

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

Text: II Peter III v 8

"But beloved be not ignorant of this one thing that one day
is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand
years as one day"

A knowledge this which, when felt, is wonderful, keeps the heart and mind, makes the little vexations, the heavy troubles, the non-plussing perplexities that we may more or less continually have upon us and about us, very small. A sense of the infinite majesty of God is a great thing. Vital religion is in Him, from Him, and the more it pleases God to give to any person a true sense of His greatness, the weaker, the more withered and the more vile does that person feel. Real religion is not a flattery of the old man, it is not a patching up of the old man, it is not a bettering of him. It is just a killing of the old man, and a new creature, and this very much narrows up the religion of God's people, and tells them that they have nothing to boast of and yet it is very beautiful because that same religion says in the heart, at times, do not think of glorying in man - "no flesh is to glory in God's presence". What then? "All things are yours". "All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or life or death, or the world, or things present, or things to come, all are yours and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." Can you wish for anything else, anything better? Yet it was a staggering statement to Abram that God made when He said "Fear not Abram, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward". And Abram looked up and said "Lord God, what wilt Thou give me seeing I go childless", as if he could say - if I have not a son, I have nothing, yet he had God. "I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward". But we are very ignorant people. I may say this to you, I suppose that as a congregation just taken, it may be said to us and of us, we know we are ignorant people. How much do you know of God, that is the measure of your religion. Think of it, just what we know of God

and no more is the measure of the religion of all of us. Well, but I have been professing, I have been reading, and thinking and hearing all these years. I say again the measure of your religion is just what you know of God. And how is God known? By revelation, by revelation, not by acquisition but revelation, just what now and again the Holy Ghost is pleased to bring to us, no more. When we die that is all we shall have to go into eternity with, if we have that. Be not ignorant of God, says Peter to those of the dispersion to whom he writes - Elect according to the foreknowledge of God through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, but who evidently were affected at times, or liable to be affected by the scoffers around them, scoffers who, knowing something of the scripture and of God's promise to come again, were saying to them - "where is the promise of His coming"? You tell us that the Lord is coming a second time without sin unto salvation and the prophets have told us this, the scriptures, which we know something about, all testify to this, but where is it? There is no performance of the promise. And so these scoffers were weakening the Lord's people and therefore the Spirit of Christ moved Peter to write this - Be not ignorant of this, be not swayed by what these scoffers are saying, listen not to what they ask you when they say "where is the promise of His coming". If you answer them, just say this - God changes not, time is not in God. Answer no other way. "Be not ignorant of this one thing that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day". I mentioned several things this morning in speaking of these begun matters. Begun matters are often judged of by the subjects of them and the judgment is very hurtful, because it is partial. A partial judgment of anything must always be, more or less, erroneous and often very painful. Judge nothing before the time, and I said there were two great subjects to notice. First was the begun work of grace, the regeneration of the Spirit, the work of grace in a sinner's heart and this, in many cases, not being very clear, more or less indistinct, the subject of it is liable to form a wrong judgment and if any hopes have been felt and now not yet realised, then there is a sinking, and a giving up. This work of grace begun by God is carried on by Him. He does not employ a deputy in this great matter. He has ministers, but He keeps the

