

58/12
562
1365b
La 1812

LIBRARY OF THE
GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Sunday evening 8 September 1929

1 CORINTHIANS 12 v 7

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is
given to every man to profit withal"

I have loved the Holy Ghost this afternoon; I wish every child of God might feel love to the Holy Ghost. He is a Person in the Godhead, He is equal with the Father and the Son, possessing the substance of Deity, the fullness of God, the Godhead. He was in creation work; the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. He was in the prophets of old; He was the active, efficient cause of the birth, the virgin birth of Emmanuel. He filled the Person of Christ with His immeasurable gifts. He led Christ into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. He was on Christ as the Spirit of wisdom, of knowledge, of the fear of God. He was promised by Christ to be the Teacher of the Church, the Sealer of the saints, the Revealer of the Lord Jesus, the earnest of the inheritance. What we owe to the Spirit of God we shall never fully know, never be able to praise Him sufficiently for His goodness to us. He has always been acknowledged by the true Church of God as a Person in the Godhead, and one of the signs, the evil signs of the present day, is His absence from the professing world, and if professors, speaking generally, were honest today, they would say that they have not so much as heard that there is a Holy Ghost. He has no place in their literature, in their profession. Now one would put this question to this congregation, do we know that there is a Holy Ghost and have we received Him? It is a grievous thing to grieve Him. Against that sin the Church is exhorted - "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption". The Church in the wilderness grieved Him, they vexed and rebelled against Him. They vexed Him when they loathed the light food that was rained from heaven for them every day. He was vexed indeed because that food was a type of the bread of life, and in despising the type, they were not innocent of despising the anti-type. How many saints here have grieved Him by turning away from His injunctions, by quenching His

operations. May we repent through grace.

Now a gift to add to what I said this morning, a gift of the Spirit, a manifestation of Him, is in this, that He enlightens the understanding, that His people may know what is the hope of their calling and what is the riches of God's inheritance in them. That is a great gift. We may know, by divine mercy, be often comfortably assured, that the Lord has dealt with us and done something in us, but to have the eyes of our understanding opened that we may gaze on the riches of grace given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, the all-spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. The riches of love, covenant love, the riches of love in that God spared not His Own Son, of love in that God set Him up to be the Head of the body, the church, the riches of this divine love, we little know. The operations of the Spirit leading out to prayer and casting burdens on the Lord, and touches of mercy, and helps in affliction, these we get, we believe, but to be led out into those deeper things, the covenant blessings stored in Christ - said by Paul to Timothy to have been given to Christ for His people before the world began - this is a blessing which, apparently, few of us know. It is a blessing not beyond the apprehension of faith, but we need the ministration of the Spirit to bring it to us, and it can be no harm for a beggar to have set before him riches to be inherited, blessings to be enjoyed, bread, O the sweet bread of God, even Christ, to be partaken of by faith for the nourishment of the soul; wine, the infinite wine of mercy to exhilarate and make joyful the spirit, and oil, the oil of the Spirit's grace, the anointing of the Holy One. It is good that beggars should have their eyes opened to look, not at their poverty - they do see that, they feel that; they feel the pinch of it sometimes - but to look at what God is in Christ; what He has given in Christ, the blessings that are to be enjoyed through eternity by the Church in her glorified state. Why a sight of these things which are not seen gives them a substance, a reality, a blessedness to faith that can never be expressed and perhaps there is more in the word in the 11 Hebrews than any of us have apprehended - "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him". A believer in God, believing that He is, that He is according to Scripture revelation of Him - "I AM THAT I AM", that He

