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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday evening 25 May 1919

Hebrews 13 v 8

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and
today, and for ever"

The text is a part of an exhortation, an exhortation to these Hebrews, christians called of God to remember the ministers who had the rule over them, who had spoken to them the word of God and also to follow their faith. "Whose faith follow". All the respect and love and obedience which ministers have rightly showed them must proceed from that ministry, the exercise of that ministry which God has given them. "Remember them that have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow". This is not a blind following of any man. That is nowhere countenanced in the Scriptures. "Whose faith follow", would set forth that blessed doctrine which had been delivered to this people by the servants of God. That is the point to consider, not the grace of faith which a minister has, in the first instance, but the doctrine of faith as is evident from the word that follows. "Considering the end of their conversation", their life, their teaching, the preaching, namely Jesus Christ; whose faith, whose doctrine is this "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and for ever". This is the very life of the church, the centre and the source of union in the church, the purity and godliness of the church, the ground of hope, the foundation of all good in the church and to the church. This is the very centre, sun, sum, substance, the end of all true faith in the people of God, the object on which they look, the Person after whom they are to follow and do follow, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." You may have school masters and the end of their teaching is that you go to learn. God will send school masters to you, afflictions, law, reproof, rebuke, searching, trying and O, happy he who can bear them.

Happy the man that bears the stroke
Of his chastising God
Nor stubbornly rejects His yoke
Nor faints beneath His rod

And why? The end is Jesus Christ, the knowledge of Him, the reception of Him, the growing up into Him, the receiving of life, of justification, of sanctification, of wisdom, of strength, of perseverance from Him, and the end, to be with Him. God has an end in all His dealings with His children, and that end is this that Christ uttered in those wonderful petitions which we were reading just now. "I in them and Thou in Me that they all may be one, as Thou Father art in Me and I in Thee; that they all may be one in Us". Look then my dear friends at this point as God may help you. What is the effect of your trials? What is the end at which you are aiming? What is the object you follow? What is the wealth you are seeking? What is the end you are panting for? If the Lord will help me in all simplicity this evening I shall endeavour to speak of this very important and vast subject. I have been trying now for a good many years to speak well of Christ and I have scarcely done it, for He is above all blessing and praise and I shall, as He helps me, make another effort this evening to speak well of Him in your midst. He is a preacher and speaks well of His Father, sings His Father's Name and His Father's righteousness, and He, Jesus Christ, sends ministers, poor sinful men, that they may sing His praise in the church and speak well of Him. Be it given to me to do so now, and to you to receive what is spoken in simplicity.

First of all I must notice the Person of the Saviour. We shall never fully understand the Person of Christ. A minister's thoughts about Him and all his ability and grace to speak of Him will soon be exhausted, but the Person of Christ, O eternity wont be too long for the eyes of the saints to gaze on Him and all their sanctified intelligence will be employed in receiving the glorious emanations that ever will be flowing from Him to glad their eyes and fill their souls, their persons with eternal bliss. Christ is God. Do we believe that? Christ is the very, the only begotten Son of God. God has myriads of sons, begotten by the word of truth, born again, living the life of Jesus Christ, but He has only one Son, begotten of Himself

