

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel Brighton on Sunday evening 17 August. 1930

ISAIAH 63 v 14

“As a beast goeth down into the valley the spirit of the Lord caused him to rest. So didst Thou lead Thy people to make Thyself glorious name”

The end of God in creation, in providence, is a most wonderful end. All things tend to, are directed to, this great end. God in all things is to be glorified. He works all things after the counsel of His Own will. Kings, and counsellors, and all creatures have this end, though they have it not in their hearts. Assyria had this work to do, though he meant it not God sent him, but he went of his own will, with his own ends; he intended to destroy cities and that not a few. God sent him to chastise His people. It is a solemn consideration for us as a congregation this evening that, whether we wish it or not, whether we believe it or not, whether we intend it or not, we shall be in some way for the glory of God. If it be in mercy, then we shall need eternity to praise Him. If it be in judgement, in righteous punishment in hell, He will be glorified. This chapter tells us of the conquest of Christ over His enemies. He had been punished, He had endured the wrath of God. Now He goes forth conquering and to conquer, to dip His garments in the blood of His enemies, and the enemies of the church. It is a wonder to those who see Him. “Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength?” He answers the question - “I that speak in righteousness” - Jehovah Jesus, the Mighty God. What an amazing mercy it will be for us if we are washed from our sins in His blood. But how terrible it will be if He dips His garments in our blood taking vengeance. And the church, seeing Him, and partaking of the benefit of His death, and the blessing of His protection, of the good of His fighting their enemies for them, breaks out into this song-“I will mention the loving kindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to His mercies, and according to the multitude of His lovingkindnesses” (v.7)

There are some here who can sing this song O happy people. God has been good to us. He has redeemed us by his blood, He has conquered us by His grace, He has fought our enemies for us, He has guided us with His eye, sustained us by His power, and brought us thus far. O let us come before Him and praise Him for His unspeakable mercies. And these lovingkindnesses appear to be

expressed in the following verse in a few words – “For He said, surely they are my people, children that will not lie: So He was their Saviour. In their entire affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old”. When the church looks back, when particular members of the church look back, and see the way the Lord has led them, this must be their song. How He has pitied them, what compassion He has had on them, and what mercies He has given to them, with what benefits has He loaded them, and so they must say He has been their Saviour. Gratitude becomes us; thankfulness, praises, and love, and trust becomes us for all his great goodness to us. Dear friends, you who know the Lord, to whom he has manifested His mercies, praise Him. May we unite in the first hymn of the service

O bless the Lord my soul Nor let His mercies lie, Forgotten in unthankfulness and without praises die

If there were no terrible thing to follow, it would be wonderful, but it follows that “they rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit: therefore He was turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them” This means His dealings with them. Their sin brought a frown. Their rebellion brought a rod, took them into a dry land. Their rebellion grieved Him and in His grief and vexation He began to fight against them. Sometimes in their consciences, sometimes in their providence. This is true today. Not many of us who know the Lord can say we have escaped all this. Has anyone, can any child of God present lift his face up to God and protest that he had never grieved the Holy Spirit, never rebelled against God. No. And so God has been kind; manifesting His faithfulness He has fought against us. Rebuke from Him is like a sword. An adverse providence may be His fighting against us. What a state God’s reproof brings us into; what desolation His fighting against us brings us into. You understand it, who have experienced it. Like the vineyard spoken of, and confessed, in the Psalms; hedges broken down, wild beast, and boar treading down all the vines. This is God’s fighting against a rebellious people. Are any of you like this? Do not complain of God; complain of self. Confess sin, acknowledge that it is God’s work, ‘Therefore He was turned to be their enemy’, and would not smile on them; did not help them at the throne of grace; shut them up, covered the throne with a cloud, and, as it were, said ‘no access yet’. But this desolation felt by the afflicted ones the Lord regards. He sees it, and He sees what sorrow there is, hears what sighs go out, what groans come from the afflicted soul. “Then He remembered the days of old, Moses and His people, saying, Where is He that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of His flock? where is He that put His Holy Spirit within him? That led them by the right hand of Moses with

