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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham  
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton  
on Sunday evening 2 November 1919

1 Corinthians 3 v 11

"For other foundation can no man lay than that  
is laid which is Jesus Christ"

One may say that the children of God want no other foundation; that every view they get of that foundation so endears it to them, so draws them out in love and desire to know Christ for themselves as that they flee all other vain and false refuges and all other grounds of hope of good. O it is a great thing to know Jesus Christ. One of the best attainments that we can have is a persuasion that Christ is sent of God to be the Saviour of the world. In this day of general profession it may not seem much to some to make a profession of that, but really to believe that the Eternal God did send His only begotten Son into the world; that the Eternal Son of God did come, became man, that is to say the Son of God became incarnate, to believe this, so as to say that Jesus is the Lord. Well you must have the Holy Ghost to teach and enable you to say so, and therefore it is one of the highest attainments. I would think it great for myself if every day I found a persuasion of that in my own heart, killing the horrible infidelity and the unspeakably dreadful thoughts that rise in the mind about and against that Person. You look - let me exhort you here - look into this point, into your own hearts; examine yourselves and see whether you be in the faith in this particular, whether you can really say in your hearts with the Eunuch - I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. But is it so necessary that we must exhort each other and narrowly examine ourselves on this point? Yes it is. Said Christ to men who were always cavilling and objecting - "Except ye believe that I am He ye shall die in your sins". And is it so great a mercy to believe it? Yes it is, for he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved. Where God has put a stress, may we not be indifferent. Where God is particular may we not be loose. What God has declared to be essential to salvation may we not pass as

a matter of indifference. The Apostle in this Epistle reproves the saints for turning aside to other things, other persons than the person and the things of Jesus Christ. He reproves the Galatians for this. "I marvel" said he "that ye are so soon moved from the gospel", the gospel I preached, "to another gospel which is not another". And so essential was it to him that he said that though he who had preached the true gospel to them or an angel from heaven should teach another gospel, let him be accursed. No latitudinarianism here. Be as wide as you desire in all charity in natural subjects, but be as strait as God's word in spiritual subjects, and as narrow as His Word. The text is exclusive; it shuts out, it denies, it cuts off, everything, save Jesus Christ. Paul was a most exclusive person. To this people he said - I determined when I came among you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. A godly determination, full of all mortification to pride, to flesh and blood, but a godly determination. This exclusiveness respected himself in his own personal experience. Said he, relating his experience to the Philippians, - "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I might win Christ and be found in Him." My brethren, have we that spirit? Is Christ so great in our view, so needed in our experience, as that other things, all other things, become as vanity, loss, dung and dross? Depend upon it, if we are going to heaven, that will be the state of our minds respecting Jesus Christ and all other things. He will be first. Here He is set forth as a foundation and there is no other foundation.

We noticed briefly this morning the foundation and saw that that foundation is the Son of God incarnate, laid by God Himself, and noticed that particularly, primarily in this text and in this chapter, an experience is referred to, that it is an experimental laying of a foundation. Paul, as a minister, an Apostle, in his teaching, in his writing, laid this foundation, set it out before people, and said you who believe, believe on this foundation. You who will go to heaven, must go to heaven by this Person,

Jesus Christ. There is no other way of escape from the wrath to come, no other rock or foundation that will sustain the weight of your immortal souls and of your everlasting interests. "Other foundation can no man lay". And we noticed a little how that when God will bring a person to build for eternity He brings that person to know and receive Jesus Christ; that a sinner is a sinner; his rags, his pollution, his guilt, his weakness, his poverty, his emptiness, these fit him to receive a manifestation of Christ; and that he becomes, this sinner becomes, a receiver of Jesus Christ and, as enabled, as receiving Him to say "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God" and it is a great thing. Now having received Him the person receiving Him begins to build and the first and only point in the building noticed this morning was that he builds all his hopes of answers to prayer on the Lord Jesus, that the Lord Jesus becomes the way to the Father, the door of access, to God, the throne of God's heavenly grace, and the sinner is led and taught to ask what blessings he needs in the Name of Christ. "If ye ask anything in My Name I will do it". You cannot be too particular here. When you pray, if you profess to pray, see in whose Name it is you go in prayer to God, whose merit you plead, and what is the ground of your hope of success in prayer. This is a very large subject; one might say much upon it because true religion begins with prayer; the Christian enters heaven by prayer; his path is a path of prayer. Trouble makes him pray; the Spirit teaches him to pray; daily wants take him to the throne of grace; spiritual wants, temporal wants. Sin's rising, sin's power, temptations of Satan, difficulties in providence, troubles that come, these all make matter for prayer, so that the child of God's life is, as he is healthy, rightly exercised, a life of prayer. The more we pray the better it is. "Pray without ceasing" is God's word. "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it". And to praying people there is much encouragement in the Bible. God has promised to answer prayer, to give out His covenant blessings, in answer to prayer. For these things will I be enquired of them to do them for them, says a promising God. But I would leave this important and blessed and beautiful part of a Christian's building to notice one or two other things.