from all eternity and this Person in the Trinity, the only begotten Son of God, is also Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, the son of Mary, the virgin Mary, and this human nature never existed separately from His divine Person. Jesus Christ possesses the Godhead, possesses by the pleasure of the Father, all salvation. "It pleased the Father that in Him all fulness should dwell". All the grace we need, all the pardons we need, all the compassions and the pity and the love and the guidance and the deliverance and the supplies that we need and can pray for and are led to pray for, He possesses. He comes to sinners and lets them look on Him, bids them behold Him. He lets them look into His fulness, that they may not despair of supplies. Look into His power, that they may believe He will sustain them, into His love. O what love is Christ's love. All our hatred cannot overcome His imperious love, says Rutherford. What a mercy, O what a mercy, that your hatred, O sinner, should His good Spirit come to you, will not overcome His imperious love to you and you shall see it and feel it and, as I have often said, so I say again to you, be particular about the Person of Christ. Blessed Person, yet many imitate Him. Many shall say Lo here is Christ, Lo there is Christ. He is in the wilderness. Go not after them, is Christ's word. Why not? There is only one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus and the rays of light that beam from Him on the hearts of sinners say in their hearts, no despair, if you come to this blessed One. No sin too much for Him, no guilt too great for Him, no hardness too hard for Him, no necessities too many and too urgent and too great for Him. And this is the Person who is the very foundation of our hope. You will remember that the Apostle Peter makes religion, as it is christian, as it is personal, as it is saving, to be on this one only foundation. Said he in his second epistle, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with Him in the holy mount". And this is the foundation my friends, and this must be and will be the end of every true minister's ministry. He may describe your evil cases, he will enter into your trials, he will set forth your path, he will show you your waywardness, and your wickedness He may probe and trouble, but the

end of it is this, that you may, under the anointing of the Spirit, see Jesus; that a way may be made for Christ to visit you, and you shall see that there is a way open for you to go to Him, that the union that Christ sets forth in the 17 John may be brought to pass in your own experience and then you will say "This is my beloved and this is my friend O ye daughters of Jerusalem". Therefore let me again urge this on you, be very particular about the Person. Now it may be an enquiry in some of your minds, how shall we know the Person? How shall we distinguish Him from other persons, other Christs? Well, as far as I know, there is only one way and that way is most beautifully and powerfully expressed in the gospel of Luke where we are informed of two disciples walking to Emmaus after the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ and they were very sorrowful and had sad communications one with another as they walked, for their hopes were spilled, their expectations were dead. They said sorrowfully to Him who joined Himself to them that they had verily thought that it had been He who should deliver Israel, that the man who had accompanied them, that the Jesus they had heard and seen and tasted and handled and felt, that it had been He, but now He was dead and He was buried. But strange things had come to their ears; they were told that He had risen again from the dead, but they could not give credence to it. And He walked with them; He called them fools and slow of heart to believe, and He opened the Scriptures to their understanding. And His teaching made their hearts burn within them, and still their eyes were holden. You may get teaching, you may get a warmed heart, and yet not know who is teaching you and warming your heart, to your own satisfaction. But when they reached the house in which they were to sojourn, He made as though He would have gone further, but they constrained Him saying "Abide with us for the day is far spent" and He went in with them, and from being a guest He became the host, and He blessed the bread and then opened their eyes, and they saw Jesus and they knew Him. Now seeker, that is the way you are to know Him; Christ to come to you and open your eyes and give you to see Him. O you will be happy then, you will want to leave the room where you are after a time, as these disciples left the house, and go and tell your friends as they went off at once to tell their brother disciples that Jesus had risen and they had seen Him. That is how you must know Him, that is the way to receive Him, by a heavenly conviction, by a sweet, believing view of Him. You will say we have seen the Lord, the God of

the Hebrews hath met with us, Jesus has met with us. You will understand the sweetness of John's feeling when, seeing Christ on the shore, he said, "It is the Lord". Faith is of a quick perception then. We have seen the Lord. It is the Lord. And I would that that should be the great end of my speaking among you, that you may really follow this faith. Not follow me, not follow my poor shaky faith as a grace in my soul that needs daily to be strengthened, but follow that doctrine of faith which I speak in your midst, feebly indeed, but I speak it, Jesus Christ the same from eternity, "I AM THAT I AM" Jesus Christ, by whom the Father made the worlds, by whose word the worlds are upheld. Jesus Christ who, in the fulness of time was made of a woman, sent by the Father, to be so made. Made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons. "And because ye are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying Abba Father". This is the Man, this is the God, this is the Mediator, this is the Friend of sinners, this is the dear Jesus, whose love is so imperious as not to be put off, turned away or quenched by the inveterate hatred of those He loves and saves. "Blest soul" you were singing this morning

"Blest soul that can say Christ only I seek
Wait for Him alway, be constant though weak
The Lord whom thou seekest will not tarry long
And to Him the weakest is dear as the strong

