

SB
1365a
L-1812

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

1 CORINTHIANS 12 v 7

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

The doctrine of the Person of the Holy Ghost is distinctly taught in Holy Scripture; may none of us deny it. He is a Person in the Godhead proceeding from the Father and the Son, not proceeding from the Father and administered by the Son - an old controversy that, leading to a great division - but proceeding from the Father and the Son; equal to them both as possessing the whole of Deity, as subsisting with the Father and the Son. One God. It might not be an impertinent question to ask some, if they, though they possess religion, have received the Holy Ghost? He is as essential as the Father and the Son, and it is a matter of revelation to the prophets that this divine Person should come with a great profusion upon all flesh after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and this effusion of the Holy Ghost took place in a remarkable degree on the day of Pentecost. Then was Joel's prophecy brought forth - It shall come to pass in the last days saith the Lord, I will pour My Spirit upon all flesh - (Joel 2 v 28.) This work of the Spirit is as essential as is the work of Christ to salvation. A Holy Ghost religion is the only religion that can be said truly to be saving. No acquirements of the human mind, no peering of the human intellect into the things of God can be saving. The kingdom of God is to be received by those who receive it as a little child. Except ye become as little children and receive the things of God in that frame, there is no salvation. The Apostle, in the preceding chapter to this, corrects an evil irregularity that the Corinthian Church had fallen into. They had fallen into a grave irregularity respecting the Lord's Supper. Each one took his own meal, and the rich took of their abundance and fell into drunkenness and shamed the poor who had little or nothing. In this chapter he corrects another evil respecting gifts, and begins by telling them that they once were as the unregenerate then were. "Ye know that ye were Gentiles carried away" - Dr Owen interprets it thus

"carried out by violent impressions" - "unto these dumb idols" (v.2). To the Jews God said - Remember, look back, "look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged" (Isaiah 51 v 1), and to the Gentile Christians the Lord says by Paul, "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world." (Ephesians 2 v 1/2). A deeply humbling and most necessary reminder of the condition that this people, called and chosen, and faithful, were once in. A reminder that we, equally with them, need. Ye were Gentiles; ye are Christians now, ye were Gentiles once. Once you were in the world, now you are called out of it. Once you ran after and worshipped dumb idols, now you worship the true and living God. Once you were without God, and without hope in the world, now you are fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God. To as many here as such words may be applied, the deepest debt, the highest praises, should be felt and given.

Now the Apostle speaks of the various dispensations and operations of the Holy Ghost. Beginning with Pentecost, there were two kinds, just to generalise, two kinds of operation of the Spirit. One kind, temporary, miraculous gifts, gifts of healing, prophesying and other gifts here enumerated. These were for a time; these ended with the Apostles. The other kind, permanent, never to cease while there is a church on earth. Permanent is the gift of faith, and of these permanent gifts I would speak as enabled this morning. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man", every member of the body of Christ, every regenerated person, every true Christian, everyone who, by the Holy Ghost, says that Jesus is the Lord; that is to say, is a worshipper of the Lord Jesus, cleaving to Him, hankering after him, hungering and thirsting after righteousness. It is great to be in this word - everyone. Sovereign is the gift of the Spirit, and sovereign are His operations in the soul, bringing the Lord's people into that great word in the Revelation - "And they that are with the Lamb are called and chosen and faithful". The proclamation of the gospel gathers many in congregations. The operations of the Spirit gather the election of grace to the Lord Jesus. Four hearers of the gospel, three uncultivated pieces of ground, one cultivated piece bringing forth fruit to God, some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold, some an hundred-fold. See if you have the Holy Ghost. One