put His Holy Spirit within him? That led them by the right hand of Moses with His glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make Himself an everlasting name?" This is God's enquiry. This is God's word, respecting these desolate people against whom He has been fighting, for when He sees their misery, and their helplessness, then He pities them. "That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble. As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD caused him to rest: so didst Thou lead Thy people to make Thyself a glorious Name." One has a herd of cattle; he will lead them. He leads them gently, carefully; they belong to him. Their preservation is good; it means his wealth is preserved, and as they go down a steep place he is careful; they are not to be over-driven lest they should stumble, so he gently leads them into the valley where the pasture is, where they shall get fat, and flourishing, where they shall be at peace, as it were. So God leads His people. "The Spirit of the LORD caused him to rest" this looks back to Israel's deliverance from Egypt. Brought from the furnace of iron, from the house of bondage, brought away suddenly, thrust out by the very people who had thus far refused to let them go; now they are thrust out. Then the enemy, remembering what he had lost, in losing the captives, and their labour, starts after them. Now the Lord's care is exhibited at once; He puts a cloud between Egypt and Israel, and they rest a little while though they have fear; they have fear, and in unbelief they wished themselves back, but God comes to them and by Moses said - Speak unto the people that they go forward. He is leading them and by His great power He divides the sea for them, and they pass through as by dry land, and when the people were at the other side, and they saw their enemies, the Egyptians, dead, then they believed the Lord and His servant Moses. This is what God does when He brings a sinner from under the law, from hard bondage, from the hammer that beats the whole earth, when He brings them through the sea of affliction, and lands them on the other side, and brings them into the wilderness, then they say - "This is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes." This deliverance is what every child of God pants for, longs to know, to experience in his own soul, to say - I cried unto the Lord and He heard me. He delivered me from all my fears, delivered me from all my troubles. So God dealt with this people. The Lord caused him to rest. Rest? Why, he was in the wilderness. We connect rest with home, with a place that is permanent, where we expect to spend our days, but Israel was here in the wilderness; how then could they rest? They rested first in that omnipotence that had delivered them, and that is a rest indeed for God's poor people. They are delivered from that hard bondage, and they rest in that power that has brought them from Egypt into this good land, for it is a good land when the Egyptians are no longer there, when their hard bondage is finished, and now they are the objects of God's care, and His mercy. This is what every child of God I say longs to know, and in some degree he must know, sooner or later; what it is to be delivered. There is something to be delivered from; mercies to be

experienced. O, you who want this, who are seeking it; wait on God for it. How often did Israel find disappointment before coming out of Egypt. Plagues, plagues, plagues; yet delay, delay on delay; so take courage, you who are now under hard bondage, and slavery, and fear. Call upon God, and you will find one day there will be a mighty change. Conscience will be at ease by the blood of Christ, the enemy will be driven away, and goodness, and mercy will just be your portion. You will sing-"I will sing of the loving kindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the lord because of this deliverance.

