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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday evening 19 February 1933

Colossians 2 v 6 and 7

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus
the Lord, so walk ye in Him: Rooted
and built up in Him, and established in
the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein
with thanksgiving.

This divinely inspired scripture, the whole Epistle I mean, sets before us a church, a gospel church, in a very gracious state. The Apostle says that he joyed and rejoiced to behold their order and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ. They were not moved about by every wind of doctrine; were not permitted to sink into carnality and worldliness and selfishness. They were not permitted to set up any false gods; for the time being they were clearly in a very gracious state and they are warned against philosophy, science falsely so called. The greatness and the fulness and the glory of Christ the Apostle was inspired to set before them, to attract them and to draw them from all things that were not of any spiritual advantage, to know and possess and to follow after that which he says is the body. The body is of Christ. The text supposes that these Colossians had received the Lord Jesus. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord". On this he builds the exhortation "so walk ye in Him" and also goes on to show what was in them - "rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith", that is, in the doctrine of faith, not the grace of faith, though that does get established. But here, it appears to be right and proper to take it as the doctrine of faith in which it is a good thing to be established, as the Apostle teaches in the Hebrews. "It is good for the heart to be established with grace and not with meats which have not profited them which have been exercised thereby". And he tells them that this establishment was not of their own begetting, but resulted from their having been taught, taught by an adjutant, an angel, a minister Paul, and taught by

the Holy Ghost through his ministry. "Abounding therein with thanksgiving". Prayer will always have thanksgiving about and in it sooner or later, and so the knowledge of God will always have this attending it - thanksgiving. That God should have condescended to have taught us, if it be so that He has, will make us full of thanks from time to time.

The first point to notice is, who has been received by these Colossian christians? Christ Jesus the Lord. Christ means anointed. In the Hebrew church in the wilderness and later the anointing was confined to two persons, the priest and the king, and this anointing signifies Christ. It was then used just as an act by the priest pouring on the head of the one who was to be a priest, the one who was to be the king, the holy ointment, confectioned, as you know by reading in Exodus, according to God's direction, and so solemn, and beautiful was this, that any man who dared to make ointment after that kind should die for his presumption. This term anointing has become a proper name to the Lord Jesus and we read His own words in the spirit of prophecy in Isaiah - "The Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings to the meek." This was what Christ was sent to do. He had good news in His heart; He had the knowledge of all the news with the Father and the Holy Spirit. That good news He would not have locked up in the knowledge of the Trinity, but who shall make it known. Says the Father to the Son in the covenant, "I will give Thee for a covenant of the people; a light unto the Gentiles" and for this purpose the Son of God became incarnate and He was anointed by the Holy Spirit without measure. "He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn, to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion; to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." This was the sending forth of that Man, God Man, Jesus, whose name henceforth is Christ.

When the Lord asked His disciples concerning the various opinions of men concerning Him, they told Him the various guesses and conjectures that were being made, for He had great fame. Then He appealed to them - "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter, for the rest, says "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus means, as you are all aware, a Saviour. O what a wonderful name this is and it is to be spread abroad until the glory of the knowledge of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. If it should spread here and lay hold of some of you who feel you are lost, that will be your mercy and your glory. If the Holy Spirit should come and preach ruin, that is the fall of man, and the sin of yourselves, then you would be fitted to receive this name - Jesus. "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord". That poor man, the carpenter's son, despised of men, rejected (when He came to His own, they received Him not), that poor man was Lord of all then, but when He had finished the work His Father gave Him to do, and had risen from the dead, then was given to Him in a peculiar manner all power in heaven and in earth. When here, He said, I can do nothing of Myself; I speak what I have been taught of My Father, and I do the works which I have seen My Father do. But when He was risen from the dead, then came to pass on Him that word that His Father gave Him - A name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in the earth. He is Lord of lords; Lord of principalities and powers; Lord of devils; Lord of everyone here. All of us do not acknowledge this, but it is so and by Him we are told that God has appointed a day in which this Man, this Lord, shall judge the quick and the dead.

