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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel,
Brighton on Friday evening 9 May, 1924

II CORINTHIANS V verse 2

"For we walk by faith not by sight"

We walk by faith in the being of God, in the being of sin, in the shortness of time, in the certainty of death, in the belief of hell for sinners, of heaven for sinners who are made saints, justified and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. The possession of faith is one of the greatest possessions we can have in this life. In the exercise of that grace, we have dealings with God, and through that grace He deals with us. By that grace we can enter into the language of the Apostle Paul when he says "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, 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" and nobody without faith can enter into such a paradox and believe that it is quite straight with truth. You look at things about you and they are great, they are real, they are more or less abiding. You look at, or hear of, things not seen, and they are unreal, they have no being in you, no power over you, no influence, no attraction to you. They do not exist if you have not faith. By faith we tremble at God's majesty. We greatly fear we may miss that prize, and that promise, the ungodly world has no interest in. By faith we fear being wrong. By faith we look upon the world as lying in wickedness, as being an enemy to God and goodness, and by faith we believe that sinners can be made saints, that the weakest can be made strong, that the greatest foolishness in us can be overcome and we can be wise, made wise unto salvation, and by faith we believe afflictions can be turned into blessings and tribulation be made useful to us. By faith we can endure afflictions as being sent by a gracious God, and by faith we can look for the end of afflictions - the peaceable fruit of righteousness. By faith Christ is made real and great, above all else, better than all else, the only desirable One, and by faith we believe there is a heaven to receive the Lord's people, where they shall be with Him for ever. Temporary things, things of a day, of a week, a month, a year, they are but for a moment, but eternal things, living in the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, and realised by a precious faith, these are the only things of which we can say there is a permanency in them.

The Apostle opens this chapter with a mystery which nobody can understand except taught of the Holy Ghost. "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." A tabernacle is used with respect to our bodies, and the dissolving of it is sure to take place. The tent is pitched today, tomorrow it may be struck, removed; our earthly house of this tabernacle. We are not to look at it as being permanent. Our foundation is in the dust, and we must know it. Everybody must know it, but the saints know it by faith. They feel it and they are not always regretting it. They sometimes may say and do say - We feel our mud-walled cottage shake and long to see it fall. Sometimes only by faith in exercise on some testimony the Holy Spirit gives. And that is not all, but he says - We know we have a building of God, a house not made with hands. Not a tent, not a canvas house, moved, exposed to weather that may soon affect it and rot it, but a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. There it is, awaiting every saint. They are built by God, mansions above, and a house to inhabit, and one day the bodies of the saints, every one of them, will rise and be made like unto the glorious body of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now this becomes real where faith is, hence in the Hebrews we read of the wonders of faith in those ancient and blessed saints, and of one of them, of Moses, it is said - "He endured as seeing Him who is invisible and he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." How real God is to us sometimes; how great He is. If you try to imagine Him then you may even reel, but if you believe in Him then you fall flat in worship, and tremble at sin, and tremble lest that great God should not be your God, lest redeeming love should not have been fixed on you, lest atoning blood should never be applied to you, lest the justifying righteousness should never clothe you, and when you have this faith you will endure. By faith Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. By faith he looked to the Lord Jesus. He kept the passover, and the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel. "The blood of Christ a precious blood, cleanses from all sin," and faith does not doubt it. You may doubt your interest often, but you will not doubt that the powerful blood of Christ is sufficient to remove your sins, and purify your soul, and make you fit for the presence of God; and this faith, gives a view of the wonders of eternal grace made known, in the Person

