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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday morning 19 September 1920

HEBREWS 10 v 35

Cast not away therefore your confidence
which hath great recompense of reward

Having laid down by divine inspiration in the preceding parts of this Epistle the great doctrine that runs throughout his teaching, namely, the Priesthood of Christ and His vicarious sacrifice, now the Apostle begins with exhortations and warnings. This is according to God's general plan in the scripture. In the New Testament particularly doctrine is laid down, a foundation. God always lays a foundation before He begins to build, and the foundation in this wonderful Epistle is the Priesthood of Christ. The offerings of all under the law never made any conscience perfect; there was always on the conscience that was at all exercised a remembrance of sin, and the repetition of the sacrifices made also a remembrance of sin every year. But when the illustrious sacrifice of Christ was offered, then sin, the sin of all for whom He made His vicarious offering, was put away and there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, and inasmuch as the priests who offered these continually repeated sacrifices were not suffered to continue by reason of death, there were many priests under that dispensation. But under the dispensation of the gospel it is different. Christ realised in His own person that Priesthood that was typified and was in Himself the Priest who was set forth by the many priests. And these two points, if you read this Epistle with any care and spiritual sight, you must perceive are the main points of doctrine in this Epistle. The Priest is Christ, the priestly office is Christ's. God made Him a Priest after the order of Melchisedec, and He stands in that office today, and the offering of Himself was sufficient and did really and for ever and ever put away the sin of the people of God, that sin which was imputed to Him, as Isaiah speaks - "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all". And if the iniquity of all men had been laid on this, our Great High Priest,

surely no person could sink into perdition under the condemnation of sin, for how could God bring back and lay on men the sin that had been imputed to Christ and punish men after Christ had been punished for their sin. This then is the foundation on which the Lord inspired the Apostle Paul to build and lay exhortations, admonitions, warnings with relation to the people of God and their state and their position in life.

In this chapter the Apostle says "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an High Priest over the House of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." How suitable to people who are alive to sin is such an exhortation as this. What relief can any conscience get apart from the blood of Christ? What relief can any troubled heart receive apart from praying, approaching the Almighty, through the atonement of Christ? This then is a most suitable word for the Lord's people. Draw near; there is a way opened; it is open; it is to remain open for ever and ever, for there is no night where that Blessed One is. "Let us then" says Paul "draw near"; come to God and ask Him for the mercies we need. Seek guidance from Him; support in Him; pardon by His blood and grace to make us strong and to hold fast our profession; to persevere in the way to heaven. Come poor sinner with your burden and sin and grief, come. The Apostle says "Let us draw near" God puts no bar in the way of praying sinners. He has opened a new and a living way, and though a guilty heart, a legal mind, a tempting devil, a sense of evil will be hindrances, they are not bars to keep us away from the throne of grace. Ho ye despairing sinners come and look to the Lord and hope in His

mercy. "Blessed are all they that wait for Him." If you search the scriptures you wont find one instance in which a real prayer was rejected, but you will find many, many, many encouraging instances in which prayer offered was answered, answered in peace. O then the Apostle thus exhorts God's people - "Let us draw near", whatever the case is, however bad, however seemingly hopeless, let us draw near through the blood of Christ by that new and living way which He hath consecrated for us.

Then he exhorts us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. There are two things which belong to, and are often the very beginning of, a backsliding state. And let me name them to you, for they are both to be inferred in this exhortation. The first is the restraining of prayer. If you restrain secret prayer; if your heart grows hard respecting the throne of grace, then there has commenced in you a backsliding, and sin has gained some ascendancy which God will notice, and when He brings you back He will make you notice it too. The second is a consequence of the first namely a disregarding of those means which God has put within the reach of His people for the most part. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together. Coming together for public worship; reading the Scriptures; singing to ourselves in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody in our hearts to the Lord, and hearing His word, are means which God Himself has appointed, and it is a solemn and, with respect to experience and peace, a dangerous thing to fall into a neglect of the means that God has put within our reach, and I say this to you, for we all need warning. And, in this evil day, when profanity on the Lord's day is so terribly prevalent, and when through abounding iniquity the love of many waxes cold, I would warn you, at least draw your careful and prayerful attention to this Scripture - "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is". May we be enabled to take heed to God's Word. Remember what the Apostle Paul writes to the Galatians - "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap". If we sow to the flesh, we shall of the flesh reap corruption. If we sow to the Spirit we shall of the Spirit

