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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday evening 18 December, 1927

2 CORINTHIANS 14³ V 14

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the
love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost,
be with you all, Amen."

It has pleased God to put every blessing that the election of grace shall enjoy in time and through eternity in the Person of Christ. One consequence of that is that every new born soul is led by the Holy Ghost to Christ, that, out of that endless eternal fulness, a supply may be received, and a consequence of that truth is this, that if we do not receive communications from the Lord Jesus, it will be a solemn evidence that God did not give Him grace for us. And this last truth may well search us and bring us to this question; if we be empty, if we never get supplies, what shall we say? This fulness is expressed in one word eternal life; is again expressed in this word: "This is the Name wherewith He shall be called, the Lord our Righteousness". And again, it is said that Christ is the great High Priest of our profession. Himself said "I am the way, the truth and the life". Dear friends, did you ever get to God through Christ? Yes, some must say, He has given us access many a time. One certain effect of access, according to the nearness with which we may have been favoured and shall be favoured, is celestial views that we receive of the Person of Christ, the heavenly feelings that will take possession of us while we are gazing on Him. "We all, with open face" says the Apostle "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." If you do not know them you cannot understand, cannot conceive, what the sensations of love are, what the attractions of Christ are, what the emptying of the world is, by those bright celestial views that are given of Him, There is a reality in faith and the Scripture is true, as some of you know: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen", not seen by the natural eye or mind. "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"; For them that wait for Him, as Isaiah says. (1 Corinthians 2 v 9) (Isaiah 64 v 4). And whatever Christ is and has and will communicate I judge to be comprehended in the word of the text: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you". I was asked at the close of the service this morning if I had finished with this text, and the same question was put to me on Wednesday. Finished this text! My thoughts of it might appear to express nothing concerning it, might very well be exhausted in a few minutes, but this text, this grace, exhaust this grace, this blessed grace, saving grace, helping grace, comforting grace, guiding grace, justifying grace, sanctifying grace, sustaining grace, and glorifying grace, who can ever do more than lisp about it? "Living tongues are dumb at best" and if the Lord did not condescend to use stammering tongues and things which are base and things which are not, what man could hope ever, rightly, to speak of Christ. It always has been and always will be an arduous thing to speak the thing that is right of God and the grand reason of that is this, the thing that is right of God is in His nature and Being. Therefore how can any creature reach that? It can be brought and it is brought by the Holy Ghost in measure in revelation and I do believe, and have said, as you may remember, many times that it does not matter how empty, wicked, weak, ignorant, we may feel, the Holy Ghost will bring Christ to the soul and form Him there the hope of glory. O may we never tire either of speaking or hearing the word that the gospel is the sinner's gospel, that Christ is the Friend of sinners, that He receiveth sinners and eateth with them; that God justifies the ungodly that believeth in Jesus; that He is a just God and a Saviour; that He says "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it"; "Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify Me" And with these precious truths all contained in the gospel uttered by feeble men, may we be encouraged to come to this Lord Jesus for His grace. "Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace", and may we never forget that connected with that invitation in the Hebrews is this, that a searched, an analysed, a dissected sinner, searched, analysed, dissected by the living word of the living God, such a person is invited to the throne of grace with all his iniquities discovered to him. O what a gospel it is, a glorious gospel, and this gospel is in, not about but in, the very Person of the Lord Jesus.