clear evidence of having the Spirit of God is saying, Jesus is the Lord. Clearly it is the language of faith, the language of a believing heart, of one feeling himself ruined and receiving the knowledge of Christ; able therefore, only able therefore, to say rightly, believingly, acceptably, Jesus is the Lord. I suppose all of us in some way have said, Jesus is the Lord, but may we look very narrowly into the question. Have we said, by the Holy Ghost, that Jesus is the Lord?, for surely that means this that we have come to some knowledge of Jesus as the Lord, some knowledge of His Person. What is the Person of Christ? How came He to be Christ? Why He became Christ? What makes Him Lord and why is He Lord? Questions these of no little importance, for not only is Jesus eternally the Lord, a Person in the Godhead, but He is the Lord in His complex Person. He is the Lord in His victory on the cross; He is the Lord in His resurrection from the dead; He is the Lord in His supplication; He is the Lord in His intercession. I will said He to the Father that the men Thou gavest Me out of the world should be with Me where I am and behold My glory. (John 17 v 24). If we then, have so seen Christ, we have said He is the Lord, and that has constituted us worshippers of Him, that has given us a hope in Him, that has attracted us to Him, made Him attractive, made Him all in all. And the gift of the Spirit is faith. It is a solemn Scripture you read by Paul in another place - "All men have not faith". I saw the other day that a Doctor of Divinity said, every man has faith. I would not contradict the Apostle; he said - "All men have not faith". There are some men without it. There is a constant distinction in the Scripture between believers and unbelievers, between men born again and men dead in trespasses and sins; a constant reference to unbelief as a very grievous sin. Unbelief is an awful immorality with respect to God. Some have faith. To the Ephesians the Apostle speaks thus - "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: It is the gift of God", and it is no question as to whether Paul means grace or faith there. Who would say grace was of himself? But it is faith that is the gift of God. It is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, a creation, a new creation in a heart that was full of unbelief. Have we faith? It is a question. The Apostle says - "Hast thou faith?" That has come then by the ministration of the Spirit, and, as the nature of faith, so its Object. It comes from God, that is, it is spiritual; its Object is God. This is a gift, a manifestation of the Spirit, for

profit. "That ye may profit withal". What is this profit? It is to be spoken of in two ways. First it is a profit to the person who has it; it carries him out of himself. He understands very painfully what Rutherford said when he exclaimed - O that I had not a myself. And faith, the gift of the Spirit, carries him out of himself, this wicked self, and brings him to live on Jesus Christ; gives him, through the Spirit's grace, access to the Father through Christ, brings him into union with Christ as a branch in the true vine. Faith draws virtue from Christ, brings answers to prayer through Christ, gives power to a sinner to wait at the throne of God's heavenly grace. 'Tis an eye to see God in Christ, and the glory of God's salvation in Christ. The sufficiency of divine righteousness, the righteousness of Christ. To see that Rock of Ages in which there is no frailty, about, and from which, there can be no erosion by waves of sorrow and by waves of evil and by time. 'Tis a great gift and its greatness is my reason - I wont say excuse - my reason for dwelling upon it. It is the gift of God, and everyone who has it will one day thank God for so inestimable a gift, the gift that makes Christ necessary in the apprehension of the person who has it; the gift that makes Christ precious, the gift that abides by the doctrine of Christ. O what praises we owe to the Holy Ghost who has manifested His goodness to us in giving us, as some of us believe, the great gift of faith. To one is given the gift of faith.

Now a believer is, according to this, a remarkable person. A believer is one to whom God has manifested Himself and is manifesting Himself from time to time as the God who made choice of Him in eternal love. One to whom Christ was given and for whom Christ came, whose sins were made over to Christ, and who has righteousness, the righteousness of Christ made over to him. He must be a remarkable person who has this gift of faith. Bless God for faith. Its action - for it does act; an inoperative faith is no faith at all - its action is always Godward. Reason, affliction, indwelling sin, temptation, will always, all of them, bend the spirit to the earth, and the more tender the conscience, the more likely for a time is that bending to be felt. Jacob had it - he said, "My way is hid from the Lord and my judgement is passed over from my God". But God spoke to him and touched his faith - "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth,

fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding". He tries faith, His word given to a sinner tries him. "The Word of the Lord tried Joseph". And everyone that has faith finds out that, that he is tried, but this direct action of faith will always bring a sinner to this - "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after Thee O God". He cries out - "O when wilt Thou come unto me?". As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, my flesh crieth out after God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

