

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Friday evening 23 September 1927

PSALM 113 verses 4/5/6

"The LORD is high above all nations, and His glory
above the heavens. Who is like unto the LORD
our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth
Himself to behold the things that are in heaven
and in the earth."

This glorious majesty of God is what no man fallen can approve, but what no man, no devils, shall ever destroy. He will be known, He will be acknowledged, and if we are brought to look on Him and humble ourselves before Him, we shall need eternity to thank Him for that condescension. He is high above all nations in His Being. There is no God beside Him; He said, "I know not any". What a favour to believe it; really, humbly and thankfully believe that God is. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is", and this, by faith, for "without faith it is impossible to please Him". A believer in the Being of God, believing that through the operation of God, is indeed, in the world of atheists, a miracle. If we, in this little congregation, can occasionally lift up our voice in secret and address the awful majesty of heaven and say, I believe in God, really say that with some spiritual intelligence, and understanding in a measure what we say, we are indeed among the elect people of God, for nations deny Him. Collectively they may say there is a God, but almost universally, collectively, they deny Him. In works they deny Him when with their lip they acknowledge Him. He is high above all the nations of the earth; looking upon them from the circle of heaven and beholding their works and their vanity. And in His high justice, because man sinned, He has consigned him to the grave; and in His high justice has decreed that many shall lie down in their sins; but in His infinite mercy has decreed that many shall rise again by Jesus Christ. He is above nations to dispose of them as it pleases Him; to dispose of them, to dispose of their property, to order their goings, to pour on them mercy or judgement. The element that may be, that is often, sent for mercy, may be - and who today could deny that it is

being - sent for correction. He sends the great rain of His strength, whether for the land or for correction and when men look, as thousands are today, on the destruction of their crops, and when the nation sees the ruin that is coming in that particular, how few will be found, it is to be feared, comparatively to acknowledge the righteous hand of the great God. But it would ill become us as a congregation to pass this judgement by, to say, what have we done to bring it on us? Rather may grace be given to us to lay our hand on our mouth, to get into the dust and say: "Thou art righteous; we have sinned." And you wont say that solemn word with reference to the nation only, but bring yourselves in. "I", you will say personally, "I have sinned." I have, alas, contributed my large share of provocation to bring down upon the nation the wrath of God. He is high and sitteth upon the circle of the earth to behold the particular sins of people. The disobedience, the popery, the efforts of a so-called - and in her station by the Reformation properly called - Protestant nation. Men are seeking, and alas there are grounds to fear that they will succeed in their aim, seeking to turn the Protestantism of this nation away, and to bring in that dominion, that thing that is the chief of all the objects of God's anger, the object on which particularly His plagues will fall; seeking to bring this nation into Papal Rome. The Lord is high above this Nation. And if we say, but we are determined this shall not be, and we will attempt to avert that apparent, that imminent disaster, may we remember this, He watches to bring evil; He watches over nations and churches and peoples to bring evil upon them. The Lord watched over people of old, even His sinning, His Covenant people, to bring evil upon them, and He will have His servants to speak of these things, that He does watch over nations to pluck up and to pull down and to throw down, and we have got great cause to fear that He will pluck up and pull down and throw down in some particulars this once highly favoured Protestant nation. God give to us, as a little church and congregation, a heart to consider His highness. He is high above us. His justice looks on us. His provoked justice beholds us. And when justice is provoked - it may in God sleep apparently for a long time - when He says, I will awake, it is a terrible word for the people with regard to whom He says such a word, I will awake, I will arise. He will avenge Himself on His enemies. Are we His enemies or His friends? On whose side do we stand? Some in affliction pass through hardly bestead and hungry and

