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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday evening 28 July 1935

ROMANS 9 V 33

"As it is written, Behold, I lay in
Zion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and
whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed"

Implied in the text, we have two different dispensations, the Mosaic dispensation, and the gospel dispensation. The first ended, alas, in the utter rejection of Christ on the part of the people, and then the rejection of the people by God. That rejection continues; it has not come to an end, but at present it continues. The gospel dispensation we have, and how near the end of the present dispensation is, one would not venture an opinion beyond saying that there are signs that it is near to us and that the solemn prophecy of Amos may be coming, may indeed have commenced. "I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD," when men shall walk from the north to the east seeking the word of the LORD and shall not find it. Perhaps there was never more preaching than now; perhaps there was never less profitable, spiritual hearing and nourishment than now. If, in His infinite goodness to us as a little congregation, God continues to give appetite, thirst, for the bread and water of life, we may hope that He will continue to give bread, the bread of life and the water of life. Just let me say this, if you lose your appetite for God, as a people, you may have a man in the pulpit, but you will have neither bread nor water from heaven, and I warn you, my friends, of the danger you may be in, a solemn danger. O, it is terrible for an individual, for a community, for a congregation, to lack an appetite for God. Christ came, according to prophecy and promise, but He did not meet the carnal expectation of the Jews. They looked for a King; when the King came in the form of a poor man - who was so poor He had not where to lay His head - they rejected Him; they turned their back on Him. If the princes of that day had known that the Lord of glory was in their midst, they would not have crucified Him, so Paul says to the Corinthians. But they knew Him not, because He was there in a mystery

- The wisdom of God in a mystery - and they said "Away with Him, away with Him; crucify Him, crucify Him." We should be no better today if Christ were here in the form, in which He was there among the Jews, without God. That dispensation ended and I want to draw your attention more particularly this evening to what I just named this morning, the Priesthood of Christ. Salvation depends on it, results from it, is enjoyed when He communicates the fruit of His Priestly work to His people. When the Jewish, the Mosaic dispensation ended, then the first heaven and the first earth passed away. God had no further use for them. The tabernacle, with all its beauty; the temple, with all its glory; all the things, so beautifully typical, were useless when the anti-type came. But during His ministry on earth Christ was a prophet; not acting as a priest, but living as a prophet; the promised prophet, as Moses said: A prophet like unto me will the Lord your God raise up unto you from among the people; Him shall ye hear. And you find of course, have found, in your reading of the Scriptures that that office of prophet was fulfilled by Christ when He again and again told the people that He did not speak His Own words, but the Father's; that whatsoever He had heard His Father speak, He came to speak, and the things He had seen His Father do, He came to do. And so, as a prophet, mighty in deed and word, to whom the poor people gave ear, of whom it is said, He teaches with authority, not as the scribes. And of the people, it is said, the poor of the people understandeth Him. They heard Him gladly. When He came to the cross, two things happened, took place. First, He passively received the curse of God; it was what men have always called the passive sufferings of Christ, when, without resistance; when, in humble obedience; He received into His soul the curse of God. "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree". But there was another thing in Christ at that very time; then He did take on Himself openly that Priesthood to which He was called after the order of Melchisedec, and when He said "It is finished", He finished the first heaven and the first earth. He acted as the Priest, the great High Priest of our profession. When He said "It is finished", He just finished the first. And the complete act of a Priest, our great High Priest, finished law; He fulfilled it. Finished transgression, finished sin; He made an end of sin. He died, He rose again; then opened, then commenced, the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. That new heaven and new earth we have in Emmanuel's

