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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham  
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton  
on Wednesday evening 26 May 1926.

HYMN 207

Text: 2 Corinthians 4 v 17 and 18

"Our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh  
for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight  
of glory, while we look not at the things  
which are seen, for the things which  
are seen are temporal, but the things  
which are not seen are eternal"

What a wonderful hymn you were just singing, what amazing,  
glorious truths it contains. I hope that you enjoyed the singing  
of it. It is a beautiful hymn, full of gospel, full of truth,  
and of glory, and when such hymns are sung, and the saints can  
sing with the spirit and the understanding, it is an acceptable  
service as the Apostle speaks, making melody in your hearts. And  
I thought for a moment while you were singing, that melody was in  
my heart. O the glories of Emmanuel The Lord give us to see them  
by faith and to love Him in His gospel, to love Him in the hymns  
as they suit us, as they exalt Him, and to sing, as He speaks,  
with the spirit and the understanding in Psalms and hymns and  
spiritual songs, making melody in your hearts. The melody is the  
language of faith, when you can say - "I do approve, and I do  
love that word, that exaltation of Jesus Christ". Let us go on  
dear friends, asking the Lord to enable us more and more to enter  
into the gospel, and if I mistake not, there is the gospel in the  
text.

Contradictions, apparent contradictions in the text - time,  
for a moment; affliction light; things seen not seen; eternal  
things present, and glory seen, so seen as to dim and make unseen  
these temporary things, troubles, afflictions and persecutions.  
What is religion without something of this and what is the world  
when you have got something of this? What is it? Just nothing.  
The coherence of this chapter with the preceding one will, as it  
may be seen by the light and teaching of the Spirit, appear very

beautiful. In the conclusion of the previous chapter, the Apostle says, not to go through it all, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty". He takes the veil from the heart, and then with open face we behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord. The veil is on the heart till removed by the Spirit. The veil is on the heart of the Jew when he reads the law. The law is clear but the eye is dim. There is a veil on the heart; so however clear God's teaching in the law is, there is no sight of it. Then, when the veil is taken away by the Holy Ghost, we behold with open face; the eye of faith open and faith causing you to look to the Lord, and your face is enlightened and not ashamed. "They looked unto Him and were lightened and their faces were not ashamed." How could they be but abashed and deeply penitent and humbled? Everyone is as he looks at the glory of the Lord. But O the shame of guilt, the shame of sin, the shame of lust, the shame of ignorance, He takes away and He gives an open face. There is straitness in us my friends, but none in God. Look at your troubles, and you are straitened; look at the judgments of God, and you are straitened; at your unbelief, and you are straitened. Whatever you look at that is not in, that does not flow from, the Lord, has in it a kind of influence to straiten us and contract our spirits, and the contrary is the effect when the Spirit comes and turns the eye another way and shows to faith what is in God - the glory of the Saviour, of His work, of His death, of His resurrection, of His ascension into heaven, His intercession there. That glory has a wonderful effect. It changes the beholder into its own image. You may not see it yourself as you would wish perhaps, but there it is, the very image of truth, and truth is then in the inward part, and in the hidden part wisdom is known. "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord we are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord". And therefore. Mind the "therefores" of the Bible - you will always find, as God helps you to mind them, some spiritual instruction and entertainment. "Therefore" is not an empty word; it is a word that will carry you to the context, a word that will tell you the reason of this "therefore". Therefore, seeing the glory of God, seeing that glory which changes into its own image the beholder, we, the ministers of the gospel, who suffer persecution

