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Sermon preached by Mr. J. K. Popham,  
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton,  
on Wednesday evening, 28th January, 1921.

Text: Mark 16. v 7.

"But go your way, tell his disciples, and Peter, that He goeth before you into Galilee. There shall ye see Him, as He said unto you."

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This is a message sent by the angel. Christ was sought in the grave where He was not, by these women - Mary Magdalene, with Mary the mother of James and Salome, and when they reached the Sepulchre, they found it empty of Christ, and there sat on the right side, an angel, and the women were frightened. Then the angel assured them, and gave them this message - "Be not affrighted; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified; He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him, But go your way - do not abide here by this empty grave, go your way, tell His disciples and Peter, do not leave him out; he has cut himself off, he has denied his Lord, he has done it with oaths, he has cursed and sworn ignorance of his Lord, and that so soon after his declaration that he would not deny Christ, whatever happened.; whatever others might do, he certainly would never deny Christ. A solemn thing that was," Peter said unto Him, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I, and Jesus saith unto him, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, in this day, in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice." But he spake the more vehemently - "If I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee in anywise," and this was the man who said he knew nothing about Christ and sought to establish his ignorance by an oath, by cursing. Do you know anything about a man who is capable of that to-day; of a heart that has just the very sin of Peter in it? that only lacks opportunity and temptation. Did you ever pray, that opportunity and temptation might never meet together in such a heart as you know? O the mercy of being kept from evil. O the goodness of God in keeping the feet of a poor weak saint. And now Peter is to have, because he is a very special sinner, a very special mercy. He needed it. He greatly needed it. Some of us can well picture him saying to himself - "I am no disciple. I am a traitor. I have

cursed, I have sworn, I have declared with oaths that I know nothing of Him who was so good to me. I am cut off and the Lord heard this in his heart and sent by the angel a particular, a kind, tender message to him. He was a disciple, but now the Lord singles him out, He says, by the angel "Go, tell his disciples, and pick Peter out, The word is impersonal to the rest, to Peter it is personal - "Tell Peter, whatever you do, do not leave Peter out. Call on him by name and tell him that he is to go with the rest into Galilee and there he shall see his denied, despised Redeemer." It came to pass as Christ had foretold. He said to his disciples just before his crucifixion - "When I am risen, I will see you in Galilee." Here the angel sends a message to the disciples to go into Galilee, for the Lord would go there and meet them there. This is the history of this text. The mystery of it lives to-day. The mystery of it is, and the mercy too, that Christ goes into certain places and meets his people, his disciples and particularly meets Peters. There may be some of them here who, though not outwardly, yet in their hearts have done this enormity, unto them he says - "I will see you. I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man taketh from you. There are certain places into which we get, poor wanderers, Peters, poor Thomases, doubting people, we get into certain places, into dark places, "The people which sat in darkness and in the region and shadow of death, saw a great light." Less would not do. It must be a great light. It must be the light of truth, The light of grace, the light of pardon, the light of justification, the light of restoring mercy, and the Lord goes there. Some of us get into exceedingly miserable places - hardness of heart and prayerlessness of spirit and great unbelief and we can never extract ourselves. There the Lord must come and let us see Him and He does come there. And some of us get into temptation places and get exhausted by temptation and need Christ to come and strengthen us even as He needed an angel to be dispatched from heaven to strengthen Him in the garden of Gethsemane and He is able to do it, able to succour them that are tempted, in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted. Christ will have his people out of these places. In order to bring them out, He goes to them. Jeremiah was in the low dungeon and the Lord drew near to him and said to him - "Fear not." He found Jacob in a waste howling wilderness. He met him in his sleep. He will find his people out wherever

