

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham  
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton  
on Sunday evening 24 March 1935

Psalm 50 verses 14 and 15

"Offer unto God thanksgiving and pay thy vows  
unto the Most High, and call upon Me  
in the day of trouble. I will deliver  
thee and thou shalt glorify Me"

If you offer rivers of oil, an entire forest, and the fruit of your body to save your soul, it will be utterly contemned. But if you bring a poor, lost soul, naked, polluted, weak, ignorant, distant from God, before Him, with faith in the Person and the work of Christ, you will find acceptance in the Beloved and walk at large. God is independent; this He teaches in this Psalm. "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls and drink the blood of goats?" He is absolute; He is absolutely, eternally independent. The exact opposite is ours; weakness, dependence. Dependence is written in human nature; as created by God the creature must be sustained by Him. This is true naturally; it is true spiritually. The offering that is acceptable from the people of God is thanksgiving; the fruit of the lips; praise to God. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord". Hymns and spiritual songs are to be offered. There are many things for which we should be thankful. I will not enter into many of them but will begin with this unspeakable gift of God, His only begotten Son. It would occupy, if I had strength and ability, too much time to enter upon other matters for which we should be thankful, but this is the one thing of all others. The Apostle Paul says - "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift". "He spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all." We shall never fully enter into what that means. "He spared not His own Son", the Son of His love; the Son who is the express image of His Person, the image of the invisible God, who has been eternally in

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His bosom. It is written - "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." And out of that eternal love, eternal oneness of essence, in their eternal communion in each, and with each Person in the Trinity, out of all that, the Father gave His only begotten Son. The measure of it is infinite, if one may use the word measure with respect to what is infinite. We cannot reach it, but God does give faith to believe it. Do we believe it? We may naturally say - of course we do - but it is not believe "of course"; it is believe by faith which is the gift of God. And this unspeakable gift is brought within the reach of faith and Christ said to His enemies "Except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins". Did you ever give thanks to the Lord Jesus for coming? Did you ever see the beauty and glory of the incarnation of the Son of God? Offer thanks to Jesus Christ for being Jesus Christ. O, the love that brought Him from the skies; from His throne to the cross. Offer unto God thanksgiving for the death of Christ. An old theme, a new theme; ever new, ever new to faith, sweet to faith, humbling to faith. O, the death of Christ. It means the death of sin for the Church for He made an end of sin. It means everlasting righteousness which He brought in; an end of transgression and of iniquity. It means reconciliation. Offer unto God thanksgiving for the resurrection of Christ. He was dead; He was buried. And the Apostle Paul teaches in the Romans that He rose again from the dead, and death hath no more dominion over Him. "In that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." And He liveth after the power of an endless life. No access to God, apart from this - Jesus entered heaven with His own blood. By, and in Him, thus dying, thus being buried and thus rising again, by Him, I say in these regards, there is access given to all interested in Him. O the wonder of a poor wanderer, a vagrant, a vagabond, a vile creature, getting, by the Holy Ghost, access to God through this Person. Well, what a wonder.

Next, offer unto God thanksgiving for the Holy Ghost. That divine Person in His operations is as necessary to salvation as

Jesus Christ is. The Lord grant we may never lose sight of this truth, but cry mightily to God that He would give to us the Holy Ghost. The Day of Pentecost was the beginning of the gospel Church, the beginning which is not ended and never will end. It has experienced vicissitudes, troubles, persecutions, afflictions, but never been cut off or destroyed and never will be, because the Holy Ghost was given to quicken redeemed people into life and bring the eternal life of Christ into their souls. Ah it is a great thing to believe, to enter into the Apostle Paul's question to the Ephesians, twelve of whom he met. Have you received the Holy Ghost? Did He ever come? You may not know how He came, nor exactly to a minute or a day when He came, but as the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, so when the Spirit comes there is some effect. You may know His coming more by the effect and operations than by the exact moment when, or the means by which, He came. Offer thanks to God for His operations in the soul, His humbling teaching, His solemn convictions, His arresting the conscience, arraignment the soul before God. Offer thanks to Him for giving hints of Christ, for issuing invitations to come to Christ and for manifesting Christ in some measure. O what we owe to the Spirit, we can never express, never sufficiently thank Him for His goodness in coming to us. One of the most wonderful things in God or from God that He does is the indwelling in a sinner of the Holy Ghost.

