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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Wednesday evening 29 April 1925

Psalm 29 v 2

"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto His Name; worship
the LORD in the beauty of holiness"

The true grace of God in the heart distinguishes the subject of it by faith, reverence, godly fear, tenderness of conscience, and, as led by the Spirit, affectionate obedience. The sum of vital religion is in the text. We are exhorted, first of all, to "give unto the LORD the glory due unto His Name". His Name here expresses Himself, what He is, His majesty, His eternity, His terribleness, His goodness, His salvation. One might say, give unto the LORD the glory of His eternal majesty, His being as He has revealed Himself in holy Scripture, and as He has made Himself known in some measure in our hearts. A true apprehension of God by the teaching of the Spirit always makes Him very great in the soul; makes the sinner very small, very vile and gathers him in his desire to God for salvation; makes him desirous of being delivered from all evil deception of his own heart, the delusions that Satan ever seeks to bring people under, and to wait for the testimony of the Holy Spirit to his salvation, his adoption and sealing unto the day of redemption. And then the soul rises to give the glory, in a very small measure of adequacy. I think myself eternity will not suffice for the saints or for angels to adequately bless the Eternal God, but where there is faith, there is sincerity, and there is a measure, though it be very small, of adequacy. That is, a spiritual nature in the saint rises in spiritual thankfulness and ascription of honour to the Almighty. This praise in your heart will bring you near to Him, will lift you up from complaining, save you from indulging in sin, and constrain you to adore, and love, and follow, and cleave to Him whose high praises are in your heart and in your mouth.

Give unto the Lord the glory of creation. The Scriptures do it; may our hearts do it. Give unto the Lord the glory of providence, that holy providence that shapes our courses, orders our steps, weighs out

our troubles, sends deliverances, holds us up where we feel we must sink, sustains under burdens. Providence, God's handmaid, servant. Providence ordering our ways, crossing our plans, coming right athwart our schemes, giving us more than we ask for or can expect on the ground of our sinnership. All praise is due to God, the God of providence. The praise of our being - not of our sinfulness - the praise of our well-being, the praise of putting us among His people, the praise of godly Christian friends, the praise of daily bread and raiment to put on; the praise of these mercies is due to His Name, to Himself. "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto His Name" for His incarnation. The very Son of God became Man, was found in fashion as a Man and humbled Himself to death, even the death of the cross. O what praise we owe to God the Father for giving His Son; to God the Son for coming into this world, making Himself of no reputation, and taking into union with His divine Person the body prepared for Him. If we do believe, by the teaching of the Spirit, in Jesus Christ, born of the virgin Mary, then let us seek once more, though we may be under a cloud of sin, though we may have some fears, though we may be exercised because we are not as near to Him as we would be, do not live near to Him as we would do, let us seek to bless Him for His condescension in coming into this world. Give unto the Lord the glory due to His incarnation, the wisdom that planned it, the love that decreed it, the power that accomplished it. Give unto the Lord the glory of all this. We owe it to Him. Have we a hope? It is on the ground of the incarnation. Have we ever had access to God? It was through the incarnate Son. Have we a hope of one day being free from sin? It will be because incarnate Deity put our sin away by the sacrifice of Himself. A hope that we shall one day be in heaven and like the Lord? It will be entirely through the incarnation, the work and the death and the resurrection of the Son of God. Give unto the Lord the glory due to His obedience and sacrifice of Himself. He is the end of the law to every one that believeth. The end of the law, that is the perfect fulfilment of the law. He died, He gave to the law everything it asked; all the obedience it required and demanded, He yielded, and the curse that it must necessarily pour out upon sinful men, it poured into His heart for His people. He died vicariously, He died voluntarily. O what a death was the death of Christ. Give the Lord the glory of it. Have we a hope? It is all owing to His death. Are we built for eternity? He is the foundation, the only foundation.