they are. We will, as the Lord helps us, look at this great seeking, searching, finding, delivering, healing presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. May we bless His name, ere we sleep to-night if it please Him, for finding us and letting us see Him. There is a dark place when, though you may not be left to call into question your standing in the Lord you may be in very great darkness as to His will, His dispensation, as to what, by certain circumstances, He means; and there are some things which are very solemn of this kind. When you get into darkness, there is a certain light shines, whereby you see what you are, what you deserve and say solemnly - "I deserve this and more - hell after it." "This trouble has not come undeserved;" you may say with respect to it in a proper way in your own spirit, what it says in Proverbs - The curse causeless does not come. You may say "This darkness has not come causeless." I have brought it on myself. I have sinned against God's love and goodness and mercy and now He is dealing with me and chastening me and I am in a dark state. What this providence means, what He will do with me in this dispensation, how I shall come out of it, and when, I know not. Now does the Lord ever speak a word to a person in this case? Oh yes He does. He sees the fears, the weakness, the distraction which at times come upon the soul, and He draws near to that low and dark, dank dungeon and says "Fear not." It is a sight of Christ that will do the thing my friends. A true sight of Him by precious faith, will, if it alter not the circumstances, alter the state of feeling of the soul. It will alter the state of the heart and mind and conscience. It will turn the thoughts into another channel. It will awaken new hopes and confidences; it will bring the soul into Zechariah, that beautiful promise with its sweet consequences - "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced and <sup>they shall</sup> mourn for Him as for an only son and be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born and then they shall mourn every family apart. The family of the house of David apart and their wives apart." Oh a sight of Christ. A sight of His dying love. A sight of His blessed atonement, of His justifying righteousness, of His infinite mercy, of His free and full forgiveness. A sight of His Person is such a

thing as a child of God, whatever his case may be, finds in it a transforming power, a changing power, bringing the poor soul out of the dust; lifting the beggar off the dunghill, setting him with princes, even the princes of God's people. Causing him to inherit the throne of glory. "I will see you again", is His gracious word. Your heart is full of sorrow, at My absence; I will see you again; and here I might say that there are reasons, which at the time, may be hidden from us, but afterwards opened, why the Lord should go away. He told His disciples it was expedient for them that He should go away, that He should go to heaven, and then send His Spirit to them; and one may say, there are reasons in our cases, why it is expedient, for us to miss the presence of Christ, at times, even as also there are reasons, why He should come again, according to His word of promise - "I will see you again." Is not one reason of the expediency of Christ's absence from us, for a time, this, that we may learn more of the awful and unfathomable, to ourselves, depths of a wicked heart. The presence of Christ when it is enjoyed has the effect of gathering the eyes and the affections so sweetly and exclusively to Himself, as that what is inside is for the time, though not forgotten, yet not predominant, and we may fall a prey in that case, after a time to the very sin that caused Peter's fall. He was full of self-confidence and you may get that too. You may think your mountain stands strong, you will never be moved, and God sees it best that you should have a lesson to let you know and learn painfully that it is not so with you. That if He will hide His face, your mountain's gone, your strength withered, your confidence shaken, and you are moved away in your feelings. He leaves us to learn a little more of what sin is. Not to commit it. O, if we are kept from indulging in sin; if we are kept from wilful sin; if we are kept from murmuring and fretting, it is a great mercy, but we may be left, that our eyes may look on this awful serpent which began to hiss and threaten death by poisonous bite and it is good, it is expedient for us, that He should go away, that we should learn a little more of what is in our heart. God left Hezekiah in the matter of ambassadors, that he might prove what a vain thing he was left to himself; that he might prove the vanity of his own nature, and how easily puffed up he was by the

