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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham  
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton  
on Sunday morning 17 February 1924

Isaiah 26 v 4

"Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in  
the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength"

This is essential omnipotence; this is omnipotent love, love expressed in the gift of God's only begotten Son; love everlasting, therefore immutable; a three-fold cord which cannot be broken. Embraced and held in and by this, poor sinners are secure, secured. Though not left to be secure in their own sense of things often, they are secure as being thus embraced. It is omnipotence expressed in and made known by the blood of Jesus Christ that has in it strength to remove guilt and pollution. It is omnipotence expressed in justification. Who can condemn a just person? One just in the sight of God is necessarily safe, beyond the reach of all condemning voices, of all envious devils, of all trying circumstances, of all storms of every sort and kind. It is omnipotence expressed in the all-prevailing intercession of the Lord Jesus. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us". Who shall condemn us? Says the Apostle - "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us". As if he should say, it matters not what sword, what peril, what nakedness, what persecution, what enemies, what necessities may come and seem to be against us, seem to be on every side hostile to our safety and progress, who shall condemn poor sinners for whom the Lord Jesus intercedes. It is omnipotence expressed in the gospel, expressed in the promises - "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee". So, if we be in floods, if in flames, if tempted of the devil, if driven, still that holds good - "When thou passeth through the waters I will be with thee and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee." If this is so, what a ground there is for this exhortation - "Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength". God keep us from looking into

self for strength; keep us from leaning on our own understanding; keep us from imagining that we are, or can be, safe, or helped to safety by anything that is in us or about us. The rich are exhorted not to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God. To the poor, this is said - "Blessed are ye poor for yours is the kingdom of heaven." The Word of God takes in every circumstance, everything that we call contingency, everything that man speaks of as choice. It takes in every danger, enemy, necessity, weakness, fear, law, bondage, sin, guilt, and says to them all, stand aside, these are Mine, these shall be with Me in everlasting glory. Where I am these must be with Me. I say again, if this be true, is not this a wonderful ground and reason for this exhortation - "Trust ye in the Lord, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength". Leave yourselves, abandon your own strength, if you think you have any. Leave everything that you have in spirit. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might. Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me that I am the Lord which exerciseth righteousness and lovingkindness in the earth, for in these things I delight saith the Lord." So we have before us this morning the Rock of Ages, Jesus Christ, to whom those amazing, all embracing, beautiful promises were made by the Father which we read just now. Jesus Christ; it is God's will that He should be everything to His people, for He has put all in Him that they need. It pleased the Father that in Him all fulness should dwell. It is God's will that His people should live on Him, and therefore the Spirit's work is to take of His things and show them to believing hearts, that they may come to Him and depend on Him for everything, for life, and godliness, for time and eternity. If such a passage as this be dropped into the heart of a poor sinner, of one who fears he cannot stand because he is weak, who fears he will not hold on because he is ignorant, because he has no might against the great company that comes against him, then he will say - Why should I fear? He will thus address his heart, his soul - "Hope thou in God for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God."

Now beloved friends, may the Lord help us to look a little first at everlasting strength, that is immutable strength; for what is everlasting must be unchangeable, immutable. Take this in the first place, the love of God. It is written that "God is love". This is His nature; He is love. As long then as He continues, as He is God, so long will His love continue; there is no change in it. You change; all the people of God have frequent changes, changes which pain them, weaken them; changes which seem painfully to warrant their fears, for if they forsake sin one hour, the next they turn to it. Changes which look exceedingly like treachery, and are treachery in many cases. Oh but says the Lord, look to Me all ye ends of the earth and be ye saved, for I am God and beside Me there is no Saviour. I change not; I hate to put away. Think of it. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end." Whatever distressing circumstances may come; whatever guilty fears may be felt; whatever deadness may embrace and seem to hold you in its icy grip for a time; whatever distance from God you may get to for a time, this love will fetch you back, revive you, warm you, comfort you. With reproofs you will come back; with gratitude and humility, you will come back to this. Love knows no change. "Go" says the Lord to Hosea, "Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the Lord toward the children of Israel". What an amazing thing. Here we have a three fold cord - the love of the Father in sending His Son, the love of the Son in willingly coming and the love of the Spirit in graciously quickening and teaching; and who can break this three fold cord. Some here know each strand in this cord in a degree; the love of God the Father has been shed abroad by the Holy Spirit in the heart; the love of the Son has been made known by the Spirit in the application, in some degree, of His atoning blood, and the love of the Spirit has been made known in His coming into a sinner though so utterly sinful and unworthy, taking up His condescending abode there, to be in the heart a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Trust this love; trust this God of love. If He afflict, trust Him; if He seem to frown trust Him; if, for a time, He goes away to His own place, trust Him. If He does not answer your prayers as you

