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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Sunday evening 7 October 1923

PSALM 80 v 17, 18, 19

"Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right-hand, upon
the son of man whom Thou madest strong for
Thyself. So will not we go back from Thee: quicken
us and we will call upon Thy Name. Turn us again
O LORD God of hosts, cause Thy face to shine;
and we shall be saved."

This Psalm opens with prayer, prayer directed to God as on the Mercy Seat. It comes into confession, into a deploring of the state in which the church at that day had fallen, into which she had come by God's chastisement. It concludes with prayer. In the beginning the prayer was directed to God as sitting between the cherubims. In the conclusion the prayer is directed to the same God but to the anti-type of the type. It is expressed differently, but it is the same. God was in Christ, and the type of it is in that beautiful Ark which was made by divine direction and commandment. A very striking thing I would just name to you in connection with the making of the Ark. If you notice, you will see that it was the first thing that was made. The temple was made, but it was made by divine direction after this and other parts of the furniture of the temple, and it appears to me not to be without a reason. Christ is the first and the last, and - united to His eternal Person as the Son of God, His Manhood - He stands first. No temple has any beauty in it apart from the Ark. No worship has any acceptableness in it unless it be directed to Him who is the anti-type of the Ark. The Ark was made of shittim wood, a wood esteemed imperishable, and covered within and without with pure gold, representing the heart of Christ who said to His Father - "Thy law is within My heart", but the Mercy Seat was of pure gold. Nothing but eternal Deity can answer the need of a fallen Church, and so the pure gold of eternal love and grace must represent her; the Lord of life and glory in whom all the fulness of mercy and of grace dwells. So when we are led to pray by the eternal Spirit, we pray to Him who is

the Mercy-Seat, who was typified by the beautiful Mercy-Seat of which we just now read. And when we come along we find that while praying we have to confess. You will never pray, as I judge, by the Holy Spirit, without making confession of sin. As long as we are here, so long shall we have sin with us and in us, and so long shall we be committing sin, for there is no man that doeth good and sinneth not, and therefore whenever we are led to pray and direct our prayer to Him of whom the text speaks, we shall find confession of sin in our hearts. And when under any chastisement, any desolation, any loss, any cross, any destruction by the work of Satan as a chastisement, then confession of that will also be in our prayers. The church, represented by the vine, had been brought out of Egypt and planted by the Lord. It had flourished greatly; God prepared room for it; it covered the hills and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. "She sent out her boughs into the sea, and her branches into the river". Such a state was this. The worship of God was conducted properly, the power of the Lord was felt, the presence of the Lord was enjoyed, and the people, through the priests and the constantly repeated offerings, had the favour of God, but they turned to idolatry. Can you point your finger at them and say, you did what we have not done, what we will not do? Is there one so conscious of his goodness and so innocent here, fearing God, who would dare to say that? Not one. Everyone says "I have done that; I have done worse". And so the Lord sent trouble, permitted the boar out of the wood and the wild beast of the field to come and trample this vine under foot. Enemies, hostile nations came against Israel, and brought desolation. And now this afflicted people, instead of being permitted to sink into black despair, turn to the Lord. He working the turning, they turned to Him, and they said "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right-hand, upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself". And then there is the effect that this mercy, if given, would have upon them - "So will not we go back from Thee: quicken us and we will call upon Thy Name. Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved".

Now for a short time, as helped by the Lord - I trust He will help me and help you - let us look at the Mediator, for it is the Mediator who is here before us in the text, the Man at God's right-hand. And then next notice what it is for the hand of God to be on Him. "Let Thy

