

SB/JH26

Sermon Preached at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
by Mr J.K. Popham on Sunday Evening
26th February 1922

Text Exodus 32 verse 26

Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.

There are two camps in the world, and two peoples only, there are two kingdoms, and only two, the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of the children of this world, ruled by the prince of the power of the air. The living and the dead, the worshippers of the true and living God, and idolaters. There are two ways in the world only, the narrow way in which are few, and the broad way in which are many. And there are two ultimate ends before all men, heaven and hell, nothing else. We are wending our way, to one or the other, of these two places, travelling home to God, or with our backs to Him, travelling to hell. We are living, or we are dead, either dead in trespasses and sins, or born again of the Spirit. And it is a solemn consideration, to those who have a heart given them, to consider their latter end, such will be saying to himself:

Pause, my soul ! and ask the question,
Art thou ready to meet God ?
Am I made a real Christian,
Washed in the Redeemer's blood ?
Have I union
With the church's living Head ? (Gadsby's 698 verse 1)

The devil had, as always, before and since, he has also at this time, a large number of followers. The broad way was then frequented, as it is now by the majority of men. No external manifestations of God, such as had been given to this people, sufficed to bind them to God. Only a new heart is sufficient for that, and the indwelling of the Eternal Spirit. So when their leader Moses, was for a time absent, they could no longer worship God, even in the form, and they set up a golden calf. God's absence from men, leaves them free to idolatry, and all kinds of evils. If you have not got, God with you, woe to you, nobody deserves to have Him. We forfeited all right to God, and His mercy by the fall and inborn sin. Therefore if the Lord is absent from us, it is an act of justice, We do not deserve His presence.

And if He is absent, there is nothing to keep us out of hell, there is nothing between a sinner and hell, but God's mercy in Christ. May we pause to consider this, have we reason to hope that there is that wondrous thing between us and hell? Have we reason to hope that we are in the narrow way, in which flesh and blood, may be crucified and mortified, now at this moment? Moses comes to these idolaters, and makes this great appeal, Who among you, now worshiping, now done in honour of this god which you have made to yourselves, who among you "is on the Lord's side," who stands for God, who comprehends what His worship is,"let him come to me." I made some remarks this morning, upon this great question "Who is on the Lord's side." And this evening, for a short time, if enabled, I want to give some evidence, some scriptural evidence, of being on the Lord's side.

The first evidence that I shall give is according to scripture, a trembling at His word. He speaks very graciously to those, who tremble at His word, "Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest? (as if He saw some people, who were anxious, to honourably and suitably entertain Him, and He said to them) "but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word." (Isaiah 66 verses 1 & 2). The humble contrite man trembles at God's word, trembles at His threatenings, trembles lest he should be outside the promises, trembles at the description of a Christian, because he does not reach to it, trembles lest he does not rightly fear God, trembles at what God says against His enemies, and trembles at all the gracious things that God says, lest he should have no part or lot in them. Does this describe any of you? Do you look at the threatenings, and fear that they belong to you? and at the promises, fearing you have no interest in them? You can see a beauty in them, a glory, a preciousness, a suitability to your case, but they do not come to you with power, you cannot take hold of them, and call them yours, if they are not given to you. You are drawn to them, and feel O if I had but a part or lot in these beautiful precious promises. Beautiful they are, precious they are, if I had but a part or lot in them, how happy I should be, but you tremble for fear.

The Lord sees your heart is contrite, sometimes fearing sin, fearing His majesty, fearing being wrong, fearing that you will miss the prize,

That prize such numbers never seek,
Such numbers seek in vain. (Gadsby's 308 part 2 verse 1).

And He says 'I will dwell with that man, I will go to him, and make My abode with him. I will be a guest in his heart, and he shall entertain Me', 'I will dwell with him' O what a mercy this is for people who tremble at God's word, and certainly they are on His side, He regards them favourably, speaks of them thus kindly. Take courage then, if you find in your heart a trembling at God's word.