and who might get some temporal advantage by a little trimming, by turning aside, by indulging in a deceitful handling of the word, and so escape some of that cross, we, seeing the glory of the Lord, have renounced the hidden things of shame and walking in craftiness, not handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth in the ministry of it, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. A minister's conscience is a peculiar faculty. If in any measure he consciously holds back from the congregation to which he preaches any part of the truth; if he holds back, or in any measure misrepresents or puts a false gloss on the word; if he at all temporises, then he has not a good conscience. And the Apostle's words are very important where he says, having testified to the resurrection of Christ - herein, in the hope for which he suffered, herein do I exercise myself always to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men. Toward God first. He is first. O it is a solemn thing to be a minister, very solemn. Sometimes the realisation of it in a measure makes one tremble, and the pulpit a most awful place. A man, in the pulpit, may sin more than anyone else can sin in a sense, but grace makes ministers, who are sent by the Lord to preach, honest. That was a great word the Apostle was able to say to the elders of Ephesus, for whom he had sent that he might say farewell. "I have kept back nothing that was profitable to you." So here he, as a minister, renounces the hidden things of dishonesty; does not walk in craftiness, nor handle the word of God deceitfully, but he says - "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them which are lost." Is it not a solemn thing to consider, that people may hear the gospel and never hear it? "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, shut their eyes lest they see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and be converted and I should heal them." Four hearers of the gospel, and three wrong. O my hearers, does it sometimes search you? Do I really hear the gospel? Does it ever come to me in the Holy Ghost? Has it a transforming power in my soul? Does it turn me from the law to the gospel, from Moses to Christ, from sin to God? Does it deliver me from evil?" If our gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the mind of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious

gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." The devil may put shutters before your eyes. He may bring a great big film upon your eyes. He may stir up your native prejudice against Christ, and that holy gospel that you listen to, with perhaps some external approval, may be the savour of death to you. "We are" said the Apostle "a savour of life unto life and a savour of death unto death". Mind your hearing. Two things Christ says about hearing - First "take heed what ye hear" and second "take heed how ye hear". "For we preach not ourselves". A sent minister will not always be speaking in the first person. "We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake". "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness" in creation work "hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This is a testing word. Religion you may have, I may have, without this. This is the test. "Hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face, or the Person, of Jesus Christ." Some will say to Him at the last "Lord, Lord have we not taught in Thy Name and in Thy Name done wonders, cast out devils, and so on", and He will say to them "I never knew you". They never got the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ in their souls. The light never reached them, never reached their hearts. It never showed them Christ. This, this is the test, to try both our state and our scheme; we cannot be right in the rest, unless we think rightly of Him. And the way to think rightly of Him is to get the light of the knowledge of Him shining in the heart by the commandment of God. O what an hour is coming to us, what an hour is coming! When I think at times of my age, and how near naturally speaking I am to eternity, then I ask myself this question "Are you ready? Have you a title? Have you enough to meet the last enemy? Will he be to you the last enemy? Ask yourselves the question and see if you can frame with the Psalmist "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." We do not half believe we are going to die. Of course we know we are naturally. That is one thing, but to believe it in the light of God's teaching, to know what has brought your mortality, to know what sinful mortality means, without grace, to know what a sinful

immortal soul means, without grace, and what a broken law means, without grace, is another thing. Sin gives the law the strength it has to condemn. Then the deliverance is by seeing Jesus Christ in the light of the Holy Ghost.

The Apostle speaks in the following verses of his persecutors, of his perplexities, and that he bears about in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus, and the dying of the Lord Jesus. As Christ died, so the Apostle says in another place "I die daily". Die to self. "I die daily". Do we? There is a world that lives in us. Do we die to it? Sin that struggles in us, do we disallow it? Members are to be mortified by the Spirit. Are we at the business? Do we mortify eyes that look into self and get straitened and distressed? Are they turned even to Him in whom is all the fulness that can possibly be needed, desired and received? It is Christ or hell. It is union with Him, or separation eternally from God, and this is clearly taught us in the scriptures. But then, though this is so, and though it is so wonderful and blessed and sweet to know Jesus Christ, yet that knowledge and the union with Him, you will find to be attended with trouble. A pilgrim is not at home; he is going home, but the wilderness through which he is going as a pilgrim is full of troubles, difficulties, dangers, deaths. He is not at home. A soldier, he is not at rest. He has to war, he goes forth to battle. This is not rest to him. He has an armour, and he has to put it on. He has enemies who are restless, ceaseless, moving against him, warring against his mind, and the law of God and the grace of God, and the law of Christ. And so the Apostle speaks of affliction, pressure - the Spirit pressing after God and the flesh pressing on the Spirit to prevent that movement; the flesh disliking the way, and opposing every step in the way; the law of sin in the members insisting on obedience, and that word exemplified that is in the Galatians - "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other so that ye cannot do the things that ye would"; and the cross of self denial "Except a man deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me" says the Lord Jesus "he cannot be My disciple". Self-denial. "I die daily" says the Apostle. "After the manner of

