

SB/JH47

Sermon Preached at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
by Mr J.K. Popham on Sunday Morning
18th October 1936

Text Isaiah 43 verse 21

This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise.

If we realised the awful truth, that the fall left not one loyal subject to God, we should understand a little of the wonder, that God should have a people for Himself. The fall did not leave one loyal subject to God, all are dead in trespasses and sins, enemies, and full of enmity, alienated from the life of God, through ignorance and wicked works. Original sin is a terrible truth, the whole of creation was disordered by the fall, human nature was completely corrupted by the fall. Man that was for God in the creation, is now for himself and the devil in the fall. The language of every man's heart is this, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways." (Job 21 verse 14). In the Epistle to the Romans Paul was inspired to say, "And even as they (man) did not like to retain God in their knowledge." (Romans 1 verse 28). What a solemn fact, what a fearful truth, that we did not like to retain God in our knowledge.

Other things give us delight, but God does not. Now if we believe this, as many of us do believe it by divine teaching, being born again, it is a solemn humbling thing for us. And also it exalts by comparison, or rather contrast, the grace that has made the change. That we are now the people of God, belonging to Him, attached to Him, by an indissoluble union. Loving Him sometimes with a pure heart, and following Him sometimes with fervent desires, such as have been expressed in the hymns sung this morning. But though the fall left not one loyal subject to God, He had in Eternity fixed upon a people, who should be born, and should be interested in the death of Christ. And who should in time be born again, formed, or as in he first verse of this chapter, created, "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel." (Isaiah 43 verse 1). First of all then, God has a people, not by natural birth but by regeneration, a wonderful truth that the Holy Ghost should go among the sons of men, one here and another there, lay His hand on each one, and by an effectual work call them in their sins from the grave of death, quicken them, create them anew in Christ, and make them a praying, believing and loyal people. "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day that I make up My jewels;" (Malachi 3 verse 17).

There is coming a great meeting, a grand assize is to be set, the judge of the quick and the dead, will gather all nations to Himself. And though very much mixed in this world, they shall then be separated, and according to the terms of scripture, sheep on the right hand and goats on the left hand. There is a people owned by God, He knows them in Galeed Brighton, and wherever there are people fearing God, He knows them all. They wander about on the dark mountains, they are hurried hither and thither, their own passions bring them, the greatest sorrow, shame and grief, but God knows them, and He says, "I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out." (Ezekiel 34 verse 11). 'I will go on the dark mountains, and gather the wounded, the lame, the holt and the maimed. I will gather them into one fold, and there shall be one shepherd over them'. He has a people and they are called by His name, His name is named on them.

"And he Disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11 verse 26). This was a term of derision, but it is a great name, and if we are Christians we have a most honourable name. Yet today it is so abused, a so called protestant Archbishop, has such awful enmity against the truth as to speak of Spain as the most Christian nation. The name is abused but it belongs to some people, why some of you my dear brethren have that name, named upon you, the name of Christians. The life of Christ, the Spirit of Christ, the love of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the holiness of Christ, that being given to you, His name is properly named on you. This people, no better than other people, the Lord seems to have again and again, taken hold of the worst of men, and made them Christians.

I know where the chief of sinners lives, Oh but to be a Christian, think of it, the name, the Spirit, the breath the nature of Christ, called "The divine nature," (2 Peter 1 verse 4), given to such persons. "This people have I formed for Myself." "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day that I make up My jewels;" (Malachi 3 verse 17). Mortal men to "be Mine" by the election of them unto Eternal Life, sinful men, a wonderful exchange made by sovereign grace to their election to the divine nature. "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left." (Matthew 24 verses 40,41). God says of one, this is Mine. Has God come to you, and laid hold of you and said effectually, if not in word, you are Mine, I loved you in eternity, you are Mine, I gave My Son for you, to redeem you, you are Mine. I gave my Holy Spirit to quicken you ? "This people have I formed for Myself," then if you belong to the Lord, you do not belong to yourself to walk in sin.

Every child of God is more the Lord's than his own, than himself, Himself is his greatest trouble. How often have I quoted Rutherford's words in this pulpit, it is so often my painful experience, "Oh that I had not a myself". This wretched self, but they are mine saith the Lord. Christ said to His Father, "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me." (John 17 verse 6). Think of it, He, God, gave you to Christ. Oh the humbling belief and comfort of it, God gave a sinner to Christ. How it has touched me sometimes, what, God took the trouble, so to put it, to cast His eyes on one atom of filthy dust and say, that dust shall be My child. That He should look on one walking in the course of this world, a Sabbath breaker, a lover of the world, and say, he is mine. And the Spirit comes to him, and lays hold of him, he is not his own. There is a distinction, a solemn wonderful distinction, made between one man and another, between father and son, mother and daughter, mother in law and daughter in law, Oh the distinction. A harsh thing I am stating to you, but a deeply humbling, heart breaking, melting truth when brought by the Holy Ghost.

