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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday evening 3 July 1920

1 CORINTHIANS 2 v 9

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen,
nor ear heard, neither have entered
into the heart of man, the things which
God hath prepared for them that love Him".

A wonderful statement this, and full of mercy for ignorant people because these hidden things are brought to the people for whom they are prepared by the Holy Ghost. "But" says Paul continuing, "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things", - all the things prepared by God for them that love Him - "yea, the deep things of God" - the counsels of God and the covenant of God, and the Man in whom all these things dwell. Nothing will ever satisfy the soul born again, but God Himself. "The eye is not satisfied with seeing nor the ear filled with hearing", but there is something in God that is full of all satisfaction. The text is a quotation from the prophet Isaiah. It is here applied, as it was there intended, for the church of God and distinctly and intimately what is first referred to is the Person whom none of the princes of this world knew for, says Paul, if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory, but what was in their midst they saw not. Their heart was made gross and their ears were dull of hearing and they saw not Him who was in their midst; they saw not who He was, why He was amongst them, what He had in Himself. They knew Him not. And He is the Person concerning whom, under a certain consideration, the Apostle was determined to know exclusively. "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified". And in this Man, this God-Man, dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily and in Him also it has pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. So, in speaking a little this evening to you on this great Scripture, I have, first of all, as helped, to speak of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was prepared before the world began and, as says Paul, He was ordained before the world unto our glory. Give then, as you can, your attention to this remarkable subject.

"Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man" to imagine "the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." These things are included in God's purpose; they are His purpose. First of all Christ is God's own elected One. "Behold My servant, Mine elect". This is Christ, the first-born of every creature, the glorious One by whom God made the worlds and by whom the worlds are sustained and who now, glorified, governs all things; who is above all principality and power. Let us seek to look to, consider a little, this Person, the Lord of glory, God's own elected One, with whom He made the covenant of grace, on whom His hand is. The Man that God the Father made strong for Himself and in whom God is pleased, and eternally was pleased, that all fulness should dwell. The princes of this world knew Him not. He is the mystery, He is the wisdom of God in a mystery, as Paul speaks in this chapter. God's wisdom, God's own wise way of redeeming the Church from her death and guilt. The wisdom of God in a mystery, known only to the initiated; that is to those who are taught of the Holy Ghost. This Man is God; His Name is Emmanuel, God with us. He sighed human breath; He lived as a man of sorrows; He was acquainted with grief. He bore a load intolerable to the whole world, only bearable by Himself; the load of guilt imputed to Him by His Father, guilt taken from others and given to Him; taken from those who were chosen in Him before the world began. This is the Man of whom Paul says: "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified". So we must go back, we must be old-fashioned; if we are right we must go back and live in the past a little. We must, as God leads us, go back to eternity and see the Trinity in action; the Trinity in love, the Trinity in a divine purpose, concerning some men who should be the body, the bride of Christ, who should be redeemed from this present evil world; in whom God would show what He could do to make a saint out of a sinner, a bride for Christ out of the world of men fallen by their own iniquity. 'Tis a great purpose to which our attention is drawn when it is said: "The things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." He prepared a Man; beloved friends, God prepared a Man in eternity, in an everlasting purpose and that Man has, from eternity, in the purpose of God been the representative of men who are chosen in Him. He has ever been before His Father in the decree; He is now in the presence of His Father actually. The Man Christ Jesus was prepared for sinners and this never could have entered into the heart of man to

