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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday morning 22 June 1924

TEXT; EPHESIANS 2 VERSE 18

"For through Him we both have access by one Spirit
unto the Father"

The high privilege, the infinite mercy, of this text must be regarded as having a very distressing opposite. If by Christ we have access to the Father, we may enquire how it came to pass that we ever were shut out from the Father. This brings before us that which many people don't like to hear about but which, unless they know by the teaching of the Spirit in this life, they will know it in condemnation through eternity. If any of your eyes and hearts are closed against the knowledge and the acknowledgement of the fall, of your sin by inheritance, of your sins in practice, if you do not know them, see them, feel them, confess them, and forsake them, if you are unacquainted with the mystery of iniquity in your own hearts, if you do not see and acknowledge how justly you, the children of Adam, were expelled from the Garden of Eden, O woe be to you, for eternity in the awful justice of God will set before hearts and eyes and fix on your persons the just judgment due to you. I think the state of a person who cannot bear the preaching of sin is a very bad one. I think, if any of you turn your hearts and your minds away from this gloomy subject, it is a very serious aspect, it looks very, very bad and God alone can deliver you from so evil a state of mind.

Let us look then at the condition into which we were plunged by Adam's sin and into which we have more deeply, with all the consent of our nature, plunged ourselves by actual transgression. It was a beautiful creation, a beneficent formation of us and a placing of us in Eden by God our Creator. It was wonderful that such a being should come from the hands of God, endowed with all that is beautifully excellent, so made and formed, as to be pronounced very good by God Himself, placed in circumstances most

wonderful, beautiful. Just think for a moment of what you were, what we all were in Adam, our father, and where we were placed, where the wisdom and goodness of God were very conspicuous. A garden prepared for the man, every tree for use and delight and all open to him who was placed there, every creature put into subjection under him, he, in the wisdom given to him, giving names to all of them. A will in perfect equipoise, perfectly straight, with no bias, this way or that way, an understanding to know the Creator, a mind, pure, a will, pure, an understanding clear, affections warm and all toward God. This was our case as in Adam. Adam was mankind, Adam was our head and all the goodness that he had we had, all the benefits, the advantages he had, we had. He was not lawless, he was made under the law and we were in him. The whole of the scripture, the whole of the revelation of God and the whole of His dealings in providence with men hang here. We were not made sinners, God made man upright. Now if we follow this, if we come to strict law, as indeed we must, if we acknowledge that Adam was well placed, that the beneficence of God was very conspicuous in His dealing with Adam, if we come to the tree which he was not to touch, not to eat of and see Eve there, in her innocence, approached by the serpent, deceived by the serpent, if we see her falling, falling a prey to the subtlety of the serpent, if we see that tree, forbidden to her and her husband, and then see her eating of it and giving him to eat of it and see that their eyes were open to their condition and then see God walking in that garden, now defiled, in the cool of the day, and calling out to the guilty pair who were hiding themselves in their vanity, in their ignorance, already so great, and see Him bringing them forth from their hiding and dealing with them, what shall we say, what can we say. Was Adam alone? Did he represent only himself? No! He brought sin into the world, and death by sin and this could not be unless there was previously a union with him of all who participated in the punishment due to his sin. And then see this great God. Did you ever see Him, this great God, and you a son of Adam. I have so seen Him. I have seen myself, a son of Adam, as it were, taken by this great and just God and expelled, driven out of that garden. What a providence, what a visitation, what a just act. And so man was expelled for sin, driven from the