The second evidence is this, namely that to these tremblers at God's word, there comes at times, a view of the cross of Christ. and of the atonement that Christ made. It is wonderful, its efficacy, the power of it, the cleansing power, how it makes a way to God, how it will introduce a guilty, vile worm into the presence of God with acceptance. How it will remove his sins from his conscience, and all that makes him afraid of eternity, and afraid of God. A view of this is given, and only people who get it, know what that sight is. The love of God, the greatness of God, the holiness of God, the majesty of God, and the acceptance of a sinner with God, and the salvation of that sinner. The removal from him of all his sins, this the blood of Christ declares.

Well dear friends, when a sinner gets that view, whether he be new in the way or old, it inspires his heart with hope, it draws out his affections to the Lord Jesus, and it makes him feel, that it is a blessing worth waiting for, worth praying for, worth struggling for, even to have a manifested interest, in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Have you got that? O the heart clings to the cross, the affections would fain entwine themselves around the cross. It is a strength to faith, a nourishment to the spirit, an argument in prayer. It is a great door open, whereby God can and does come to sinners, and sinners reach Him. It tells the sinner that the blackest sinner, the vilest sins that are in his heart, that have ever been entertained, or done by him, this blood can remove. That the holiness of God is honoured in this blood, that union with God is effected by this blood, that communion with God is brought about by this blood, that God has pleasure in it, satisfaction in it, and the sinner lives by it, and by it partakes of the mercy of God, as food. O the atonement, what does it not bring to the hearts of Gods people. To have that evidence is a good thing, it is a good evidence. He who can plead the blood of Christ, has true faith, and the sight of that blood, whereby it came to be a plea, was given by the Holy Spirit. It is a great help to faith, now on the back of this, let me say a third word.

A third evidence, to mention, is, waiting on God. He will be waited on, He will be waited for, if you follow me, "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him." (Psalm 62 verse 5). "The Lord is good...(to them that wait for) "that trust in Him." (Nahum 1 verse 7.)

"Blessed are all they that wait for Him."(Isaiah 30 verse 18). Let us notice this point in true experience, waiting on God, is waiting on His pleasure, looking for His salvation, waiting for Him, is waiting for a fulfilment of His promise, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."(John 6 verse 37. It is waiting to see what the Lord will do, waiting for Him to come, and answer prayer and bless the soul. It is waiting for deliverance, deliverance from sins power, sins guilt, temporal afflictions and all needed supplies. It is a look to heaven, an opening of the mouth, a stretching out of an empty hand. It is the expression of a souls wish, that God would come. Do you wait and wait for God? You will have many hindrances, a world of hindrances, a world of iniquity in your heart, a world that you cannot move out of the way, but which is moved out of the way, by a ray of divine light, a beam of heavenly mercy, whereby your soul is invisibly drawn, and you will then say, "my soul wait thou only upon God."(Psalm 62 verse 5). "In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God."(Psalm 62 verse 7). And then you say, "Truly my soul waiteth upon God:" (Psalm 62 verse 1). Verily you feel there is a certainty in it, for the moment "My soul waiteth upon God."

If you were against Him, would you do this? you may be tempted to leave off, tempted to believe you are a reprobate, to believe that God has done nothing for you, and never will do. You may be tempted to cast away your confidence, "which hath great recompense of reward," (Hebrews 10 verse 35). tempted to think that, the work of grace has never been begun. and to fear it never will be. Tempted in many ways, tempted to have hard thoughts, and nourish hard thoughts, against a merciful Christ. Tempted to blaspheme, tempted to idolatry, and all kind of things, but a new sight of Christ, will sweep away the dominion of these temptations, and enable you to say, "Wait only upon God". Who is on the Lord's side? What poor vessels are here, empty vessels, saying, O if God would but, pour out of His fulness, to fill these vessels. Wait on, He is worthy, who you are waiting for. Yes, He is worth waiting for, and never will come too late. He will never disappoint any hope, that a view of Him and of His cross has given. He never can disappoint a sinner, but this is true, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick:" but that is also true, that follows, "but when the desire commeth, (when He who has been desired so long, and prayed to so often commeth,) it is a tree of life,"(Proverbs 13 verse 12), bearing twelve manner of fruits, to give satisfaction, comfort and delight, He will come poor sinners. You waiters on God, He give you to see the encouragement, that His word affords you. He says, "They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me." (Isaiah 49 verse 23).

