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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Sunday evening 29 October 1922

TEXT: II CORINTHIANS 8 VERSE 9

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
that though He was rich, yet for your sakes
He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich"

What a mercy it is to be brought off from the old stock, cut out of the old dead stock and grafted into Christ. the living vine, and to know in some measure the virtue of that living vine, and to feel in your own soul something of the true grace of God, something that brings comfort to a soul when pressed by conscience, wrath and law. A touch that makes you say out of your own heart

Jesus, Thy Godhead, blood and Name
O 'tis eternal life to know

There is a mystery in Christ we shall never fully fathom, but to know any measure of it is an amazing blessing. The Apostle Paul says in the first Epistle "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." They are all wrapped up in Christ, as in the same chapter the Apostle speaks of Christ as the wisdom of God and in another place He speaks of Him as possessing all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, but this verse seems to have in it a mystery which the others do not particularly set forth. It is not separated anywhere from Christ, but here it is distinctly expressed - the poverty of Christ. And if I could, by the Lord's mercy, express it to you in any degree of worthiness, I should be glad. I confess that it is to me a great mystery, and that there is in it a peculiar glory, that the Eternal God should become a poor man, that His poverty should much more be in connection with the work of redeeming His people than in any temporal, any natural poverty, I believe. O but it is great, this poverty of Christ, and it was

1

necessary. It was necessary that He should empty Himself, take on Him the form of a servant and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And if, in our case, it should be proved that the Son of God became poor for us, that we who are, by our fall, inexpressibly poor and shameful and degraded and dead, might be made rich, then we shall need eternity to bless God for this poverty of Christ. When I left off this morning I thought I had finished with the text, not finished the text, I hardly touched it, but so poor was I in the matter and seemingly so destitute of things which should be said, that I concluded not to attempt to speak again of it this evening. But while looking, this afternoon, for some other subject that I might, by God's mercy bring before you, some things came into my mind quietly, some thoughts distilled, as it were, and turned my decision quite away, and I began to feel that I would, if the Lord would help me, speak again from this word, and two or three scriptures came into my mind which I would submit to you this evening for your consideration.

To begin with, I thought, and do think, that this great poverty of Jesus Christ is in the covenant and agreement between the Trinity, that it has an intimate relation to redemption, that the Redeemer must take up everything belonging to the redeemed people He was to redeem. Whatever belonged to them, He, their Redeemer, their substitute, must take up. An illustration of this is seen in the case of Boaz purchasing the field of Naomi. Boaz called upon one who was nearer than himself in the matter of redemption, and this nearer kinsman, being told that Naomi was to sell a field that had belonged to Elimelech, expressed his willingness to purchase it, but when Boaz said that if he purchased the field he must also purchase Ruth the Moabitess, then this nearest kinsman said - I cannot buy it. Boaz bought it, bought it with a Moabitess with all the prejudice against her that the Jew would entertain. With all the disability that would naturally arise, he bought the field of Naomi and of Ruth and she became his wife. Now when Christ was to be the near kinsman, to whom the right of redemption belonged, then He would have to purchase, and did purchase, shall I use a word, the very worst material that creation could afford and bring forth. The very

worst material He could find on earth, Christ covenanted to redeem, to buy back. Hence His poverty. Not merely natural poverty, painful as that must have been for Him who had made the world not to have one spot of it on which to lay His sacred head; for Him who had made gold and silver, not to have enough to pay a tax with. For Him to be in this condition naturally was extremely painful, but a poverty deeper, immeasurably deeper and more dreadful, He had to take up and experience and, as I hinted this morning, this, His poverty, reached its climax, its most terrible pain and inconvenience when, having been eternally in the bosom of His Father, there came a moment when, as it were, that sacred bosom afforded Him no repose. Was not it poverty? When wrath issued from the Father and took hold of the Son, when a curse issued from the law, and took hold of the devoted sacrifice, when Jesus was made a curse, this was poverty. This was the deprivation of good; this was the experience of evil, which He, the holy and just and glorious Saviour experienced. May the Lord open this to us. I believe if He should do, it would deeply solemnize our minds; it would powerfully sanctify our affections; it would cleanse our understanding from much mist and ignorance, and bring us to admire and adore the Saviour in His lowest condition. We are very apt to have our minds fixed on Christ exalted. It would be well if our hearts were fixed on Christ abased, Christ persecuted, Christ with a broken heart, Christ under a cloud, such a cloud as would envelop us in everlasting darkness, confusion and death, were it to come upon us. A cloud of wrath divine; a cloud of divine curse, Jesus Christ experienced. This, His poverty, is fruitful, and as Christ took on Him the form of a servant, and so to speak purchased his children with all that belonged to them, so on the other hand everything that the Redeemer possesses, His purchased people became heirs to, joint heirs with Him. Everything, all that His blessed Person is; all that it means, His people are heirs to. All that He possesses as the Redeemer, as the High Priest of their profession, all the omnipotence which is given to Him in heaven and in earth, all the love of His heart, all His wisdom, all His authority over men and devils and elect angels, and all inanimate nature, these things, being given to Him who is the heir of all things, and being His by that gift of God to Him,

