

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday evening 19 May 1935

JOB 36 v 22

“Behold, God exalteth by His power: who teacheth like Him”.

The fall of Adam made unbelievers of us all, an awful fact. Whatever may be said contrary to the fact of the fall it remains true that man, made after God's image and likeness, has become vile, polluted,

We are not all avowed Atheists, but we are all practical Atheists by birth and by practice. We do not all with our lips, say to God, depart from us we desire none of Thy ways; but naturally that is the language of fallen nature. The greatest sin that ever was committed was the sin of Adam, when he broke through the prohibition and ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil which he was told not to touch. And the fruit of that fills hell, fills the world with wars, rumours of wars, hatred, biting one another, devouring one another. Who can numerate the evils which have resulted from that one sin; the fall of Adam. He lost his uprightness and we lost uprightness in him. Federal union is a doctrine of Holy Scripture; whether we can receive it or not, there is the truth of it. Adam begat a son in his own likeness. Sin has brought sorrow. Who can fully enter in to the sorrow of Adam when his eldest son became a murderer? And since that one murder, murders have defiled the whole earth. If I were to accuse this congregation of murder some would rise up against me, but the accusation would be true. How? Can everyone here rise and say they have never had any hatred to anyone? But hatred in the Holy Scripture is called murder. I remember when God told me I was a murder because I hated a man. But God has a remedy. He has provided, unasked, undesired, a remedy. The remedy is in a Person first, and then in His work. The Person is the Person who speaks in that wonderful, that outstanding chapter, which I read just now, Jesus Christ, the very Son of God, the very Son of Man (Proverbs 8).

~~We~~ We shall never be able properly while here to thank Him for that word in that chapter - "My delights were with the sons of men". If we are born again the enquiry is this, often, whether these delights were fixed on us. A type of Him is Elihu and here he utters a great truth which is made known in the lives of all God's people. "Behold, God exalteth by His power: Who teacheth like Him? He putteth down one, He setteth up another. So the Psalmist writes and so we have to believe. Positions in the world are made by God, not sin. That procured positions in many cases, but divine sovereignty overrules things. "By Me", whom am King of kings and Lord of lords, "by Me kings reign and princes decree justice." You cannot occupy an honourable position or a menial one, as men speak, without divine sovereignty. Who ordered our birth? Who fixed the bounds of our habitation? It is a vain thing for a man to say, though often men do say, "we will go into such a city and continue there a year and buy and sell and get gain" James 4 v 13. If he does say it and if he is permitted to accomplish his aim, what then? He has to say in the end, he will say if he is a good man blessed with grace, God did it. I was self important. I followed my own vain designs, but God did it. God lifts up people. There are some people who He lifts up spoken of thus "He raiseth the poor out of the dust; He lifteth him from the dunghill. He setteth him with princes, even with the princes of His own people, and maketh him to inherit the throne of glory. You would not expect that from man but it is from God. He puts down Eli, He raises up Samuel. Age is nothing to Him. He reveals His mind to an infant, the child Samuel. He exalteth by His power. Do not attribute anything you have, as men, any position that you occupy, any uplifting that you may have in the providence of God, do not attribute that to your own efforts. Praise God for what you are, even in providence. Remember the Scripture - "By Me kings reign". He exalts a poor man, one following the plough. He calls him by grace, He anoints him to be a minister, He exalts him by His power, and uses him for the conversion of sinners, and the establishment, instruction and comfort, the rebuke and revival of His people. God will be honoured and if we dishonour Him by neglecting to ascribe honour to Him He will make us know it in some way. He is a jealous God. Did you ever tremble at His great Name? It is awful jealousy. It is good to be made conscious of His divine sovereignty and to acknowledge it in all our ways. There is one exaltation to which I will call your attention before passing on to

