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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Wednesday evening 7 December 1921

JUDE V 24 and 25

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

Last Lord's Day you will remember I spoke on the first part of the 24 verse: "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling", a most blessed and welcome truth to every exercised, sensibly weak child of God. As the Apostle Paul says in the Romans of him that is weak in the faith: "God is able to make him stand". What a mercy it is that the standing of a child of God, his perseverance to the end, his endurance of the fiery trial that tries him, God has made Himself responsible for in His own gracious promises. Our perseverance depends on God, but it is through faith. Faith is His gift. All must be traced up to Him continually. If you look at faith you look at a creature, a creature created in the heart by God. A creature is dependent, a creature must have that to subsist upon which is suitable for its nature. Faith is a creature, is dependent, must have food suitable to it; that food is the bread of life which cometh down from heaven, and which is communicated to each child of God in different ways and measures; it is really communicated. It consists of the work of the Spirit bringing home the gospel of Christ, the truth as the truth is in Jesus, manifesting the Lord Jesus Christ in some measure of light and knowledge, as the Apostle says to the Corinthians: "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." You will stand by faith. "Thou standest by faith" (Romans 11 v 20) "Let him that thinketh he standeth" - that is, that thinketh he is privileged above others, and that he, being blessed, shall certainly stand; let him, while in that state of mind - "take heed lest he fall". The man who thinks he can

stand has already fallen.

This evening, if enabled, I will speak to you upon the next part of the text. And, keeping you from falling according to His ability, He is able "to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy". And after that, let us notice the ascription of praise to this God for all His gracious ability and mercy and salvation made known in our hearts.

"To present you faultless". You will never understand this if you have no faith, and if you have faith, when you feel your continual faultiness, your perpetual failure, your frequent turning aside, and your intense untowardness to divine things, you will, in such an experience, need all the faith the Lord may give you to enter into this word "faultless". We are full of faults, and in order as enabled to be particular and not be straying everywhere, I shall speak this evening of three faults which each person has. You may exclaim, only three! Well, wait a little, I shall speak of three faults. First original sin. O what a fault that is; our whole being is poisoned. There is not a thought of our minds, a wish, an aspiration, a look of our eye, a word of our mouth, a movement of our feet, according to our original fall and sin, that is not tainted. Let us remember that our heart, out of which things come - our life comes - is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. The question is asked "Who can know it?" Is not this a fault? To be faulty is to be blameworthy. Is not this blameworthiness? Original sin, that depravity which came by Adam's sin, the defacing of that image of God in which we were created; that is our fault. The paralysing of all the powers of our souls and the killing of our souls, making us answer to that "Dead in trespasses and sins". Blinding our eyes, warping our judgements, perverting our will, corrupting our affections; is not this a fault? It is said we are "born in sin and shapen in iniquity". Forbear poor man to boast; there is nothing to boast of. In innocence we may have gloried in God's great gift of innocence to us, in His great gifts of understanding, and uprightness, and perfection of our nature; the absence, utter absence of all sin and inclination to sin, but that has long since gone. Adam lost it, and lost it to all of us, and therefore we have nothing in our nature when we are born but original sin. If you quarrel with it it does not alter it. If you say, Why did the Lord

allow sin? You must be quiet. His mysterious will in permitting evil to enter into the world and to blight our nature, destroy the image of God in which we were created, we must leave. What we have to do with is the very solemn and terrible truth that we are depraved, that we did fall in our first head Adam, that there is not one single thing left in us that is quite pure. The best of human nature is love; family love, love of nation, whereby peoples are held together, but that is depraved and often is seen in family feuds, disagreements, and quarrels and in worse. O what has sin done for us? Well may we exclaim, sorrowfully exclaim

O thou hideous monster sin
What a curse hast thou brought in
All creation groans through thee
Pregnant cause of misery

That is the first of three faults, and a sufficient thing it is to make every man convinced of it by the Holy Ghost, to blush the rest of his days on earth to think that he should be deformed, be without shape before God, being misshapen; that he should have a heart in him full of sin, as a cage of unclean birds; that he should have brought into the world with him nothing better than an entirely corrupt nature; every faculty corrupted, therefore we cannot understand God. We cannot love Him, we cannot obey Him, we cannot please Him, as the Apostle Paul wrote "They that are in the flesh cannot please God". This is the answer - when people say, why does God blame and condemn and punish people for doing that which they could not help, for disobeying when they had no power to obey - this, I say, is the answer, He did not make us so. We are responsible for our inability to obey, for our inability to love. We are responsible for our enmity against God. We are accountable to Him.

