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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel  
Brighton on Sunday evening 17 March 1935

There is such a thing in public worship as a spiritual atmosphere, and the saints breathe it and take in health and vigour, even if there be no special blessing. May such an atmosphere be with us, breathed by the Holy Spirit.

TEXT: 2 Corinthians Chapter 4 Verse 6

"For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"

The ministry of the gospel is ordained to be for the building up of the saints, for the guidance of their feet into the way of peace and for their establishment in the truth. You have it set forth beautifully in Corinthians as a gift of Christ after His ascension into heaven. He led captivity captive, He received gifts for men, that the Lord God might dwell among them, and one of the chief gifts that from that passage may be inferred, is the ministry. Pastors after His own heart. I am concerned about this church, because naturally one cannot expect to be long here. How I do pray and this afternoon have entreated God to grant that you, as a church, may be led to earnestly ask God to send you a minister, as soon as he takes me away. Do not, O entreat the Lord to keep you from falling into the unhappy practice and system largely among us of living on supplies. They will only confuse you. I remember a big professor saying this respecting supplies, he liked one man to come one Sunday and another to come the next to break and knock down what the previous one had built up. Do entreat God that you may have a heart to seek the blessed promise in the fulfilment of it that He will give you pastors after His own heart. The ministry is spoken of here. We have renounced the hidden things of shame, as the marginal reading is, not

walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, the clear alledging and demonstrating the truth in the preaching, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Commending ourselves, not as being something, but as being just ministers of Jesus Christ, receiving first from Him, and then delivering to the people, the truth, as the truth is in Jesus. But if our gospel be hid; what a solemn thing it is to hear the gospel, and yet not hear it. Hearing, ye shall not hear; seeing, ye shall not see. Terribly solemn to any to whom the preaching shall be as a savour of death unto death. If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. The word lost, here, is not to be understood as it is used in other places in the scripture. One only I will name. The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost. He does not fail in that. Lost there does not mean hell as it does here. If our gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are in hell or are going there. Be this made a concern to you. Shall the gospel be hid to you; believe it and never believe it, never feel it. God forbid. In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not. He did that in regard to Christ when He was here, and they rejected Him. We wont reject Him some may say. You do not know what is in your heart when you speak so. You would reject Him to-night if a test came and you had no grace. "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them; for we preach not ourselves" We do not hang ourselves up, so to express it, for you to admire, as the Apostle would say. We preach Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. Not your servants to do just what you want them to do. I knew a good minister, and one of his deacons, and in conversation one evening with others as well as themselves, it led to the minister saying this, and what am I, that is in the church of which he was speaking. Our servant, said the deacon, to do as we want you to do. No, a wrong view of

things. Then comes the text "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Two divine sovereign acts we have here. First, creation, the creation of light. God commanded the light to shine out of darkness. If you try to understand it, you may not be far from modernism, evolutionism. Where were you when God commanded it? Turn to those wonderful chapters in Job, when God speaks to the utter confusion of modernism, evolutionism. When did He? You do not know, but we know this, that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and He commanded the light to shine. God said "Let there be light" and there was light. I have admired the convenient dates, if one may put the word dates to what is said of the evolutionist, millions of years; a most convenient statement, that, for men to make. God did it. It was not till He said let there be light, and it shined out of darkness. Dear friends, young friends, particularly, listen to the scripture. Through faith, we understand that the worlds were made, by the word of God. The best, the most accurate scientist, is the believer. Through faith we understand that the worlds were made, framed, created by the word of God. That was a sovereign act of the will and power of God. Do not think that creation was necessary to God. Infinitely complete and happy in Himself, He needed no creature to add anything to Him, but of His goodness, He would create worlds and men in this world, to glorify Himself. That sovereignty comes into another thing, another creation, another world, a new heavens and a new earth. Hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Shined. Nothing dispels the darkness of our ignorance but the shining of God in Jesus Christ, into the heart. Think of it. Nothing will do it. Intellect is nothing here; research is nothing here; study of the Bible is nothing here. Good in themselves, but they cannot reach to this -

the shining into the heart; a light, we need. By the commandment of God, sovereignly, suddenly, without any account given, any reason given, a light shines into a sinner's heart, and he believes according to the measure of light, according to the object God discovers in and by that light, so does the blessed subject of it believe. Some know when it came first, others do not, but it is a new thing, different absolutely from that old nature, fallen nature, different indeed, and different in the working of it. When this light shines, you believe in the source of it. With Thee is the fountain of life and light. O, one says, who had the light and wanted more, O send out Thy light and Thy truth, let them lead me. The least glimmer in the soul of this light leads the eye, the mind, to the object, the source, even God. I remember when it came to me and I saw God, I saw His purity, and His justice, and I said "Where that God is, I shall never be" You may have had just the same effect, without perhaps exactly the measure, a greater measure perhaps, than I had, but God became the object of your faith. Shined. Just as to-morrow morning when the sun rises his beams enter this building, and the darkness of night is banished, so when God shines into the heart of a sinner, then, in the measure of the light, the darkness of nature, the ignorance of the mind, the blindness of the understanding wrought by the devil, and sin, vanish and go. They are banished by God.