They rested in His power. They saw what He had done, believed what could He do. They thus rested in the Lord. They must have rested, having some knowledge of it through Moses, in the Covenant made with their father Abraham, with Isaac, with Jacob renewing it with each one, promising that God would be their God, they should be His people, and, as later Moses said to them, you shall be a nation of priests to the Lord, and this was that that they had in their souls' experience at this time, some knowledge of the covenant that God had made with them in and through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Spiritually is not this true? Has not God made a Covenant with his Son, Jesus Christ, and has not that Covenant been in some degree made good in your experience when God has separated you from the world, separated you from evil, separated you from a curse, the curse deserved, and brought you under the blessing, the blessing of the everlasting Covenant. He Cause him to rest. All saving knowledge of the Covenant of Grace becomes a rest to the soul. God made with David a Covenant ordered in all things and sure. He rested there. When a sinner comes into this Covenant spiritually then he has real rest, rest for which he can never be sufficiently thankful. The hammer that was breaking him to powder, now no longer touches him, and the Covenant, full of blessing, is in his soul in some degree. So the Spirit of the Lord caused this poor nation to rest. And there was rest too here; they were no longer to make bricks; they were no longer to eat their bread in a kind of terror. They had their bread from heaven, and there they rested as being nourished by the Lord. There they rested every morning, without hard labour, every man would go out of his tent, and gather sufficient food for the day. And they rested in respect of drink, for the rock was smitten, and the waters gushed out to them, and they had sufficient. The blessing was here, and what is this in the gospel but receiving Jesus Christ, eating His flesh, drinking His blood, and living by Him. No hard labour for this bread; it is given, it comes from heaven. It is given to faith by the Holy Spirit. Christ is revealed by the Spirit, and faith receives him and partakes of Him, as partaking of bread which, as he eats makes him know that he shall never die. He drinks of the water of life; he receives the Lord Jesus, and his soul is refreshed. Is not this true? Faith drooping is revived; hope, all but gone, is revived, and brightened, and love waxing cold is made warm again through this sweet mercy of God in giving to the soul the Lord Jesus- I am that bread of life which, if a man eat, he

shall die no more-never die. He rests here; he does not labour for this bread. He gets it without money, without price.

He enters into the sweetness of the gospel; so he rests in that that God has given to him. He rests next in the protection of his God. The cloudy pillar, the pillar of fire by night, the protection of that nation. When to move they knew by the moving of the cloud. When to rest they knew by the resting of the cloud. There was their protection; there was their guide. When Christ comes, is it not so? You move sweetly in the way of peace when you have the Lord with you, going before you; when He fulfils the word - "I will guide thee with Mine eye" - then you move after Him - "I will run in the way of Thy commandments when Thou shalt enlarge my heart". And in this way the hardness, the difficulties of the wilderness were rendered bearable. They could move when the Lord said, by the moving of the cloud, you have been here long enough. So God caused his people to have this sweet rest, and one more word on this rest, on they had before them the land of promise, sweet land of promise, flowing with milk and honey .God had told Abraham that it was given to him. Again the promise was made over to Isaac, and to Jacob. The land of promise was before this nation though in the wilderness, and that would make, at times, the pilgrimage bearable. The roughness, the difficulties, the dangers, the weariness of the wilderness, they would find bearable, when it was brought before them that they were going, step by step, day by day, week after week, year after year, they were going to the land of promise. In two senses this may be taken under the gospel. First in the sense of being brought into the church, into the living, visible church of God. We do not know fully the privilege it is to be in the church of God. There is rest in it. God rests there, and surely they rest when He is there. Christ is there walking in the midst of the candlesticks. The Spirit is there illuminating, and teaching, and guiding. Surely then where God is the saints can rest, and sometimes they find this a sweet rest; no longer guests, but children at home in the church of the living God. "This", says He speaking of the church, "is my rest here will I dwell for I have desired it". So God causes His people to rest in His church. There are their friends, there are their kindred, there is their Father, and they can say, again, and again, we are Thine. The church lays a humble claim to this, we are Thine. What a mercy to be brought to this. But the better land is the land which is very far off

the land of extensions- as the marginal reading is, a land you cannot measure, a land where ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands and thousands of angels are, and where the church is round about the throne, and where the glory of God is, and this is set before the saints of the Most High.

