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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTIST

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Sunday morning 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"

Verses these which, rightly read and believed, may verily bring a searching question to us. It is good to be honest before God. Good to take nothing for granted. Good not to build any material, irrespective of the nature of it, on a good foundation. Here we have questions and statements. The questions respecting a person and statements respecting Him. Questions which may well search you and me. Who, who in the Jewish nation hath believed our report or hearing? Who in Galeed this morning has believed the report? It is respecting the Lord Jesus. There is much more said about Him in the world than there is belief concerning Him. More disputing about Him than there is resting in Him, receiving of Him. More pretensions to knowledge of Him than real knowledge of Him by the Holy Ghost. The report or hearing, who hath believed it? A report is a statement of a matter that is supposed to have been heard or seen. The prophet had both seen and heard things and he was anointed to preach them and he did preach them and comparatively few believed them. The arm of the Lord had been revealed to Him and he had preached it, and he asks to whom has this arm, this power of the Lord been revealed. It was no second-hand report that the prophet brought. He got it at first-hand. He got the matter from God. In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up. The holy majesty of God made him, the prophet, a poor unclean sinner in his

own knowledge and feeling. All who see God then as a consequence see themselves sinners, hence the more knowledge men have of God, the deeper their convictions are of their sinfulness. The knowledge of sin is not derived from some investigation that you may make of yourself and in yourself. It is derived from the knowledge of God. Said the prophet, woe is me, woe is me for I am unclean and I dwell in the midst of a people that is unclean and the reason of this woeful, painful knowledge, he gives us, for mine eyes have seen the Lord. O sinner if you see God in the revealing light of the Spirit you will be a poor sinner, a convinced sinner, a confessing, trembling sinner and never be at rest until your lips are touched with a live coal from off the altar and it is said to you that your iniquity is purged. The prophet saw God. He saw the revelation. He had it in his own soul. "Unto us a Son is given" The eternal Son of God. "Unto us a child is born" and the Son in the human nature taking up the child into union with Himself then has this Name."His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. and of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end" The prophet saw this, he preached it. Who believed his report? It was revealed to him that the fruit of the Branch of the Lord should be comely and excellent to all that are escaped and he preached it and who believed his report? It was revealed to him that a Man should be a hiding place from the storm and he preached it and who believed it? It was revealed to him thus "Behold My servant whom I uphold, Mine Elect in whom My soul delighteth. I have put My Spirit upon Him and He shall bring forth judgment unto the gentiles" and who believed it? He preached it, who believed it? It was no idle tale that he spoke. He spoke of the beauty of God, the life, the wisdom, the love, the power of God in Christ. He preached the gospel. He preached the gospel and if you bring this chapter into his preaching, as indeed you may, and must if you rightly take hold of the thing, then you will see he preached a wondrously full gospel, a bruised, wounded,

chastised and smitten Saviour, The holy justice of God he preached. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. He put Him to grief. He caused Him to be numbered with the transgressors. He made Him to be sin, and who believed it. This was the report. We are brought up more or less religiously, more or less all of you brought up to hear the word of God read in your families, never disliking perhaps to listen, reading it yourselves, hearing it. You have listened to me over many years and have not been offended apparently and now let us stand here as in God's holy sight and presence and listen to this question "Who hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed" Did you ever get more than the reading? Did you ever get into your hearts a solemn persuasion that the Son given is the Son of God, that the child born is the Holy Child Jesus and that that person, not two, one with two natures, that person is the person spoken of in this chapter and did you ever believe, by seeing God, in your sinfulness. Sin is generally talked about. The knowledge of it comes from seeing God. Woe is me for I have seen God. John said when he saw God, Jesus Christ, that he fell as dead at his feet. A sight of God kills human nature as to its sinfulness and prevents sinning wilfully. Ezekiel saw the same person, and his comeliness was turned within him into corruption. Daniel fainted. Abraham fell on his face. Jacob said "How awful is this place, this is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven." It is great to see God. No one can fully express what is seen but the holiness of God, the justice of God, the wisdom of God, the love of God are terrible, all terrible; as in Christ seen, bearable, merciful. But when one seeing God, sees his sinfulness then he says woe is me. When you get a sight of God you may get then such a sight of yourself, look on your fallen nature, your native sinfulness as to be ashamed and then on your sinning of your whole life so as to be amazed and feel as if you must sink into despair and that will fit you to enter into the language of Hart,

"Had I not Thy blood to plead,

Each sight would sink me to despair."

