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Sermon Preached at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
by Mr J.K. Popham on Sunday Morning
30th September 1934

Text 1 John 5 verse 5

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ?

Two great objects are presented to us in this text, the world (this term frequently occurs, but we must always read it with discrimination regarding the context. In Holy Scripture it means creation, God made the world by His Son. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "And without Him was not anything made that was made." (John 1 verses 1 & 2). "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. (Genesis 1 verse 1). The heavens or the firmament which we see, and the earth on which we dwell.) It also means the religious world, the Pharisees and the Sadducees were perplexed at this, it seemed to them an unwelcome and much to be hated description, used by Christ in His preaching. The Apostles preaching was also unwelcome to them. They said, "Behold the world is gone after Him." (John 12. verse 19). Also the Apostle Paul, of which they said in Athens, "What will this babbling say ?" (Acts 17 verse 18). And at Thessalonica, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also". So it means the world that lieth in wickedness, and this is the world of our text. The world that lieth in wickedness.

It is a great object set before us, wickedness of every kind, immorality being almost universal. Atheism spreading in the most specious shape, of higher criticism as it is called, pleasure, so called for a season. Moses knew them to be only for a season, they perish in the using of them, entanglements are also in the world for the feet of the Lord's people. This is the world set before us in this first object of the text. "Who is he that overcometh the world" not by going out of it, if you are not to be a part of it. The Apostle Paul says, "And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Romans 12 verse 2). "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord." (verse 11). He further instructs, saying, you must not go with the world, neither neglect yourself, nor neglect your body. nor neglect your duties in life. Your business matters, must be, yea ought to be constantly attended to by you. "Neglect not the gift that is in thee". 1 Timothy 4 verse 14).

"This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." (2 Thessalonians 3 verse 10). There is no natural duty that the holy scripture will allow you, without guilt, to neglect in any position that you lawfully occupy. Take heed to all moral duties, all the agreements and all the business duties that you have a duty to attend to regularly, carefully, Oh and if it might be, prayerfully. This world hates God, "Because the carnal mind (of a fallen man) is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,"(Romans 8 verse 7). And no man while in the world will be other than a friend of the world, that is approving of it, following it, not forsaking anything in it that meets his taste. He is not a friend of God, but God's enemy, a very solemn position to occupy. Entanglements may catch a child of God, and hold him for a time, but if he is, brought from time to time to see how he got entangled, and how his bad habits were acquired, and then led to cry mightily to God, he will be delivered.

The second object in the text is, Jesus the Son of God, "He is (hated) despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:" (Isaiah 53 verse 3). "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him." (John 19 verse 15). This is what they said when He was here below. You may think, at least some of you, that if He was here now, He would receive very different treatment at your hand. You may be speaking very ignorantly of yourself, the severity of His teaching, the morality of His teaching, the mystery of His teaching, the spirituality of His Kingdom, would offend you, as much as it offended the men who heard Him speak. There is no difference between human nature then, and human nature now. No difference in regard to the prejudice of it, the self righteousness of it, the evil tendency of it, and the ignorance of God of it. If the Lord were to say to you, 'Oh self righteous person ye must be born again, or you cannot see the kingdom of God, what would you say to Him ? If you met that statement in the scripture, what would you think of it ? Does it speak at all to your understanding ?' You would say, I know nothing about it, and with that confession you must, if you speak the truth, also say, I do not want to know it. Then you are in the world, Jesus is the great object of the text, He is larger, and immeasurably better than the world. Not Jesus as man only, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1 verse 20,21). Jesus is the Son of God incarnate. You will find if you read a little religious literature of that period, that this name Jesus is used, but He is not allowed, in such literature to be born, as stated in the scriptures. The scripture in our text is "He that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God".

