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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Sunday morning 4 December 1927

PSALM 148 v 14

"He also exalteth the horn of His people, the praise
of all His saints; even of the children of Israel, a people
near unto Him. Praise ye the LORD."

All God's creatures have their being from Him; even the beasts are to render, though instinctively, suitable praise to their Creator. How much more mankind, and yet - awful fact - sin has utterly disabled the human race from honouring their Maker. So God solemnly complains "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider", (Isaiah 1 v 3) What grace is that, then, that does bring a rebellious people to know, to consider - yea, to worship their God. The elect must and shall: "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall shew forth My praise", (Isaiah 43 v 21). The Psalms are an abiding witness to God's mercy in teaching His people what sin is, and what salvation is. It is His work, firstly in conviction - and that shall be repeated through life here - but then in deliverance, which makes a child of God glad. So David said in Psalm 92 v 4 "For Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through Thy work: I will triumph in the works of Thy hands". He must then have had such a glimpse of the beauty of all God's works, and the deep that coucheth beneath: "O Lord, how great are Thy works! and Thy thoughts are very deep." Now in the Psalm containing our text, and indeed, all these later Psalms David was largely blessed with a spiritual view of God's wondrous works. If you are favoured with a measure of the same grace, you will have to 'Praise the Lord', and at times will long, as he did, that everything that hath breath might praise the Lord. (Psalm 150 v 6) And why? the verse before our text tells us - may many of us feel it - for the Lord's Name "alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven". By faith David saw the glory of His exalted Saviour, and so, as in the text before us, saw the certainty of the exaltation of His

people: "He also exalteth the horn of His people" This would make us offer unto God the fruit of our lips. If we could only a little thank Him as we should, we should oftener be engaged in that grateful, that acceptable work. It is, to me, very striking to read these last Psalms and to find them just one note of praise, loud adoration and praise; lifting up God and calling upon the whole of creation in particulars, to praise the Lord. But then you come to a centre; there is a centre and we have it here. He also, who has done so much, He is the centre of creation, the author of it, the sustainer of it. These were all to praise Him.

But then there is added our text. "He also exalteth the horn of His people, the praise of all His saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto Him. Praise ye the LORD". These people near to Him: "Praise ye the LORD". So you are called upon to praise Him. The Holy Ghost in this word says to you who belong to the Lord and have had experience of being near to Him, He says to you: "Praise ye the LORD." You look at your wounds and your sins and your failures - you look at these things - but there is a Redeemer.

Now I would take notice, in the first place, to the horn, the horn of our salvation. This is the Lord Jesus. The horn in Scripture is a symbol of power, of authority, the Lamb as showed to John in the Revelation. He tells us he saw Him, having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God. The horns represent each a symbol of His power and authority. To His disciples, on the eve of His departure from them, He said: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." And so the Pope and the Popish Bishops and the men who are endeavouring to hand this highly favoured, but wicked, nation over to Popery, and the infidels and the critics that are filling numerous pulpits today, these, all of them, are under the power of this great One. May the Lord make this a heartening truth in our hearts, that we may believe in the Lord Jesus. Believe that He reigns in heaven and in earth; that, believing Him in this way, we may go to Him and take every trouble and every enemy, and every devil that troubles us, and every sin that stumbles us, and all the afflictions that are laid on us, to Him. God has given us this horn of salvation; the horn of David is above. The horn of David is the blessed Lord Jesus coming in the line of David from Abraham. What is His

exaltation? It is the lifting of Him up and if we may be enabled, and have given acceptable words, I will set before you a little of this exaltation.

Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, was born of the virgin Mary and men knew Him not, and when they came to know Him as a poor Man they despised Him. But there were occasions, during His sojourn and labour and sorrow here, when God exalted Him. Let us go to Jordan's bank and there we shall see, if we have eyes given us as John had given him, we shall see a Man among men; a Man on whom the Holy Ghost descended, distinguishing Him from all men there. And if we have ears to hear, as John had, we shall hear a voice speaking of that Man so distinguished: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." May the Holy Ghost make that word effectual to our good. May we see Him and hear Him. "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." And the Apostle was inspired to speak this concerning that pleasure of God: "It pleased the Father that in Him", this Man Jesus Christ, "should all fullness dwell". All the pleasure of God dwells in Him. Not only the Godhead bodily - that as Jesus Christ is the very immediate Son of God contains the whole of His divinity - but in the first chapter of that Epistle the Apostle speaks of the pleasure of God. All the purpose of love, all the goodness and fullness of grace, all the intentions of the Lord respecting the elected Church, all that pleasure dwells in Him in whom the Godhead bodily also dwells. What an exaltation above men. May our eyes be open to see that Man on Jordan's bank, a beautiful sight; the whole of Deity there; all the pleasure of Deity there; all the purposes of Deity there. All the love of God to the Church, all the righteousness that the Church is to inherit and be adorned by, all the purity she is to wear through eternity, all the happiness and bliss that she is to have, in that Man must be found. This was the horn of salvation and this was the beginning of His exaltation. He had grown into manhood; He had been subject to His parents; He had been obeying the law under which He was made from His childhood. Now He comes into His public ministry; now He is to be known, not as one of a family, but as a Man above men; among them but above them, and God lifted Him up. Has the Holy Ghost lifted Him up in your hearts, in my heart? Has He been, in our view, invested with everything that will save, what must save. Here is God incarnate; here is the expression of God's image, the brightness of

His glory. Here is omnipotence; here is perfection in obedience; here is the Substitute of the Church. If so, what favoured people we are. A good deal of religion will perish, but this wont. A view of Christ given by the Holy Ghost will live and be enlarged, and will be like the house shown to Ezekiel, widen as it ascends. This will live.

Let us follow the Lord Jesus immediately after His baptism - and that exaltation of Him - into the wilderness, and mark this - it is written and it should be marked - "He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness", led of the Spirit there to be tried and there to be a conqueror. The devil tempted Him; He was in the wilderness with wild beasts and the devil those forty days and forty nights, and He overcame. "It is written"; "It is written"; "It is written"; that was His defence. God was with Him. He was there in His Mediatorial character and also He was there in His Kingly office, and He used the sword of divine majesty given to Him and overcame with those divine thrusts of that glorious sword the foul tempter, the devil. Was not that an exaltation of Him?, the Lord's owning Him in His Word as His Son and as His Servant. Tempted soul, follow Him, follow Him, follow Him there in that wilderness, that dark scene, when the enemy came with all his hellish force and counsel and tempted, hanging before Him alluring temptations; temptations which indeed allure you, allure me; temptations that do catch us and get hold of us, seizing something in us like himself and like themselves, but to Jesus this had nothing of attraction. He said, the prince of this world hath nothing in Me, nothing to work upon in Me, nothing to coalesce with what he brings to Me; nothing. O my friends, God did exalt Him in that wilderness. He was with Him, as Peter says, God was with Him. "Behold My Servant who I uphold" and He upheld Him and so exalted Him. And I can but believe, and would so rightly, that this will have an influence on the hearts of tempted people. Others may notice it as a piece of history, but God's saints will feel it as having relationship to them; it has relationship to them. There was no step Christ took here below; there was no work that He did while here below, no sorrow felt, no grief He endured, no temptation hurled against Him, but what had, and will ever have, in this life some influence upon, some relation to, every tried and tempted child of God. And do, the Lord helping you and helping me, try to notice this,

the exaltation of our horn. Think for a moment of the result of a defeat here; if the god of this world had overcome the Lord Jesus. The thought is scarcely bearable. Defeated there, defeated everywhere. But no, He was a conqueror and the devil left Him. Defeated, he left Him. And one day as grace is given to a tempted saint to resist the devil; James's word will be true: "Resist the devil and he will flee from you". And when the temptation ended, the exhausted Jesus was ministered to by angels despatched from heaven; angels ministered to Him. And when you are exhausted by temptation, when your faith is ready to perish, when your hope seems perished from the Lord, and when you feel that there is no standing any longer, that you are done for, finished, as to your religion, then you will prove the words of the Spirit of God by Paul: "He shall be holden up for God is able to make him stand". Trust to Christ; He knew what weakness was. He knew what it was - in these troubles, these grievous troubles that laid on Him - what it was to fear and offer strong cries and tears unto God. As the Apostle Paul tells us, "He was heard in that He feared". And you will be heard in that you fear God in the days of your affliction.

