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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel
Brighton, on Wednesday Evening, 30th September 1925

Text: Isaiah XL verses 30 and 31

"Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint."

The contrast contained in the text is very striking and the whole of the context may be made very instructive by the Spirit to us.

Israel is in captivity. Appearances are all against her. She has no power, but she has a promise that is more than all opposition, all weakness, than all sin, and the preaching is this "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God" They need comfort particularly sometimes, particularly when they have the discomfort, the pain and the shame of sin in their hearts. When they look at themselves, at their unprofitable walking, at their unbelief, at the strength of their enemies, and their own weakness, when they consider what they have merited at the hands of Him who has been so good to them, when they consider their waywardness, and the ill treatment that their gracious God has received at their hands, when they consider all these things and feel them, then they stand in need of the declaration with which this chapter opens "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people saith your God. Speak comfortably to Jerusalem" Poor Jerusalem, who shall pity her. Nations against her, devils against her, providence against her, poor Jerusalem, and of the church we may say, poor church, so weak in herself, so afflicted, so solemnly dealt with by her Head and Lord. Enemies, devils, indwelling sin, these rise up against her. She goes into captivity and her enemies are strong, her captors refuse to let her go, and she never would be at liberty again if her Redeemer were not strong and did not thoroughly plead her cause, and this poor captive reasons and reasons on false grounds and some of them are here and we reason on false ground. Our false grounds are what we see and feel in ourselves. Surely nobody can be godly who has what we have of sin. Nobody can be godly who does what we have done. What false grounds. Also the captors, they

mock, and they say "Sing us one of the Lord's songs" and the captives say "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land". They reason too on other grounds which seem good but are not good. They reason on the grounds of the Lord's dealings with them. If He loved us would He allow all this to happen to us? If we were His would He give us into the hands of our enemies and His enemies and further if we were His, would He not hear our prayers as we mourn with melting hearts, as we weep in spirit before Him, as we prostrate our hearts and kneel in our hearts before Him? Would He not, if we were His, answer us? She reasons on this false ground and she goes further and she says, which was a great injury to her Lord, "My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God" He has forgotten all about me. I deserve that He should for I have forgotten Him, my resting place, days without number and He has forgotten me and men ride over my head and I am tempted on every hand. My way is hid from Him and my judgment, He takes no notice of it at all. it is passed over from Him. She thinks He is like the sordid judge, took no care as to whether she is pressed, no notice at all of her. Do we understand this some of us? I doubt not I do. It is a solemn place to be in, a painful condition of mind, and against it we have no might, but in respect to it the Lord speaks and He asks solemn questions. "Lift up your eyes on high, behold who hath created these things, the sun and moon and stars, that bringeth out their host by number, who calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might because that He is strong in power" Look at all this evidence of the power, wisdom and goodness of God, not leaving the world in absolute darkness either by day or by night. Why sayest thou O Jacob, what reason have you, and speaketh O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God. Hast thou not known who called Abram from the east, called him alone and blessed him, promised to make him a great house, and that his seed should be as the sand of the sea shore, as the stars in heaven for multitude, innumerable. Who did this? Who, after Abram waited 20 years for a fulfilment of the promise, and when the fulfilment of the promise was naturally impossible, fulfilled it? Have you not known who made you a great nation, whodrove out the seven nations of the Hitites, Amorites and so on, before you and gave you the land of promise? Who has made you what you are, maintained your cause, and delivered you from well deserved captivities?

