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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday evening 28 September 1924

PSALM 27 v 5

"For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in
His pavilion; in the secret of His
tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall
set me up upon a rock".

Real religion consists in God coming to, and dealing with, a sinner. Vastly different this, from the natural religion that many people have. They go to Him, they deal with Him, they flatter Him. With their lips they draw near, but their heart is far from Him. This is very solemn. You had better be torn to pieces by conviction and reproof and solemn dealings of God with you, than be allowed to think yourselves right when you are not right. If God is pleased to come near to us, we shall tremble. We shall know that the touch of His word is like fire, and we shall know that His majesty is terrible. It is a poor religion that knows nothing about the majesty of God, the holiness of God, and the terrors of the Almighty. And when God so deals with people, then they are afraid and look for destruction, and when He blesses them, then they know a little of what the secret of His presence is, what this tabernacle is, this pavilion in which He hides all of them. "In the time of trouble" - we will look at this; first, what the time of trouble is. And the first time to name, and that which continues all through the pilgrimage of the people of God, is a time of sin; that is a trouble to everyone born again. If sin does not trouble you here it will trouble you through eternity. If sin is not your bitterest grief here, you will be tormented and plagued and punished throughout eternity for your sin. O, better have it all here. Guilt is removed; the death of Christ took all that away; He made an end of sin by the sacrifice of Himself, but the being of sin continues; the activities of sin continue and sometimes the prevalence of sin lays us very low. This was a time that Paul had. When he was alive without the commandment he had not this trouble. When the commandment came and sin revived, he died. Then he had this trouble. "O, wretched man that I am" was his cry; "who shall deliver

me from the body of this death?" And doubtless every child of God here has this trouble. It hinders, it deceives, it violently assails, it overcomes, it appears in pleasant form, it promises good. O, but it is a deceitful monster, it is a horrible pollution, it is a dreadful power. It takes various forms, now in thoughts unutterable, because of their vileness; now in infidelity whispering in your heart that there is no God; now in mocking at the solemnities of Zion. Sometimes like a flood spreading over the land, it spreads itself over your soul. Sometimes you have no heart to pray; prayerless, careless, indifferent to God, to His glory, and your own interests; and very solemn it is to have this experience. This is a time of trouble, and you may be so handled by sin, so assailed and mauled as to think and say with David, in another case, I shall surely fall by the hand of my enemy. Yea, to say with him again, "there is but a step between me and death". This is my experience; am I alone in the chapel in this? No, I believe I am not. If we are in this case, we feel to be in danger. A host comes against us, threatens us, and we need to be hid. The Psalmist's confidence at this time was very sweet, no doubt very comfortable in his heart. "In the time of trouble" - in this time of trouble - "He shall hide me in His pavilion". A time of trouble is a time of temptation. The enemy, who has always been against Christ, comes against the people of God because Christ is in them the hope of glory. When the Lord Jesus was born, Satan, by Herod, sought to destroy the young child's life and because He is born in some of you, he comes against you. I believe that this is the key to the secret of many peculiar temptations that befall the people of God. He would fain destroy Christ. He stirs up a legal heart and that is against the atonement and righteousness of Christ. He stirs up pride, and that is to keep us from the throne of grace. He works by false humility and that thinks it would be too bold a thing for so vile a sinner to pray. He comes violently with awful suggestions. O, I hope I shall never, never utter the things that have been hurled into my mind against the Person of Jesus Christ, and they have many and many a time made me tremble in this pulpit. The awful things the old serpent, the dragon, leviathan, that crooked serpent, has cast into my mind against the Lord Jesus, I would never utter. Ah, he has a flood of wickedness which he casts out of his mouth to devour that blessed birth, in a sinner's heart, of Jesus Christ. This is a time of trouble, a time when you cry and groan and

perhaps feel that the Lord shutteth out your prayer. A time when you scarcely know what to do. And these thoughts seem so entirely your own, that you, for the moment, have no suspicion that an enemy is doing this. He is sowing the tares; he is uttering the blasphemies, and, because they have a counterpart in your nature, you think they are entirely your own. In this time God will hide His people in His pavilion.