What was there in us to give the Creator delight ? Nothing. What is there in a praying soul to give God delight ? The language of his spirit. What is there in the acting of faith on Christ to give God delight, the very work He requites. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." (John 6 verse 29). Not this is the work of faith in you, that is true, but in that place it is something else. This is the work, God will have you, work in you, that you should believe on Him whom He hath sent. This people, an invisible Church, (there are visible Churches). There were seven such Churches in Asia, but not one there today. There may be isolated people, there may be two's and three's, but as far as all knowledge of that part of the world goes, it leads to this conclusion, there is not a visible protestant Church, where there used to be seven. What a wonder to belong to a Church, the world does not know it. But it knows visible Churches, known as, little visible Churches of course, but there is a Church which the world knows not. God says, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth:" (Amos 3 verse 2). He knows them and that separates them. "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth My praise." They are His property, the wife of His Son, the subjects of His Kingdom, the objects of His love. Oh to belong to God, it breaks your heart when you believe it. To belong to God, just think of it, children who have a noble upright father are proud of him, the children of God, who have the Eternal God for their Father, are not to use that word proud, but they are humbled, they delight, they melt, they rise up in thankfulness to God, that He should look upon them and distinguish them from others.

See if you know what this is, you have got plenty of sin to make you doubt, there is no question about that. You will have many things in you making you wonder, if such creatures can belong to God. But there will be moments, sweet moments when you can scarcely bear it, so great, so weighty, so wonderful is the truth that you belong to God. "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." (Isaiah 43 verse 1). Oh but you say, I am so vile, God has done one thing in Holy Scripture. He alone can do it, He said it charging His ancient people with their perpetual adulteries, leaving Him for false gods. He says this, Oh how I have wondered at it, I have looked at it in my soul, wondered at it and blessed God for the words, more than once. "O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities." (Jeremiah 31 verse 21). I have said, how can it be ? Grace can do it. "O virgin." But if I have gone after false gods innumerably, and perpetually, He says, "O virgin." and I have said, Oh I could not say how often, Lord do say that to me.

It seems impossible, but it is not impossible, "This people have I formed for Myself", not themselves, they were not consulted. But when they are consulted, if I may so express it, would you be healed ? they answer Oh that I might be healed. Jesus said to one man, "Wilt thou be made whole ?" (John 5 verse 6). If He came and said to some of you now, in your hearts, would you be made Christians, would you be made clean, would you be made righteous, would you be made whole ? I know what you would say, Lord I would. My hearts desire, my longing prayer, is that I may be right for life, and right for death. You dear young people, you that are listening to me, and I am glad to have you to speak to, there is only one thing that you need to live for, may God give you to believe it, and that is, to belong to the Lord. I was young when He called me, and He made Himself desirable, Oh but by nature I do not love Him. No, and you do not either by nature, but then I remember when young, reading that scripture in Isaiah, "Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish." (Isaiah 41 verse 11). They shall not be incensed against thee, Oh how my heart did leap, I said, 'I am not incensed against Thee.' Sometimes a word gets hold of you, and you feel it in a moment, 'Lord I am not incensed against Thee'. Thou art the object of my desire, Oh that I might be the Lord's. "This people have I formed for Myself," for My enjoyment, does that startle some of you, that God should have you for His own enjoyment ? Listen, "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy." (Psalm 147 verse 11). Religious people have legs and they run about, this scripture cuts them, The Lord, "He taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man." (Psalm 147 verse 10).

I remember saying, I wish He did, when I was very young working and walking, and running for life, Oh how I did wish God would take pleasure in my legs but He will not. He taketh pleasure in the people who fear Him. What can give Him pleasure, you may say, in me, do you believe in Christ ? That gives God pleasure. Do you pray that God would cleanse you from your sins ? that is better than all the gold and silver, and all the cattle on a thousand hills, and all the burnt offerings you might take to Him. The sigh, the groan, the prayer of His people, He does take pleasure in, and He takes pleasure in their love, their love gives Him great satisfaction. If you look at yourself, you will hate yourself, when you have the fear of God in you. But if you look at Christ, there will be something wonderful, "They looked upon Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed." (Psalm 34 verse 5).

He counts Himself rich in the possession of His people, they are His jewels, "And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels;" (Malachi 3 verse 17). He will make up His wealth. Oh what an amazing thing, "The day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat," (2 Peter 3 verse 12), "and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll" (Isaiah 34 verse 4). Then this people shall have an abode, they will have their dwelling place with God. They will worship Him, not in temples made with hands, "for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." (Revelation 21 verse 22).