Now it is a good thing to be testing ourselves. Doubtless every child of God is brought from time to time to a close questioning of himself. Have I faith? Am I right? Is it possible for a person who has the sin which I have, and who suffers from the working of sin as I suffer, to have faith? Faith lives under a load; faith struggles against death; faith resists evil. In the Spirit's power it stands, it believes, it lives, it hopes, it waits. There is a constraining influence in faith, causing the sinner who would fain hold fast, to do so. "Hold fast that which thou already hast". This is a manifestation of the Spirit. How great a thing then is faith. That is one thing that the Spirit here manifests Himself in giving; He gives faith. Faith is the gift of God. Faith in the bleeding Lamb, faith that says to a sinner, you are a sinner; faith that says in the sinner, there is a Saviour; faith that says God is love and longs for that love to be shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost.

Another gift of the Spirit is knowledge. Every child of God more or less distinctly sympathises with the word which he finds in the Proverbs - "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy". And yet, however ignorant a child of God is, this is true, that he has divinely imparted knowledge. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent". It is a great thing to know that; it is not commonly had, that saving knowledge. The Apostle John in his first epistle speaks of this; he says - "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children keep

yourselves from idols". There is nothing will save us from idolatry but the true knowledge of God given by the Holy Ghost. You may not have a little god in your waistcoat pocket, you may be free from the vanity and ignorance of having a crucifix and bowing down to it, you may not be guilty of the frivolity and idolatry of the Anglo-Catholic and of the Papist, you may not worship your own intellect, but you may have a god with all that. Notwithstanding all that, you may be an idolator. You have got something that is more precious to you than anything else in the world; better, and before God; that is your idol. Some of you may be caught and say, well I am an idolator. Now John says, "We know that the Son of God is come" and He has given us, by His Spirit, an understanding to know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true. This is the true God and eternal life; and therefore idolatry is abandoned. The gift of knowledge. What is the Name of God? What is His Son's Name if thou canst tell? That is a test. What is His Name? What is His Son's Name? Why, says God, I am your Father. Says Christ to His disciples, "I ascend unto My God and your God, to My Father and your Father". Therefore His Name is the Brother born for adversity. That is knowledge, not acquired, but given; not a guess, but an assurance, an assurance that melts the heart into happiness, into contrition, into sweetness, and brings the most blessed reliance on the Son of God. Ah, it is a great thing to know Christ has come. When? Why did He come? Because God sent Him in the fullness of time. And what for? That that sinless One should be made sin and that there should be a marvellous exchange. Sin taken from the sinner and imputed to Him, and His righteousness brought and imputed to the sinner. And if you know that, you know everything that is necessary for heaven. There is the title, there is the fitness, and there, from time to time, is the assurance. Look then for knowledge. Beware of guessing in religion. Beware of supposing in religion. If you have not much, God grant you may say this by the Spirit's mercy - Now this I received; this God gave to me. A light shone into my heart and I saw the Son of God. A light beamed from Calvary and I saw the atonement; I saw Jesus rising from the dead; I have seen Him in heaven. Knowledge - this is a gift of the Spirit. It is capable of an increase: "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ". Every fresh inshining of the Spirit increases saving knowledge. Any Scripture illuminated by the Spirit in your heart increases your knowledge and also your