Offer thanks for a good hope through grace, for visits of love, for divine compassion, for merciful deliverances, for sweet communications. Offer unto God thanksgiving for that blessed contrition which at times you have felt, for the sweet repentance with which your heart was filled and for the coming of Christ to you occasionally to make you happy. Offer thanks unto God that you have not been left to apostasise. There is in each of us a tendency to that terrible thing. Some here may have feared often that they would apostasise, that they might become like Judas Iscariot, or like Balaam, or like king Saul and other characters but "Thus far" the hymn says and we sing sometimes

Thus far my God has led me on  
And made His truth and mercy known  
My hopes and fears alternate rise  
And comforts mingle with my sighs

The man who fears apostacy will cry "Hold Thou me up and I shall be safe".

Offer unto God thanksgiving for the Scriptures and for any directions we have had from them, any comfort God has made them to us, any promise that He has made over to us, contained in this blessed Book. May the Lord forgive our neglect of the Scriptures and stir us up to seek them more diligently; read them more prayerfully and studiously. Who knows what use He may make of them if we are enabled to read them.

Now some of you, if you do what you ought to do, will, this evening, offer thanks unto God for the things I have named and many others.

"And pay thy vows unto the Most High". Have any of you made a vow? Do not hesitate to pay it. You say, it is very poor. The Lord said the man who made a vow must pay it and he is not to alter it; not to offer a good for a bad or a bad for a good; just take the vow as you made it and regard it; pay it. Have you put a condition in? It is not good for sinners to put conditions in things before God. But if you put a condition, when that condition is realised, do not forget to pay the vow. "Pay thy vows unto the Most High" It is a solemn thing to promise anything to God. If you told Him you would do something if He would do such and such things for you, if He does regard that condition, when it is regarded, pay the vow.

"And call upon Me in the day of trouble". Here is a direction to troubled people; a heavenly call to troubled people; a gracious telling them what to do. "Call upon Me". You know Me, as if He should say; I am the Most High before, and to whom, you have made a vow. I am God to whom you have been

giving thanks. Now you are in trouble; bring that to Me. That is the equivalent of the word "Call upon Me in the day of trouble." I am to name a day of trouble in several particular regards. Surely it is a day of trouble when your indwelling sins and corruptions seem to have victory over gracious exercise; when a prayerless frame comes and overcomes prayer; when unbelief rises and damps faith; when, instead of caring about God, and diligently seeking Him, you care more for the things of this life; when, instead of Christ being first and last, self is first, or some providential matter is first. When you get this state of mind, come into this sad condition, as you are at all alive to God, it is to you a day of trouble. A heavy day and in it there will be a sense of helplessness, like dull earth, inert. Whatever potentialities there may be in the earth, without rain and sun, there is no effect. It does nothing; it can do nothing. So, whatever of life there is in your soul, or of grace, the exercise of it you cannot maintain. And if the exercise be gone for the time, you cannot call it back. "Call upon Me". The remedy is in God. No excuse, but the remedy is in God. "I will deliver thee". The Holy Ghost shall renew your spirit, renew the frame of your mind and heart. He shall cause you again to cry mightily to God, which you have not done lately. He shall cause you to cast your burden on Him, humbly believing that He will regard your prayer. That is a day of trouble.

A day of trouble is next when God hides His face, when, for reasons which He may tell you later, He has deserted you; when you say - I sought my Beloved in the night and found Him not. When you looked for His gracious smile and it was not coming. When darkness took possession of you, so to express it. When you went forward and could not find Him, and backward but could not read your signs. On the right-hand where He works and He was not there to you. On the left-hand and He hid Himself. Desertion is a solemn thing. Jesus understood it; Jesus endured it. What caused desertion to be His experience? Sin imputed. What causes desertion to come to you as a painful experience? Something you have done, indulged in mostly. There may be occasions when, like Job, you may have adversity and God's desertion without any

special cause, but, generally speaking, you will find when God goes there is some reason in you for it. If you experience it, without any special reason, then God will explain it to you later. O, but a deserted condition is very solemn; no substitute for God. No presence, no light. Nothing in the whole world can become a substitute in the soul for God. God keep that truth in you and in Me. It is written of some in Hosea - "They returned, but not to the Most High". They got a remedy, but it was not God's presence. May the Lord forbid that we should get a remedy for desertion other than His return to us. Call upon Me in this day. What? When I have provoked Him to go, then to call upon Him? Yes "Call upon Me in the day of trouble".