is a just God and that that justice shall never be infringed; but that He is a Saviour in that justice; that justice always accompanies salvation. This is indeed a wonder, and it is one of the ministrations of the Spirit according to the chapter which I read: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints", the riches of God, the riches of His glory, the riches of His gift in Christ, gift to Christ; the riches of Christ's Person. O it needs a tongue that God alone can give and touch with fire from off the altar to tell rightly, never adequately express, what is in this word - the riches of His glory. Says one, if I get a touch I am satisfied. Well, it might be a profitable question for you to ask yourself, was the touch a good one? Was it by the Holy Spirit? for it seems that a touch of the Spirit that does not bring liberty should never satisfy. A touch of the Spirit will always be, not only a present feeling, but a stretching out after more than is felt. The question is not, how little will save me? God only knows what a grain is sufficient for salvation in any sinner's case, and it never can be properly set out by any human judgement. But that is not the question; when the Spirit ministers, when He teaches, when He leads, when He opens the eyes, the question is O that I knew more of Him, that the eyes of my understanding might be enlightened, that I might see more than I have seen, receive more than I have received, and feel more than I have ever felt, of the riches of God's grace. And this will ever cause a person whose eyes are opened to search for God with all his heart. Then, says God, you shall find Him. Now that is one of the ministrations, manifestations of the Holy Ghost, that He opens the eyes of the understanding; the understanding that was darkened, and alienated by sin anointed and opened to consider, to meditate on, to look into, and seek to lay hold of, the mystery of God, the mystery of God as it is expressed in the Corinthians. "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery", a mystery which the princes of this world knew not, for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. And this will bear all the beating out in your feeling, and searching to which you may be led. There is an infinitude in God, in God's covenant, and mercy in the gift of His Son, in the Person of His Son, in the work of His Son, in the redemption effected by His Son on Calvary. O that God would open our eyes to see these things more than we have ever seen them. Then we

should say we are plunged deeper and deeper into debt to the Holy Ghost by whom such mercies are brought. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened".

Now there is another word to which I would call your attention in the Romans. It is that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ makes free from the law of sin and death all who are justified, against whom, and over whom, no condemnation comes. And this is very very important because, following that is minding of the things of the Spirit, and that distinguishes the Church from the world, for they that are in the flesh do mind the things of the flesh. But, says Paul, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. Sin is likened to a law because of its working, its assumed, usurped authority, and because of the perpetual seeking of it to be a king. Now, Paul says, we are free from that. The operation of the Spirit makes us free from that law. Do not confuse that freedom with the freedom from the being of sin, for that the Church, every believing heart, must wait till the day of death. But to be delivered from the dominion of sin, from the operation of the law of sin, so as that it prevails, that is the mercy that is here expressed, and that deliverance from the law of sin is the cause of sin's opposition to the believer. That is the reason that sin is so provoked; it cannot have its way. The Spirit is against it. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, but it is not all on that side. The Spirit lusts against the flesh. And these are contrary the one to the other, so the soul of the believer is like a battle field, two who can never be agreed, each seeking the death of the other, but the Spirit's ministration keeps the soul, keeps it free from sin's dominion, brings it into that promise - "Sin shall not have dominion over you for ye are not under the law but under grace." And there is a sweet and very beautiful harmony between the promise of God and the exercise and the experience of the people of God. They are said to be not under sin. And sometimes you can say, who have this experience, now I am not serving sin, for serving sin and being under sin are the same. I am not under sin, I am not serving. Every praying soul is, while praying, free from the law of sin and death. Every believing heart is, as believing, free from the law of sin and death in the form of unbelief. Every soul that loves Jesus Christ is free from the law of sin and death in enmity in that terrible form, and everyone who

casts his burden on the Lord and waits for Him is free from the law of sin in the shape of unbelief. It is a great thing then to have this manifestation of the Spirit. Are you free, am I free from the law of sin and death? Indwelling sin is the plague of every child of God, but freedom from the dominion of sin is the mercy and the privilege of every child of God. Thanks be to God for that ministration of the Spirit. And when you are in a world of business and affliction, burdened with many things, and the Spirit comes and enables you to cast your care on the Lord, believing that He careth for you, there is then freedom from the law of sin and death, and when you cast everything on the Lord and wait for Him you are delivered from that corroding thing, unbelief, as to its prevalence.