flattery of the king of Babylon, sending ambassadors to him, and you must prove, and God may see it needful even now to be proving some of you thus; showing you what is in your hearts. You may not think that this has anything to do with God, or He with it but it is not so, He has much to do with it. It is good that we should learn that hell of sin in our nature, that we <sup>may</sup> know the heaven of grace in the Lord Jesus. It is expedient that He should go from us at times that we may prove the truth of His word- "Without Me ye can do nothing." Bear no fruit. Bear no trials properly, carry no burdens correctly, nor hang about, nor hanker after Christ seriously, diligently, unless His grace be in us to produce such things. Oh we are poor creatures, but it is easier to say that, than to believe it, yet we must believe it, God will teach us to believe it and one of the most effectual ways of being taught it, is having the thing demonstrated to us by our own weakness, and inability being more prominently brought to our attention when Christ is absent. My brethren we are weakness itself and the Lord brought this very vividly to the notice of his people by Ezekial, he said - "Take the wood of the vine, who will take so much as a pin of it to hang anything on it. A bit of useless knarled wood with nothing comely about it in itself, and the Lord may say to you - "What are you? Who would take anything of you to make a pin of? How can you glorify Me? How can you walk profitably before Me? How can you be profitable to your brethren? How can you love them, especially if they do not please you? How can you walk humbly amongst them without Me? Yet the saints are exhorted to do all those things and why does the Lord go away? That no flesh shall glory in His presence. My effectual grace. My sweet mercy. My justifying righteousness, My cleansing blood, My glorious Person are necessary for you; for all your humility and all your love for the brethren and all your sweetness in walking and all your uprightness in conduct and all your tenderness for my glory. I am necessary for all. One may say- 'I believe all that' but you must learn it and as Gadsby says in one of his hymns:

We must not learn God's truth,  
as schoolboys learn their tasks,  
such knowledge is not proof  
against temptations blast.

These things then may make it expedient for Christ to go away from us for a time.

Another thing may be necessary in His sight for our good, namely this, that we shall prove the power of the tempter and our powerlessness to resist the Devil. We must learn that. You say 'I do believe it.' So do I but O it is one thing to believe it when you are not tempted; it is another to know it when you are tempted and Christ may go away. How easy it would have been for Christ, just secretly to have sustained Peter's faith and kept him loyal in his affections, but no. As if the Lord should say - Peter has to live. Peter is an apostle. Peter must live to My praise and glory and it is a needful lesson that I will have him to learn, that he is weakness itself without Me, and when the tempter comes he must know that he is nothing but a yielding flag without moisture if I am absent. Do you follow me in this. Now when you learn the expediency of Christ's absence, temporary, blessed be His name, then you will be fitted for His gracious return. The grave hid Him from his disciples for a moment, then He came to them and said- "Behold Me." Some circumstances like a grave may hide your Lord from you, then He may send you a message in some gracious invitation - "Come unto Me." Some heavenly direction, some merciful promise - "I will see you again." and as He is pleased so to come, then your darkness and your dark circumstances will vanish and you will see a little of Peter's case - he wept bitterly and you will say- "False to Thee, like Peter, I would fain like Peter weep." O it is sweet to weep over sin forgiven. To weep over a crucified injured Lord when again He is seen by precious faith, and there, He says "Ye shall see Me." And this is not fancy. "Behold Me." He said. Handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have. We are not to see Him like that, yet, there is a demonstration of the Spirit and of power in the light and strength of which the believing soul gazes on the Person of Jesus Christ. There is a sight of Jesus Christ given by the Holy Spirit in demonstration and power that our faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. "There ye shall see Him." O they made no mistake at that time. You may be like Thomas; if it be so, may you get Thomas's demonstration. Not seeing, as Thomas was favoured to see, yet seeing Him by faith, whose presence, the light of whose glory will make you a believer in an instant, scattering the deadly