land, the land which is very far off, but from that new heaven comes the church of God. "I saw", says John in the Revelation, "the holy city descending out of heaven from God as a bride adorned for her husband". "I saw", he said, "the holy city descending from heaven, having the glory of God." In this new heaven and new earth there is our great High Priest. If you have a case for Him, take it to Him. If you have a leprosy go to Him with it. If you have an offering to God, go with it and offer it through the Priest. He answers perfectly the imperfect type, the type I mean at this moment of the priest being the medium and the only way of dealing with God, for that nation. No man, not a priest, might offer anything to God in the way of either sacrifice or offering. Almost all things were, by the law, purged with blood. Everything, every communication from God, every offering made to God, must be, and was, through the priest. Now the anti-type of this is Jesus Christ, and His poor people. So I believe I may say this, it is a most encouraging doctrine; it is a most inviting doctrine; it is complete. It is wonderful that a poor, wretched, miserable, sinful creature, quickened by the Holy Spirit, conscious of his sins, convinced of his sins, painfully carrying a sense of his sins in his conscience, may, does and must, by the Holy Spirit, go to God with all he has, all he feels, all he suffers, all he desires; to the great High Priest of his profession. Does that suit us? Yes, if we are under the teaching of the Spirit it must do. Let us, for a moment, consider the offering that Christ offered God. Goats, sheep, bulls, slain, offered to God, and their blood sprinkled the altar, the horns of the altar and the people, according to the commanded rite; the anti-type is this one offering, once in the end of the world, to put away sin. The only way to God, under the old dispensation, as I said, was by the priest. The only way now for poor, wretched, guilty people, is by Jesus Christ. "I am the Way". The way from hell to heaven; from sin to holiness; from guilt to justification; from weakness to strength; from darkness to light. The way from self-
abhorrence to a sense of divine acceptance is by Jesus Christ. He that believeth this shall not be ashamed. What have you to offer? My believing friends, what have you to offer God? If nothing, beyond this, as to the nature of it, a broken and a contrite heart, you may take it, but he that offers the blood of a bullock or a heifer is as if he cut off a dog's head. If you bring your poor self, with all your trouble and misery and bondage and fear to the Lord Jesus, then you

bring an offering that is acceptable to God, and, more than this, the persons of the people of God, offered to God through Jesus Christ, are acceptable. Paul teaches this when he says, that the offering of the Gentiles is acceptable. How could it be apart from Jesus Christ? Do you take yourselves on occasions? Do you take your poor selves and entreat God to accept of you by Jesus Christ? That is according to Scripture. The offering up of the Gentiles is acceptable to God. It is through Jesus Christ. Now this, while it is the death blow of pride, is the encouragement of faith. Will the Lord accept a worm? Will He look on a Gentile dog? Will He hear the prayers of a poor, wretched creature, such as I myself am? Then I will venture; I will venture to pray. There are many difficulties in the way of believing and of praying; many temptations. A legal heart, a blinded understanding will set before you many difficulties. Some providences which appear to you perhaps to be against you, as if God were fighting against you. The devil will come, and the devil can be a Calvinist when he wants to keep you from praying. He will be a Calvinist thus; you believe in God's decrees? You say, yes. You believe everything is fixed, that what God has decreed must take place, and that nothing can alter or change in any way or degree what God has decreed. You assent to it, not realising, not suspecting, what the devil means. Then he will say, now why do you pray? What use is there in praying? And so the devil's calvinism will hinder you for the time and would dash you against God's sovereignty if permitted. But now the Spirit comes and makes you believe that God has decreed that a beggar should beg, that a sinner should ask for forgiveness, that a guilty person should ask for justification, that a thirsty soul should ask for the water of life, that a weak creature should ask for divine strength, and all this - and I would press this on your attention - all this through our great High Priest. And this is my reason for insisting on it in this manner this evening, that it may be an encouragement to us that you, poor, tried people, tried by the devil, tried by your sins, tried by some providences, may, notwithstanding all that, nay, with all that, go to this great High Priest. And consider this, too, that this, our great High Priest was, when here, a sufferer. He suffered temptation; He suffered affliction and He thereby did acquire an ability to succour tempted people. Says Paul - He is able to succour because He Himself hath suffered, being tempted. This is an additional reason why we should

