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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel, Brighton

on Sunday morning 14 April 1929

TEXT: I Peter I verse 21

"Who by Him do believe in God that raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory that your faith and hope might be in God"

This scripture shows the innermost secret of divine worship. It is different from that which you have spoken in the Romans where the creation is spoken of as exhibiting the invisible things of God. That which may be known of Him is clearly seen in the work of creation but men who saw that work then, men who see that work now, neither glorify God nor are thankful. They become vain in their imagination and their foolish heart is darkened and these natural worshippers are spoken of in the Revelation, the outer court that is not in the temple; measure not, cast it out. The innermost worship is spoken of in the Revelation in that passage. A reed was given wherewith to measure the temple and the altar, and they that worship therein. All natural religion is outside this. You may have a great deal of natural religion, but not be in this most sacred word. It is a remarkable passage in the Revelation. Measure the temple and the altar and they that worship therein. There you have the church of God. You have the altar. "We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle" and the measurement is God's judgment of them and His separation of them from all others.

The Apostle in this wonderful chapter addresses these worshippers; tells them by the Holy Ghost what God has given to them, an inheritance. He gives the nature of that inheritance "incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away" He makes certain to those who have an interest in it their blessedness in the possession of the inheritance "Who

are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time". He speaks of ancient prophecies, and of the diligence of the prophets who did not understand the times and the matters of which they prophesied. They searched diligently; They were not indifferent. It is a great thing to have a spirit to care for the things that are spoken in Holy Scripture, but he tells us that the things which were prophesied, were prophesied for us, for the people of the dispersion, and all the saints of God then and also now and on this blessedness he exhorts the people of God to diligence. "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end" If things are gloomy, if providences are adverse, if judgments fall, if more and more trouble comes still gird up the loins of your mind, be sober. Say not where is the promise of His coming; hope to the end that is certain, the end that shall reveal God's will and bring you into the happy possession and endless enjoyment of your inheritance. " Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance, but as He that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, be ye holy for I am holy". This exhortation to holiness is an exhortation to separation. "Come out from among them and be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing" This is the holiness to which the saints of the Most High God are exhorted, and if you are praying people, if there be given to you the spirit of grace and of supplication, and ye call on the Father who without respect of persons, Jew or Gentile viewed alike by Him, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear forasmuch as ye know whatever trouble comes, whatever trial of your faith, whatever difficulties be in your way, forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers. This knowledge is God given, breathed into the soul as Jesus breathed on His disciples on the eve of His departure and

they received the Holy Ghost. This knowledge is God given and it is liberty, it is peace, it is the purification of the conscience by the blood of Christ. It is the peace of God which passeth all understanding. It keeps the heart and mind by Jesus Christ. It is a saving knowledge, a comfortable knowledge, a divine freedom, a wonder of wonders.

It is God smiling, it is the blood of Jesus speaking peace, better things than that of Abel. Oh if you know this, if you are acquainted with this wonderful mercy then you have reason to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Redeemed with the precious blood of Christ from slavery, bondage, hardness of heart; redeemed from your enemies, the devil, the law, sin and every kind of evil. Redeemed from all by the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot. You will remember that this purity of the lamb was typified in all the sacrifices. Every beast offered to God in sacrifice must be without blemish. When slain according to divine order then the inwards must be washed and the legs must be washed, everything pointing, typically pointing to the purity of the Lord Jesus, a Lamb without blemish and without spot, a Lamb ordained, not yesterday, but before the foundation of the world; a Lamb manifested. John manifested Him, preaching "Behold the Lamb of God" Manifested to us dear disciples. Said Peter "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God". Manifested to the Apostle Paul "Who art Thou Lord" "I am Jesus" Well then He has been manifesting Himself ever since and if that is so, then this may be a proper question for us to put to ourselves. Has He been manifested to us?

Then comes the text. Who? You of the dispersion, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, by Him you believe in God. I will repeat what I said, this shows the innermost court, the secret of worship, and all believing in God. There is a natural belief in God. Man, fallen, cannot divest himself absolutely of all notion of God. There is an innate belief which God did not permit the fall entirely to obliterate in the creature. Many men have believed and do

today believe in God and in His providence but they glorify Him not as God but are vain in their imagination and their foolish hearts are darkened. Now is the distinction. You, by Jesus Christ believe in God who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory that your faith and hope might be in God.