Another day is when the Scripture may be silent to you and God silent to you in the Scripture. I read the other day in a letter I received from a friend that a hearer went to his minister - it is about eight years ago - and said what will you say to one who has been six months without hearing the oracle, the Word of God. The minister answered the hearer - what will you say to one who has been two years without hearing the oracle? If the Scripture is silent to you it is a solemn thing. Is it silent? That is, does the Lord God not speak to you by it? Can you read chapter after chapter, book after book, epistle after epistle, and not a word, not a syllable speaks to you? That will be, if you have spiritual life, a day of trouble. Your cry will be - "Be not silent to me", for He puts words, so to speak, He puts life into words in the Holy Scripture. "Be not silent to me lest if Thou be silent to me I become like them that go down to the pit." In this day of trouble call upon Me. Other days you are acquainted with in your own particular cases.

Let us look briefly at the promise - "I will deliver thee". I will deliver thee from the power of indwelling sin. "Sin shall not have dominion over you". O, what a word. What a suitable promise. And that promise is yea and amen unto the glory of God by you. By me, says one, it could not be. Yes, when you are delivered that will be to the glory of God. When He comes and puts His hand on your sins and says "Be still", makes the storm a

calm, then that is a deliverance. God bruises Satan under the feet of His people and He bruises sin under their feet sometimes. Not fully yet, yea partially, here a little and there a little. Bless Him for any relief from the power of indwelling sin. If you get that for an hour, do thank Him. Sin is ceaseless in its activity. God alone is able to subdue it and make it quiet.

I will deliver thee from desertion. One of the saddest experiences of a Christian is God's absence. They only can know absence who have had presence. Some of you may be saying what does he mean by presence? I cannot explain it. God can make you understand it by being with you, and when He is with you then you know what it is to be blest. Naphtali satisfied with favour and full of the blessing of the Lord. When you have had this then you can understand what absence means. If you have walked with God for an hour and He has gone to His own place and you have gone to your own place and there has been this, a distance between you, you understand what absence means. When He comes again you say - I know Him; I know His voice; I feel His presence. "I will deliver thee". I will come again. I will see you again. He pays a love visit; He shines into the heart. "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God" it is written in the Book of Samuel "and He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain". That is Christ's coming, a morning without clouds; the tops of the mountains clear, the valley clear; your heart, your soul filled with heavenly light, with the presence of God. And perhaps you may walk with Him for a time. "I will deliver thee". God's return is a wonderful deliverance for a sinner. Wait for it. May I repeat what I said, there is no substitute for His presence. God grant you may not make a substitute. There is nothing too base for men to do, but if the Holy Spirit is with you, you wont be allowed to make a substitute, or, if you attempt it, you will bring further trouble.

"And thou shalt glorify Me". That I can never do, says a poor child of God. You do not speak wisely when you speak so.

What is it to glorify God? This - "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me". When you take, so to put it, a blessing in your hand that God has given to you, and go before Him and thank Him for it, praise His Holy Name, bless His condescending love, bless His forgiving mercy, that is glorifying Him; putting Him above all others; praising Him who is the Most High, higher than the earth, higher than all imaginations.

Thou shalt glorify Me by abandoning yourself, offering up yourself to God as the Apostle speaks - the offering up of the Gentiles is acceptable. God accepts it; accepted in the Beloved. They shall glorify Me by losing their own life, by hating it and so finding it unto eternal life. They shall glorify Me by making a covenant with Me by sacrifice. They shall glorify Me by depending entirely on Me; coming out of the wilderness, leaning on My arm. They shall glorify Me by trusting in Me for ever, believing that in Me is everlasting strength.

Ah, some say, if you knew how bad our cases are, you would not try to encourage us. If your cases were a thousand times worse and you got this day of trouble in the case or cases I would say, the deliverance will come. The Deliverer will come and turn away iniquity from you and then you will glorify God.

One word in conclusion, we must needs die. Shall we glorify God then when we come to the end? That is my concern. I am not far from my end; what will it be? When Philpot was dying he said - "Beautiful, beautiful; it is better to die than to live". I covet that. I have often coveted that. One may not have ecstasies, but O to be built upon the foundation that God has laid in Zion and to have living views of the blessed Jesus Christ, the only Saviour, will give that confidence and sweetness that will find expression in Philpot's word - "Beautiful, beautiful; it is better to die than to live." Have you got that hope, notwithstanding all that you have in your nature against God. A living hope that when you die that Scripture will be good in you - "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." The Lord grant this to us.



"Offer unto God thanksgiving and pay thy vows unto the Most High and call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify Me."

AMEN.