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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Sunday evening 4 October 1908

PSALM 89 v 19

"..... I have laid help upon one that is
mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the
people"

A greater than David is here, and if our eyes are opened to see Him we shall see that Scripture made good - "It hath pleased the Father that in Him all fullness should dwell", and that the help here spoken of is every way suited to the case that is helped.

In the first place we would notice the case that is to be helped. It is an evil case, it is a case that started in Eden, that came under that awful word of Jehovah - "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die". It is a case of death, not of physical, temporal death merely, nor mainly, though that was involved, but the chief, and greatest part is the death of the soul called: "being dead in trespasses and sins", which does not mean the death of the being, but the death of those qualities that God created us with. Uprightness, light, understanding, freeness, freedom of will, goodness of disposition, complete straightness with God, these died, we lost them and in place of them became possessed of death, alienation from the life of God through ignorance, and by wicked works. Enmity to God took the place of life, distance, rebellion and every kind of corruption we have in the place of all that obedience, loveliness, and uprightness, and ability, and power with which we were so richly endowed by our Maker. Therefore it is a case of curse, for the commandment is this terrible sentence - "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them". It is a case of debt contracted, debt we are unable to pay, liabilities we can never meet, exposedness to God's curse. This is an awful case and it becomes experience by all who are born of the Spirit, and who have a sound law work in their conscience more or less clear, and powerful, and by a sound law work I mean a work that is distinct, and distinguishable in the light of the Spirit. There are

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common convictions which natural men may be the subjects of. A sound law work, it arraigns the sinner, brings him to God's bar, and sets before him his sins, makes him believe that he is a sinner, a sinner, not only by action, but that he does do evil things because they reside, in the root of them, in his nature, that he is born in sin and shapen in iniquity, that he has gone astray speaking lies from his birth, that he is at his best estate both vanity, and a lie, lighter than vanity, and less than nothing. This is a case that every one born again comes into some experience of. You will never want saving till you are lost, never seek a physician till you are sick, never wonder if a surety can be found till you realise your insolvency, and never seek to lay down your arms till you see there is One against whom you have lifted them up who has power to kill the body and after that destroy the soul in hell. Oh it is a very heavy thing to be a sinner in your own sight, as it is in the sight of God. One needs no heavier cross than that, the cross of a sound law work, your debts laid upon you by God's Own word, and His claims enforced by His good Spirit, and, in a degree that you can bear it, the light of His justice shining into your guilty conscience, and the truth and verity, and imperishable nature of His threatening in a broken law. Whenever God deals with men by His Spirit then they deal with Him by confession, and when He charges their sins on them, they confess them, and then they begin to run, to flee from the wrath to come. None so active as a man who knows there is a man-slayer behind him, and who believes that there is a refuge into which, if he can get, there is therein safety. Whether he will reach it he does not know, but he will try. O that is what every living soul feels

Can prayer reverse the stern decree
And save a wretch condemned like me?
It may, at least I'll try

This is the help that Jesus Christ, God's dear Son incarnate became -
- A surety. The God-Man stood for men, men given to Him in an eternal choice by the Father, in an eternal love; and He stood for them as Surety. Dear friends, an atonement that does not atone is of no value to anybody; a Saviour who does not save is no Saviour, and the help that God laid on Christ is this, as expressed by the Spirit through Paul - "For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we

might be made the righteousness of God in Him". That is the real, mighty, sufficient, blessed help that God has laid on His dearly beloved Son. He saw His people, in common with others, ruined in the fall, and then pitied them, and laid help upon One and sent Him to redeem them from that condition, and this He did by coming into their place. O, we have need to thank God for the humanity of Christ. "He took not on Him the nature of angels". If He had done He never could have redeemed men; It was an absolute necessity if one man, one sinful man, was to be redeemed from their sins, that the Lord Jesus, God Almighty, should become a Man and stand in the place of men. "Without shedding of blood is no remission". And this is so solid a rock when brought to a sinner and that sinner laid on it, that God says - "On this Rock will I build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it". Now what does this appear to you to be? O sinner, what is this help to you?

There are two views that people get of it - gracious people. One is their need of it. In the light of their need of it, they see it to be exactly what they need. And the other is the view they get through the powerful application of it to their souls by the Holy Spirit. Let me try by the Lord's help to set before you the greatness of this help in two observes. First in the incarnation of the Son of God. What a blessed way this is to God, that He would have men come to Him in; the way in which the Scriptures declare that they should be able to come to Him. It was needful that He should come down and take their nature. "He took not on Him the nature of angels", but "as the children are partakers of flesh and blood He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage". Have you entered O Christian, O child of God, by faith at any time into the beauty and the glory of the incarnation of the Son of God? It was as needful that a Man should save men, as it was that God Himself also should save them, and that this should be in One Person - "Immanuel God with us". God absolutely considered could not. God, if He had taken the nature of angels, could not save men. But because He would save men therefore He took their nature into union with His divine Person, and thus became Immanuel which by interpretation is "God with us". It behoves every child of God to give thanks for the

incarnation.