Shined in mercy, though perhaps mercy is not apprehended or felt for a time after. It shines on various objects. Ordinarily it shines on the state the sinner is in. Very solemn. What a change it would make in some of you if the light should shine in your hearts and show you what you are. Sinners, real sinners, great sinners, poor sinners, empty of good, full of ill. May the Lord give that to those of you who have it not, if it please Him. When it shines on our state we then believe we are lost people. We then believe we are unjust people; that we are polluted people, that we are alienated from the life of God through

ignorance that is in us. We then believe in hell, and that we deserve to be sent there. We then believe in punishment, holy just punishment, expressed in one of our hymns

And if my soul were sent to hell  
Thy righteous law approves it well

Rutherford speaks of hell, just punishment in hell. It is just, that just punishment. When this light shines on the gospel, by the gospel, bringing the gospel, there is another object. Jesus Christ then becomes the object of faith, that faith that believes in the justice of God, that believes in hell that believes in the curse of the law, that believes that that curse was hanging over the soul. That faith now turns another way, in the power of the Spirit, turns even to Jesus Christ, and what an object. The first sight of Him that a man gets by the Holy Ghost, he probably will never really entirely forget. The first gleam of hope then enters the heart; the first comfortable feeling that perhaps God may save such a wretch is felt, and the first energy perhaps that was ever felt in prayer for salvation is here. Many a cry has gone up "God be merciful to me a sinner", without even the sinner knowing how it could be, but now, when the face or Person of Jesus is seen by a divinely given faith, that makes a great difference. It draws the soul up; it enlarges the desire; it makes the sinner more earnest.

Shined in our hearts to give the light, to give the light of the knowledge. Light comes; knowledge comes. They may be as to their entering into the heart, just simultaneous; you can hardly distinguish one from the other in your feeling when the light shines, but O the wonder of it. Of the knowledge of the glory of God. Light gives you knowledge; it affects your understanding. You may have noticed in the 119th Psalm, how often the Psalmist prays for understanding; and there is an understanding given when this light comes, by this light; it gives light; it shows a sinner how God is glorified - the light of the knowledge of

the glory of God. The great end of all His works in creation, in providence, in grace, is His glory; and the great end of the new creation in the soul becomes then, that that is predominant again and again to be for the glory of God. You who have had this understand it. I cannot give it to you, no minister can. The best a minister can do, as enabled, is to just set it before the people. Let us look at this glory of God, in the face, or the Person of Jesus Christ.

First it is redemption. Redeemed. What is this? "For as much as" the Apostle says "For as much 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, but with the precious blood of Christ. O what a redemption. Redeemed back; brought back from sin, death and curse. Redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. This is God's glory in Christ. He imputed sin to Him. He took it away from His people. It being imputed to Him made his death a necessity. Christ was naturally immortal. Being without sin how could He die. Mortality is the fruit of sin, and Christ had no sin of His own. He did no sin, therefore He was naturally immortal. Sin brought death to Him. His death is voluntary, vicarious and an act of obedience to His Father. "No man taketh My life from Me, I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again; this commandment have I received of My Father" This death being voluntary is just what is spoken of in the scripture. He offered Himself. Himself, the altar, and of that altar every child of God has a right to eat. Himself the altar, and the priest, and the sacrifice. He offered Himself, without spot to God, and that is to the glory of God. So the vilest sinner out of hell, who is blessed with divine life and grace is for the glory of God, and sooner or later the knowledge of that comes. This is an experience that is very beautiful when in your conscience you know. You do not think, you do not imagine, you do not guess, you just know. Ah some here may be saying, we wish we knew. Do you wish it

really? Then I tell you what you do. You pray for it. You desire it, then you pray for it. "The desire of the righteous" rising from a righteous principle, "is only good". Wait on God for that. It is the glory of God to pardon sin. When Israel greatly provoked God, by idolatry, arising out of their unbelief, when Moses was forty days absent from them, they set up an idol, they danced and they said "These be thy gods, O Israel" and the Lord was angry and Moses interceded, and the Lord heard him, and said this; He proclaimed by Moses this "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" O what a proclamation, and one day, it is heard in the soul. "Pardon mine iniquity O Lord" and by Jeremiah the Lord says this "That it shall be to Him, for a name of praise and honour in the earth, when He shall forgive the sin, whereby His people have sinned against Him" What an amazing act. Forgiveness is an act of God passed on the soul, the word of God spoken to the soul, the manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ in His infinite merit made in the soul. What glory there is in this. Peter speaks of the Lord's people suffering and he says "The Spirit of God and of glory resteth upon you."