work in His own hand and just uses ministers here and there. He carries on His good work. The Holy Spirit is that blessed one who is sent by the Lord Jesus and I should like to take up one or two points on this matter that I had not time to name this morning. The first is that the Spirit of Christ graciously moves from time to time upon the soul as the Spirit of prayer and the grace of supplications. One often has to name this and one reason is that it will never be exhausted, that the Spirit's work in the heart is more or less a constant work of teaching how to pray and what to pray for. Our ignorance of God's will in certain things gives a great reason for the Spirit's instruction and inward intercession. "We know not what to pray for as we ought" Is not that true? Can you always say to the Lord - now I know what I want? Some may stumble at that and say - of course we know what we want. You know what you wish for, you know what your mind hankers after but your real need may not be known to you. How you need the Spirit of grace, the Spirit of Christ. How you need Him to quicken every desire, need Him to cause the doctrine of God to drop as the rain upon you and His speech to distil as the dew. Need Him to teach you every divine truth that is necessary to your salvation; need Him to guide your every step in the way of peace, in the way of life; need Him to be the Governor, the King, the Guide, the Saviour; need Him in all particulars in your soul and that need men know not but as taught by the Holy Spirit and in this subject that passage in the Romans is an essential passage - "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities". Infirmities are upon us and in us and He comes alongside of a person, and takes hold of him in his inability, and his infirmity and his ignorance and graciously moves, teaches, helps, guides, and gives petitions and Christ receives them and presents them in His intercession to His Father. Prayer thus is made not common, but a wonderful thing. As many in this congregation as are praying people, so are there as many miracles of grace sitting here. Real miracles of grace and miracles of the teaching and unction of the Holy Ghost. That Spirit knows what opposition there is in us to prayer, He knows the aversion to prayer, how we would prefer any course but that of praying, waiting on God for mercies and for answers. He knows that, but He so instructs us in our needs and so shows who alone is able to

supply those needs, He so manifests our guilt and wickedness and who alone can save therefrom and so opens also the grace and the beauty and the benignity, the clemency, the kindness and love of Jesus Christ and His infinite merit, as to greatly incline the soul that way. Ah there is a great inclination of the soul that way. I know that some of you will enter into it. It is very great to have it. We do at times, don't we, prize the privilege of prayer, although there is a backwardness in us to pray. And in this wonderful connection the will of God comes - Says the Apostle there - "He knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit" God in heaven, the Father to whom the prayer is directed, He knows what is the mind of the Spirit in the teaching and the grace and the help He gives to a sinner in prayer and that is very remarkable, for we may often not know that. We may pray many and many a prayer with little or no knowledge of what we mean, but God knows, for His Holy Spirit has written the petition and Christ has given it in His infinite merit. Now this is the work of God, and He may delay many a day and month and year to send an answer to such prayer. It must come and the instruction of the text is - do not judge before the time. Wait. If the enemy mocks and says, you will never get an answer, if you could say to him, you know nothing about it, it would be well. He knows nothing about it. He has nothing to do with it. God will put him out of court at times and rebuke him. The prayer is yours, written by the Spirit and the hearer of that prayer is God and the answerer of that prayer is God and your soul will be the recipient of the answer. It is a matter between a sinner and God, between a lost person and a Saviour, between one most vile and the Lord who has a good thing to give him, even a robe of righteousness. And mark this, the decays in this business do not alter anything. One sigh sent to heaven by the power of the Spirit from your heart in one particular must one day receive an answer. There may be thousands of words used again and again that never reach heaven acceptably, but one unutterable groan - Paul speaks there of groanings which cannot be uttered - one, unutterable groan, forgotten after you had it in your heart, forgotten perhaps for days and weeks, and months, it went to heaven. It cannot die, it is in God's ear and God's book. It will come down. One day with Him is as a thousand years in this

matter as in all matters. O then look for an answer. "I will wait" says one "I will wait for the Lord who hideth Himself" says another. "I will get me to my tower, I will stand upon my watch and wait to hear what He will say unto me and what I shall answer". And then this is the word - "The vision is for an appointed time, though it tarry, wait for it, in the end it shall speak and not lie, wait for it". Ah, have you seen Jesus Christ? Have you seen His loveliness, His infinite merit? Have you seen that robe with which God is so pleased that He sees no flaw in it? He can see nothing at all wanting, lacking. Have you seen it? Well now, that sight came to you by the Holy Spirit. How do I know that? Why, because Christ, teaching His disciples, promised them the Spirit, and said "He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you". The sight of faith is not an intellectual sight. That may be had by any thinking man when he reads the scriptures. It is not an intellectual sight, it is the sight faith gets, it is seeing light in God's light. It is a sight that an illiterate person may receive, a sight that an idiot is capable of. The Holy Ghost is not dependent on our intellect. We only need His teaching to show us things, to show us that lovely Person, Jesus Christ, that suitable Person, Jesus Christ, and faith, getting that sight from Him, cries mightily to God that what is seen may be made over to the sinner who sees it. Now you have an answer to that in your own souls have you not, some of you? You can never, I am sure, express the longings, pantings, sighs, yea I will say inward sobs of spirit to reach that that the Holy Ghost has shown you in the Person of the Lord Jesus. O wondrous sight

Is this the Man? can this be he
The prophets have foretold
Should with transgressors numbered be,
And for their crimes be sold?