hand be upon the Man of Thy right-hand". And thirdly, what God did, how God did it, when He made Him strong for Himself. And then, as I said, notice the effect of that. This Man is the Mediator. There is One God - O dreadful truth to sinners - One God, angry, angry with sinners, angry with us as we are in our first head; angry with us as we are in our own selves, so to speak; angry with us because of our sins, our perpetual sins. How many feel this? How many of you feel this? There is one God. Did He ever deal with you as One God, angry with you? Did He ever speak to you as from Sinai, commanding you to do your duty? Did He ever show you that you had not done it, could not do it, and that yet His anger against you, even for your inability, was just anger? O it is very solemn for God to deal with sinners as such, to speak to them as such, and show them that He is against sin. How that He necessarily hates it and must punish it. There is One God. Only the pure in heart can see Him; only the just shall live with Him; only the holy shall see His face with joy. There is One God. Sinner, God make you feel this. You must see Him in some way. There is One God, an awful God. None can know Him except He make Himself known to them. If He does, it is of His good pleasure - for the honour of His Son who was eternally set up in the purposes of God to bear the sins of those loved in Him. Therefore, if God appears to any here, He will first show them their sins; they will really taste here what the reprobate will only know hereafter: that God is a sin-avenging God. To the elect He is so in Christ the Mediator. Blessed be His Name, there is one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. This is the Man of our text, spotless, innocent, and pure, who in due time was to be born of the virgin Mary by the Holy Ghost united to the eternal Person of the Son of God. This is the Mediator. The Holy Spirit will give to the elect divine views of His blessed Person: most importantly Paul wrote to the Galatians: "Now a mediator is not a mediator of one - that is commonly acknowledged by the natural man - but God is one": that is a truth only made known to those for whom Christ is the Way to God: God Himself - the Mercy Seat I spoke of earlier, the ONLY Way whereby God makes known mercy to all who feel their sins. For this purpose the Son of God was made manifest: to make dead, hard, unfeeling sinners who by nature and practice are at enmity to Him, really feel this. Then they cry; they do so because God is mediating for them at the Mercy Seat, for His Name's sake: Christ, His beloved Son, the Man of His right hand. This is the

Mediator. A sight of Him moves the affections, draws out hope. A sight of Him says to him who receives it, do not despair; though you cannot take up your own case, though you cannot speak for yourself, though you cannot plead anything why you should not be condemned, behold the MAN - of whom God says He is My eternally beloved Son in whom I am well pleased as your Priest and Shepherd; yea, says God, My Shepherd - the Man that is my fellow. (Zechariah 13 v 7) It is a sight of sights; it is a power when it is given, a power that forbids despair. Blessed be God He has given it to some of us. "I love the Incarnate Mystery, and there I fix my trust". And cannot some of you say the same? "I love the Incarnate Mystery", the only hope, the only way of escape, the only door of hops set before sinners, whatever the case may be, however bad the case may be. Here, if there is such a case of real trouble, this says, there is an open door. Though there is One God, there is a divine Mediator: God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus. What is intended by this word - "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right-hand?" It means that God was with Him, that God wrought in Him and by Him. You find this to be the meaning of the word - "The hand of the Lord was upon Him". In the Scripture you find it in the case of king Hezekiah, who, when carrying on the work of reformation in Israel, sent posts all through the land of Judah and Israel; men who were mocked and scorned by the unbelieving, but men whose message was received by some - "divers of Asher and Manasseh and Zebulun humbled themselves" 2 Chronicles 30 v 11). And this is written "Also in Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart". It was a powerful working of God in them.

You find that when Ezra was returning with his companions from Babylon to Jerusalem, he stopped, halted at the river Ahava, and there proclaimed a fast, and the hand of the Lord was with them. They afflicted their souls before the Lord. They sought a right way for themselves and their little ones and for their substance and they were heard, and the hand of the Lord was upon them for good. It was His blessed working, His powerful working. When applied to Christ it means this, as I understand it, that the Lord His Father gave to Him the Spirit without measure. "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that

are bound". This was the hand of the Lord. The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him to make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. By this immeasurable abundance - for He was full of grace and truth - the Holy Spirit bore testimony to Christ's obedience to His Father: He had made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men - the Man of God's right hand. Though so humbled - yea, because He was so in obedience to His Father - His Father exclaims, "Behold, My Servant whom I uphold, Mine elect in whom My soul delighteth". The Man Christ Jesus when here always felt this: "He that sent Me is with Me; the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him". So He went to His Father constantly, went up into a mountain, continued there all night in prayer. This was because the hand of the Lord was upon Him. He was in the stead of the Church. He was "that eternal life that was with the Father" and came to be manifested unto the Church, as John wrote in his first epistle. He had the Spirit given to Him who was to inhabit the Church. He had the power and the fear of God, and the faith and the grace that the Church is to receive. It dwelt in Him first of all. I have thought today there is a great beauty in this. And the hand of the Lord was upon Him to bring this to pass. The hand of the Lord was upon Him when He was baptised. His Father said "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." And the Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a Dove and abode upon Him. It was upon Him when He was in the wilderness of temptation and with wild beasts forty days and forty nights. And when He was an hungered, angels were sent to minister to Him. He was strengthened. The hand of the Lord was upon Him in the garden of Gethsemane, when, in the near view of what He was to suffer, when the cup, so to speak was just put into His hand, strength was given Him; He found what He had said in the spirit of prophecy by Isaiah "The Lord My God will help Me". He found it so; He was helped to say, the Man Christ Jesus was helped to say "Not My will, but Thine be done". "The cup which My Father giveth Me, shall I not drink it?" You will follow Him in this good stoop of His, as led by the Spirit, in some affliction. You will follow Him. The hand that was on Him without measure will be on you in measure, and you will say in your measure - "Thy will be done". The hand of the Lord was on Him in the Judgement Hall, when false witnesses, suborned, bore ^{false} testimony against Him, and He was dumb. Yes, He was dumb. We should have spoken; we should speak today if we could, if we