A Man there is, a real Man

May we not lose sight of this. O what is His incarnation but His descending into the lower parts of the earth to take that body which His Father prepared for Him? The Lord help us to hold fast the miraculous conception and birth of Christ. "In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law". O listen not if you can help it to all the abominations that will rise in your own hearts against this blessed truth and the contradictions of science falsely so called, and the limitations of corrupted reason, and the boldness of that reason hurling out injections and blasphemies against this most glorious truth, this most necessary doctrine; but may you, may I, be enabled to hold fast that the Holy Ghost did descend upon and overshadow Mary and that thereby she conceived that "holy thing" that the Son of God took up in the fullness of time - that sacred humanity. Who is the One that is here spoken of - "I have exalted One chosen out of the people" - but Jesus Christ? Ah He was one of them in His birth, lowly in His introduction into the ministry; What was He in the crowd but one of them? John, as His forerunner, knew Him not as He stood there on Jordan's bank till the good sign came down from heaven. "I knew Him not" he said. How should he? Jesus was a Jew, Jews were also there crowding on that bank; You would not have known Him if you had been there. None of us would. "I knew Him not". Why? He was a man like the others. The eyes of man could only see man in Him. The externals of His life were not alone such as to proclaim Him Almighty God. "He that sent me to baptise with water, the same said to me: upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit of God descending and remaining on Him, the same is He;" and I saw.." O what a sight - "and I saw" My dear friends, of yourselves you could never say a greater, a more wonderful, a more blessed word than that of Jesus Christ - "I saw"; I saw the Lamb of God, I saw by faith in that lowly Man the Son of God, and that Man was, and that Man is the Son of God. This is the One exalted, this is the mighty One on whom help is laid. This is the true Almighty God who came into their place, into the very death, and sin, and condemnation of His children; for God His Father "made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin". Less than this would leave us in our death and our condemnation. Nothing else will stop us from going into hell,

nothing else can save us from just condemnation. My beloved friends, who laid down His life? Almighty God did. Great love was this. "We ought to love one another" says John. Why? Because God loved us and laid down His life for us. "Feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His Own blood". That spotless humanity joined to the Person of God, the second Person in the Trinity, constitutes the mighty One on whom the help of substitutionary work, help of atoning work, help of redeeming work, help of justifying work God was pleased to lay. Blessed are the eyes that see Him, blessed the ears that hear His voice, blessed is the soul that trusts in Him, blessed is the sinner that casts himself on Christ, blessed is the ruined creature that comes to Christ, for He says - "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out". My friends this becomes an experience. Ah it is a great thing to be a real sinner, and it is a great thing to be a real saint. What a blessed thing that God called heathens. Pagans, Romans, worshippers of Diana of the Ephesians, He turned into saints. Noble Bereans who were guilty of idolatry, He made to believe, He opened their eyes to see the truth, and they brought into the market place their books of great value and burnt them. O what a real blessing it is to be made a saint. But my friends, God who made the world, alone is sufficient for this business. Does anyone say he is outside this? Let me ask you this question - What does God make saints out of? He makes them out of sinners. As He made Adam of the dust of the ground, He makes godly men out of ungodly men, He makes believers out of unbelievers. Ah, but what is it to be a saint? One may say, in his exercises about it, and in his mistakes about sanctification - O it must be something that I do not know anything of; it must be that he is blessed with holy feelings, and a holy walk, and that he is straight according to God's word, and will, and everything else. My friends, a saint is a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, a man who believes in Him in those respects in which his needs stand up before him which God has impressed on his spirit; he believes in Him in respect of His great substitution, in respect of His blood-shedding, in respect of His death, in respect of His resurrection, in respect of His ascension into heaven, and His intercession there; and his very soul is this way: O that I might have an interest in all that Christ is, and all that He did. And what has this man present with him when he believes? He has present with him his own case. If you went to Him and talked to Him about

believing in Him, and knew nothing of your own case, you would only draw near with your lips. If you go to Christ (or think you go) without any of the sins of nature on you, you do not go at all. He goes, who goes rightly, with his case. As when a beggar seeks alms, his poverty is with him; as when a sick person seeks the doctor, his sickness is with him; as when a hungry creature goes to his table, his hunger is with him; so if ever you go to the Lord, your case will be with you. And that is a thing that will stumble a man. It stumbles everybody that is brought by the Holy Spirit, yet through grace the stumblingblock is taken away and the sinner sees that Jesus Christ came to save that which was lost. Blessed be God, though I am always stumbling, I am brought to reach this point -

