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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel, Brighton  
on Sunday evening 6 January 1929

TEXT: ISAIAH 53 Verses 1 and 2

"Who hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of  
the Lord revealed for he shall grow up before Him as a  
tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground. He hath  
no form or comeliness and when we shall see Him there is  
no beauty that we should desire Him"

It is an unspeakable mercy to have a saving religion, a  
religion, that is, that comes down from God out of heaven,  
that is the religion of the church, not of the professing  
world and the centre of that religion, the root, the  
foundation, the life and the glory of it, is the Lord  
Jesus. The test of all profession will be this in the end if  
not before, how we have received Him, whose Name may be  
named upon us, and what we think of Him. "What think ye of  
Christ?" one says in a hymn. This is the test to try both  
our state and our scheme, we cannot be right in the rest  
unless we think rightly of Him, and the text brings this  
person before us in the form of questions and in the first  
instance "Who hath believed our report" I remarked this  
morning on this first verse. This word report or hearing or  
preaching, that it was a report which the prophet gave of  
what he himself had seen and heard, no second-hand report.  
He got what he reported or preached from heaven. A  
consideration growing out of this might furnish a minister  
for a sermon on the ministry, what the ministry should be,  
its grand subject, its circumference, its end, for surely no  
man ought to occupy a pulpit to talk of God unless he has  
seen God and heard something from God. Seen Him, that is to  
say, as he may be seen, in His beloved Son Incarnate, and  
heard from Him what is necessary for salvation, that a man  
thus speaking can say that he testifies what he has seen and  
tasted and handled of the word of life. He need not always be

speaking in the first person. There will be a testimony and demonstration of the truth that he preaches without saying I have seen and I have heard and so on all through. The subject of the ministry is here, the Person and the work of Christ. The Person of Christ in particular regards. Who hath believed the report of Christ? but I am not to dwell on that aspect of the case. The ministry is a very solemn occupation, weighty beyond expression. In my own case I can only say that the older I grow, the weightier the great subject of speaking to you becomes. It is no little thing for a sinful man to speak in the name of God. This, to ~~say~~<sup>say</sup> in passing, this has a very solemn reflection on the hearers. Paul says that some who heard the gospel did not profit by their hearing of it because it was not mixed with faith. Their hearing was not mixed with faith so they did not receive the word to their profit. It may do some of you good to ask yourselves what you have received, how you have received, what your hearings have done for you. It is said of this Person in the second verse "For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground," and this may in measure explain the reason of the question "Who hath believed our report" If sin is spoken of, if salvation is mentioned, then men say who is the Saviour, what person is He, what is there to show to us that He is able to save, that He can do for us what we hear we need to have done? A difficulty stands in the way immediately, for if such an enquiry be made, who is this Saviour of whom you speak and boast and the answer is, well He grew up before God as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground, referring doubtless with respect to His coming in the flesh, to His coming from the decayed house of David, not a cedar, not an oak, not an imposing tree, but just a tender, perhaps unnoticed plant out of a dry ground where you do not expect things to flourish. Tender to God, in God's eyes. So tender was the Lord Jesus as an infant, so cared for by His Father that when Herod, angry at the wise men having gone home another way, instead of returning to him as he requested, said as it were I will meet the case,