Who has restored to you at times the years that the cankerworm and the palmerworm and the caterpillar and the locust have eaten? Who has done all this? Can you go back? Who called you by grace? Who broke your heart? Who broke your enmity? Who shed light in your understanding to show you God and yourself by contrast? Who put life into your soul to make you feel your sins? Who gave you a sight of the Lord Jesus so as to raise you up to a good hope through grace and has heard your prayers and granted deliverances many? Who has done all this? Hast thou not known? Have not you known Him? My friends are we all strangers to God and is God a stranger to us? Has He never drawn near? Have we never seen Him, heard Him? Oh what will not unbelief do? What injury to the character of God it inflicts. What damage to your own consciences it brings. What barrenness it induces in us "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not neither is weary" You faint, you are weary, but am I? Do you judge of Me by yourselves? This is the Lord's solemn way of expostulating, speaking to people, according to their conditions. Hast thou not known this? My brethren have you got good reason to judge thus of God with respect to yourselves? Produce your strong reason. Have you a good reason thus to judge of God because He smites? Do you think it is a sword to cut you off and cut you in pieces? Because He frowns do you think He is going to send you to hell after all the tokens for good He has given you? Because you have broken loose from Him, and from the fear of His great name, do you think He will break His covenant and alter the thing that is gone out of His lips? Because you do not understand His ways do you think He does not understand? There is no searching of His understanding. He knows the end from the beginning. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world, and He knows the thoughts about us when we do not know them. "I know the thoughts that I think towards you, thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you an expected end". An end that He expects and that you have reason to expect from what He has said to you. O but I shall miss says a poor creature. Who told you so? I have said before there are only two voices that a child of God in trouble and affliction should listen to. The first is the voice of the Holy Scripture. Does that tell you God has cut you off because He is afflicting you? Does that tell you that He has forgotten you because you are in darkness? The voice of scripture never says that to a

child of God. The second voice is the voice of the Spirit in your heart. Does He tell you this? Does the Holy Ghost? Has He told you that He has no mercy for you? Who gives you the smart of conscience that you feel? Who gives you the repentance that melts you? Who gives you the spirit to pray that you feel? Who enables you to call on the name of the Lord in your trouble? Who gives you power to go to Him with your case, bad as it is and plead the atonement of the Lord Jesus? It is not the Spirit's voice that says your way is hid from the Lord and your judgment is passed over from your God. No you are faint. Who is not sometimes? Impatient. The thing is not done quickly enough for us. Deliverance does not come when we think it should come. We get disappointed. Today we think the Lord is not far from us and we think He is going to take full possession but He seems to go away. Another day we repent before Him with such sweetness that we even feel comfort and another day we are as hard as a stone, and as cold as ice, and so faint. We are weary. Alas we get weary of the Lord. Wherein have we wearied Thee? We little think sometimes at least I have little thought that I have wearied Him with my sins. He says as much of some people. "Thou hast wearied Me by thy sins" but with all this God is not weary of doing good, not weary of His covenant, neither is He discouraged because of all the waywardness and folly and sin all of which we alas are so guilty.

He giveth power to the faint. He gave it to Jonah. When Jonah's soul fainted in him the Lord gave him power and it was power. A power that sent a cry from the belly of hell into heaven. That was power. Has He ever given you that power? He giveth power to the faint. He gives power to faith, that faith can say "Hide Thy face from my sins and blot out my transgressions" Have you had that power? He gives power to a poor creature to venture on the Lord Jesus and venture wholly, sink or swim, right or wrong, saved or lost. The soul has power to cast itself unreservedly on the illimitable ocean of divine merit. He gives power to a poor creature to commit himself and his way and his troubles and his afflictions and all things connected with him into the hands of God. Whatever the Lord will do with him he says he does not know, but he feels he can commit himself entirely into the hands of the Lord "My times are in Thy hand" "Into Thy hand I commit my spirit O Lord God" Have you had that power? It is great.

And to them that have no might in themselves; lost all their religion, lost all their strength, their strength to pray and believe, and hope and love. Having lost everything of that, and now they have no might. They once had a little but it is gone as to their feelings. Now God comes and increases it, gives them more than they have ever had before. To them that have no might of their own He increaseth strength. Paul had no might at a certain time, but He said Lord this thorn, this thorn in the flesh, please graciously take it away. Thrice he said I besought the Lord that it might depart from me. Cannot you enter into Paul's feelings and into his prayer. Lord this thorn irritates me; I cannot serve Thee with this, it brings out the worst of my nature. I cannot be right with this; it makes me know that I am a fool, that I am an irritable, unbelieving, hard, carnal creature, do take it away. He had no might, and now the Lord comes and says to him "My grace is sufficient for thee" and Paul got such an increase of strength that he said he would glory in his infirmity that the gracious power promised him might rest upon him.