Do we rise in a living hope? It is in His power. Do we ever feel the love of God? It is shed abroad in our hearts by His Spirit through Christ's precious death. "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His Name" for His resurrection, His ascension into heaven, His intercession there. He took heaven, took possession of it in the interests and for His people that He may eventually bring them all home, saying to His Father, as He presented them to Him: "Behold, I and the children whom God hath given Me." Beloved friends, we owe all to the Lord Jesus. All hope; every glimpse we get of a gracious God, every gleam of mercy that we have, every beam of hope that shines into our hearts, every breath of prayer, all true conviction, all our hope in the atonement, we owe to Him. May we not grudge to give Him what is His due. It is His due. It is due to Him that we should rise up as we are exhorted in the Psalms I read, and sing unto the Lord a new song. Not creation's song, for there is no song there, no proper song, because sin has marred that, but a new song of redemption. Redeeming love, redeeming blood, be this our theme, our new song. We begin to lisp it here when we sing "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His Own blood". Give unto the Lord the glory due to Him, that is, unto the Holy Spirit. Everything that we have above fallen nature we have from the Holy Spirit. The washing of regeneration is by the Holy Ghost. The renewing of the mind is by the Holy Ghost. The enlightening of the understanding, the putting of the will straight with the will of God, the knowledge of Christ, the knowledge of the throne of grace, power to come to it, liberty to confess sin, grace to sincerely confess it and to forsake it, all, all we owe to the Holy Ghost working, operating in our souls. Are we sincere before God? He has made us so. Are we truly humble? He has put that seemly garment upon us. Are we spiritually minded at any moment? It is by His grace and His power. Do we really pray? He gives us prayer. "Praying in the Holy Ghost." Do we forsake sin? He gives us power to do it. Yea, do we find Satan at any time under our feet? He it is who bruises him. It well becomes us to praise the Lord for His great mercy. Give unto the Holy Spirit the honour due to His Name for inspiring holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Is the Scripture in our hearts in any part of it? Has faith ever embraced the whole Word of God as being given by inspiration of God? Have we ever felt the penetration of any Scripture, the authority, the thunder of the law in a Scripture, the sweet voice of mercy in a Scripture; seen Jesus, as in a glass

darkly, in the Scripture; received a promise concerning ourselves in the Scripture? All, all came to us by the Holy Spirit, that divine Person with the Father and the Son. Blessed be God if we have any grace from that Spirit, that Holy Spirit. I would stir you up, if I might, to do this, to praise the Trinity. Let us come before Him with thanksgiving. O come, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; He is our God, we are His people as some of us believe, humbly and thankfully believe at times. Therefore it is due from us to praise His Name, to bless this glorious God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Give to Him the glory due unto His Name for our being preserved thus far. "Thus far" may not some of us sing, ought we not to sing, "Thus far my God has led me on". And sometimes we can sing, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life". These things are always accompanied, more or less, with searching of heart, with fear lest there should be some secret thing with us on account of which we get dark days and distances from the Lord. Always accompanied with more or less distinct temptation and the workings of a corrupt nature. But these things, though they militate against our peace, and seem often to hinder our progress in the path of life, do not really such evils. They only seem to do, for God turns these things to a good account.

And in the next place let us notice this second part of the text. "Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness." "In the glorious sanctuary" the marginal reading is. The glorious sanctuary was Israel's centre. The centre was revealed when the Lord said to Moses, Now take of the people a gift, let the people bring gold and silver and precious stones and onyx stones and oil and so on. Make an Ark. put the tables of testimony in it. Make a Mercy Seat, and cherubims, and there I will meet with thee and commune with thee. When the tabernacle was set up in the wilderness that was Israel's centre, Israel's glory. So long as that remained in the land there was the glory of God. He put His Name there. When Solomon built his temple that was Israel's centre, that glorious sanctuary where the Name of the Lord was, and you remember that Solomon in that memorable prayer of his, again and again brought the cases of trouble, captivity, defeat, famine, plague, pestilence. If they shall bethink themselves, if they shall pray toward this house, then hear Thou in heaven; let thine eyes be open and thine ears attent unto the prayer