The man who was poor, was lacking a college education, offended his fellow men who said "whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works ? Is not this the carpenter's son ? is not his mother called Mary ?" (Matthew 13 verses 54 & 55)." "Heis the Son of God." Whence hath this man these things (His learning) ? and what wisdom is this, which is given unto Him, that even such mighty works are wrought by His hands ?" (Mark 6 verse 2). He has never been to school, He whose miracles offended them, because these miracles declared Him to be Divine. "And they (blasphemously) say, He hath a devil." (Matthew 11 verse 18). "The Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils" (Matthew 9 verse 34). This Jesus whom men despised, of whom they said, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him." (John 19 verse 15). It is not fit that he should live.

This Jesus, you must believe to be "the Son of God". The proper, natural, eternal Son of God, "Behold, I will send My messenger, and He shall prepare the way before Me: the messenger of the covenant." (Malachi 3 verse 1). Of the essence of Jehovah, Of the essence and substance of Jehovah. Jesus, fully partakes, in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost of the Divine Godhead. And the Apostle here , by divine inspiration says, a man cannot overcome the world, unless he believes "that Jesus", (who was crucified, and was dead and buried, but "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it". (Acts 2 verse 24). That Jesus who is for ever and eternally will be, "is the Son of God."

Now this brings us to a point, namely that unless we do, in our hearts perceive and feel, and believe Him to be the Son of God, we can never expect or hope to overcome the world. Think of it, it does not say immediately, and I am not going to press that point immediately, it does not say, he must believe he is interested in Christ. Oh how many poor doubters there are, about their personal interest, who have no doubt about His Sonship. How many there are, going to heaven through Him, who would like to say, but dare not, that they believe that He was born, and lived and died to put away their sin, yet cleave to His Divine Person Incarnate.

"Who is He that overcometh the world, but He that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ?" The prominence here, the emphasis here is, not that he believes Jesus, but that he believes that Jesus is the Son of God. Today men and religious teachers do not deny that Jesus was a man, that Jesus was the greatest person in history, they do not deny that He walked in Palestine, that He was tried by Pilate, that Pilate washed his hands in protest of His innocence, and that He was crucified.

But we need to go further than that, and believe that Jesus who was crucified, who gave up the Ghost voluntarily did not die a natural death as we do of necessity. He died a real death but not of physical necessity. It was necessitated by the Covenant of grace. It was necessary because of the obedience due to His Father, who gave Him a commandment that He should die. This is not a necessity that will be on us when our hour of death comes, for we must die. His death was voluntarily and vicariously, and so He died. Jesus is the Son of God, this truth must be the centre and circumference, so to put it of our faith. The Man Jesus is the Son of God. The Man Jesus Christ did die, and that He, was when dying, yea in His conception, He was as now the Son of God I cannot sufficiently emphasise that truth as it lies before us in this beautiful text, "Jesus is the Son of God.

He always has been, recognised and confessed by the Church to be the Son of God. Go no further back than His conception in the virgin Mary, when the mother of the un-born John the Baptist was visited by her cousin Mary, what happened ? "And it came to pass, that, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost." (Luke 1 verse 41). The un-born John Baptist leaped at the presence of the Lord Jesus, "the Son of God." "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am ?" (Matthew 16 verse 13). "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (verse 16). "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? And he said, Who art thou, Lord ? And the Lord said, I am Jesus (the Son of God) whom thou persecutest." Acts 9 verses 4,5). He ever was and ever will be, the Son of God, contrarily to all who deny this great point. And every child of God is brought, sooner or later to this truth, that the Redeemer, as the Son of God, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, the Rock of ages on which the Church is built, is the very Son of God.

The refuge into which sinners are led to flee is the Son of God. and their plea before God is the death of the Son of God, who purchased the Church with His own blood. This is the centre, the ground, the glory, the end of faith, in all the people of the living God. Between ourselves, to express it thus, two great objects, a warrior or a soldier, whose aim is to get the victory, not for a day but for heaven and eternity. He has only one enemy, that is the world. And finding in his own soul that he cannot be a friend of the world, and a friend of God together, he seeks victory over the world. "Who is he that overcometh the world ?" A good deal is said about overcoming, and a very solemn business is the fight, Paul expresses it thus in Timothy "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called." (1 Timothy 6 verse 12).

