

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham  
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton  
on Sunday morning 29 May 1932

JOB 23 v 13 and 14

"But He is of one mind and who can turn  
Him? and what His soul desireth, even that He doeth" For He  
performeth the thing that is appointed  
for me: and many such things are with Him".

Job is set before us in the Scripture as a pattern of patience. His trials were many, very severe. There were four ingredients in the bitter cup God gave him to drink. First the loss of all his substance; second the affliction of his body, smitten by Divine commission, by Satan - he was covered with sore boils from the sole to the crown; and third the wicked advice of his wife who had no faith, at least as far as the record shows us - simply was under the power of the devil and a carnal mind. "Curse God and die" she said to her husband; and fourth, the misunderstanding of his friends, who formed a two-fold, erroneous judgment. First, the judgment they formed of Job. They contradicted distinctly God's testimony concerning Job's character. He is a perfect man, said God, one that eschewed evil. But these friends of his said - you are a hypocrite, hence these troubles. God has afflicted you, is afflicting you, to bring to light the hypocrisy of your character. And they misunderstood God, as if He would only bless perfect people; that a man who is afflicted by God must of course be a hypocrite.

These four bitter ingredients Job had in his cup. But I think there was a fifth, an occasional fifth, which would be more bitter than all the others, namely, the absence of God. Not always, but occasionally, as we find from Job's impetuous replies to the foolishness of his friends. And the Holy Ghost has said, by James, that Job is a pattern of patience that God is pleased with. "Ye have heard of the patience of Job". You have seen the end of the Lord with him in that peculiar dispensation. You have seen the end of the Lord in turning these accusers, three friends. Well intended were their words, but unwise. And it is very striking to see the people, the men

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who had accused Job of hypocrisy, being commanded by God to go to Job with sacrifices and Job should be their priest and pray for them. From this chapter, and the four or five following, with one exception, the third chapter by Bildad, Job has what is called his parable. He begins this chapter by speaking of his complaint. "Even today" that is, this time of trouble, "is my complaint bitter. My stroke is heavier than my groaning", that is my groaning cannot express my sufferings adequately. I do groan, but there is more than my groans can express in my trouble. And what course did his regenerated, Spirit taught soul take? "O" he says, "O that I knew where I might find Him." Who? Why, his God. Just as in Solomon's Song, the Song opens with a prayer of the bride "Let Him kiss me" There is but one Him to the people of God, God Himself. We have plenty of "hims". We run to this friend, we go to that friend in trouble. But in the long run it comes to this, there is only one "Him" in the matter, only One to whom we must go, to whom we must refer all things, and whose judgment we seek. "O that I knew where I might find Him". He had been with Him. He knew his God. His God knew him and expressed His approval of him. But now he appears to be so confused by his friends in their unwise judgment, that he has lost his Friend as it were. That is what we, some of us, know. We lose our Friend, best Friend. We lose a sense of His presence, cannot find Him. Go to the right hand, to the left hand, forward and backward, but we cannot see Him, cannot find Him and there is no rest for us. You know that is so, who fear God, and have had His favourable presence. There is no substitute for God. Nobody can take His place. Nobody can fill the vacancy that is felt when He is absent. Every case must be decided by Him. Every want must be supplied by Him. Every question of importance to the soul must be answered by Him. All darkness must be removed by His bright inshining, and all burdens must be relieved by His power. We are shut up to God. If you believe Him in a right way, you will find that you are shut up to God. Nobody can deal with your soul's case but Himself. Nobody can remove your infidel thoughts but Himself. "O that I knew where I might find Him." Are you in search for God? Would you rather find God, with a cross, with your trouble, with your pains, with your afflictions, than find a mine of gold and call all its nuggets your own? Would you rather find Jesus Christ and Him crucified than all the pleasures and honours that the world could confer upon you? Seek this "O that I knew where I might find Him".

Let me repeat there is no substitute for God. Get what you will, it will never make up for God. If you lack Him, you lack everything. If you possess Him, you possess everything. "All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death. All things are yours and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." What a congregation this would be, little as it is, if every member of it could say, may now be saying in his heart - "O that I knew where I might find Him." You wont be disappointed if that be your cry. He never sends people away empty who go to Him empty. He never turns away beggars who go out of necessity. He never despises a sinner who goes to Him as a sinner seeking mercy. He is a good God and I, little as I know of Him, can commend Him to you and tell you that He is kinder than you can imagine. "This Man receiveth sinners and eateth with them". Seek Him, you will not seek Him in vain. He never said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye Me, in vain. Seek the Lord, is the divine direction of Holy Scripture. "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near."