be sure I have that child. Every child of such an age, every man child shall be destroyed, and God said to Joseph in a dream take the young child and the mother and flee into Egypt. His Father cared for Him; He was a tender plant and for a time He would not allow Him to be exposed to the persecution and anger and the jealous rage of Herod, so He sent Him to sojourn in Egypt. The root out of a dry ground shooting forth unexpectedly from a decayed tree cut down and only the root left and out of that comes another root. " I am the root and the offspring of David" said the Lord Jesus in the Revelation. When He came, the people to whom He came, seeing His mighty works and yet despising His Person because He had no prowess and no great Name, said is not this the carpenter's son? He casts out devils by the prince of devils. When He said God was His Father they said He blasphemed, and so it is said He hath no form nor comeliness. Now form is attributed to Jesus Christ in two respects, and I invite your attention to both of those respects. You have it in the inspired word written by Paul when exhorting the saints to have the same mind that Jesus Christ Himself had, said "Who" that is Christ "Who, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God" Beloved friends, there are pharisees, scribes, and lawyers and doctors into whose hands this Jesus Christ is delivered today and they see not the form of divinity in Him. "Being in the form of God" means that He is God. God has no actual form as we understand that term and when men see Him He says they only see My back parts, My face, that is my naked glory, shall no man see and live but Christ had and has and will eternally have deity, absolute deity. He is in the form of God. He is God, and it is written concerning Him that "He is the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His Person" That He is the Word who was with God and is God. In the beginning was the Word with God and the Word was God, and the Word was made flesh and that veiled the Word, the Eternal Word. The Son of God, the Word, was made flesh and dwelt among us and the Godhead of Christ equal with that of the Father and of the Holy Ghost

is never propounded in the scripture for the understanding of man but for faith so when His enemies, the Jews, said to Him Who art Thou, whence dost Thou come? If I told you, he said, you would not believe. Whose Son art Thou? And when He declared Himself to be the very Son of God they understood that He meant He was God. They said He maketh Himself equal with God because a son partakes of the nature of the father. So that the form of God which they saw not is God Himself. He hath no form in the judgment of men, and today they blaspheme His Name, They say He was a Jew, a man ignorant, that He spake under the influence of Jewish prejudice and ignorance. They deny His eternal deity. They deny His miracles, conception and birth. They see not His form. My brethren do you see it? Do you see Him to be Almighty God, sighing human breath? Of course we may say as a congregation and individually we may say if asked whether we believe that Christ is God, O of course we do, but that is not what I mean, neither, as I judge, what the scripture means, when the question is put "Dost thou believe on the Son of God? It is not, of course; it is of the Holy Spirit; it is by faith. O happy is that sinner who can confirm with the hymn writer

That Christ is God, I can avouch  
And for His people cares  
For I have prayed to Him as such  
And He has heard my prayers

Well that is His first form. Do not forget that this is said of Him by the Holy Spirit through Paul "Being in the form of God He thought it not robbery to be equal with God" that is He thought it not robbery to say "I and My Father are one" One in substance, in the glorious eternal essence that can never be comprehended, but may be, and is apprehended by all taught of the Holy Ghost. This is a profound subject. We see it afar off by faith, those of us who have faith. We see Him to be Almighty God, in the bosom of His Eternal Father always delighting in and with the

Father, and the Father delighting in and with Him and the Spirit proceeding from them both and delighting equally with and in them. This is a mystery. Trinitarianism is a scripture doctrine not to be played with, not to be talked about lightly, but to be believed and the Trinity is to be worshipped and this invests vital religion with a singular solemnity. It from time to time kills the levity of human nature; it kills the prying curiosity of science; it brings a person as a child, a little child, to receive the doctrine by the powerful teaching of the Spirit, and a man thus blessed says I worship Jesus Christ, He is God. I love Jesus Christ, He is God. I trust Him, He is God. I believe His merit, infinite merit, He is God. Happy soul that for a few minutes occasionally can say as much as that, and yet to men He has not this form.

The second form that is attributed to Him, predicted of Him is, "He took on Him the form of a servant" and do notice the difference with respect to His being in the form and taking on Him the form of a servant. The first is natural to Him, it is His eternal right to be God, with the Father and the Holy Ghost. He could never be said to have taken on Him the form of God. He is not a created God. He is not a God with a beginning as it would be if He were truly said to have taken on Him the form of God, but being in that form naturally, eternally, properly begotten of the Father's substance, and so one with the Father, being in that form and being designated in the Trinity in the Council of eternity and of love being designated to be the Saviour, of necessity He took on him the form, that is the being of a servant. No phantom. No! but just a reality. He became a servant. "Behold My servant" said the Father concerning Him. "Behold My servant". Neither time, nor ability, nor grace have I sufficient to enter much into this mystery. How that God, the absolute God, did become in time Man. How that in the fulness of the time appointed in the Trinity, the Father sent His Son into the world made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, being

made a curse for us. How all this took place we know from scripture but the conception of the human nature in the virgin by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, the birth of that child in that wondrous, miraculous way, by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, and the wisdom and the power and the love that brought that to pass, eternity will not be too long, to use that word long, to open, to see, to admire, to love and to worship.

