

Sermon preached by Mr. J. K. Popham,
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton.
Sunday evening, 2nd July, 1922.

Luke 24, v 26.

"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things,
and to enter into His glory."

For two reasons I wish to bring before you brethren the sufferings of Christ. First, because the church here is to celebrate these sufferings in the Lord's supper; this could invest the service, both the services, with a becoming solemnity. It is likely enough that the ordinance of the Lord's supper is not sufficiently regarded in the tremendous solemnity of it. May we, whose privilege it will be this evening to sit at the Lord's table, find our souls deeply solemnised and favoured with some believing view and realization of those tremendous sorrows of the Lord.

My second reason is this: there may be some here whose sense of guilt and ignorance and pollution and distance from, and unlikeness to God, keeps them in such bondage as that there is no way of escape for them from the wrath to come. They may be looking on the Lord's people as highly privileged and feeling no hope, no hope, no hope; now to such poor troubled people one would say, 'Here is an opened door! The door of God's mercy stands open and he says to all who are in an evil case in their own experience, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heaven-laden and I will give you rest." and the hymn-book says and says truly,

"The vilest sinner out of hell,
Who lives to feel his need,
Is welcome at the throne of grace,
The Saviour's blood to plead."

So that although this evening the privilege of coming to the Lord's table by ~~is~~ not yours, oh you troubled ones, may the Holy Ghost show you that New and living way to God which is so celebrated in Hebrews where Paul says, "Having therefore brethren boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the vale, that is to say, His flesh, and having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near." Oh what a wonderful thing it is, to perceive an open door, the door which God has opened.

The centre, the circumference, the beauty, the glory of the gospel, Jesus Christ is; and the centre and ground of hope, gospel hope, is the Person of Christ and His sufferings; and the glory of the church on earth, as well as in heaven, is the same. Here we have a suffering Saviour, the Lord Jesus, greater than all others, fairer than all, all-over glorious. Fairer than the children of men; with grace poured into His lips. Fairer than all, in the constitution of His Person; more wonderful than all; God and man in one Person. But here He is under a necessity to suffer. God is free; Christ is God, therefore Christ is free, whence this necessity that He should suffer, for the ought, here, is used in the sense of necessity; it behoved Him; it was necessary for Him. There could have been no salvation apart from, and without His sufferings. What is the necessity? It is the necessity imposed on Himself by His free love, His great love wherewith He loved his church; love that made Him undertake all the duties and sufferings and smart of a surety, love that moved Him to engage Himself to be responsible for bringing to heaven, all whom His Father gave to Him; love so free as to bring Him, in a real covenant, into the condition, the precise place of his children.

God was free to create the world, and the only necessity that ever lay on God to create the world was His decree to do so. Christ was free, as He is God, and the only necessity for His incarnation and His sufferings, was the decree of God in eternity. Who will ever be able, sufficiently, to extol and magnify the love of God? Who will ever be able properly and fully to comprehend it; the bliss of it can only be known by tasting; the power of it can only be known as it is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost; and the greatness of it, its steadfastness, its immovability, unchangeability, and its glory shall shine in the church for ever and ever. But see what it brought Him to: it brought Him to humiliation, great humiliation. The glorious God became a poor man, a root out of a dry ground, "He had no form nor comeliness and when men saw Him, there was no beauty in Him that they should desire Him." It brought Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil; to suffer the presence of that fallen spirit and to suffer the injections into His ear, those vile temptations which, however, blessed be God, found no place in Him. It brought Him into the condition that exposed Him to the vile accusations of men who said that He had communications with the devil, and that therefore

and thereby He cast out devils; they took away His name, His honour. It brought Him into the garden of Gethsemane and there, prone on the ground, sweating blood at every pour, he received, accepted and took into His hand the cup which His Father gave to Him. It took Him to the judgement hall, where He suffered His judgement to be taken away from Him and where, when falsely accused, He opened not His mouth. It carried Him to Calvary's cursed tree and there He exposed His heart to the sword of justice and there was poured into His soul the wrath of God in the curse of a broken law. It took Him into the ignominy of death; death is an ignominious thing, deeply humiliating to all, but specially so to the Lord Jesus. This free love of Christ did all this in Him and brought Him to His sufferings.