vile power of unbelief and enabling you to say - "My Lord and my God." There ye shall see Him. Demonstration. You understand a thing made so plain, so clear as that you cannot doubt it. You are unable to doubt it. I have before sometimes illustrated this in a simple way, let me do it again. If one says to you - Now two parallel lines can never cross, you say that is absolutely plain, it is demonstrated to you. It is demonstratable everywhere. If Jesus Christ comes to you in the demonstration of His Spirit, you will see Him and you will say:- "This is my Beloved. This is my friend. This is my Lord, my Redeemer. O what a sight is the sight of Christ. Take that promised vision of Him that I have mentioned before this evening - "I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced." The Galatians had this blessing. They got away from it after a time but they did really have it. "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified amongst you"; demonstrated as if in one of the streets of that city. Jesus Christ had been lifted up on the cross and they had walked and looked at Him; looked on His very Person as crucified. Faith gets demonstration. O praying people, pray for demonstration. No man hath seen the Father at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. He declared Him to His disciples - "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." and then in John again it is said - "And the word was made flesh and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Now that was demonstration to them. John got it - "I knew Him not." is his testimony. "I knew Him not." That He should be made manifest to Israel, he knew that, but He that sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me - "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is He." and this is the word that John said after - "I saw and bear record. I saw." You say - I cannot expect that. "No, but you can see the same Person by the Holy Spirit in the light of the Spirit, in the demonstration of the Spirit. You can see that Person in heaven. John saw Him as a lamb that had been slain, and that is what every guilty person

desires and what every tempted person seeks. What everyone, in dark circumstances longs for, "I saw" says good Newton, "I saw one hanging on a tree in agonies and blood." and that is what you want again and again - "There shall ye see Him in your dark places; in your dark circumstances. There ye shall see Him. See Him for yourself and not another. See Him as your own and not another's. See Him and hear Him. See Him and feel His love, and then love Him in return.

Well my brethren, this is a little heaven, and I know it. O how beautiful it was to Moses when the Lord said to him "My presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest." Thou hast to go through this weary wilderness. Thou hast to deal with people. Thou shalt be in dark things, but My presence will go with thee, and I will give thee rest." O that overshadowing, that all-covering, that surrounding presence of God. Why my friends, I say it again, it is heaven. You will begin to sing with this. You could not help singing with this. You will sing the song of love. You will sing with the Psalmist - "Bless the Lord, O my soul and all that is within me, bless His Holy Name." You are at liberty in this presence. Sin has held you, Some darkness has held you, you are at liberty. "I will strengthen them in the Lord and they shall walk up and down saith the Lord." Sin is quiet here for the time. It does not hiss in you like a serpent. It will again, if the Lord sees it best, to go away for a time, but now, in His presence, you can say "In Thy presence I am happy; in Thy presence I'm secure, In Thy presence all afflictions I can easily endure." what God has laid on you. The natural trouble you may have with your own disposition, your own devilism and hypocrisies and deceptfulness and your own things that nobody can bare with you. You must bare them alone. You can bare all with Him. He constrains and restrains. O it is a great thing for the Lord to be seen, because His presence fills heaven, it fills earth, it fills the soul. There ye shall see Him, And He is seen in very particular things. Sometimes seen in His word. He shines in it. Did you never find Him in an unexpected way in some scripture in which you never thought before that He was. Did you never find Him in a gracious promise? in a holy doctrine, in a sweet heavenly prospect? I think the Psalmist found Christ in the word for he says - "Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I may not sin

