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Sermon preached by Mr. J. K. Popham,
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton.

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Wednesday evening 1/1/36.

Text: Isaiah 26. v 4.

"Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength."

This chapter is a continuation of what has gone before in the 24th and 25th chapters. The 24th is a chapter of solemn threatening, desolation and destruction. The 25th is a chapter of mercy and promise and victory, and this chapter is a continuation of that wondrous gospel which God has revealed in Holy Scripture.

In that day, the day when God shall arise, when it shall be said "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation. For in this mountain shall the hand of the Lord rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under Him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill. And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim: and he shall bring down their pride together with the spoils of their hands. And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low, and bring down to the ground, even to the dust. In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." A strong city which John saw coming out of heaven from God, that great city, the church of the living God. We have it - the poor, the tried people of whom it is said - The foot shall tread it down (the lofty city)- Isaiah 26. v 5.) even the feet of the poor and the steps of the needy shall tread down all the pride of this world. And the pride of that world of wickedness which is in themselves, in that day when God will work mightily, bring captives out of prison and comfort mourners, appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness: (Isaiah 61. v 3.) then this shall be sung "We have a strong city- (Isaiah 26. v 1.) The church of the living God, and in that city all this people shall come. "Open ye the gates....." Isaiah 26. v 2. Ministers preach the gospel, a free gospel, a full gospel, a mighty gospel, a glorious

gospel of the Blessed God, and open the gates. Tell the poor and the needy that there are no barrs. Nothing to hinder their entrance but their own wretched unbelief, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. That there may be continual accession of godly numbers in this city. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace." peace peace, as it is the margin, whose mind is stayed on Thee. This may touch some of us. We may find, painfully find, a shamefully find, our minds very frequently wandering. Perhaps some of you have to entreat God to keep your thoughts away from earth and its things, when with your lips you are addressing His Holy Majesty. It is a painful and shameful thing in us that we should, when we kneel before God, begin to dig and delve and work and think and plan, and all the time we are doing this in our minds we may be speaking to the Almighty, and that is like the scripture - "This people draweth near unto Me with their lips but their heart is far from Me. " If any of you are thus afflicted, may it be given to you to earnestly entreat God to keep your hearts with your lips, that both may be consistent when you call upon His Holy Name. We have a very wicked nature. We have an awfully wicked nature, we know some of us, that scripture is true - "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it. I do not know mine in but a ^{very} small degree, and that small degree is enough to sink me into black despair, but for the gospel of the grace of God.

Trust ye in the Lord for ever, you who have faith, for this is addressed to people who have faith. You in whom the Holy Ghost has wrought that great grace - faith; that wonderful grace. No child of God is ever sufficiently thankful for that grace, wrought in him by the Holy Ghost. It is the gift of God. It brings salvation. It takes the heart to God. It gives God credit for being true. It pleads every promise that the Lord opens. It brings the soul again and again to the cross. It unites with the hymn-

"Bid us call to mind Thy cross." 827.

O, we do need it.

Now you who have faith, have unbelief and unbelief diverts the mind, confuses it, turns it away from God, speaks against

God, barrenises the mind and heart, kills, as far as it is possible all right desires. O my friends, unbelief is the accursed sin that plagues the people of God

If unbelief's that sin accursed,
Abhored by God above,
Because, of all opposers worst,
It fights against his love,

How shall a heart that doubts like mine,
Dismayed at every breath,
Pretend to live the life divine,
Or fight the fight of faith?

Yet you have faith in God, who can sometimes say from your heart that you do believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Trust Him. This word trust here means lean on Him. Depend on Him. What else have we to lean on? The sin of the Jews at one time was, that they went down to Egypt, to trust in the shadow of Egypt. A dreadful thing. We have done it in our own way, have we not.

Trust in the Lord. Lean on Him. It means you know something of Him. None will ever trust an unknown person, or lean on an arm not known or felt at all. Trust in Him then of whom you have some knowledge. Little it may be, still some knowledge of his graciousness, of his mercy, of his truth, his gospel. Trust in Him for ever. As long as you live. As long as we live we shall need Him., and He will cause us to know that. And the reason given for this word is - for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. The name Jehovah embraces the Trinity. Whenever we read of God, or Jehovah, where there is no one person of the Trinity indicated, or named, we should understand the Eternal Three. In Jehovah there is everlasting strength. May the Lord help me to indicate to you, what I believe we may say is in this great word - Everlasting Strength.