think He should, or as you desire, and have hoped, trust Him. If you get no sweet smile for a time, trust Him. Whatever comes to you, trust this love, this God of love. He will not deceive you, though you hardly of Him deem. He cannot deceive you. What thou findest Him at thy best, He's at thy worst the same. If He is pleased to withhold sweet operations, trust Him. If He sends rebukes that seem to sound like enmity in Him as if He would do you harm, trust Him. If you should get afflicted as Job was, may you be enabled to say what Job said out of his heart - "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him". He is greatly honoured by faith. Faith will listen to Him while it turns its ear away from circumstances which speak against Him, seemingly. Trust Him dear friends; trust Him with your soul, with your body, with your family, with your circumstances. Trust Him to do what is best. Trust Him to work in you that which is pleasing in His sight. Trust Him to bring you honourably through all your difficulties, to turn into a good account all your contingencies, all your distressing circumstances. Trust Him when everything is dark and uncertain. Trust Him. O what a God we have; what a good God we have. I would rather be silent the rest of my days than to be permitted to bring up an evil report of Him. He is so wonderful and so gracious and so kind and so loving and so faithful in His love. May the Lord help you who are distressed or distracted or weak or troubled in any particular thing to do this, to walk in humble obedience to this text. "Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength".

Trust Him in His precious atonement. Remember that He was sent of His Father to be the salvation of the soul to the very end of the world, the end of the earth. "Thou art My salvation unto the end of the earth" and this salvation is expressed very particularly in the blood of the everlasting covenant. The blood has a voice. Abel's blood had a voice calling for vengeance on Cain who shed it. The blood of Christ has a voice calling for pardon. It speaketh better things than that of Abel. It says "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin". It says all manner of sin and blasphemy against the Son of Man shall be forgiven. It speaks peace; it brings the soul to God; it

unites the soul to God. It takes away all frown and all curse and all anger and all sword and all affliction from affliction to those who are beneath its shelter. No harm can come to a sinner who shelters beneath the blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore when you are troubled by sin, when you are tempted on the ground of your sinning, when everything, because you are full of sin, seems to militate against you, then may the faith of God's operation rise by His own merciful power in your heart to this atonement of Jesus Christ and trust that. Trust it; venture wholly, venture wholly, let no other trust intrude. Confide, O beaten sinner, O troubled sinner, O guilty sinner, confide alone in this atonement of Jesus Christ. By it access is obtained; by it the soul is acceptable to God; by it prayer comes up with acceptance; by it the Lord smiles; through it He speaks peace and comfort to a troubled heart and by it I may say that all adverse providences are softened and mitigated. Their severity is removed, their harshness is taken away, and matters that look so angry and that speak so solemnly as it were against you, shall be turned to your account.

The blood of Christ, a precious blood  
Cleanseth from all sin, doubt it not  
And reconciles the soul to God  
From every folly, every fault

Now poor sinner, can you trust this blood? Is this your plea when you seek the face of God? Is this your reason for asking for forgiveness, for protection, for sustenance, for supplies of all good? Depend on Him, thou canst not fail. Go on making known your requests, go on laying your case before God. All must end well with those who rely on the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. Trust in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, that blessed robe, that pure, bright, spotless robe wrought out by Jesus Christ on the earth and on the cross with exquisite pain and infinite skill and sufficiency. O what a righteousness is Christ's righteousness and it is unto all and upon all them that believe. Poor sinner, seeing and feeling ashamed of your own filthy garments, behold a robe wrought out by Christ; a robe

brought to the soul, imputed to the soul, received by faith, put on and worn. Here is the sinner's acceptance; here is his walk with God in peace; here is his security from the law and its curse; here is his safety on earth and after death the plenitude of heaven for substance. What can harm a righteous person? The law will never hurt a righteous man. God's law never can hurt a righteous person. The devil will never be allowed to injure a righteous person; circumstances, though adverse they may be, can never injure a righteous person. Everything must turn to this person's good. Crosses, losses, staffs or rods, all shall turn to this person's good, all shall yield him comfort, all shall be peace to him. Trust this righteousness, it will keep you from despair when you get deeper and deeper discoveries of your own corruption and filthy garments. It will keep you with your eyes steadfastly set on God. It will keep you with your heart in heaven. It will keep you looking to the Lord for justification and the sweet sentence of it to be expressed in your heart from time to time. There is strength in righteousness, great strength. Strength against false accusations. One may be taken to court by false accusations, but righteousness will shine forth and no accusations that are false can have any effect to injure the righteous man. Think of it; think of the strength of righteousness and think of what strength is needed when we have to stand before the searching eye of God; to stand the test of a penetrating law, of the law that goes to the heart and the thoughts of it; Think of the danger one is in who has no righteousness but that which he himself can produce out of himself. But O the safety, on the contrary of the man who wears this spotless robe. Law what canst thou do? Sin indwelling, what canst thou do? Devil what canst thou say? There is strength in righteousness, everlasting strength, for this righteousness is everlasting righteousness. Jesus brought it in; He brought in everlasting righteousness, immutable. Created righteousness, such as Adam had, and we in Him, was not immutable, but such a righteousness as Christ wrought out and brought in is immutable; it can know no change. Therefore, whosoever wears this is, as to his standing before God, immutable. Trust in Him, lean on this righteousness sinner, lean