A servant has a service. A servant has to do the bidding of a person whom he serves. His work is set him. It is not for the servant to say I will do this and I wont do that. He comes as a servant to do the bidding of the person whom he serves. Jesus came, He said Himself, to do the will of My Father who sent Me. "I came not to speak My own words but the words I have heard My Father speak . I have come, not to do My own works, but the works which I have seen My Father do. I can do nothing of Myself, but as I have heard and as My Father hath taught Me." These are the words of Almighty God incarnate standing in the relationship of a servant to His Father. He stands in that humble relationship. He humbled Himself. He made Himself of no reputation. Men do that. Men start out to get a reputation. Jesus, having an eternal reputation as God, made Himself of no reputation in this world; did not blaze forth His eternal deity. It came out occasionally in some of His mighty works, some of His lovingkindness, in healing the sick, but He was in the relationship of a servant. He said "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many" Have we ever had an evidence from Himself that He has come to serve us? The question arises here, what was the service Jesus came to render to His eternal Father? Well when His servant, His disciple Peter, would have spared Him the pain that Jesus foretold was awaiting Him, the Saviour severely rebuked him for that interference and said that He must obey the will of God. In the Garden of Gethsemane He said "If it be possible let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless not My

will but Thine be done". O it was a service. This was the service. He was to take the place of sinners. He was to take on Him their infirmity, their sicknesses, their sins, their guilt, their debt, their death, their curse, and in all those respects He was a servant, paid debts He had not incurred, took away the reproach that did not naturally and properly belong to Him until it was imputed to Him, and to put Himself under that law whose curse, He, being God, well knew, for He put that curse in His own law to put Himself under that curse and to make Himself liable for the death that sin procured. The immortal Jesus rendered Himself liable to death, not a death of physical necessity, but of a gracious voluntariness. This was His service. He took on Him the form of a servant and His obedience landed Him here. He was obedient unto death, just think of it. Obedient unto death. What natural man would not run away from death if he could but we must needs die. He must needs die but in another way. He must needs die because He had undertaken to die, promised to die, came on purpose to die, took a life that He might yield it in true, vicarious obedience to His Father. A commandment means a duty. That is a general truth. Now see how particularly Jesus came into that "No man taketh My life from Me. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I of My Father. Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life". I lay it down voluntarily as I came to do. O what a service. Who hath believed this. They tell us today that it is impossible justly for an innocent person to suffer in the place of a guilty person, that such a thing is unequal, that it does not lie with justice or goodness, but the scripture saith that it was otherwise. The scripture saith "He laid down His life" laid it down. The Father commanded Me to do it, and I, His servant, am obedient unto death, and this put Him in the eyes of men into this condition "There is no beauty that we should desire Him," when we see Him

Now I am going, in the next place, for a little while

just to look at this and to put a question to you and to myself. The question is this. When you look, if you do look, at the Lord Jesus, in Holy Scripture as being a servant, as subject to the law, as dying, is there anything in Him in those particular respects that has beauty? Anything in Him that attracts your attention? Anything that makes you say O if I only knew that His visage was so marred more than any man's for me. If I only knew that He took my place, that I could sing for myself

He took the dying traitor's place  
And suffered in his stead  
For man, O miracle of grace  
For man, the Saviour bled

I thought this morning of a verse we have in our book,

O why did Jesus show to me  
The beauties of His face  
Why to my soul did He convey  
The blessings of His grace?

