

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham  
at Galeed Chapel Brighton  
on Sunday evening 17 May 1936

1 TIMOTHY 4 v 8

"For bodily exercise profiteth little: but  
godliness is profitable unto all things, having  
promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come"

That the Apostle was inspired by the Spirit to speak this word describing the apostate Church of Rome there is no doubt. That pagan church that she is, bringing paganism and christening it Christianity, "speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared as with a hot iron; forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth". That apostate Church, Rome, the object of divine anger, punishment, vengeance; drunk with the blood of the saints. What is Spain suffering now but the punishment of God for her fearful shedding of blood in the days of the Inquisition, and her murdering the poor people of Holland, burying many of the saints alive. O, what a day of reckoning is coming, when the doors of those abominable places, Nuneries and Monastries shall fly open. Men are doing well to advocate the opening of those prisons, but they will only open really when God sets them open by His own mighty power. Whether we, whether this nation, has more to fear from Popery in the future, or from the kings of the North, yea of the South, some may say; Pagan Rome, now godless Germany, the anti-God Russia, blessed be God, the Church is safe, but she must suffer. She is invited to come into chambers provided for her. "Come My people, enter thou into thy chambers, shut thy doors about thee, hide thyself as it were for a little moment until the indignation be overpast". Let us seek to obey the merciful invitation, fly to God by prayer, by faith in the Lamb of God; safety is there. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High" - in the eternal purpose of grace - "shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty". Look to your standing brethren; see if your feet are placed on the Rock of Ages; if God is the Object of your faith, the ground of your confidence, the source of your life, and peace and

strength and comfort. The day may not be distant when there will be mighty movements in the providence of God and when there will be a separation which we cannot make, when the precious shall indeed be taken away from the vile and separated; a day when the thoughts of men's hearts shall be opened, when empty professors shall be made manifest as such, and when trembling saints shall be confirmed, weak hands strengthened, feeble knees confirmed, fearful hearts spoken to encouragingly. "Fear not, God, even your God will come and save you". Perhaps the church of God is to get lower still than she is at present, but the eye of God is on the remnant; a remnant indeed. What changes I have seen here; 53½ years ago and more since I came. I have buried a chapel full of people. Many, many saints have gone to heaven, so to speak, from this chapel. Recently, as some of you know, we have lost more than 20 members of the church and congregation; 23 members, 24 of the church and congregation, within a year and a half. What the Lord is going to do with us we know not. With regard to myself, my desire is, while I live, to honour God in preaching; that He may be first. That you, if He will so honour me, may be nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine. That your loins may be girded about, that your feet may have on them the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace, and that you may be as men awake and waiting for the Lord. It is good when God is first. He is doing one thing for me, I believe, at times; making Himself first of all. None before Him, none like Him, none worthy of being spoken of, of being preached. And if you have your senses rightly exercised to discern between good and evil, to take strong meat as well as milk, for your nourishment and strength and confirmation, your hearts will be again and again brought to this point; God in Christ is first, Alpha; and God in Christ is last, Omega. The beginning of your life, the beginning of your faith, the strength of your faith, the ground of your faith, the Object of your faith, the fullness of your faith to live on; all in Himself.

"Bodily exercise profiteth little" If you come with your body only, if your hearts are not in the service, what profit do you get? "Bodily exercise profiteth little". Literally, it is so, and religiously it is so. Attend to this word. "Bodily exercise profiteth little"; does you no real good, no abiding good. "But godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life