"Flee youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (2 Timothy 2 verse 22). Having nothing to do outside your business with the world. An overcomer has that one object. The Apostle Paul uses another figure, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize ? So run, that ye may obtain." (1 Corinthians 9 verse 24). All the runners in the race, have one object before them, they do not keep their loose flowing garments. Everything is their own, and if anything hinders them it is discarded, because they have one object, and that is to win the prize. Every hindrance Paul was enabled, according to his own testimony, to lay aside. "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection:" (1 Corinthians 9 verse 27).

The denial of self is a great thing, gluttonous man is intoxicated with his love of food to great excess. There is such a thing as laying these things aside, but when you come to the world, and the entanglements of it, as a man in business who loves his business and is diligent in it, he knows if he is not he will never succeed, but fearing God, he comes into this, I am in danger, why ? Your business is lawful, yes my business is lawful, but my strict attention to it, is swallowing up my time, absorbing my mind, and getting all my attention. That is lawful, but there I am in danger, for the world is in me, the world is in my heart. Solomon says, He hath made everything beautiful in his time: also He hath set the world in their hearts." (Ecclesiastes 3 verse 11). and, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." (Ecclesiastes 8 verse 11). How shall he separate himself between lawful attention and being swallowed up ? There are many snares in the world, the theatre, cinema, pleasures, parties, and that sort of thing, that may be quite incidental to your business and its connections.

How I loved these pleasures, and often wished that the Lord had done with all sin, what He did to one particular sin, He killed that sin outright. I suppose there is not a person here who loved the theatre as intensely as I did, when it pleased Him to stop me, He just killed it. He knew what I had before me in every day of my life. I had to pass the door of that place, and He never left me even to desire to look at the door, much less to enter into it, after that day of mercy it all came to an end. Some of you may say, well I look at it but it is not a snare to me. Your looking may lead you to enter in perhaps, and you will have to give it up if you are a child of God. It may ensnare you for a time, you could not say you never felt guilty could you ? Other things may ensnare you, things that are so pleasing, that look so inoffensive.

Who is he that overcometh these things, that are so pleasing, and look so inoffensive ? They are in the world and the world loves them, praises them and admires them. We now even have a special train from Brighton to take people to London theatres and all other pleasures that the world seeks after. How can I overcome it, well you say, you preach about it, and you do not enter into it. I did enter into it, I know what worldliness is, and I repeat, I wish the Lord had killed all my sins, as He killed that one. There is no worldly mind in this chapel that will give you my worldliness, my natural worldliness is intense. One thing will do it, and only one thing, listen, that one thing is faith, or believing.

Oh when guilt, when sin, when difficulties in your way, when temptations come into your mind, when some things that are wrong pull us into wrong actions, one thing will save you, you may not be able to say "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength:" (Isaiah 45 verse 24). But you can say this, 'there is One I know a little about, and I would rather know that I have an interest in Him, that He loves me, that He gave Himself for me, than I would possess the whole world.' And to Him my soul sighs 'Lord save or I perish'. I cry to Him and mourn over my wickedness, I look at my weakness and feel my entanglements, I cannot help myself. He knows my heart, that it is desperately wicked. Lord, you may say, wilt Thou come and take it, it is believing in the Divine Person of the Son of God incarnate. It is believing that, the Person named Jesus by the Angel before His miraculous birth, was made by God "to be sin for us (His people,) who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him," (2 Corinthians 5 verse 21).

It is believing that He, "The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble." (Psalm 9 verse 9). It is believing, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10 verse 13). That their tears are put into His bottle, and that He hears the cry of the needy, "For He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper." (Psalm 72 verse 12). It is believing that Christ is the bread of life, and desiring to have that bread given them, that their soul may eat it and live for ever. It laughs at impossibilities, brings the soul to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in times of need." (Hebrews 4 verse 16). Believeth, Ah that will bring you to the cross, put you at the feet of the cross, and it will keep you there. No saying, I go away, but yet you may go away, and yet if you speak your heart, you will say, my heart is there, when I go away. I want to be there, to live there, to love there and to hope there, cleave there to the Lord and die there. And the man who thus believes will be His.