reap life everlasting. What you sow in the Spring you will reap in the Autumn. The end of the Summer comes and there is a reaping. What you sow in religion you will reap. If you sow to idleness of hands and fulness of bread; if you say, well we go and there is nothing, and we go and there is nothing, and therefore we will stop going, at least only partially, then mind there will come a reaping. God is not mocked. The mercy is to be enabled to wait on the Lord midst discouragements, in the face of things which tempt and entice us, still to wait on the Lord. May the Lord give us mercy to attend to this, and also he says - "exhorting one another and so much the more as ye see the day approaching". Exhorting, helping, comforting, speaking of the things of God one to another. "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins", and a mere professor and a child of God may sadly resemble one another in the beginning of sin. They wont resemble one another in the issue, for the child of God will be chastened and brought back, but the other will go on and on until he sins wilfully, with his eyes open to the truth he has professed, but his heart hardened against it. O beware of the beginning of a bad state; beware of the beginning of a backsliding condition of mind. You do not know the issue, but do, God help you, do remember that to all sowing there comes a reaping, and if you sow to the flesh, you will of the flesh reap corruption in some form. Brethren, exhort one another; says the Apostle, exhorting one another. All the exhortation is not to be confined to the pulpit, and exhortations may be comforting. If you see one in trouble, comfort him to the best of your ability, and God may help you to do it. If you see one, as you judge, in a poor state, then you may be enabled, by the grace of the Spirit, to go and set before him that condition you judge him to be in. "Exhort one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching" "There is no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries, and the adversaries may have been professors. Do you ever fear being a cast away? Do you ever wonder how the end will be? I often do. In these latter days of my life, I look at that Scripture sometimes, with solemn

feeling lest, after having preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses and a professor may come to despise the gospel. Perhaps you have seen some such professor. One of the most awful sights you can see is a professor who has cast off all fear. "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who has trodden under foot the Son of God and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace, for we know Him that hath said vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense saith the Lord." And again, "The Lord shall judge His people". "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" in such a condition; a fearful thing. Ah, the way to heaven is a difficult way, and flesh and blood can bear but little trouble, and will soon be offended with the cross. The offence of the cross has not ceased, but lest these people should instantly begin to say - well what an evil case we are in - the Apostle says "But call to remembrance the former days" I have set before you terrible characters with a terrible end, but do you, to whom I write this Epistle, call to remembrance the former days, in which ye were illuminated and saw God, and saw yourself; saw holiness divine and your own pollution; saw God's justice and your own guilt; call these days to mind, when God was great to you, when sin was real to you, when you were in terror knowing what Paul speaks of - the terror of the Lord. Call to mind also the time when you were illuminated in the knowledge of Jesus Christ; when He became your High Priest and His sacrifice your hope and your life. Call to mind those days in which you got a sight of the throne of grace - O glorious throne; of Him that sat on it - O wondrous Mediator. Call those days to mind when hope sprang up in your spirit; when love warmed your heart; when the voice of the turtle dove was heard in your land, when you felt that the Lord would be gracious, yea that He was gracious; when you embraced a revealed Christ; when the peace of God which passeth all understanding came into your heart and kept your heart and mind by Jesus Christ. Call those days to remembrance as Moses said to Israel - "Thou shalt remember all the way the Lord thy God hath led thee." Now here says Paul, look back, go