Sinner did you ever see any beauty in the grave of the Saviour, in the ignominy of the Saviour, in the shame heaped upon Him, in the public shame He endured and despised? I believe every new born sinner sooner or later comes by the grace of the Spirit to see that there is no beauty in the whole of creation, neither moral nor physical nor any other kind of beauty compared with the Lord Jesus. His visage was so marred, more than any man. It may not be an empty speculation to imagine, to think, that the Lord Jesus, as to His human nature being begotten, as He was in that miraculous way, was a most beautiful person, that His face, His countenance, would be the most beautiful countenance that ever man looked on and yet that countenance was marred, more than any mans literally. O the thorny crown pressed on His sacred forehead. O the grief that scarred His face, and still more His holy soul. Is there any beauty in Him? Ah

the Lord knows, He is very beautiful to some of us." Fairer than the children of men." "The chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely". Now this is the thing. There is no heaven without knowing this Man, without faith in this Man. In this Man in the records of the text. These records in the text set Him forth, not as naturally inviting, rather repellent, but O faith says "Let me see Him bleeding for me. Let me see Him die for me. Let me hear that He gave Himself a ransom for me and let me know that my vile sins, my vile nature, my corrupt nature, my deformed nature, having no shape nor comeliness through sin, that this, my nature, Jesus Christ will restore and more than restore, to its primeval glory. What a Saviour! What a Saviour! I thought it, and I believe it, that when I came to this place so long ago, I knew something about this Lord, and I then tried to speak of Him, but I think I know a little more of Him tonight than I did then and I would, if the Lord would help me, continually speak well of Him to you. He is worthy! and if we get to heaven, O how will our expanded powers and affections and vision look on Him and then sing His high praises. "Worthy is the Lamb to receive honour and power, and riches and blessing and might and dominion for ever and ever" He is worthy. Our lips are not worthy to name Him, and our hearts are not worthy to think of Him and yet says He to His poor people "come to Me" and when their longing eyes are looking here and there He comes sometimes in His Spirit and says "Behold Me, behold Me." O what an object. If you have to give a report of yourselves, you who know yourselves, you will say none so vile, none so unworthy, but that humbling knowledge will fit you to see the Saviour with admiration and come to Him with adoration and rely on Him by faith and receive in love and in faith His justifying righteousness. Then you will say I believe all the holy reports that the scriptures give of Him. Who hath believed our report of this Man, this root out of a dry ground, this One of whom men said, when He was here, He hath a devil and is mad, and some of us can say He is God, and perhaps some have said to Him and this day, Lord we love

Thee. "Jesus" we sing sometimes "I love Thy charming Name, 'tis music to my ear" All the sorrow of sin, all the burden of affliction, all the sore places in the providence of God we get into, these were met, and relieved and healed by this gracious Saviour. He went about doing good, and it is significantly said of Him in more than one place and He healed all them that had need of healing. People with devils came to Him, and the lepers came to Him, and the dead was brought to Him, and He went to the dead and raised the dead out of their graves and this is the same Jesus we speak about. There is one word in the Psalms I would like just to name in conclusion, this. "Delight thyself also in the Lord" Now has that ever been in this marred Saviour, this crucified Saviour, who endured the cross, despising the shame? Did we ever delight ourselves in Him? May the Lord grant that it may be so. Here is a foundation for you, a refuge for you who are brought to feel your need of Him in every way. The only Saviour, the only Lord God, Jesus Christ. May He come and may we be able honestly, humbly, to say to the Lord we do behold beauty divine, and beauty human in the highest excellency, human beauty, in this gracious Saviour. ~~THE~~ AMEN

~~Now we have as a little church to celebrate His death. This evening, rather a goodly number of our members are not able to be with us, but still we shall be here at the table now and I hope we shall find the Lord with us. Some of us have often had a hard heart at the Lord's table. Some of us have often felt very distant from Him at His table, but the privilege is none the less to go to His table, and should we, this evening, hear Him say "Eat O friends and drink, yea drink abundantly O beloved" then we shall find a melting of our souls. Perhaps some may say we should like to be there. Well if it is so, I would ask a question, what doth hinder? May The Lord give you that movement in your souls by faith that will bring you to say hinder me not.'~~