This people are separated, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord." (2 Corinthians 6 verse 17). They are a holy people, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," (Hebrews 3 verse 1). What a name to be given to men, by the name God gives here, "holy brethren", because they are created in Christ Jesus, a new creation never to be defiled, that is the first thing.

I said there were two things formed for God, "This people have I formed for Myself". The second thing is, "They shall show forth My praise". This may meet a feeling which some of you may sometimes have had, or now have. If any one should speak to you of your glorifying God, you would think, well but it is not possible that such a creature situated as I am should glorify God. I had that thought many years ago, I thought how can I glorify God ? Your situation would seem to make it impossible. I will tell you what relieved me, "Whoso offereth praise glorifyeth Me, and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God." (Psalm 50 verse 23). When you have got a broken grateful heart, what do you do ? You offer Him a broken and a contrite spirit, which is His pleasure.

When He gives you a certainty in your soul, making you know and firmly believe that He "loved us, (you) and hath given Himself for us." (you) (Ephesians 5 verse 2). what do you do with all your powers, you praise Him. You offer Him praise, well, whoso praises on his bed, in his room, or in the field, behind the hedge, or in the street, no matter where, "whoso offereth praise glorifyeth Me." The Lord help you to do so, and believe it, so as not to be stumbled. If the enemy whispers, your situation in life makes it impossible for you to praise God, you are unknown. God knows you, and now His ear is open to the prayer and praise of His people, wherever they are.

"They shall show forth His praise," the praise of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, and that for many reasons, only one or two of which I can name this morning. First because He is the Daysman, they have longed for a Mediator, and the Holy Spirit has revealed Him as the Daysman. They go before God, and have so many sins, and such a corrupt nature, that if there were no Mediator, they would not have courage to offer a prayer, but there is a Daysman. He lays His hand on the Father, being His Son, He is of the same nature, and He lays His hand on His brethren, being of their same nature, and He deals with them both on equal terms. He takes a poor sinner and brings him to His Father, a poor sinner, I know what I mean by that word, a poor sinner. It is not just a common word to me, He takes that poor sinner, who has not a word of excuse, but has thousands of accusations constantly made in his conscience, and the Daysman comes. Jesus the Mediator comes, the Blessed Saviour of Sinners comes, and He takes the part of that sinner. Takes his part, not against justice, Oh no the sinner would not like that, it would not be acceptable, if the Mediator tarnished the justice of God. But the Mediator met justice and satisfied it, and now He takes this poor sinner and deals with him on that ground. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2 verse 1). Now you praise Him for that. Many a time you will have occasion to bless God for this Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. On your bed, at your work, here and there you will bless God for the Mediator.

By Him you have come to God, by Him you have poured out your heart of sorrows, by Him you have made known your requests with some sense of acceptance. Oh how I have looked at that word, "accepted in the Beloved." (Ephesians 1 verse 6). What a great word, God knows how you despise yourself under the light and teaching of the Spirit. "Accepted in the Beloved." Not a frown on God's face, not a repulse in your spirit from God. This is holiness divine, and I say again, this is one thing in which you praise God. "They shall show forth His praise."

Angels delight in sinners who repent and belong to God, how much more their Father in heaven, their Redeemer and the Holy Spirit. They shall show forth the praise of My blood, I should be in black despair without that. The blood of Christ, a precious blood, cleanseth from all sin, doubt it not, and reconciles the soul to God, from every folly and every fault. Oh but I am ashamed, of course you are, and the more you know of the blood of Christ in your conscience, the deeper will be your shame. "That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." (Ezekiel 16 verse 63). Oh the blood of Christ, we have fellowship with God in that, "And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1 verse 7). There is not a fault that this blood will not remove, it washes out the deep stains of sin. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isaiah 1 verse 18). Praise Him for His precious blood, praise Him for shedding that blood, which is the life of His people.

"They shall show forth His praise." The praises of His Spirit, Oh the work of the Holy Ghost in the Church is a great work, it was first of all in the Person of Christ, the Holy Ghost created that nature, united to the Son of God. He filled the Lord Jesus Christ without measure, and from Him the dear Lord Jesus Christ, that Holy Spirit comes and breathes the breath of life eternal into the soul. How can we bless the Holy Spirit enough. How can we praise Him enough, for coming and breathing life into our souls. How can we bless Him enough for convincing us of our sins, for making us sorry for our sins, and enabling us to do two things. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them (his sins) shall have mercy." (Proverbs 28 verse 13). All perhaps you can say to the Lord is, I do confess them, and I would forsake them. He knows, for it is through His preserving mercy that some of us can say, we do not deliberately, willfully and continually sin. We fail, who does not, we come short, but the Spirit comes and helps us. He helps our infirmities. It is a wonderful word, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself (Himself) maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Romans 8 verse 26). It is a beautiful word, He comes alongside a helpless sinner and begins to help him, prompting him to pray, teaching him how to pray, and how to approach God. We do love it, praise is due to the Holy Spirit, if we are enabled to pray acceptably, what do we owe to the Spirit for making us acquainted with Jesus Christ. Can you forget the first glimpse you had of Him ? I cannot forget it, though now more than seventy years ago.