of Christ, and gives a sinner to perceive how that, if he can but come, (there are many difficulties in his way) if he can but come to the Lord, the poorer, the weaker, the worst, the more welcome. Faith perceives that. O it is a stretch of faith though. A great stretch of faith to believe that, and to go on believing it, notwithstanding your continual fallings, and failing. By faith a sinner pleads the blood of Christ before the Lord, that blood that atones, that cleanses from all sin. Faith pleads it, and also faith lays hold of the promise as it is brought home, by the eternal Spirit, and pleads it. One pleaded it thus "Remember Thy holy promise." A holy promise is spoken by a holy God, but how contradicted that promise may be, by lapse of time and circumstances. So it may seem contradicted, but by faith, a sinner holds on to the throne of grace, cannot give it up. If we have faith we shall be praying people. The prayer of faith will be in our hearts. It will save our sick souls. It will bring us to Christ as it took the woman of Syrophenecia - "O woman great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt" It will take us to Christ. It will put all other things out. It will turn away from false christs, of which there are many, and bring us to that true Christ, the Son of God. We shall look for help of and from Him, look for shelter in Him. Look for blessings in Him, and sometimes see a little into that scripture "He is the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." All the love of God, and the grace of God, and the purposes of God, and all the goodness of God, and His wisdom and His power, all reside in Jesus Christ, and faith sees these things, and they become real to the soul, so as the Apostle says in the Hebrews - "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Have not you felt at times, that the things of God, the goſpel has a substance in you? It is like a great possession. You believe it, hang about it, and it comes in, and you hold it by precious faith. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for." The things of God faith lays hold of, and they have a substance through faith in you, an evidence that you could not at times lose. Whatever infidelity, doubt, fear, gloom, guilt and bondage may be in your spirit, there will be an evidence that the things of God are real things, and that all you need is the promise and power of them in your soul. So we walk by faith. O blessed be God for faith given to some of us. O blessed be God that ever He looked upon such as we are, unbelievers as all men, wicked and dead as all men, yet He came and said to our dead souls "live." and gave us faith, faith in His word, and we believed that sin was terrible,

and His divine majesty made us afraid. It is so still, from time to time. He who has true faith, walks in the things of which God speaks in His blessed word. Faith will never make you forget you are a sinner. It will never let you forget the holiness of God, and when you believe in divine holiness and human corruption, as in your own heart, you will have something to do. You will have a burden on your spirit and you may have many fears that that corruption which is so great in you, may prevail to your eternal destruction, but would you, with that faith in your heart in the holiness of God, wish that holiness less? No. Not even though you do feel a fear that you may miss, that prize such numbers never seek, such numbers seek in vain. Though we tremble at God's holiness we would not wish it less. I have that testimony in my heart on this point. There is such a substance in God's holiness, such a beauty, such a glory in divine holiness, that one would not wish it less, and yet, O when you come so to put it, when you come into contact with it by faith, then you tremble because you are a sinner, and sin dwells in you and works and lusts, lusts against the Spirit and spiritual things, and would take all substance from them if it could, but faith holds to this "Though we tremble while we sing, we would not wish it less," and I do believe this is a good part of our religion, if we have a right religion, we are exercised a good deal at different times about the character of God, and here is His character "Holy, Holy, Holy". He cannot look upon sin "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil and canst not look on iniquity." When you look on it with an eye of God wrought faith, look on it in its pollution, look on it in respect of what it deserves, look on sin as being a bar between you and God, look on it as that which He, being holy, necessarily hates, then you tremble, yet you walk by faith in this. This makes you sober, fearful. But we walk by faith in the grace of Christ - "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be made rich." O this grace of Christ, how shall I speak of it? There is the grace of His incarnation. Great was that grace that brought Him from heaven to earth, but He did not disdain our poor nature, to take it up into union with Himself, and loved His church as being given to Him from eternity, and so loved her that when she fell, and He, knowing the only way of her redemption was by incarnation, He came and did not disdain that. O that we could look at the grace of incarnation, believe it, hold it fast, walk

in it, walk before God. Indeed, who can deal with God apart from incarnation? Who can hope in God apart from incarnation? Who can get access to God except in the Person of the Lord God, Jesus Christ? So by faith we walk in that, and sometimes it will fall on your spirit so sweetly as a divine truth, and a mystery, that you will find your soul warmed by it, your faith strengthened, your hope confirmed, your affections inflamed, and you go to this incarnate one and put your whole trust in Him. He will be everything to you as God, as man, as one Person.