Now having said this about His Person, let me in the next place speak a little of His love. It is wonderful love, unquenchable. "Many waters cannot quench love"; beyond praise. All the gold and silver of a man's house, if offered for it, would be utterly contemned. How has he manifested it? How has Christ manifested His love? "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends." See what the Lord Jesus came into. He came into shame, ignominy; came under the law, under sin, came to save rebels, to take pieces of sin and pieces of condemned flesh, pieces of hell to form them into vessels of mercy. And when He had done this He went into heaven and still He comes to the earth. He visits sinners, He visits outcast sinners, He visits dead sinners, He visits, not loving, but loathsome sinners, not loveable, but loathsome. He visits them

and that for the purpose of saving them and that they may become His. "And thou becamest Mine". Judge not the Lord by your present troubles, by your present convictions, distractions, distresses, bondage, weakness, fear, legal bondage, and legal fear. Judge Him not by these things. But you say, how am I to judge Him? Wait for Him then you will judge righteous judgment. What am I to wait for? His visits. Will He visit such as I am? If He does not visit sinners, He will visit nobody. He came to save the lost. O but my blackness; He knew it. My treachery, my hypocrisy; He knew all. "I knew thee that thou wouldest deal very treacherously and wast called a transgressor from the womb". Nevertheless, for Mine own sake. His honour is dear to Him, and so are base sinners. He comes to sinners more base than words can express. Cast out to the loathing of their persons are the Lord's people, and to them He comes and declares that the time of His coming is a time of love. A time of love? Surely a time of judgment, a time when God must loathe such loathsome creatures. No, a time of love, and this must be preached. I will preach so by the help of God as that I will say, Christ who endured the hell His people deserved, will go to the gates of hell and into the fire of hell in their consciences and into the seeming fire of hell in their circumstances, and pluck them thence. Yes sinner, no matter where you are, no matter how base you are, how distracted you feel, how troubled you may be, how full of all manner of evil and sin you may feel, this Jesus whom I try to preach will come where you are. You cannot go where He is as to your present state; you cannot pray to Him perhaps as to your feelings, but this is the thing, He will come to you. I came; "Thy time was a time of love and I passed by thee" - well He must have gone to the place where the sinner was - "and I spread My skirt over thee and I said unto thee live" Loathsome you may be, loathsome you are, but Christ loves loathsome sinners, and loves to make them pure and spotless. Nothing can overcome His love. He will overcome all opposition by His love and it will be a surprise to some of you one day when you find yourselves saying "And is this the manner of man O Lord God?" O what must the murderous Saul of Tarsus have felt when the love of Christ filled His heart? O what love Manasseh must have felt when the Lord heard his prayer and delivered him. What love Mary Magdalene felt out of whom seven devils were cast and now what love we, some of us, have felt when Christ's love has come and what astonishment. "Is this the manner of man O Lord God?" Canst Thou

look on a wretch, so wretched, a miserable, poor, blind, wicked creature? It is a beautiful thing, this love of Christ to me, unworthy as I am. It is a beautiful occupation to try to speak to sinners of this love, conquering love, covering love, sweet comforting love, filling satisfying love. There is no love like it. Greater love Christ could not show nor give than when He gave Himself. "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends." Follow this my friends. This is a part of the faith of God's elect, the faith that has been delivered once for all to them, that Christ loves sinners, and because He loves them He visits them. Because He loves them nothing can keep Him away from them. No sin, no guilt, no fear, no distraction, no trouble, no hardness and no enmity shall keep Him from the objects of His love. But when He comes and finds them so, what does He do? He does not leave them as He finds them. O no!