as He is the Redeemer of His people, His people become joint-heirs to with Himself, and it is this that I particularly want to notice this evening. "Ye are Christ's and Christ is God's". But notice what goes before - No man is to glory in man, says the Apostle in the Corinthians. Why, why should not you have a man's person in admiration because of advantage? Why should you not look to this and to that man? Why should you not boast of his friendship and so on? Why, says Paul "for all things are yours", not that man's only, but all things. Is it a godly teacher? Is it a profitable minister? Says the Spirit by Paul - "All things are yours; whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come; all things are yours; And ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." (1 Corinthians 3 v 21) "Therefore let him that glorieth glory in this, that He understandeth and knoweth Me that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." (Jeremiah 9 v 24)

Now first of all then, that that I would speak of this evening as belonging to the Lord's people, coming to them from Christ through His poverty, that they might be made rich, is this - the love of Christ, that rich, that enriching love of Christ - of God, in Him. His prayer is this, that the love wherewith He Himself was eternally loved of the Father may be in His disciples. "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them and I in them" (1 John 17 v 26) Is there anything that can be imagined of wealth that is not included in the eternal love of God, and that love fixed first of all on His Son. That is the electing love of God, not the essential love of God that is between the eternal persons in the Trinity. That I conceive to be incommunicable, but the love that was given to Christ before the world began, as Christ, as the Redeemer, as the Head of His body, the church, Christ prayed that that love might be in His disciples, and wonderful it is, wonderful when sometimes, when you are in trouble and on your knees in trouble, groaning through affliction and under some burden, a sense of the love of God comes to you, and that it comes through Jesus Christ, from the fulness of Jesus Christ, is communicated to you by the Eternal

Spirit. There is the love that God gave to Christ, the very same love that He fixed on His dearly beloved Son when He said "Behold My servant, Mine Elect in whom My soul delighteth". That that same love of delight is on you and in your heart, this, this is riches. "That we through His poverty might be made rich". Can a man be anything but poor who lacks an interest in the love of God? Can the whole world make a man rich whom God does not love? And can he be poor whom God loves? Ah, the Lord's people want this love. Some of you may be saying in your hearts - now we feel that nothing would trouble us if only we felt the love of God in us; nothing would make us poor in our experience if we but felt the eternal love of God fixed upon us and shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. It is riches indeed and durable riches as in the chapter we read this morning. "Durable riches and righteousness" says Christ are Mine. And surely this eternal love is part of that wealth, the wealth of love lavished, may I use that word, lavished on the most unlovely creatures, lavished on pieces of sin, on the most deformed and huge and void things. The love of God poured upon them. And if you feel it, I am sure you will sing with the hymn "On such love my soul still ponder". It takes all difficulties out of the way; it removes all obstacles from the mind; it shatters all prejudice against God in Christ and against salvation; it melts the hardest heart. If you were an iceberg, it would make you just a melted creature before the God of love. And this is through Christ, my friends, and through Christ a poor, persecuted man. May this be kept before us "That we through His poverty might be rich". Rich to all the intents of bliss; rich in experience; rich in your feelings when experiencing it; rich in your prospects - loved eternally; rich in God's dealings with you, because of His love to you. In the Ephesians, Paul, speaking of Christ, says - "In whom we have obtained an inheritance" and a good part of the inheritance is love. The religion of Jesus Christ is a religion of love; the dealings of Christ with his people, are dealings in love; the sovereign rebukes come from love. "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten" His leadings in providence of his children are leadings of love. Love is their convoy, love is their supply, love is the rod, love is the voice, love is the smile, love is the Sun. The love of God in Christ covers the saints; it

surrounds them; it sustains them; it supplies them; it follows them. The whole of their religion they prove, at times, to be love. On such love may we ponder. May we feel it.