‘So didst Thou lead Thy people’. This leading is merciful, this leading is by the Holy Spirit. He leads them into different ways, and different things. He leads them into the truth. No child of God can say that he knows all the truth. If you know a little, thank Him for that, but you must know more, you shall know more, as the Spirit leads you. He is the Spirit of Truth, and, just as God led Israel through the wilderness - they did not get out of it until the time appointed; they did not turn aside except as God said, move in this direction, then in that direction; they were kept in the wilderness - so God leads His people into the gospel, the everlasting gospel, the gospel of God’s grace, the gospel of righteousness, the gospel of forgiveness, the gospel of goodness, and of communion with God. They are led into it. If you never are led by the Holy Spirit you have no evidence of belonging to God, If you always stand still; if you are in the same position, and condition of mind, with no enlightenment, no opening up of the truth, no opening out to your view of the gospel of God’s grace in this branch, and in that branch of it, you have little or no evidence that you belong to God. “He”, says Jesus of the Holy Ghost “He shall guide you into all truth”. And John, writing his first Epistle says to the saints - “Ye have an unction from the Holy One and ye know all things”. This unction comes from Christ; it is the Holy Spirit. He anoints with fresh oil; He opens up this truth now, and that truth another day. One day you get a view of Christ’s person O, how you love Him. I am disposed to say that in my judgement this is one of the most sacred operations of the Holy Ghost, that He opens, and shows, and reveals to sinners, the Person of the Lord Jesus, that He becomes their life more and more, that He more and more works in them their true experience, is their hope, is their way to God, is their nourishment; everything they see to be in Him. The Spirit leads them. He leads them to see the beauty and blessedness of the righteousness of Christ. O, it is a spotless robe perfect, as perfect as God requires it to be-and if that be a true word it means this, that it is everlasting. An everlasting righteousness, broad as God’s law, and all His requirements.

The more sinners, taught by the Spirit, see of the nature of God, the more wonderful to them, when it is revealed, is the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Low, narrow views of God, will always mean low, narrow views of justification. May we, as a church and congregation, as many of us as are born again, be led by the Spirit into the righteousness of Jesus Christ. If I had grace, and wisdom, there is so much in it that I could spend all the rest of my life in preaching, expatiating on this grand subject, the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Sinner, you will never be in heaven without it, and if you have it, you will never get to hell. O, this righteousness. Bunyan said - My righteousness is in heaven - and you must say that if you are going to heaven, and yet you have it in your heart, you have it covering you for justification. Sometimes the leading is into the

atonement. The atonement is in the death of Christ. The death of Christ has infinite glory, but the shame, the ignominy of it, men do not understand, and because He died in that way they can see no glory in His death, but O, the blaze of that glory that a saint sees when his eyes are opened to this divine mystery, and when the witness of the Spirit is in him, and he can say, my sins were there, my guilt was there, my hell was there, my punishment was there, my having no presence of God, being deserted, was there. All my pains, and all my punishment, and all my pollution, and all my guilt, there. Ah, when a man can say that in faith, he can say what constitutes his heaven.

So didst Thou lead them. He leads the soul sometimes into union with the Lord Jesus – “I in them”. Is not that wonderful? The church has union with two heads, two men. The man who sinned in Eden, Adam. That union brought death – “As in Adam all die”. “Sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned”. First, in their head Adam. That union is dissolved in this important sense, that while we are the children of a fallen head there is brought to pass in the soul’s experience union with the man Christ Jesus, the Head of the body – “From whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth” (Ephesians 4v 16) this, this is the Head, this is the man Christ Jesus. To Him the saints are united, and from Him their life comes. The energy of their faith they derive from Him. The warmth of their love they receive from Him. Their acceptance with God is in Him. They have union, and sometimes they know it; they experience it. “So didst Thou lead Thy people”.

