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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Wednesday evening 2 October, 1929

JOHN 1 verses 35/36/37

"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus"

This remarkable chapter begins by declaring the eternal deity of Christ. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God". One of the greatest proofs of the inspiration of Holy Scripture is, to my mind, this verse, stating the profound, incomprehensible mystery of God and of the distinct personalities in the Godhead. If men will contend for an inspiration of suggestion only, what will they make of this? How could any man, mere man, with suggestions of deity perhaps brought to him, have expressed the profound, incomprehensible mystery as here we have it expressed? But that is just by the way. What I would say is this, that this Person, the Word, is also called the only begotten Son, the only begotten Son dwelling in the bosom of the Father. So dear friends what a Person you believe in if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. This Word, this Son, this only begotten Son, was made flesh, became man, was made under the law, took the nature of the children, became the captain of their salvation and was made perfect through sufferings. He cried with strong crying and tears unto His eternal Father and was heard in that He feared. O see this great God in this humble condition looking to His Father, waiting on His Father, and bearing the burden and the curse of imputed sin. Of all the mysteries the Scripture reveals, this is the greatest, the Word made flesh, and it says this, as one effect, that the religion which the people of God have is a religion that has the highest possible praise in it. It has its origin in heaven, it has a power in the heart, it gathers the soul up to God, it unites the soul with God, it brings redemption into the conscience, it brings love into the affections, it brings a King to the heart, it brings the atonement to the conscience. O it is a great religion that

great sinners have. It is a great God who reveals Himself to them and dwells in them and this Person, this Lord Jesus, Son of God and man and of whose Godhead, Name and blood you were singing, John was sent to proclaim, to be a forerunner, to be the voice of one crying in the wilderness and he knew that he was a forerunner. He knew that this incarnate Word was to come, to be made manifest to Israel and that he, therefore, was sent to baptise. He knew that this coming Saviour would baptise with the Holy Ghost and would make good the word which later was uttered by Himself that the Holy Ghost should be in the believer a well of water springing up into everlasting life. But until this baptism of Christ took place it seems that John had no personal acquaintance with the Man Christ Jesus. He knew He was to come, but now the day arrived when the given sign came to John's vision. He was told that upon whom he should see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is the one who was promised, who should come suddenly to His temple and He came and John said, I saw; I saw. O the sight that John got then, the vision of faith, and the vision of the very Person of whom he had been told and whose coming he prophesied. What a sight! It made him a preacher of Him in a moment. He said "Behold the Lamb of God". And after that day of Christ's baptism, the day afterwards, John stood with two disciples and the text tells us this - "Again the next day after John stood and two of his disciples" and the Lord Jesus whom he had baptised the previous day came along. John saw Him walking and the sight again affected his heart and loosened his tongue and again he said, said to these two men, two of his own disciples, "Behold the Lamb of God", and the sight so got hold of them that they left their master John and followed Jesus. The middle verse of these three is the one I would particularly call your attention to. "And looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God". We do not follow a cunningly devised fable when we speak of Christ as being a real Man. Heresy very soon crept into the church of Christ and there were men who began to speak as if there had only been an apparition or only a fancy, not a real Man, but John saw a real Man and the disciples of John here spoken to saw that same real Man and you, O you, O believer, who, by faith believe the testimony of the Scripture and have had the revealing light of the Holy Ghost in your hearts, you believe that Christ is a Man, a real Man. You have sung, we have all sung again and again the word of Hart

A Man there is, a real Man,
With wounds still gaping wide
From which rich streams of blood once ran
In hands and feet and side

'Tis no wild fancy of our brains
No metaphor we speak
That same dear Man in heaven now reigns
That suffered for our sake