And in the next place, part of the wealth that the saints are to have is the communication to them of the power of Christ. This is particularly dealt with in the scripture as being in the saints. Their faith is wrought in them by the power that brought Christ from the grave. Think of it, that that motion of faith in your heart, as well as the very existence of faith in you, is by the power of the resurrection of Christ. O the poverty of Christ was in weakness. "Himself He cannot save" was the taunt of men as He hung on the cross. "Let Him come down if God be His Father and take delight in Him". "Let Him come down and we will believe Him".

Himself He cannot save
Insulting foe 'tis true
The words a gracious meaning have
Though meant in scorn by you.

Weakness, Christ, the mighty God, weak. O the poverty here is very great. Now out of that came this "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth". His exaltation follows His humiliation and abasement, and the gift of power to Him as a Mediator, power to exercise in heaven and in earth and in hell, in all creatures, is the fruit of His death, His crucifixion through weakness. And wont this enrich you if you feel it? If the Spirit imparts this power to you, the effect will be very great and to you, sweet, at times. For instance, you will believe in God by this power. You will stay your hope in God by this power. "Who by Him do believe in Him who raised Him from the dead; that your faith and hope might be in God". If you believe by this power, then you will hold fast to God, God in Christ; then you will follow Him fully; you will hope in His mercy; you will plead His promises; you will look to Him in the midst of trouble and out of dark places. Then you will believe also that there is nothing too hard for Him, nothing in your circumstances, nothing in your experience, nothing in your soul

too hard for Him, no sin too powerful for Christ's arm to break and subdue. No devil too mighty for Christ to bruise under His feet, no providence too difficult for Him to manage. All, all is under His hand. And this the Lord's people are to have as part of their riches. They are heirs to it; heirs to the power of Christ; heirs to omnipotence, not to make them omnipotent, but to work in them the works which only omnipotence can accomplish. "Thou Lord hast wrought all our works in us". Here things become easy. I can appeal to the experience of some of you. Confession is easy; repentance is easy; believing is easy; living is easy; taking up your cross is easy; following the Lord with full purpose of heart is easy. Everything is easy here, not to nature, but to faith, to the hidden man of the heart. Well, when this is believed with a vital faith, the whole case is committed unto Christ. He, in His sufferings, committed Himself to His Father, and His people follow Him in that. He gives them power to commit their cases to Him, to the Father, and to the Spirit, and this runs into providential things. Faith will do in you something like that you read in the Hebrews. It will subdue kingdoms; it will work righteousness; it will quench the violence of fire. By it you will escape the edge of the sword; out of weakness you will be made strong; by it you will obtain promises. Blessed is that faith that is born of the power of Christ, for He is the author of it; that is maintained by the power of Christ; that gets victories in the power of Christ; that mourns after God; that can never be happy without Christ; never be content in any state or place without the Lord of life and glory. Well my brethren this wealth will carry you through. Christ has taken the charges upon Himself, and by giving this, His power, He will carry you through, rescue you from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear. Yea, though you may be torn to pieces as it were, that will be true that is said in one of the Prophets that the shepherd will take a piece of a leg and a piece of an ear out of the mouth of the lion. So will Christ exercise His power. If you are in a storm He will make a calm of it. "He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still." If your fears rise high, He will say "Fear not" If things are disturbed He will sometimes give you power to stay yourself on Him. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed

on Thee, because He trusteth in Thee." "Trust in the Lord for ever for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength". And if one should say, being so low and tempted and weak, if he should say "My way is hid from the Lord and my judgement is passed over from my God" I have been a long time without hearing from Him, or seeing any of His mighty works, then God Himself in His condescension will appeal to you "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasing God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding". "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint." And He gives an illustration of His power in its working. Who rolls the stars along ? How is it that not one of them fails? The Lord who is strong in working, Almighty. So He will hold you up, keep you going, carry you along, bear all the charges that you may be put to in your pilgrimage. "Because He is strong in power not one faileth". Not a saint shall come short because of the power of Christ. And the wonder is that a sinner is an heir to this, as he is united to Christ; an heir of God, a joint-heir with Christ.