Even the youths shall faint and be weary. No wonder old men do, when the youths faint and are weary. No wonder that those who have little strength left do find it exhausted quickly when even the youths, the strong, the picked out young men fall, and utterly fall, get faint, cannot run any more, cannot wrestle any more; just must give all up. Oh how many professors give up. How many give up. How many find themselves unable to receive Christ's teaching "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" and they faint. "This is a hard saying, who can hear it" And so away goes their religion, all withers and they faint and give up. Now says one, that is just like my own case, I feel gone. Well if you do, this is a place and a room for the Lord. He does love an empty place; He does love a weak sinner, who says Lord I am too weak to stand, do help me. I cannot run, do give me power. I do not know how to believe, or what to believe, mercifully come to me. My cross is too heavy, my sins are too heavy, my guilt is too heavy, I am distracted, do come. Can you pray? You live to prize prayer more and more. The older you get you live to prize a breath of prayer, if it is only like a breath vanishing as soon as you expire it. Oh you live to value prayer.

But they that wait on the Lord. A waiting person is a person who has got some expectation. You will never wait if you have no hope at all. Waiting is patience; waiting is faith; waiting is hope; waiting is love. There is patience, hope and love in all waiting people, not to their sense of things, no. They cannot think themselves hopeful, and they do not think they have any love, and as to love they seem not to know what the word means spiritually, but they do wait. I must go again. I will look again, says one. I will wait for the Lord who hideth Himself from the House of Israel, says another. I will get me to my watch, I will watch and hear what He will say unto me, says a third. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, says a fourth, all waiters, and if it were put to some of us, if we could add our own names to the list that the scripture gives of waiting people, some of us would say yes, we are amongst them. "They that wait upon the Lord" Will He take any notice of them, they are such sinners. I wonder sometimes will He take any notice. All the saints about Him, holy angels adoring Him, obedient children waiting on Him, will He look at a sinner who comes with his sins and his shortcomings and his failures and backslidings? Will He look on such a person? He says "They that wait upon the Lord" afflicted people. It is beautiful to read this of the Lord when He was sojourning here, "He healed all them that had need of healing" Encouraging to read that He allowed a leper, and ten lepers, to come near to Him. Their presence was defiling, but they must go to Him. He lets them come near; He teaches them how. And He healed all that had need of healing. They came to Him. Go, poor praying soul, go with the chains about your neck, with the guilt upon your conscience, the hardness in your heart, and the lack of clear evidence that you feel so troublesome, and painful. Go with them all. He says "They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me" One says but I am ashamed. You wont be ashamed of waiting nor of Him on whom and for whom you wait. No shame there. Plenty of shame in our sins. Happy the man who feels that. Plenty of shame arising out of our rebellion and backsliding and hardness of heart. Plenty of shame but none in this point. No shame for waiting; no shame about and from Him. The sinner waits. Glory comes to a waiting sinner; glory rests upon a waiting soul. The Spirit of God and of glory rest upon a man who cannot do without the Lord. I thank Him for that I cannot do without Him and I would

not if I could. They that wait. Where do they wait? At the throne of His heavenly grace. "Come boldly" He says. "Ho everyone that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye and buy wine and milk without money and without price." Waiting people; they all come; they crowd about His door; they fly as doves to their windows. There is an attraction in Him, and there is a necessity in them, and these, meeting in their hearts, bring them to His heavenly throne. They must come; they do come. He teaches them how to come and they crowd about Him. They say "To whom shall we go, Thou hast the words of eternal life" I expect that some of you could say on certain days it is as if from rising to going to bed you are praying all the day. Not kneeling all the day, but moving about saying Lord I need Thee, I want Thee, a poor creature, do come, bless this poor waiting soul, and the whole of the day it may be like that. Another day you are like a stone. Now this latter state is very awful, but what the Lord notices is the former state. The prayer that moved you, the desires that inspired you with courage to go to the Lord.