When the first glimpse of the blood of Christ was given to me, Oh I remember it, and I foolishly knelt down and said, 'Lord I wont get off my knees until I know that I am pardoned', but I had to wait a long time after that before pardon came. The blood of Christ is our hope, our rest, our cleansing, our victory, it is everything. Praise Him for it, and praise the Spirit for making us know it. That Holy Person, that Divine Person, in the adorable Trinity, that He should come to a poor ignorant creature, and give him a sight of what is commonly read, and talked about, but a sight of which penetrates the very heart and soul, it touches the conscience.

The Spirit does that, you may read about the blood of Christ, but to feel it, to have its efficacy on your conscience, that is the wonder. They shall show forth the praise of the Trinity, as concerned in our salvation, interested in our poor persons, in our positions, in our difficulties, in our afflictions, and coming to us even when we despise ourselves. And letting us know, that He does not despise us. "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, (broken hearted) and not despise their prayer." (Psalm 102 verse 17). Oh bless God for this great wonderful truth.

"They shall show forth" the praise of the Eternal Trinity. I was glad the other day to think of this, "They shall show forth" the praise of My long suffering and patience. This text has been upon my mind for a week or so, and that was one thing that came into my mind, the patience of Christ. Suppose you have got a wayward child, and one day you are so tried by his waywardness, you become quite impatient. Here the Lord sees our ways, follies, faults, mistakes, and we are brought to hate ourselves for them, and this is His compassionate patience. Do thank Him for it, help me to thank Him, that He is so patient to us. How many a time He forgave their iniquity, and did not stir up all His wrath, He remembered they were but dust. Think of it, He has been patient with me longer than with any of you here, because I am older, and because I have been longer in a profession, but Oh wonder of wonders He has not tired of me. I am tired of myself, but He has not got tired of me, He lets me come near to Him still. Praise Him dear friends, do praise Him for His long suffering. There is no end to it, so long as we live. "They shall show forth My praise" for My occasional visits, Oh He does visit still, He visits sinners still. How shall I know if He visits? Let me answer the question by putting one to you. How do you know the sun shines? Just so will you know when Christ shines. How shall I know if He speaks to me? A good Scottish Minister was asked that question by one of his hearers, and this was his answer, Never man spake like this Man, no one. They said of old in the days of His sojourn here below, and teaching, "For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." (Matthew 7 verse 29).

His speaking penetrates, it instructs, it rebukes, it strengthens, it comforts, it guides, it assures, "Never man spake like this man." (John 7 verse 46). Oh one says, I wish He would speak to me, can you ask Him, have you a heart to ask Him, do you persevere in asking Him ? That is to say, is your hunger so keen that you cannot help asking Him, constantly asking Him ? "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. (Psalm 35 verse 3). Praise Him, Oh praise Him for this His goodness. He does visit, He does speak, if He were to come and speak to some of you hear now, you would say I know that voice. I had an old friend in Wiltshire, who lived to be considerably over ninety years of age, though he has been dead many years, his mind was very weak and he forgot people. One day I was with him, standing at his side, and his wife came and spoke to him, from behind him. Instantly he said I know that voice. And if the Lord speaks, you too will say I know that voice. A life, a light, a power, an influence always attends the voice of Christ when He speaks. Praise Him for His visits, praise Him for His long suffering. Praise Him for His goodness, His power, and His faithfulness. "They shall show forth His praise."

One word more, they show it here but feebly, yet their testimony is sufficiently clear for Him to say in this chapter "Ye are my witnesses", you speak well of Him, you witness to His goodness. But, Oh the time is coming, nearer to some than others, when without physical weakness, or weariness, without any imperfection of any sort or kind, we shall meet with the Lamb and that blessed company, and sing with a loud voice "Worthy is the Lamb." Sing to Him who sits upon the throne, with that wondrous book in His right hand, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." (Revelation 4 verse 11).

And they will sing to the Holy Ghost, these seven Spirits, lamps of fire, before the throne, with no weariness. "For the Lamb which is in the midst (of them, as well as in the midst) of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: (They shall thirst no more,) and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Revelation 7 verse 17).

Effulgences of glory, perpetually emanating from that wondrous, glorious Person Jesus Christ, satiating their precious souls. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more." (Revelation 7 verse 16).

Amen