For sinners Lord Thou cam'st to bleed
And I'm a sinner vile indeed
Lord I believe Thy grace is free
O magnify that grace in me

Bless God for a Man in heaven. There are "spirits of just men made perfect" there, but there is only one real complete Man there, and that is the Man Christ Jesus. There will be men without number one day, body and soul, but there is one Man there now - the "the last Adam", "the second Adam", "the Lord from heaven", He is there now. O sinner, did you ever see Him? Did you ever get a sight of Him? A sight of His conspicuous blood, of His precious atonement, there? God has laid help on Him. What a mercy. And now the experience of it is this - when He puts away your sin, when you get near to Him, when there is no distance, no distance of sin, no distance of condemnation between you and the Lord; when you are a happy, pardoned child, when He says - "Thy sins are forgiven thee", when He sheds abroad His love in the heart, when He takes away condemnation, and the sense of it, when He removes the sense of His wrath from the conscience, that is the sweet experience of the help. Christ is the help of sinners, and sinners know it. He visits sinners still, and they know it sometimes. He comes into their cases.

Now let me speak of one or two particular points in experience, wherein the help of Christ is known. For instance, first, He has the fullness of the Spirit. O what a mercy, He has the fullness of the

Spirit. We are much more, at least some of us, in experience, like a sieve than a solid, good vessel, and yet you know if the sieve is held in the water it is full. Well, He has the fullness of the Spirit, and if you are like a sieve that lets everything go through it, still there is a supply of grace in Christ; there is a real fullness. And this powerful help of Christ is known in the gift of the Spirit in a measure; and the gift of the Spirit is that He may be in the soul as the Spirit of faith; faith is that great gift, that cardinal grace, that from the first reception of divine life to the last breath a man draws in this world, is necessary to him. "Without faith it is impossible to please God". With faith you would honour Him, when it is in exercise. With faith you will always do the thing that pleases Him, for what is the thing that pleases the Father? It is to see a sinner looking to Christ, going to Christ, hanging upon Christ, waiting for His coming; confessing sin, and yet confessing also that the blood of Christ has infinitely more worth and efficacy to save than sin has power to condemn. Faith in the bleeding Lamb pleases God. Faith exercised on Christ pleases God. And friends, you could not have faith, and not please God, for true faith whenever it is in exercise, runs after Christ. O, says your guilty conscience, then you are wrong; says faith "Christ can do the turn that I need". Faith goes out to Him, this is its constant exercise under the Spirit's moving, and power, He gives all the motion. Then believer, as the being of faith was not by thine own hand, so neither are its actings dependent upon thy hand, but upon the working of the Eternal Spirit. One of the means that the Holy Spirit uses to draw faith into exercise is frequently by - if I may use a word that looks very feeble, but which is not feeble really - by suggesting thoughts of Christ, by giving meditations upon Christ, by giving glimpses of Him. Do not therefore turn away from any suggestions that come into your minds about Christ as if they are nothing, because they are not as much as you want. O, if they really flow in, or if they fall like a gentle shower, if they come and seem no more than the moisture that has been recently saturating our air - it was not seen to fall, but there it was, present in the air - O if thoughts come like that into your mind, so that you could not say how they came till you found them there, do not put them away, as if there were no value at all in them. If they give you to remember, - seeing how suitable He is - to turn again to His work; if they show you the necessity of Him, that you

have an evil case but cannot take it up; if they give you to see that though you be dumb through your guilt, He opens His mouth for them, that Jesus Christ is the righteous Advocate with the Father; then such thoughts are thoughts that nourish faith, and they are, as much the work of the Spirit as is the fullest assurance that a sinner can get. The difference is not in the kind of operation, but in the measure of power. And Christ, let me repeat it, has the fullness of the Spirit.