And another ministration of the Spirit is respecting the sweet, beautiful, and I will say bounteous, spirit of hope and grace, much to be valued, for we are saved by hope, and hope maketh not shamed. And the reason given is a very wonderful one - because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Just think of it, connect these two things, a hope in God and the ground and the reason of that hope - that you feel in your heart, the power of which you understand a little - is the love of God shed abroad by the Holy Ghost in your heart. Ah, says the sinner, I have felt the love of God and so I hope to be brought honourably through, I hope the mediation of the Saviour will bring me honourably to my grave, I hope that the Lord will help me day by day to cast my care on Him, to live to Him, to live in Him, to live on Him, to live for Him. It sometimes seems impossible, but it is not impossible. All things are possible to him that believeth, because he has in his heart the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost dwells in him and He takes of the grace of God and works in the sinner the grace of hope. Hope has respect to the future. What you possess you cannot hope for, you have got it, but what you see in God in Christ, of which you may have had some sweet, clear hints, some sweet tastes, but not the fullness, for that you hope. Hope is for the future and if it is to stand it must have a good ground, and the ground given to us in the Hebrews - two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie. O the condescension of God in this - impossible for Him to lie, for, having given a promise - think of it - having given a promise and considering the weakness and the fear of a child to whom the promise is given, He says "He

confirmed it by an oath and there was only One by whom He could swear and that was Himself, so He swear by Himself, and that is the ground of hope. This hope is as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast and entereth into that which is within the veil. But O the contradictions that this hope gets. Who but those who have them and feel them can at all enter into them. Think of the contradictions that hope got in Paul when God promised him the lives of all with him in the ship and said the ship must be broken, the waves will prevail, the soldiers will attempt to leave the ship, yea they will give counsel to kill all the prisoners, and all this against God's word. But Paul, sustained by the Holy Ghost in this, said to them all, I believe God. We have often believed the waves, have we not? We have believed trouble, have we not? We have believed our weakness, believed the dangers, believed that we should not get through, but the Holy Ghost sometimes comes and makes a little of God known in His love; then hope rises again and says, I believe it shall be even as God said to me, and this is the Spirit. There is a certainty in true experience that is most solemn and sweet; better, stronger than all the troubles that come. Ah, hope is not written on the sand to be washed away by the next incoming tide. It is fixed in God, and when it is thus made strong by some new operation of the Holy Ghost, then the sinner says, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise." Yes, many and many a saint has praised God for deliverance before deliverance has come. I know that is true, so do some of you. We have blessed God for deliverance, in some cases, long before it has come. "Hope thou in God" said the Psalmist to his soul - "Hope thou in God". There is a manifestation, a ministration, a teaching of the Spirit given to every man, every member of the body of Christ, and this is for profit.

In the next place the ministration of the Spirit is given with respect to providence. We all have to do with providence. What is providence? Providence is nothing more nor less than the predestination of God with respect to this world. Providence is no chance, no peradventure. It is God's predestination. Think of it. O the details, the men, the circumstances, connected with the people of God. Just look at one instance for a moment. A man, during a famine in Israel, went with his wife and two sons into the land of Moab. The sons married, the husband died and the sons died, and no child was

left. Orpah the widow of one of the sons, goes back to her people and her gods. Ruth clave to Naomi her mother in law and went to the land of Israel. All those circumstances, the famine, a man leaving the land because of the famine, taking wife and sons; these die, three men die; the widow, the two widows go back. The young widow, Ruth, becomes the mother of Obed who begat Jesse who was the father of David; David is God's choice, David receives a promise that of the fruit of his loins God would raise up a Seed to sit on his throne for ever - Jesus Christ. What a providence. You may have things of your own, tangled circumstances; cannot straighten them, see no good to come out of them, wonder why you are allowed this and allowed that, and why the other contingency arose. O the difficulties that come in the way. I say, providence is God's predestination, and He works all things after the counsel of His own will. So you come to your business; men are connected with it, troubles are connected with it. What to do you know not. You come to your family, and here is affliction. Come to the Church of God and there is affliction of some kind, and everything may seem to say God is against you, and the devil, when he sees you have got a heavy cross, comes and tries to write on that cross hatred, to make you believe that God is moving against you, that some providence may arise that will carry you away. Who could have made Judas believe, at the early part of his discipleship, that he would be carried away by a providence? That is to say, the devil entered into Judas and suggested to him that he could get money, for he was a thief and loved the bag, that he could get money if he would only betray this, his master. Why he would probably have, with some feeling of sincerity, repudiated with indignation the suggestion. Providence came and the determinate counsel of God had to be fulfilled. Does not it invest providence, as you this consider it and see it, with an awfulness? Has it, if you thus consider it, ever moved you to ask God to keep you in all circumstances and if the enemy has suggested that you are a Judas, have you been enabled to investigate the case a little? It is said of Judas that he sought opportunity to betray Christ. How do you stand with that? He sought opportunity to betray Him. Says a tender hearted, trembling child of God, "Lord Thou knowest that up to this moment I have not sought an opportunity. I have feared, I have trembled, I have wondered. I am weak, I am ignorant, I am corrupt; O, but I have never so far sought an opportunity. Do keep me. What is