The second fault is this, the mighty workings of our corrupted nature, the actual sins and transgressions of which we are continually guilty. Original sin is a fountain whence flows the bitter stream of a sinful life. It is one of the most solemn and painful experiences that can be had by any person, namely, to find in his own life nothing but a continued stream of wickedness. Therefore the Lord said, man had corrupted his way on the earth, and it repented

Him that He had made man and grieved Him at His heart. O sinner, your best is sin. As born, your best is sin. We go astray from the very birth, speaking lies. We send forth the bitter stream of evil thoughts, evil words, evil deeds, and that is our best, a poor best; it covers every convinced, every new-born person with shame and fills him with grief from time to time. When he would do good evil is present with him. How to perform that which is good he finds not. When he would love, enmity is present. When he would believe, unbelief makes itself known. When he would be humble, pride lifts up its head. When he would fear God, then the impudent, daring spirit of the man will raise itself up against godly fear. When he would pray, then prayerlessness interferes with him. When he would study the truth of God, then a giddy, worldly spirit will whirl his thoughts about withersoever it will and he has no control. O, to what a state of utter helplessness has sin reduced us. Helplessness with respect to God and goodness. This is a fault indeed. Transgression we are always committing; we overstep bounds continually. No matter how that God has set boundaries, we transgress, we step over, we go where we should not go. Where we are forbidden to tread, there we boldly go. So are we full of transgression, full of actual sin. You need do nothing amongst men to render you liable to arrest and imprisonment, to make you immoral. The greatest immorality that you can ever have and be guilty of, is unbelief. It was Adam's immorality, it was Adam's fall. He believed in God; he was not deceived. His wife was deceived, and he lost, so to speak, instantly, on her persuasion, his faith in God, in God's commandment, and he became a poor, weak, sinful man. And O you can fill up this for yourselves, who are convinced of sin. Who could dare to trace out in language the thoughts of a man's heart, the wishes of his mind. That is a fault. We are blameworthy, guilty, dreadfully guilty.

And the third fault, dear friends, is our mortality. We must needs die. Is this a sin? It is the fruit of sin. "By man came death", and death came by sin. No sin, no death. If there is no corruption how can there be death? It is because we are diseased that death comes to our bodies. Our mortality is our fault. God did not so make us. He said to Adam fallen: "Dust thou art and to dust shalt thou return". That is the fault. My friends, you may say that of everyone who dies, sin was the cause of it, sin brought it. We live on

borrowed days. It is a borrowed life that every man lives while he lives on the earth. We cannot say truly that any person has a right to live, because every person is sinful, and therefore we are all faulty. Do you believe these three faults to be in yourselves. Do you feel these faults in yourselves? Take mortality; we know we must die; do we believe it? The Psalmist believed it and he said: "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" He saw that "every man at his best state was altogether vanity; that his own days were "as an handbreadth", and made an handbreadth by God who curtailed man's life which was prodigiously long at the beginning. He curtailed it and it was made ultimately three score years and ten. So said the Psalmist God had made his days as an handbreadth. Therefore said he, Lord what wait I for; I shall not see many days; I shall not see good; my hope is in Thee. I have no hope of long life here; at the longest it is short. I have no hope of getting better in my nature, of irradicating my sin, of purifying my heart; I have no hope at all here. My hope of forgiveness, my hope of sanctification, my hope of a blessed immortality is in Thee. Well, dear friends, from these three faults the Lord's people are to be cleansed. Let us look how the Lord takes them away. He removes the guilt of original sin by the imputation of Christ's righteousness. The glorious gospel of the blessed God does that, for it is written "He hath made Him - Jesus Christ - to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Now if that has taken place in us, or shall take place in us, then we are delivered at once from the guilt of original sin; we are new creatures: "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. Old things have passed away and behold all things are become new". What a beautiful church God looks on when He looks on the new creation. Rejoice in that which I create. Behold I create Jerusalem a joy and a rejoicing in the earth. (Ref. Isaiah 65 v 18) This is the creation of God. Here is a church that has lost, as to the guilt of it, that original depravity that came by Adam's sin, and now the Lord looks on that new creation, that blessed church, and says to her "Thou art all fair ... there is no spot in thee". And Paul, in the chapter which I read this evening, says that Christ gave Himself for the church that He might present her without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Now in the Scripture a spot was ordinarily the beginning of leprosy as you find in the history of leprosy as the Lord gave it in Leviticus;