were falsely accused. He held His peace. He was like a sheep led to the slaughter. He held His peace for this great and wondrous reason, that He represented there sinners who, justly charged by the law, ought to be silent; must be silent, having nothing to say against their condemnation. The hand of the Lord was upon Him on the cross. Yes, He was sustained there. He bore all incarnate God could bear; the sin that was imputed to Him, as Isaiah tells us "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all". The sin that was laid on Him He had to atone for. The debts He had undertaken He must discharge. The debt He was to pay, He must fully pay, and there, on that cross, where centered all the wrath of God in the suffering of His Son; there was the "hiding of His power" - hidden from men, because not hidden from the Man of God's right hand. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him that we - if He suffered for us - might see His "brightness as the light" (Habakkuk 3 v 4). From Him proceeded for the Church all the rays of light and love and mercy. There on that cross, God's hand was on His dear Son to punish Him. "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief". A sight of this would melt the rock. The sight of this brings a distant person near. The sight of this loosens all the bonds, brings a sinner to realise that his burden has fallen off, that he is a freed man, Christ's freed man. The hand of the Lord was on Christ in His resurrection. He was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness. The resurrection of Jesus Christ - what a doctrine. The life of a sinner must come through this wondrous act of God raising His Son from the dead. This is just a very brief word concerning this mercy and this mystery. The hand of the Lord was upon the Son of Man.

How did God make Him strong for Himself? It might rightly be said, By giving Him a divine commission, by giving Him the Holy Spirit, by giving Him words which He was to say, and the works which He was to do. But that this might be so, the darling Son of God - His only begotten ^{eternal} Son - first covenanted to make Himself of no reputation. This was the engagement: the covenant of peace between Him and His Father and therefore He made Him strong to declare His covenant. My covenant, He said, is with Thee, and My words which I have put in Thy mouth, and My Spirit that is upon Thee, shall not depart from Thee; shall not depart out of Thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of Thy seed's seed, from henceforth and for ever. O sinner, God

made Christ strong to declare the covenant, strong to bear sin, strong to help sinners, strong to preach good tidings to the meek, to open prison doors, to call forth prisoners. Strong, having borne sin, to bear all troubles. The sin-bearer becomes to His people the burden-bearer. Strong to overcome the devil and destroy His works. Strong to bring His people through their afflictions, through the waters and through the rivers and through the flames, and through the fire. Strong to hold them up in conflict. Strong to bring them honourably to their grave, notwithstanding all their sins. He made Him strong to do these things. He would do them by a Man, Christ Jesus, the Man Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God by miracles and wonders and signs among you. This is the Man by whom God made all things; the old creation and also the new. He works all His wonders of grace, His wonders of providence, His wonders of love, His wonders of mercy. All His deliverances, all His goings, all His sustaining power, all that He will show to His people, all with which He will enrich His people here and hereafter, He made Him strong to accomplish. O wondrous doctrine this. I wish the Lord may open it to us. One observation grows out of this at this point, namely, that since the Father put every grace, every good thing, every atom of mercy and all love, and all purity in His Son, dear people of God He wont look for one atom in you. He will give you everything you need, but He wont look for anything from you. The fruit of what He gives will be manifest, but what He will have you to be He has put in His Son. Does it suit you? Does it fit you? It suits and fits me well. The base sinner taught to know that God will have him holy, and that He put that holiness in His Son, The ignorant worm taught to understand that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in the Son of God, Jesus Christ. The weakling, unable to resist the least sin, led to understand and experience the truth, that the Strength of Israel will prevail. He will not lie, He will not be discouraged, will not fail. Can you, do you feel led, sometimes to cast all your cares on this Strong One? Led to look to Him for guidance and for deliverance. To look to Him for the holiness you pant for? For the righteousness after which you thirst, for the kingdom of God to be in you, which shall be set up and established by this Man whom God made strong for Himself.