This Jesus Christ is the only way from the wrath to come. When men know that they deserve wrath, that wrath is reserved for the ungodly, then by the grace of the Spirit they flee from the wrath to come, and they do not flee as if they were blind. No, they have eyes given them to see and to see the way to the city of refuge, even to the Lord, and this, in spite of indwelling sin, of unbelief, of all that is within us contrary to God. This fleeing from the wrath to come is according to the divine will and under the divine teaching of the Holy Spirit.

Now the Apostle, having spoken of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, addresses these Colossians, and He says you have received Him, according to your profession, you have received Him. Let us notice this point, the reception of the Lord Jesus. And first of all one must say, there must be faith, there must be knowledge. There must be knowledge of ruin, of need of Him; there must be faith to move you to say, "None but Jesus, none but Jesus, can do helpless sinners good". There must be knowledge of Himself; you will never run to one of whom you have no knowledge; you will never lean on an arm that you do not know to be omnipotent; you will never seek pardon of one of whom you are not persuaded He is able to give forgiveness of sins. There must be knowledge of Christ. This Man receiveth sinners, that is another word. Christ takes sinners to Himself; when they come to Him He receives them. They come as supplicants, as lost persons, as polluted sinners, and their amazement is great when the Lord takes them to Himself. But the word "received" here is another word and it means just this, that when faith gets in the light of the Spirit's teaching, it lays hold of Him who is revealed. "Lay hold of eternal life whereunto thou art also called". And this is a vital point in experimental religion, the real reception of the Lord Jesus by faith. "That Christ might dwell in your hearts by faith". He is received as Christ anointed to preach good tidings and as He preaches those good tidings to your hearts in any measure you receive Him; you receive Him as Jesus. Being lost in yourselves, and can never do anything but ruin yourselves, you receive Him in all that this word Jesus means. "They shall call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." He is to be preached in season, out of season, as that blessed One whom God has named - Jesus, to save sinners. And by living faith, a sinner receives Him in this particular for salvation, the salvation of his soul, the salvation from His sins, the salvation from his guilt, salvation from his weakness by which he would every minute fall if he were left to it. Salvation from his ignorance, for he knows he can never acquire saving knowledge; it must be imparted. So Jesus is received and some can say they have so received Him. There is neither Jew nor Greek here, neither Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; for Christ is all and in all

to His people as they receive Him. They receive Him as Lord, Lord of all; Lord of everything about them; Lord of themselves, and when they have received Him then they pray, for substance, this prayer, "Reign o'er us as King". "O Lord", it is written, "other lords beside Thee have had dominion over us"; they are fallen. Ah, some of us can we do wish that were always true in us - they are fallen. Self, that lordly beast self, has to come down like a city. Isaiah writes of the lofty city - "The lofty city, He layeth it low, He layeth it low even to the ground". Then the sinner thus blessed by faith in the strength of Christ puts his foot on this city; the feet of the poor and the steps of the needy, God strengthens so. So Christ is received, Lord of all. Ah, and faith says to Him, humbly supplicating His mercy, do be Lord over and in me. Perhaps sometimes a day comes of which you have had fears, concerning which you have felt standing would be impossible if you were left to yourself, and your cries have gone out to Him - "Hold Thou me up". If what I fear comes, keep me; preserve my faith; preserve me in the fear of God; preserve me from apostacy. He is received as Lord.

Now the Apostle, on this, builds an exhortation. Exhortations are very congruous to the people of God. If you begin to exhort dead people to perform actions of life, then you are foolish, but God is wise, and He makes His ministers wise; He made Paul wise in this - You are christian people; this is needed, written, and you have received Christ. One may say, supposing you here, any of you, and as many of you, as have received the Lord Jesus Christ, then it may be consistently said to you - walk in Him. Take heed how you walk; take heed to your conduct; so walk in Him. Did you receive Him in all humility of mind? Then be clothed with humility; walk humbly with your God. Did you receive Him as a perfect Saviour? Then walk in Him, depending on Him for salvation always, in every particular, in every exercise, in every providence, in every dealing of God with you; walk in the Saviour, which means, go to Him, cast your burden on Him, seek counsel at His gracious feet. His saints sit at His feet. Seek strength to hold you up, to enable you to walk in the fear of God - "so walk ye in Him". Did you receive Him as