the second part of the text. There was a man who called Himself a worm and no man, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, on whom was laid a burden that would have crushed the world into hell had it been laid on them, the burden of sin. The Man is Jesus Christ, made under the law, made a curse. The Apostle says Christ is made a curse for us as it is written "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree". They hanged Him on the cross. When He had done all, and knew it in Himself, He said with a loud voice - He did not die of natural necessity - "It is finished", bowed His head and dismissed His spirit. He was buried, He saw no corruption. Death could not hold Him for this reason, He owed nothing. The mighty debt which He had undertaken to pay He had paid. God received the payment. Justice was abundantly satisfied. Now no bar remained in the way of a sinner to God. Christ was buried. He rose again the third day. The Spirit of God, who dwells in you here who are children of God, will raise up your bodies even as He raised up the body of Christ. That is taught us in the Scripture. And after Christ had manifested Himself alive by many infallible proofs, He was exalted. "God", says Paul in the Philippians, "hath highly exalted Him and given Him a Name which is above every Name that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess." Some here have, by the Holy Ghost, said Jesus is the Lord. No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost". God hath highly exalted Him. He went to heaven; He entered heaven with His own blood. The infinite merit of His death He entered heaven with, and He sat down on the right hand of God. Intimately connected with, and consequent upon that exaltation, is the exaltation of human nature which His children are all partakers of. Says the Apostle John by the Holy Ghost - "We know not what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is." Have you a hope of this? As many of us here who have a hope of this should fall on our knees and praise and bless and exalt God for such infinite mercy. We deserve it not.

"Who teacheth like Him?" Teachers have definite subjects to teach, that you will appreciate. Every teacher has something of a definite kind to teach. Cannot that be said with the wonderful truth of God. He has definite things to teach and He does teach them. Teachers have different scholars, pupils, some unwilling to learn.

That must be said of God's scholars. O the stupidity, the unwillingness to learn, the cramped condition of the mind. This must be said of God, He is determined that every pupil He takes in hand shall learn the lessons He has to give. You will have to learn things whether you are willing or not and He will make you willing. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power". What are the lessons? First this that God is. You cannot pray without believing that. He that cometh to God must believe that He is God. The Scripture opens with this great truth - "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth", a revelation of Himself, a revelation of His invisible things, even His eternal power and Godhead. Vague notions of God exist in the mind of nations. True knowledge of Him is imparted to the hearts of His people. You understand the difference. What shall I say to thy people when I go to them and tell them that I have seen God in the burning bush and that He has sent me. What shall I say? What is Thy Name? "I AM THAT I AM". They have to give credit to that as everyone has and does who is under the teaching of the Holy Ghost. "Hear O Israel". What? Thou shalt have none other gods before Me. We are all idolators by nature. You have not an idol in your pocket, in your bedroom, it may be, but you have one in your own mind, and the biggest idol man can have is himself. Nebuchadnezzar, alone in his boast, looking on Babylon - This is the great Babylon which I have built - not alone in spirit. A good many Nebuchadnezzars are in this chapel. We are all proud people. Now when God gives a revelation of Himself, down goes that spirit from time to time and an apprehension of Him leads you to a worship of Him. When God spoke to Moses out of the bush and told him to take his shoes off his feet, then Moses bowed and worshipped. When God revealed Himself to Abraham we read Abraham fell on his face. And that is just what people do today. When God in any manner or measure reveals Himself they fall on their faces and worship Him. You may often bend the knee of your heart when your knees are not bent in the form of prayer. Notice if you get a manifestation of the Being of Jehovah you will worship Him. Your heart will worship Him. It will worship in spirit and in truth, and did nations believe in God, idols would be smashed at once. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, any picture of anything. I am the Lord. He teacheth that. "Who teacheth like Him?" Did God ever make Himself known to you my hearers? Was there ever a day, an hour a place to which your memory will go back at

times when you got a sight of God, not natural sight, but a sight by faith, an apprehension of Him? You cannot describe an apprehension that made an impression deep and abiding. Who teacheth like God? Do you feel ignorant of Him? Jesus has made a way for you to go and ask God to teach you the true knowledge of Himself. I want always, as I am trying to do, to keep this before you, God is first, and God will be first with His people. "Ye are My witnesses". A witness of course as you know must be able to say he saw something. If you are a witness for God you have seen Him by faith. No guess-knowledge. I am the Lord. O that He would say it to us from time to time for we need to be taught the same lessons. Bunyan speaks of forgetting almost, when the Lord was absent from him, of what he had known of Him.