men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus. I bear about in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus", marks of death. The greatest act of self-denial is to utterly renounce and denounce and forsake self. Self-denial; denying your goodness, your strength and your wisdom and everything that would set up a claim upon God; to deny the whole. And, as you go on and get some experience of God's kindness and love, you will find that self-denial does not grow easier, it does not grow easier. There is one thing that is not weakened in our nature by age, and every operation of nature, and that is sin. Old men get infirmities, and they become acquainted with weakness and a kind of decrepitude comes to them, and then they see there is one thing is not one bit weaker than it was when they started on pilgrimage, and that is sin - the law of sin in the members, and outward things too. No rest here my friends. We may not be pinched by poverty, but we shall be pinched by something. Something will come and say "this is not your rest, it is polluted." Outward things will come. We are not, as they were of old, tempted, sawn asunder, and in many, many unnatural and horrible ways, afflicted, but if we be saints there are some things which will be an affliction to us. Our affliction, says the Apostle, weighty, and you have carried the cross for years, yet it is for a moment, it is light, comparatively light. Compare your affliction with your hope and with Him who is your hope. Compare your affliction with what you deserve - "If with my sins compared how light, and all in faithfulness is sent." Just look at it, dear friends. Time, an empty vapour; a time, a moment, between two eternities; a span-length, just like the weaver's shuttle, shooting in here and out there the next instant. "Time, swift as an Indian arrow flies". And in this time we are living, living our short day and what we are here and what when we die we shall be through eternity. "Our light affliction". Too heavy for you to lift yourself up under when alone, and too long for your patience. As the waters wear the stones, so continued affliction wears out patience. And if we did not get a fresh supply of patience we should be impatient and ready to throw away and cast of all self-denial, and all kinds of affliction. I am speaking to some who are afflicted and I believe I may say to them, as I would say to myself, now if all the temporal things, external troubles, that you have got were

removed, and everything your heart could wish were given you; health without interruption; strength enough for you; everything that you could wish, and it were left to you just to feel what sin is in your members, I am sure I may say for you that you would say "I have got a cross, I have got a sore, I have got a burden, I have a disease, a loathsome disease, and nothing here gives me ease under it. I know it will be my death, and how soon it may be my death I know not. I have got sin in my members." Now this is an affliction and other things are added, more or less, as God sees fit to add them, for in His sovereign wisdom the Lord has weighed the path of the just. "Thou most upright dost weigh the path of the just", and so we live in affliction. But this is not all. This is one side, one part of a christian, an afflicted person - an afflicted soul, an opposed faith, damping things coming on love, and darkness coming before the eye of hope, and thus we have to live, and thus suffer. And the Apostle characterises the affliction in these two words - light and for a moment. Light, when every feeling of your nature is lacerated; light, when you feel, a little more and you would have more than you could bear; yet light, and for a moment. And you say I have had this cross so long it has worn my patience out, and I have thought I could not continue another hour to wait on God; yet it is for a moment. But this is comparatively speaking. O, there is something to look at, my friends; bless God for it; there is a Jesus Christ, there is a gracious God, and Father in Him, and there is the Holy Spirit in Him, this Trinity, having devised good and having revealed a little of that good to us and we have received it by faith. If you look only on the trouble, I know what you will see. One five minutes steadfast gaze on yourself, poor earthy creature; one five minutes gaze on the world that you are in and the things you have to do with it, and the pain and mortification you feel, and the burdens you have to carry, while you look, and while you are thus looking, it will be darkness and dimness and anguish. Look at your family sometimes and you will say "Lord I do not see any grace in my children. O take them not away in their sins", and they may show their enmity. And look at your business and how troublesome it is, how painful it is to you. Look at your disappointments in it. You thought it would be this and it is