having all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and as having all the fulness of pure humanity, and as having all the fulness of infinite merit? Then walk in Him in that way, that is to say, depend on Him; go to His blessed throne and by faith draw out of His fulness; go and depend on Him as Almighty God; depend on Him as blessed, glorified man in union with God; depend on Him for acceptance with God; depend on Him for supplies out of His fulness, for direction, according to His wisdom, for support, according to the power given to Him in heaven and in earth, for protection, because He is Lord of all and, as Lord, He has power over all principalities and powers and wickedness in high places. "So walk ye in Him." Flee self dependence; flee from your own wisdom; flee from your own directing thoughts - (this is a fairly good way,) I will walk in it. Flee from it, because Christ has said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation". "So walk ye in Him." Did you receive Him as being the eternal life of your soul? Then so walk in Him. But death will come, death will come on your best experiences; death will come on the comfortable and most blessed communion that you may have occasionally been favoured with, and when that death comes, then will come the adversary. Never was there an assembly of the sons of God without the adversary. Now walk in Him who said "I am the life". Pray for a new supply of life, a new coming of the Spirit into your soul, and a dependence on Him to revive you.

Are you in a winter? Is it winter with your soul? Is the sap now in the root, and the branches do they look like dead things? Walk in Him who said there shall be summer as well as winter, and go to Him for the uprising of the sap, which is in Himself, into you as branches, that you may bear fruit to the praise and glory of His Name. Did you receive Him as the only glory that a poor, saved sinner shall have? He does give glory. "The glory which Thou gavest Me" said the Lord Jesus "I have given them". Now sin is a shame, is it not? Who can speak of the shame of sin as it should be spoken of? I cannot. The deep shame of sin, the shame of guilt, the shame of defeat at the hands of sin. O the deep shame. Can this be over-ruled, removed? Can one, to whom belongs shame and confusion of face

ever have any glory? Yes, Peter had the shame of denying His Master; all the disciples fled and forsook Him. Can any glory come to men who had the privilege of the presence of Christ while here, and the teaching of Christ and the grace and the promise of Christ, can such men, who had that privilege and then who denied Him and fled away from Him in His hour of distress, have any glory? Yes, He said concerning them "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them". What was that? The word Thou hast given Me I have given them; the grace that is in Thee, He gave to them; the love of His heart He shed abroad in their hearts; the mercy He bestowed on them, and I must add the communion they had with Him. Communion is marvellous, if I may for a moment turn aside and speak of it, communion is marvellous. It is not all on one side; it begins on one side, always on the side of Christ. He begins to speak; He sheds abroad His love; He fills the soul with His mercy; He covers the sinner with His righteousness; He humbles the sinner with His condescension and by His holy presence, inexpressible, yet known to be a reality. He blesses the soul. Let My Name be named on them. The Lord bless thee and keep thee. This is how communion begins, this is the side on which it begins, but it does not end there. There is another party interested in communion and that is the favoured sinner. When love came, there was a vessel to receive it; when the sweet smile of God fell on the good ground, there was the response of growth, and when the Lord, by the Spirit, bore witness with the spirit of the child, then the spirit of the child spoke in response; and when the Lord said Thou art mine, the sinner said I am my Beloved's; and when He said - cast thy burden on the Lord - faith said, I do this, I come to Thee, my refuge, my life, my hope, my strength, my righteousness, my holiness, my all and in all. And only those who have had this communion can understand it; the familiarity, the holy boldness, the sweet humility, the sense of unworthiness, the sense of acceptance, the communication of scriptures, the opening of this passage and of that. Well if you have had it, walk according to it. "So walk ye in Him."

And what will this walk be? Why some who have had it, have

to say mournfully "Lord, I have left my first love; I have walked after vain things; I have come into a deathly condition. What then? Renew my soul. O that I was as in the months that are past. As ye have received Him, owned Him, confessed Him, prayed to Him, blessed Him, received Him in the open arms of your little faith, so go on acknowledging Him, thanking Him, praising Him, trusting Him, looking to Him to make you christians, to keep you christians, and enable you to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things.