The second thing I would name to you which God teaches as no other can teach, is the fall of man. Nothing is more repugnant to our pride than to believe that we did fall in Adam, that when he became a sinner, we became a sinner for, as Boston says, Adam is human nature in compendium. What a fall. From the height of innocence, from the height of knowledge, from the blessedness of communion with His Maker, Adam fell. And the beautiful likeness and image of God in which he was created, he lost. We fell and lost all in him, so to speak. God gave him all the wealth of perfect human nature and he recklessly spent it and landed himself in abject poverty and all of us. Has God taught us this? You may have some belief in your imperfection, but have you ever felt the spirit of Dr Goodwin, that on a night he was so troubled and convinced of his sin that he had to rise from his bed and confess that it was as if his were the hands that took the forbidden fruit. You may not have it quite as distinctly as that but you certainly will come to acknowledge that you did commit that sin in your head. Federal union is a doctrine of the Bible and it is really practised in nations. When the government decides on any matter it becomes a law. Whether it be good or bad, we all have it in the fruit of it because our representatives pass that matter into law. Shall men have these representatives and shall we not have a representative? But O to come into the knowledge of this, to come to believe it. To view in a measure, for no man could see altogether fully, but have you in a measure seen your own bad heart To believe and feel, as we have it in Jeremiah - " The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." The desperate wickedness of

man's heart is almost past believing and yet it is a fact painful, most painful, and felt. The most daring thing in the world is sin in the heart. I do not wonder, some of you may be saying, that John Bradford the martyr said, seeing a man being taken to Tyburn, "There goes John Bradford but for the grace of God". Have you got the Pharisee's stone in your pocket? God will take it out of your pocket if He teaches you your fallen state and the wickedness of your heart. "Who teacheth like Him?" You may say, of a minister, he depicts it too badly, puts the paint on too thickly. "No" you will say, if God teaches you "I am not only convinced of the truth of what the minister says, but I am sure of this he does not half describe what I am." Guilt O what a burden; guilt, O what a burden. Dear friends some people of God know one thing which I express thus, sin is so in us, we are so full of it, of its life, that it may seem to you as if it oozed from your very pores.

The third thing God teaches, as none other can teach is this, the redemption by Jesus Christ. If we truly believe in, if we have some extension from time to time of knowledge of our fallen state, we shall in that measure appreciate the worth of redemption by Jesus Christ. Redemption, a buying back. We sold ourselves, we are prisoners to justice, divine justice, prisoners to the law which we have broken. Who can redeem us? God incarnate. He only can redeem us. At what a cost. O think of it. He was made under the law, this blessed Redeemer, made of a woman made under the law, that is to say it was necessary that He should be a man and that he should be made under the law of man. An angel could not have atoned for the sin of men. The Redeemer must be of the nature of the men He is to redeem. So Christ took our nature. "The children being partakers of flesh and blood He also Himself likewise took part of the same"; He could not die else. We read in Isaiah that marvellous statement, "All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way". What then? What will justice do? What will divine anger do? They will do this, take these sins away and lay them on the Surety. "He hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all". O what a blessed Jesus we have in the Scripture. May He be in our hearts being made sin by God He must be punished for sin by God. Redemption was no haphazard work. A designed work and God's eternal Son became His Servant and being His Servant He was told what to do. And what was He told to do? The works