They are ashamed of themselves, ashamed that they wait so badly, ashamed that they are so ready to give up, ashamed of their sins, ashamed of their depraved nature. But of God, of waiting on Him, they shall never be ashamed. They shall say, "Lo this is our God; we have waited for Him," (Isaiah 25 verse 9). This is the Lord we have waited for Him. One of the greatest blessings in this world, is to embrace that blessed Lord, for whom you have waited. Wait on.

Now these are as I judge, very good evidences, the scripture owns them, and the scripture says, they are blessed. "For he that is not against us is on our part." (Mark 9 verse 40). Against Christ? No. What have you thought about His cross at times? Oh if I could cling to it. What have you thought about His mercy, as discovered in His death, and His precious blood? You have thought, nothing could be compared for beauty and glory therewith. So that to be on the Lord's side, in this point, in these particulars, is a very great mercy. And another evidence is this, that all the trials, and the difficulties that are met with, instead of being really, what they seemed to be at the beginning, and at times, hindrances, are made great helps. Everyone learns to say this, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes."(Psalm 119 verse 71). God will make trouble, evil and sorrow like a wind in the sails of the mill, it will move them round. Troubles will move you to God, many a help you may say, you have had by means of trouble, and many an errand to the throne of grace, many a cry for God's mercy. I shall perish without it, Lord grant Thy mercy. How many a look to the precious promises of the gospel, "And call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."(Psalm 50 verse 15).

"Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." (Isaiah 45 verse 22). Beside Me there is no Saviour. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."(Philippians 4 verse 6). These precious promises do encourage people in trouble, to call upon the name of the Lord, and is not that, an evidence of being on His side? "And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me."(Luke 7 verse 23). Blessed is that sinner, who, though tempted to blaspheme, cleaves to the Saviour, whom he is tempted to blaspheme. Blessed is that sinner, who, whatever the pride of his heart, may say to the contrary, 'I would be a waiter, I would be a praying soul, and I would seek good, out of all my afflictions. "Now no chastening (affliction) for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby."(Hebrews 12 verse 11).

And here I would bring in a great point, in experimental religion, I have often named it, and I shall always be having to name it, as long as I speak in God's name. It is, namely, that afflicted people are helped in prayer, by affliction. The Holy Ghost is the only one to teach them, how to pray, but He uses afflictions, to enable and move them, to pray. Yes we can say this, many an errand have we had to the throne of grace, by means of trouble. Many a time has the mouth been opened, by necessity, many a time have we been drawn, sometimes driven, to the Lord by affliction. O it is a great thing to find your way to God, though it be by a cross, or by some trouble. It is a great mercy to find your way to God, so here we have another evidence, of being on the Lord's side.

Another evidence, I would name, even this, is that a soul on the side of the Lord, has energy to press a bad case, strength and energy in faith to take a bad case to God. If you have got a case, it may be good, and it may be bad, both good and bad may be said here, but our case must be a bad case, because we are sinners, but it is a good case, because we have faith. "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"(Matthew 14 verse 31). Yet it was faith. Now faith is a peculiar grace, peculiar in its birth and origin. The Holy Ghost begets it, as He is the Spirit of Christ. It is a work of grace, in as much, as it won't pick a single argument with God, that comes from nature. Not your own poverty, though you will speak of your poverty, but that which is an argument with God, is derived from, the Person and the work of Christ. And every time the Holy Ghost, manifests that Person, and that work, there is a fresh argument, an old argument made new, again in your heart before Almighty God. Yes, for Christ's sake, goes a long way in heaven. It is a powerful argument in heaven, when you finish, as it were, your petitions, with that words, for Christ's sake. O remember me for Christ's sake, come to me for Christ's sake, appear to me, and bless me for Christ' sake, deliver me from evil, for Christ's sake. This is not vain repetition, it is speaking by faith, in the ear of God.