At such moments as he thus believes, he will be an overcomer of the world. Moses was able to do this, and what was the effect ? "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." (Hebrews 11 verses 24-26). He esteemed the pleasures of sin for a season only, he saw their limit, he therefore saw the unsatisfactory nature of the pleasures of sin. He saw, in seeing Him who is invisible, "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." (verse 27). He saw pleasures in Christ which are ever full, and therefore he also saw by contrast, the unsatisfactorily nature of the pleasures of sin. He saw, in seeing Him by faith, who is invisible, the pleasures in that ever full, ever flowing river at the right hand of God, endless pleasures. Oh how his heart must have gone after that, and some can say, our hearts have gone after that river. Oh to reach the right hand of God, then while that is in view, what could you see ? Suppose one here had just got that view, and then that verse was given out,

Let worldly minds the world pursue,
 It has no charms for me;
 Once I admired its trifles too.
 But grace has set me free. (Gadsby's 1100 verse 1).

You would say, I can sing this beautiful hymn at this moment, "And they overcame him (the accuser of our brethren) by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony;" (Revelation 12 verse 11. And it is promised, listen to this, "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." (Romans 16 verse 20). Well it is a great thing to overcome, there is a conclusion, a reward to be given to overcomers." To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." (Revelation 2 verse 7). And, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." (Revelation 2 verse 17). The warfare is to end my brethren, the battle is simply and surely to end well, where faith is in him that overcometh, for, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out." (Revelation 3 verse 12). A pillar that is his state, in the temple of God and further, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His Throne." (Revelation 3 verse 21).

See what is before you, Oh soldier of Jesus Christ, you who are ready to faint, see what is before you. The Apostle writing to Timothy says, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." (1 Timothy 2 verses 1 & 3). You may say, I am a coward, yes but there is grace to make you strong, grace to enable you to follow your Lord and Master, who, "when the time was come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem," (Luke 9 verse 51). Sometimes you may say on your knees, Lord take this poor heart, fix it, fix it on Thyself. Take it and fix it on Thy Son, Fix it on Thy Holy Spirit. Oh God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, object of faith, and victory won by faith, what poor trembling sinner is he, what fearing sinner is he. What fearing son is he, what empty sinner, weak foolish and vain sinner is he that overcometh the world ? Oh says the Apostle, by divine inspiration, "he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." The believer in Jesus, a man whose eye of faith looks, sometimes tremblingly, he looks to the Lord Jesus, "And he said, Lord I believe. And he worshiped Him." (John 9 verse 38). I cast my soul on Thee, I have no hope apart from Thee, nothing but sin and consequent despair can I speak of in myself.

Soldiers of Christ can you look for the reward ? Moses did, "for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." (Hebrews 11 verse 26). What was that ? why to get where God is, that is what poor people are looking to, and expecting sometimes. To be where the Lord is, Oh unless you feel it, you cannot understand what sweet excellencies there are in the mind, that gets a view of Christ. What living hope, what springing panting love you may feel, and will feel as you get a sight of Christ. Is this the Person, is this the end ? Is this the reward ? This is the way to endless bliss, the way to the final victory. This is the reward, to be where Jesus is, to sit with Him in His Throne, even as He overcame all His conflicts and sorrows, and is sat down with His Father in His Throne. Now that is the prospect before every believer, for every believer must eventually be where Jesus is, in Heaven.

Heaven is that holy, happy place,
Where sin no more defiles;
Where God unveils His blissful face,
And looks, and loves, and smiles

Where Jesus, Son of Man and God,
Triumphant from His wars,
Walks in rich garments, dipped in blood,
And shows His glorious scars; (Gadsby's 850 verses 2 & 3).

"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

"But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings;" (Malachi 4 verse 2 & 3).

Amen.