That conflict has been going on ever since Adam fell in the Garden of Eden till now, towards the end of time, and surely we are coming into the dregs of time now. We are beginning to see these things, the awful, increasing opposition of wicked men, evil men, important men in high places, the spread of Islam, the power of Romanism, the hatred of atheism, the immorality, the lust, the lawlessness, the crime, Satan *seeming* to triumph.

Now this is the theme of it all, that Satan is not going to triumph, that Satan is a defeated foe, that the end draws near when he will be cast for ever into the bottomless pit, and though the conflict seems sore and at times severe, yet the victory is sure; the cause of God is a triumphant cause. The Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is victorious as King of kings and Lord of lords. It is not the world that is going to triumph, not the devil; it is the blood-bought church of God, and it comes right down individually to every poor, unworthy sinner saved by grace, trusting in the Saviour.

“And has He not His promise passed,
That *thou* shalt overcome at last?”

Now here it is, and that is why all heaven sings, “Alleluia,” praise to God, for the Lord *is* God and He *is* omnipotent and He *does* reign. “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

No doubt you noticed as we read through the chapter that in the context here, the glorious triumph of the church of God is brought before us in a very beautiful way, perhaps an unexpected way: the marriage supper of the Lamb. In the Book of the Revelation, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is almost invariably spoken of as *the Lamb*. When He came to earth, John the Baptist pointed Him out: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” And then we have the Lamb slain, but here it is the Lamb exalted. It is the Lamb reigning for ever and ever. The Lamb is the Lord God omnipotent, equal with the Father and with the Holy Ghost. And this is the end of all things. It is spoken of as this wonderful marriage, the marriage supper of the Lamb. Do not forget that it is at the marriage supper of the Lamb that this “Hallelujah* chorus” is going to be sung. “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

We have this beautiful image right through Scripture, Christ the heavenly Bridegroom, His people His beloved bride. And of course here on earth in this gospel day, the Holy Spirit’s work is seeking out here and there those who are going to be part of the glorious bride of Christ. We think of that account in Genesis chapter 24, how it illustrates this: Abraham’s servant going to seek out a bride for his master Isaac, and how he found Rebekah, and how he told Rebekah all about the glories of Isaac, and then he gave her a few tokens of love from Isaac and tokens of the wealth of Isaac, and increasingly Rebekah’s heart and affections were drawn out after him, whom having not seen she loved, till at last the great question was put (and it is the great question in the gospel, beloved friends): “Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.”

And so it is. The gospel minister speaks of this One, the heavenly Bridegroom, whom having not seen we love, and seeks through the preaching of the gospel, the searching and seeking out and bringing in of the bride. But it is the Holy Spirit’s work, working in some of your hearts as you hear of this dear Man, this heavenly Bridegroom, the Lamb of God, the Saviour of sinners, His grace, His love, His blessed ability to save. And as you hear of it, you begin to say, “Thou, O Christ, art all I want.” And then as the Holy Spirit gives you one or two tokens of His love and of His favour, and then at last this question – this Man, this glorious Man who

died, who rose again, who is exalted in heaven, this beloved Bridegroom of the church, your only hope, no salvation without Him – sinner, “wilt thou go with this Man?” And faith always says, “I will go.” May there be many in this chapel who know the sweet constrainings of His love and the powerful, inward working of the Holy Ghost. “Wilt thou go with this Man?” And faith says, “I will go.”

Well, we read, “The day of His espousals ... the day of the gladness of His heart.” So when a lost, guilty sinner in love is espoused to Christ, we are told that in heaven it is the day of the gladness of His heart. He sees of the travail of His soul and He is satisfied. But this is the glorious consummation in heaven when all the redeemed of God, all those who are part of the beloved bride of Christ are safely landed in heaven. Time is no more. The world is all ablaze in a flame. It is the marriage supper of the Lamb, and that is where they sing this Hallelujah chorus. It will be a wonderful mercy if you and I are there.

“Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to *Him*.” This is the heavenly Bridegroom; this is the Lamb of God; this is the One who omnipotent reigneth. “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come.” It was for this, beloved friends, that the world was created. It was for this that the Son of God came into this world of sin and sorrow. “The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready.” Now that is the vital point: we need to be ready. We need to be made ready. We need to be prepared. As sinners by nature we are *not* ready. In our unregeneracy we are *not* ready. Until born again of the Holy Ghost, we are *not* ready. We need to be *made* ready.

“And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.” That very beautifully, very simply explains how the bride of Christ made herself ready: through God-given faith, enabled by the Holy Spirit, she put on the beautiful, pure, white, spotless robe of Christ’s righteousness. If you are going to be there, you will have to know something of that. And it means you will have to put off your own old, covenant-of-works righteousness which is as filthy rags. You will have to confess it. You will have to forsake it. And led by the Spirit of God, you will have to be brought to that place, to be clothed in this pure, beautiful, spotless white robe of Christ’s righteousness.