instead of humbling themselves under the hand of God - who brings trouble, judgement - instead of humbling themselves, they pass through, they lift up their head in their affliction, and they curse their King and their God. Is that the case with any here? Are you rebelling against the judgements of God or have you grace with others to say to Him: "Thou art righteous; we have sinned." But have we sinned? Yes, is there one that doeth good and sinneth not? Have we sinned? Have we honoured Him as He should be honoured? Do we fear Him as we should fear Him? Do we acknowledge Him in all our ways? Do we worship Him as we profess to do? He is high; He watches us, He knows our thoughts, He sees our hearts. I should not like any person in this world to see my heart, but God sees it, and your heart too; thoughts that are there. And if you complain in your own soul of the condition you are in, look at home, see if you can trace any connection between your present barrenness and any sin. If you have spiritual wisdom I believe you will be able to do it in the light of God, in the grace of the Holy Ghost, so that you will lay your hand on your mouth and get into the dust if so be there may be hope. The Lord is high; He is high. No secret place can cover us from Him. Can any hide himself that I should not see him? says the Lord. He that made the eye, shall not He see? Think of it, shall not He see? O, says the fraudulent dealer, wiping his mouth, it is nought, it is nought. Shall not He that formed the eye, see? O to be honest before God. "The LORD is high above all nations, and His glory above the heavens." Ah all nations will see this one day. Every eye shall see Him, every knee shall bow before Him - they shall see Him whom they pierced - and every tongue shall confess. While every knee bows, every tongue confesses, some with joy, and some with shame, and confusion; shame and confusion never to be taken away from them. The glory of His justice, it is very great. The glory of His wisdom in having watched over nations and churches and individuals, to bring evil or good upon them. The glory of Christ's death, of His resurrection, of His ascension into heaven, of His intercession there, and the glory of the Spirit's work in the soul, in the Church of God. His glory shall be seen. Do you hope to see it with joy? Do you hope to be of that company that shall eternally sing Hallelujah; to sing "Worthy is the Lamb". Do you hope for this? If so, can you say on what ground that hope is fixed? The glory of grace, how good it is; the glory of the grace of God. The praise of His glory, how wonderful; and this shall

be known in, this shall be celebrated by, the church in time and through eternity. Paul bowed his knees unto the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that blessed Name that He has is named on the church and, says Paul, concluding that prayer for the church, "To whom" - that is to God the Father - "be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, world without end." To have an eye to see, to have a heart to love, the glory of God is given to some. "Blessed" - said the Lord Jesus to His disciples - "Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear." Many righteous men, prophets and others, have desired to see these things but have not seen them. And the reason of that is given in the Hebrews, "That they without us should not be made perfect". Have you seen the glory of God, my friends? Has the glory of God in Christ been revealed to you in your hearts? Have you seen the glory of His justice on the cross? Yea, have seen that wondrous meeting there that is thus celebrated in the Psalms? "Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Righteousness with respect to a sinner, and peace in a sinner, have met together. Glory dwells in our land, in the land where this is. Glory dwells in the church of God where this is. May we then look very carefully at this point, whether we can, in heart and affection and desire to know it more and more, say: "The LORD is high above all nations, and His glory above the heavens." It is a solemn consideration; when you enter upon it you perceive it to be so, that nations deny Him; very solemn, and the exhibition of that denial in our beloved land is very patent, very sad. What child of God can look on this nation, seriously look on it, and say other than this, "we have sinned". "Thou art righteous; we have sinned." "Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high" Well, if you speak of His likeness, if you can speak comparatively, it means this, that you know something about His likeness, about His character. Who can compare with Him? He knows not any Himself, He will not know any. "I am the LORD". "I am God and beside Me there is no Saviour". Would you associate any with Him? You would know His jealousy if you would. If you attempt it, you will know His jealousy. Set up Dagon in some form and you will know His jealousy. Set up self, and His jealousy will burn like fire in your conscience, sooner or later. Is there any beside Me? But what is He like? Who is like Him? Well, you have seen Him if you can say this. "Who is like unto the LORD our God" Said Jesus to His enemies, You have neither seen His shape, nor know Him or

His Word. None can see God. "No man shall see My face and live" He said. He was very jealous giving the law of that point to His people of old. You shall make no graven image; no likeness of Myself shall you make to yourselves, and Moses said, you did not see His shape; you saw no shape. May the Lord keep us from picturing in our imaginations a God. He is only knowable here by faith. Faith will bring Him so to you, that you will understand Paul's word to the Hebrews, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." A great God, a glorious Being, full of majesty, and honour and glory; eternal, therefore unchangeable. Eternal, and in love making Himself, the eternal God, the refuge of His people. If you imagine the human nature of Christ, you cannot imagine the divine Person in that nature as having shape. He that looks on Jesus Christ by faith sees the Almighty God there, and he cannot say He is like this or that, but he has to come to His character. God has a character, and that character is reflected by the Lord Jesus who is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His Person. O, I wish I could see Him every day expressing the character of infinity, the eternal God. Who is like Him? He is love, we are enmity, we are deformity. He is love. And love, as it were, if I may so express love, is His whole character. Love is His beauty. "How great is His beauty." Love is His justice. He can only be just. Love is His glorious attribute, and in that, as I judge, if we have faith and are enabled to meditate on that, we shall discover the whole character of God. This is not above us. It is above our reach, but it is not more than God can cause us to see. This is my comfort when I think of Him, that the Holy Ghost can make Him known to me. Can make Him known, did make Him known to John the Baptist. The consideration of this, if it be given to us, will make us a little enter into that - "God is love". Love draws, love attracts, love brings the soul before God. The love of God has an effect, a great effect. This love expresses itself, and the greatest, the grandest, the highest possible expression of that love is first seen in the manger, seen in the temple when 12 years old disputing with the doctors, seen in the Garden of Gethsemane, seen in the Judgement Hall with His judgement taken away. And seen on the cross; God was in Christ and "He that hath seen Me", says Christ, "hath seen the Father also"; seen in the blaze of the cross. The blaze of love, the blaze of justice, the blaze of holiness, the blaze of love, no eye could bear in the

