

Sermon Preached at Galeed Chapel Brighton by Mr J .K. Popham on
Sunday evening 8th December 1935

Text Ephesians 1. 11.

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

The fall of man is a dreadful fact. It is declared in the scripture, Adam created in creature purity fell, disobeyed, broke the law, became dead in the law, dead to God. We his children have his fall, and the consequence of it, in our nature. We follow that, that is to say, we follow the constant and powerful tendency to evil. The heart of man is set in him to do evil, and that continually. Tis a solemn truth that we here, everyone justly are, under that word in Galations "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Galations 3 verse 10).

That is our state by nature, some of us believe it, some of us have been called from it. Some of us have had given to us a new heart, and a right spirit. We can never thank God enough for it. We shall need eternity to praise Him for the knowledge, change of state, change of feeling, of proportion, of perception of God, of understanding His claims on us. Of experience, the experience that we cannot meet these claims. Of judgement that we judge these claims to be righteous. Of some understanding of the being of Jehovah, whereby we become acquainted with the terrors of the Almighty. In different measures, but in some measure. What a wonderful thing, a world of sinners, and Jehovah looked on them, and made a choice, not because some were better than others, but because He would save this and that man.

"Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left." (Matthew 24 verse 40). Dear friends if we rightly receiver it, it must very deeply affect us, it will solemnise us. It never makes a man hard hearted, who receives this doctrine in the love of it, or in the power of it. It makes him wonder. Have you not sometimes, as it were stood amazed, to hope that God did, in the counsels of peace and mercy, predestinate you to be one of His children. There is a moment in the heart when this dawns on it, that God did, in much mercy, take hold, in His decree, of such and such persons. Now the Apostle deals with it here "Predestinated, foreknown, elected."

May the Lord keep you from quarrelling with it, keep you from objecting to it. May you realise that if you quarrell with it, you quarrell with the Bible and ultimately with God who has revealed it. If you quarrell with it, that is an unforgiveable sin. May it be forgiven you. I know what that quarrell is, I entered into it deeply. "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." (Romans 8 vers 29). God owed salvation to nobody, do you believe that ? He owed salvation to none of us. What He owed to us, as fallen creatures, as docile subjects was this - punishment. His justice would have been honoured in sending us to hell, but no He said of some, thou shalt go to heaven. O wonderful, how I have stood amazed at the hope that one had. I shall be with God in heaven, a person who deserved hell. Richly deserved hell, "predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" Who hath resisted His will ? The will of God is, God willing, God purposing, decreeing. Who hath resisted it ? You may rebel, but you cannot resist it, and He worketh all things according to His own wisdom, and providence.

He has ordained that His people, shall go to heaven, that is the end, the end of their faith is their salvation. But the way to it, that is difficult, but provision is made for that, full provision is made for the journey, and that is prudent. God's working, is prudently, prudence among men is what they call, provision for the future, for this or that contingency. For example if you are to take a journey, or voyage to the tropics, you book your passage, that is the end. You have done it, you name it done. What do you do ? Do you say, now I have booked my passage, the thing is finished ? No you say, after a little time, my furs, my rags and all my thick garments will be out of place entirely, and so prudence says, make provision for what you will experience. God's end is heaven for His people. His prudence is to make provision for the journey. All their troubles and their temptations, their lusts an their pride, their dangers, all the rest they must go into.

The stones and boulders that they must meet with, these are all provided for in the provision. This may be just expressed in the word that Christ spake to Paul in his difficulty, the difficulty with the thorn in the flesh. "My grace is sufficient for thee." (2 Corinthians 12 verse 9). It shall be enough in every state and case, and it shall be enough for you. "My grace" not your will, not your resolutions, not your strength, not your foresight, as you may speak, but God's grace. "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him." (Ephesians 1 verse 10).