that now is, and of that which is to come." "Godliness". It appears to express the whole of the spiritual life and exercises of a child of God, of the people of God. And in regard of the Church in her corporate capacity, her public worship, it includes and embraces the whole of worship and also each individual child of God will find this to be true. Worship is a great word, embracive of everything that is right as between God and the soul. When we worship God in spirit and in truth, because He is a Spirit, then, and for that time, we are universally right as in His sight. Our judgement of our things may, in many ways, be faulty, our understanding of divine things may be very small, our hold of doctrine may not be strong, but while we are worshipping the Three One God, when faith and hope and love are going out to Him from our hearts, and when He most mercifully responds, speaking, shining, helping, blessing, then the whole of vital religion is there. That is godliness. Is it not profitable? Is it not profitable to you in your life? Come to your home. If you get near to God, will it not affect you in your home? Come to your business. Is it not profitable there? If you are a master, surely you will be just and generous and tender. If you are a servant, surely you will be conscientious. Godliness is profitable to you in all things. Come to your afflictions. Is it not profitable there? Does it not say, watch the hand of God? Submit yourselves unto Him as unto that Father who corrects, not for His own pleasure, but our profit that we may be partakers of His holiness. Come to your comforts. Is not godliness profitable in them? Who gave them? On whom does the continuance of them depend? Godliness will say, these came from God; these obey Him. If He said, leave that person, leave that child of Mine, you cannot keep. Is it not profitable for you with a view in respect of the future? What it holds for you while you are here, you know not, but godliness says, depend on Him who has blessed you. Look to that fullness that has hitherto supplied you. Lean on that arm that has never let you fall. It is profitable unto all things.

Profitable in the church, profitable with regard to your fellow members. It will make something of that word of Paul to the Ephesians. "The whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase in itself." There is reality, there is comfort, there is peace in this godliness, as

exercised in the church of God. Take heed to this, take heed to it my brethren, take great heed to your condition as a church. I have seen many changes here and some very remarkable things, interpositions of God, the mighty grace He has manifested. We should praise Him. As the unworthy Pastor I want to praise Him. We have had sorrows, and we have sorrows. Most mercifully God has sanctified them in some degree as far as I am able to form a judgement by what I know.

"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

We have to look at the life that now is. What shall we understand by it? Our mere physical life? No; that is included. Our natural wants? No; they are included; but more than that. "Having promise of the life", the natural and the spiritual life, the natural needs and the spiritual needs, the natural trials and the spiritual trials, the natural weaknesses and the spiritual weakness; and the promise relates to all of them. What is your natural life? "A vapour" James says, "which appeareth for a little time, then vanisheth away". Do not think too much about it. This awful day of fashion; this dreadful day when the sense of morality is very much deadened, as we can see, alas, about us every day. And on the Lord's Days as I come to the services I see sights that, if one had more grace, would all but break one's heart to see; the lovers of pleasure and the dreadful condition of the women, as nude as they can be almost, and men do not think this life is a vapour in these cases. Do you? What is your life? A vapour. And these poor worldlings, not prayed for by Christ, in most of the cases, they go madly on, not thinking of that Scripture that Asaph wrote: "Thou hast set them in slippery places" Never envy anybody whose course apparently is quite easy. Think of the slippery place. Better to be in a rough place that hinders your progress, as you think, than in a slippery place which might soon land you in destruction. Life? The vicissitudes of it, the burdens of it, the sorrows of it, are provided for in the promise for the church of God. All our natural wants are just summed up. "Having food and raiment let us be therewith content". Bread shall be given, water is sure. If you gather but little you will have no lack. If you gather much you will have nothing to spare in the end, nothing to take away with you. Our life is a poor life naturally because of sin; that

mars everything, that darkens every prospect, that says to all joy, it is short; to all good, it may soon pass away. Do not think too much of it, but do not think too little of it. Remember God has spoken about it and given a promise, a promise of this life.