go to Him as our great High Priest. He wont despise you; He wont be ashamed of you. You are ashamed of yourself, as well you may be, but He wont be ashamed of you. No. It is said, He is not ashamed to call them brethren. O, think of the eternal Son of God in your nature, calling you brethren, and telling you that He is not ashamed to call you brethren. Nay, just when He was to ascend to heaven, He sent this message to His disciples by Mary Magdalene. "Go and tell My disciples, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, to My God and your God", thus showing the intimate relationship, the near and dear brotherhood, between Himself and His people. And whosoever believeth on Him in this particular shall not be ashamed. The Jews would not have Him as a King, and when Pilate wrote on the cross "The King of the Jews", their bitterness continued and made them bold enough, impudent enough, to say to Pilate "Write not the King of the Jews, but that He said, I am the King of the Jews." But Pilate wrote what was true - The King of the Jews. Does a Gentile here say, but I am not a Jew. Paul says in this Epistle: He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, and circumcision is not of the flesh but of the Spirit, whose praise is not of men but of God. So he brings in Gentiles and calls them Jews, spiritual Jews. He is a King. Do you believe in Him as a King? Zechariah tells us of this Priest being crowned, a crowned Priest on His throne, ruling the universe; angels made ministers, ministers of vengeance when God will use them. One angel went and slew thousands of God's enemies and the enemies of His people in one night. And the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him. King of kings, Lord of lords. My friends, you who have faith, go to this King. The god of this world would fain be your king. Go to King Jesus and say to Him, as sometimes you sing

Reign o'er us as King, accomplish Thy will

Were miracles necessary, He could perform them. He is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever. If Elijah today needed ravens to bring him bread and flesh, they would go with them. He is King my friends. King over your circumstances, reigning over them. And, whereas the enemy and your unbelief would say of some trouble, this is certainly against you, the King will turn it to your account, and you will say, O what a good, blessed King is King Jesus. And whosoever believeth on Him in this shall not be ashamed.

Let us look for a little moment - I am afraid I cannot continue very long; my voice has become troublesome - let us look at what is said about this believing. He shall not be ashamed. One thing is certain; it does not mean that a child of God shall not be ashamed of himself. Thou shalt never open thy mouth because of shame when I am pacified toward you. The deeper your conviction of sin, the deeper and more sincere your feelings and confessions of unworthiness, the deeper your sense of the majesty and the glory of God, the deeper will be your shame. The more you see of your unprofitableness, of your unbelief, of your base treatment of God, your best Beloved, the more will you be ashamed of yourself. But what is intended here is this, you shall not be ashamed of Christ and of God in Him, and of the Holy Ghost. You say, I shall never do that. Peter said to the Lord, I will go to prison with Thee and I will die with Thee. I will never deny Thee. But Peter rested on himself and so his self let him go down into a wicked denial of his Lord and Master. They shall not be ashamed of the Trinity; Three in One, One in Three, in the unity of the Divine Essence, a mystery, a mystery believed, never understood. Do not try to understand God. He who understands God is God. None can comprehend eternal Deity but God Himself, but what is revealed is revealed for faith, and you will honestly and humbly confess at times the adorable Trinity, and, as you feel interested, as you receive the love of the Father, the blood of the Son, and the grace of the Spirit, you will love each Person in the Godhead. There is a distinct love felt by the child of God at times; love to the Father whose love was manifested in that He sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. You will love the Son; O, you will love the Lord Jesus for becoming the Lord Jesus and dying for you; for interceding in heaven for you. And you will love the Holy Ghost for quickening you and teaching you and helping you.

Not be ashamed. Martyrs were not ashamed nor afraid of the fire, when they were called to confess God. You wont be ashamed of Christ. He endured the cross, despised the shame for you. When a little of His glory is revealed in your hearts, then you will glory in Him, and say, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." A double crucifixion produced in the heart by a revelation of

Christ. Ashamed of Jesus, sooner far let everything in the world, in creation blush, than I should blush for the Name of Christ. Ashamed of His Person? No. Of His life, a perfect life? No. Of His death? That is my hope, that is my glory.

Ashamed of the Spirit? No. That Holy Dove who came, and has sometimes come when I have been in trouble, and helped my infirmities with groanings that could not be uttered; that came and killed my legality, again and again; that came and helped me, that gave wings to my faith, and strength to my hope, and life to my spirit; that Holy Spirit. My brethren, only Trinitarians will go to heaven. Only Trinitarians have communion with God on earth. Look well to this.