providence for with respect to the people of God? The Scriptures answer the question. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Now connected with that is the Holy Ghost, for in that chapter, just previous to the verse quoted, is this - The Spirit maketh intercession according to the will of God - one of the most beautiful words in the Scripture. You take a poor child of God in some difficulty in providence and he is afraid of the effect of it upon him. He is led to pray - keep me, O keep me, and the Spirit of God is in him and teaches him to pray in exact accordance with the will of God. "He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God". He says, I do not know what God's will is, I am afraid. The Spirit comes and teaches him to groan and make his requests known with the most wonderful accordance with God's purposes, and this, when felt, endears the Spirit who is the Spirit of grace and of supplications. There are different ministrations; the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

Now I have one more word to say on this point. There is a great deal in it, but I mean to say I have just one more word I would like to say. It is with respect to the end. We must needs die. Of course, some may say, we all know that; the question is how shall we die? How shall we die, because as we die as to this body, this life, so we shall be through eternity. That is very solemn. "We must all" says the Spirit by the Apostle Paul, "appear before the Judgement Seat of Christ, that every one may receive that which was done in the body, whether it be good or bad." An unknown world men speak of, an unseen world. An eternity to be spent in one of two states, one of two places. The state of heaven, the place of God's dwelling; the state of absolute holiness, of immutable blessedness. A state of God's immediate presence, fountains of living waters ever to satiate the glorified people in heaven. What a state. Now when the Spirit comes and bears witness - and He does so - bears witness with a sinner's heart that that state is awaiting him; when He sets before the soul what was set before the Lord Jesus as we have it in the Psalms, God's kindness made Him glad; He was glad before His spirit left His body on the cross because He had shown to Him pleasures at God's right hand for ever more, when the same Holy Spirit shows these pleasures to

some, that is how it has been again and again that the saints have anticipated heaven and longed to be there. The Spirit has brought heavenly things, has sealed the soul, has revealed the sinner's interest, his union with Christ, his oneness with Him, his perfection in Him - "Ye are complete in Him" - and so death has lost its sting; the grave has no victory now. O death, said the Lord, I will be thy sting. O grave, He said, I will rob thee of thy victory. That is a ministration of the Spirit; it carries the soul above what is experienced in the body. We must needs die. Dissolution is terrible between body and soul. There is a repugnance which is felt by all to that thing we call death. It must be faced, it must be experienced. But O, sometimes it is anticipated. I could never express what I have seen and anticipated in looking mentally into the grave, perceiving that it will be the softest bed I shall ever repose in. Tried, such a faith is, but there it is - the ministration of the Spirit. We may not have had it; we may be a long way from death, as men speak, but we come to it. When we are face to face with the last enemy, then to hear God speak and tell us that where He is there we, His servants, shall be also, will be beyond all blessings great to us.

Now all this is for profit; that every man may profit withal, that it may be for his good, for his growth in grace; that he may learn there is something better than time, even a blessed eternity. That he may learn that Christ will never part with him, that the blood of Christ must, in all its virtue, be known and he profits by the grace of God. Nor is this to be confined to the person. Concluding this morning, I said that this profit brings the Church within that Scripture of Paul in the Ephesians. "From whom", that is Christ, the Head "the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase of itself in love". It is edified, built up, and this brings the communion of the saints in. When you get a blessing God's saints will be glad to see you. David found it and said they will be glad when they see me. Glad when they hear a testimony of God's goodness, when they hear of the Spirit's teaching in this and in that person. They will be glad when they see you. There is such a thing as the communion of saints. I hope it may please God to grant this to us and do entreat the Lord to grant more and more of the ministration of the Spirit in your souls. A Holy Ghost religion is the religion that will stand the test, that will not

be frozen by the icy chill of the river of Jordan, that will live and labour under load but will never die. The Spirit's grace is immutable grace. May the Lord grant this mercy to us and add His blessing to His own word, that we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

AMEN.