that is made in this place. (2 Chronicles 6) What answers to this? What is the anti-type? The Apostle tells us in the Hebrews. He speaks there of a minister of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. Man, by divine order and direction and instruction pitched the tabernacle. Solomon, following the directions that God gave to his father David, built the temple, but these were only a type of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched in the incarnation of His dearly beloved Son. The true tabernacle is the Lord Jesus. O what a tabernacle for sinners to go to, to take refuge in. When, under the Spirit's teaching and thunder, they are convinced of their sins and of their danger, they fly from the wrath to come and enter into this refuge, this true tabernacle and there they worship - the beauty of holiness, of the glorious sanctuary - worship there. That glory is no other than, nothing less than, the Person and work of Christ. The attributes of Deity are here in their glory. The love of God is here in all its greatness and sweetness. Forgiveness is here, justification is here, sanctification is here. Divine visits are paid here, and consolations come here. All good things from God to the church are found in this true tabernacle. This may be a test to us, this may move us to ask ourselves what our worship is, what direction it takes, who is the centre, the end of it. It matters not whether you worship a bit of stone or a bit of wood, or carry an idol in your waistcoat pocket, if there is no worship of the true God, if you have none of these things, whatever else you worship is but vanity. But if you worship here that is in the beauty of holiness. Worship the Lord here. And now worship is the sum of vital religion which is in the heart, in secret. Divine worship is acceptable to God. It is the offering up of a sinner which is acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, and it consists in these things. First, faith. True faith will bring you, if you possess it, before Almighty God with sincerity and much searching. You will be seeking grace to dig deep till you reach the rock lest you should build on sand. You will believe the testimony of Christ "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom" Your faith, laying hold of these truths, will direct your worship toward Him who is "The Lord Our Righteousness", and from whom forgiveness comes. Without faith there is no real worship. Take one or two instances afforded us in the Scriptures. The man whose eyes were opened by the Lord Jesus and who, for professing

Him though he knew Him not distinctly, was turned out of the synagogue, excommunicated, was found in that sad condition by the Lord Jesus who said to the man: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Said he in reply, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" The Lord said to him, "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee". Now what was the effect of that sweet, clear testimony and revelation? It was this: he fell down and worshipped Him. His heart's worship, adoration, admiration, confidence, hope, love, centred then from that man's heart upon the Lord Jesus. This was worship; faith. "Lord I believe", said one, "help Thou mine unbelief". Take the case of the Syrophenecian woman. When she had been rebuffed, as it were, repelled by the Lord, she fell before Him and said "Lord, help me" and worshipped Him. Her faith then entwined itself around Him so that she would not let Him go nor take the discouragement which His words seemed to convey, and He accepted her worship and said: "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." She saw divinity in the Man. How clear she was on the point or what answers she might have given if anyone had questioned her about the matter, we do not know, but this we do know the Lord Himself said: "Great is thy faith", and she worshipped Him. Do you follow what I mean? Is that how you are affected sometimes toward this Person? Does your heart go out in real reverence to Him? Does your spirit bend before Him? Worship is adoration of an inferior for a superior, for the Lord of life and glory. Worship is the entwining of faith around the Person of Christ; the pleading that faith is enabled and encouraged to do when the atonement of Christ appears, when His righteousness is seen. Faith makes us afraid to trust anything else; afraid of fancies, of deceptions, such as are in our own nature. Afraid of being deluded, and so she goes to the Lord and says, "Lord help me".

You take the case of king Jehoshaphat. He had faith. He received the testimony of the prophet. He went out to war; He spoke to, consulted with, the people and then, having doubtless told them of what had been said to them, having professed his confidence in God, he set singers to go before his army. I have thought that a very remarkable instance of the power of true faith. There was a battle to be fought, with all, as men would speak, all the uncertainty of it. As men would say, even the probability of defeat was before him. But

no, Jehoshaphat's faith went to God, hung upon God, committed all to Him. So he set singers before the army and they went forth to praise the Lord whose mercy endureth for ever. Now this shows us what true faith is; it is a great grace that does not live on circumstances and is not dashed by all appearances, but, secretly strengthened by the Spirit who works it in the heart, it goes to God, lays hold of His infinite goodness, His omnipotence, His wisdom and believes, with Peter, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation".

Take another case in Scripture; you will find that good man who had to go against an army with 300 men looking to the Lord. Said Gideon, Lord give me a token. He got it. He said again, give me another token; reverse this. The fleece was wet and the ground dry. Now let the ground be wet and the fleece dry. God gave him what he asked and he went with empty pitchers and lamps within the pitchers and the sword of the Lord. Here faith triumphed. Here faith worshipped. It was God on whom he was depending, whose direction he was following, on whose arm he was leaning, and to whom he was looking for victory. This is true faith.