First the strength of Eternal Love. That is everlasting. "I have loved thee with an Everlasting Love." I drew thee with the cords of love, with the bands of a man." "The Holy Spirit shall be in you a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." and these three things are in the love of God. They spring from the love of God. They have, if I may use the word, there origin in the Eternal Council of Peace. and all spring from that one wonderful, glorious attribute of love. God is love.

Where shall we go to find the strength of it. First of all

in predestination. In the election of Christ. Behold My Servant, Mine elect. He is the first fruits of the Eternal Love of God. Nothing before that. If we speak of an order and following one thing after another in that Eternal Love of God, we must put this first- That He gave, in the eternal love of His heart, His only Begotten Son, gave Him to be the Surety, the Substitute, the Prophet the Priest, the King of his people. There is strength in that great Everlasting Strength. In the love of God as seen in its Gift. Its Great Gift. "Thanks be to God," says Paul, "for His unspeakable Gift. " Unspeakable in this regard, that you can never exhaust it. All the descriptions of it God has given in the Scripture. Do not bring before us the infinitude of it. Human language we have, and God uses it to set forth Himself, but O we must die and get to heaven to know more of this love, but we shall never exhaust it. Trust in this love which is everlasting strength.

And in the next place. this strong love of God is declared to be in the predestination of his people unto Eternal Life. As many as were predestinated, believed. Predestination goes before calling. Predestination was before the world was. A particular, a personal predestination of certain people unto Eternal Life. "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called" The predestination was in heaven, in Eternity. The calling is in time, when the set time comes to call that person and the other person, that they may be born in Zion. What a love. It takes in all the obstacles, sins, idolatries, evils of every sort and kind and as it were brushes them aside to use that word just here, takes no notice of them. They are Mine, says God in his predestinating love. It is a strong love. If God be for us who can be against us. If God should have taken you into His heart, into His covenant, put you into his Son, that was all an act of love and a strong love. Stronger than death. Waters cannot quench it. Floods cannot drown it.

The strength of this love is seen in the next place in the death of the precious Son of God. A blessed death. All the devils enmity; all the sins of the church, all her difficulties, her waste places, her temptations, her guilt, her wandering are all put away, not one of them stand before Jehovah. You may get it. God give it you, as you have it in the Psalms-"Hearken O daughter, consider, forsake thine own people, forget thy fathers house," What then? "So shall the King desire thy beauty, for He is thy Lord and worship thou Him."

When grace separates the people of God, that is forsaking and forgetting. It brings them away from the world. Then the beauty that God desires is the beauty He has given, Thy beauty was perfect through My comeliness which I put upon thee. And that is the beauty God desires. I could have no hope but for that. I had no hope some hours ago but for that. God desire the beauty of one who knows his own corruptions, deformity and wickedness. O but there is a beauty and the strong love of God has given it and the beauty is wonderful to those who are brought to enter into it. Then the strong love of God is seen in regeneration. When God created the world, there was no opposition. He made the world out of nothing. He called it into being, when there was nothing at all. In the beginning God created heaven and earth. When He re-creates or new creates a sinner, making him a child of God, there is opposition. The old man opposes every movement of divine life in the soul. Opposes every desire after God that regeneration creates.

What a love that was. The death in sin in which God found his people and always finds them- their corruption, their loathsome condition, their utter helplessness, lying as dead in an open field. Nothing could hinder that love from saying - Live, Nothing. In Jehovah is everlasting strength. In calling a sinner. Whom He did predestinate, them He also called. An effectual call reaches the heart. It surprises the heart; it takes captive the heart. It brings the heart to consider Eternal things, time things lose more or less there importance. When Eternal things are brought to view. God, justice, hell, punishment. Then the gospel in its attractions, its drawing power, the love of God.