There is the grace of His poverty. Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor. He emptied Himself; He made Himself of no reputation; He took on Him the form of a servant, was not disgraced that He who had, and has, and ever will have the adoration of angels should condescend to veil His Deity behind our nature, and should be a servant, His Father's servant.

There is the grace of His obedience, for when He took on Him the form of a servant it meant that He had to obey. The law that was in His heart, was there that He might obey it. The commandments that He had given to Him by His Father, whose servant He voluntarily became, had to be obeyed and fulfilled. "The work which Thou gavest Me to do, I have done." There is the grace of His obedience, perfect obedience, infinitely valuable obedience, vicarious obedience, obedience rendered by the Lord God Jesus Christ, to His Father, in the behalf and stead of His disobedient and helpless children. O the grace of Christ's obedience is very very bright, and faith in it, will make you walk. You will walk before the Lord in it. You will pray in it and on account of it. You will ask mercy in it and for its sake - "If ye shall ask anything in My name I will do it." You will hope in it. You will cleave to it. You will love it. Your hearts will be warmed, your affections will go out to it. You will want it to be that one wondrous means and way of approach to God, and of God's approach to you. Incarnate Deity. What can we say but that it is a mystery, yet such a mystery as is believed on in the world. The Apostle says so - "Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifested in the flesh, seen of angels, justified in the Spirit, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into heaven." And the grace of Christ's death, His humiliation, came to its climax on the cross. His ignominy reached its deepest depth on the cross. His suffering had its intensity on the cross. It was intense before, even intense enough to cause Him to sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, falling down to the ground, but O, when

on the cross, He poured out His soul unto death and was numbered with the transgressors, then there was the very height of all, the climax and fulness of suffering, fulness of death, fulness of shame, fulness of ignominy, fulness of love, fulness of power, fulness of glory. I have scarcely apprehended, but I trust I have really apprehended a little of the glory of the cross of Christ. As a suffering, O how ignominious, as a sacrifice O how glorious. As a sacrifice, sufficient, sufficing for the whole church. As a sacrifice pleasing to His Father, satisfying and honouring to the Lord. As a sacrifice, the sweet smelling savour that God always has now before Him. As a suffering, as a penalty, great was the shame and the ignominy of it, and by faith we walk in this. We have no hope of acceptance, have we, but this? No hope of deliverance but this. No expectation of life, but by the death of Christ, of justification but by that precious obedience of His, even unto death. So we walk by faith in spiritual things, the unseen things that, perceived by faith, held by faith, prayed over by faith, held up to the Lord by faith, making His soul an offering for sin. Faith can see into these things in the light of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord make Himself in these things real in us. If He does, they will be powerful in us. They will deliver us from bondage. They will deliver us from the dominion of sin, from the guilt of sin, from the pollution of sin, from the torment of fear. They will deliver us from hardness of heart and they will become a life, a sweetness, a power, a liberty in our souls. We walk by faith in these things.

We walk by faith in affliction. When we walk by nature in affliction then we faint. We have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto us as children and we faint. We have forgotten that the Lord said "My son" Enduring word, living word, "My son" and we have forgotten it and in respect of the affliction being sent by a gracious heavenly Father, it looks like what Solomon speaks of time and chance, it has just fallen out to us and we have got to bear as well as we can. That is nature, nothing more. Nature, forgetful nature, fretful nature, self-pitying nature, weak nature, hell-deserving nature, that is what it is. Now when the Lord comes in a word such as was written to the Hebrews and says You have forgotten several things. You have forgotten the Lord Jesus, that He endured contradiction of sinners against Himself. Remember it, for remembering it you will not be faint and wearied in your minds. You will hold on. You will be weary in your spirit sometimes but that is a different thing from turning away from affliction. You will pursue though you