O it is great to be enabled to hold fast the sacred humanity of the Lord Jesus. No salvation without that, no access to the eternal God except through the rent veil of the Saviour's real humanity, no redemption except by the Man Christ Jesus united to the eternal Son of God. Brethren hold fast that, stand on that ground, the reality of the sacred humanity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Now John's word - "Behold the Lamb of God". And first, a word about the Lamb of God. When did Christ become the Lamb of God? The Scriptures tell us that He was foreordained before the world, that He was then, in the purpose of God, the blemishless Lamb of God. A Lamb without blemish and without spot foreordained before the world unto our glory. It is a great thing to believe in the decrees of God, especially in that decree in which all others found their being, so to say, and their strength and their beauty, and their glory, the decree concerning the incarnation of the only begotten Son of God. Salvation had its rise in eternity. It was not in the purpose of God subsequent to the fall, and an afterthought and purpose. The Lamb foreordained before the world began, of whom there is that beautiful type of which we were speaking last Lord's Day, the Paschal Lamb, a beautiful type of the Lamb who then, in God's heart and decree, existed. See the position of the church here. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world having predestinated us unto the adoption of children to Himself by Jesus Christ." This is the beginning, so to express it. He was the Lamb of God in the decree of God in eternity and there was no uncertainty

concerning His coming. In the history of the Jewish nation and the dispersion of the ten tribes, we see the preserving providence of God in keeping the kingly tribe of Judah, of whom Christ should come. That tribe must not be utterly broken to pieces until the Messiah should have come. O the workings of God "who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" according to His eternal grace and purpose. Providence is admirable, providence is wonderful and providence is intimately connected with the Lord Jesus. It seems not particular, put naturally, that a mere kingly tribe, as Judah, should remain, who Hosea said "But Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints" (Hosea 11 v 12) And when the Messiah came, the multitude of the heavenly host sang "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men". So He is the Lamb of God before the foundation of the world. He is the Lamb of God manifested in due time. In due time He came, which is called "the fulness of the time" that is the fulness of the time appointed by the Father and in that fulness of time Christ came. If it were given to see by the Holy Ghost the miracle of the incarnation in the glory of it, to see God taking the nature of the children, to see the mystery by faith that can never be comprehended, of the holy eternal God descending and taking into union with Himself our frail nature, that He might be like unto the children - "For the children being partakers of flesh and blood He likewise took part of the same" - we should admire, and adore and love this great One who condescended to come from the highest to the lowest. "Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth" (Ephesians 4 v 9). May we love the incarnation of the Son of God. No redemption without it.

The Lamb of God must be without blemish and this gives a beauty to the types of Him. You remember that the sacrifices under the old dispensation were to be without blemish. The Paschal Lamb must be of the first year without blemish. And when the sacrifices were made, before being offered they had to have their inwards washed, their legs and their inwards washed with water, to express in type this beautiful thing concerning Christ that He had no blemish and it tells us this, that God could accept nothing that had a blemish in it, that He is pleased with nothing but perfection and a perfect Saviour therefore pleased Him. "Behold the Lamb of God" without a blemish,

without spot or wrinkle or infirmity of a kind that would be sinful. And the Lamb of God was for a sacrifice. Jesus was sent for a sacrifice and Jesus came to offer Himself without spot to God. Jesus intervened in the quarrel of men with God and God's anger with men. Jesus came and stood in the breach and came and offered Himself willingly, offered Himself lovingly, offered Himself in a sufficiency to please God and to satisfy justice. The Lamb of God must die. "He was led as a Lamb to the slaughter", had nothing to say against justice when it arrested Him, had nothing to say against the sword of justice when it was appointed to him, and was about to thrust itself into His very heart; had no complaint to offer. He was as a Man who had no reproofs in His mouth. He was there, a Substitute, to do the work of a Substitute. He was there as a Lamb to be offered and He, also being a Priest, offered Himself without spot to God. Jesus was that Lamb, that wondrous Lamb, the Substitute, giving His life for the lives of a company that no man can number, shedding His blood to wash away the guilt and the stain of sin. Jesus was sent to be a sweet savour unto God. It is written He offered Himself a sweet savour unto God. And to the church spoken about by Ezekiel, God said this. "I will accept you with your sweet savour". The people over whom He had been reigning in the wilderness with terror and an outstretched arm, these very people should come to Him with their guilt and then He said "I will accept you with your sweet savour", and that was in the Lamb, the holy Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God. Behold Him therefore on the cross. What a place for the eternal God to be in. "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree", and the anger of God was burning against this Surety instead of burning to the lowest hell all the election of grace. And there was this Lamb, there was this Lord Jesus on the cross. "And I" He said "if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto Me". This spoke He of the death which He should die. What a sight! If you get it, if I get it, we shall know what it is; the sight of all sights. See Him on the cross then, dear friends. This was the Man of whom John spake, whose forerunner John was and this is the greatest preaching that John ever preached when, seeing Jesus walking, he said to the two disciples who were then with him, "Behold the Lamb of God". See that Man, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose. See Him who is preferred before me because He was before me and because I am determined He shall be before me. Ah there is infinitude here, deity and humanity in one Person here. Here is