There is something particular here then, some manifestation of the character, the mind, the purpose of God not revealed by creation. Something that God had in His heart before the world began and when the world was created was not then revealed in and by the work of creation and it may be profitable for us to search into this and diligently enquire what is that that is revealed by the coming of the foreordained Lamb of God that was not revealed by the works of creation. We are informed by the Apostle John in the epistle immediately following the second epistle of Peter, that "In this was the love of God manifested toward us because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him" That is what is revealed by the Son of God coming, by the Lamb of God who was ordained before the foundation of the world and the name of God revealed in the Lamb of God is love. God is love, and the purposes of God revealed in the Lamb of God are the salvation, the justification, the sanctification, the redemption and the glorifying of the church. The purposes of God further are that his people shall have tribulation, that they shall be secure, being secured, that they shall hold on their way, that the promises of God in Christ are yea and amen. A promise of happiness to Adam was not yea and amen. It was yea on a condition. Promises of greatness to the Jews were not yea and amen. They were conditional. Obey and you shall live. Worship Me and I will bless you. The promises in Christ are yea, I will bless you, and amen, I will bless you. Nothing shall turn away my heart, nothing undo my work, nothing alter my purpose. Yea and amen are my promises to you in Christ Jesus and further in this we have that God, the holy God, the just God, the righteous God, will justly forgive sins. "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all

unrighteousness" All the scripture testifies to this, the greatness of God in salvation revealed in and by the Lord Jesus Christ. Here then we, as I apprehend, have the distinction between one worship and another worship, between the temple and the altar and all who worship therein, and the outer court given to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles. This being so now let us as enabled look at the great point here. "Who by Him do believe in God. Who this people are we are informed in this chapter and in the whole of the scriptures. Let us notice this. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" These people have faith; their faith is spoken of in this chapter. "The trial of your faith". They have faith; "Ye believe in God believe also in Me" and this is a concern with all who are born again; have they faith? Is their faith (for they may not be able to say they have no faith) is their faith of that kind that moves Godward, that finds its happiness, its scope, its blessedness, its strength, its renewing, its end, in the person and the work of Christ? Many a look into yours^{elf}, you a believer must take, for the proportion is this, between a sinner and his esteem of Christ, what he knows and what he feels concerning himself as a sinner.

Sinners are high in His esteem
And sinners highly value Him

But the faith of the operation of God has this distinction, it carries a person above notion, above acquirements, above everything belonging to nature and natural religion, to the blessed God of all grace by means of and through the very Person of Jesus as the Lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world. An empty sinner is thankful to have a sight of a full Saviour; a captive is thankful to get a view of the Redeemer who is strong; a polluted person is thankful to get an intimation from the Spirit, of Him who sanctified His people by one offering, putting away their

sins, and these things are spoken of here as being a matter of faith in God.

"Who by Him do believe in God." Now this believing in God is expressed by the Psalmist in one Psalm. He said "There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared". Take that point, because forgiveness enters so largely into the experience of the people of God, that in a sense, you may say, that the whole of their religion just centres on their forgiveness. There is forgiveness with God. Creation does not say this. The invisible things of God, which are revealed by creation are His eternal power and Godhead. The law does not reveal this; it says obey and you are blest, disobey and cursed. "Cursed is every man that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" You may believe in the invisible things of God as seen in the work of creation and never, never see forgiveness, never, never feel your need of it, but if you get a sight of your sins, if you feel them as done against God, then, then to have this Lamb of God opened to your gaze, to see that in God, through Jesus Christ, there is forgiveness, will be such a incentive to you to pray and such an urging there will be in your heart to prayer, that you may have this forgiveness, you will wait on God for it. Now let us hang about this point for a little for it is worthy of our attention, and if we fear God we shall be about it all our days. Forgiveness. The forgiveness of a fault, one man sinning against another, may be forgiven. The forgiver may say, well I hold no grudge against you, but this is impossible. The transgressor can never be absolutely free from the transgression. When God forgives sin, He absolutely removes it. He loosens the sinner from it. In the National church there is a beautiful word, He absolveth. He pardoneth and absolveth all who truly repent. This absolution is loosing the sinner from all he has done. Removing from him all the sins he ever committed and when you believe this is in God, this forgiveness, you will wait on Him and fear Him. It is very wonderful and it is, when