This morning I occupied nearly the whole of the time of speaking by endeavouring to set before you the relation of the atonement to the justice of God and to the conscience of a sinner. The relation is intimate, it is beautiful. It is intimate because it glorifies God. It is beautiful because it comes to a sinner and justifies him from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses. The atonement - they sing of it in heaven. Yes, now the spirits of just men made perfect are singing that song; "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; unto Him be glory". They are singing it now my friends. May our hearts sing it under the power of the Holy Ghost. The grace of the atonement in the sinner's heart is forgiveness, justification, sanctification, access to the Father, acceptance with the Father. That, all that experience, comes from the Lord Jesus. What a religion you have got you who have this grace and yet what a conflict it occasions, what a conflict it occasions. Why? Because you have got a bad heart, a wicked heart, depraved and desperately wicked, deceitful above all things, and this heart wont be quiet; it wont be quiet. Say what you will, trample it under foot as you may try, it wont be quiet, it wont be stilled. It will always speak and lust and work and struggle and wriggle and aim at getting you under its feet, but God will make you stand. It is a great conflict; to get to heaven is not easy. It is the work of the Spirit and in that way it is easy, but for a poor sinner who opposes, by his wicked heart, every step of grace, would shut out every ray of light, would despise and deny and do away with all the goodness of God, O for such a sinner it is a struggle. But the end is sure; the grace of Christ in His intercession which I mentioned this morning briefly, that grace of intercession secures the soul. I pray for them, these My people whom Thou gavest to be with Me; I pray for them. A man is troubled in his office and the Lord has given him grace and He prays for him. Another is afflicted in his business and God has blessed him with life eternal, and the Saviour prays for him. And a poor woman is plagued in her family or by some affliction and the Lord has given her grace and He prays for her. The gospel comes to people; it enters into their various relationships in life, meets them in their troubles, speaks to them in their difficulties, and says this is the way, the way of faith, the way of tribulation, the way of dependence on the Lord. This is the way, do not expect two heavens, one here and

one hereafter, and yet you shall have a little heaven again and again with My presence and favour. But this is the way, walk ye in it. Ah, says flesh and blood, I do not like it and I wont have it, but, says grace to the soul, this is the way. And sometimes this grace so enlarges the heart that the sinner says I will run and I do run in the way of Thy commandment with my heart enlarged. Then the man runs so as to obtain; he fights so as to win. This is the way, sinner. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in His intercession.

I would speak a little this evening on another part of this grace. When I say a part, I mean another manifestation of it, namely the grace of the Word of Christ be with you all. To the Colossians the Apostle Paul says "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom". Comprehended in this I would say, first, the Word as we have it in this Book. This Bible is the Word of Christ, the Word given by Him, because it was given to Him in eternity to speak; the Word inspired by Him, that is to say, His good Spirit has inspired this blessed Bible. If the Jew was not judged other than by his works as Paul teaches in the Romans, what advantage has he seeing that the law condemns him for any and every evil. Says Paul, "Much every way: chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Romans 3 v 2). Every way Israel was favoured above other nations, all the world, by having given to them the Word of God. We Gentiles have the same Word now. What a singular providence of God it was in Israel's life and existence and sinning, that there was always a great jealousy in that nation over the Scriptures as they had them, the Old Testament; a singular, watchful jealousy over the whole of the Old Testament. We have the benefit of that. Then after the Lord's resurrection the New Testament was given, given in parts, till the whole of what is called the canon of the Scripture was completed and we have it in this Book. I would say here to you dear friends hold fast the inspiration of the Scripture. If you want to see the effect of denying the inspiration of the Scripture, go to the general professor and see his liberty. What is the Sabbath to the man who denies the authority of the Bible? Remember this, the noble confession of the great Queen Victoria. When she was asked the secret of England's greatness, she said, the Bible. The Bible was given to us in the Reformation. The Church of Rome would never let us have the Bible if it could help it. Nobody would have the Bible but the wicked

priest if the Church of Rome could have her way, but God, in the Reformation gave us the Bible. It used to be chained when it was translated, so precious was it. It used to be chained in the church. Now it is freely scattered and I have thought sometimes that one of England's mercies will stand for her in the judgment of God, namely that He has given to her the great privilege of scattering millions and myriads of millions of Holy Scripture. Hold this; this Book is infallible. We shall be judged by it. It describes an impenitent sinner and says: "The wages of sin is death". It speaks of the Lord Jesus as judge of quick and dead. It says we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that every one may receive the things done in the body whether it be good or bad. O sinner if you die in your sins this Word will stand against you. It describes a saint. His life is from above, his justification by God, his walk in the path of tribulation, his union to Jesus Christ, his cleaving to Him by faith, and it says he shall be with Him for ever. O saint, what a destiny you have, a kingdom; a kingdom of immense delight. We may well prize the Bible. The Lord help us to do it. Yet many read it and have no saving benefit by it. Some of you may never get any saving benefit by the Bible. You may read it - I hope you do - and I wish you may continue to read it, for who can tell what the Lord may do one day when you are reading the Bible. So I come closer. Said the Lord Jesus to His Father concerning His disciples, "The words which Thou gavest Me I have given them and they have received them and have known surely that I came out from Thee." "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" asked the Lord of His disciples. They told Him of the various conjectures and guesses that men were making of Him. Then He turned to them and said "Whom say ye that I am?" Do you know anything better? Are you more certain than these people who are guessing about Me? Peter said "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God". How did Peter get that, a poor fisherman? While the doctors and Pharisees and scribes were conjecturing and mistaking all the time, how did Peter get to know it? "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven". (Matthew 16 verses 16/17). And unless you get the same revelation in some measure you cannot imagine the incoming of that holy light, that sacred view of Jesus coming from His Father's eternal bosom. You cannot imagine the sensations, emotions, light, life and love, that must have filled the hearts of those men to whom

