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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
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Hebrews 10 v 14

"For by one offering He hath perfected for ever
them that are sanctified"

The Holy Ghost, in this important and beautiful chapter, tells us, in the first place, what the law was - an imperfect shadow of good things to come; not the very image; did not exactly express by type what good things God had promised before the world began, and first promised in Eden, after the fall. It had a shadow of good things to come but not the very image of the things, for this reason, that a finite, imperfect offering could not express an infinite goodness. What it could not do, we are told. It could not make perfect the sinners who obeyed God in offering continually the commanded offerings year by year. When they were obedient they took the offerings as commanded and directed, but were never made perfect, never had rest in their consciences, never found satisfaction in their consciences by the ordained sacrifices. Forests, thousands of rivers of oil, the fruit of the body, could never satisfy for the soul that sinned. This has a very kindly look for sinners who are under a sense of sin and a sense of what is needed to satisfy God. Never forget this, that in the first place, with respect to salvation, God must be honoured, must be satisfied. Every perfection of Deity had a claim and unless each claim had been absolutely contained in the sacrifice that was typified, but not precisely set forth, there could have been no salvation. I pray the Lord that each child of His here, and everywhere, might be brought to this grand thing, to know and reverence and love the character of God. His Being is the reason, the formal reason of worship. And, seeing that that character has been defamed and is defamed in and by our hearts, when we are convinced of the greatness and the righteousness and the glory of that character, then, says conscience, there is no rest for you until that character is fully satisfied. Now the law could not do that; it could never take away sin. Therefore it could never make the comer, who brought the sacrifices, perfect as pertaining to the conscience. Mind

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conscience, do not browbeat conscience. Do not set up anything that would at all reduce the authority of conscience in this matter. There was a perpetual remembrance made of sin by the perpetual repetition of those insufficient sacrifices and so God had no pleasure in them. He had pleasure in the obedience of the people so long as they brought to Him the sacrifice which He commanded, but the satisfaction, the pleasure, which He never had in those ordained offerings was that His justice and His honour and the removal of sin and the happiness of the sinner, never could be met by those sacrifices, and this is what is intended when it is said He had no pleasure in those sacrifices. To disobey Him, as did His own nation, with regard to those sacrifices, was their sin, and they could not see to the end of that which was to be abolished. They had no faith in their looking for the promised Messiah. But when it pleased God to say He had no pleasure in them, at the appointed time then His Son, eternal Son, and eternally chosen to be incarnate, said - Lo I come, I come. The fire on the altar shall lay hold of Me. It shall come from heaven and lay hold of Me. I come. In the volume of the Book, beginning at Genesis where the seed of the woman was promised, down throughout the whole of the Old Testament, these great promises in the volume written of Him had in Him, and by Him, their fulfilment. When He said this He took away the first, the covenant which the people to whom, and with whom, it was made, broke. He took it away as to all its form and its authority. He took that away and He established the second, the Covenant of Grace that does not impose sacrifices on the people with whom and for whom it was made; does not impose endless conditions on them. He established this by His death and, as in this chapter it is said, the Holy Ghost is a witness to this. And after the Lord had done this, He sat down on the right hand of God in an important, official sense. The priests under the old dispensation never sat down; they were always repeating their sacrifices. The morning lamb and the evening lamb, the meat offerings, the drink offerings, the thank offerings, and the annual atonement left them nothing at all of rest. They never sat down as being satisfied. Jesus, when He had offered one offering sat down for ever. Sat down, finished His work, had infinite contentment. Nothing more to do, He sat down, looked round the world to the end of time and saw a world of enemies but expected them, and is still expecting them all to be His footstool.