that if a bright spot were seen then there was a suspicion of leprosy. The bright spot, the leprosy of sin, our original sin, is in us, but if we are new creatures, if Christ's spotless robe has been imputed to us, if our sin was taken from us and imputed to Him, and He made an end of it by dying, then that spot, that fault is removed. What an amazing act of grace and love and power we have here, that God should take sinners who are as wicked as the veriest reprobate in hell and make them spotless through the spotless obedience of Jesus Christ imputed to them through the imputation to Him of their sin. This demands, and will eternally receive, praises from all the Lord's people. Do you hope that you have lost the original debt, not at present, in your experience, but as being a new creature, a new creation? As having had given to you a robe spotless, a nature faultless. Men will never find heaven who do not lose their original depravity. Mind that truth dear friends; it is not a bare, a dry doctrine, it is a great, a wonderful truth, you cannot enter heaven with your original depravity, and you cannot lose it except by being in Christ, a righteous person, and by Him made a new creature, a creature so spotless as that God Himself does declare - and His, the lip of truth - that there is no spot, no leprosy, no fault.

Secondly the fault of our actual transgressions whereby we continually defile ourselves. This is removed as to its dominion. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law" - that stirs and provokes sin and gives it its power in a person - "ye are not under the law, but under grace" - whereby ye are saved. And here is that great work of the eternal Spirit in the heart new created, whereby faith is drawn into exercise on God and whereby the sinner becomes acquainted with the Trinity in salvation. Here faith goes, as directed by the Spirit, to the blood of Jesus Christ, and sees there all that cleansing efficacy that is necessary and, as original depravity is removed by righteousness and a new creation, so is the actual sin to be obliterated, done away eventually, and the people of God are to be really and actually and everlastingly, sinless. God will never have a polluted person standing in His glorious presence. O sinner, you must be made right, you must be made both righteous and holy before you can be made happy. And this righteousness and this holiness is imputed and imparted. They are never acquired. Mind it, they are never acquired. They are given,

really given, given by God.

And the third fault is to be removed. Adam's body turned to dust long ago. Abel's body turned to dust. The bodies of the prophets and all who died in faith, as Paul speaks in the Hebrews, not having received the promises, and martyrs who have been martyred for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and all who are in the graves, and in the sea; the precious dust that shall yet be corrupt and lie in the grave; all this shall be raised up. And how? How will this dust, now corrupted and polluted, how shall this be spotless, blameless, faultless in the presence of God? Well, the Holy Ghost tells us distinctly, saying of Jesus Christ: "Who shall change our vile body" - the word is "the body of our humiliation" - Who shall change our vile body and fashion it like unto His glorious body according to the power whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." It is a great humiliation to be mortal. It is a great part of the curse to be mortal. A very great humiliation for these bodies to be dead and buried, and a great honour it will be for these bodies to be raised again incorruptible. This mortal shall put on immortality; this corruptible must put on incorruption. The body, when buried, is given, not as a property to the grave, but sown as a seed. It is sown in dishonour, it shall be raised in glory, the glory of likeness to the body of Christ which is a spiritual body now. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; therefore never again to die. It is sown in dishonour, the dishonour of original sin, and actual sin, though not actual sin amongst men after grace is given. It shall be raised in glory. O what an event will be the resurrection, what a wondrous circumstance will that be, that shall change the whole Israel of God, lying under the ground, decomposed, and God shall say to the graves, awake, awake My dust. My dead body arise, as it is in the prophecy of Isaiah. "Awake ye that dwell in the dust". Blessed be God for this great hope that some of us have, that the third fault mentioned shall be done away.

Now look at the presentation of these people. "And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory". Have you got a hope? And it is to be "with exceeding joy", the joy of having no sin. The grief of a child of God is that he is a sinner. His exceeding joy will be that he has lost his sin, his sinfulness. His grief here is that he cannot cease from sin. His joy there will be that he has no sin, and