They shall not be ashamed of the throne of grace. Who can express what relief he has found at the throne of grace. Help has been conveyed to his soul at the throne of grace. What comfort his heart has conceived by some sense of God's smile and favour and blessing at the throne of grace. Who can say what burdens have been lifted, what clouds have been scattered, what miracles have been wrought, at the throne of grace. O, the sweetness of prayer. It is a relief; Ah it is a great relief. In prayer, real prayer, there is worship. In real prayer there is wrestling with God. In real prayer there is laying hold of God, and making peace with God. In real prayer there is casting burdens on Him, making known requests to Him, bringing every trouble to Him; yea, casting yourselves on Him, and you wont be ashamed of that. This is your boast, this is your glory, that God has given you a voice of prayer, and has bowed down His ear to hear that prayer, and you may have said: "Blessed be God who hath not turned away my prayer nor His mercy from me". You are not to be ashamed of the helps you have had, yea, of the exploits you have done. "The people which know their God shall be strong and shall do exploits". One of the greatest exploits you will ever do is to believe in God and go to Him by the Priest, with all your sins. You think that is not much, perhaps, some of you. You wont say it if ever you get an experience of it. Not be ashamed of answers to prayer. Ah, the natural man says - no such thing as prayer; no such thing as answers to prayer. And the dead Calvinist and the devil together say the same. A child of God says, I was in trouble; I knew not what

course to take; I was kept from going to friends; I took my trouble in secret to the Lord; I kept it from all human gaze; I kept it from all human sympathy. I took it to God and nobody knew of it but God and He bowed down His ear to me; He answered me. He answered me in two ways. He gave me a promise; He made me believe I should be delivered and I did believe; I was delivered. I got deliverance in my hand, the hand of my faith, before God wrought it for me actually. And will the man who has had that experience be ashamed? He believes in God; He believes in Christ; and faith has made that possible to him that was not possible naturally. "To him that believeth all things are possible" and this is one of them. O carry that in your bosom, that wonderful deliverance, two-fold; first in faith, then actually done. I have walked about Brighton with these two things. Before deliverance, I believed deliverance would come; then I have had deliverance. Are you ashamed of that? I would humbly say, No. No believer shall be ashamed of that mercy.

They shall not be ashamed of their hope. "Hope maketh not ashamed". That is connected with the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. This hope is not only for time; more especially it is for eternity. Hope all that heaven has good. Well, we may boast of a good hope through grace; we may bless God for a good hope through grace. "The righteous", in such experience, "is bold as a lion", says to all difficulties and hindrances, hinder me not, I am bound for heaven. My face is set for heaven; my heart is after heaven; my pantings are after God who makes heaven. "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed."

He shall not be ashamed of his gracious experience. There is a good deal of experience of which we may well be ashamed. Some hopes have been blighted altogether and will never be realised. Some feelings have been blighted. A good deal of legality, wrong building, wrong hopes, and of these we are ashamed. This shame perhaps belongs more to matured Christians than to young ones. You young people who fear God, you may now be just like children. "When I was a child" says the Apostle, "I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things". And I judge that every child of God during his, if I may say so, his minority, during the years of his infancy, and

perhaps just as he is attaining to the age of a young man, has many things which he looks back upon and says, I was greatly mistaken there; I thought that was from God that I now know was not; I thought these exercises were right which now I know were only carnal. I made many mistakes. Well, the Lord is not offended with you. So far from rejecting you on that ground He ordained that blood should be for those who had sinned the sin of ignorance. Do not be too much cast down if you are living to prove a good deal of your religion belonged to yourself and did not come from God. Mind the nugget, the little bit of gold. "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire". But they shall not be ashamed of what God wrought in them.

And lastly they shall not be ashamed when they stand in the great day of judgment. Christ will put them on the right-hand; they shall not be ashamed. What they did on earth He owns; you gave a cup of cold water to a saint because he was a saint in your judgment and Christ accepted it and owns it on that great day. And O, what a wonder, what an amazement. They said, when did we do this Lord; when did we do this. But He owns them and that is everything. Will He own me? that is the question. Will He own you? that is the question. Now if the Lord visits you in love you will say

Bold shall I stand in that great day
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
Fully absolved by this I am
From sin's tremendous curse and shame

Now I leave it. I am afraid I have not made some of you hear but I have done my best. May the Lord command His blessing to rest on us as a people.

AMEN.