And another thing I would set before you as helped is this, that you are an heir to all the life and warmth of the Sun of Righteousness. Think of it, we are heirs of darkness through the fall; we sit in darkness and in the region of the shadow of death through sin. What a change, that God should take a worm, a wretch, a guilty person out of the region of darkness, and shadow of death and make him a joint-heir of Christ in whom is the light of life. And this will bring, from time to time into the experience of a sinner, that true light that lightens every man that is born into the new kingdom of God, and it will be such a light as will always move you, because it is called the light of life. Not a cold naked light, no mean shining. It is the light of the Sun, the animating light, the reviving and the vivifying and the fructifying light of life that shines into the people, and they are heirs and joint-heirs in this matter. And is not this wealth? "Truly the light is sweet and a pleasant thing it

is for the eyes to behold the sun" the Sun of Righteousness, the fountain of all beautiful light; the light of divine goodness; the light of infinite perfection; the light of God's kind and merciful decrees; the light of election; the light of redemption; the light of sanctification; the light of justification, all flowing from this Person, this Sun of Righteousness. And it came, first of all, this way - through the poverty of Christ. His deep poverty bears the fruit of everlasting light, bears the fruit of the bright inshining of God in the soul whereby the soul is enlightened to see those things that make for peace, and to see that God, the everlasting God, is his portion, that Christ, the Elder Brother, is an heir of God and he who has been made a child of God is a joint heir in this. Hence in heaven this inheritance is enjoyed without interruption, for we are told, there is no need of a temple, for God and the Lamb are the temple of that place, and no need of the Sun, for God and the Lamb are the light of that place. O to be an heir of this, to have this wealth, these unspeakable riches of truth and everlasting light in your heart and soul, through, and from, Jesus Christ. And once more, let me say this, that through the poverty of Christ comes the inestimable good and wealth of a divine guide, even the Holy Ghost, for He is received from Christ. He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. He was with Christ in all His sufferings and pains and deprivations, and coming from Christ as the Spirit of promise, this is said of Him "He shall guide you into all truth". What a poor person is he who has no guide through the wilderness, no compass when steering across the ocean of time. What a poor person he is who is in that condition. Some of you are there. You have no guide. Therefore you never find your way to the throne of grace, do you? No guide, therefore you never tread any of the sacred paths of the scriptures. No guide, and therefore you never find Jesus Christ, nor do you wish it. Dead people know nothing. But there are living people here who have to cry, who do cry "Guide me O Thou great Jehovah". That Jehovah is the Holy Ghost. Guide me as I tread the mazes of ignorance and indwelling sin. Here I need a guide. How shall I escape despair? Only by this guide leading you to Christ. How shall I escape presumption? Only by this guide telling you to cast

yourself down at the throne of God's heavenly grace, and hope in the Lord. How shall I escape the wickedness of my nature? Only by this Guide leading you unto Him who said to the Apostle Paul "My grace is sufficient for Thee". How shall I escape the evil of trouble, trouble that I am in? Only by the Holy Spirit guiding you to Him who will bring good out of evil; life out of death; joy out of sorrow. and sweetness out of the eater. He shall guide you, take you by the hand, lead you by the spirit of grace and supplications; lead you in a straight way, wherein you shall not stumble. Here our ignorance shall not hurt us. Nothing shall hurt us if this Holy Spirit is our guide. "Through His poverty", the Holy Spirit comes down from Him into every poor sinner's heart, who has an interest in the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. And my friends, one thing came to Christ as He was in His labour and sorrow, this, namely, that His Father showed Him the path of life, and a river of pleasures at His right-hand. As you have it in the Psalms "Thou wilt show Me the path of life. At Thy right-hand are pleasures for evermore." And does this come to poor people? Does this come to sinners who, from time to time, feel their poverty, feel a lack of joy, feel as if there are no pleasures left them? They cannot rejoice in or take any pleasure in the things of this life as they used to do. Some things have had to be given up; some things have been lost; some things have had to be forsaken, as if all joy were taken out of life. And is there nothing that God will give in place? If you lose your life for His sake, shall you not find your life? If, for His sake, you are enabled to take up your cross, will He not give something with it? Jesus had His cross, the Saviour had His sorrows. And His Father showed to Him a path of life, and pleasures at His right-hand and for these, the joy that was set before Him, the Saviour endured the cross, despised the shame and now His poor people, through His poverty, get what He got in another measure, infinitely different indeed, but the same joy. Pleasures at the Father's right-hand, the Father's blessing, the Father's smile, the good-will of Him that dwelt in the bush, the promise of eternal inheritance, a better thing here than anything you give up. You only give up something of the flesh, something a carnal nature indulges in and loves. When your soul receives a little view and sense of the pleasures which