“No age can change its glorious hue;
The robe of Christ is ever new.”

You know what it means. God as a holy God demands perfect, infallible righteousness from everyone in this chapel this morning. He does it as our Creator. He has a perfect right, and He has given His holy law to show what He demands, and everyone has failed to bring it, but He still demands it. Christ came into this world and lived that perfect life of spotless obedience to His Father’s law, and then He gave it to His beloved people as if it were their own. That is what *imputed* means, imputed righteousness. He takes away their sins and He gives them His own righteousness. Those who flee for refuge to Him, those who trust in Him, those who repent, those who leave the world, those who renounce their own righteousness, they are led by the Spirit of God to trust completely in the righteousness of Christ. That is the putting on of the pure, holy, spotless robe of Christ’s righteousness. That is the ground on which they are in heaven. “To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.” Well, may the Lord teach us to sing,

“Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.”

No wonder that all creation is singing, “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” He is triumphant; He is victorious, and so are all His people, every sinner saved by grace. No wonder it is written, “Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.” Well, that is still to come. It will be your mercy and mine if we are found there. But until then, we still have this glorious truth: “The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” It is true of the eternal Father; it is true of the eternal Son, the dear Lamb of God; it is true of the Holy Ghost; the whole Trinity, one God.

“The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” He is in complete control now. He will be victorious in the last day, but He is in complete control now. He is reigning in the earth now. Nothing can take place apart from His divine permission. He orders all things according to the counsel of His own will. It seems that at present He is allowing the devil to have some latitude. Do not forget, the devil is a chained foe, but God is allowing him

to have some latitude. He is allowing the powers of evil to rage. But do not forget, He is still almighty; He is still on the throne; He reigns omnipotent and, “He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?” It seems that our sad lot is to find that our little lives are cast in a day when that restraining of providence that some people call the doctrine of “common grace,” that restraining of providence, is little by little being withdrawn from the earth, which allows the powers of hell more powerfully to work. But do not forget, He is still on the throne and it will ever be true, “The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” He says, “Thus far and no further.” “He bindeth the floods from overflowing.” He has “set a bound that they may not pass over.”

Now may this be our resting place: “The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” That amazing word: “The wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain,” which simply means this: that as God is almighty, as He is on the throne, He either stops the evil of wicked men, or if He allows it, in some mysterious way He is going to cause it to work for His own honour and glory. God will always have the last word, and God uses Satan when He please. Satan cannot do anything without God’s permission. Remember the Book of Job. John Kent sings,

“Great is the mystery, truly great,
That hell’s designs should hell defeat;
But here eternal wisdom shines,
That Satan works what God designs.”

“The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” Now beloved friends, may we be given clear, believing views of the greatness of our God. May we tremble before Him. May we come before Him with awe and reverence. May we know what it is to say, “O Lord my God, Thou art very great.” May we know what it is to say, “When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?”

“The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” The Lord complained in one place in the Old Testament, “They ... limited the Holy One of Israel.” Never limit God. In another place in the Old Testament the Lord complained, “Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.” Never think of God as being such an one as yourself. He is the

Lord; He is God; He is omnipotent; He is on the throne; He reigns. It is not a precarious throne. All these many thrones which have toppled during the last hundred years, thrones which stood for generations, and one by one they have toppled. But, “He sits on no precarious throne, nor borrows leave TO BE.”

“The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” So He is in control. All these happenings, the mighty happenings in the nations, all the things with President Obama, all the things in Afghanistan, all the things in Iran, all this they talk about climate change – you can go on about all these things. Sometimes it is, “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.” He knows the answer to all these things. He knows why all these things are taking place. He is in heaven. He is in control. Every rolling planet, everything is beneath His sovereign, almighty sway.

“The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” One of our little hymns says,

“In heaven He lives and reigns,
And lives and reigns for you.”

Do you believe it? He “lives and reigns for you.” Almighty God on the throne, omnipotent, in control, and He is making everything work together for good to His beloved people and for His honour and glory. You say, We cannot see it. Well, often we cannot see it. The end of the thing will be better than the beginning, and we have not reached the end yet. It is like the old story of how they used to make the magnificent carpets in Persia, and the poor workmen working underneath, the threads here and threads there, it looked utter confusion, but when they were allowed to go up on the platform when it was complete, they could see not a thread out of place. So Rutherford said,

“With mercy and with judgment,
My web of time He wove,
And aye the dews of sorrow
Were lusted with His love.”

“The Lord God omnipotent reigneth,” working out His purpose in the earth. But with His beloved people, everything working together for their real good, and it touches their life’s minutest circumstance. It touches the falling of a leaf. It touches the crushing of a moth. It touches the fall

of a sparrow. It touches all these things. And when you and I are blessed with a little living faith, we can feel this, the truth of that glorious hymn we sang at the beginning (hymn 64). I have always been grateful to Dr. Ryland for that hymn. God has blessed that hymn and will do to the end of time.