Himself has given faith to plead, it is a great thing, not to be put off by waiting, it is not a denial. Nor to be overmuch discouraged by delays, or by a deferred hope, nor to be turned aside by specious reasons that may come into your mind, why you should cease praying. Such as, if God had a blessing for you, He would have long since given it to you, or if you had prayed in the Holy Ghost, you would have long since have had success. If you had true faith, you would long since have got the deliverance that you have sought. Specious arguments they may be, apparently very solid, but they are not reasonable at all, on gospel grounds. They are not reasonable.

This is reasonable, in the scriptures, "But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."(1 Peter 3 verse 8). That was spoken to some, who were saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?"(verse 4), spoken against them, and spoken in an encouraging way. If we measure God by our time, He is a long time in coming, a great deal too long, but if we measure Him by Himself, which is the only true way of thinking of Him, then it won't be so.

He tarries oft till men are faint,
And comes at evening late; (Gadsby's 893 verse 5)

As we speak, of evening, but His time is eternal day, and His promise runs, and can never be exhausted. And when He made a promise, did He tell you, do you find it in His word, that He attached to it a particular time of coming, of fulfilling His word? As far as I know the promises, and I have read them a good many times, you won't find that God has particularly timed Himself, to a time of fulfilling them. He has spoken of a third day, and if He speaks of a literal third day, to you, then, the third day will find you blessed. "After two days He will revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight."(Hosea 6 verse 2). And if that is taken, and given to you literally, then it will be literally fulfilled. Take the promises as spiritual, take them as spoken by God, and in a general way, and all but universally, you will find there is no time for fulfilment attached to them.

God is free, and He uses delays for trial, and this is made a means of putting new energy into faith. Sometimes, as when you think, now if it does not come soon, I shall be lost. God may use that in your mind, as an energy, an energising effect, to plead before Him, that He would come and bless you. "It is time for Thee Lord, to work:"(Psalm 119 verse 126). Here is then an evidence of being on the Lord's side. His delays do not offend you, though they try you. Your very heart, would stay on that note, Happy is he, who can never go away from the throne of grace, until his petitions are answered, his requests granted, his questions resolved, and his soul blessed. "My soul wait thou only upon God." Now let me mention to you another point, which is not unimportant to every child of God, and it is this, namely, that every waiting soul, waits in weakness. He waits in weakness, he who is strong in himself, does not want the strength of Christ. Paul says "For when I am weak, then am I strong," (2 Corinthians 12 verse 10), "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."(2 Timothy 2 verse 2. This is real strength, and I apprehend that being strong, in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, is this, that faith lays hold, of what Christ says, and gives out, and thereby.

There is a resolve, in the soul, to stick to this point. "I will not let thee go, except Thou bless me,"(Genesis 32 verse 26), and to endure hardness, you must be strong, but it is not your own strength. You will wait in weakness,

War in weakness, dare in doubt. (Gadsby's 270 verse 1)

And yet all the time, there is a being on the Lord's side. His fear, not your own strength, would give grace to chose, to wade up to your knees in blood, on the side of Christ, rather than to be in the lap of luxury. It is great to be on Christ's side.

So when it pleased God to, bring people to a point, there is this connected with it, as if an appeal is made, and made by Christ Himself, "Will ye also go away?".(John 6 verse 67). Like as if, a crisis has come, here are multitudes leaving Him, who had followed Him, now He says to His twelve disciples "Will ye also go away?" Look at these crowds hastening home, going to their own occupations, and into their own world, and their own life, will you go?

What anguish has that question stirred:

If I will also go? (Gadsby's 999 verse 5)

writes the hymnwriter, what anguish have I felt, at the very thought of doing it, yet what I humbly answer, dependant on Thy strength and grace,

I humbly answer, No. (Gadsby's 999 verse 5)

But it is in weakness, every soul waits on God, in sensible weakness. "Who is on the Lord's side".

And then let me say in conclusion, that the Lord's people are on His side for eternity. What a man eats in this world he will digest in eternity. If you eat the bread of this world, which is enmity with God, you will digest that in hell. And the company that a man has, the choice of his heart, will be his company in eternity. Look at this what do you eat? The word of God sometimes, the Holy gospel of Jesus Christ is food, that nourishes faith and love. If that is so, why you will be satisfied with that, through eternity. It is not for time only. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable".(1 Corinthians 15 verse 19. But it is for eternity."I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh" (John 6 verse 51). He says, what a wonderful thing, when you eat a promise.