In the next place look at the effect. Here is a Church in

desolation. Her waste places are before her; her desolate heritages she looks on. And though not directly mentioned here, it is not an imagination of mine to say that sin had brought her to this - "Hast thou not procured this unto Thyself?" What do you feel sometimes when you go before the Lord? You try to pray, you direct your prayer to Him in the morning. You want the lifting up of your hands to be as the evening sacrifice. But O, the difficulty. Is it not difficult when you remember, when you feel, your sins, your backslidings, your waywardness, your inconsistencies? When you look at your heart and at your conduct, conduct which no man has seen, and therefore is not a fit subject for any man to reprove in you because it is internal, but which God sees, and for which He has reproved you. You look at these things - O what a sight - and then something comes to you and says, you must not pray in this state. Some suggestion takes hold of you - you are not fit to call on God; such a treacherous dealer, such a hypocrite, such a wayward thing, so bent on mischief. How can you pray to this God? Do any of you suffer in this way? Now dear friends, if the Holy Ghost should open to you the mystery, the mercy and the glory of the Man whom God made strong for Himself, the Man of His right-hand, you would feel just as the Church here expresses it - "So will we not go back". Lord, we will not give up; though we are so vile we will not give up praying. We will follow on, we will cleave to Thee, we will make known our requests, we will come daily. We will come in the morning and in the evening. We will not go back. Lord, we have started - if one may so speak - we have commenced with our cases before Thee. We see a Man at Thy right-hand, a Mediator who offered Himself to Thee without spot; receive us in Him. Shine on us in Him, bless us, for His sake. "So will not we go back from Thee". We wont give it up. Faith has a resolution here. Faith is strong in the sight of Christ. As Paul says to Timothy - "My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Every fresh view of Christ will put new strength into your faith, new courage into your confessing spirit, new hope into your depressed heart, and new love into your mind, into your affections. It must be so. A revealed Christ is a Christ that works wonders in the sinner in whom He is revealed. "So will not we go back from Thee". Every particle of every bad case you can persevere with. Every need that you have, everything that you lack, everything that oppresses you, you can bring before God when you see this Man, the Man Christ Jesus. The unspeakable suitableness of Christ here,

the infinite merit of His death - for He ever was and is God - known and felt here, will bring this heavenly courage into your souls, into my soul.

"So will not we go back from Thee". Hold on poor sinner as well as you can. Make mention of Christ and you will prevail. Plead His blood and you will come off well. Speak to the Father of His righteousness, and you wont be sent back empty. Look to Him who is kind as strong, mercy joined with power, and all things must end well. How can God turn a sinner away who comes in the name of the Lord Jesus? How can the Lord Jesus turn away a sinner who comes to Him? Why, He would go against His own word if He turned you away, and the Father would go against His own drawings if He turned you away. Does He draw you by Christ to Christ? What is it for? To disappoint you, to send you empty away, to leave you in your misery, to leave you in your bad condition? No. He says - "I will restore her waste places and her desolate heritages. I will make her wilderness like Eden and her desert as the garden of the Lord." And this is because a poor sinner prays in the Name of Jesus Christ.

We will not go back. Have you got a case - a case that God has begun in you and for you? One concerning which He obliges you to watch and wait? Sit still in prayer, wait in prayer. The Lord will not be in rest until He has finished it. Have you a case? He is in the most wretched condition who has no case for God. He is in a hopeful state who, though now bowed down with misery and bent by sin and tied by temptation, yet has his eye directed to the Lord Jesus, the Man at God's right-hand, the Son of Man whom God made strong for Himself. "So will we not go back from Thee". You will keep to it, you will keep to it as you see Christ. You will hold on here, though you may be driven back by temptation, though you may be discouraged by a sense of sin, though you may feel as if you have waited in vain. Another sight of Christ will give you new courage and help you to say, I will not leave it off. I cannot give it up. I will wait till He is pleased to turn again to me.