The love of God in its everlasting strength is known when the Holy Spirit gives to a sinner the grace of faith, so that from his heart he says- I believe there is a God in heaven and I have sinned against Him. I have a nature contrary to His nature. I have broken His law. I deserve hell. That is faith in its operations and language. Every regenerated person has that faith and that language.. But then the love of God comes against that. Does not contradict it, because it is true, but it comes against it in this way - there is a remedy, a ransome. "He looketh upon men, and if any say I have sinned and perverted that which was right and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. Job.33. v.27,28.& verse 24. "I have found a ransom.

That is the love of God. It brings the gospel. But whoever can properly, fully express what the soul feels on the first believing sight of the gospel.- A remedy for sin. Forgiveness for sin, justification of a sinner, cleansing of all filth from the sinner, reconciling the sinner to a holy and just God. A manifestation of this truth that God is a just God and a Saviour. That is the wonder. A just God has been believed in before. Now God unites salvation with His justice and that is an amazement. The very God whose justice has withered us, dried our spirits, taken away all hope from us, is united to forgiveness. What a love is this. A strong love. An everlasting love, giving union to the Lord Jesus. Passing by transgression and forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. Trust in Him.

Next, the love of God is manifested in Holy Scripture. In the blessed revelation God has given of Himself in the scripture as the God of love. Giving Himself this name - God is love. That is His name. It is written as you know in the first Epistle of John. God is love. And this Book, this infallible Bible of ours declares this perfection or attribute of Jehovah. The love of the Father, the love of the Son, and the love of the Spirit. The love of the Father in revealing Himself in His Son, the love of the Spirit in providing a body for the Son of God to take into union with Himself, the love of the Spirit in revealing all this in this inspired Book. May I say this to you, read very diligently, very prayerfully the word of God. All that He will make known of Himself to you in this world is contained in the Scripture. All the experience you are to have of God, you will find written and promised in the Scripture. All the guidance you need, you will find promised in the Scripture. All the strength to fight the fight of faith, all the hope you are to entertain in God, all the anchoring of your soul, casting faith and hope as an anchor into that which is within the veil. All the promises on which you are to lean, which are given you to plead, to enjoy, given you for strength and guidance and comfort, He has put in Holy Scripture. Take then this word of exhortation. Read more carefully, more diligently, more constantly, more prayerfully, the Word of God. The everlasting love of God in its strength I have declared in these particulars. Can you trust Him. Can you cast your souls in their nakedness and need and weakness and liability to fall, to fall into temptation and fall by temptation. Can you cast yourself on this eternal love of God. In the Lord Jehovah is this threefold cord which cannot be broken Love. Love is.....

of God, and you will find, if you are enabled to read it, what a friend of mine the other day wrote to me about it. He was led to search into the matter. and was surprised to find what stress is laid on the love of God. If God loves you and you know it, then you will trust Him. Lean on Him, He is worthy of it. There are times when we need this particularly. Times of sorrow. Times when God empties us of some things we would like to have retained. Times when we are weak in the presence of temptation. When it seems as if we must fall. Times when the tempter comes and declares that there is no help in God for us. Times of providential affliction, of personal affliction, of relative affliction. Times when time things seem to be passing away. Times when trouble threatens . Times of difficulty in the church of God. When there appears to be little grace in exercise. Times when the ministry seems to have little or no effect on many. Times of darkness. Trust in Him for ever as there is no cessation in the love of God. May we be enabled in all times to trust Him. Trust in the Lord for ever for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

And in the next place, trust in the Lord Jesus Christ in His Person, in His work, in His death, in His resurrection, in His ascension into heaven, in His Priestly work of intercession there. Rock of ages. The marginal reading is this- everlasting strength, rock of ages. He is that rock. He is The Rock; His work is perfect. We need Him. and as we are kept lively in our souls, we feel our need of Him. And as faith is called forth into exercise by manifestations of his Person and his work, then we realise that we need Him.

We need his Person. I mentioned a little of this on Lord's day morning in another connection, You will remember that I spoke about the Surety, and the Substitute, and I illustrated what I had in my mind and tried to say to you by speaking of a man who would be a Surety to a friend, and the debtor and the would be Surety goes to the bank and the bank takes no notice of the debtor. He is there but it does not notice him, it deals with the Surety. Now this may be an illustration. One point in this word - Trust in Christ for ever. Trust His Person. He is the Rock. All the weakness, all the sand, all the wickedness of our poor nature will leave us destitute, weak, feeble indeed when He is most needed, and then the greatest strength of

faith may come.