They shall renew their strength. They shall get a little of what they formerly had, and even more of it. They shall change their strength as the word is in the margin. They shall be changed from giving way and fainting. They shall become strong. Let the feeble say I am strong and the devil says that is presumption. It is not. If you feel strong, strength coming into your heart, strength really flowing in, it is not presumption to say I feel stronger than I did, I feel altogether free whereas a little while ago I did not know how to pray. That is not presumption. Then the enemy may say but you are a hypocrite because a few minutes ago you declared you were without any strength. Well it is not hypocrisy to say you feel a change. It is not hypocrisy to say I was weak five minutes ago and now I feel strong enough in my soul to pray and call upon the Lord. That is not hypocrisy. "They shall renew their strength" be strong where they were weak; have a vigour in their souls, an energy in their faith, a directness in their eye, looking to the Lord. "My soul wait thou only upon God" And this strength is enough for you to take every case and trouble you have. Whatever the nature of your case may be, faith thus strengthened will take it to the Lord, look upon me. "My way is hid" says an unbelieving creature. "No" says

faith in the same sinner, it is not hid from the Lord, and this faith says "Look Thou upon me and be merciful to me" and prays with the church of old "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself" Well you get a little of this do you not? Some of you must say so I think. The Lord renews strength to your waiting souls and you stand up again and say "My soul take courage from the Lord, believe and trust His gracious word", and Oh how true it is, "They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me" They shall carry off the blessing they went for. They shall get the good they sought. They shall enjoy the inshining that they felt so much to need, without which they were afraid of moving. They shall get these things in their souls.

"They shall mount up with wings as eagles" Though ye have lien among the pots, though you have been among the pots, the potsherds and had all the defilement of the dust of those potsherds, your wings shall be as silver, yea yellow gold shall be on them. They shall mount up, and this mounting on eagles wings is very wonderful. The devil has ever been persecuting the church. Sometimes he casts out floods out of his mouth that she may be carried away, and what does the Lord do in such times? Just what John tells us in the Revelation. He said I saw and there were given to her two great wings like eagles, that she might fly into a place appointed for her. Does that answer to what the Apostle Paul has in the Ephesians when He said he prayed that the Ephesians might have the eyes of their understanding opened that they might know what is the hope of His calling and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him far above all principality and power, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in the world to come. Does, I say, these eagles wings given to a sinner, answer to that, the power of Christ's resurrection? And Paul prays that the eyes of these Ephesians might be opened that they might see this, which seems to say there may be some of this power on a person and he may not be able to comprehend it for a time. Now says Paul to the Ephesians, God open your eyes that ye may see what He is doing to you when you rise in hope, when you fly to your refuge, when you go to Him in all your distresses with all your burdens and troubles, and sins,

when you feel nothing can keep you on the earth, nothing. Oh it is very wonderful just to feel a little of this, as if nothing can keep you on the earth. What, not my affliction? No, not your affliction, nor your sin, nor the devil will be able to keep you down among the pots where you have been lying for a time, when these wings are given to you. Renew your strength, mount up. Well, and where do they mount to? The Apostle writing to the Ephesians, to quote that Apostle again, says "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ". The covenant of grace, the atonement of Christ, the righteousness, the grace, the priestly office, the intercession, the omnipotence, the wisdom, the rule, the power, the peace of Christ; to these things faith rises sometimes. The flight is very wonderful as you know, those of you who have been favoured with it. The flight of a sinner, with all the weight on him of sin, with all the inertness of his nature, with all the unbelief of his wicked heart, that such a sinner should ever, for five minutes, rise and mount up above himself, above his troubles, with his troubles rise to God, rise to the will and the love and the mercy of God, so that he can say "Thy will be done", is not this amazing. You cannot understand it unless you have had it. What a change takes place when the Holy Ghost comes to a weak creature and gives him those blessed, mighty pinions of the eagle, so that he can say "Begone unbelief, my Saviour is near". Begone impatience, His time is best; begone rebellion, Thy will be done; begone all these gloomy fears and distressing doubts and distracting thoughts, all of them. If you get this for five minutes it will make such a mark on you as will never be erased, and in future days the remembrance of it will be exceedingly sweet. "They shall mount up with wings as eagles" and mind it will always be in that direction that you rise. When the bird is let loose out of the snare of the fowler it goes into the air. You, let loose from unbelief and distracting things, will fly to your native air, which is sovereign grace. That is the air a sinner loves to breathe, that revives his spirit, that gives him new health, that enables him to live contentedly in the will of God.