You eat that which will be your nourishment, and joy through eternity. And when you are on Christ' side, what company do you choose? You choose, if you may have it, and it is a favour, not to be rebuffed, not to be chided, but you would choose, if you may have it, the society of Christ Himself. Mary was led to make this choice, taught and enabled to make it, and she sat at His feet. It is written in the book of Deuteronomy, "All His saints are in Thy hand: and they sat down at Thy feet; every one shall receive of Thy words." (Deuteronomy 33 verse 3). Jeremiah says, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart."(Jeremiah 15 verse 16).

How attached to the cross have you been?, by some view of it, by some word concerning it. What life have you drawn from that, what strength and hope have you felt coming from that, into your very heart? and this food means eternal life, and this company means, eternal blessedness, in the presence of God. Do you choose that society? Can you say, do you say with the Psalmist, "O when wilt Thou come unto me?"(Psalm 101 verse 2). When shall I have the society of the Father, and of the Son, as it is written, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, (and we will come unto him) and make our abode with Him."(John 14 verse 23). Do you choose that? How often has my spirit said, 'O if I could but be favoured to come into that experience of having Him as my guest.' It is a great word for a sinner to utter, having the Father and the Son to be with me, and abide with me, and then the Holy Ghost is sure to be there, for it is by His grace, you keep the words of Christ. By His grace you value them, this is the company of the Holy Trinity in a sinner. And in the next place, the society of the saints, is sought after and valued.

With them numbered may I be,
Now and through eternity. (Gadsby's 80, last two lines of each verse, as originally written, but not included in our Hymn Book)

The Psalmist said, "I am a companion of all them that fear Thee." Psalm 119 verse 63). Could you say that? as far as you know, saints are made a companion of them, and with them, would you go, and walk the narrow way, struggle on, in the path of life, labouring to enter into rest with them, speak with them the things of the kingdom of God? Paul says to the Corinthians, I beseech you,.....that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and the same judgement." (1 Corinthians 1 verse 10). That ye say the same things, of the kingdom of God, and there is an attraction in the saints, to the Lord's people, there is a mutual attraction. Now you can appeal to your own experience, for the truth of what I say, you can say, we are one, the same spirit.

How you wish you could see that person, how you would like to have a little conversation with that friend, with whom you have had true fellowship. What an attraction you feel towards those who fear God, how you can say with the Hymnwriter,

My soul shall pray for Zion still, (Gadsby's 361 verse 6)

What beauty you must have seen in that word, " Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love Thee."(Psalm 122 verse 6). "Who is on the Lord's side?" you will say then, if it be so, as you put it, I think I am on His side, only I want one thing more, to clinch what has been said. I want His own testimony, that He is mine, and that I am His. I want the testimony of His presence, and of His love, of His blood and of His Spirit, and then I shall be satisfied.

I close with another word, and it is this, If we are on the Lord's side, idolatry will be hateful to us, false religion will be feared by us. To be easy, to walk in an easy, unexercised way, to walk in a faith that knows no shaking, that can always go along, and say heavenly Father, that can always lay hold of things. To walk in such a religion, is what a child of God greatly fears. Anything that is easy to the flesh, you may well suspect, as being false. Anything that is uniform in that way in religion, without shaking or testing, without interruption, you may suspect.

If you take the Spirit's word, the testimony of the experience of the saints in the scripture, you won't find them walking, in that uniform way. Trouble, trouble, trouble, then God coming with deliverance, then another deliverance needed, and by these things you live. By these things you learn the evil of the flesh, and the terribleness of idolatry. And you cleave to Christ, and God in Him.

Who on this point can say, "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil:" (Psalm 97 verse 10), it is a terrible thing to love that which Christ hates. "Who is on the Lord's side?" It is a blessed thing to love that which Christ loves, and to prize that which He commends. May the Holy Ghost help us, and bring us to clear points, bring us to a solemn sweet persuasion, that we, with our difficulties, and short comings, and sins, are, notwithstanding all this, on the Lord's side.

Amen