I will draw your attention to yet another scene in which Christ seemed all but overcome, but not so. Go to the garden of Gethsemane. He then apparently had a near, a clear view of what was immediately before Him. The cross was close to Him; the curse, in its terrible heat so to speak, came and searched Him, and the cup of wrath which He was to drink was then put into His hand, and the holy Jesus cried: "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt" No disciple could be near Him then; He must be alone. "Of the people there was none with Him". He was alone there with His God, His Father, whose Servant He was. But He was not overcome. O the exaltation of the Saviour there. As I seem to see it, in that expression - "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt" - above all that came upon and against Him He triumphed. He sacrificed Himself whereby His will was clearly seen to be straight with His Father's will that sent Him. It was straight with the divine commandment that was laid on Him to lay down His life and God exalted Him, and when exhausted there, an angel was sent from heaven to minister to Him. But God exalted Him, the horn of our salvation.

We go to the Judgement Hall and see Him there with His judgement

taken away in the day of His humiliation; when He was silent with respect to all accusers and accusations and He was guilty of none of the things they accused Him of. But because He stood there, the representative of sinners of whom all the accusations would be true, He held His peace. He was a Substitute; He stood and He overcame. And He was taken to the cross, and there all the beauty and the loveliness and the glory and the victory that He had for the moment seemed to be overshadowed. The rough badgers skin covered everything for the moment; only faith can see beneath it. Only faith can see the Lord Jesus overcoming, making an end of sin. Think of that great word, "an end of sin". Sin in you, endless in its efforts to overcome you. Ceaseless in its temptations and solicitations, sin threatening you every day. An end made of that, when He said: "It is finished" and bowed His head and gave up the ghost. Ah it was a great exaltation. The law magnified and made honourable, the curse of God exhausted with respect to the Church and every requirement of justice, every demand of the law met, fully met. And now He is buried and, said the Jews, now let us make sure that this deceiver shall not escape our observation. We have imprisoned Him in the grave, let us detain Him. And so they obtained the word from Pilate: "Make it sure". They went and set a seal on the stone. O but what is a watch and what is a seal to omnipotence and to justice and to love and to the glory of God. So He was raised from the dead. Having shown Himself alive by many infallible proofs to many people, He ascended into heaven and there He is exalted. Love exalted, obedience exalted, perfection exalted the Lord's power and goodness and grace above every opposition set up. That is a great word in the 1st Ephesians: "And set Him above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named not only in this world but also in that which is to come" "He hath exalted the horn of His people", lifted Him up; significant is the word. All power and authority in heaven and in earth is given unto Him. The horns of the altar have blood on them; once a year sprinkled with blood; a symbol of authority and a symbol of a perfect atonement. Now what is this Jesus Christ to you? What think ye of Him? Is God's thought of Him such as you would like to entertain after your nature and measure? "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased". Can you honestly say to God in a humble protestation, I am well pleased with Jesus Christ, and His exaltation pleases me; I am thankful for it? Could you say as much as that to

Him? Heaven is beneath Him, earth is beneath Him, men are beneath Him, devils are beneath Him. He is Lord of all. O what a mercy, what an unspeakable blessing to the saints of the Most High.

And now this is said of Him, that He is the praise of all His people. He is the praise of all His people in respect of the matter of praise. The matter of praise is so large, wide, deep and high, that one can only expect to make two or three very brief and poor references to it. The matter of it is, first of all, His Person. If you have any praise from God and any praise to offer God, you will find the whole will centre here. Everything is here. You may say you have got matter for praise in providence, and matter for praise in your body or health and strength, matter for praise in your daily things, and that is true indeed, but if you be God's people the matter of your praise will centre here - Jesus Christ, whose Name is above every name. "God 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". What a wonder to have this matter put into the hand of your faith. A sinner blessed with a Saviour; a guilty person blessed with a Redeemer from his guilty condition; a weak creature blessed with strength; a dead soul blessed with life; a naked soul blessed with righteousness; a polluted sinner blessed with cleansing, perfect purity. This is matter indeed for praise, and does it not all centre in the one Man, the Man Christ Jesus, Almighty God. O what a favour to know Christ. Religion without this is vanity. What a favour to have the revelation of Him in your soul. If you need it, that is if you feel your need of it, go to Him. It is a blessing He has to give. How shall I get it? When He sends His good Spirit to you; for He says, "He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you". Nothing else will deliver you from the law. Nothing else will put you straight in your conscience. Nothing else will clothe you so as that you appear spotless and without blame in the presence of God. My friends, this redemption is in Christ. This salvation is in Christ and this is the praise of all His saints. It is exclusive - I use the word advisedly - it is exclusive. Your goodness, if you think of it, if you have any in your own judgement, is no better than your sins. That is to say, there is no goodness. "There is none righteous, no not one" But this blessed Lord Jesus when revealed, and thus known by faith, becomes