But I must not delay long before I reach the text, although the whole chapter is to me just now, very wonderful. "That I might come even to His seat", which is the Mercy Seat where God said He would meet with His people and commune with them. "I would order my cause before Him". I would spread out my sins; I would confess my sinfulness. I would bemoan my wickedness; I would acknowledge that I am wrong on the right hand and on the left. I would order my cause before Him. A lost soul, an unjust person, an unbeliever, a poor, a destitute, a weak, a wicked person. I would lay all this out before God. Would not He be offended? He is offended with sin, but He loves sinners, and says "Come unto Me". If you confess your sins I am faithful and just to forgive you your sins and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Job had faith in exercise at this moment. "I would know the words which He would answer me and understand what He would say unto me". "Will He" - He could do - but "will He plead against me with His great power"? Will He upbraid me for my sins? Will He tell me of my ingratitude? Will He rebuke me for my rebellious thoughts? Will He tell me that I have been irritable and have spoken unadvisedly with my lips, or, if I have not spoken unadvisedly, I have thought most unadvisedly and wickedly? Faith said "No". Have you got that faith in that measure? "No", - a good God wont turn away a coming,

confessing sinner - "but He would put strength in me" the strength of grace. And so he goes on, speaks of his search for God. "I go forward but He is not there". His faith could not reach a promise that was before him as well as behind him. "And backward" where I have seen Him, "but I cannot perceive Him" now. "On the left hand, where He doeth work, but I cannot behold Him; He hideth Himself on the right hand that I cannot see Him. But He knoweth the way that I take". He knows what way you are taking now. He knows if any of you are saying inly "O that I knew God. O that He would save me, a poor, unworthy creature. He knows it, He sees it, He approves of it because it is His work. That is His gift. "When He hath tried me" - He does try the righteous by various afflictions - "I shall come forth as gold". "But He is one mind and who can turn Him, and what His soul desireth even that He doeth".

First, we are here confronted with the awful, the glorious sovereignty of Jehovah. If that great truth were impressed by the Spirit on our hearts, it would kill the flippancy of our minds, it would produce reverence, it would make us tremble at His word. The sovereignty of God is stamped indelibly upon all His works. He was under no necessity to do anything outside His Own Being. It is difficult for me adequately to express this. He was under no necessity to create angels or men. Everything that He did, that He is doing, that He will do, is voluntary. That is to say, He has acted, He is acting, He will act as a sovereign. If you say He needed to make the world, you limit Him. You take away His liberty. It was for Himself alone to say whether He would create the universe; whether He would create innumerable angels and innumerable men. Their destinies - that some angels should fall, that the human race should fall - His decree to permit things is sovereign. His decree to do things Himself immediately was sovereign. "He is in one mind". Parents, native place and time, we may each say of self, all appointed were by Him. Job was brought to this - The great God, whom I seek; the great God who is working them in me; searching for Him, I do not see Him; He, who is sitting as a Refiner of silver, will bring me forth. "When He has tried me I shall come forth as gold". O what a God we have to do with. Dear friends, I do wish for myself and for you, a deeper sense of the tremendous, the overwhelming sovereignty of God. It alone can bear the weight of creation. It alone can bear the weight

of the decreed destiny of men and of angels and of all the intricacies of providence. One mind. We have many minds. The mind changes; today it is for this; tomorrow it is for something exactly opposite. Foolish creatures, fickle creatures we are. He was of one mind with Job, yet His dealings with Job were strange and various. At one time Job was greatly prospered, was the greatest man in the east for possessions. Another time Job is seen to be just stripped of everything. Then his body, afflicted sorely, became loathsome. Yet there was one mind respecting this man in all these changes. "And who can turn Him?" Job's sores, Job's lamentations, the falsehood of his friends, the irritation of their accusations, his sharp speeches, his irritation again and again exhibited, these were all in the one mind. These were part of the trial that Job was subjected to by God. The means - the devil, the Sabeans, the Amalekites, the wind and the fire, these were means, but Job, when in a good state, did not see them. He saw no robbers, no wind, no fire - only God. "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord." What do you see in your circumstances? Somebody, some mysterious providence, something over which you had no control, against which you fret. Against somebody you may feel revenge; you may be hating somebody. That is to say, in Scripture language, you are a murderer. "He that hateth his brother is a murderer". And all these things are under the controlling hand of God. You see the instrument, God looks at the end. He cannot be turned away. Lord I cannot bear it, you may say. That wont turn Him. I will not submit to it, you may say. That wont turn Him. It is a very solemn truth and may the Lord give us to receive it, really to believe it. The sovereignty of God is stamped on the Scriptures. Let us look a little at some of the proofs of this. We need to go no further back, indeed we could not go any further back, than Cain and Abel. If we saw those two men we might say they are both industrious. Cain is industriously cultivating the land. Cain is thinking of the fruit of the land which he would take to God, of whom he has heard from his father Adam. Abel is industriously attending his flocks. The day comes when they will take an offering to God. Cain takes of the fruit of his own hand, his own industry. Abel takes blood. Think of it, Why Abel and not Cain? Can you find a reason outside God? Go to Abraham. Why Abraham and not another? Abraham was called, called from his own land to go into a strange land

which God said He would give to him and to his seed for a heritage. Why Abraham and not Lot? Can you find a reason outside God? Take Esau and Jacob. "Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated". No reason given but this, that God said it, God designed it; no reason. If you look closely into the characters of those two men, you might say Esau was the better character. Jacob's character was not an admirable one, a supplanter practically as his name is, and yet, Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated. Does this bring you to yourselves? Does this make any of you say "O to be Jacob, to be Abel, loved of God. Toplady sings

Loved of my God for Him again  
With love intense I'd burn  
Chosen of Thee e'er time began  
I'd choose Thee in return.