against Thee; "I have esteemed the words of Thy mouth said another, "more than my necessary food." The Psalmist said "I have esteemed Thy precepts in all things to be right." God was in the word to Him at such a time. Were you ever favoured so to find God. A light shining on the road. A light shining into your heart, showing you God. Showing you your interest in Him. Showing you the heaven to which you were moving. Showing you your security in Him. There shall ye see Him. Yes, in the scriptures that shine in a dark place, Christ is seen. Sometimes seen in the ordinances of His house. Sometimes seen in the ministry of the truth. Sometimes seen in His holy providences, and wherever He is seen how welcome is He to the humbled soul that is drawn out to believe against sense and reason, and all opposition, and I would like just to hang about this for another few moments and then close. I would direct your attention, to the effect of this sight of Christ. It made all those who saw Him, believe, believe that He was risen from the dead. What a thing that was to them. It was life to them. Their hopes had been buried with Christ and they had been scattered. They got very scattered. Said Peter - "I go a fishing." and the other fishermen said "and we go with thee." We get very scattered, when Christ is away. Our dispositions assert themselves, our avocations assert themselves, our interests come to the front, and we get scattered away. Who taught of God, does not know this? The claims of the family and the claims of business, and the interests of the mind and the wishes of certain people, wishing to be where God has not put them and wishing themselves away from where God has put them. These all come up, and assert themselves. Why perhaps some of you wish to run away from something, I do sometimes wish to run away from some things laid on me. We get scattered my friends. There is no rest in circumstances. There is no rest in self. There is no rest in the sinful heart. There is no rest in your own wisdom. There is no rest in any scheme, any plan you may formulate to yourself, No, and if you could go away to what you want you would be sad and you would say - O what a fool I have made of myself. and perhaps God would follow you with a rod and what would you do then? They were scattered, but now see what Christ's presence did for them. It gathered them. They were assembled in an upper room and He appeared to them and they were all gathered to Him. Cannot you imagine how their eyes would

fix on Him and how, as He demonstrated to them who He was "Behold Me." He said "Handle Me <sup>and see, for</sup> a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye Me have," and they were gathered to Him. We may be gathered in a place, but not in our spirits, and affections, but if Christ is pleased to come, we shall be gathered to Him. "To Him -Shiloh, shall the gathering of the people be." There was Thomas out of the number, and on another occasion Christ comes to them and Thomas is there. Thomas had been told of the demonstration that the others had received, but it had no effect on him except to draw out his strong unbelief, in an assertion that was ungracious and now the Lord comes to Thomas. He does not beat him. He does not frown on him, as Thomas might have expected. No, Christ deals as a saviour, when He comes to save. He came to save Thomas from his unbelief and discontent and so He used the means calculated to do that work. Not a frown but a kindly word - "Thomas, reach hither thy hand, thy finger, thrust thy hand into My side." It was enough for Thomas. O said he - "My Lord and my God." Thomas was gathered. Faith was triumphant. Love was now the victor and O what a time it was for him. Said a deacon once to a Scotch Minister at the ordinance - "I hope Sir, there be no Thomases here to-day." Said the Minister "I hope there will be, and that they will get the blessing that Thomas got." Thomas got the demonstration. Thomas got the blessing and although Thomas is not commended for his unrighteous demand, for his unbelief, that is to say, yet the Lord did not turn away from him. There shall ye see Him. You shall look on Him. And let me mention this in conclusion - Think of that congregation of over five hundred brethren, a great gathering and a risen Lord came into that congregation and they saw Him. Paul tells us about that meeting, about the Lord, after that, that is after He had shown Himself to His apostles, after that He said He was seen of above five hundred brethren at one time in a place, many of whom remained, when Paul wrote that word - Seen of above five hundred brethren. Do you want to see Him.? What a pitiful thing it is if people go away and say- Well it was a good sermon, and nothing more. What a blessed thing it is when poor sinners say- "We have seen the Lord." Saw Him when the minister was trying to speak about Him. Saw Him as a great God, a dear Redeemer, as full of pity joined with power. Saw Him for ourselves. May it often be so. It is a sad day we are living in and apparently there are not many

visits paid now. Very few demonstrations of the Spirit and of power apparently. May there be exceptions and may we be among the exceptions, be among those to whom the Lord Jesus comes and says - "Behold Me." That we may say - "The voice of my Beloved, behold He cometh, leaping o'er the mountains, skipping o'er the hills." That we may say, "the King is held in the galleries!" That we may hear Him say - "Turn away thine eyes from Me," thou hast overcome - What? Yes, a poor sinner with the eyes of faith, looking on Christ will overcome Him, and then, there is not a good thing that sinner wants that the Lord will withhold, no good thing from such a person. May it please Him to come to us. We are not to ascend into heaven to bring Him down but He pays visits. He visits sinners still and may we know it for ourselves.

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