He saw me ruined in the fall
Yet loved me notwithstanding all

And what then? I spread my skirt over thee and thy time was a time of love, and I said unto thee 'live' and thou becamest Mine, and I gave thee oil and wine and fine linen and flax and silver and gold, and that is what the love of Christ gives to sinners, He gives them Himself; He gives them His clean white linen which, in the Revelation, is called the righteousness of the saints. He gives them His purity; He purges their sins and makes them spotless. He gives them His gold, the gold of His grace, His tried grace, His great grace, His sweet grace, His continuous grace, His never ending, never failing grace. He gives them that saying "My grace is sufficient for thee". Follow this I say. May you believe in the infinite love that many waters cannot quench, that no wealth of man can purchase. Follow this infinite love. It wont elude you, it wont deceive you. It will stay sometimes till you reach it, rather it will come down to where you are. You may be on the ground, no bed. You may have no pillow. A guilty conscience will make you restless and pained and ashamed, but O love will find you out. It found out Jacob in the wilderness when God went to cause him to rest. It found out Manasseh in the thorns when the Lord took him. It found out Saul of Tarsus; as he was approaching with his bitter enmity and his deadly mission to Damascus

Jesus met him. It found out Mary. He found out Nathaniel and He found out some of us. He will find out you. Follow this love.

Then follow the atonement. This is the end, the atonement that will make you one with God, that will purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. It is a high privilege to be forgiven; it is a melting mercy to be forgiven. Malefactors will prize forgiveness. Debtors can, will, have nothing to say against it, nothing, because Christ paid the debt and

Payment God cannot twice demand
First at my bleeding Surety's hand
And then again at mine

O the atonement of Christ, it pleased God. It satisfied God and it will please you and satisfy you whose consciences are sore and burdened and shamed. God the Father is pleased with Christ and the Spirit was pleased to dwell in Christ without measure, and the Spirit comes from Christ to bring His merit and to bring into the heart of a poor guilty wretch the Trinity in unity in salvation. This is no speculation; it is a Scriptural truth. It is revealed in the Word of God. Christ suffered desertion, the desertion of His Father and was left alone and died, but not under desertion. He died when He had finished all the work, and there was no more reason for desertion in His case, and He committed Himself, committed His soul into His Father's hand, and He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. He was raised again by Himself. "I have power" said He of His life which He gave up, "to take it up again", and He was raised by the Spirit. The Spirit of God raised Him from the dead. Now here is a satisfied God, justice pleased. Poor sinner, when the atonement comes to you then you will be pleased and you will be with this God and God will be with you and it will be in Jesus Christ, and every new visit, every fresh token for good, every blessed thing that the Lord gives to His children comes from the same source, Jesus Christ, and we owe all to the atonement. "Christ died for us"; that is what the Apostle expresses to the Romans. "While we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly".

Now let me mention another thing connected with, and a part of,

Jesus Christ, namely, His blessed, effectual mediation. This a minister must always be at. If he is kept lively in his own soul, he will never be long without this mediation of Christ, seeking to know it and to be delivered by it from bondage and, knowing it, he must preach it, he must preach it. There is nothing between black despair and my soul but the Mediator. I must preach Him and his mediation. Why, my friends, the fall has brought us into this condition, that the bread we eat and every breath we draw without pain we owe to the long-suffering of an offended God. That is true universally. Now come to the poor church of Christ and to some sinners here. What are you to do when your conscience upbraids you and God reproves you for sinning against His love? Only the Mediator will suit you, Jesus Christ. "If any man", any man in the church that is, for it is written to the brethren. "These things I write unto you that ye sin not" The tendency of what I write is to preserve you from sin. "But if any man sin we have an Advocate". If any little child, if any father, if any young man, and all these are written to by John you know. He says "If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous". Solomon says "There is no man that sinneth not" There is no man of God that sinneth not. "If any man sin we have an Advocate". Poor sinner, sensible sinner, failing, falling sinner, there is an Advocate. This is the faith for you to follow. "Whose faith" the doctrine of faith "follow". This is it and if you find any godly people who are hankering after this Mediator, you follow with them. Go by the footsteps of the flock and you will come to the Mediator one day, for all the saints seek Him and they will find Him. They find this Mediator and they put their cases into His hand, they commit their bad cases to Him and they have not to speak for themselves, they need not speak for themselves. They will speak about themselves, they will speak about their sins and their shame, their shortcomings, their unbelief, their ingratitude, their hypocrisy and thousands of evils. They will speak about these things and condemn themselves, and then the Mediator comes in, and when the devil is speaking against them, the Mediator will say "The Lord rebuke thee O Satan, even the Lord which hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" The Mediator stands up for His children, His dumb children. Blessed be this Mediator. Brethren, follow Him. "Whose faith" the faith that the ministers preach, "follow". It is a grand doctrine; it will bring