O but says fallen nature, this is very hard, this is very harsh. Well, if you say it, you are not the first. Many have said it; I said it. And I hope you wont sin as I sinned for I wickedly said, when this awful, glorious doctrine of divine sovereignty was presented to me - "If that be true, I neither want to know God nor be where He is." Is it hard to you that He should be right, hard that He should be the sovereign, hard that He should dispose of you, decree your parents, your birth, your position in life, order your steps You do not kneel down and ask Him but He does it. Does He give you prosperity? You have not asked Him for it perhaps. Does He send trouble? You do not like it. But He is of one mind. No dependence on the creature; the creature altogether, in every way, dependent on Him. You have got an intellect; why not be as thousands, bereaved of that? You have your faculties; many have not their faculties. Why? No reason in you. Were you better at your birth? Were you different in your conduct? Do you merit what you have got? No. He wills, He wills. Who has resisted His will?

Saul of Tarsus is a solemn instance and a wonderful, blessed one of the sovereign love of God. Very successful in his studies as a young man, got beyond most of his equals. And his religion was so imperative to him in its behests, so to express it, that he thought he ought to be a persecutor of Jesus, by hauling men and women and all

whom he found of the sect everywhere spoken against, to prison. It is not recorded how many poor professors the Apostle Paul, as Saul of Tarsus, had compelled to foreswear, to curse the Name of God and so obtain liberty. And yet that man was a vessel of mercy. Do you wish to be a vessel of mercy? Is your secret cry, Lord, though I may not love this doctrine, it is so harsh to me, yet, O that I might be inside that love. That I might be one of Thy chosen ones.

He is in one mind in providence. Providence? How can you manage things? God's will is done. Is it prosperity that you are enjoying? To whom do you owe it? Have you the good will of friends? To whom do you owe it? Are you in trouble? Whence came it? Job said "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord." One result to name at this moment in Job's case is this - it brought him to the throne of grace. "The Lord gave" How near to his God he was then. "The Lord hath taken away". How near to his God he was then. When his whole soul just submitted in the humblest way, deepest way, submitted to the will of God, the holy will of God. The righteous, merciful will of God. You say, "I will go into this city and continue there a year and buy and sell and get gain." Is that right? No. What ought you to say? "If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that, for what is your life, it is even a vapour which appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away". That is God's way. Well, it is an infinite mercy in God, and it flows to sinners, to chosen sinners, that there is a throne of grace to which they are brought by the Holy Spirit, who is given to them to be a Spirit of grace and of supplication, And God is in one mind about this. Pharaoh said "Who is the Lord; I know not the Lord; what profit is there if I should pray unto Him?" Job said "O that I knew where I might find Him". Job lived before Pharaoh. One of the oldest of men, probably one of those of whom we read in Genesis - "And men began to call upon the Name of the Lord. Began probably to have public worship here and there. And all is resolved into this - "He is of one mind". Well may the Lord bring us to submit to this. Whatever our position, whatever our state of mind at this moment, may we be brought to this point - There is a God in heaven in whom we live and move and have our being. A glorious Being, and it is at His bidding we came into the world, by His purpose and decree we live in the world. He has fixed the bounds of our habitation that we may not pass over them. But the great end with the

Church is this, that she may come to the knowledge of God. Now what is your desire and what is mine? Can we honestly say - "O that we could find God". God is findable. Many years ago that thought fell into my heart, God is findable. O it was a help to me. Think of it, He may be found. Where may He be found? "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them". This God, this glorious Being, against whom you may be feeling much, thinking it is all hard and harsh, this God says - Seek Me while I may be found. Call upon Me as long as you live. "Ho everyone that thirsteth come ye to the waters". Every exercised soul come to God. Every hungry soul, call on Him for the Bread of Life, and the end, the blessed end will be that He will be found of you. "I am found of them that" in the first instance, "sought Me not". I am found of them who, through grace, sought Me, where I was findable. And where? At the Mercy Seat. And what is the Mercy Seat but the blessed Saviour of sinners, typified by the Mercy Seat and the Ark of the Covenant. This blessed Saviour says "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest".

And the last word I would say this morning is this. He is in one mind to take poor, needy, exercised, hungry souls to heaven. He has provided a robe to make them fit for it. He gives them a new nature to make them like it, and He says "Where I am there shall My servant also be". The devil comes in and says, No, not a step further. Sin rises and says, No. Enmity says, No. Old nature says, No. God says Where I am, there shall these, my poor people be. I will bring them safely through. I will bring them honourably to their grave. I will make an end of sin. I will bring in everlasting righteousness for them and "They shall be Mine in that day when I make up My jewels".

"He is in one mind". God give us the mind of Christ. "We have the mind of Christ", that is the mind in the text.

AMEN.