But then I would not - I do not think we ought to - confine the word to this natural life. There is a spiritual life. Having promise of that. What is this spiritual life? You have it in the words of Christ, largely: "In the world ye shall have tribulation". By Paul, the Holy Ghost says that the whole of the new creation groaneth and travaileth until now in pain, and the whole of it subjected to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. You have that in the Romans. The new creature, the new creation subjected to vanity by God who hath subjected the same in hope. And this is the creature, this is the spiritual life in this world. In the world Christ promised tribulation. "In the world ye shall have tribulation". And the promise covers the whole, the promise covers the whole. No fear that God does not speak to; no need He has not provided for; no weakness that shall not be met by the grace, the strength of Christ. We little know, and not at all naturally, and unless we come into some real need, some real exercise, then we come into this. "Having promise". If this spiritual life is, as I have said, there is a need for a promise, is there not? "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus". Let me for a short time direct your attention to that supply, the fullness, according to the riches of God in glory. What are these riches? The riches of love, everlasting love. The riches of grace to overcome sin. The riches of patience to bear with wayward children. The riches of mercy to melt hard, stony hearts. The riches of wisdom to guide poor wanderers, that they shall not always be vagrant, but have a home in Christ. The riches of power to support them; of protection to preserve them. What do you think of that? What do you think of Christ in this regard? If you have ever seen Him in the way I very feebly mention Him to you now, I will tell you one thing, when you saw Him you fell in love with Him and when you fell in love with Him you wanted a match to be made, and when it was made in your experience then you wanted that, that Hart mentions

Let the marriage be complete

To see Him is to love Him. If the princes of this world had known Him they would not have crucified Him. You would not crucify Him, would you, those of you who know Him? They would not have done. Paul tells us "Having promise of this life", this pure life, this spiritual life. What is this spiritual life, but the inbreathing of the Holy Ghost bringing the eternal life of Christ? What is it but the soul's hungering for God? What is it? The soul's desire to belong to the mystical body of Christ. Many people belong to the visible church. There never was a pure, an absolutely pure, gospel church in this world. There always have been hypocrites and people who have mechanically united themselves, but there is a mystical church, invisible, though in the world, and the soul by faith says let me be one in that mystical body. Let my soul be united to Christ, a member of His body. Now the promise is to that life. "Your life", says Paul, to saints, "is hid with Christ in God". Who can touch it? That life is in the secret place of the Most High, expressed beautifully by the Spirit of God through Paul. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world." "Promise". Now Christ said, concerning this, "Because I live, ye shall live also". Sin in you, in me, would kill it if it were possible. The deceits of Satan, the wiles of the world, and the abominations of Rome would kill it if it were possible. No. "Your life is hid with Christ in God". And when our languid life is spent, as to feeling, when exercise has exhausted us, when temptations have wearied us, and when compliance has defiled us and brought a distance between our souls and God, and when God has chastised us, and even after chastisement has said of us, they went on their own way, frowardly went on, He says, I will restore comforts unto Him; I have seen his ways, his stubbornness, I have seen that he has been like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, I will restore comforts unto him; the manifestations of that to a child of God breaks his heart, fills him with shame for his sins, and he cries out of necessity, of sweet necessity by faith he cries, "My Father, the Guide of my youth." The promise is here, I live and you shall live also. Think of it; your life is hid. Devils cannot find it, the world cannot find it. You may often be doubtful about it but it is hid in Christ and there in its source, there in its fullness, there

in its freeness, it is and it is there to supply the fainting saints.

"Having promise of the life that now is". A life of temptation. Three dangers are always about the people of God and in them more or less. One is always in them, sin indwelling. O this monster; I have wished at times I could get him under my feet; that I could put my feet on him in this pulpit. But he is subtle. Preach against him and, as Hart speaks on pride, you may speak it of this

Against it preach, it prompts the speech  
Be silent, still tis there

That will hurt you, grieve you, pain you, shame you, give you many a fall, many a shameful defeat; this wicked self. If the Lord had not promised concerning this, what hope could we have. But He says this - O it is a beautiful word - "Sin shall not have dominion over you" Why? Because you always are hating it? Because you never indulge it? No. No. "For ye are not under the law" - that provokes it - "but under grace", that subdues it. That is a promise that God will subdue our iniquities. Look at your cases. Have you ever found that to be true? "He shall subdue our iniquities." You have gone to Him perhaps with your pride, with your lusts, with your vanity; you have gone to Him with the poor, desultory life you live, hopping here and moving there without purpose often. You have had to go to Him and you have said, O Lord I am sorry. I will be sorry for my sin. He pities all your grief, helps you in your troubles, gives out His word "Sin shall not have dominion over you". He is always uttering kind things to His people. That is a beautiful word of Him in the Psalms: "Thou art fairer than the children of men. Grace is poured into Thy lips" Is it that He should always keep it there? Yes, as to its fullness, but no, as to communications. He will communicate what He has, and it is spoken so. Grace is poured into His lips to convey this to His people. "He will speak peace to His people, but let them not turn again to folly". That is what He does, He speaks peace to them. Peace by His blood has Jesus made; peace by His intercession, He conveys to the soul. Peace with God, reconciliation with all His dealings with you. Stones and boulders and difficulties in the field will not offend you while you have grace in exercise from His fullness. "Promise of this life".