I dare say that some will say this, may be saying this mentally, you have gone a long way above us. That may be true, but you know, at least you should know, that the ministry is not just always to come and sit down by the side of the hearer and say, now you are alright, just what you have got, you have enough, it will take you to heaven. That is not the ministry that God sends. He sends a minister to show people what is attainable through the operation of God the Holy Ghost, that is attainable by having, of the fulness of the Lord Jesus, something communicated to you. You say it is above you, you cannot climb to it; I know, but I know this, there is a gracious Saviour in heaven who can give it you. Have you a heart to ask Him? Have you a place for Him? Is there an empty room for Him? Is there waiting for Him a welcome if He will but come? "So walk ye in Him". He is the same yesterday when He blessed you; He is the same today when you are needing and asking Him to come; He is the same for ever, when you will need Him all your days here, and be blessed with His presence and in His presence through eternity.

Rooted and built up in Him" Rooted in Him as the building is rooted in the foundation. It expresses intimate union. Rooted in Him. Every brick in this building is united to the foundation. Yes, the brick that is furthest from the foundation is united to the foundation, rooted in it, so as to be stable, so as not to be shaken out of its place, rooted in Christ. There is in christian, gracious experience, a taking root downward, which is not only growing in a knowledge of yourself, but a taking root deeper and deeper into Christ, and this is being rooted in Him.

Built up in Him. Built up in Him is being built up as a habitation of God through the Spirit. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Holy Ghost dwelleth in you". O how ashamed I am of myself when these matters come before me. Built up in Him, yet constantly scattering one's self, scattering one's thoughts, scattered by sin, scattered by unbelief, driven by wind. O what shame comes to a poor believer, yet there is a being built on Him when you grow in a knowledge more keen, penetrating, piercing, of yourself as a lost person, and then the Holy Spirit brings some gracious knowledge of the Lord to you that causes you to be built more fully, more entirely, more firmly in the Lord Jesus. And that builds you up; you grow up into Him as into your living Head in all things. Rooted; uprooted with regard to yourself, uprooted with regard to all help in self, then rooted in Christ your life, your righteousness, your wisdom, your holiness, your all in all.

"And stablished in the faith." Children think as children, talk as children, but they are not always children. I wish it might be said of us we are not now children; that we are in measure established - we have broken forth (Hosea 13.13). It is a solemn and sad fact that some of the Lord's people, year after year, seem to be in the same state, no breaking forth. Instead, like unruly children they break away from home. This is sad for us and amongst the saddest of all the people of God, must be living ministers who preach and preach apparently without anything wrought, the people just the same, no concern apparently for a real deliverance. Ah, there will come a day, it may not be far off, when you will be stirred up. You may say sometimes of my preaching, it is very very discouraging; he tells us of evil days coming. But you will say one day, he is right. I desire to be free from the blood of all of you; I warn you of the days that are coming, when at midnight, like the midnight cry, in which there will be trouble. Then you will feel "the sorrows of a travailing woman" come upon you. That you have been as an "unwise son" who should not have stayed so long in "the place of breaking forth of children". O the trouble, the trouble, the atheism, the false religion, the communism. The greatest enemy, judgement at this moment, the greatest danger and the greatest evil that is coming into this nation, that is with us now, but

not prevailing at the moment, is communism, their godless schools, teaching the young to blaspheme the name of Jehovah. Well that will stir you up. It makes me afraid sometimes if I live what shall I do. God says to His people, be faithful unto death. Perhaps you may have sufficient knowledge or thought of what is coming to make you say - Make me faithful; hold me up Lord; keep me on my knees; keep me at the throne of grace; stablish me in the doctrines of grace, sovereign grace abounding over sin. Grace more than sin, sin mountains high; grace in heaven. Sin threatening to deluge you; grace, grace, grace reigning over sin. Stablished in that doctrine, in the covenant of grace. Stablished in it so as that you look at Peter's great sheet. You may see creeping things and fowls of the air and then say, I wish I might be one of them; I wish I might be found in the covenant. And you will say I do believe there is no salvation outside the covenant.

"As ye have been taught". Who teaches? The Holy Ghost. By what means? Often by sent ministers, generally by the Scriptures. Read the Scriptures dear friends, read the Scriptures. Read them, not mechanically, so many chapters a day as a kind of duty, but prayerfully, carefully and thoughtfully. They will teach you you need God and make you wise unto salvation, and wise to escape the evil day when it comes. May the Lord grant that this Scripture I have just skimmed be opened to you by the Spirit in the fulness of it, in the beauty of it, in the glory of it.

AMEN.