the church to heaven; it will bring them through their difficulties and temptations and failings. It will bring them through everything and they will be with the Lord for ever. Follow this. Do not speak for yourselves, do not try to justify yourselves, and indeed if you are under the teaching of the Spirit He wont let you, but He will convince you and convince you and convince you till at last you will be dumb and then He will open His mouth for you as it is said to Him "Open Thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction". Open Thy mouth for the sons of destruction, for the sons of death.

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday", unchangeable in His Person, in His love, in His atoning work, in His mediation.

Now I have one word more I will say. It is a great subject, and it grows in my mind, but I will only say one more word this evening, and it is this. Jesus Christ is omnipotent. He holds the world up by His power. He gave evidence, proof on proof of His omnipotence when He was a man of sorrows. He rebuked the winds and the waves. He said to the stormy sea "Be still" and there was a great calm. He took a few loaves and fishes and blessed them and multiplied them and of them fed thousands. He met a funeral, an only son was being buried by his widowed mother, and the mighty, compassionate Saviour said "Young man I say unto thee arise". He goes to the grave of Lazarus and says, "Lazarus come forth". And this is the Jesus ministers preach and want to preach, Almighty God. And what is that to do with me? one may say. Well, if it has nothing to do with you, you will never see Him in glory. Have you no sin to subdue? Is there no devil in your heart to be cast out? Is there no unbelief to be put down? Is there no tempting devil for Christ to rebuke, no devouring flame to rebuke? Is there no blackness in your soul for Him to cleanse, no sin for Him to forgive, no guilt for Him to take away, that you may be perfectly justified? Who can forgive, but God only? Who but God can quicken the dead? Who but the Sustainer of the world can sustain a feeble worm against all the opposition of the devil and indwelling sin? Who but this blessed One can manage you in your troubles and manage your troubles for you and bring you more than a conqueror through all of them? Follow this. Follow omnipotence my friends, follow omnipotence. It must have been a great astonishment

every morning to that widow when she went to her barrel and saw a little more meal and to her cruse and saw the oil remained in it. Still a little for today. I may be wrong, but I have thought, and have expressed it more than once, that probably there never was a great increase in the meal in the barrel, nor a great increase in the cruse, but that every day there was enough. And, O, have you never been astonished, a little grace today, a little softness, and a little prayer, a little fervour of spirit, a little love, a view of Christ, an attraction to Him and some sin that you feared subdued, and some trouble that you could not manage, managed for you, some difficulty taken out of the way, some obstacle removed. And who has done it all? Our Lord Jesus, our blessed Redeemer, our omnipotent Christ. The praise must be His, the praise must be His. Let me again say, follow omnipotence and you will be more than conquerors through Him that loved you. "Whose faith follow".

May the Lord command His blessing to rest on this blessed doctrine which I preach. The preacher is poor, the preaching is poor; the doctrine is not. No, I will stand by Dr Owen in one thing, in my very small measure. He said "Though I cannot preach a good sermon, I can preach a good gospel", and I will stand by that. I preach a good gospel to you, Jesus Christ the same yesterday in His divine Person in Eternity. Today, the blessed God Man Mediator in His love, in His blood, in His righteousness in His mediation, and for ever, and you shall see Him who follow Him. Yes, you shall see Him. O what a gospel. I think it is the most moving prospect whenever it is set before faith by the Holy Ghost and it makes these souls who get it feel it is difficult to repress a desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better. This then is the end of a true ministry. This you are to follow. This, the Apostle by the Holy Ghost, exhorts the Church of Christ to follow. This is the faith, the doctrine of Christ. This is the faith you are to follow. The Lord help you.

AMEN.