may faint, when you by precious faith remember a suffering Christ. What He suffered. What He went through, and for whom He suffered and went through, all that He had to go through, and then you have forgotten a great cloud of witnesses by which you are encompassed. Nature forgets it, that is to say it has no relish. Nature, unbelieving, proud, dead, nature, and there faith looks up and there is a cloud and which ever way faith turns, there is the great cloud. The cloud bearing testimony, testimony to God's faithfulness and goodness and sufficiency and mercy and pity. Oh to see the cloud. Good men and women, gracious believing souls, enduring affliction. Good men and women choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, and faith will go and find out Moses who had such burdens to carry, and afflictions to endure, as would have sunk everybody else, as we think, and speak and that man - he is enduring - and nature can never see why he should do it. How did he hold on? What kept him? Says the Holy Ghost by Paul - he saw God, he saw the invisible One, he saw the Saviour. He kept the passover; he knew the Lord Jesus was coming; He knew that the Paschal Lamb was a type of the Lord and Saviour, and he knew the shedding of his blood was the type of the shedding of the blood of Christ, who should pour out His soul unto death, and this answered the type perfectly. He saw all this and he endured. Blood strengthened him. The grace of Christ fortified his mind and the Lord, he saw by faith, and so he held on. O what a little thing was his trouble to him at such moments. What a great Person was the coming Saviour to him at such moments. He endured as seeing Him who is invisible; and if you go, by God's mercy, through all that great cloud of witnesses, and have your ear open to their testimony, they will all say these things. First, we were as weak as water. We were poor, blind, ignorant creatures, and yet we had to leave the city of destruction. We did not dare continue in it. We left it. We came out, became pilgrims and strangers. We sought a city, the Builder of that city we believed in, even God, and we came through, and now we are with Him for whom we left the world, and they all say this also, though we were weak we found God was strong. Though we were treacherous, we found Him faithful. Though we were empty, we found His fulness poured again and again into our empty hearts, and though we shrank from suffering, He gave us grace to hold on. My friends, if we have faith, we shall look at this cloud, and we shall hear this testimony for our encouragement. And the Lord then goes on by Paul to say - You have forgotten the exhortation.

I have written it in My word, and you have heard it, You have forgotten it, and forgetting that you have no prop, no support, no comfort. You are ready to give up. What is the exhortation? "My son despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him" Then you may say I see there is a need for this affliction. Yes, but you will be carried forward a little, and you will get to this by faith "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" and then you will say, my sin procured it. You will also say, love sent it. My sin deserved the rod. Love has used it, and wisdom has just decided how much shall be laid on, and when we forget this, then I say, we have lost ground, lost anchorage, are driven and tossed about in our minds, and know not what to do or think. Then, the Lord kindly comes, and says "Why, you have forgotten what I have told you. You have forgotten, that I chasten because I love," and that strengthens a soul. We walk by faith in affliction, and when we walk by faith in affliction, it means this, to us, that we can accept what the Lord lays on. We can submit to His holy will. We do not want our own way, We do not want our own props. He becomes sufficient. He is an all-sufficing God. He is a great God. Great in His love, in His mercy. Great in His covenant. Great in His promises, and faith looks to these things. They become real in the soul. Now I tell you this - if you get one hour, under the power of these things, they will have such a being, and an influence in your souls, as that you will never really forget. O it is great for the things to become real to us. An empty profession gives no reality to things, but a living faith, given right, and brought into exercise by the Lord, will do it.