"They shall run and not be weary" Not be weary of God. Oh what a mercy it is not to be weary of God. You would think that one who has felt his kindness could never be weary of it. Alas, it is too true, a sinner can soon be

weary of God, but the Lord is not weary of the sinner. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love. Therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" "I drew thee with cords of love, with the bands of a man". Blessed be God he teaches us to know a little of this running. Run with patience the race that is set before us. If you have God before you, if you see the Lord Jesus, the Friend of Sinners, by precious faith, if you see how He freely justifies the ungodly, how He pardons all sin, how He heals the sick of the fever of sin, how He takes to His heart the guiltiest and vilest worms that ever lived, you will run to Him. Though death and hell obstruct the way you will run to Him. "They shall run and not be weary" They do not give up. They do not give in, when the Lord helps them in this way.

"And they shall walk and not faint" The rough road; walk the paths of tribulation, walk in the valley sometimes, walk in the dark and trust the Lord. There they shall walk by faith, believing that what is apparently most wrong, is right; believing that the crooked things they have in providence shall make a straight path for their feet under the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit. They shall walk this narrow way that no fowl knoweth, and that the vulture's eye hath not seen. "And not faint" That is they shall not give up; they shall not fall defeated, not fall defeated. Though I fall I shall arise. Not defeated. Though I fall I shall arise and though I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me. Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth His servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light, no bright shining, let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God. He goes on walking. He is walking to heaven, walking through darkness, dark circumstances, dark afflictions. He is walking by faith as Paul says "We walk by faith not by sight" "They shall walk and not faint" It is a narrow path and very rough, but sometimes God makes it quite smooth and when it is not smooth then He gives shoes of iron and brass. Sometimes it is preparing the way of the Lord, and then the runner goes and the labourers go and they fill up hills and valleys; they level mountains; and then a sinner says the way is very pleasant to my feet, to my soul. Christ is sweet. He is sweeter than all the bitters of providence. The way is straight. I see the way to heaven through the atonement. Faith speaks so. "And not faint" Not give up. Says the

devil, God will never help you through. You so provoke Him by your sins, by your sleeping and slumbering and unbelief, you so provoke Him by your ways, He will give you up. No says faith

Can He have taught me to trust in His name
And thus far have brought me to put me to shame

Dear friends, the end does not depend on us, but on Him who has put us in the way, and who, by the blood of Christ, the cross of Christ and the teaching of the Spirit, pointing out a rough way, says "This is the way, walk ye in it" Nature says, "I cannot" Nature says "I wont" Faith says "Lord help me and I will, I will take up my cross and I will run the shining way. I will walk the difficult road" This is the way the prophets went. This is the way the noble army of confessors spoken of in the Hebrews went, and I see the cloud of witnesses and hear what they say "God is faithful who has promised who also will do it" It does not depend on the sinner. God put the stock once in a man, Adam, but He has never put it into any sinner since. He put a new stock of grace into the Man Christ Jesus and that blessed One gives it out to His people just as they need it. So they shall walk and not faint. It is an encouraging word and that encouragement is needed by people who are in this condition. The chapter shows trouble and mercy; it shows the sinner and his God. It shows a guilty person and a sin pardoning, justifying God. It shows trouble, difficulty and things which appear in themselves impossible, and a God who says "Is there anything too hard for Me"