to that beginning when light came and you saw things, saw light in God's light, saw yourselves perishing sinners, and saw the Rock which you embraced, Jesus Christ; saw you were out of the way and saw Him to be the way and walked therein by faith. Call all that to remembrance. O what a mercy it is to have something to look back upon. Come my dear friends and look to this point. Call these days back when you became concerned and God was very great to you and when Jesus Christ became all and in all to you, and when hope cast herself in and anchored into that which is within the veil, and you found some sweetness in the gospel, some sweetness in Jesus Christ and saw some glory in Him. Then call to remembrance what you suffered. You had to leave something and to leave some people; you had to leave companions and perhaps to endure their mocking, and some affliction, and had also to lose a great deal. You took joyfully the spoiling of your goods. Now there is one thing every child of God is enabled to take joyfully the spoiling of, and it is this, his own life. That comprises everything. Except ye hate your own life and lose it, said the Lord Jesus, you cannot be My disciples, and was there not a day when you felt, as before God Himself, that self must go; its fairest pretensions be lost and crossed; its pharisaism, its hypocrisy, its fair show, its boasted strength, its vaunted wisdom, its holiness, everything must go, be cast overboard, and you, a poor, naked, lost soul, be cast upon the very Person and work of the Lord Jesus. Paul says, now remember all that. Remember too how you were made a gazing stock, and joined yourself to the Lord's people, left the world and joined yourself to the Lord's people, saw a beauty in them, a preciousness in them, a blessedness in their condition, so as to feel "With them numbered may I be" Lord, let me belong to Thy people; O remember me with the favour that Thou bearest to Thy people; O visit me with Thy salvation; that I may see the good of Thy chosen, and rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation and glory with Thine inheritance. So they had grace and boldness to do all this and they had some knowledge - "Knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance". My brethren, this is wonderful. You look at it; knowing, not in your brain and judgment; knowing, not outside yourself as looking on and

and speculating about, but knowing in yourselves. Says the Apostle in this Epistle and the next chapter "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" and that faith brought Christ to you. He was revealed by the Eternal Spirit and your faith laid hold on Him and that brought an inward witness within yourselves that you had in Him an inheritance, a heaven, a glory, a beauty, a life; justification, sanctification, wisdom and redemption. It was all there. Knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance, better than this world, better than your own life, better than all else. What is Christ to you? What is Christ to me? What is Christ? Is He better than life? Do we join with the Church and say "He is altogether lovely"; with the Apostle, in another Epistle - "Christ is all and in all". And can we say with them all that that is the better, the enduring substance? "I" says Christ "lead in the way of righteousness in the midst of the paths of judgment, that I may cause those that love Me to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures." And if Christ be our treasure, the testimony of the Scripture is this - our heart is in heaven. "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also." And then the words of the text come - Therefore, says he, seeing you have had grace thus to do; seeing that you have had grace to believe, to hope, and to stand boldly in the way of truth against all opposition, and even to stand before the reproachful gaze of men; whilst ye were made a gazing stock, both by reproaches and afflictions; now having come thus far, do not by your present trials and difficulties be induced to cast away your confidence. Because the Lord has been so good to you, now hold fast. And the confidence may be in this word taken thus, either for believing that your condition and state before God is good and that you will never be cast off by Him, or it may be boldness. You have been thus far bold in the ways of God; now give not away to that cowardly feeling that comes upon you at times, making you say - "How shall I stand the trying day" Confidence must have a ground; boldness must have a reason. What is the ground of confidence when you take it as trust and believe in the goodness of your condition and state before God? The ground is and ever must be the very Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He who builds on anything else, builds on