The fullness of times, there is a dispensation in times, times ordained. There was a time after the fall from Adam to Abraham, when the fathers were, as it is considered, priests in their own houses and families. An instance of which we have, in Job, when his sons and his daughters met in their season, probably their birthdays. The next day Job got his children to come, and sanctified them, and for sacrifices. For he said perhaps they had cursed God in their hearts. He was the head of his family and that may have been, it is thought, that was their custom. The way in which men in those early days worshiped God in their families. A time was, when God gathered Israel into a nation and put His name there, made a kingdom of priests of that nation, and set His worship up at Jerusalem. And there that nation in the priests, the Levitical priests worshiped God. The time came, when that time ended.

The time of Christ's incarnation, a wonderful time, think of it poor child of God, that the Son of God took on Him a body without sin. Took it for you, your sins imputed to Him, and He bore them on the cross. Made an end of them there. That was a wonderful time, that ended the Jewish dispensation, that ended the Levitical priesthood. There came the time of the gospel, a wonderful time, and O think of it, a time came to call you when you were dead in sins. A time came to convince you, that there was a God in heaven. A great conviction. A time came, perhaps that scripture came to your heart "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (Matthew 5 verse 8). And you said, I shall never see Him, for I am not pure in heart. A solemn time, the time of the gospel, when the law is the end of the sinner.

"Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." (Hebrews 8 verse 13). The law waxes old and decays in the mind, and in the conscience, and in the understanding, in proportion to the coming in of the gospel. When the gospel comes into your heart in a measure, if you are not fully delivered, that is a weakening of the law, and making interruption throughout eternity. Then the Apostle says "In whom (in Christ Jesus,) also we have obtained an inheritance." (Ephesians 1 verse 11).

An inheritance comes in two ways, first by succession, as when a poor man dies, his eldest son inherits at once, his title and substance, his estate. The second way is by the death of him who puts your name in his will, and this is expressed and taught in the Hebrews, because "for this cause He is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal Inheritance". (Hebrews 9 verse 15).

That is how the inheritance comes to the church of the living God. Some of you have got that, for the Testator died "For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth" (Hebrews 9 verse 17). When the testator is dead then the testament becomes of force, and Jesus died, and what He put in His testament, (that is the names written in the book of life,) they become then possessed, really of the inheritance. Actually by the work of God in their souls, they become possessed of it by faith, and ultimately, they enter upon it.

Let us look a little as helped, at this inheritance, how it comes, the particulars of it, not in the bulk, not in a word, but the particulars of it. There are particulars in this inheritance that the people of God enter upon, even here in measure. I wish I could express it graciously, and fully as it should be expressed, but the Holy Ghost has set it out in this, said in the Corinthians by Paul. He says of God who, that is Christ. "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Corinthians 1 verse 30). That is the inheritance, the inheritance entered upon in this life. Wisdom, that is Christ. "I wisdom dwell with prudence", (Proverbs 8 verse 12). "I am understanding;" (Proverbs 8 verse 14). He is "the wisdom of God in a mystery" (1 Corinthians 2 verse 7). "Which none of the princes of this world knew:" (1 Corinthians 2 verse 8). If the princes, the pharasees, scribes and sadusees, doctors and lawyers had understood who Christ was, and received Him. There would have been no redemption. Whom the princes of this world knew not, for had they known Him "they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory" (1 Corinthians 2 verse 8). O the wisdom of Christ, and the wonder of a word He uttered in wisdom, then as recorded in Matthew, He said "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." (Matthew 11 verses 25,26).

Wisdom to redeem you, wisdom to devise the scheme of salvation. Wisdom to point to one equal with Himself, even His Son to be the redeemer. Wisdom that there should be found, a way of escape from hell to heaven. A way of safety through the dangers, and the temptations of life. Christ is made wisdom, now you have got that, you who have Christ in any measure in you. And you know the way, you know the way to the throne of grace, you know the way to God in trouble, you know all the way to confession of sins, and to hope in His mercy. You know the way to come before Him as a guilty person. The law forbids you, the gospel inviters you, and enables you.