no inclination, and no temptation, no circumstances to allure him, no devil to tempt him, no wicked heart to deceive him. Present it to God before the presence of His glory, means, as one apprehends, before God Himself, where His glory shall shine and bring into an instantaneous and abiding conformity to it, all who see it, for this seems to be set forth in the epistle of John where he says, "We know not what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." What a wonder it will be, will it not, if you find yourselves in heaven, if I find myself in heaven, and this wicked heart that we carry about with us, these abominations that trouble us, and the sins that shame us, and often bring a cloud and distance between God and our souls, gone, for ever gone, for ever gone. Sin washed away, robes washed in the blood of the Lamb, and the presence of all the saints of the Most High; complete persons, not souls only, not spirits of just men made perfect only, with God, but their bodies also. Heaven is not complete yet. The saints in glory are not complete yet. They are completely happy in their manner and their measure now, but they are not completed yet. They will never be complete till their bodies, the companions of their souls, the companions of their sorrows and of their joys, till their very bodies shall be raised and again united to their souls, and shall be for ever with the Lord. Will the meeting of body and soul of a saint be in the air? Will all that mighty and innumerable multitude of holy spirits, spirits of just men made perfect, leave heaven with the Lord Jesus when He shall come to quicken His people's bodies, raise them from their graves? Will they all come with Him and meet their bodies in the air? Paul says of all living saints, they shall be caught up into the air to meet the Lord. Will the great gathering be there? I only speak this as a suggestion. God only knows. But whether it be there, or whether the union shall take place in glory, it matters not if we be but with Him, if we be but cleansed from our three faults, which embrace all our sins; if we be but delivered from indwelling sin, and from sin-procured mortality and are gathered up to be for ever with the Lord. O what a wonder it will be. How many of us have a living hope that so it will be with us? Have you seen the Lord Jesus? Have you seen Him by faith to be all righteousness for you? at least a hope that He will be that. All holiness in you, all goodness, all the blessedness, the perfection, that God will have His chosen people possess and shine in. Have you

seen all that to be in the very Person of Jesus Christ? that your blessing consists in Christ being yours, and in you; in His life, in His righteousness; that your union with Him consists in His having come down to you on earth and made you one with Him in your soul's life and your soul's hope and your soul's experience in some measure. Well might the Holy Spirit write by Paul that God had united good hope through grace with everlasting consolation. The everlasting consolation is perhaps but little known here, but it will be known in all its fullness, and in all its unintermitted end and sweetness when, if it be so with us, we reach heaven. Now Jude says, to this God, to Jesus Christ, immediately to the Father in Him, and to the Spirit proceeding from them both, "To the only wise God our Saviour" - only wise, wise in His disposals of us, wise in sending to us what He does, wise in giving us, wise in withholding from us, wise in this, and wise in that solemn dispensation of His providence - to God who is only wise; our Saviour who has plucked us as brands from the burning; our Saviour who has forbidden sin to have dominion over us; our Saviour in removing pollution from us, in taking the filthy rags from us and giving us His spotless, perfect robe; our Saviour in delivering us from temptation, and helping us in affliction; "Our Saviour", there is a sweetness in it - may the Lord bring it to us - be glory. The glory of eternal deity shining in the sacred person of the Saviour; the glory of eternal love in electing us; the glory of sovereign grace in delivering us from sin's dominion; the glory of God here is very great and is to be given to Him in the songs of praise which shall for ever and ever be sung. "And majesty" No flippancy, no flippancy. God is to be had in reverence, and will it not be so? That the emanations of His majesty will be so surrounding and filling His saints that they, all of them, will in glory unite with the cherubims who, each one with six wings, shall for ever and ever be covering his feet with twain of them, and with twain of them covering his face, and with other twain of them flying in swift obedience. Majesty shining in God will make us understand and glory in our creatureship for ever and ever and bow in the deepest reverence before the Divine Being who shines in His majesty. "Dominion" over us and all creatures. Dominion in heaven is Christ's and the Father's and the Spirit's. Angels and dominions and powers are subject unto Him as Peter says, and we shall be. We are now, and blessed be God there are moments when we are willingly His subjects; when every

thought - it may be but for a moment or two - but every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. O what will it be to be in that state when there wont be one single rebellious thought and there wont be one gadding thought; there wont be one restless wish; when the whole being of a child of God shall be taken up with God, and filled with God. "Dominion and power" to preserve in being all who are there; to preserve all in bliss, all who are filled with bliss. Yes, this power will have to keep all creatures in being. He upholds all things now by the word of His power, and He must do, and will do it through eternity. We shall be as much held in the hand of omnipotence in heaven if we get there as we are today in our temporal being upheld. O what do we need? Everything that God has decreed to give. "Power", power to preserve us in that happy, holy state; power to continually send forth emanations of glory to fill and satisfy all who gaze upon them, and feel their inflowing. And this ascription is "both now and ever. Amen". May our hearts say Amen. I daresay sometimes some of you think how short lived your thanksgiving is, how very momentary your praises are, but if ever, for a moment, you have thanked God from a renewed heart and praised Him out of a sense of His mercy and love to you, it is but the beginning of a lasting song; as sometimes we sing - "Thus we begin the lasting song."

AMEN.