A time of trouble may be a time when some sad and solemn providences occur, when it seems that the hand of God is against you. We have many examples of this in holy Scripture, as when Abraham, having received the promise, had long to wait for it. O, it was a trying providence that kept Abraham childless after receiving the promise of the son in whom all nations should be blessed. That is a solemn thing. If you have had given out to you by the Lord some promise, there probably will come a very serious death on it, a delay as to its fulfilment, and that will be a time of trouble. Yea, and one may say, this begins when God speaks first to a child of His comfortably, and when some hint of heaven is given, and you have to wait all through your pilgrimage. And sometimes clouds come, and various evils come in the holy, wise providence of God and what to do and how to hold on, to keep your feet, to wait on God, to believe in Him, to believe when the word is contradicted on every hand, and when some seeming impossibilities arise, that is a time of trouble. It was a time of trouble with those noble confessors who refused to bow down to the golden image set up on Dura's fiery plain. A time of trouble when, bound in their clothes and their hosen, they were cast into a seven-fold heated furnace. They were hidden. It was a time of trouble with David when, over and over again, during the life of Saul, he was persecuted and here and there it seemed inevitable to him that he must be destroyed. It was a time of trouble with the Apostle Paul when, in that eventful voyage, the Lord told him that the ship must be broken but he had given to him all the lives of those with him. These are times of trouble that come to us even now, when the providence of God is adverse, and who knows what adversity we have yet to experience, whether we shall live to experience persecution for the truth's sake in some form that at present appears not. Whether we shall know more about the sealing of the witnesses and we shall find the enemies of Christ prevailing for a time against Him, the Lord

knows, but open trouble may come to us. We shall need hiding then.

It will be a time of trouble when there must be a dissolution of partnership, if I may so express it, between two who have lived together a long time; I mean, when death comes; when soul and body, constituting a person, shall be separated for a time. When the view of eternity, when the awfulness of standing before Jehovah, when, it may be you remember your sins, and your shortcomings during the whole of your life and particularly those which have marred you since you made a profession, when these things stare you in the face, and you have to look at them, that, O that, will be a time of trouble.

Is there any hope of escape? Is there a refuge? Yes, and the text reveals it. "For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion", His tabernacle. This is a place of safety and I will, as enabled, show you what this hiding is; how a sinner, in the trouble I have named, is really hid and covered and preserved by the Lord. Take the first, sin, that monster; who can speak enough against it? Who can fully, adequately describe sin in its filth, its pollution, its subtlety, its power? Do you expect to get through it, to be delivered from it? Yes. Have you ever blessed God that sin is separable from a sinner, that one day in every saint sin shall be entirely destroyed. O, I am thankful that sin and a sinner are separable and God will separate them in the cases of all His people. But, so long as a sinner remains here, he has this thing to trouble him. Then what is his security against it? Where is he hid? That blessed word, one may say, is the pavilion in which the Lord will hide His people from their indwelling sin, namely the promise: "Sin shall not have dominion over you for ye are not under the law", which provokes sin, "but under grace", which subdues it. Well, my brethren, what a hiding place Christ is here. This is the secret place of the Most High, the Ark, the Mercy Seat. O, the safety of that. And there Jesus Christ was prefigured, typified, and there no death, no sin, no pollution can come. The pestilence walks about it; it does not enter this secret place. The arrow flies by day; it does not come nigh this dwellingplace of the saints. This is the place of safety. And sometimes, God, in very gracious and sensible ways, hides a sinner in this, so that he sings in his heart: "I shall be satisfied when I

awake with Thy likeness". He looks out, he lifts his head up, he believes his salvation is near, nearer than when he first believed. He believes his good God will stand by him. He can sing sometimes in his heart and say