The gospel says come, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11 verse 28). He tells you to bring your troubles to Him, your afflictions, your needs, your weaknesses, your liability to fall, and to fall every minute. There is wisdom in all this, spiritual wisdom. No man could find this out of himself. Affliction alone never works well, nor troubles. Men and nations will pass on and through, how ? They shall curse their King, and their God. And the same kind of trouble comes to the church of God, and wisdom says to her "Cast thy burden upon the Lord." (Psalm 55 verse 22).

He who was on earth, your sin bearer, is in heaven now, your burden bearer. He who was crucified will cause you to cleave to Him, in your crucifixion. That is what the people of God inherit. They get it by the will of Christ, by the will of the Father, by the will of the Holy Spirit. It comes to them, first unbidden, then sought continually, and Christ as wisdom says, in that beautiful word in Proverbs. He "standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of he paths". (Proverbs 8 verse 2). He "crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city" (verse 3). "O ye simple understand wisdom" (verse 5). "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life" (verses 34; 35). Why seeker, you must find Him ultimately, not because you seek, but because He intends you to find Him. He has set you on seeking. O there is to be a wonderful union between a seeking soul and the Saviour, who has sought him. Now that is given by the will of God. An Inheritance.

And the second thing obtained, as part of this inheritance, is righteousness. I do like that word of Joseph Hart

Righteousness to full perfection
Must be brought, lacking nought,
Fearless of rejection. (800 verse 7 Gadsby's)

You have not that of your own, never will have, our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, but Christ is that righteousness. "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness." (Isaiah 45 verse 24). Do you see it ? Some get deliverance by a clear manifestation of that righteousness. A good old friend of mine, in my earliest days, got his deliverance that way. O it did trouble me, because I had not seen that, I got deliverance by forgiveness, but then if you get forgiveness, you get righteousness, and if you get righteousness you get forgiveness. Righteousness, Whose ? Christ's. His only. It does this, it clears your character, it alters your state as a sinner. It removes you from the law, and puts you into the covenant of grace.

It makes you a person acceptable to God. It says that the law has no claim on you, that your surety fulfilled the law for you. And that now in the court of justice, God acquits you, and you have no stain upon you, no guilt attaching to you. That is justification. Seek it dear souls, seek it feeling as you may be now, in your own unrighteousness. You will inherit this blessing one day, when the Holy Spirit reveals to you, that Christ is your righteousness. You will gladly part with your rags, you will gladly receive that robe, and put it on by faith, and sing:

I'm clean just God, I'm clean.

(29 verse 4 [adjusted from third to first person ie. We're to I'm] Gadsby's)

O what a mercy to be "justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts 13 verse 39). Two standings are, first in sin, second the other in righteousness. The one exposing us to God's anger, the other making us acceptable to the infinitely just God. What a wonder to have this, it is a title to heaven, it is a meetness for the presence of a just God. To be a just person is indeed wonderful.

In the next place this is inherited sanctification. I believe that every new born soul pants for holiness, and as growing in grace, there is in that soul a clear perception of what this means - sanctification. How stumbled is a child of God, in his earlier days, when there is some eruption of sin, some prevailance to sin. If it comes sinner, after deliverance it is a kind of shock, and it shakes the soul to pieces.

I had that experience, O to find after forgiveness, that sin remained, and that it came up and prevailed. And worse, if worse it could be, you find you have a love for it, that the old man continued. Sanctification, why it is a word that frightens a child of God, at such times. Sanctification, I know nothing of it, he may conclude, but it is false, he does know something about it. Sanctification is effectual in the affections, as righteousness is effectual, in the standing of a person before God. It is the work of God's Spirit in two ways, first in the application of the blood of Christ "That He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate". (Hebrews 13 verse 12). He died to sanctify His people, His blood sanctifies them. Every offering on the annual day of atonement for the Jews, made that people acceptable to God, typically it sanctified them. When a child of God receives the atonement, that sanctifies him, he is cleansed. The word of Christ as recorded in John's gospel, is a beautiful word. "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet," (John 13 verse 10).