are at God's right-hand, the pleasures of eternal purity, the pleasures of everlasting salvation, the pleasures of eternal inheritance, of eternal redemption, the pleasures of God's love and God's smile and God's blessing, a taste here, a view here and there, you will find it to be more than a compensation. You will say - this is of another nature; this has a different effect; this lifts my soul up; this lifts my mind; this tells me of a world to come, in which I hope to be, a world of light and of glory. "That ye through His poverty might be rich".

And this may lead you a little into what Paul desired to enter, where, in the Philippians he said that he desired to apprehend that for which also he was apprehended of Christ Jesus. It is a great thing to be saved, but this seems, as to experience, an added blessing when you know that Christ has laid hold of you, apprehended you, taken you to be His prisoner, his happy prisoner, chained you to His cross, enchained your affections by His cross, and His mercy. When you see that, now you say - what is this for? To save me from hell. True. To save me from living in sin. True. To save me from walking according to the flesh. True. But beyond that what is it for? Why for the glory of His grace; for the glory of divine prudence and wisdom manifested and expressed in election; for the glory of His grace, the glory of that grace that laid hold of a sinner and made him a saint. The glory of that power that created a creature anew, in, not only that likeness in which he was created at first, but the likeness of Jesus Christ, and that is to have its consummation at the resurrection when, seeing Him as He is, His people will be like Him. Pleasures at God's right-hand. You may wake up tomorrow morning to some pain, sorrow, difficulty, perplexity. You may realise therein your own weakness and inability to do good, to submit to the will of God as manifested in this untoward providence, but should the Holy Spirit breathe into your soul the spirit of resignation to the will of God, should He give you to feel the import of that word - "Thy kingdom come Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" and should He give you to hope that this very adverse, serious circumstance is to work for your good, and to be for the furtherance of the gospel in you, what then? Why you have a little, just an inkling

of the pleasures which are at God's right-hand, and that will enrich your soul. Then you will say

Let worldly minds the world puruse
It has no charms for me
Once I admired its trifles too
But grace has set me free

Grace has set my heart on better things, set my affections on the Son of God, Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And then you will also wish to do as Paul did and to say as he said "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"That ye might be rich". That through His poverty you might be rich. One word more in conclusion. Christ in His poverty suffered, but He rose from His poverty, a victor, a conqueror, and He led captivity captive and received gifts for men. In our weakness and poverty we are often overcome. What child of God would not confess that continually. "He sees me", we sometimes sing "He sees me often overcome", overcome by some temper, some passion, some prejudice, overcome of some powerful lust, lust in the heart. Overcome by a rebellious will, overcome by many things. And what is to be the issue of this? Shall the saint lie down in eternal defeat? Shall the purchase of Christ's blood sink into perdition? Shall any sin living in the heart of a child of God have to say - I have obtained the victory? No! Christ's victory is imparted; Christ's word "It is finished" is imparted in the efficacy of it, in the life, in the power, in the beauty, in the glory of it. So one who has often been vanquished, shall vanquish all and say that he is an overcomer. Watts, looking to the saints in glory speaks thus

I ask them whence their victory came
They with united breath
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb
Their triumph to His death

And this is the case, and ever will be the case. with the church of the living God here and hereafter. They will all sing this

"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 to the Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, amen".

Through His poverty, through His death and pain, and grief and ignominy, He brings all this wealth, untold, untellable wealth, to His people. I have not said much. I do not expect ever to be able to say much about this. I have said a good many words and if any of them should be of use, the glory must be the Lord's. But look at the text - "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich".

Do you, dear friends, do you get to God? Do you find Him in the new and living way? Do you ever have access into the holy of holies? O that experience is wealth and it comes to you through the poverty of Christ. May the Lord forgive what has been amiss and command His blessing on this, His sacred word.

AMEN.