Now the end of it is this - “To make Thyself a glorious Name”. What is this glorious Name? First, it is the name of righteousness. “This is the Name whereby He shall be called THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jeremiah 23 v 6). What a Name, and so wonderful is it, and so intimate is it in connection with His people, that it really is given to them. “This is the Name wherewith she - the church - shall be called, The LORD our righteousness” (Jeremiah 33v 16). O sinner, what a glorious Christ Christ is to you when this is revealed. ‘Tis a glorious name. A glorious name is the name of King. The Lord is our King, the Lord is our Lawgiver (Isaiah 33 v 22). “I will be thy King” says Christ. “I will be thy King”. O, the glory of His rule and reign in the conscience, and in the affections sometimes. His loyal subjects say that every thought of their heart is brought into captivity to Him. O, happy is the man who occasionally can say that, that God, by His weapons, by His gospel, by His Spirit, by His blood, by His mercies, has brought every thought, every wandering thought, into captivity to Jesus Christ. ‘Tis a good place to be in. ‘Tis a beautiful thing to feel you have a King. You owe Him your life, you owe Him your soul, you owe Him everything, and now, a willing subject, you are at His footstool waiting to

receive His word into your soul, and also to feel His Kingly authority in your circumstances, in your afflictions, in your mercies. A glorious name that he has is that of Prophet. Says Moses to Israel - God will raise up to you a prophet like unto me, and you shall hear Him. A prophet not only foretold things, but he talked of things present. The prophets were speaking again and again in the present tense to Israel telling them of God. So does our Prophet; He teaches the truth; He brought good news from a far country, good news from heaven. If the feet of ministers, when preaching the gospel, are beautiful, O, what shall we say of our great prophet, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now sinner, did He ever say anything to you? Did He ever bring good news from God the Father to you? "God, who at Sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." And the Holy Ghost anointed Christ to preach. The prophet Isaiah tells us this - "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness". And all this good news comes down from heaven into sinners' hearts by the preaching of the Lord Jesus. He speaks well of His Father to them. He preaches His Father's Name to them. He declares the righteousness of His Father to the church; so you find Him speaking in the psalms, and if He be our Prophet, He will do these things in our hearts. If we never hear Christ preaching to our souls, it is an evil thing, a bad sign. But if He does preach the gospel to us it is a good sign. He does say such kind things to sinners. He comforts them with love. He supports them by His power. He tells them of a Kingdom that is to come. He tells them that though they are for a moment deprived of His presence, He will be with them; that though He is going to heaven, He will come and they shall see Him again. He tells them of these things, for He is the anointed Preacher. "I have not hid Thy righteousness in My heart" He says to His Father in the Psalms. I have preached it. "No man has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." To whom? To his brethren, to some in this chapel. Yes, He has declared, He has preached to some in this chapel. O happy people. O blessed people, who have heard this Preacher, preaching the peace of God, Speaking comfortably to His brethren, and seeking their good, their welfare, honour. This is what the anointed Lord Jesus does. To make thyself in Israel a glorious Name. I must mention one other Name without which we shall never see the face of God with joy. The name of our High Priest, a Priest after the Order of Melchisedec, a Priest who had somewhat to offer; Himself. The Priest who offered Himself without spot to God through the Eternal Spirit and who, thereby, opened a new and living way to His Father;

who put away sin, perfected forever them for whom He made an atonement. Dear friends, there is no sin left. We are full of sin, but there no is atonement to be made other than that which Jesus made. Was not this glorious? O, what glory, what glory is in this great name, our great High priest, our faithful and merciful High Priest. He entered into God's presence for his people, and for them there is a cloud of incense for their Acceptance.

"To make Thyself a glorious Name". There are other names He bears. A foundation, a refuge, a hiding place. Husband, Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, a brother born for adversity, to be afflicted with all His people in their afflictions. These are His names and these Names fit into the conditions, and the troubles, and the fears, and the necessities of His people. Names that are to them better than gold and silver, and He makes these His names in their experience. He is given to them in these Names for their experience and for their salvation. He is given to them. And this gospel, this gospel has no charge. If it had, who could hope? But Christ said - "Without money and without price". He comes and He gives Himself. "To make Thyself a glorious Name" Now when this is done, what do the people of God say? Each says, I will praise the Lord for his lovingkindnesses, and His tender mercies. So may we, as a church, and people, both feel, and sing, and praise the glory of His grace.

AMEN