Trust to Him and by thy weakness
Thou shalt prove that Christ is strong.

O if I were strong one says, then I would trust. No you would not. The stronger you feel the less you need Him, but when you have no strength, when you have no help in self and no helper., when you are as weak as water, as feeble as an infant, unable to lift up a finger to help yourself, that will be the time when faith will be found to be strong to cast yourself, with all your wickedness and weakness, confusion and evil and temptation and troubles unreservedly upon that glorious Person Jesus Christ.

To trust Him endeavour,
the work is His own,
He makes the believer,
And gives him his crown.

Here comes the trouble, that a legal heart says - but I am not fit to go to Him.

All the fitness He requireth,
Is to feel your need of Him.

O but I am so wretched, so wicked. He came to save the lost, and when this gospel is opened to faith, faith's business then is to venture wholly on Him, to let no other trust intrude. Trust His Person.

I am the Lord your God. He is a just God and the Saviour. He is the great Saviour. Whom God sends, He sends a Saviour and a great One. Great in his love is this Lord Jesus Christ. Having loved his own which were in the world, He loved them to the end. And the manifestation of His love to you who believe in Him was given on the cross. Some of you may feel disposed to contradict me and say _ No. The greatest possible manifestation Christ can give of His love would be to give it to me. No. It will be to you the greatest manifestation up to a point of your experience, but the greatest manifestation of His love to you was giving Himself for you, and the other flows from that. The lesser comes from the greater. Because He loved you He speaks to you. Because He loved you He died for you. Because He loved you He will give you to see Himself and then to hear His word. Come unto Me says this loving Saviour. Cast your burden on the Lord He will sustain you. Cast your care on Him for He careth for you. O and what love He shows when He sends His good Spirit.

It is needful for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come, but if I go away, I will send Him to you and He sends His good Spirit. How shall I know that? By the operations of the Spirit. By your convictions. By His reproofs in you. By touching you with His love. By drawing you to the throne of grace. By enabling you to pray, committing your case with all its badness to Him. By His manifestations of Christ's Person to you. By His persuasion in your heart that it is well with you. Well while time shall last, and well when called to die. Trust in this love of Jesus Christ.

Trust in His gracious promises. O what a jewel a promise is. O what a value there is in every word of Christ. What a treasure you have, who have the Word of God. One single word of the gospel. One promise is embracive of all the promises. Not that it is understood or felt, but it is a truth. If He gives you one promise to help and bless you that embraces everything. But when you have one word, O when He drops a promise into your heart, or when He lets down a smile of His well-pleased face upon your soul, or when the Spirit comes and bears testimony of His grace in your heart, then you have wonderful evidence of His love.

Trust in the third Person. Trust in Jehovah the Spirit. He has the care of your souls. You are committed to Him. The care of the church is committed to the Spirit. If I go away I will send the Comforter to you. He shall not speak of Himself He shall speak of Me. He shall come freely to you and having received in the covenant, My things, He shall as My Spirit show them to you. That is how Christ is glorified in any saint. He the Spirit reveals this Saviour. This Jesus. But you get other things. You get checks do not you? A check comes upon your spirit when perhaps you are contemplating to do something which you would have done but for that check. That made you afraid. Shall I displease God if I do this. You get an intimation that such and such a course will be right for you to take. He gives you power to take it. You read the scripture - suddenly a passage arrests you. You have read it many a time before but never have been arrested by it. You stop and do not read on. You look at it. It looks at you. It smiles on you. It is God's word in you by His Spirit. It is a teaching. It is a reproof. It a promise. It is an attraction of Christ made known

to your heart. A work of the Spirit He sprinkles your conscience purifying it. That is the Spirit's work, He sprinkles the conscience. He opens the gospel. The nature of the gospel. The extent of the gospel. The sweetness of the gospel. The wonderful suitability of the gospel to a bad case. He opens all this. The Spirit's work. Can you trust Him to help you. ? Can you lean on this divine Person. He is as necessary for salvation as the Father and as the Son. Each Person in the Godhead has His distinct part in salvation. And the three are the three-fold cord which cannot be broken. You cannot separate them. You cannot break them.