conceive. No eye of man ever saw it till it was revealed, that God prepared a Man for men, a Saviour for sinners, a representative for those who had only a lost and dead head to represent them, even Adam. No heart could have imagined that the eternal God would set up the Man Christ Jesus to represent, to save, to bless; to give to men who are sinners His righteousness; to men who are polluted, His holiness; to men who deserve hell, His own heaven; to men separated from God by sin, an intimate union with God by grace. Herein shines the free, electing love of God, setting up this great, this glorious Man, Christ Jesus, who is the hiding place for His people, the glorious high throne from the beginning for His people, the only refuge, the only safe place for them; a defenced place, when this is needed. Then men who need it wait for it. The word in Isaiah is "The things which God hath prepared for them that wait for Him". Waiting is not easy; waiting sometimes seems impossible, for the waiting ones have destruction close at hand in their apprehension, but God has prepared this Man for such people and they shall never be disappointed, for what they could never find out themselves, God discovers to them, and this comes to pass, sooner or later: "Blessed are your eyes for they see and your ears for they hear". They see Christ; O, what a wonderful mercy it is to see the Lord Jesus by faith as the Man prepared from eternity, as the hiding place set up, and as the glorious high throne from the beginning to be the place of our sanctuary. God has done this. It is a great encouragement to ignorant people, to people who can heartily subscribe to that word: "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Where is God seen, to perfection? In the Man Christ Jesus, our Emmanuel God with us. There He is seen; all the perfections of Deity are seen here. All the love of God is here; all the free grace of God; all the blessings of the covenant are here, and no man could find out these blessings by himself. Human intellect, however accute and far reaching, cannot reach heaven. You can see the stars, but you cannot see God who made them. You may see signs, for they are indellibly stamped on them, signs of God's eternal power and Godhead on the works of creation, but you cannot find out God thereby. You cannot rise above yourself and you are not sufficient to find out things that are God's things. Therefore He gives His Spirit to aggravate their guilt. Nehemiah recounting God's mercies to the Jews "Thou gavest them Thy good Spirit", and God gives

His good Spirit to His children that they may see this rich, this wondrous, this eternal provision, the Lord Jesus Christ. And, as this is the first, so it is the last, of all the things which God hath prepared. Says Christ: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending". Nothing before Him, nothing after Him, for in Him God has been pleased that all fulness should dwell. Now here let us pause and consider with respect to ourselves, this question. Are we in need of such a Person as Jesus Christ? Do we feel ignorant of such a Person as Jesus Christ? Our need, our felt need of Him, is pleasing to God because it is given to us to feel our need of Him by the Spirit. What then? Shall our ignorance, our inability to know Christ hinder us from knowing Him? No! "For God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit". Does the Spirit know Christ? Yes, He knows Him intimately, perfectly; first, because the Holy Ghost is God, even as Christ is. Secondly, because the Holy Ghost was present in the council of peace and love in eternity when Christ was set up in the decree of God. And thirdly, because, when Christ was born into this world, the Holy Ghost was given to Him without measure and He has promised to be the revealer, the glorifier of Christ in His children. What then, is this a great encouragement to us who feel our ignorance, a great encouragement to those who are seeking and often feeling, fearing, they shall never attain to that knowledge of Christ they desire. Look, poor sinner, you who may be feeling your ignorance and your shortcoming, look to the Holy Ghost; beg of Him to reveal Jesus Christ to you. Put Christ in mind of His own promise. Speaking of the Spirit, He says, "He shall glorify Me for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you". And you need nothing more to save you than a manifestation of Christ in your soul, nothing else; but nothing short of this will do. This is therefore a word about Christ that is suitable, so suitable that no tongue can adequately express the suitability that is in the Lord Jesus. Then follow these things, as in Christ. First, a perfect Saviour, absolutely perfect. And what makes Him a perfect Saviour? First, His Person; secondly His work. His Person acceptable to the Father; His work acceptable to the Father, and suitable, both of them, to His people. A perfect Saviour is One who stands exactly and fully in the place of people whom He is to save. A perfect Saviour is a perfect Substitute, a perfect Mediator, a perfect Priest; perfect in all these particulars. Perfect in His righteousness, in His atoning, His vicarious work.