the matter of the praise. God praises the man who is in Christ. Christ praises the Church as she belongs to Him; she is all fair to Him, for she is clothed with His Own robe. "The King's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold." Do not expect anything that will be praise for you and praise to you, but that which is in Christ Jesus whom God makes known to His people. If you are after this you will receive it. If you feel you can rest short of it; if you feel, now I have got this evidence and that feeling, and therefore I now feel I am right, you are short. You may be sound - that God knows, I do not - you may be sound, but you are not certain. You may be saved but not sound in your experience until you receive this. This will be the seal, this will be God's blessed testimony in your soul that you are right, and then you will say, not one single atom of the religion a man may get for himself can be added to this. It is wholly God's gift; the matter is the gift of God. I should like, were grace and wisdom given to me, to insist constantly on this. No clothing, no cleansing, no life, no access, no comfort, no peace, no strength, no glory but as received from and in a revealed Christ; revealed in you. And then when you get that you have got everything. Now you may go your way and be no more sorry for the joy of the Lord will be your strength. Go your way poor sinner if you have got this. Go your way when you get this and be no more sorry. Eat the fat of the gospel, drink the sweet of God's love, and be no more sorry for the joy of the Lord is your strength. "The praise of all His saints". The praise of the Church; fair thou art My beloved. The praise of a tempted soul who has got victory. The praise of a hungry soul who has had bread, the bread of life given. The praise of a thirsty soul who has received water from the smitten Rock that has followed him and now satisfies him. "The praise of all His saints" in all their afflictions and their troubles and their sorrows.

Well, this is a great thing. And in the next place, and very briefly, He is the praise of all His saints in their experience. An experimental religion is the only religion that will land a person in heaven if that experience is good. There is a false experience as well as a true experience and it will be a matter for constant searching with you till you get a revelation of Christ whether the experience you have thus far is a right experience; whether God has given it to you. O it is easy to be deceived if the Lord is not our

Teacher and Saviour, very easy. There is a conviction of sin that is perfectly natural to some people. A kind of religiosity may deceive and doubtless does deceive many. They do not deny that they are sinners; they have some sense of being sinners. They do not deny God's Being; they have some sense of Him. They do not deny hell and they may fear they are going there. They try to pray and sometimes they may get a little melting; then they are happy. They listen to a minister and he describes their badness and they go away satisfied they are in the right way. The minister says the Lord's people have these things and these things and I have and I am happy. There is a false experience; it is in the Church of God. It plagues the people of God; it hurts them sometimes in this way; they are afraid that it is their own case. But there is a real experience, a true, gracious experience given to some; a repentance that is not to be repented of; a brokenness, a bankruptcy, a sense of evil, a sight of God, a sense of His claims, great claims, deep, and broad, and wide, and high. A sense of inability to meet them. A justification in the conscience that if the sentence of a broken law is inflicted on the soul, God is justified in it. He is justified when He speaks, He is clear when He judges. Prayer given. Faith in the Lamb of God making Him the only plea. Waiting on Him. Years perhaps before He comes, but the day comes when He is revealed and they receive Him by faith and He becomes their life, and their liberty, and their purity, and their justification, and their acceptance, and their access and their communion. O what praise this is; what praise it begets. O the blessing of God that fills a man's heart when he gets this religion, this real experience. Why, now he says, I can see everything I have gone through, and in some way and measure, I can make a distinction. I was wrong there, and then the Lord put me right and now I know that the writing on my heart has been the writing of the very finger of God. He has got a good religion and the Lord Jesus is the praise of that religion, and he goes to God with that religion and blesses God for Jesus Christ and for the revelation of Him. Now sinner, that is what you must have in some measure sooner or later, and if you wait fifty years for it, when you get it you will say it is worth waiting for. But this is the religion, a revealed Christ received by faith. You then will know and be able to say with the Apostle John: Now I know that the Son of God is come and hath given me an understanding that I may know Him that is true and I am in Him that

is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Does any person here say he is too ignorant and too weak to ever hope for such a blessing? What I will say to that person is this, neither your weakness, nor your straitness, nor your condemnation, nor your filth as felt and confessed, will be a bar when the set time comes. Press your case, urge your suit, plead the Saviour, name His Name, put before the Lord His blessed atonement, and the day will come when every prayer that you have put up to God will receive a blessed answer. You will say, now I know.

AMEN.