“All must come, and last, and end,
As shall please my heavenly Friend.”

If only we had that sweet realisation, “My times are in Thy hand,” and not only my times, but myself personally. It comes right down to this, in all our weakness and helplessness and sin and ruin and woe:

“If I am found in Jesus’ hands,
My soul can ne’er be lost.”

For He is the Lord God who omnipotent reigneth.

The wonderful power of God! It was seen in creation. He appeared there the Lord God omnipotent. He spoke and it was done. Creation was an easy thing. “The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” You see it again and again right through the Old Testament in the history of Israel. You think of Pharaoh pursuing Israel, the banks of the Red Sea. Pharaoh, the greatest monarch on earth, but, “The Lord God omnipotent reigneth,” not Pharaoh. “They sank as lead in the mighty waters.” Pharaoh said, “I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil.” The Lord said, Will you, Pharaoh? “They sank as lead in the mighty waters.”

“The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” You think of Jehoshaphat. “Neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee.” These three mighty armies, but, “The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” You think of Hezekiah and Sennacherib, the impossibility of the case, and those dreadful threatenings of Sennacherib, but Sennacherib forgot this: “The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” What a wonderful mercy that the love of God to His people is equal to His omnipotence, equal to His divine power!

You come to the life of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ here on earth. You see in His miracles, the Lord God omnipotent. Bartimaeus: “Go thy way.” The woman with the issue of blood: “Daughter ... go in peace.” The cleansing of the leper. You can go on. You say, What of Calvary? Well, we do read He was crucified in weakness, but the omnipotence of God was never more displayed than it was on the cross. If you think of it in the terms of that beautiful hymn we sang just now (561) –

it is not sung very much – speaking of Jesus at Calvary as a mighty Warrior. There is omnipotence. In His death, Christ conquered sin, death, hell and Satan. And then publicly displayed on the resurrection morning. “Vain the stone, the watch, the seal.” The power, the glorious power of His resurrection!

“The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” And do not forget it is true of God the Holy Ghost. You think of Pentecost. You think of some hard-necked sinners and the appointed time has come “not to propose, but call by grace.” The Holy Ghost is omnipotent in the new birth, omnipotent in calling sinners by grace.

“The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” Well, how does it affect us this morning? Well, quite a few ways. First of all, this is the One to whom we pray. I hope all of you pray, and I am sure some of you have some hard things, some difficult things when you are praying, but it is a wonderful thing if in our prayers we have a little glimpse of the greatness and the glory of the One to whom we are praying. We often quote it – if only we felt it, knew it and believed it:

“With heaven and earth at His command,
He waits to answer prayer.”

In our prayers we are coming to One who is omnipotent.

“Thou art coming to a King;
Large petitions with thee bring.”

Never forget that when the New Testament speaks of prayer, it speaks of coming to the throne of grace. There is mercy there; there is “grace to help in time of need.” But do not forget it is a throne, and if words mean anything at all, a throne means that there is a king sitting on it, because it is not an empty throne. O that we might have believing views of this! May you see it even this morning and may you hear that voice and may you know it comes from an omnipotent God and Saviour: “The cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto Me, and I will hear it.”

“The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” What else? Well, many of you have your problems and difficulties. You have had them. There has been a lot of affliction, hospital visits. You have your inner burdens that no-one knows about. Some of you have long-drawn-out things. This is the One who in His love and mercy upholds you, supports you, gives you strength equal to the day, whose grace is all-sufficient for you. “The Lord

God omnipotent reigneth,” and He says, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” He is almighty to supply all your needs, great and small, providence and grace. And that blessed word – do not forget it is the Lord God omnipotent who reigneth – that blessed word: “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms,” and they are the everlasting arms of the Lord God who omnipotent reigneth, which means one blessed, simple thing, and that is this: that you will never be allowed to sink. “The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” May you be able to look to Him and commit your way to Him and rest in Him and lean upon Him. May His mercy hold you up.

“The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” And then this is the One who keeps His people from falling, who preserves them, and keeps them finally and brings them safely through, because we can no more keep ourselves than save ourselves. “Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” It is a wonderful truth, the everlasting safety and security of the people of God – and it will not lead you to carelessness and indifference – but especially for a young believer setting out in this dying, changing world, with the opposition of sin and Satan and the world and so much confusion.

“Kept by the mighty power of God,
Not one shall e’er be lost.”

Jesus said unto them, “I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” “He is able” – why? Because He is the Lord God omnipotent. He “is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.”

“The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” Well, you have the victory here and you have the everlasting triumph here. You have the whole blood-bought church of God here. You have the marriage supper of the Lamb here. These things are true of the feeblest believer who is trusting in the Saviour to be upheld, to be supported, and then at last to be brought safely through. We have sung it recently: “He that has loved us bears us through.” It is borne through on the arms of omnipotence and then safely landed for ever and ever, and then to join in this Hallelujah chorus. “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”