"Quicken us and we will call upon Thy Name". But they were calling upon Him. Yes, but they needed new courage every minute. "Quicken us". Give us fresh intimations of mercy, fresh touches of

Thy power and Thy grace. New insight into the infinite depths of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. A new feeling of the exact suitability of the Lord Jesus to us. "Quicken us". Do you feel sometimes fresh moving, fresh uprising in your souls? It is sad to be dead and without them. O but how sweet and good of God to give this new quickening. You will be conscious of one when it comes. Some strange, sweet sensations will come upon your spirits and you will feel, no matter where you are, now I must call on God's Name. It is not a natural effort; it is the effect of Christ's mediation and death opened and manifested to the soul's faith by the Spirit. It is a sweet effect of grace in a sinner's heart. It is worth your close observation dear friends who know what I am speaking about. Make the observation as constantly as you can, as closely as you can. Whenever a new motion in your heart, a fresh quickening comes to you, think, as you may be enabled, who gives it. A good God. Does He give it that it may die in disappointment? Does He draw you to send you empty away? No. Every fresh quickening is a new token for good. "I will meet with Thee on the Mercy Seat", said the Lord, "and there I will commune with thee." See what is in store for you sinner. "So will not we go back from Thee". A good God awaits you, and is waiting to be gracious to you. "There I will meet with you". No other place could be a mercy place. The Mercy Seat is the place for mercy. Mercy is here dispensed. Mercy reigns here, love reigns here, infinite merit reigns here. God is good here and here alone. Out of Christ nothing of this can ever be hinted to a sinner. Here it is not hinted only, it is spoken so that the deaf shall hear. It is revealed so that the blind shall see. It is so applied that all to whom it is applied live. "Thy dead men shall live, together with My dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing ye that dwell in dust". And this may be done again and again in measure before the great resurrection comes. "Quicken us and we will call upon Thy Name". "Turn us again". Lord, you may say, we have turned from Thee. Who here, knowing God, knowing himself, does not say, painfully, shamefully, he has turned away from God. Times without number we have turned away from Him. From His heavenly counsel, from the throne of grace, from the holy Scriptures, from the dear Redeemer, from His wounds, His death; from His sorrows, from His resurrection, from His Mercy Seat we have often turned, and turned to vanity. Now, conscious of this, and guilty too, this Church turns to the Lord in prayer, and says to Him, "Turn us again". Lord do come

again and turn us round. We have got into the wrong direction; now we are the prey of the boar and the wild beast. We are a prey to fear, to bondage, a prey to temptation and the tempter. Come and turn us away from all this. "Turn us again O Lord God of Hosts". He has power to do it by this Man Christ Jesus. He has power to forgive sins, power to raise the dead, power to renew the face of the earth, power to speak peace and comfort. He does speak peace to His people. He has power to do it.

"Cause Thy face to shine". You know what Paul says about this. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ". Cause us to see the Person of Christ, the great Sun of Righteousness, whose wings spread out; wings of light and love heal all who are within the blessed beams and shadow. What a wonder, what a great marvel it is, a wonder of everlasting love and of grace. "Cause Thy face to shine". You will see it when it shines on you. Softly it comes in; as the light makes no noise when entering this chapel, so, quietly unperceived for the moment perhaps, yet instantly perceived, this blessed light shines; it penetrates, it reaches the dark corners of our hearts; it reaches our cases. It is light that speaks but it is light that fructifies; it is light that humbles. "Cause Thy face to shine and we shall be saved". We, who are now in a lost condition, who have lost all fruitfulness and all order and beauty, as this vine had lost its fruitfulness and its order, and the branches were trailed and trampled under foot of boar and beast. Now Lord, we shall be saved from that if Thou wilt come and shine upon us. He restores the soul. The Psalmist found it so. "He restoreth my soul". Some of us need it very often. Some of us may be feeling to need it now, this evening.

"Cause Thy face to shine". Can He do it? Yes. Will He do it? Yes. "I will see you again" is His gracious word of promise, and when He comes we are saved. Not saved eternally only - that is an act of God never to be undone - but saved from our barrenness and darkness and distance from God, and hardness of heart. Saved from the disorderly condition into which we have been brought. Everything out of order in our spirits; like a vine trampled and ravaged by a wild beast, so our hearts are, but we shall be saved. Lord, if Thou wilt

shine everything will come into its proper place and order again. Everything, every past experience will be felt again in sweetness because of something new. Every good thing will be again manifested. The trailing branch will be nailed up, tied to Christ by the Spirit. united to Him by His blood, in the Covenant. But I must leave it here. It is a great and a grand subject. May the Lord open it to us. I have said but little about it, just given two or three hints, but God can open the matter and make it so living and powerful and good to us that we shall say, now He has shined and we are saved. Saved from that bad state into which our sins had brought us.

AMEN.