confidence. The gift of knowledge - you have it in that beautiful word of Christ's in His prayer recorded in John's gospel. "I have", said He there of His disciples - I have given them Thy word, and they have known that I came out from Thee. O think of it, the word of God given, and the Spirit opening it, so as that a person can say "I know". There are many things in this world, sciences, and various things, ignorance of which will be no very serious inconvenience - we can live comfortably without knowledge of certain things here - but we can neither live comfortably nor happily, nor surely, without the knowledge of God in Christ. Mark it my brethren, this knowledge, divinely given, brings a certainty, a humbling certainty, into the mind. And there is knowledge also of forgiveness. Jesus is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And how is this brought by the Holy Spirit? He glorifies Christ and there is a certainty in that. "He", said Christ, promising the Spirit - "He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you." Here is the truth in this blessed, infallible Book, this inerrant Book. You read it, but this is true, what this Book testifies of, you can only know savingly by the teaching of the Spirit. "He shall glorify Me". He shall show you what I am, why I came into this world; that I might bear your sins away in My body on the tree, that you, being dead to sin therefore might live unto God. The blood of Christ, a precious blood, cleanseth from all sin. How is this known? I might ask a question here. This - How many consciences are there in this congregation that know that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin? Look at the question, because if we never know that, if the conscience never has on it the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, if we die without sin being removed from us, there is no place in heaven for us, for no sinner enters that place. Nothing that defileth or maketh a lie enters there. And the gift of the Spirit is for that purpose - "How much more shall the blood of Christ who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God." O sinner, you cannot have access to God but by the blood of Christ. "You that were sometimes far off, yet now hath He made nigh by the blood of Christ". The Spirit gives knowledge. He gives knowledge of the Father. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also". Yet the disciples did not know Him, they had no spiritual intelligence at that time of the Father. But says

the Apostle to the Ephesians - "Through Him", Jesus Christ, "we both", Jew and Gentile, "have access by One Spirit unto the Father". Then you know Him. If you get access to Him you know Him. Then the Spirit is the Spirit of adoption, crying in a believer's heart "Abba Father" O, the bliss of this; you can never express it; the blessedness of having access to the Father. And O, if I might here just say a word by the way, namely, the wonderful knowledge of a sinner knowing the Trinity. Three Persons known; the Son known as the door, as the way, as the truth, as the life. The Spirit known as the teacher of the Lord Jesus and as leading a sinner through Him. The Father known as being approached and the sinner, the saint, hearing Him say, I will receive you, I will walk in you, I will dwell in you and be your Father; you shall be My child. Tis a grand gift, this gift of knowledge.

And lastly here, the gift of knowledge extends to heaven. We are not there, nor do we know what we shall be when there, if we get there, but there is such a thing as seeing the land afar off, and the King in His beauty. "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off". Hope enters heaven. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil. Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus". Some here, perhaps not many of us, but some here have anticipated heaven by getting a view of it by faith; a kind of certainty that, for the moment, left no room for doubt about that "holy, happy place where sin no more defiles, where God unveils His blissful face, and looks, and loves, and smiles". Ah it is a great thing to have this in your heart. Nothing will more separate you from the world than this and nothing will tend to make you more spiritually minded, minding the things of the Spirit, than this - knowledge. Knowledge of what is right. Everybody naturally knows right from wrong, but to know how God can be just and forgive a sinner, and justify the ungodly, and how God can promise heaven to that person, and how the Spirit gives a knowledge of that blessed Eternity that is to come. Plenty of guessing, but little knowledge, but the little is worth the world and more than the world.

There are diversities of manifestations and ministrations and ministries but this is the one of all others. The Spirit gives faith,

the Spirit gives knowledge, and it is profitable to the sinner. O he benefits by it. It humbles him, it sanctifies him, it strengthens him; it enables him to fight the good fight of faith. It enables him to cast an anchor in God in Christ; it enables him to pant after God more than the whole world. And it is profitable to others; if you have faith there will be times when your heart will be enlarged and your tongue loosed and you will speak and people will be edified. And I think that brings us into the great word of Paul in the Ephesians. "From whom", that is from Christ, "the whole body fitly joined and compacted together by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." And this also brings out another word - "Ye are taught of God to love one another". These two gifts only have I mentioned. May the Holy Ghost give them both to us.

AMEN.