Promise of victory. A very trying word that may be to you. Victory, you say, victory; why I am always being overcome. You must find this, that victory over any sin, any temptation, any iniquity, any affliction, bringing you into sweet submission to God, victory is as much the gift of Christ as was the victory He obtained on the cross, His work. It is all His work. If it were not, would you have that word on your side entirely? The topstone shall be laid on with shouting, grace, grace unto it. No, if Abraham has something of his own to glory in, it won't be before God, Paul says, and that will be said to you. "Promise of this life". Well, what a prospect you have who have promises in your souls.

Promise respecting the devil in relation to yourselves. What is that promise? "God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly". Do you expect that? Christ is expecting till all His enemies be made His footstool, and there are moments when faith is bold enough to go to the Lord and ask for a fulfilment of that word, and in some measure it is done more than once. Promise of that kind secures a child of God from the victory of the tempter. And so we come to the end. Stephen fell on sleep. The saints are said to sleep in Jesus. Sweetly sleep do they who sleep in Jesus. Much they may be mourned by those who are bereaved, but they sleep in Jesus. And that promise relates to the end. To old age I am He, to hoar hairs will I carry you. I have made, I will bear. When saints die young they get an advantage although naturally when death comes to a young person it is depriving them of much of their life. Hezekiah felt this, that the residue of his days was cut off. But O, when a saint dies, be he old or young, what a blessed thing it is for him. He sleeps in Jesus. There is a promise respecting that body. If we believe that Jesus died and rose again they also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. Great will that day be, when the graves shall be opened. The dead in Christ shall rise first, their once vile bodies fashioned like unto His glorious body and they - manifestly new creatures in body as well as soul, - shall be for ever with their Lord. O all this is revealed in the word of God. "Having promise of this life and that which is to come." This can only be looked at. We cannot enter into it except by the anticipation of faith, except by the motions of love to the Lord, and this Scripture, which, though there, only a few speak of it, and that seems to sum up the whole: "Behold what manner of love the

Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God". It is a wonderful thing that God should take a sinner and make of him a son. "And it doth not yet appear 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." How do you know that? Has God ever taught it you? The Scripture teaches it. Having this great doctrine of predestination in the Scripture, we read this: Predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son". You feel just an unutterable, wretched, ugly creature, without form or order in your fallen nature, yet predestination has got this in it, that you, blessed with grace, with life from Christ, with justification by Christ, with sanctification by Christ, are to be one day changed into the image of Christ, body as well as soul. "Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." That dust, that precious dust, Adam's dust, conformed to the image of Christ. Martyrs now crying beneath the altar, of all who die in the Lord, and that pertains to the life to come. O for a sight of it, for a believing anticipation of it, for God to communicate something of it, as to the life of Christ, His righteousness, and His holiness, that we may anticipate the day when we shall be absent from the body, present with the Lord. And when that great Assize shall be set, the body shall be there. "If the Spirit of God dwell in you the Spirit that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies even by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." Now may the Lord look on us. I have just called your attention in these observations to great realities. The world feeds on ashes. You who are made the people of God feed on Christ. The world has an awful end before it; Christ did not pray for it. He prayed for the people, the men who had been given to Him by His Father; and may the attention I have called you to in regard to these things have a weight on your spirit and guide you to prayer and supplication that the word of the text may be an important word to you, guiding you and moving you to pray that what is there said may be spoken to you, be fruitful in you.

AMEN.