And then the important word which I have ventured to read, for it is indeed an amazing thing for a man, a poor man, to attempt to treat of infinite things. The important word is this "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified". We have first of all the Offerer, the Person offering. Who is sufficient to name His Name? "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" is the Word of His Father respecting Him and to Him. He took not on Himself this honour; it was laid on Him; His Father laid this honour on Him. Aaron did not intrude himself into the office of the priesthood, but God called him to it. So the Lord Jesus was called to this great office. Aaron was made capable, not in his own person, but capable by the divine call of him and the dress that he was to wear and the sacrifice he was to offer, capable of fulfilling that so important office. Jesus answers to this. A body was prepared for Him. This tells us of the blessed conception and birth of the Lord Jesus. The virgin birth is an integral part of the salvation of the church. He had no sin; He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. He was entirely set apart for this, His great office, by a divine call. Hold this fast my friends. God said to Him "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec". Not after the order of Aaron; the order of Aaron was beautiful, but it had its end and it came to an end in itself. It died when Christ came. This Person, this blessed Lord Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, the holy son of the virgin Mary, constituted One Person. And the witness His Father bore of Him at His baptism you all remember. "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased". Ah if we had the smallest possible pleasure in our hearts in Jesus Christ - the nature and the Object of it would answer to the Father's infinite pleasure - what favoured people we should be. If we, looking at the Man Christ Jesus - unknown to His nation, undesired of His nation, rejected by His nation, hated, despised and crucified - on looking on Him if we could but say, there is our pleasure, there is our delight, there our only trust, what honoured people we should be and that pleasure would cast other pleasures out. That kingdom of Christ, in which this pleasure would indeed preside, would stamp and grind to powder all the kingdom of sin in us. This is the Man, this is the Priest; Jesus Christ set forth, a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. There are two words I would add to this, first that in His office Christ was infinitely well pleasing to His Father and this was necessary. A

Mediator must be acceptable to both parties between whom He is to mediate and the Priest is a Mediator. O how acceptable is Jesus Christ to His Father. Think of it; when men said He had a devil and was mad, when they accused Him of being a friend of publicans and sinners, when they said "Away with Him, away with Him; crucify Him, crucify Him", then the heart of His Father was wholly to Him, delighting in Him. He was acceptable in His Person being qualified for the office in which He was then standing and performing the duties of it. And the second word is this, this Priest must be, will be, acceptable to every person for whom He is a Priest. Sooner or later, more or less distinctly, each child of God comes to this, that he delights in the Lord. "Delight thyself also in the Lord", in His Person, in His offices, in His work. Delight thyself in Him. Can we stand this test? Can you, could you now, if alone in your rooms and the question were put to you, do you delight in Jesus Christ, as to His Person and His call to the Priesthood, and His work in the Priesthood and the perfection of His work as a Priest, can you say to God that you delight in Him?

We have, in the next place, the offering. Three things are required in the Priest with respect to his Priesthood and his work as a Priest. There must be first of all an altar. Secondly there must be a sacrifice. Thirdly there must be the Priest to offer. It was not without significance, I think, that the Lord said the altar must be made of earth and no tool was to be upon it, because this Priest was not by man. Himself is the altar; He is the altar. "We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle". This is Jesus Christ. When you approach God by faith sinner you come to this altar. We have it. O, but says one, I do not know, I am not certain at all, that I have an interest in Him. That is not the question for the moment. 'Tis a vital question but for the moment this is it. We have an altar and the man who would fain approach God, who does approach Him by faith, goes with his sins and his imperfections, his failings, his fallings, his hardness, his unbelief, and everything that would disqualify him for the presence of God, that man, when he approaches God, does so by coming to this altar. So my dear friends, see Him, that altar made by the Father in His sacred Person. And then the offering, the offering. Himself the sacrifice. "I lay down My life for the sheep". "He offered Himself without spot to God", His Person,