Yes, now I know 'tis He, 'tis He!

This is what people under a sense of ruin and sinfulness want to say for themselves I know 'tis He

'Tis Jesus, God's dear Son,
Wrapt in humanity, to die
For crimes that I had done!

And when you have waited for it, and it has not come, you are apt to say it never will come. Now here is an error and the Apostle says when you are listening to the mocking of your own hearts and to the scoffings of others perhaps about you, be not ignorant of this one thing. This one thing includes all things you need being in God. This one thing includes all the salvation of a soul and all the guidance that the sinner can possibly need. Therefore wait on Him, wait on Him.

Now there is in the scripture this with respect to the Spirit's work further, namely, that He is the Spirit who seals the saint unto the day of redemption, who makes the sinner fit for heaven, who makes heaven a reality, such a reality as that the sinner, seeing it, says - I would fain not be unclothed of my immortal being but clothed upon with Christ and prepared for the house that God has prepared for His people. And, says Paul, "He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit". An earnest is that which gives a certainty to the person who receives it, of the thing that is promised. It gives an evidence also to the person who receives it that that which is promised, the person promising is able to do. If you get a view of Christ, if you get a testimony of Christ, you have got an earnest and though that may be contradicted by unbelief and the tempter, though you may suffer much with Christ and for Him, there will come a day when you will be able to say to the Lord - Whose is this? Did not I receive this from Thyself? "Put Me in remembrance" says the Lord, and now the sinner does it. He does it. An earnest is a good blessing. It comes from heaven, it speaks of heaven, it is a part of heaven, it is a forerunner, a foretaste of that to which the sinner is predestinated in the purpose of Almighty God. Wait for Him, be constant, though weak, and may this knowledge of the immutability of God, this knowledge of His eternity, be a support to you in all your troubles.

The second great matter that was in my mind to name to you I will now just enter upon, namely, the matter of providence. Providence. Providence is God's foreknowledge and forecasting of all events, arranging, ordering, directing and bringing to pass in and by men, all His purposes. It relates to kings, to nations, to communities. It relates to all men. This view of providence, as we may receive it from God, makes a very wonderful matter of divine prescience and divine working in the world. It reaches individuals, particular persons, it comes in an especial working to the church of God. There is a special providence over the people of God. Churches are brought into existence by individuals gathered together in the providence of God forming visible bodies and these are under the especial eye and working and care of God and some of His people have had very special providences and sometimes they can look back and see how God remarkably moved for them. My memory goes back to a providence which, at the moment of its occurrence, appeared very small. It is nearly sixty years ago since it happened to me. Walking out one evening with a design to go to the right-hand, when I reached a certain point where I must have turned at right angles, a sudden impulse, unaccountable to myself, then came into my mind to turn exactly the other way and I turned to the left, and on that turn, every step of my life from that moment to this depended. You may have something like that, some singular providence fraught with matters for which then you could have had no conception. I had no conception of what that movement meant at the moment. You may find that God did work in you though perhaps you knew Him not. See the providence of God over Israel in her seventy years captivity. As the end of that captivity approached and when it actually had come, Cyrus, of whom mention had long before been made, Cyrus - why did he not do it before? - Cyrus made a decree, made a proclamation - All the Jews who have an inclination to go back to your city and build the House of God at Jerusalem, go. What a striking thing. Who moved the heart of Cyrus to make that proclamation and then who moved Ezra, Nehemiah, Zerubbabel, and the many thousands that were then disposed to go back to their own land, and everyone, it is written, everyone to his own city. Who moved all that? The enemies had said, "Sing us one of the Lord's songs", one of the