"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" What the things were that He suffered, may I be enabled just to hint at; the depths of those sufferings, the anguish, the exquisite pain of spirit who can fully tell. The climax of all was this, that He was made a curse for us. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, as it is written, "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree;" Here was that word brought into great force upon Him,- "Awake, oh sword, against my Shepherd, against the man that is My fellow saith the Lord of Hosts. Smite the Shepherd." Here was fulfilled that scripture- "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed." The dear Son of God was exposed to the anger of His Father and He endured it; His love brought Him into that condition where His Father hid His face from Him; deserted Him, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me." All real hope is built here, for here, and here alone, passed away from wrath, the church's sin, by Christ bearing it; and here and here alone was exhausted the wrath of God against her because He endured it; here, and here alone death was swallowed up in victory by Christ's voluntary, vicarious death. It was voluntary. This was necessary to its efficacy. It was vicarious because He stood precisely in the place of his people, so that what He suffered was put to their account, was esteemed to be for them and in their place. He ought to have suffered for another reason which, let me name; that is, in order that his people should not suffer.

He died that they might live. He must die because they, by divine decree must go to heaven and this was the way, the only way of their going, by the death of the blessed Son of God, and these sufferings are not to be measured by our minds; not to be entered into by any sense, natural sense, of suffering that we may have. They are infinitely beyond us and can only be apprehended by faith as they are opened and explained to us by the Eternal Spirit. Hard hearts never can sympathise with a broken-hearted Saviour: careless sinners can never ^{enter} ~~never~~ into what the Lord Jesus Christ endured, and there is no natural possibility in us, because of our sin, to enter into this word, - "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things." The only view that we shall ever have of those sufferings, if we do get a proper view of them, will be by faith.

"When I by faith my Maker see,
in weakness and distress,
brought down to that sad state for me,
which angels can't express;
When that great God to whom I go.
for help, amazed I view,
By sin and sorrow sunk as low
as I, and lower too."

And when you see this by faith, you will be lost in wonder, melt with grief and faint beneath the bliss."

And the viler the sinner to whom this is revealed, the sweeter is the sight, the feeling, the more wonderful is the door of hope, and the more glorious is Christ to such a person. Oh guilty sinner, no devil will ever shut you out from this as you are led into it by the Holy Spirit; no unbelief in your heart will ever blind you to this as it is opened to you by the Spirit, and no sense of guilt and unworthiness shall ever shut you out from this as it is opened to you by the blessed Spirit of Christ. How the Spirit lives to honour Christ; how He at times opens the sufferings of Christ and says in the heart - "This is the door; this is the ground; this is the Rock; this is the Refuge; this is the way of escape, a bleeding Jesus, a suffering God-man. Oh behold Him." May the Spirit reveal Him to us! If the Lord in the scripture did not show us the impossibility of it, we should be surprised that those disciples did not enter more into the sufferings of Christ, but it is impossible through ignorance, that any man shall enter into the sufferings of Christ till those sufferings be revealed to him

by the Spirit of Christ.

"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things." It is one of the secrets of our holy religion, the sufferings of Christ. It is one of those wonderful revelations that the Spirit makes at times to sinners, that Christ's death is their life. The sinner perceives this, only as it is shown to him. When Christ said, "It is finished." there was this done, that which will fill innumerable sinners with holiness and happiness and bliss through eternity. Shall we be among them? The sufferings of Christ, as they are made known, make sin more hateful than anything else. You may suffer for sin when punished for it, but that will not make you hate sin; but when you perceive that Christ suffered that you might be forgiven, was wounded that you might be healed, groaned that you might pray, bled that you might be purified and died and found in His very soul the curse of the law, that you might come under that blessing of God which maketh rich and with which He addeth no sorrow through eternity; this will make you hate sin, not only because it exposes you to punishment, so much as this, that it grieved and broke the heart of Christ. Sin then appears to be sin indeed; then it appears to be what it really is in the sight of God. It appears to the sinner to be the only thing to be hated.