Perfect before God as an Intercessor. In all these particulars He is perfect, and when He is revealed faith embraces Him. She, as Flavel says, opens her little arms to embrace this Saviour. Love brought Him down; love moves the Spirit to reveal Him in this perfection. He is perfect indeed. His blood can cleanse the blackest soul and wash away each stain. His righteousness justifies the ungodly that believe in Him. Being justified freely by His grace. And the perfection of this justification is manifested in that Scripture: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law". That does not come in; the law and the deeds of it do not enter into this matter. But the Lord Jesus makes Himself the chiefest among ten thousand because He is a perfect Saviour. A perfect Redeemer; perfect righteousness; and all the sweet perfection of His precious blood, felt on the conscience, brings this to light. "What God hath prepared for them that love Him". Look for a perfect Saviour, for there is no heaven without Him; there can be none. But with Him is all that is necessary. God hath prepared love in Christ, that is, has given it to Him. All the love of God for the Church is in Christ. All the love of God for every individual person chosen in Christ, is in Christ for him, and no other way is there for this love to come down. It flows through the Mediator, the God-Man. "Before Abraham was I am". Therefore Christ is God, and therefore Christ is love, but love that shall reach a sinner must be given purposely by the Father to the Son in order that it may reach the sinner. How can it reach the sinner? By the death of the Son of God. "Therefore doth My Father love Me because I lay down My life. No man taketh it from Me. I have power to lay it down of Myself and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received from My Father". And this is the way, the opened way, whereby the love of God comes down to a sinner, and the One by whom this love is made known is the Holy Ghost. Again I would quote this word: "God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit". And in the Romans the Apostle Paul says that the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost who is given unto us. Love divine all love excelling comes down into the heart by the Holy Spirit. He takes of Christ's love, He takes of that love that brought the Saviour down, and sheds it abroad. He takes of it and sets it before the wondering eyes of a distressed sinner whose tears are dried up. Hitherto undried, now dried by the precious love of Christ.

Almighty power is in Christ and this is most necessary, most necessary. It was necessary in Him when He was a Surety, to smart, to suffer. He had to bear all incarnate God could bear. He had to make atonement; He had to offer Himself to God; He had to remove all that burden; load, terrible load of guilt, and only Almighty God in human nature could effect this. He did it; yes, He did it. And again, it is necessary in order for regeneration. The hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live. Creation is God's work: "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works". "Created in righteousness and true holiness after the image of Him that created him." This is the work that is done by the blessed Son of God, and it was prepared, given, ordained to be in Him; almighty power. And moreover, not only is this power necessary for regeneration, but also for preservation. He who made the world holds it up. He who makes a Christian preserves the Christian. He who makes the believer preserves the believer. In no other way can sinners endure to the end, and only the man who endures to the end shall be saved. O, my brethren, you must look to Christ. It is intended that you shall never be supported by yourselves; almighty power must support you. Support you in life, support you under trouble, support you against temptation, against yourself, and bring you honourably to your graves. Nothing else, nothing less will do, and this is prepared, and being prepared, it is revealed. "God hath revealed it to us", brought it home, made it felt, sometimes. What child of God has not felt support under a load, a load of trouble, of grief, sorrow, loss, cross, temptation. This is what is done, prepared, for eternity; almighty power. Another thing prepared is this, the forgiveness of sins. A forgiven sinner is a saved sinner. Forgiveness is in Christ. It is said of Him by the Apostle Peter: "Him hath God exalted at His right-hand to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." Forgiveness of sins is spoken of as by the blood of sprinkling and it is the blood of Jesus Christ that is sprinkled on the conscience. There is in Hebrews a contrast between the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer - which, sprinkled on the person who was defiled, cleansed him - and the blood of Christ. "How much more", says Paul, "shall the blood of Christ who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God". Now to those of you who do