songs of Zion, and these poor captives had mournfully said - how can we sing the Lord's song here. The harp was on the willows and the heart was sad, but now the time had come and these men, hearing of the proclamation, and finding a desire in their hearts to return, went back. This was God's doing. When Nehemiah heard of the condition of Jerusalem, that the walls were burnt down and the House of God desolate, he, being the king's cupbearer, felt a sudden movement in his heart to return. But how could he get liberty? Why, that God who put the cause on his heart, moved the heart of the king. Seeing Nehemiah's countenance sad, he asked the reason. Then Nehemiah hesitated and prayed, prayed in his heart, with the cup in his hand. Trembling perhaps and fearing the result, he prayed, and God moved the king to listen to him, gave him favour in the eyes of the man. God did it. Watch the hand of God. Do not say He never will work because at this moment you see no movement. Do not say He will never do anything for you because now He seems to have left you. Remember this - one day is with the Lord as a thousand years. No solutions for the time, no arising to work for the time, can have any effect on God, however much it may affect us. And here we have much to observe. We have much to observe in this, namely the state of our nation. What a state it is in. What shall we say? If, what is known as the Deposit Book, the altered prayer book, becomes law, then we shall have become by that profession, under Rome. What shall we do? Now God may seem to take no notice of this movement. We may look here and look there and we may regard the authority and position of the Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of England and see that God allows this and permits this and say - what is He doing? The answer may appear to be this - nothing, letting things go, letting this nation that has been so remarkably blessed and is still, by profession, somewhat of a protestant nation, letting it go. Now judge nothing before the time. And what shall we say of the Church of Christ, the Church of Christ in the land? If there be desolation there, if there be a lack of authority, power, life, and usefulness in the ministry, if therefore churches are more or less distracted and some torn asunder and God appears not to move, what then shall we say. If, coming home, our own condition, the condition of our matters, business, providential things in our houses, afflictions in our

persons or the persons of those who are dear to us, and if afflictions upon us as a church and congregation come and abide and God seems to take no notice, what shall we say. A scoffing, mocking, Ishmael in the heart will say - There is nothing in all your religion and providence, seeming to take no notice, may say, well there is nothing to watch. If you get upon your tower, you will see nothing; if you stand on your watch, you will hear nothing. "Now beloved" says the Lord to His people, "be not ignorant of this one thing". We are conversant with our circumstances; we are painfully aware of the mocking and scoffing to which we are exposed; we are conscious of our weakness and inability to stand and we are made to know the truth of Christ's question - "Who can, by taking much thought, add one cubit to his stature, or make hair white or black?" Of these things we are painfully conscious. Now, says the Spirit "be not ignorant of this one thing" Add to the things you know this - that, with the Lord, your hope; with the Lord, your Saviour; with the Lord, who has undertaken for you and made over some gracious promise to you; with Him to whom you go of necessity and of choice; with Him, who sitteth upon the circle of the heavens; with Him to whom all creatures are as as grasshoppers; one day, a long day it may be to you; a day of trial; a day in which you are baptised with the baptism, wherewith Christ was baptised; a day in which you may have a baptism of temptation and be worn out as to your strength; one day, such a day, such a day of exposure; such a day of trembling; such a day of gloom; such a day of dark anticipation; remember this - one day is with the Lord, always in His eye, always before Him, in His purpose. He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. That day is with Him just as a thousand years. I ventured to say this morning and repeated it several times and I will repeat it again - time is not in God's nature. It is with Him in purpose but not in His nature, which means that He is not affected by time. He is not affected. That is a fine hymn you sang at the beginning, a favourite of mine