fullness of it. No human being could sustain the weight of it as it is now. Later in heaven the people of God will be able to bear the blaze as they could not now and the weight of glory as they could not now. Who is like Him? Who is like Him in His death? His death is the life of the church, and when we are baptised into the likeness of His death we lose our own life and live in Him, live in His life. Hate our own life and love our life as He is that life. "Your life is hid with Christ in God". Who is like Him in His atonement? The Paschal Lamb expressed a little of Him as a figure. The two goats expressed the two parts of a full atonement. The goat for the sacrifice and the scape-goat to remove the sins of the nation; these expressed a little of the beauty and glory and fullness of the atonement, but never, never can that be fully expressed. O, how could it be, since that atonement fully satisfied, that is eternally satisfied, infinite justice, and all the claims of the law on man; satisfied all these claims. Paid the whole debt the church owed; the whole of it, leaving nothing to be paid by the church, so that when we sing

Payment God cannot twice demand
First at my bleeding Surety's hand
And then again at mine

we sing but the truth, the simple, blessed, full truth of the gospel of the grace of God. O, who is like Him? Who is like Him in heaven? When it was asked: Who is worthy to open the Book that was in the hands of God the Father and loose the seals thereof, there was found no man, no angel, no creature worthy and John wept when he beheld that there was no man worthy to open the Book. But one came and One was shown to him; He was a Lamb as it had been slain, and that Lamb took the Book. Taking the Book is the same thing that is expressed by Christ Himself. All rule and all authority and power God gave to Him. Taking the Book was just the beginning of the fulfilment of His word to be openly known. All rule in heaven and in earth, all authority over angels to make them ministering spirits, and flames of fire; all authority over men, good men and bad men; devils, all spirits, powers, principalities, powers of darkness, spiritual wickedness in high places; all these under the authority of the Lamb. And dear brethren, every saint and every saint's case, all his tangles, his providential difficulties, the insurmountable things that he has to

meet, these, and the valleys into which he is afraid of sinking, these are in the hands of this high Lord. Who is like Him? Who can be compared with Him? Lord of lords, King of kings. The King-Priest in heaven, seated on His throne, crowned with a glorious crown. Who is like Him?

Who is like Him in His proclamations? A guilty nation, for whom Moses had interceded, heard through the intercessor, the proclamation of the Lord's Name. "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." What a proclamation, and He proclaimed it to individual souls when He was here. "Thy sins are all forgiven". He proclaims it still. There are some consciences here in which that proclamation has been made, and they need it again and again. O, the atonement, dear friends, the atonement. If you admire it, you admire that which is worthy of admiration, but if you never get beyond admiring it as a doctrine, as a great truth, it will be very solemn for you. You must have it proclaimed in your consciences; that is where the atonement terminates finally. When the atonement was made on the cross it terminated then in God; in His justice to its infinite delight; there it rests. In His holiness, making a way for that holiness to shine with all sweet benignity in men's souls. Yes, and it terminated in the love of God, making, as it were, a great window in heaven through which that love should beam in mildest rays on poor sinners. But then that is not its last resting place. In an important sense it does rest there abidingly, everlastingly, but it also rests in the church there. She is feeling it; the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven are rejoicing in it; and poor sinners on earth sometimes get it, and it rests in them, and they rest in it. What bed is like the atonement to a guilty person? Who is like Him in His proclamations when He makes promises to sinners, telling them He will be with them in all the ways they have to go, that He will never leave them, never forsake them, that He will guide them with His eye, teach them by His Spirit, fill them out of His fullness. Who is like Him in these proclamations? Yea, in that wondrous word: "I go to prepare a place for you and if I go to prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also".