another thing altogether. And look at your ambitions, and they are more or less thwarted. A child of God is brought to this - he cannot live for this world; he is not to live for this world; he is not made for this world; he is made for heaven; he is not made for the god of this world; he is made for the God of all grace, and his relationships here are all just for a moment; he is made to live in eternal union, with an ineffable relationship to the God of all grace - the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and if we were tonight, any of us here walking the way to heaven, favoured to get a little inkling of that holy and blessed word that Jesus Christ sent to His disciples by Mary - "Go, tell My disciples, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, to My God and your God" should we look at the world, should we be saying - "but Lord I am in this difficulty, and I have got that need, and I do not know where the supply is coming from?" Should we talk like that to Him? No, we should drop unreservedly into His hands, and feel sweetly that we were in the hands of a good God and a gracious, a considerate, a compassionate, ever ready to help, Father. O this it is that turns the eye another way, away from self, away from the cross.

Let us look, as enabled, for a few minutes, at this. "Our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" - weight, opposed to light; light affliction, weight of glory - "while we look not at the things which are seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal". While we are under these things rightly exercised, they are working for our good. O what a wonder that some temporal trouble, some evil, some persecution it may be for the Lord's sake, should be so sanctified to the soul's profit and be the means of bringing the soul and God nearer to each other, this being His grand design in sending affliction, that we might be partakers of His holiness. This being so, the affliction works, not by way of merit, but by way of God's ordination and disposition; works a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; works a great excess; a great excess repeated; an excess, excess of glory. Well, what God is doing in the saint is wonderful, think of it, and He sometimes says in, and by means of, the light affliction - "My

son, give Me thine heart". He got it years ago did He not? O when the beauties of Christ were first seen, He got the heart then. But since then there have been many lapses, mistakes and falls and deadening things and deathly conditions of mind, many, and He sees these things and says "My son give Me thine heart". And the sinner says "Lord, I cannot keep it. Take and keep it. Keep it; set me as a seal on Thy heart and as a seal on Thine arm; keep me in the fear of Thy Name; keep me looking to Thee; strengthen faith, sweeten care, sanctify trouble, set my heart more and more on divine things, even Thyself." This is the working that the Apostle has here. The working of the flesh is that way, pulling us away from God, and the working of the Spirit in and by affliction, is the other way, drawing the soul after God and bringing the two together. O the contact that sometimes you get; the sweetness for a few minutes that you get; and when you get this does not it make you wish you could have more, more grace? Lord give me what is promised. "He giveth more grace". Mercifully give me more grace. How opposite often we are to this scripture. It is with us. We look at the affliction and it is heavy and wrong. Change comes and the Holy Ghost graciously turns the eye another way. The working is good; you are stirred up to prayer more than you used to be. You are stirred up to this; you believe none is good for you, none is sufficient for you, but God. You have perhaps some inkling of the meaning and the depth, and the height, and the breadth and the length of that scripture spoken to Abraham - "I am the Almighty God, walk before Me and be thou perfect - be thou sincere". "I am Almighty God" - "I am God, all-sufficient", as the word is translated by some. "Cast your cares, your wants, your weakness, your sins, your fears, cast all on Me. I am God all-sufficient. You can have no need that I am not sufficient for, no sin that I cannot conquer, no lust that I am not able to quell. Walk before Me." And the walking before God is by faith. "We walk by faith and not by sight". And this walking is good; O it is good; it brings you to God. This is the walking of which the Apostle speaks in the Hebrews - "that no affliction for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them which are exercised thereby." Lift your head up, and there is no exercise; stoop