that revelation was given. And so, when Christ said, I have given them Thy words, the words Thou gavest Me, what a wonderful thing was said of them. O my friends was there ever a spot, a room, a street, a lane, an office, a chair where you were when some wonderful thing came to you, when you could almost say, if you did not, could say: "The voice of my Beloved; behold He cometh leaping o'er the mountains, skipping o'er the hills. and you got a sight, an amazing, humbling, warming, drawing sight of the Lord Jesus, and you could have said, if the question had been put to you - "Who is the Lord?" - you could have said with the disciples: Now we are sure, we are sure, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God". Thou speakest no more in parables but Thou speakest plainly. Well, one may say, I have never got that, but you are not dead yet. Can you pray? Do you try to pray? Do you confess your ignorance, your inability to get this and how also that you do not deserve to get it? Can you wait sometimes in prayer for a few minutes, wait still, wait on the Lord? "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord". Oh the gospel is as full of encouragement as the Lord could put into it. "Come unto Me" He said. "I have given them Thy word", the word of Christ, the word of the living God. Now that is very great. I should like to just dilate a little on this, expound it a little. First of all He gives a word of encouragement, of invitation. He does not pass poor sinners by who are hungry and thirsty for Him and take no notice of them. He will take as much notice of you when you are feeling a poor, helpless, dead thing and destitute, as He took of that young man who was being carried out to be buried, when He stopped the bier and said "Young man I say unto thee arise". He will speak to you, yea He may have spoken to some of you and said: "Come to Me" If you say "Who is He Lord?" when He says "Come to Me" you will know Him. There is a demonstration in the words of Christ. When He speaks them that demonstration is understood in a measure. You are not in doubt when He speaks in that way: "Come to Me". He makes Himself known and He is very great. No gods in the world can compare with him. There be gods many and there be lords many, but to us there is only one Lord Jesus Christ, and when He says "Come to Me" the man to whom He says it, knows. He does not guess, he knows. There is a penetration, an enlightenment, an influence, a power, a warmth, an attraction in such a word. That is one way in which the grace of the word of Christ is communicated. The Word given Him in eternity by His Father, the revelation given to Him

by His Father, He speaks, He whispers it. The still small voice is a convincing voice "Come unto Me". This Man, God-Man, the eternal Son of God incarnate, receiveth sinners and eateth with them. This is the grace of His word. You may have the word without the grace, in the letter of it, in the form of sound words, but if you get the grace of the word you may know very little about the form, but you have got the reality. Many a poor sinner has gone to heaven with very little knowledge of the form of sound words, but he has had the power of sound words, the life of sound words, the sweetness of sound words, the instruction of sound words in the word I have just mentioned: "Come unto Me". Now some may say, but we have no qualifications. Well, what do you mean by qualifications? What is in your mind when you say you have no qualifications? Is it that you have no repentance? Is it that you have so much sin? Is it that you are always stumbling and sinning? Is it that you feel blind and very, very blind? Is it that you are full of inconsistencies? Now you must, to make your objections valid, you must bring all that you have got, which you lift up against Him, and put it to the test of the Bible, and then I ask you this. Can you find in this Book, the only Book you are to be guided by, as the Holy Spirit helps you, can you find in this Book one passage that will encourage you to look for and even tell you that you must find in yourself such and such qualifications as you think you must have? Ah Hart is a better teacher. He says

The poorer the wretch, the welcomer here

Oh for faith to believe that. Oh for the power of God to believe that the poorer the wretch, poor in knowledge, poor in godliness, poor in feeling, poor in zeal, poor in prayer, poor in faith, every way, everywhere, poor

The poorer the wretch, the welcomer here

Jesus is the Friend of sinners. This is His word and the grace of it coming into your heart will wonderfully help you. It is stronger than nature, and the conditionless gospel - I say conditionless because it does not set up ever so many qualifications - you will find to be very suitable to you when the Lord's word comes in the grace of it.