source of goodness, cut off from the fountain of life and light, life in the first covenant, light in that covenant. Cut off, no more sight of God with pleasure in that covenant, no new, no fresh, sweet communications from God by that covenant. No access to Him, the gate closed and barred and an angel standing there with a sword flaming and turning every way so that all the devices of a man should be met by that sword, that nothing in man, nothing that could be done by man, nothing that could be devised by man, should ever effect an entrance into that garden from which now he was justly driven. Sinner, this is your case, son of Adam, this is your condition, this is how you stand, driven from your home, driven away from God, driven from that that sustains your life, from Him with whom you had a proper union in creation, driven away. And between you and this God there can be no communion as under that law which you broke in him, no friendly smile, no kind word, but just death. If you look at this in the teaching of the Spirit, you will see what a condition you are brought into by your sin. Think of what it is to have no God, to be without God in the world, to have no hope in Him, no hope of a blessing, no mitigation of your sufferings, no blessing in your troubles, no security of any mercy you have, nor of your life. Think of this condition and no prospect of good for eternity. This, dear friends, is the case of every one of us, a congregation of sinners, a congregation of wanderers, a congregation of vagabonds, without home, without God, without hope for eternity, without security in time, living on undeserved kindness, living on mercy not promised, on providence not immutable. O sinner, look at it, God give you grace to do it, and look into your heart. You will, as the Spirit may teach you. What is there? Unfathomable deceit, desperate wickedness. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it" Look at your future. What is that? Of God, this is said - that "He will drive the wicked into hell with all nations that forget God". That is the prospect, this is our case as in Adam, as under the law, this is our case. If we die in this case, what will become of us? The pit will swallow us up and shut her mouth upon us. Should I be a true minister if I talked about Christ and never mentioned this case? I know there is a cry, preach Christ, preach Christ, preach Christ, but let us

see our need of Him, God teach us this. May I preach Christ, but may I preach Christ given, Christ coming, Christ working, dying, ascending into heaven to accomplish in all that the holy will of God. And what was that? He came to save the lost. Oh it would be a good day for some of you if this day God opened your eyes and quickened your souls and made you see and feel your state in Adam and by your own transgressions. It would be a grand day for you, this would, if you were born again. It wont be long before you will die. O but may you be quickened first and brought to know your state and Jesus Christ the Redeemer.

Then we were driven from life and from wealth, from uprightness. That is to say, we forfeited all those mercies, and God drove us away from that place, that garden, in which we had and enjoyed them. So now we have the greatest poverty that is possible, which is death. We have the greatest evil which is possible, which is sin, and we are under a law that is inexorable, it wont abate one jot or tittle of its demands, its claims. Now if we can follow this, in the teaching of the Spirit, we are prepared, so to put it, to listen to this great text. this beautiful mercy and look on this wonderful vision, of sinners admitted into the presence of Him who drove them out of Eden. Admitted to His friendship, to His, more than once, forfeited smile, to His mercies, to a new covenant, to a new relationship with Him, to a new vision, not promised in the first promise. And here is a wonder of love, a wonder of wisdom, a wonder of power, a wonder of the illimitable ocean of God's mercy in which, if we be favoured with this entrance, we shall swim for ever. Let us look at this as we may be enabled a little.

The Apostle, in the context, treats of Jews and Gentiles, different from each other both in race and religion. In religion, by the providence and greatness of God, these two, racially and religiously very much opposed each to the other. Gentiles, without God, without the Covenant given to the Jews, without the oracles of God committed to the Jews, without religion such as came from heaven to the Jews in the Covenant, and in their separation. We have these two races, so opposed, so opposing, brought together, the irreligion of the one and the

religion of the other equally abolished as to all influence, into the new relationship set up in Christ. Uncircumcision is no hindrance, grievous a hindrance as it was nationally, racially, terrible. While the Jews enjoyed all the privileges of the national Covenant, the Gentiles were excluded from every one of them, and now, for we poor Gentiles and the Jews who are called individually (here you find one and another but hereafter, it may be not very long, God only knows, that they shall be called as a nation and then both those who are enemies to God and have enmity in their minds, those shall come to God, and, the enmity being destroyed by the cross and the hand writing of ordinances that was against all, nailed to the cross and so taken out of the way,) there is an open door and we have access.

"For through Him". May I mention first of all that we have in this wonderful, blessed text, the Trinity. O my brethren, if we are going to heaven, we are going there by the joint love and action of the Eternal Father, the Eternal Son and the Eternal Spirit. Is it then indifferent whether or no we acknowledge the Trinity? No! Everything hangs here, the fountain of life, the foundation of the church, the salvation of every individual member of the church, all, all things, hang on this wondrous God, ineffably, mysteriously to us, incomprehensibly, subsisting in three Persons revealed in the scriptures as the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. And may we be kept from confounding the Persons in the Trinity, may we be enabled with our hearts to acknowledge the Father. If we truly acknowledge the Father, if we believe in the Father, we must acknowledge and we shall believe that He has, as the Scripture teaches us, a Son, one only Son, and that that Son is one with Him in eternal relationship, begotten of His very substance so that God has only one only begotten Son. And if we so believe, we also believe that from the Father and the Son the Holy Ghost proceeds. Never try to understand this, but pray for faith to receive and believe it and hold it, hold it fast, not confound the Persons, for if the Persons are confounded then what can you say? If there be no Father, He had no Son to send, and the Scripture teaches us what is not true. If He had a Son, then His eternal love is exalted beyond all expression in this that He gave His only begotten Son,