on it. It will bear all that you have that will militate against you; lean on this righteousness.

Take the strength of God as He is the intercessor, the God Man, who ever liveth to make intercession for us. We have enemies, we have sins, we have a quickened conscience. We can say many times our conscience is against us, it testifies against us. Mine testifies against me for my sins. O how constantly do they work, how frequently do they prevail. Then, when conscience tells you of these things, when memory brings them up and sets them before you and when the reproofs of the Almighty stick fast in you, speaking to you about your ways, then you need one to open His mouth for you. It is said to the Mediator - "Open thy mouth for the dumb, in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction". Dear godly friends, you will never kneel down and say - we have done that which is right; we have earned our wages, therefore pay us. You will have to go rather thus - we are guilty, we have been prodigals, we are prodigals. We are bent to backsliding; we have turned away from the counsels of wisdom and walked in the foolishness of our own hearts. Then what will you do? You will plead the name of Christ and He will open His mouth for you. He says - "If ye shall ask anything in My Name I will do it". This will be strength. Why, Satan will flee when you thus approach God. He will be put out of court. "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". Is not this one of Mine? Though he has been a prodigal, he is My son. Though he has wandered, he is Mine. I bought Him with My blood. Sinner, trust this intercession; trust it. It will never let you down into trouble and woe and destruction. It will keep you; it will hold you up in all difficulties, under all afflictions, temptations; this will be sufficient. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us" "Trust in the Lord for ever".

Trust in the Lord for ever as He reveals Himself in the gospel of Christ. The gospel of Christ is the gospel of good news. Now listen to what the Lord Jesus Himself says in this

prophecy - "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn, to 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 that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that He might be glorified." You may search the world over, read all good works that have been written and never find a more blessed and full and complete description of the gospel than that passage I have just quoted, and what a gospel. Have you heard sad news from heaven about your depravity? Have you received the sentence of death, making you feelingly need a risen Saviour? Whoever trusted in the Lord and was put to confusion? Whoever leaned on the dear Saviour and was forsaken by Him? Whoever pleaded His blood in vain? Whoever went to God poor and was turned away without anything at all? Whoever went to Him needy and was not helped according to His blessed promise? Whoever sought justification and was shut up in eternal condemnation?

"Trust in the Lord for ever for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength," strength expressed in those things which I have brought to your notice this morning so to speak. This word everlasting strength does not set out naked omnipotence alone, but God in His goodness, God in His love, God in His mercy, in His kindness in His Son, in His faithfulness. O

This is the God we adore;  
Our faithful, unchangeable friend  
Whose love is as large as His power  
And neither knows measure nor end

That blessed truth was the ground of the Apostle's challenge in the 8 chapter of Romans - "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that

condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right-hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." O, therefore, says he - "I am persuaded". What a persuasion, a persuasion founded on God, founded on redemption, founded on the intercession of Christ, founded on the foreknowledge of God as it is expressed in that chapter. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Trust Him my brethren. God has made us, as we feel in our souls, very needy, and then He has met all the need in this blessed Word. He has made Himself over to His people in an infinite act of lovingkindness; He has made Himself theirs. "Thy God, thy glory". And faith, warranted by this, faith drawn into exercise by the Spirit, says, "The Lord is my portion saith my soul, therefore do I hope in Him." That will do, that will do. It will never leave you. You will have faith as long as you need it. Your prize is great and God will take care of your soul and you shall not lose that prize such numbers never seek, such numbers seek in vain. Are you seeking glory, honour and immortality, eternal life, in the way God has opened and taught you? Then trust in the Lord when in darkness, when at a distance, when in an enemy's land, when troubled by a variety of evils. "Trust in the Lord for ever"; not just when it is all sweetness, when it is light, when it is all comfort, but when the opposite shall be your lot for a season, then trust Him. "Trust in the Lord for ever for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." May the power of this great gospel come by the Holy Ghost into our hearts.

AMEN.