I will give you one more instance out of Scripture, namely Abraham when told to offer up Isaac his only begotten son, the son for whom he waited 20 years, the son in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed; that son was to be sacrificed. And he went, he laid Isaac on the altar, esteeming, as Paul tells us, that God was able to raise him up from the dead, from whence also he had received him in a figure. O brethren, living faith is a wonderful grace. It will take you with your sinfulness and your sorrows for sin and your difficulties through indwelling sin and your deadness on account of, and by, sin; it will take you with your providential trials and all the things that come, the fears, the suspicions, the dread you have of being deceived, it will take you with all these things; take you too with your longings for nearness, for true access, for boldness, for free communion; it will take you with all these things unto the beauty of holiness, and in the beauty of holiness this faith will see everything that can be needed, desired, and prayed for. Divinity's indwelling rays in the Man Christ Jesus; eternal love in the Man Christ Jesus. Eternal redemption in Him; everlasting

righteousness, the blood that sealed the everlasting covenant, sweet liberty from sin, blessed bright prospect of eternity, all seen in this true tabernacle. Worship the LORD. Faith is a worshipping spirit, a trusting spirit, a humble spirit. Faith is a spirit that, coming from heaven, lives on heavenly things. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" and can live on that. It is enough for the world to come. A worldly man has enough then. But says faith, my birth is heavenly, my nourishment must be heavenly. My origin is in God, God must be my sustainer, give me my victories; and so faith worships.

Also love worships. Love is worship; that is to say, if you say at any moment here is a man full of sin but also blessed with grace, and I have seen, and, having seen, I love the Lord Jesus; He is my hope, my strength, my righteousness, my peace with God, my hope for eternity, in that, yea in those very words as they come from a believing, broken, tender heart, is true worship. It takes you to the Lord. Love is a most separating grace. It separates the man in whom it is from the world, separates him from himself, separates him from all evil. "Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness." And as in the Lord Jesus is all holiness and all the beauty of holiness, eternal separation from everything that is wrong, so one may say, in measure, this holiness is in the heart. Where worship is, the heart, the soul, the person blessed with grace, is separated from sin. Said the Lord, you shall be to Me a holy people, and it is in the spirit of holiness that the saint worships God. Blessed is the man who has love, pure love. Blessed is the sinner who, in his troubles and exercises and fears, is not offended in the Lord, when the Lord's dealings are strange as they were with John the Baptist. He, in his fears and doubts, sent to Christ that question: "Art Thou He that should come or look we for another?" He received from Christ the answer. When the messengers had seen the eyes of the blind opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped, and the dumb made to speak, and the lepers and the sick people healed; when they had seen all these things and heard that the gospel was preached to the poor, said Christ, tell John these things, and say unto him: "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me." "Great peace have they that love Thy law and nothing shall offend them." Whenever you have this holy peace in your conscience you will find love moving in your heart

and nothing that God does will, at that moment, offend you. Is He afflicting you? You are not offended; while love abounds you are not offended. Faith and love go hand in hand for faith worketh by love, and this love in the heart thinketh no evil, is not puffed up, does not behave itself unseemly, will never listen to an evil report of God. "Worship the LORD".

In true worship there is also this to be added, namely the sincere subjection of the will unto God. It is very strongly and very strikingly expressed in the Scripture: Having every thought brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. When your will is thus captivated, every thought is captivated, the will brought into submission. There is no rebellion active then in your nature. It may rise later, but at the moment there is no rebellion. True submission, universal captivity in the man; his whole heart and soul is in this that he says: "It is the Lord". "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done." I am not speaking a strange language to all of you I am sure. It is beautiful wherever this is and acceptable. The Apostle Paul speaks of the offering up of the Gentiles which is an acceptable offering and when a poor Gentile sinner comes to God with his whole will in submission and sweet subjection to Christ, then there is the offering up of a sinner before God and that is acceptable to God.

The understanding is subjected to Him also. We have a proud reason. It proudly works in us; it works against grace, against providence. What it cannot understand it rejects. Unitarianism, in that part of it, that evil principle, is in every person. What we cannot understand we will not believe. But this is subdued, these mysteries are received. A mystery is a knowable, but a covered, thing, and the mystery of Christ is received, the mystery of His incarnation and the glory of God filling the Man Christ Jesus, and the immeasurable gifts of the Holy Spirit; these mysteries are received. The mystery of a sinner being made holy, of an unjust person being made just, is a mystery received, and reason, the beast reason, as Luther speaks, is slain. That beast reason is killed from time to time when grace subdues the understanding and enables a person to receive the kingdom of God as a little child. Except ye shall receive the kingdom as a little child you cannot enter into it. Bow down proud sinner, grace will say in your heart. Bend down to

holy Scripture, bend to the Lord Jesus, prostrate yourself before His heavenly footstool. And what the Lord says in His Word the Spirit effects in the heart, and the sinner finds his heaven in being nothing but a receiver of grace, a dependant on mercy, a happy recipient of pardon. Thus the Lord is worshipped.