under the rod, accept it as from God, and there is a right exercise; there is a proper walking. This is the working - "worketh for us." O God is not unrighteous to forget the work of faith in your soul, and the labour of love in your spirit. He is not unrighteous to forget the patience of hope; that you can say, now and again, as the husbandman waiteth for the early and the latter rain, so my soul at this moment feels it can wait on God. "Worketh for us", poor creatures as we are, poor unbelieving believers, unloving lovers of the Lord, unfaithful as we are. Thus afflictions work well for us. Can you not bring up a good report of God in the afflictions He has laid on you? Can you not say, He has exacted of you less than your iniquities deserved? Is not the testimony of your faith this - He has laid on you less than your sins have called for? And has that word been wonderful to you - it has to me - "I will correct thee in measure" O the beauty of that word "measure". I could never describe its beauty "in measure". And perhaps you have thought of there being no "measure"; that would mean eternity, and eternal hell. But "measure" means there is a limit, a limit to the chastening, a limit to the correction, a limit to the pain, and the shame and the weakness and the sorrow. Who can believe this, one says? You can if God draws your faith out to the Lord Jesus. The world is not big enough for living faith; it is not good enough for the soul; it is not full enough for faith and the wants of a creature. God is; God is; He is enough. "I am God all-sufficient, walk before Me". Walk before your weakness and you will get weaker; walk before your wants and they will magnify, they will grow. But when you walk before the Lord, there is enough. "I am rich" says one; may we say it with him. "I am rich to all the intents of bliss if Thou O God art mine."

There is a looking. "While we look not at the things which are seen", not at the mortifying things; not at the crucifying things; not at the cross, no. You get many a mortification here, many, and as you look at it, you say "It is too much for me, I cannot go on with it". Poor creature, as long as you look at that, you will get more and more mortified. But now, if the Lord comes and says "See, poor sinner, look at what I have provided for you". "See My Son, whom I sent for you". "Look unto His

atoning blood; unto His justifying righteousness; unto His endless mercy - for the mercy of the Lord endureth for ever and ever." " Look unto His power; unto His covenant; unto His promise; unto His faithfulness." "Look at these things, these are eternal; these are your inheritance; these are to be your happiness, always through eternity; these are to fill you with bliss; these are to be your heaven." Who can see these things? The man to whom they are revealed. You can see them in the scripture, and never see them. The man to whom they are revealed, he sees them, and when he sees them he says "I now can enter a little into the word "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." But he can continue and say "God hath revealed them unto me by His Spirit." A little measure of them only, still the things are there. Ah, they are there, and in seeing them God is real, Christ is real, the Holy Spirit is real, the Trinity is real to you. How often have I said to the Lord, "Do make this real to me. A name, if only a name, how empty. But if the Lord makes Himself real to you, then He will fill heaven and earth to you and for you. "All things are yours, whether life or death or the world, or things present or things to come; all things are yours, and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." Well, my dear friends, may this great God come to us. I do pray that He will come to you. More or less I can say, night and day, I pray this for you, that this blessed God would come to you, and come to me. We can never do right without Him and we cannot do wrong with Him.

"Our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look, not at the things which are seen". Oh that we might turn our eyes away from them; that we might pray with the Psalmist "Turn mine eyes away from vanity. Incline not my heart to any covetousness. Turn them away from vanity, that I may look on Thee." We shall tremble if we see Him; we shall fall down in felt corruption if we see Him; we shall follow Hezekiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and all to whom a revelation of Him was granted. In our own manner and measure we shall just follow them all. Each felt this, self-denial, expressed it. "My comeliness

was turned into corruption in me". And that makes way for the beauty and the holiness of the Lord Jesus to become ours in experience. "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

AMEN.