He that is washed, in the washing of regeneration, that washing is effectual for ever. But "his feet" his walk, his inward walk, his thoughts, I need not innumerate, you will understand. The lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life. The temptations to which you become a prey, and many, many other things, these defile the feet. And the washing of the feet, is the work of sanctification, that blessed work that effectually, from time to time cleanses a sinner.

Now many of you know what defiled feet mean, I know what they mean. defiled feet. ? Did you ever get through a day, without your feet being defiled ? do you expect to get through a day without it ? You could, (I would not limit the Holy Spirit of God in His operations,) but mean it is His ordinary way, it appears not to be. We get defiled, but O the provision for the washing of the feet is wonderful, beautiful. Go to the fountain dear friends, when your feet get dirty. Go to the fountain and to the Holy Ghost, and ask Him to put matters right, that you yourself have put wrong. To cleans you from your vain and foolish, and vile thoughts.

An inheritance, the blessed inheritance of sanctification, and that is you enter into it. The Lord give you to feel some hope, that you are called, in that sense in which Paul speaks to the Romans "Called to be saints" (Romans 1 verse 7). As Paul speaks to Timothy "Who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 1 verse 9). Holy brethren I have been frightened of these promises at times. Holy brethren, to be called to be saints. Why you may say, you cannot bear to look at it. Why ? Because you are so defiled, so by nature unclean. Christ is made sanctification, and that sanctification is brought by the mighty operations of the Holy Ghost.

Redemption, He is made that. A sinner by nature under the law, and a captive, has freedom by Christ. Wonderful, if you get an hour of this holy redemption in your walk with God. You will never forget it. As to the thing itself, you may lose sight of it. It may be questioned, but it will be there, God wrought it. Redemption, the price paid, everything settled, Now, says the Holy Ghost. "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord". (Philippians 3 verse 1). "and again I say rejoice." (Philippians 4 verse 4).

Would we then rejoice indeed ?
Be it that from Thee wer're freed;
And our justest cause to grieve
Is that thou wilt to us cleave. (154 verse 3 Gadsby's)

Being predestinated to this, God has ordained, and I believe every one to whom this predestination to an inheritance is made known, falls down in humble worship, adoration and praise. Then he says, I do bless God, that He ordained me to eternal life, that He gave me an inheritance in Christ that is "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away," (1 Peter 1 verse 4). That cannot pass away from your possession, what you say, I say again, it cannot pass away from your possession. You may lose the hold of it in your experience, you may forget there is such a thing as an inheritance, made over to you by the Lord. Because you are dark, and because God deserts you for something, for some good purpose, but the inheritance does not pass away.

The minor too, he may think, I shall never get it, but it comes uncorruptably, There is nothing here that is not corruptable, nothing, no possession that may not corrupt. No good that may not die, but this, O this is the one thing that we need, incorruptable, undefiled, everlasting inheritance, and when the Holy Ghost reveals this, it brings all the peace that is needed, all the peace that can be desired, and this is according to the will of God. The eternal will of God, the will of God is, God willing. You cannot divide the will of God. Attempts have been made to divide the will of God, into a permissive and a declarative will, but it does not stand well. One will is in God, acting differently. He decrees to permit something, as He decreed to permit the fall. He decrees to bring a soul to heaven, that will be done, according to the will of God.

My dearly beloved friends, the one thing worth being born for and living for is to have an inheritance in God. Whatever we may have by inheritance in this world will pass away, at any rate we shall pass away from it. But what God has given in Christ abides, it is undefiled, and therefore cannot die. Nothing that is absolutely pure can die, so an inheritance that is absolutely pure, is everlasting.

May the Lord make this out to us. It is worth seeking, it is worth waiting for, and all who seek it and wait for it must receive it one day. For "He that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." (Luke 11 verse 10).

I am sorry not to preach better, but God can make this feeble testimony useful to you. May He do so, and be gracious to us, for His own sermons and mercies sake.

Amen.