Trust in the Lord for ever for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

Trust Him for salvation. A just God and a Saviour. Trust Him with your conscience. Ask Him to rule in your conscience. That He may make you so tender there as that thinking becomes a matter of conscience with you. Trust your conscience to Him that He may enable you to make a conscience of speaking. I do need this myself. What heedless words are uttered. What idle words are spoken. Trust the Spirit to help you against these evil tendencies. Trust Him to give you true knowledge. You may acquire a good deal of knowledge of the Bible and be proud. That won't help you at all. It is very proper to read scripture and acquire whatever knowledge may be within your reach, but if you depend on that you are depending on what will not help you. Trust the Spirit to open things to you. "Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.

Trust in Him to teach you how to pray and what to pray for. A very tried word that among us, but a very important one in the meaning of it. How to pray. Why, says the Spirit- "We know not what we should pray for as we ought." How then shall we pray? This Holy Spirit will come. The word intimates this. One coming alongside of you to teach you, to teach you to say this is the way to pray. This is what to pray for - "Thy will be done." This is what to pray for." Pardon mine iniquity O Lord for it is great." This is what you should pray for. "Guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." This is what you should pray for - A broken heart and contrite spirit. A deliverance from legality. A deliverance from leaning on myself. Lean not to thine own understanding. This is also what you should pray for - Power to keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.

Dear friends, may I say this. Can you lean on this Holy Spirit? Can you trust Him, and leave yourself in His hands. Your providential things and your hearts feeling about them, your over-carefulness, your drunkenness and surveiting of care. Can you cast yourself on Him and not be over anxious. Trust in the Lord for ever for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. Father, Son and Holy Ghost. One God in three Persons. One glorious Trinity in unity. One glorious unity in Trinity. May the Lord grant us to increase in the knowledge of God, of Jehovah.

We start another year. In my heart I have greeted you to-day. I have wished you well. I have prayed for you. Prayed for the church, that God would bless us. Make us more fruitful in the knowledge of Himself. We have got knowledge of sin, some of us have, which makes us afraid. I am afraid of myself. I very quickly slip. May the Lord bless us as a church. Give us grace to regard membership as a very solemn thing,; not lightly to be taken up. Not lightly to be sought. It is too solemn. Here we are a few of us gathered together. The weather and age and affliction have kept many from us this evening. My mind has gone back suddenly to my first winter here 53 years ago. It was a wonderful winter as to weather. Often in that winter I sat on the front. Often in the bright, beautiful, warm sunshine. This winter thus far, is very different. Then people were able to come out, now those who were then young are old and a great change has come. There is no change in God. Now look well to your membership. Look at the exhortations of the Bible in regard to your membership. It lies on you each. It imposes obligations on you. Love one another. A new commandment. Bear one with another. If any man give open offence, let one pained or offended be tender and if one is seen to have fallen, let others restore him with affection..... These words are addressed to churches, to this church. I exhort every member to remember that and if we have left our first love, may we have grace given us to return to it. for if we do not, then the day is approaching when the candlestick will be removed. To the godly in the congregation, I would address a word. I love you. I have union to men not members of the church. I love them in the truth and if I may speak so, they are embraced in my petitions for this place, that the glory of

God may be among us, that we may not displease Him knowingly, nor walk in any known sin.

To those in the congregation who do not manifest the fear of God, I would address one word, you are in great danger. Hart addresses as it were an individual and says "While thou liest out of Christ, greater is thy danger." If you do not come into union with Christ by the Holy Ghost, there is no heaven for you. Whatever morality you may have, and I beg of you to keep moral, avoid sin, avoid sinful company. Avoid wrong reading. Avoid novel reading. Avoid everything that would divert your attention from the Word of God and Eternal things, but one thing I would say, I would rather quote the words of Jesus Christ- Ye must be born again. Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God. He cannot see there is a Kingdom of God. Nicodemus heard that. He saw the national, the Jewish kingdom. He was an important person in it, but he could not see the spiritual kingdom, neither can you. Now may the Lord bless you and bless the church, bless the godly in the congregation, bless the dead by regenerating them and glorify Himself in our midst.