faith sees it, worthy of all consideration and acceptance that the death of Christ is infinitely more valuable than all the demerit of sin. If our faith can get hold of that this morning, I believe it would greatly tend to urge us to approach God and wait upon Him. May I urge it on your attention, the infinite value of the death of Christ infinitely exceeds all the demerit of sin. You can never exaggerate by any feeling in your heart, the evil of sin unless it be here that you regard your sin as being greater than the blood of Christ. If you ever get that feeling, and I believe many of God's people are tempted to that, if you ever get that feeling I say then you really do exaggerate your sin. O but what a mercy that there is forgiveness with God. Forgiveness, it is a joyful sound. Now when a person believes this, he has what the Puritans used to call the faith of adherence. He may not have the faith of appropriation so as to say I believe my sins are forgiven. He will get that one day, but O the value of the faith of adherence, that will make you Ruth-like say to the Lord "Entreat me not to leave Thee". O give me leave to pray; teach me how to pray. Give me leave to come to the cross; lead me to the cross. Give me grace to hang about the cross as long as I live for I am a sinner and shall be a sinner as long as I live. God forgives sins. A great truth, a mighty principle in God of love and forgiveness. My brethren to believe in God in this particular is to believe in His greatness. He proclaimed to Moses His Name even immediately after the gross sin of the Israelites. They had made a calf, and they ate and they rose up and they danced and madly and foolishly said "These be thy gods O Israel" Moses was then an intercessor and Moses obtained blessing and then this name came "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin, and will by no means (except in the gospel) clear the guilty".

If we have got a pardon of sin, we may be indeed looked

upon as being blessed people but we shall never feel we are blessed people until we are forgiven. Forgiveness is with God. Remember what I have often said, remember that forgiveness is the act of God on a sinner. Honest men will never forgive themselves for a fault. An honest person, suddenly tempted to speak an untruth will always be lashing himself for that but he cannot forgive himself. He needs forgiveness and God speaks it through the blood of Jesus Christ. "Who by Him do believe in God" in this great thing. This forgiveness delivers a person from evil; it is the remission of punishment, it is the justification of the ungodly; it is the reconciling of an enemy to God; it is the purifying of a polluted sinner, making him whole; it is the happy union between Christ and the sinner; it is the sweetness of the gospel; it is the Sun of Righteousness shining; it is the falling down upon the saint, that is as mown grass, of the sweet showers of sovereign grace. O it is a great thing to believe in God. If you have not this faith you will run away from Him. Your foolish hearts will be darkened. But if you have this faith you will run after Him. "Draw me, we will run after Thee" I have dwelt on this because of the importance of it. If you are looking forward to your dying day, and asking yourselves if you have enough to meet the last enemy, the answer will be as God teaches you, the only thing that can properly, completely equip you for that enemy is to be forgiven all your iniquity. If there is no sin on you, there is no devil to devour you, and the death that you have to die is the last enemy, and that one day shall be destroyed.

If sin be pardoned, I'm secure;
Death has no sting beside;

Look then for this, you who are concerned about your souls, about eternity, the forgiveness of sin. Conscience must be purged and God does purge conscience by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus.

And following this we believe in God as a God of Love. The love of God, pure, eternal, undesired, unsought, never to be merited. The love of God. He says by Jeremiah "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." There are moments when a child of God is instructed by the Holy Spirit to look on the dealings of God with him. The rods, the chastisements, the afflictions, the crosses, the losses, the difficulties, these as seen in the light of divine teaching have love written across them, and that is very wonderful. You will never see it in creation; you will never see it in the law, but in the gospel, there it is, love is inscribed. It is there, whether we read or not, but sometimes we read it.

'Tis my happiness below,
Not to live without the cross
But the Saviour's power to know,
Sanctifying every loss

O the temptations of the enemy are very great in this matter. He will try to write hatred, bitterness, anger in God on all your troubles and you cannot always object against what he suggests in that scripture "No man knoweth love or hatred by all that is before him". That is, all the providential matters that are painful, you cannot say these are a description and a manifestation of God's hatred and all the providences that are kind, propitious, pleasant, easy, you cannot say these reveal the love of God to your soul. "No man knoweth either love nor hatred by all that is before him" in providence, and what a handle the enemy may make of that. He says you do not know the love of God. He says you may read in your troubles His hatred. Now what is needed, what is sought by the saints and what they get sometimes, is the light of God, the light of the Spirit's teaching and grace through Jesus Christ on their trials, and then they can see love inscribed upon them all. Then they can say and do say we would not have been without them. Then they can unite with that godly man David and say "It is

good for me that I have been afflicted" Then they can say I would not be without the cross if I might.