His will, His affections, His obedience, His perfect obedience to the law, His obedience to death, His voluntary death; laying down, according to the divine commandment His life. This is the offering. You must have faith to believe it, that that holy Person, the Lord Jesus, was the sacrifice. Connected with this was the great, the awful truth, that fire descended from heaven to lay hold of this sacrifice, typified by the fire that came down from heaven when the altar was first set up and the sacrifice. That fire was never to go out till it went out in an infinite satisfaction. It is not out now in a sense, but it will never burn one for whom the Lord Jesus offered Himself without spot to God. And what that was we are told in the 53 chapter of Isaiah - "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him". "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed." Justice came to Him and said, as it were, Thou now art representing sinners, pay me what they owe. Thou art representing dead people, give Thy life for them. Thou art to be a window through which shall shine illustriously, gloriously, and justly, the love of God. Love panted, so to put it, for a vent, and got it by this Priest and His offering. Every perfection of Deity, all that the law had discovered, and more than the law discovered, the love of God, the grace of God, the covenant of grace, made and ordered in all things and sure, these all of them required the death of the Surety. So God, as it were, came and poured fire on the cross, on Him who was hanged there by wicked hands. Then the Priest and what He did. We are told He offered Himself. Blemishless bullocks, endless in number, were offered under the old dispensation but they could not take away sin. Now this Priest offered Himself and He made an end of sin, brought in an everlasting righteousness. This is the offering. By one offering, never to be repeated; one offering. Acceptable, accepted, sufficient, gloriously sufficient, was this one offering. And dear friends, whether you like it, or not, whether you believe it, or not, whether it is acceptable to your hearts, or not, this is the fact that if you are going to heaven you will go this way. You will be born again and you will go to heaven this way; no other way. It is written, there is a new and living way, and this is it, the Person of Jesus, the rent veil of His flesh, the efficacy of His blood, His Priesthood in the house of God; this is the way. Are you interested in it in your minds and have you a panting in your souls for this?

Happy people if it is so. Now what did this offering effect? What did it accomplish? We have here the great truth - perfected for ever these people. A perfect Saviour, perfectly saving, perfecting them, meeting on their behalf, and for their sakes, everything required of them by God. Everything that God's nature demanded, everything that God's law demanded, everything that divine holiness, divine justice, divine truth, everything that could bear the gaze of omniscience, that could bear the presence of omnipresence, everything comes in this way. "Perfected for ever". Now, poor legalist, what have you to say to this? Poor, distracted child of God, what have you to say to this? O I would like, I would very, very much like, to have a broken heart, and if ever you get it this is how it will come to you. Not a tear, not a prayer, not a good wish, not a holy desire, not a perseverance in any good thing for five minutes will ever be accepted of God from you except it be through this one offering. Perfection lies in the atonement, not in the sinner's conscience. In the first place the perfection is in the atonement. I wish I knew how properly to emphasise this and press it on your notice for it is of infinite worth. It paves heaven with the pavement of gold. It opens living fountains of water of which we read they shall be refreshing always to these people. It is the new way to the Father, to His heart, to His love, to His mercy. The way to justification; a conscience satisfied, and to holiness, the heart being purified. "Jesus, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate". I believe every child of God wants to be perfect. Some of you could say, that is quite true. Then you stumble because you are imperfect; you think you cannot be a Christian. What a mistake. A pharisee goes home condemned and the publican goes home justified. My brethren, the perfection is, if I may express it so, on the cross and from that wondrous place it must flow into your hearts. Perfection must be judged. Who shall judge it? Who shall say what is perfection? You wont set up yourselves will you? No man will ever be content for ten minutes, whose conscience is tender, in setting himself up as a judge of perfection. You can judge yourselves of imperfection, imperfect desires, imperfect prayers, imperfect readings of the Scripture, imperfect hearings of the ministry, imperfect preaching, of everything imperfect. I am glad the gospel does not set this before me that before I can come into the pulpit there must be some sort of perfection in me. Who is to judge of what