which He had seen His Father do in the covenant of grace. He was to speak certain words. What words? The words His Father gave Him to speak. He was to obey a wonderful commandment. "No man taketh My life from Me". They did all they could to take it away from Him when they took Him and by wicked hands crucified and slew Him but it remained a truth, it is a truth today, that "no man taketh My life from Me. I have power to lay it down", and He did lay it down, and said therefore doth My Father love Me. He became obedient unto death. His death was an act of obedience to the commandment given to Him, and when He said "It is finished" He uttered a word that has divine music in it, love in it, sweetness in it, peace in it, reconciliation and all good things in it. "It is finished". He bowed His head and dismissed His spirit, went to heaven. Now God teaches this. It is taught here in the Bible, this infallible Book. Distinctly, beautifully, blessedly, the Redemption work of Christ is taught. There are other places where also it is taught and of this I will speak, namely in the hearts of His people. They are all condemned by the law. By the law opened to them they become acquainted with sin. "By the law is the knowledge of sin". O what a knowledge. Can some of us ever forget when God began to teach us our sins. Can I ever forget that moment when He struck me down and when I said in my heart, standing in awe of that wonderful God I then saw - Where that God is I shall never be. Can you forget the beginning of your knowledge of your sins? It may not have been quite distinct with you. It may have been more or less a gradual growth in you that you were lost, that something was wrong, that you needed what you had not got, what you could not get. But it comes to this in all sooner or later, they are utterly lost and that if God were to damn their souls He would be a just God. That is a great point in true experience. You must be killed, you must be lost, you must lose your own life, you must hate it. Hate the sins of your nature, hate your life if you love it. O it is a great thing to be lost! I am never sorry when people speak about being in great trouble about their sins. I wish everyone in this congregation was troubled. O it is a great thing to be lost! But then that makes a place for Christ. Rutherford says "Heaven's best palace is built on hell felt and feared in the conscience". Tyndale says that God will take you to heaven through hell, hell felt and feared in the conscience. That makes place for redemption. Ah dear friends it is great to be redeemed and it is great to know we are redeemed. You

think His anger will never pass away. He says - "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace". What a strange thing to a sinner to hear of that. "Thoughts of peace and not of evil". God thinks great thoughts of sinners, and the Psalmist learned it. "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts delight my soul". The thoughts of God. And when a sinner cannot go on any longer, his strength is wasted, his spirit is broken, his conscience is burdened, his heart is full of sorrow, then says the Lord "I pity the sinner", and He says "I, even I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions as a thick cloud and as a cloud thy sins". The sinner cannot penetrate that cloud. So thick is the cloud of transgressions, so innumerable are his transgressions. His oversteppings are without number. God looks through the cloud and says - "I have redeemed thee, thou art Mine". "I bought thee with My blood; thou art Mine". Who teacheth like God when He comes to a sinner and teaches him that He has bought him with His blood. Peter uses this language "Forasmuch", said he, "as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but by the precious blood of Christ". When that is spoken on the heart, that gives a title for heaven, and brings heaven into the heart. One thus blessed can say - "Now I could die on this". He is fit for heaven when God forgives him his sins. He is washed clean. He will never need that washing again. He will often need his feet to be washed, but that washing stands.

"Who teacheth like Him?" Who teacheth the value, the sweetness, the blessedness of God's invitations. They are here in abundance. You will get one in your heart sometimes poor seeker, and then you will say - "This is wonderful". It deeply affects the heart, it sweetly constrains the soul to come - "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest". A preacher might quote over and over again, and a seeker may say, "Well, though it is a good word, it does not do good to me." But when the Lord speaks it, then there is life and power, an attraction and an obedience of faith, for the gospel is preached thus for the obedience of faith in all nations. The man obeys by faith, when Jesus says "Come unto Me". As Augustine said "Give what Thou commandest and command what Thou wilt". And God commands in the invitation and the sinner obeys Him who teaches the

fulness and the greatness and the sweetness and the power and the blessedness of a gracious promise. A place is made for a promise; that place is necessity. And the promise comes and fits. Mortice and tenon never fitted so beautifully as the necessity of a sinner and the promise of God to him.

"Who teacheth like Him?" the greatness of being ready to die. You younger believers may, at times, when I speak of this say, well but why bring before us constantly the subject of death? Well, but if you believe you will often be thinking of your death, but as you get old, then you will be more and more concerned. You ask Him now to guide you, help you, be with you; be with you in your troubles, bless you in your perplexities by advising you spiritually, and you will need it to the end. But as you approach the end some things will be past and this one thing will be prominent. "Lord make me ready to die. Fit me to be well laid in the grave." How can you be? Grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life, and the witness of the Spirit in your heart that it is well with you. And you may then look forward to that Scripture which I believe I named this morning - "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." It is grand to be well buried. You can only be well laid in your grave by being ready for the resurrection." If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, He also that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies".

"Who teacheth like Him?" Who can teach you your duties day by day? Who can enable you to do what you do, whether you eat or drink, to do all to the glory of God? O the innumerable things, ways in which we need to be taught of God. When He sends teachers, His people listen to them, but when He comes Himself and teaches, then each one says "I was taught effectually that lesson". God give us this teaching.

AMEN.