And in the next place there is the promise of the gospel, the grace of a promise. The promise may be in your brain and not in your heart but if you receive a promise into your heart then there will come grace with it, sweet grace, the grace of faith to believe it. One moment you may say I believe nothing and the next moment you say "Lord I believe; help Thou mine unbelief". The grace of the promise. A promise, my friends, a promise implies an engagement and if the Lord gives you a promise He, in that, engages Himself, binds Himself. Thus He bound Himself to Abraham to Isaac and to Jacob. Thus He bound Himself to David and thus He bound Himself to all His servants as you will see in the Scriptures, and any word spoken to you puts you on a level with those blessed men of God whose names I have just mentioned, and puts you on a level with them in this that, as God engaged Himself to them, so He has engaged Himself to you. This blessed promise, God's holy word to a sinner. I know something about it; so do some of you; God's Word as spoken to me in the Holy Ghost. And I have objected, but He has put the objections away. He has spoken to me when I have been under the power and the heel of the devil and unbelief, and in a moment I have said, Lord I believe it. You will find there is a grace in His word when it comes to you. Oh to believe that God has engaged Himself to you, a sinner. And what are your needs to His fulness, yet He has pledged His fulness. The Apostle Paul was inspired to pledge God to the Philippian church and that pledge runs down, and will run down, to the end of time. "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." If you have got a promise in your heart put there by the Lord, you will never empty it. If it has been in the fulfilling for 50 years it is as full today as when you got it. It will last through eternity. The grace of the word of promise be with you, be in your hearts. What sober people we are when the Lord speaks to us. What broken people we are when He speaks to us. What tenderness of conscience the word of God begets in a person to whom it is given by the Spirit of God. What views of Christ it imparts, what sensations of love it begets, what warm hope rises under the influence of the word. Yea, you may see in a word, what you could never express adequately, a fulness, a greatness, a power, a glory, lasting through eternity. The remembrance of such a thing will sometimes warm your hearts. I find it so. Sometimes you say, I do not know whether I got it from the

Lord. When He makes it o'er again then you know. Hart was troubled about it in his own case. He said: "Sometimes the tempter affirms it fancy, forged or vain". Are you a companion with him in that? Then he says: "Jesus appears, disproves the lie, and kindly makes it o'er again". You will want it; you will want it. No man can keep alive his own soul nor his own faith. He cannot support his own faith. He wants the Lord to come again and again to him and speak it. Well if He promised to guide you when you get into new perplexities the enemy will say He is not guiding you and you will begin to believe the lie, but this is not the right way. Ah you will begin to think you are altogether wrong but when the Saviour comes again and in some gracious power makes over the word, the old word, or gives you a new word, it does not matter which, for there will be life in both, you will say I know He did speak to me. If I judged, and I do sometimes do it, if I judged of my case by my fallings and failings and wickednesses in my heart, I should judge, and I do judge, myself not to be God's son. But if the Lord comes and makes over a promise, renews a promise, shines again on His word, then faith says, that is right, that will stand. Holy fear rises, sweet, filial, holy fear of God moves in your heart. This is how the grace of Christ works, the grace of the word, the grace of the word of promise.

I have one more word to say here; the grace of the exhortations, precepts, admonitions of the Word of God, be with you. Well dear friends, what is wrong with the exhortations, admonitions and precepts? Why, you say, I cannot fulfil them. That does not make them wrong does it? You say I do not want to walk in them. That is nature. Does that make them wrong? No. You go to a house where there are parents and a family of children and live there for a few hours or a little time. If the father is a wise father you will find he has got children who need him, and they need him to tell them what not to do and what to do. They may say we do not want to do it or we do want to do it, that is, they want to be disobedient. What does he do as a wise father? He says, you shall not do it or you shall do it. And if the rebellious one says, I won't, what does he then do? He puts him perhaps into his bedroom and says you are not to come to my table until you express your sorrow for your disobedience. God has a family; God has a family, blessed be His Name, some of us are in it, He has disobedient children. Woe to some of us we have been