not feel the guilt and pollution of sin, this is a song, a myth, but to those who feel the guilt and the pollution of sin, it is a great reality, and is made the sweetest comfort the conscience can know in this life. The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." That is a great word, and you have another word as great where Christ meets fear and doubt and trouble on this point. He says: "All manner of sin and blasphemy against the Son of Man shall be forgiven". Think of it; if you are troubled, troubled by sin and burdened with guilt, then you will be fitted by that to receive what the Holy Ghost alone is able to reveal to you, the efficacy of the blood of Jesus Christ. And therefore, in the next place, this is prepared before the world began, namely the peace of God. "The peace of God which passeth all understanding". Peace is good when it is good peace. There is plenty of peace that will be broken up one day, but this is not that peace. This peace, it passeth the understanding of a man who receives it. It is the peace of God's smile, the peace of the Saviour's blessing pronounced, the peace that the blood of Jesus brings, saying all sin is removed. The peace that is felt by reconciliation to God; the peace that proceeds from the cross, telling the sinner to whom it comes that God has now no quarrel with him, no controversy with him. This is the peace that was prepared from the foundation of the world for sinners, such sinners as God has made some of us in ourselves to be; prepared for them before the foundation of the world. Eye hath not seen these things nor ear heard them; you cannot find them out; they must be revealed to you. Our ignorance is terrible, God's wisdom is infinite; our blindness is, to all human instruction, impenetrable, but it is moved in an instant by the revealing light of the Holy Ghost. This is prepared also, namely, a refuge in times of trouble. If Christ said: "In the world ye shall have tribulation" - and He did say it - He also said "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world". You shall run into My Name and find it a refuge. "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe". And God set Him up for this. As you read in Jeremiah: "A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary". This is Christ, set up in the purpose of God, that His afflicted people, tempted, hunted, troubled by sin and Satan and the world, should run into His Name and by faith they make Him their habitation, and therefore they are safe. "Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most

High thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling". This is prepared. And again, heaven is prepared. Happy the man who gets honourably to his grave in the fear of God, and who enters into what Solomon says: "Better is the day of one's death than the day of one's birth." How many of you have ever welcomed the thought of death, or to how many of you is the consideration of death present from time to time with many solemn questions, such as, am I fit to die? Have I enough to die with? What are my prospects after death? What do I expect in eternity? Where do I hope to be? Who shall be my companions? what my society? Do you consider these things? Some do, blessed be God, some do, and they would not have the thought of their end banished from their minds; they would not be indifferent to this, that they must needs die and be as water spilled on the ground which cannot be gathered up again. No, they rather hug to their hearts the thought because as it is with them then they pray:

Prepare me gracious God
To stand before Thy face
Thy Spirit must the work perform
For it is all of grace

Now this heaven is prepared, and people who are going to it are prepared for it. Mind that; there must be something in you like the heaven to which you are going, a nature like the place. The place is holy; so are the people who are to dwell there. The place is light itself, so are the children of God called children of the light, and of the day. The place is the place of the Father, where He dwells, and the elder brother, where He is, and the seven Spirits of God which are before His throne, and there must be something in the nature of these people who are going there, in order that they may be at home. One accustomed to pure air, and surroundings that are clean, can never be at home in a vitiated air, and filthy surroundings. And if this is true naturally, O how much more so is it with regard to heaven and all who are going there. You will never go to heaven if you are not perfect. Think of it! Are you perfect? Every child of God says I am the most imperfect of all creatures. Then how can you hope for heaven? Why thus - "Who of God", that is Jesus Christ, "Who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption".

What says Christ of this heaven? "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also". And in welcoming His sheep into heaven, He says: "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." It is all here. "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him". Heaven is prepared; a prepared place for a prepared people; people who get weary here, troubled by sin, tempted by the devil, afflicted in the world, in their families, in their business, chiefly in their souls by indwelling sin. For them there is a rest and it awaits them. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God", and what a rest. They go in but they go no more out. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am sat down with My Father in His throne." All prepared. He shall go in to go no more out. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God and he shall go no more out".

These are just hints, which God has, in infinite love, prepared and given to His Son Jesus Christ for all those who are, as the apostle speaks to the Ephesians, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love, and may the Holy Ghost, who alone is able to do it, reveal these things in us.

AMEN.