love infinite, here is justice infinite, here is mercy infinite, and all in this blessed Lamb of God; a sufficiency of merit, when known to faith. Faith then moves the sinner to sing

I stand upon His merit

I know no other stand

Now in the next place I want to speak about the sight, the seeing. He is the Object. There is a seeing of Him spoken of here. It is not every man who has eyes to see this great sight. "All men have not faith" said the Apostle Paul and therefore all men cannot see this man, this Lamb of God. So we must come to a vital point in experimental religion. There is the Lamb of God whether we see Him or not. There He is on the cross, whether we get the sight of Him there or not. He is in heaven, whether we see Him there or not. A searching thing this, a matter that will bring you and bring me, if we are rightly concerned about our souls and about the character of God, to an examination of self. Have we faith? Have we faith? No sight of Christ if there be no faith in us. Naked knowledge wont do. The letter of truth wont do. The doctrine of the atonement wont do, if alone. So may we look at this "Behold". Ah, it was more than a man these two disciples, together with their master John, saw when they went after Him. There was a power, there was an attraction. There came union. Matters of vital importance were in their souls and now they saw sufficiency to answer and meet these matters in the Man of whom they were now just hearing. "Behold the Lamb of God". Previously John had said "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world", not of the Jewish nation, of all in the human race to whom Christ was sent to be a Redeemer. Well then faith in the first place sees in Christ's Person the very Person that is needed. Now that is one point for us to be very careful about. Not an idea of a Saviour, but a sight of that Saviour as being the One who can meet exactly the case that we are in. You know what I mean who have got faith.

Jesus, Thy Godhead, blood and Name

O 'tis eternal life to know

Now if we get this sight of Him this will be one effect. We shall find

such an attraction in Him as will move our souls, with all the weight of guilt, with all the perplexity of indwelling sin, with all the objections of a legal spirit, after Him. O to know Him will be the language of a self-condemned and law condemned sinner. O to know Him whom to know is life eternal. And this is like a scarlet thread running through the whole of a christian's life and experience. O to know Christ. None but Jesus, none but this Man, this God Man, this Substitute, this great High Priest, this Atoner. O none but Christ. His mediation is seen by faith to be sufficient for us. No tongue can adequately express the suitability of Christ to a sinner and the suitability of the sinner for Christ. But wherever that suitability, mutual suitability, is felt, is seen, then there is an attraction to the Lord Jesus. Neither sin, nor law, nor devil, can keep the sinner away from following after the Lord when that sight of Him is given by the Holy Ghost. Now we may well pause here and put the question seriously to ourselves. Let for the moment the objections you feel about your cases, the uncertainty of them, and your difficulties and your sinning and your failings, let these objections and matters for the moment go and just put this question. Now have I had that sight of the Lord Jesus that has said in my heart here is just the remedy you need for your malady. Here is the Mediator, here is the Intercessor, here is the God sent Saviour, behold Him. It is not a cursory glance, it is not an indifferent thought about Him, but it is, if I may so say, it is a penetrating view that faith has of Him that says in the sinner, this is the Saviour. Here is the new and living way to God. Now this faith will run to one place, namely to Calvary where the Lamb was slain and will pray to the Holy Ghost, more or less distinctly

Conduct, blest Guide, Thy sinner train
To calvary where the Lamb was slain
And with us there abide