"And to enter into His glory." The poor disciples were sorely put to it when their Lord and Master was dead and buried. With His death their hope seemed to die, and when He was buried out of their sight, then there was no more for them to look forward to. Now Christ calls these misunderstanding men fools, because though they had been under His teaching, yet they had understood none of His words concerning His death. Now He said to them, you are fools in this, - you have never entered into My word; I predicted this death of Mine, I predicted my burial and My resurrection, and you never entered into what I said. Then He begins mercifully to open to their understanding the things concerning Himself.

To enter into His glory, is a wonderful thing. It was wonderful to me. He rose to die no more; He rose to another and different life from that which He had lived before His death. The life He lived before His death was a life of shame, suffering, false accusations, sorrow, trouble. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. It was a life under which He had this grief, the imputation of sin; a life that was full of burden. He was conscious of imputed sin resting on Him. Now the life He lives, after His

resurrection is called the power of an endless life. No more suffering surety-ship; no more smarting under the wrath of God; no more piercing of the sword of justice. He lives a blessed and a pure and a glorious life. He entered into His glory, and I would say two or three words upon this: First, He entered upon the glory of having removed sin for ever and ever from his church. He died unto sin once; once in the end of the world He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; the glory of this is infinite. Christ died and by death removed every sin and stain that the church had had upon her, to her defilements and exposedness to the wrath of God. Brethren interested in this, the glory of Christ must come to you. The glory of Christ is the glory of the church. For this was a given glory and an acquired glory; a glory which He had by conquest, by victory, the glory of removing sin; the glory of destroying him that had the power of death, that is the devil. By death He did this that He might deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. What a glory is this, that now no enemy shall ever overcome the church neither sin nor devil! No, they may feel overcome, they may fall and alas do; they come short of the glory of God, but no fatal dart shall ever pierce their souls; the victory of Christ is theirs and it is made over to them and imparted by the Eternal Spirit.

He entered into the glory of universal Kingship. All power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth; all rule and all authority Christ has; the glory of a name which is above every name He has; King of kings, Lord of Lords. Yes, and this glory the people of God participate in, for He makes them kings and priests unto God and His Father. But this glory is very wonderful and beautiful because the Lord Jesus has all authority over all things, so no harm shall ever reach them, never reach their souls. There can be no trouble without the permission of their blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And this authority of Christ enters into everything. Everything, the world, upside down, as it now seems to be; providence significant and perplexing as it is, personal troubles, family afflictions, business perplexities and everything of that sort by which the people of God are affected and afflicted, these are all in the hands of Christ. The lion shall not roar without Christ; the furnace shall not singe thy hair without Christ; the sparrow cannot alight on the ground without Christ. All things are in His hand, and this is the glory of God that is given to

Him to exercise authority over men, and they do not know it, won't acknowledge it; despise Him; will not have Him to be God. God only knows how far Socinianism and Unitarianism have eaten into the professing church. May we be kept. He is God. He is man. He is exalted now and has a name which is above every name; to do what He will, and He does carry out His own divine will in the world, whether men will or will not. But there are men who acknowledge Him in this and are thankful that He has this authority and this glory; and where are they? You will find them in the church; you will find them if you follow them on their knees; you will find them saying to Him in their hearts-

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"Reign o'er us as King, accomplish Thy will;
And powerfully bring us forth from all ill;
Till, falling before Thee, we laud Thy loved name,
Ascribing the glory to God and the Lamb."

He entered into His glory when He entered into heaven with His own blood.

And now let us have a few words of what the old Scotch ministers used to call application. Philpot says that true religion is application, application, application. That is the spirit's work; but let me try to speak a few words that may be called application of this great subject, and first of all the sufferings of Christ: There are two if I might use the expression; there are two terminations of the atonement. First the atonement terminated in God when God accepted the sacrifice; when justice was appeased, when the law was magnified and made honourable; when the blessed Redeemer declared with His own lips, knowing Himself that it was done, "It is finished." and bowed His head and gave up the ghost. Then as typified by the law, then God was satisfied. On the annual day of the great atonement, the peoples sin was put away by the sin-offering. It terminated in God.