First, the sinner taught of the Spirit, led of the Spirit into a painful knowledge of himself, his sinfulness, is led to build all his hopes of justification on this foundation. Justification, a mighty word, impossible to a guilty person when he deals with men and men deal with him. Forgiveness of a trespass is possible among men; justification respecting a trespass is impossible among men. But that which is impossible with men is possible with God. It is impossible for you to justify me in any offence I might commit. You might forgive me, but you could not cleanse the guilt. But God justifies the ungodly that believeth in Jesus. And the sight of a justified person as the Scripture exhibits him; the sight of a justified person thus spoken to by the Lord - "Thou art all fair My love, there is no spot in thee", will draw out the most fervent desires of a polluted, guilty person to enter into such a rich experience. He alone can justify the ungodly, who says "Come unto Me" Now the ground of that glorious change in the state of a sinner from guilt to justification is the very Person and the immediate work of redemption by Jesus Christ. This is the only foundation of it. O sinner, is it in your heart to go to heaven? Is it in your heart to seek to know God? Is it in your heart to pray for justification? Then the man to whom the Holy Ghost will direct your faith is the man Christ Jesus who is true Almighty God. This is the foundation of a sinner's hope for justification. O your friends may say to you, you exaggerate your case when you complain of your sins, but you say, no, I know too well what my case is. But when you go before God He wont tell you you exaggerate, but the conclusions you arrive at when you begin to conclude that being so bad you cannot be saved, being so guilty, you cannot be justified, such conclusions He will disallow and pronounce you just in your own conscience. That is the title to heaven. Here is the ground of it, and bold will all the Lord's people stand in that great day, when the challenge as it were shall go forth - "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" They lay much to their own charge. Each one said - O but my backslidings, my sins. The answer is this - "It is God that justifieth". His work is perfect; there is no unrighteousness in Him. "It is God that justifieth; who is

he that condemneth?" What man, what devil can condemn when God justifies? Better have this experience with any affliction that God may send, than be lacking and have all temporal prosperity.

The next important and essential point in salvation is holiness, which the Scripture calls sanctification. Now in this Epistle the Apostle tells the church what sort of people cannot inherit the kingdom of God - adulterers, thieves, murderers, drunkards, covetous persons and so on. These, he says, cannot enter into the kingdom of God. If the Holy Ghost had left it there, is there a person in this chapel that could go to heaven, or even have a hope of it? No; but the Holy Ghost has not left it there. He says, continuing in that important passage - "and such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are justified, but ye are sanctified in the Name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. That is the gospel. The law says, die; a legal heart says, I am dead. The gospel says live, and faith says "I shall live and not die and declare the works of God". Holiness in all its parts you must receive from Jesus Christ. Holiness without ebbing or flowing, always perfect, you must receive from Jesus Christ. Holy affections, holy feelings, you must receive from Jesus Christ, brought by the Holy Spirit. Other foundation for sanctification cannot be found. In Christ it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. In this Epistle the Apostle says - "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." Be it given to me to direct you to this only holiness, this only holiness which is acceptable to God and will be really acceptable to you, as it is revealed in you by the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Now I have made out these points by the Scriptures and I will tell you that few become acquainted with these things. If the Spirit brings them to your hearts then you are in the way to heaven and there you will go. How can he miss to whom Christ is made wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption? Do some of you follow after this rich experience? Then I would say, follow on; go on; wait on the Lord; come to Him with your

wants and woes; come to Him with all that you feel of badness and guilt; come without money and without price, without good feelings, without good frames, without good deeds; needy, naked, poor, come; you cant come too filthy, cant come too lost. You may be too good, but you cannot be too bad for Jesus Christ. O blessed gospel this, and no money asked for it, no price to be received for it; no toll to be levied on this narrow, but safe, way - Jesus Christ.

I will mention one or two other matters. First, this, namely, Christ is the only one on whom we can properly build a hope of getting honourably to our graves, and I do entreat your strict attention to this. Do not mistake moral uprightness continuing through your life for perseverance in the race to heaven. The things are distinct and different absolutely. Perseverance in the race to heaven, reaching out after that prize such numbers never seek, such numbers seek in vain; this, this must be from Jesus Christ. And the hope of it must be built, laid upon Him. He made a great promise before He ascended into heaven after His resurrection. He said to His disciples - "Lo I am with you always even to the end of the world" and when you find this blessed presence with you, then you have ground on which to stand, a rock on which to build hopes, sweet hopes of heaven. That is a great word in the Psalms - "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever". Now what was the ground of that confidence? It was Jesus Christ. But what proof have you of that, you ask? Go to the Psalm, see how it opened - "The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want". There was the foundation, there was the confidence. "The Lord is my Shepherd"; He will take care of me, a poor, silly, helpless sheep; He will look after my necessities and protect me against enemies and therefore goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. He built his hopes on his Shepherd who restored his soul, who spread a table before him in the midst of his enemies; gave him a staff and a rod; who helped him and protected him; on Him was the Psalmist's confidence, so sweet and pleasant to his soul, that goodness and mercy should follow him all the days of his life.