I could not tell you the difficulty I have, to think that I am a christian, sometimes, although, by God's mercy, I do not know of anything of a flagrant nature, that anybody could come and charge me with, as to my conduct among men, but O my heart life. Do you think about the life of your heart sinner? Do you think about your thoughts? Do you ever make a conscience of thinking. Do you think about your unbelief? Do you feel it? About your atheism, practical atheism? Doing ever so many things, without prayer, and that is practical atheism. Do you think about your hardness of heart, your unthankfulness? Oh, if you think of all these things, and you will if you see God, think of them. What then can you say, how thankful I feel for the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness? Here's a door of hope for the vilest creature, who hath believed the beautiful report of God, given by this prophet, by all the prophets, by the Psalmist, and by the evangelists, and by the apostles. This Book, how full it is of Christ. As full, if I may use the word, as full as the Holy Ghost could make it. Even as Christ is as full as the love, and the wisdom, and the goodness, and the justice, and the power of God could make Him, and yet how few, comparatively believe in Him. I suppose, if we could realise how the pulpits of this land, are for the most part filled, with either superstition or infidelity today, we should be shocked and grieved beyond measure. At least if we love the Lord Jesus we should be, and yet come away from all that, and ask yourselves this question "Do I believe this report?" "Who hath believed our report?" The report of Christ's Person. Christ's Person is the great delight of the Trinity, the delight of the Father, the delight of the Son, for His delights, when in the bosom of His Father, were with the children of men, and the delight of the Holy Ghost. Well it is good to read, and it is sweet to feel, what is written in the Psalms. "Delight thyself also in the Lord" and the Psalmist did feel it on one occasion, in particular. He said "My heart is inditing a

good matter. I speak of the things which I have made, touching the King." Then he began (O it was a sweet Psalm that he started) "Thou art fairer than the children of men;" "Thou" the Lord Jesus "art fairer than the children of men, grace is poured into Thy lips". What a doctrine this is, the fairness of the Lord Jesus, exceeding all fair things or creatures, beyond all of them, because His Person is the Person of God the Son, in the Man Christ Jesus. I can never tell you, no preacher can tell you, how wonderful it is, that omnipotence that created the world, that holds it up, should be clothed in our own nature, and that the glory of Jehovah, should be veiled, to a bearableness, in the Lord Jesus, and this makes Him fairer than the children of men, and grace is poured into his lips, that is to say, as He Himself expresses it to His Father, "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary;" This is the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, when a man, a sinful man, believes this by the power of the Holy Ghost, he loves Christ; he can sing, "Jesus, I love Thy charming Name!" "Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." This is the Name, and a sinner who believes the report of Him, loves that Name. A Man, is a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the storm, a shade from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones, is as a storm against the wall. This is the Lord Jesus. What a refuge He is. What a refuge His blood is. The guiltiest wretch on earth, who lives to feel his need, and to confess his sin, is welcome to this Saviour. His faith, embraces this Saviour, as the Spirit reveals Him. His heart, opens to receive this Saviour, as the Spirit reveals Him, and the sinner says-O this poor heart, may it be Thy throne. Well dearly beloved friends, it is a great thing to be a believer. I live to feel that more and more, because I grow, in a knowledge of my sinfulness, and of my ignorance, and so I find it a great thing, and greater and greater, to be a believer. O people find it quite easy to believe. Why? Because they do not know what their sin is. Once a man knows his sinfulness, by

the Spirit of God teaching him it, then he begins to know, that it is a difficult thing to believe. Difficult to believe, that Christ can think kindly of one who has behaved so unkindly to Him. This is where I stick sometimes, my exceeding unkindness to Christ, Can He think kindly of me? This is where you will find yourselves at times, put to it, hardly put to it, to believe that people, so wicked, as you feel, with such a depraved nature, and such an unprofitable, ungodly heart, in your life, in secret before God; you will find it more and more wonderful, to be a believer. O but Christ does receive sinners. Take the report of Him in this book. Never forget, that Moses, and the prophets and the Psalms all wrote of Him. It was the occupation given to them by God, to express in the words, the Holy Ghost gave them, the love, and the wisdom and the power of God in giving His Son. The Apostle Paul says "Thanks be to God, for His unspeakable gift," Our sins, our sinfulness, bring us to this, there is not a spot in our nature, nor a thing in our sinful life, that we can put under our feet, and say, now we can stand on this. Do you believe that? I believe it of myself, and I believe it of you, and I am sure, you who are taught of God, believe it of yourselves. What then, sink, yes indeed, sink beyond all hope in self. Then listen to this report. "Behold I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone;" and the Jews rejected it. Those of us here, who have received that report, have built upon it, and do build upon it. This is the report. Heaven let down, in the Man Christ Jesus. Love revealed, in the foundation; the laying of it, in the wisdom and the power of God, all received in this report, received, when the report is believed, into the heart. O dear friends, you cannot sink, if you are built here. Have you received this report? Who hath believed it? It is a very solemn question, because it intimates, that very few do receive it or believe it, and the intimation of this, is confirmed solemnly, in the parable of the sower. Four hearers, three wrong. What a proportion, what a trembling proportion. Four people hearing the gospel, and only one, rightly receiving the gospel. Well might the

prophet say," Who hath believed our report?"