disobedient - who so disobedient as myself. What has the Lord done? He has been determined with us, determined we should learn lessons. Ah, and He has given grace. He has spoken to us. He has spoken to us, and some of us have told Him when He has spoken that we would not do it. I have told Him it is too bad of Him to tell me to do it, and I would not do it. That is no boast; it is my shame. What did He do? He put His hand in by the hole of the door and made me ask Him to let me do it. The grace came, the grace of a warning, the grace of an admonition, the grace of a precept came. My friends you will find it, as God speaks to you, you have got an old nature that will say, I won't do it, but you have got a new nature that, under the Spirit's strengthening, will rise up and you will say, Lord forgive me and help me to do it, allow me to do it. This is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the grace of His Word. Holy Scripture spoken, holy admonitions dropped upon the heart, holy precepts commanding us how to walk, to walk worthy of God, worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called; to come out of the world, to be separate from it. Holy precepts like statutes limiting our liberty, limiting it. A statute is a limitation and it says, this is the way, narrow; here is the gate, strait. Walk in this way and leave a vain world. Nature says, I love the world, and I will have the world. If that prevails for any time in any of you I will tell you what God will do with you and to you. He will hedge up your way with thorns and if you say I am not going to be stopped, I will break through these thorns, though I tear myself - O nature is very bold; very daring nature is - if that takes place in you He will do one thing more and that is: "I will build a wall of hewn stone round her that she shall not find her paths." Then nature says I am not going to be baulked. Then grace touches the man, grace touches his heart, and he says "Pardon mine iniquity O Lord for it is great" and give me grace to be content to walk in the narrow way, in the way of life. Give me grace. And the grace comes and the sinner lies flat in shame and in hope. May this grace be with you. No man of God will pretend that he has not got a bad nature. Every one will be ready to confess that he has got a worse heart than anybody else. Every saint will say he is the chief of sinners but then this is the thing not to be innocent but to be gracious, not to prove you are good but to have God blessing your soul and saving you from sin and from sinning. What a kind wish is this then. The Apostle uses these words, and they are uttered every time there is a religious service.

At the conclusion of the service these words are uttered, but the grace of them, O the grace of them, may this be yours, may this be mine.

In conclusion just one word on another subject, the grace of perseverance, the grace of perseverance. Shall we hold on, shall we hold out to the end? O I determined to do that, says one. That is the man who won't do it. O, says Mr Fearing I am afraid I shall come short at last. The lions did not trouble him; it was always the fear of coming short at last, lest he should fail then. Is Mr Fearing here? Says the Apostle Paul to the Romans: "He shall be holden up for God is able to make him stand". "Able" says the Spirit in the Scripture "to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think". When trouble comes to this nation (and it is coming, though mercifully God has saved us for the time being from that abomination that was designed by the Archbishops and Bishops and the House of Convocation; we are saved from that for the present, and I think it is a sign for us as a nation that God did mercifully, wonderfully, and it seems almost miraculously, at the last moment, turn that wicked measure out and we are today by His great goodness a protestant nation by law, but trouble is coming and there is a solemn, trembling word in Daniel - O it shakes one sometimes - and some of them of understanding shall fall that they may be tried and purged and made white) shall I, among the blessed people, stand? Shall I be on the side of the Lamb, who is to conquer His enemies? Shall I be among the called and the chosen and the faithful? Trouble? Why, say some but what a discouraging thing to tell us we must have trouble. The Word of God does it. Jesus did it. When one said he would follow Him, said Christ "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head", as if He should say to this would be follower: Are you willing, can you follow Me into poverty? Can you follow Me into a homeless condition, poorer than the foxes and the birds? Yea, said Jesus to His disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation". What is tribulation? A threshing instrument. What is that for? To separate the chaff from the wheat. "In the world ye shall have tribulation". Why, we must give up then. No! He says, "In Me", in Me, the Son of Peace, the Prince of Peace, "ye shall have peace". "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world", and so you shall overcome it. The grace of perseverance. But I am not strong

enough to persevere. A good thing you feel it. "By thy weakness thou shalt prove that Christ is strong". The man who says he shall manage is the man who fails, but the sinner who says, Lord I cannot stand alone, I do not know how to walk; teach me, keep me, hold me up and bring me through by grace; that is the man who will get to heaven. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the grace of perseverance. May the Lord be with us.

AMEN.