O my brethren, all good is here. Forgiveness, justification of the believer in Jesus without works, sanctification, making a sinner acceptable to God, here. Here is the new and living way which the Holy Ghost declares in the Scripture, and preaches in the conscience, and here is God reconciling the sinner unto Himself by Jesus Christ, not imputing his trespasses unto him. It is a great thing, it

makes a man a christian. When he sees this blessed Lord Jesus, it makes him a christian. It is like the Spirit of Christ overshadowing the soul. It is a wave of God's goodness passing over the spirit. It is real baptising of the Holy Ghost. Greater measure of it may be later, but here is the very thing. It is the baptism of the Spirit coming into the soul of a sinner. It is God's holy Word, life, love and power coming into a sinner, Jesus on the accursed tree seen by faith. And it is a very intimate and near sight that is given to sinners sooner or later. I mean what the Apostle Paul writes to the Galatians. They got such a sight of Christ as that he then reproveth them because they had turned away from Him. "O foolish Galatians who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" As I have more than once said on that, it is as if the Apostle said, now Christ was crucified in your stead and you gathered together and looked on Him and you got such a sight of Him as to marry you to Him and now you have been bewitched and turned away. O it is a great thing to get this vision of Christ crucified. And you find that Paul the aged was not tired of this subject. To the Galatians he says at the conclusion of his important epistle - "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world," as if he should say the life and soul and consistency and continuance of a gracious experience lies just here in the Lord Jesus on the cross and this will sometimes be an instruction to some who perhaps, when they were young, thought they would grow and grow and grow and get out of what people call the seventh chapter of Romans into the eighth chapter. But they find as they get older they are glad of this that Paul expresses "But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ". Beware of Plymouth Brethrenism that will transplant you from the seventh chapter of Romans to the eighth and you will forget the conflict, and if you forget the conflict I will tell you what else you will forget; you will forget the remedy, the Saviour, and an awful thing that. Well, what a mercy it is to be held to it as the Apostle Paul was - "But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ". O keep to this as God helps you. "Behold the Lamb of God".

Now I would like to say this. The sight is a very filling sight.

It leaves no room for anything else. In respect of salvation, in respect of satisfaction, in respect of justification, in respect of sanctification, in respect of access to God and acceptance with Him, this sight so fills the soul as to leave no room for other things; self remedies. There are other things such as obedience, obedience to the ordinances of God's house, holy walking, holy brethren, as we have it but in respect of the vitals and the fundamentals that I have named, there is no room for anything. It must have filled John wonderfully and it filled those two disciples. Behold Him then as I have named.

Now notice what is written. "And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus". This answers to what Paul says - "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" Have not you found that some of you have heard the word sometimes, a chapter, or a verse or a sentence or two, in a sermon, and faith has been born, and that blessed faith has gone to the Lord Jesus, Jesus in whom is seen the very fulness of God and the fulness of human nature, the fulness of divine atonement and the fulness of all that is necessary and desirable by the people of God. "And they followed Jesus". What is it to follow Him but to believe in Him? And what attends believing in Him? Loving Him, cleaving to Him, cleaving to Him with purpose of heart and this follows, a valuing of Him above all else. This must be at times felt by the people of God. None but Jesus, they say, can do our helpless souls good. And Christ Himself says in the Proverbs, "I love them that love Me". "Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness", (Proverbs 8 verses 17 and 18) and I will fill the treasures of all who follow Me. Sinner, there is enough for you, there is enough for you

Christ has blessings to impart
Grace to save thee from thy fears
O the love that fills His heart
Sinner wipe away thy tears

It is all wrapped up in this "Behold the Lamb of God". See the Father's love to Him. My Father loveth Me because I lay down My life. See the Spirit's love for Him. He loves to glorify Him, and therefore He reveals Him. And see the Saviour's love; He says "Come unto

Me".

Now dear friends, I have just called your attention to this great subject and I know, I know that it is a vital necessity for every one who is concerned about being saved, who does not want to make himself right, but prays the Saviour to make Him right. May the Lord give us this sight and we shall be satisfied. "Behold the Lamb of God." And the two disciples that heard him speak followed Jesus.

AMEN.