Then too, He is able to help us in prayer. for He has the Spirit of grace and supplications to pour out upon people. There is everything in us to hinder prayer - pride, unbelief, hardness of heart, worldliness of mind, distraction of circumstances, and attraction of business and everything else; these are all so many hindrances to prayer, and probably some of you are painfully conscious of them working in your own minds. There is the family, you must look after it; here is the business, you must look after that, and are anxious about it, and various other circumstances you must look after. These things can crowd in, and instead of being a means of helping us to pray, through our vile nature, are a means to keep us from prayer. My friends, Christ has enough for this business, He has enough grace to subdue these things, and enough of the Spirit to be in us the Spirit of grace and supplications. I will pour Him upon these people, I will lead them with supplications and weeping, putting bit and bridle in their mouths, not to trouble them, but to lead them gently, as a horse is led through the wilderness. He leads them so that they should not stumble, by prayer and supplication. Though you are infested by devils, surrounded by troubles, if you cannot take a step, and not perceive a dangerous snare, yet with the Spirit of grace and supplications in your souls, you cannot err. If you should go straight to God - "Lord help me, I am oppressed, undertake for me" is that man stumbling? No, he thinks he is perhaps, but he is not, for he is being led through the wilderness of his distresses, necessities, and griefs, and led safely by the Spirit as a horse is led by its owner. O what a graciousness there is in this. And this is help, real help. Perhaps not as the soul wants to feel it, but it is real help.

He has also this namely, His blessed Word, to help the heaviest

hours of His people - He sent out His word, O what a word. Now the word is called a doctrine. "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, My speech shall distil as the dew". And Christ says - "My sheep hear My voice" "They know not the voice of strangers". And this voice of God's doctrine of love, and salvation, and justification, dropping upon the soul from time to time, is always, as it comes, like a refreshing rain upon the thirsty earth. Drought is trouble, rain is salvation. Drought, O what a case you come into by it. Rain, what fruit comes from it. And this is what the Lord graciously gives; He gives it in a promise, and He gives it out so as that it becomes an experience. "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, and My speech shall distil as the dew" When you get it, you will know something about it; just as while you are in hardness of heart you know that, so when you get that softening, mollifying, fructifying cheer of salvation into your soul, you will know then, you will know something has been done. Ah the devil would make an infidel of every child of God if he could; he tries hard to do it, but the Lord knows how to make believers. We have all got the root of Socinianism; the root of Socinianism is this, that a man says he will not believe anything he cannot understand. Yet this Object of faith will kill it from time to time in the saints. What kills it? Why, the word of life from His blessed lips. The word of grace, the word of invitation - "Come unto Me". A glimpse of the Saviour, a glimpse of this precious fountain; such things from God kill the dreadful spirit. And this is the help God laid on Him - "I have given Thee", He said, "to be a Governor to the people, for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the ends of the earth." Honours rest on Him for making us believers and keeping us believers, as some of us can say. I think alas of myself (the Lord knows I say, "alas", I do not boast) that if anyone here should say he is troubled by infidelity, I have a line to reach that person, I can go as far as the worst, and if you should say, any of you, you have got an Ishmael, I say I know him too well, alas. But this is the point; not all, and only, what evil we have got, but does the Lord help us, does He send help from the Sanctuary, do we get revivings, does He return in mercies to us, does He cause His doctrine of truth and salvation to drop upon our hearts as rain upon the earth? This is the help. Sometimes it is the help of a distinct word spoken distinctly, and how kind Christ is in this. "Be ye not afraid" Why? What was the reason they were not to be afraid. It was Himself, He was

present - "Lo, I am with you alway even to the end of the world". Ah, beloved friends, that is all we need. I believe you need nothing else. Let this God-Man come down from heaven in some shining of His Spirit, in some visit of His lovely face, or some word of His effectual mercy, of His great grace, and righteousness, and instantly you will find all the help you need in your heart; you will find it as Hart expresses it - Let the Christian descend into his heart and find His Saviour there, and what else can he need when he finds that? Let him find His Saviour there.

And then there is all necessary help in respect of providence too. We are exercised, of course, and necessarily as to the providential dealings of God, and we need help, and the Lord has laid that help upon Him. "I have laid upon One that is mighty" Bless God, there is a particular providence over the saints; they are things as much in Christ's hand as their souls are. He is over them in the world to protect them, provide for them, defend and cover them in the day of battle, guide them, open the windows of heaven and send streams of supply to them. All this is laid on Him. The reward of His humiliation was His exaltation, and in heaven, when a difficulty appeared to John - a book in the hands of Almighty God, and no angels, and no creature could there be found worthy to take it out of His hands and to loose the seals and to look therein - then the angel said, "Fear not, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah hath prevailed to loose the seals thereof", and this is the blessed One who has got all providential help laid on Himself for His poor people. Therefore, O believing soul, you need not be anxious to run to a dozen friends, and put your case before them; if you can gain the ear of Christ you have got all you need, and if it be needful that some external help - the help of some creature - should intervene, He knows where to find that help for you. Blessed be God for an exalted Christ. "I have laid help upon One that is mighty", and His people are to come to Him for that help; therefore He kindly invites them to come to Him, saying - "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest". "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need". Ah friends, there is an eye to guide, there is a hand to support - "I will guide thee with Mine eye" "I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness" Well, if we could not write a "Bank of Faith", any of