"Who humbleth Himself". Though He dwells on high naturally, sovereignly, eternally, He humbleth Himself, stoops. O what a stoop. He chargeth His angels with folly. The heavens are not pure in His sight, by comparison with Himself. All creation is dim compared with Himself. But He looks on sinners; He humbles Himself to look on sinners. Not sinning angels; these are held in reserve and in chains of divine justice to be punished for ever, but sinners of men, human beings, a countless number, elected eternally, on these He looks and He sees them in their conditions, their felt conditions, their real conditions. These may sometimes differ, but He looks on them, He humbles Himself. He said to idolatrous Israel: Take off your ornaments; come to Me stripped of your ornaments, that I may know what to do with you. If you get into the inner sense of that word you will wonder what God will do with you when you appear before Him with every ornament stripped off, and you strip it off yourself; grace has made you do that. Grace has brought you in your nakedness and guilt before God, and He says: that I may know what to do with you; and you wonder what He will do with you. He knows, but He speaks so as to bring a man tremblingly before Himself, the great God, and the man says, what will He do with me. He looks at his nature, his sinful nature, and says what will God do with me in this? He looks at his infidelity and says, what will God do with me in this? At his hardness, his unthankfulness, his unbelief. Everything that is wrong in him he is led to look at, at times, and says what will He do with me? Is it not so with some of you? Are not you sometimes wondering, what will He do with me? What chastisement will He send? What rod will He lay on my back? What fetters will He fasten my feet in? What will He do with me? What will He say to me? Not bad questions for men who are guilty to ask. Not bad questions for you, for me. If you turn away from them it is not a good thing for you. Honest men who know what they deserve begin to wonder what they will get; what God will give them, what He will do with them. What will God do with them? What will He do with me in providence? Sometimes it is heavy work that God puts you to in providence. He turns your things upside down. He cries death upon your life in providence, and emptiness where there was fullness. But that, comparatively, is small compared with the greater question, what will He do with me as I am a sinner before Him? What will He do with this soul of mine, polluted? What will He do with this soul of mine, guilty? Go on asking the question till He

answers it. I say it again, go on asking the question till He answers it. You may say to me, cannot you answer it? I could answer it with the supposition that you are born again; with evidences before me, I might answer it as a poor minister, but that is not what I mean. I mean this, God must answer it in your own conscience. If He should do it by means of my preaching, what an honour for me and a good thing for you, but go on asking it. What will He do? Think of this. With Him is mercy that He may be feared and with Him is plenteous redemption; more than you can possibly need. Plenteous; more, I say, than you can possibly need. More than you could bear in this life. No human being in this world could bear much of the glory of Christ's death. The beams of it are too wonderful, too glorious, to be borne by us in their fullness while we are here. But O to see Him atoning for sins, not His Own; bearing our sins in His body on the tree. Thus to see Him is to be pierced with a sorrow that is most wholesome. It is to be drawn out into that word in Zechariah: "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son." And then follows that sweet, pleasant, wholesome repentance that is in your soul, apart from all creatures.

And His work is this, He raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill. He does it. You may, while lying there, get a sight of the sun, and say, O if I could live in that blessed sun, but I am not near to it. You may, while on the dunghill, sickened by what you are, and what you are perceiving continually there, say, O that I were off this place, lifted out of it. And He can do both, and He does them both. He does them both. Yes sinner, He is sent for it; it is His great work, His strange, His wondrous, His glorious work, to lift sinners out of the dust and take them out of the dunghill and set them where they could never expect to be set; set them in company they never could think themselves fit for; to set them with princes, the princes of His people and make them inherit the throne of glory. And they begin here, when the gospel comes, when forgiveness of sins is felt and enjoyed, when Christ is revealed in them the hope of glory, then they begin to enjoy this state, for they are brought out of the dust of their sinfulness, and they say we shall never lie down in our sins; they are taken away. And the dunghill of corruption they are taken off, and though they find corruption in them, there is still this, they have been lifted into Christ in a way

of sweet experience, and then their hope is they shall be with Him for ever when they have done with time. May the Lord make these words great to you and to me; put them in your hearts, that His highness may be seen and acknowledged, and loved by us; that His greatness and glory may not strike an awful terror into us, but attract us as seen in the Man Christ Jesus.

AMEN.