sand, and when the rain comes and the wind blows and beats against that house, that building, it will surely fall. Is Christ your forerunner? Is He the ground of your hope? Is His precious blood your plea? Is His righteousness the covering you fain would have? O my friends, the confidence that is fixed on that Person and that work cannot fail. It is written in the Proverbs by Solomon - "The Lord shall be thy confidence"; the Lord alone. Paul writes to Timothy thus - "My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." No other strength will avail; sin and Satan will have the mastery if Christ be not the ground of all hope and all confidence. In Psalm 37 which I was reading just now before you, it is written - "Trust in the Lord"; "Commit thy way to the Lord"; "Roll thy way on Him, trust also in Him, and He will bring it to pass." There is a confidence here that the Lord's people have; they feel enabled to look to Him. Now take one or two instances of it. Take Abraham. Said the Lord to him, tempting him, "Offer thy son, thine only son Isaac whom thou lovest" And what was Abraham's state of mind? It was a state of trusting wholly in God and believing that God was able to raise up this, his son Isaac, from the dead from whence also he received him in a figure. What you are enabled to give up to God, at His commandment, you wont really lose. You will never lose by resigning things into God's hand. You will be no poorer for giving yourself up to Him. O what a mercy to have confidence in God. - Accounting that God was able to raise him up from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure and his faith might have been exercised that way, sweetly exercised. Looking on his son, he would say, why I have got him from the grave and if I bury him, God can bring him again from the grave. You may lose many things in your feelings, but if you can give up everything to God, you wont be a loser. No, promises may be called over as it were; hopes may be blighted for a time; appearances may be against you, but if your faith is just fixed where Abraham's faith was, if you can say - "God will provide Himself a lamb"; I believe He gave me that and if He calls for it back again, He wont let me be a loser, that will do.

Take David; he was in trouble and no ordinary trouble. A

bosom friend had arisen against him, Ahithophel; a son of his had become unnatural and wicked and had risen up in rebellion against his father and had driven his father from the throne. Now what does David say - O if the Lord take pleasure in me, I shall see it, that is the ark, and His habitation. He will bring me back. Yea, and before that time in his history, take the case when Ziklag was burnt down and David's wives and the little ones and wives of all the men had been carried away. The men were so grieved and wounded and irritated by this, their condition and loss, that they spoke of stoning David. Now if David had said - These men are desperate, I must get away, no natural man could have wondered at it. What was David's course? Faith looked up to God; faith eyed the Lord and we read - "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." Beloved friends, what better course could he have taken? He did not cast away his confidence, but once more went to his God. Lord, I am in trouble, help me. And you know the Lord did help him and deliver him. Now these two examples are very encouraging. We cannot be in a greater strait than Abraham was, nor in a greater affliction than David was, yet these two blessed men of God are set forth in the Scripture for, as Paul speaks in the Romans, for our encouragement. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." This was the case; O blessed is the sinner who can trust in the living God, and not cast away that confidence that he has had. You may say, but I have never been in this case before; I have got through a good many troubles and have thought the Lord has brought me through them, but here I am in a case I have never known before. You are not in a case beyond God; His wisdom can find out a way; His power can command a deliverance and work it. You only need to go to Him; you only need to go with your case just as it is and you will find all the help and mercy that you need. Therefore, cast not away, in the face of present difficulties, that confidence which has been wrought in you. Look to the Lord with longing eyes, though both should seem to fail. Look to His power to help you; to His goodness to supply you; to His faithfulness to His word to bring you through. Hath He said and shall He not make it

good? Therefore in that way cast not away your confidence. God wont forget your work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope. Hold on; hold on poor sinner as well as you can, and when you begin to sink, still, as God helps you, do as Peter did, say "Lord save or I perish". And you will find that although He tarries till you are faint and comes at even late, it wont be too late. No, when He comes it will perhaps be just as you are about to give up all and to sink, and yet your faith at the same time is cleaving to Him. "Lord save or I perish". O help me. And there may be a feeling in your heart like this - Do not let me dishonour Thee; enable me to hope in Thee, in the midst of all, when I am at my worst; do come and deliver me; command a deliverance for me.

These exhortations may meet some of us. We may be in a strait; we may be able perhaps even to look on the past and say - we thought we were helped but now we are in a bad case. Still, says Paul, cast not away your confidence; hope in God. David thus addressed his soul when in the midst of grievous discouragements "My soul, why art thou cast down? Hope thou in God for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God."

May the Lord help us. Now we will leave it for the time and take heed dear friends to the blessed Word of God and seek grace to enable you to walk according to it.

AMEN.