Great God, how infinite art Thou
What worthless worms are we

I think Watts must have had at that time a great and wide view of faith enabling him to write so finely of the infinite God as compared with such worms as we. He says what worms are we, worthless. He sitteth upon the circle of the earth, the inhabitants are as grasshoppers. He weighs the mountains in a scale and the hills in a balance and says - you have forgotten - "Hast thou not known?" - O believer - "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding." Look at the stars, they are upheld by Him and therefore not one faileth. Why do you say then because of some delay "my judgment is passed over from my God?". Why do you say there is no help in God?" He changes not and He is not affected by circumstances, nay circumstances are His instruments, His servants. Angels in heaven He makes ministers and servants. Ministers are a flame of fire. Providence. It is often the hand-maid of grace, often accompanies grace, often is the means of increasing grace. So may the Lord instruct us in this great matter not to judge before the time. Many men, religious men, are looking today for what they will never see and what the world will never see. They are looking for the personal reign of the Lord Jesus on earth. They will never see it. The scriptures nowhere hint at it. Misinterpretation of the scripture leads men to think it is coming, but it is nowhere taught. There are two comings, real, open, personal comings of Christ in the scripture. The first is the incarnation of the Son of God; that was a coming. Then He was made sin; then He was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. When He had finished the work His Father gave Him to do, He said to His disciples "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, to My God and your God". He said - I will come again. I will see you again and receive you unto Myself and of this second coming the Apostle Paul says "He shall come a second time without sin unto salvation" and that second coming is a blessed coming to all who love His appearing. There are many approaches of this great One to His people, many love visits are paid them by Him, many sacred things He says to them, many holy promises He makes over to them and He walks with them, walks in churches, walks with individual members of churches here and there. And these

are rich experiences. O that we had them more, that the Lord might come to you in your individual cases and to me and come unto us as a church and walk among us. But these are not the second coming, nor will they ever be. They are, so to speak, the sweet interludes to the last coming, they are the sweet evidences of His goodness and mercy to us. They are wonderful blessings. What a favour to have them! Can you go to your room here and there and say, He met me there.

Dost mind the place, the spot of land
Where Jesus did thee meet

How sweet it is to view Him so. There is a coming of Christ that has never yet been as to the measure of the life and power and glory of it. There is to be a millenium. I firmly believe in the millenium, when the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. The day of Pentecost inaugurated a wonderful, a glorious, dispensation. Christ then reigned in many. He quickened and converted by His Spirit three thousand in one day and since that auspicious day He has been working ever since in numberless people, but there is a coming, a day when, after dark days, then this day; when, after heavy troubles, very heavy troubles, when some of them of understanding shall fall that they may be purged and be tried and made white, that day is coming. Who knows how near? Who knows how near? Profession alone wont bear you then. Militant protestantism wont stand then. Only the kingdom of God within you will keep you then. Only the glory of Christ will keep you. It will be solemn to live in that day. Then, then a strong angel will come down, seize the devil, chain him and bind him for a thousand years so that he, during that wonderful period, shall deceive the nations no more. What a day it will be. I have believed it so as to feel a most powerful hope that the gospel net will then cover all men. The Lord knows that it will be a great day. That thousand years will end, and then Satan will be again let loose for a short season and go forth and deceive many and make war with saints, camping round the church of the living God and then will come the last great day and the strong angel will plant one foot upon the earth and the other upon the sea,

and with a loud voice proclaim that time shall be no more. Then will be set the grand assize and the Man whom nations abhorred, whom kings hated, and from whom they turned, the Man whom the world has said we will not have Him to reign over us, He will judge the quick and the dead. He will then say to His servants - bring forth those men who would not that I should reign over them, Mine enemies. Bind them hand and foot, cast them into outer darkness. And then He will turn to those on His right-hand, His dear sheep, His precious people, bought with His own blood, taught by His Spirit, and say to them "Come ye blessed of My Father inherit the kingdom prepared for you". That is the day when every question will be satisfactorily answered, every problem beautifully solved, all sin done away with, temptations and the tempter destroyed. Sin, separable, will then be separated from the saints and they shall enter into the joy of their Lord. Meantime, dear brethren, in all your troubles and difficulties and in what they seem; delays on the part of God, yea some indifference to you, when you are ready to say my judgment is ready to pass over, my way is hid from Him, meantime, I say, may the Holy Spirit help you and help me in my own case to remember this - "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day." Anchor here, anchor here, hold here, all will be well.

AMEN.