Well dear friends, "To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? This brings the nature of true religion, before us. It is not a matter of acquisition, but of revelation. You cannot pick it up, it must be given. It is God's teaching. It is God, opening Himself, revealing Himself. Himself teaching, Himself imparting goodness and mercy. The arm, which means the power of God, working faith. Now faith, which is wrought in the heart, by the Lord, is wrought by that same power that brought Jesus Christ out of the grave. Just meditate on that for a moment. Think of the power, that brought Christ out of the grave; that same power, the Apostle Paul says in the Ephesians, is in the saints, working faith, and as that power, that raised Christ from the dead, set Him far above all principality and power, so, whenever it is revealed in a sinner, sets that sinner above himself. Ah, if you be sinners, you need a power, to set yourselves above yourselves, to believe Christ, as being better than sin, bigger than sin, greater than enmity, than unbelief, and all the wickedness of a wicked heart, a fallen nature. Oh quite easy say people. No! It is easy to the nominal professor; it is easy to the man, who has simply, a notional faith, or a faith, built on the Bible, without the Holy Ghost, but for one who is lost, it is not easy, and yet, it is easy, for the power of God is such, as to enable a sinner to say, "Lord I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." I have come to this, and I have been brought again and again to it, to have attained to a knowledge of my depravity, and of my ignorance, ignorance of God. Some professor might say, well after 60 years of profession and more, you ought to be ashamed, to say nothing more than that. I would bless God, that I have attained to that knowledge, and He has led me, a little further, for I have attained, to the knowledge, that Christ, is a suitable Saviour; and to use Bunyan's language, to make me know the want, and worth of Christ. O sinner, if you get as far as that, you will go to heaven; though death and hell will obstruct the way, you will go to heaven. Bless God for Jesus Christ, and

for faith to receive the report of Him, and to have the arm of the Lord revealed in us. When did you get a revelation of Him? When did you see this dear Saviour of sinners, and run to Him, answering in your own case, to that that is written, "Who are these that fly as doves to their windows?" Who is this poor sinner, who flys by faith to the Saviour? Who is this wretch, who goes to the holy Lord Jesus? Who is this naked thing? Who is this wretched creature, who says, my rags are ruining me, and my sin will sink me to hell, yet I am flying as fast as I can, with all the impediments I have, to the Lord Jesus. What will the Lord Jesus say to such a person? Come in, He will say, and open the door. Yea, that will be true concerning this man, that is written of the Lord in the days of His flesh, "This Man receiveth sinners;" This God-Man received the wretch, and "the poorer the wretch, the welcomer here!"

The arm of the Lord revealed. It is revealed, when Christ comes near. It is revealed when His blood appears, and is sprinkled on the conscience. It is revealed, when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart. It is revealed, when the unjust is justified, and when the ungodly, is made godly. It is revealed in a way of sweet powerful experience, and it is very wonderful, when a revealed Christ, and a sinner in whom He is revealed, come together. Until you know it, you cannot in the least imagine, what passes between these two; the lover and the loved one. He speaks so kindly to sinners. I have had a fear at times lately, of committing the sin (yet I do not think I shall do it) of those ten spies. They brought up an evil report of the land, and I have feared bringing up an evil report of Christ, but I will try not to do it. I will speak as well of Him, as I can to you. O He is worthy to be praised; worthy of all your confidence, and all your trust, and all your love, and all your affection. To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? It is revealed in some, and then Jesus Christ is received as the Mighty God, mighty to save. Sinner think of it. Mighty to save. I wish He would come, and save us all constantly. He is mighty

to convert sinners who have turned away from Him, as He converted Peter, and has converted some of us. O the number of times, He has converted me, and you need Him to convert you. When you turn your back on Him, you need Him to turn your face to Him, and that means conversion, and converting grace is very sweet; it brings such sweet repentance, such grief for grieving Him, such sorrow, that you disputed with Him, that you disbelieved Him. And when the arm of the Lord is revealed in a sinner, it reveals this, the everlasting love of God. "Yea, I have loved Thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn Thee". One of the most wonderful chapters in the Bible, is the sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel, but O it is a shameful thing, a shameful thing, that people born again, and washed, and clothed, and enriched, should take God's gifts, and pour them out as offerings to idols. A shameful thing, so shameful, that when the Lord forgives them, and is pacified toward them, it is said, they shall never open their mouth again, never open it any more for shame.