And then next, we walk by faith in respect of the prospect. We hope, yes, blessed be God, we hope sometimes, for the prospect is brought sometimes. Mine has been made bright sometimes "Where I am there shall also My servant be". That is the prospect. It is set before faith. Nature sees nothing in it. Faith sees everything. There is a promising Saviour. There is a heaven promised, and here is a poor sinner to whom it is promised, and faith in his heart, lays hold of it, and he looks forward. He looks for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. Have you got this prospect? Have you ever had it? It is very wonderful. A welcome to be extended to you. A welcome into heaven, but my friends, what is it that will make heaven a heaven to us? It is this, as the foundation of all, it is an affinity between heaven and us, but we have not an

affinity by nature. We are fallen. We break away from God. We have a corrupt nature, a wicked heart. How then can any sinner, who is in that condition by the fall, and by practice, come to have an affinity with God and heaven? I will tell you. You know it, the Scripture has told you, perhaps also the Holy Ghost has in your own hearts. I believe He has in many of you. This is it - the new birth. Begotten again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Born, not of corruptible, but of incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever. Partakers of the divine nature. That is very wonderful. You put a child of God into a company of ungodly men. Let these ungodly men be scholars and critics of the Bible, not loose living men, but religious men, and they begin to talk and one says - I do not believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures. Another says - I do not believe that Jesus Christ is God, and so amongst them they break away from everything and would destroy our faith. Now what does that child of God feel? Does he say I am united to this company? No. His heart goes out after God and his faith looks up and he says to this Lord - "Save me." O mine honour come not thou into their assembly. "Save me" from wickedness and wicked me, and give me to know and love and cleave to, and be found in Him, who is God and Man in one Person. Now what is this? It is really the affinity that is between this child of God, and the Lord God Jesus Christ. Now heaven will be heaven to him when he gets there. Yes it will be heaven to him. He won't be a stranger to the nature of that place, though he has never been there before. His affections have been there, his heart has been there, his faith has lived there, his hope has lived there, and his love has lived there, and so when he gets there really, he will be no stranger. His faith will expire sweetly in an open vision. His hope will lie down glad to be extinct in the sweet, and full realisation of what had been hoped for, and his love will not die but extend. O how he will love his Lord there. So we walk by faith in the prospect, a good prospect. We may be ruined here, but with faith we shall all our treasures bear with us, wherever we are. Yes, in shipwreck. Though we may often fear one, very often being foolish, ignorant and wayward by nature, we may often fear shipwreck, but there will be no shipwreck. Where I am there shall my servant also be, and that will hold a sinner fast and he will prove again and again that it is not his hold of the Lord that secures him, but the Lord's covenant with him, and the Lord's hold of him, so firm, and he will find, that when by faith he walks in this prospect, then his soul is elevated. He is humbled into the dust. He is lifted up to sit with princes, even the princes

of God's people, and to inherit the throne, and so the full soul hires himself out for bread, and the hungry soul has the sweetness of bread given, and a blessed prospect of victory and heaven to come. We walk by faith not by sight. Every minute that you walk by sight you fall, you stumble. Every time you look at trouble by sight, then it becomes more or less intolerable, in the weight of it, and the length of it. Every time you look at your difficulties and perplexities by sight, then you fall. There is no gate through them, but when the thing becomes changed, that is to say, when you look at it by faith, whatever it is, you say I shall overcome. I shall reach home. Faith in the bleeding Lamb gives you a stronghold, and when you get the testimony of the Eternal Spirit in your heart, then you look forward. Is it not a mercy therefore, to possess a grain of faith? A grain of faith will save you, bring you to God, that is keep you near Him. Keep you on your knees at the throne of grace, confessing your sins, and protesting to the Lord that you have no hope of heaven except Jesus Christ. No expectation of pardon and peace and of goodness, but Jesus Christ. He thus becomes to faith, all and in all, and this walk, O it pleases God, and it benefits all who are engaged in it, but it is difficult, because sight, the things we see about us appeal to us, they affect us, they touch or get hold of us, but when the Lord strengthens faith, then in one important sense it is quite easy. We run up the shining way and say - this is the path the fathers went. This is the road the Saviour went. I will pursue the narrow way till Him I view. May we have this blessed faith.