And the Apostle Paul had the same confidence. "I know whom I have believed" What then? "I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day". I know whom I have believed; I know the Son of God; I know that the love of God was manifested in giving Him, that He might redeem me. I believe in Him and I have committed, by faith, to Him all my interests and I believe that He is able, being God; able, being an intercessor; able, having shed His blood and gone into heaven with it; able to keep my soul, to keep my steps, to keep my faith, to keep my hope, to keep my love against that day and to keep me so as that when He shall present His children unto His Father I shall be one of them. It was good building was it not? Suppose a professor should say, well I will keep to the things that I have learned; I will stick to the truth as I have learned it. Watch that professor and if he be only a professor, probably you will see him fall away. If he be a child of God, probably you will see he will get a sore fall and many of his bones will be broken, but he shall be saved. "I know" says Paul "whom I have believed" and I have committed to Him everything and therefore I shall get through. He will give me a crown of life. The Psalmist had the same confidence in another Psalm which, coming to my mind, I will speak to you. "Into Thy hands I commit my spirit, O Lord God of truth". But then there is something else there, this - "Thou hast redeemed me O Lord God of truth". And if you get that bottom, that foundation, you will say the same thing; say, we build our hopes of perseverance on the Lord Jesus. Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid" And this is good building in my judgment when you build here all your expectations of perseverance on Jesus Christ.

One other matter; Christ is the foundation of all our hopes of deliverance out of afflictions and temptations. The Lord will be with His children in six troubles, yea also in seven, and here one would say a word about that, that is not often absent from one's thoughts nowadays and may often be present in the thoughts of many of you young and old who are exercised. I mean we have one enemy to meet, who is called the last enemy; not that he is the last enemy that some people will meet, but the last enemy

that the saints will meet - death. Now I fear that if some of you were to meet that last enemy now, God sending him, he would not be the last to you, he would only take hold of you and carry you, all unwilling, into the presence of another enemy, even God, to whom you are not reconciled. The case of one who is not reconciled to God is a very terrible case. "I am against that man" says God. The thought of death not being the last enemy one would meet, or could possibly meet, is very terrible. What, shall I get into the grip of death, and shall death carry me into the presence of an angry God? O sinner, if you never know God in Christ, if you are not reconciled to God in Christ, if you never hear God say that your sins are forgiven you, God will be your last enemy, not death. You may free yourself from some enemy here, but you will never free yourself from God if He is your enemy, and He will utter one terrible word. He will say to you "Depart from Me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Men may try to persuade you that there is no such thing as eternal punishment, but Scripture declares it and I will tell you of it. Everlasting punishment. O but it is not so with all of us. What a sweet hope some of us have, I have, that death will be our last enemy; can do nothing for us but humiliate these poor bodies, for death is a terrible humiliation of man; can do nothing after that. And what is the ground of our hope? No other foundation for such a hope can be laid than this - Jesus Christ. No other ground does God afford us, nor do we want another. Well, build here; you can never build your expectations too high when you build here. Hope all that heaven has good. Think what the blood of Christ has bought; invaluable blood. Death, the curse and fruit of sin, becomes thus to a child of God everlasting gain. "For me" says Paul "to live is Christ and to die is gain". It will be gain to leave every offensive thing, even our sins, behind us. It will be gain to go where there is no night, no desertion, nothing to disagree with us. In this mortal state we have many things that are disagreeable to us; nothing of the sort there. It will be gain to go where there is no darkness, where the sun ever shines. Well, you who do believe, God help you to build well here. Build all your hopes for good in time and through eternity on the



blessed Person and work of Jesus Christ, God's dearly beloved Son. What harm can reach us if we are here? What flood will wash us away from off this foundation? "On this Rock", Christ Himself, "will I build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it". It does not say - they shall not contend against it - but not prevail against it. The Lord help us to build here. Be very careful of your building. Be very careful, I say, of your building. Build on Christ, nothing but gold, silver, and precious stones, that is to say, hope all that God has promised; hope for nothing that He has not promised; hope for nothing that is contrary to His glory. Build no hopes on anything that would help you against any mortifying trial except it is here, on the grace, Person, blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Be very careful. I have been a poor builder and some fires have come to destroy wood, hay and stubble, and some of you may have to make the same confession. But blessed be God if He has taken pains even to put a fire to burn up that rubbish which we think so much of. If you build here, the building wont often be rising rapidly to your own view. Rather it may be you will say, the thing is going to pieces and I am losing constantly. You will never lose one single hope that you well and solidly build on Jesus Christ. May the blessed Spirit help us to take heed, for if any man build on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. May we be saved in the day of the Lord.

AMEN.