Justification is another thing, a fundamental blessing, a doctrine which as held keeps people. A doctrine which, as neglected, is the destruction, the removal of a church. Think of this - justification. It is God's sentence in the conscience. It is the communication of Christ's righteousness; it is the revelation of a sinner's acceptance with God, in the righteousness of Christ. It is the clean white linen which the bride adorns herself with, when she is preparing for the marriage supper. Justification. It comes to a sinner who is full of corruption, and does not notice his corruption. This act is just the sovereign act of God in the soul, whereby it is passed from under the law, under the rod, into the bond of the covenant. Are you guilty? Are you sensible of your

guilt? Are you mourning your guilt? Are you conscious that that guilt condemns you, and if God leaves you to it, the law must sieze you and punish you in eternity? Then as helped, as led by the light that shines in your heart, you will be saying "O if I were only justified. If I might but be justified" and God will come and pardon your iniquity, and remove your guilt, and that will be for the glory of God. It is the glory of God to unite a person to Jesus Christ as the true vine, uniting the soul to Christ by living faith. "I am the vine, ye are the branches", and that union will manifest itself in the heart, drawing the affections to Christ, causing faith to entwine her little arms round Him; to look to Him for all good, all grace, all strength, all perseverance, all submission to the will of God in affliction, all humility and all tenderness of conscience and power to pray and strength to believe and hold fast the word of Christ, keeping it. Every good thing, every grace, every favour comes by this union with Jesus Christ; you want to be more meek, humble, tender, and you think you will watch more, be careful of your temper; a very good thing it is to be careful of that, but the victory over a bad temper, the victory over lust, slothfulness and all evil things will be, can only be, union with Christ, for the living sap flows from Him into the heart. This is the glory of God in the face or Person of Jesus Christ.

It is the glory of God to strengthen weak hands, and confirm feeble knees. It is His glory to say, fear not, to one who is full of fear. In the face of Jesus Christ, or the Person, as the word is, the Person of Jesus Christ. The scriptures do make this clear, that the greatest object of God's affection, and trust, and confidence, and glory, is Jesus Christ. None like Christ to Him. "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." Holy Apostles following holy prophets, spake and wrote of Him. The Psalms are full of Him. He filled, so to speak, the world, when Adam fell. The seed of the woman promised and from that day to this there has been no person, either promised or really



coming, but Jesus Christ in whom the Father delights. That beautiful chapter the 8th of Proverbs, sets Him forth. The glory of God in the Person of Jesus Christ.

And lastly my friends, the glory of God in the Person of Christ when He shall come to be glorified in all His saints and admired. Ah what sometimes is felt here will be realised there to the full. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee" What is this, but that Christ is the image of God, the express image of the Person of God; omnipotent to save, even as He is omnipotent to hold up the worlds which He created. What is it but that omnipotent pity comes from time to time to a poor weak creature, full of trouble, and misery? What is it but that He again and again fills the soul with something of His goodness, of His greatness, of His victory over sin and death and hell? And this is to be experienced. Not a picture to admire, but a life to feel, a light in which to walk, a power to hold you up, a sweetness to overcome the evil of sin, and the abominable stink of sin in your mind, in your soul. Yes, and there is satisfaction. I wish we might have the satisfaction of Naphtali. "O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full of the blessing of the Lord" That satisfaction has no parallel in this whole world. In your world, whatever that may be, there is nothing to be compared with this. It satisfies the soul; it will satisfy it through eternity, yea it will bring that to pass "We know not what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" Some of you younger people who fear God may think, may inly sigh at times, I leave you behind. Well when you get older, you will understand a little of this as God is with you, that He does make Himself, as to His uninterrupted presence, and as to wearing His glorious image, as to be being with the saints, the spirits of just men made perfect, the chief desire of your soul. When I was younger, it was not present with me as it is now. Naturally God brings people on by degrees. You wont leap naturally

from youth to old age; you just grow, and in spirit it is the same. You dont jump or leap from a babe in Christ to a father in Christ. Be thankful for grace, in any measure, and long and desire and pray that you may grow in grace; that the roots of your faith may strike deeper and deeper into the Person and work of Jesus Christ, and as your hearts are that way, and your prayers in that direction, you will get answers, but one thing may astonish you, as it does myself - the older you grow, the more you know of God, the more you will feel your ignorance of God. If anyone had told me, when I was a young man, that in my 88th year I would feel as I do, my ignorance of God, I would not have believed him, and when you get old you will say, I understand it now. I know what the minister said and felt, but think of this, that God who commanded of His sovereign mind the light to be created, He said "Let there be light and there was light", that same God, in Jesus Christ, commands divine light to shine into a heart that was densely dark before; now it sees, and now, in measure from time to time, here a little and there a little, He will give you to see His glory, in the face of Jesus Christ. I might, if I could, go on a little longer, to speak of the glory of Christ in His incarnation, and in His obedience to His Father; His reliance on His Father's promises to help Him, and the fulfilment of those promises, and His precious vicarious death, but I must leave that all now. May the Lord bless you. Bless every saint, and quicken the dead. O you who have no life in your souls, may He open your eyes by this light, quicken your souls by the Spirit, that you may see what an awful condition a man is in, who has no God in Christ, no salvation. Unspeakably awful. Those of you who are in nature's state now, can have no imagination or conception of the condition of your souls, lost souls, perishing souls, souls under God's curse, at His disposal, souls that are willfully sinning and treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath and when it comes, if you die as you are now, when it comes to that moment, when you must pass the river, not in a ferry-boat, pass the river that has

no bridge or bridges, what then? No open door into heaven.  
Hell, opening its mouth to receive you. The Lord save you  
from this. Amen.