and if we believe in this Person, this second Person, then we see how wonderful is the love of God in sending His only begotten Son and, as John teaches in his Gospel, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth". Look on it as a fundamental, as an essential, as a glorious truth that there are three Persons in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost and that these three Persons bear record and that they are one, these three are one. The Sonship of Christ is His Deity, His Deity is His Sonship, the one follows, or stands with, the other, and if the Sonship be denied, it is not easy to comprehend how His eternal Deity can be believed. Now this blessed Trinity is before us. My friends, I will, as God helps me, keep it before you the little time I have to preach, for you will never get to heaven without this doctrine with all it contains. I do not say each one in the church of Christ in the same degree of clearness enters into it, but I do say it will be the very thing that every child of God will receive, acknowledge, and be favoured with, that there is one only God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Now the Apostle tells us in the text that it is through the Lord Jesus Christ as a door, as the door, that sinners have access to the Father and that that access through Christ is had and experienced by the Holy Ghost, for through Him who came and preached peace to you which were afar off, the Gentiles, and to them that were nigh in the national covenant and religion, the Jews, we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Then I must first notice the door. "I am the door" This is noticeable indeed and to be observed. Would you get to the Father? Here is the way. Would you see the Father smile? Here is the way. Would you enter into the blessings of the new covenant? Here is the way. Would you know that you are newly, in another manner, and better than of old, to be related to God? Here is the way. Would you enjoy the sweet favour of God and have communion with Him? Here is the way. Would you escape the wrath to come and find now, rather than the old way opened, a new and living way? This is the way. "I am the door" Jesus Christ, very God and very Man, in His Person, in His work, is the way of entrance unto God and all that that means and if you have seen Adam, your head, if

you have acknowledged him to be your head in your creation and covenant, you will want to see Christ, and to see that, while Adam prepared for you and you prepared for yourself expulsion from Eden, and all that it meant, you will want to see Christ, the door and the entrance into the new covenant and into life and all else that the gospel reveals. O this blessed Lord Jesus, I wish I knew Him better and loved Him better and served Him better and that I could preach Him to you as He deserves to be preached. O what a Christ He is, above all principality and power exalted. He has a Name which is above every Name. At His Name every knee must bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord of all. This Jesus is to the soul the only door of entrance into divine mercy, into divine privileges, into the new covenant. A way from sin, a way from curse, a way from hell, a way from the justice of God, so outraged. This Jesus is a way from all these things and a way into love and into life and into the covenant, and into a good standing before God. Jesus is the way. Brethren, as you are exercised look to this Lord Jesus. Do you feel distant from God sometimes? Do you wish to get near to Him? Do you wish to have union with Him? Do you pray that you may know Him. Behold the way to God. On Jordan's bank John preached Him. He said "Behold the Lamb of God" the only way of escape. Isaac must be sacrificed except there be found one, a creature, to stand in his stead, so the ram was caught in the thicket by its horns, and you must be sacrificed unless God came, first took your nature, and then your place, under the law. It must be so, you will never live in God's sight with happiness, that is holiness, without this blessed Lord Jesus Christ. How sweet is His Name to a sensible sinner, how sweet He is as the way of access to the Father, the way into the blessings of the everlasting covenant. What a good, what a wonderful, what a glorious God He is, for He is God as well as Man. But how could He be the door, the way, the entrance into life? How could He be? We are sinners and the law is inexorable, the law wont abate any part of your debt, it wont give way in any particular, it wont say, unsatisfied, I go away that this sinner may enter into life. It cannot do it. God is just. Would you wish Him other than just? Would you wish that He were lenient, at the expense of His character, that you might escape even though His character had a blot on it by your