Bastards may escape the rod,
Sunk in earthly, vain delight;
But the true-born child of God
Must not, would not if he might

O the beauty of a cross as thus seen. The love of God surrounding a sinner, underneath a sinner, supporting a saint, comforting a troubled person. The love of God eternally choosing the sinner unto life, eternally giving the Son of His love to redeem that sinner. The love of God fixing the position in providence, guiding the steps, and guarding the sinner when he knew not God. Leading him to where he should hear the gospel, sending a word of life and conviction and truth and peace into his soul. Love in all. "Who by Him do believe in God".

And again we believe in God through the Lamb slain as a God who has made a covenant, a covenant ordered in all things and sure. What changing scenes we have to pass through. What weakness we see in everything here. Changes in feeling, changes in places, changes in persons, friends removed, difficulties arising. Many things as you would not have them, even as David said "Although my house be not so with God, yet hath He made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure." The sure mercies of David. Not a conditional covenant, except that in the covenant there were conditions, but the conditions were laid on the Surety of it. His blood is called the blood of the everlasting covenant. Everything that had in it to Him a condition, is to the saints conditionless. What a covenant wrapped up in it, and Peter had a great instruction in this which may be made a comfort to us. There was let down to Peter a great sheet knit at the four corners wherein were all manner of all four footed beasts and creeping things and fowls of the air and the voice said arise Peter kill and

eat. An offensive thing to him as a Jew. Nothing, said he, has entered my mouth that is unclean. Then God taught him. "That which God hath cleansed that call not thou common" and these creeping things, did you ever hope you were one of them. Creeping things in the sheet, unclean things, cleansed by God. A Gentile as clean as a Jew. What a mercy to be in that covenant ordered in all things and sure by the Person and the work and the death of the Surety, the Lord Jesus. No covenant in nature of an abiding kind; no covenant in the law that can save a lost person. But the covenant of grace in Christ, the covenant indeed strictly speaking, ought always to be placed first. In the covenant are redemption, justification, forgiveness of sins, everything is in the covenant. The covenant is the ground, so to speak, of all; it embraces all and it is God in Christ. O sinner have you ever seen it and have you ever had a hint in your heart that God has made that covenant for you and with you in His teaching and in His grace. Who by Him, Jesus Christ, believe in this blessed covenant. Ah that sheet that Peter saw let down, he saw also taken up again and all poor sinners in it are taken up to heaven. They are cleansed. God has cleansed them, and they are taken up to heaven and that is to be the end of all the saints of the Most High. They will be taken up to heaven, happy sinners.

And so just one more word. The perseverance of the saints is that which their faith gets hold of sometimes in the teaching of the Spirit by Jesus Christ. Why, now and again a trembling saint can sing "Yes, I to the end shall ensure" Whence this confidence? "As sure as the earnest is given" If you have not the earnest you cannot sing that honestly, but if you have had the earnest you can sing that honestly and God accepts the melody that is in your heart as you so sing. Perseverance. "Perseverance in our race, we draw from Jesus' blood" and I am sure you love to trace all up to that, the Lamb slain, the Lamb of God ordained before the world began, when He shed His blood, and from that blood

faith draws comforts, and peace and confidence, and full assurance. Perseverance you will draw from the death of Christ and so lastly heaven. We believe there is a heaven to come, there is a heaven to be enjoyed. There is a presence to be eternally enjoyed when time with its changes and sin, in its turmoils, in its bitterness, in its pollution, will be done away with and not a person in heaven shall ever be troubled with it and there the Lamb with all His blessed ones will be together, and this is set before us, and faith believes in God in this. By Him, we believe God will give us heaven. There is an anticipation of it sometimes. Even a young person, blessed with pardon will anticipate heaven and would be glad to go quickly there, but when people get that and God is with them sometimes the anticipation of heaven is very sweet. To have done with sin, to be out of the reach of the devil, to have no more defilement, no more defiling thoughts. Well it is a prospect, beautiful and blessed and there is this in it. It is a righteous thing, a righteous thing, for God gives it righteously through the atonement of His dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Well might the Lord say lift up your heads, your redemption draweth nigh. It is nearer now than when you first believed. It is coming very near to some and it will be a wonderful exchange, to exchange earth for heaven. To get to heaven will be indeed of all things the very climax, the fulfilment of hopes, the answer to prayer, and the realisation of eternal bliss. Now may we be enabled thus to believe in God who by Him, Jesus Christ, by the Person of Christ, by the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world in God's purpose, by Him you believe in God; believe in these wonderful mercies which are revealed in the gospel and brought by the Holy Ghost with power to the soul.