And here nature is stripped; here the needle's eye is passed through, the straight gate is found to be wide enough for faith.

Worship God then in His Son
There He's love and there alone
Think not that He will, or may,
Pardon any other way

Now let us briefly notice some of the circumstances in which this pure worship in the beauty of holiness is carried on. Not easy. Sometimes providence militates apparently against a person's worship. You may be in circumstances that are so turbulent that they put you into a flurry. Circumstances that appear to be determined, so to express it, that you shall have no quiet at all. But, "when He giveth quiet, who then can make trouble". When He is pleased to say - as He did to His disciples who had been so busy with serving they had no leisure so much as to eat - "Come ye apart into the wilderness and rest awhile." He may say to your faith, come with Me, come from the lions' den, come from the mountains of the leopards, come with Me; let us go into the villages, let us lodge in the field. There I will give thee My love. Then you are quiet. Circumstances are made, so to speak, quite submissive, quiet. You live above them, that is to say, faith tells you there is a God in heaven who cares for you, who has numbered the very hairs of your head. It tells you that He lives to intercede for you, that He never intermits His care for a moment, that He will keep you night and day lest any hurt you, He will water you every moment out of His mercy and His fullness.

Sometimes you may worship Him when you are in temptation. Sorely tempted you may be; tempted to distraction, desperation; tempted to infidelity, tempted in a variety of ways, yet God the Spirit may draw your faith out and you go before Him and say, "Lord help me", and fall before Him. You have no weapon of your own with which to fight the

enemy, but He gives you the sword of the Spirit, He puts on you the whole armour of God, and thereby helps you to fight the good fight of faith, looking to the Lord Jesus the author and finisher of your faith. Sometimes in particular affliction that may come into your house or person, you are enabled to worship, to submit yourself entirely to His holy will, the will that now has brought trouble to you; you have grace just to submit yourself. "We are the clay, Thou our Potter". One of the sweetest places you can ever come into, where your heart is submissive, where you believe in the wisdom and kindness of your God, where you confide in His mercy, trust His power and depend on His faithful Word.

Thus the Lord's people are distinguished at times by worshipping Him in their circumstances. And we may carry this a little further, the circumstances connected with the Ordinances of the Lord. Ordinances are pure, beautiful, as they are revealed in the Scriptures. There are two, two left by Christ Himself. Not invented, but left by Christ, ordained, given. Go, said He to His apostles, preach the gospel to every creature, disciple all nations, that is some of all nations, teach them to observe whatsoever I command you, baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Worship may be carried on here, and I hope will be this evening, that we may see a great God saying to His humble disciples, now be baptised and commanding His servants to baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. It is a beautiful ordinance, and when God in His providence and by His grace brings a person to walk before Him and in the ordinance after Him, then there is real worship.

And further, the second Ordinance of the Lord's Supper. Much more seems to be attached by some to this than to the other, but they are both equally important, as they are equally revealed and commanded. Do this, said the dear Saviour, in remembrance of Me. In one day, the day of Pentecost, 3000 were born again and converted and made believers and then they were baptised having gladly received the word, the doctrine of the Apostles. And so when the ordinance of Believers Baptism is obeyed, walked in rightly, there is worship and when the saints meet at the Lord's Table there also is worship, and in the beauty of holiness, not nakedly. O take the ordinance that we are

to administer this evening just nakedly, and what is it? But taking it as being ordained by our Saviour Jesus Christ, take it as that which it pleased Him to give us, that came from His heart, and by His mouth, that sets out His burial, sets forth His having all the waves and billows of God passing over Him, that pictures also His beautiful resurrection, and then it is not a naked thing; it is invested with divinity, divine authority and beauty, in which a saint may worship Jesus Christ and the Father and the Holy Spirit, for in those three names people are baptised. I trust God may then help us, graciously help us to remember His holy Word, and not to regard it as something invented by man, but as coming from Himself who said to His apostles, discipline the nations and baptise them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and I trust that our sister will find this evening the answer of a good conscience toward God in her act of obedience.

AMEN.