Secondly the atonement terminates in the conscience. Yes, it comes there by the Holy Ghost; He applies the atonement. Now you may be instantly saying, "We do not know that we follow you when you tell us the atonement terminates in God, but when you say it terminates in the conscience we have to stop." Well, and do stop where you are till God is pleased to deliver you no matter who blames you, take no notice of that. If they tell you you ought not to be in bondage, or fear, you take no notice, beg and beg

of God to bring the atonement to your consciences; to speak pardon, thus to you; to tell you really in substance, that Christ put your sin away; that He left nothing to be done but the Spirit to apply to you what Christ had done; His perfect work brought home to your heart. Your faith, (you may not think you have any), your faith pleases God, pleases Christ and if you could only believe for one moment the delight it is to Christ to see you on your bended knees; to see your heart prostrated before Him and you kneel in spirit, and to see and hear you say to ~~to~~ Him that there is but one door you hope to have opened; one ground you desire to build upon; one Priest before whom and through whom you would stand before Almighty God, and that is Jesus Christ and His work; I say, if you could only believe that for a moment, your very heart would leap for joy, but when the atonement comes you will say, "Now I know it, now I am sure of it: and how anybody, realising his sinfulness can be truly happy and content, resting in his spirit without the atonement there, it is difficult to understand, but God has His own way in Zion. Well may this application of the atonement become yours my brethren who have never yet had it. May it be made over again and again to those of us who have had it, for some of us have had it, and sweet has been the experience, blessed the remembrance; comfortable has been the feeling that sin, so dreadful, so polluting, so exposing to the curse of God was put away, not only by Christ on the cross but by the blood of Christ upon the conscience.

And secondly, look at this glory. You look at yourselves as I look at myself covered with shame, because full of sin; yes, it is a painful experience, but a wholesome one; full of sin, sins immense as is the sea, guilt deep, and there is an unescapable feeling at times in the soul that one is not worthy to take the glorious name of God upon ones lips. Then to hear of glory being given to people may be a trial. Oh you may say we do not know what that means. Well, when you receive forgiveness you will have the glory of Christ; when you feel the love of God shed abroad in your heart you will feel the glory of Christ, you will really possess it; when his righteousness clothes you, then the beauty of Christ will be upon you; when He spreads the wings of his heavenly light over you, and you shelter beneath those wings, then the glory of divine light is with you; and when the holy, pure love of God in your soul moves and operates and makes you long to be holy,

then the glory of holiness is in you and this is the glory of Christ in the beginning of it; this is the glory which Christ gives to his children.

And lastly when the glory of holding on, that is, the power of Christ is with you to hold you on in the way of tribulation, keeping your hope alive, increasing your faith at times, drawing you out in prayer and supplication, with love to the Lord and his people. What is that but the glory of divine grace? "My word," says Christ shall be in you a well of water, and the Spirit shall be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

"Ought not Christ to have suffered." This experience would have been **impossible** but for the suffering of Christ and the glory which followed. Oh my friends, it is a poor religion that has nothing of Christ in it, but it is a good religion that has something of Him in it; and though it may not be much of Him that you know and experience to your joy and comfort, yet a little, the little that is real is worth more than a world of sham and pretence. "A little that a righteous man hath, is very very great in it's value. The glory of Christ is seen in the perseverance of the saints. They hold on their way because He communicates to them from time to time new mercy, fresh power, sweet inshining, and sheds abroad in their hearts His love by His good Spirit, gives them His word: passes His word over to them and makes them know sooner or later, more or less distinctly, that they have One in heaven who will never leave them nor forsake them.

"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" Oh sinner. What is the warrant that some of us have, for partaking of the Lord's supper and remembering Him this evening. It is His own divine commandment- "This do in remembrance of Me." "Take this bread, it is My body which is broken for you, eat it in remembrance of Me." Drink this cup, all of you, this is the New Testament in My blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins. And this should make, and rightly comprehended, will make, always the ordinance of the Lord's supper a holy solemnity to those who participate in it. Christ has said to his dear disciples, his baptised people- "This do in remembrance of Me." Come to My table; remember your dying Lord and Master and remember what I have said to you when I gave you the bread and the wine. This is My body, this is My blood, eat and drink them in remembrance of Me. And I hope that we may be favoured to find our souls brought into humble and sweet submission to Christ's commandment, and find Him in our hearts at the ordinance, so as that we may bless His great and glorious Name for suffering, for dying, for being buried and rising again.