is perfection? God, God. Then you say, "If Thou Lord shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord who shall stand?" Then you say, I cannot stand; nor will you stand until you get the Psalmist's standing. What was his standing? "With the Lord there is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption." You will stand there if you are brought to it. God is the judge of perfection. He is very merciful and when He sees His fear in a sinner's heart, He takes pleasure in that sinner. But when He looks on a sinner as being fitted for heaven, then He looks on His Son and teaches the people of His love to pray thus - "Behold O God our Shield and look upon the face of Thine anointed". Could you go to God this evening with your day's life and say, now Lord I am pleased with it; art Thou? No. But if you can say, by faith, "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself", then you can add - "So will not we go back from Thee. Quicken us and we will call upon Thy Name". Perseverance in prayer, hanging about God, panting for His presence, must all be given through the perfect atonement of the Lord Jesus. If we half believed this we should be far better Christians than we are. Of course we believe it, but O how little effect has that belief upon our spirits. There is an immortality in perfection. "Perfected for ever". Sin brought mortality; grace brings to light life and immortality through the death of the Lord Jesus. "Perfected for ever". Well then you may see that this will carry you beyond time. The full stop will very soon be put to our days, an end is coming, but no end to this perfection. Are you looking for a good end, a blessed death. The reason for that, if it be a good expectation in you, is "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified". Have you a hope of being welcomed into heaven? The reason of that, if it be a good hope, is "perfected for ever them that are sanctified". Do you sometimes believe you will be brought honourably to your grave? The reason of that belief, if it be a good belief, is that "He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified". And what does this mean? No sin shall conquer the saint. No devil shall deceive and destroy the church of God. Time shall not affect her hope. Difficulties, afflictions, sorrows, changes, these all are made subordinate and useful to the saints, and not one of them shall really hinder or injure. Sanctification is, in the Scripture, ascribed to each Person distinctly in the Trinity. Sanctified by God the Father means set apart in the eternal election of the Church in Jesus Christ.

No respect to goodness in the creature, no respect to badness done by the creature. Just God eternally taking a lump of clay, coarse or fine, as men might speak, and saying this is a vessel of mercy. That is sanctification by God the Father. Sanctification is ascribed to the Lord Jesus. "Jesus that He might sanctify the people with His own blood suffered without the gate". He sanctified, consecrated, and set Himself apart - and His Father did it also with respect to Him - for His people. For their sakes I sanctify Myself. I give Myself wholly for them and to them and I give My life for them. And sanctification is ascribed to the Holy Ghost. The sanctification of the Spirit is distinctly taught in God's Word. Some of you may be sometimes afraid to look at the word "sanctification" because you are so far from it, so unlike a saint, so entirely different in your judgment from what a saint should be and is. But now look at it. You might well be ashamed. If God had said, now you must manage this matter, you must crucify everything, you must manage it; O who here would dare look for getting through, and being honourably laid in the grave? But since God has taken the business into His own hand and said I have sanctified these people in My eternal and internal act of election, electing them to be My people; and since His Son said, I have taken this business in My hand, and I will take all their sins away from them; I wont leave one behind to attach to them; I will cast all their sins behind My back and remember them no more; and since the Holy Ghost has taken it up and said, I will give them a new heart and a right spirit; I will join them to the Son of God; they shall partake of the fatness of that good root; they shall have the virtue of the vine; they shall be all holy; the Spirit shall call them with a holy calling; then I say, since the Trinity has got this business, may we be enabled to hope in God, and cast ourselves on Him to work in us all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power. Well, my friends, this one offering is the only thing I have got to preach to you. The Lord Jesus, the Priest, the sacrifice and the altar, doing everything necessary for the removal of sin and the perfecting of a person so as that person shall be fit for heaven. Do you think you are going there? No unregenerate person will ever get a place there. An unregenerate person would find heaven a hell if he could get there for one minute. Nothing would torment an unregenerate person more than the holy presence of God and yet some of us, sinners though we be, have a hope in our souls that the holy

presence of God would be our joy. What a mercy it is to have an interest in the Lord Jesus and to know Him. This is life eternal to know this Priest and the Father who called Him to be a Priest; know the virtue of His sacrifice, and the healing. One word and I close. Conscience quickened and instructed by the Holy Ghost is a very clamorous faculty in a child of God, always clamouring for something, wanting satisfaction. Go into yourself and you wont get it. It will never be there until the blood of the everlasting covenant is brought to you. The Spirit's work is connected with this atonement. "Whereof" says the Apostle in this chapter "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us", in that He saith a new covenant, a new covenant I will make and it is this. I will forgive their sins and remember their iniquities no more. That is the thing to look for. Religion? What is it without divine life? Peace, what is it without the blood of Christ? Hope, what is it if it is not built here? Love, what is it if this does not live and draw it out? All the graces we desire and are so beautiful and sweet and acceptable flow from this. God give us grace to believe this and give me grace to preach it to you and insist on it continually. Every grace and every favour we draw through Jesus' blood.

AMEN.