escape? No! An honest, that is to say an enlightened conscience, says, - No, let God be magnified, let Him be right, whatever becomes of me. Then how can the sinner have access to God? By Christ, by the death of Christ. Says the Apostle "He reconciled both unto God in one body", that is the church, "by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" And in the Colossians, we are told - He took the hand writing of ordinances that was against us and contrary to us, out of the way, nailing it to His cross. Death is life here, the shame of Jesus Christ is the glory of the church, the sufferings of Jesus Christ are the healing of the church and O to see this is to see the greatest manifestation of the love and the wisdom and the power of God. This is the door, by Him we have entrance. "I am the door, by Me if any man enter he shall go in and out and find pasture". He shall find good, all that God has devised, all that He has given, the sinner has by entering in by Jesus Christ. What a gospel this is, how it meets poor people and condemned sinners. How it fits them. They can do nothing, legally they can do nothing. Think of it for a moment, I have found, I think, good in contemplating this point. Legally I can do nothing to relieve myself, to deliver myself. What can the murderer in England do to relieve himself by that law which he has broken and which condemns him to death? If that is so look at it as an illustration of your case. O sinner you can do nothing under the law, legally you are shut up, legally you are condemned. Then if one shall come who is able to say it, and to carry it out, if one shall come and say that sinner's place I will take, his condemnation I will bear, his debt I will suffer in his place, in all particulars I will stand. He shall live by my death, he shall be justified by my death by my righteousness, he shall be sanctified by my holiness. If one should come and say and accomplish all that, then he who said and accomplished it is the way for that sinner into all good. Do you believe it? O sweet is the faith that apprehends this, O blessed is the eye that looks on this mystery, this mercy. O wonderful is the gospel that reveals this to a sinner, God in Christ, reconciling the sinner unto Himself, not imputing his trespasses unto him, for He made Jesus Christ to be sin. "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in

Him" What does your heart say to this? One says I would get near to God in this way, I would come and look on Him and receive Him and the blessings that are couched in Him. I would go and cleave to Him and love Him and repent in the sight of His pain and grief and shame. I would go and feel the love of God to my soul if only I might. Here is a new and living way through Him the Eternal God, Jesus Christ, through Him, suffering and groaning and bleeding and dying.

"We both have access" The Apostle Paul uses this word "access" in the Romans, this word "access" and says "Through Him we both have access into this grace wherein we stand". We get in His grace. This is the only way. Here is law, we are in it, we were born in it, we have lived in it, and we cannot get out of it naturally. Now, says the Apostle, we have access into something else, into the grace of life, the grace of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the grace of the Holy Spirit. We have access into this grace and we stand in this grace, the grace of Christ, the grace of the Father and the grace of the Spirit. We have an entrance into this grace and therefore we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And in this Epistle in another place, the Apostle says - we have access, through Him we have access with boldness and confidence. Faith lives in this, faith has confidence in this, faith has boldness in this and you will feel it sometimes, you who get it, you will feel it, confidence that God cannot lie, confidence that Christ is sufficient, confidence that His blood can atone for the blackest sin and remove it, confidence that the Lord will fulfil His word - "He that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out". Confidence that the goodness of God will lead to repentance and in the Lord, who has said "He that believeth shall not be condemned". Faith lays hold of this. And boldness - liberty. Ah faith will lift your face up when the law condemns and casts you down, faith will tell you there is a good God when the law tells you He is only just. Faith will set before you infinite kindness, when the law sets before you only infinite justice. By Him we have access. So dear friends did you get access to God at any time? Did He let you come near Him? Did He encourage you to draw near? Did He tell you to come with boldness in the Name of His dear Son and

did He smile as you tried to come trembling and fearful? Did He smile and smile away those guilty fears and all that jealousy that you had in your heart? O what a good God He has been to you. Something of this one knows. I know what it is to be shut out. I have acknowledged the justice of my expulsion from Eden and from the presence of God, but O how wonderful has been the opposite, nearness to God. A people near unto Him, in His heart, His love, in His mercy, in His new covenant, new covenant which is thus expressed in the scripture, "I will forgive their sin and remember their iniquity no more." Well brethren I leave it here for this morning. May the Lord set before you the two things which I have tried to set before you, your state in Adam, your better state in Christ, and may He keep you who listen, perhaps with little or no interest, keep you from pushing aside the truth and turning your eyes from it. Rather may He quicken and bless you and give you to perceive your dreadful condition in Adam and the law, that you may earnestly covet to receive intimations from God that there is another door open for you into a different and a better state, and into an immutable state in Jesus Christ.

AMEN.