When the arm of the Lord is revealed, wonders are wrought. Have you believed it? Have you had a revelation? The report is about heaven. "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty, and the land which is very far off". The land of extensions, endless happiness, bliss, glory, views of God and says the Saviour, "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also". Have you ever felt, when God has converted you again, and blessed you with peace, that you would like to die so as not to sin against Him again? O it is painful, to think, when the Lord reveals Himself to you again and again, as a God of love and peace, that if you live, you will sin again. This vile nature, this wicked heart, these wandering thoughts, the gadding spirit of men. O it will be good to get to heaven, and if we get there, we shall never cease praising Him who has taken us there, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Now brethren, the belief of this, will make you spiritually minded for the time being. Every time you receive this report by faith, you will hang about the Saviour, hanker after clearer discoveries of Him, and sweet communications from Him, and will long to be kept by Him. "Kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." Well I hope we shall never be tired of the gospel. I believe, if we are quickened, and led by the Spirit, we never shall be, and if the Spirit of God is pleased to make the ministry of any service, you wont be tired of the ministry. X

Who hath believed our report. This blessed report. O if I only knew how to speak about it, as it ought to be spoken about. This great report. I might go back to Genesis, that book that men say was not written by Moses, and all the other four books making up the Pentateuch. Go back to Genesis, and what do you find there? The seed of the woman, who is promised, and who is to bruise the serpent's head. You find there the report of God. You find it said to Abraham, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed". Gentiles, Gentiles coming to this day, and poor Gentiles in this chapel, O think of it, and when you feel a hope in your soul, and, as I feel that I am, one of the Gentiles, one of the families of all the earth, and to be blessed in Christ, why sinner, what is the world to this? How rich is a man who is called by grace, and blessed in Christ, and when you come to another Book in the Pentateuch, you hear Moses saying, and God had told him this, it was not an empty, naked hearsay. He said "A prophet like unto me, will the Lord your God raise up unto you. Him shall ye hear, in all things," and God knew how man would reject this, and then he said, and the soul that will not hear that prophet, shall be cut off, that is to say, in the language of the text, "Who hath believed our report." And what of the people who do not receive it? "All" says Paul "who obey not the gospel, shall be destroyed". Very solemn, very weighty. If you do not receive this report by faith, faith which is of

the operation of God, there is no remedy, there is no remedy, for all God's pardon is in His Son; all justification is in His Son; All cleansing is in His Son; all the promises are in His Son, so if this Son, if the report of Him, be not received by precious faith, then there is no remedy. May the Lord set this upon your heart, those of you who at the present give no sign of possessing life and grace.

When Christ came, what a reception He had. And the doctors, and the lawyers, and the pharisees, and the scribes, they rejected the head stone of the corner, and they said "Away with Him, away with Him". An elected Peter said with his brother disciples, and as it were for them, to this same rejected One, "To whom shall we go, Thou hast the words of eternal life." What do you say? What does my heart say? Do we say "Away with Him", or do we say to Him in the Spirit, "To whom shall we go? Thou, the Saviour of the lost, the redeemer of captives, the justifier of the ungodly, to whom shall we go, Thou hast the words of eternal life." Well, now what will he do to such people? Give them rest. "I will give you rest". What is that rest? Rest in His precious blood; rest in His justifying righteousness; rest in His kingly office, to rule in them and for them. Rest in Him, as their priest to intercede for them. Rest in Him, as the prophet to tell them of good things to come. Is that so with us? Have we thus believed the report? May the Lord cause us to believe it. There is no question about it, according to scripture, that whosoever believeth not, that lies in darkness, is under condemnation. There is no question about it in the scripture, that whosoever believes in the Lord Jesus is saved, is passed from death to life from condemnation to justification.

Now may the Lord command His blessing to rest upon us, and upon our dear absent friends. Sickness is upon us, many as we have seen this morning. Their vacant places are vacant because they cannot be with us, and I hope we shall

pray for them, pray for all who are afflicted, and any who are in particular affliction pray for them. The life of our young friend and fellow member Mrs. Burtenshaw seems to be in danger. May we pray for her and for the husband and the little child and all connected with them. They need prayer.

Pray for them and may we pray for Zion, pray for the churches. Mr. Brooker of Hastings has just lost two deacons and that is an affliction. May we pray for him that the affliction may be sanctified to him and to the church. When I heard of that I thought what an affliction it would have been to me and to all of us if our brother, Mr. Banfield, had been taken away from us by death. These things if rightly received will have a good effect upon us. They will cause us to call upon the name of the Lord. May the Lord help us to pray for one another according to the scripture.

Now I want to say, you all are aware of course of the distress of the miners, the great distress of them all and of others and you know the efforts that are being made to assist them and I think the Mayor of Brighton is asking for sustenance from congregations and the deacons and myself think that we as a congregation ought not to be lacking in this and so propose that next Lord's Day, we will have a collection for the poor sufferers. When I think of the wives and little ones in this severe weather and little or no clothing and hunger pinching them it is very painful to one and I hope we shall be able to show that the doctrines we profess, the religion we profess, do not make our hearts hard against our fellow creatures, rather the contrary, so next Lord's Day we will have a collection for the miners.