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

Will that Lord Jesus, in whom I have been enabled to put my trust, will He, who has appeared to me to be the Friend of sinners, will He, who bore, as I hope, my sins in His Own body on the tree, will He leave me to this foul enemy, to this subtle foe, to this violent thing, sin? And faith says, No. No, you will come through. God will help you, the Redeemer will come near to you, the Holy Spirit will speak to you, and show you where safety is. And you will perceive that safety lies, not in your resolution to hold on, not in your resolution never to yield to temptation of sin in you, but in the Lord alone. There is safety, the safety of the child of God. That he is brought to perceive and he sings. Paul did - let us look at that case - Paul realised something of this, so that he said, after having mourned and made a complaint against himself, he said: I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord, so then I, myself, I with my mind, serve the law of God but with the flesh the law of sin. He was safe and he knew it and when he knew it he was humble, as you are when you know your safety in that way. God shuts His people in here and let me repeat it, here is the secret place into which no pestilence can come, into which no arrow can be shot. This, this is safety. O, dear friends in the Lord, your souls will find sweet comfort in this, that in the Lord, in Him alone, is life and righteousness and therefore safety. We have to look out of self and we are brought to do it by the Holy Spirit.

"Out of self"

we pray sometimes

"Out of self, to Jesus lead

There is the beauty that God looks on; there is the security of His saints and, as Noah was shut in the Ark, so the people of God are shut in Christ and no harm can reach their blessed souls, and they are happy. Why, sin afflicted soul, your prospect is good. You say, I do

not see it. When the clouds are cleared away by some bright shining of the sun then you will see the prospect, the King in His beauty, the land which is very far off. Jesus in His loveliness; Jesus in all His sufficiency; Jesus in His great promises and in His faithfulness and in His wisdom, and in His omnipotence. He, He is the song; He is the hope; He is the Rock; He is the secret place of the Most High. And this will be the song, this will be the song: In the Lord we are secure; "Safety is of the Lord". "A horse is a vain thing for safety, neither shall he deliver any by his great strength". "Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength". Will that do, my friends? A plain, full gospel, satisfies a poor, needy sinner who often is distracted and sometimes distraught because of indwelling sin.

And, in the second case, the tempter, the awful tempter, that foul spirit, the devil. Ah, he is chained with respect to every child of God; he is chained. He is allowed to come very near; he is permitted to whisper a lie; he is permitted to work very violently or harmfully. Either by deceit or violence he will work much damage. But what of this? You will be hid and that word will take effect: "God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly". I believe it will be a great surprise to most of the Lord's people, if not all of them, when they find that the terrible things that were hurled into their hearts and minds, the fearful blasphemies against Jesus Christ which shook them with terror and fear, filled them with alarm and distress, that these things are visited on that serpent, that crooked serpent and the dragon that is in the sea. In this time of trouble God hides His people in His pavilion. There, now and again, they have wonderful comfort. The daughter of Zion despises her enemy. Yea, the foot of a poor sinner treads down the lofty city which God lays low, and sometimes faith moves a sinner to say, as it were, to Satan: Boast not, O foul spirit; boast not, O enemy of Christ and of my soul; He will overcome you, though I cannot. I am in danger in my feelings sometimes, but "the Lord liveth, and blessed be my Rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted". How safe is he for whom the Lord vouchsafes to plead and to whom the Lord condescends to pay love visits and speak gracious words. Fear not, fear not; I will destroy the destroyer; I will destroy death and him that had the power of it in you, as I did when on the cross, saying: "It is finished".

And in the time of providential trouble God will hide His people. It touches them, hurts them, destroys a great deal, but not one single bit of goodness will it destroy. Whatever providential trial does in the way of destroying things, we can afford to do without, though we may not think it at the moment. Ah, 'tis a great thing to see the kind care, the covering care of God in respect of providence. Take the most illustrious example of this that the Scripture affords us, namely the holy child Jesus. Herod sought to destroy the young child's life. What did God do? Spoke to Joseph and said to him: "Take the young child and His mother, and flee into Egypt". He covered Him; God's holy providence took care of the holy child Jesus; it will take care of you. Your sonship is derived from God through His beloved Son, and Christ born in you must be cared for. And providence may be so solemnly adverse as to seem to destroy you, but God will take care; He will cover us. See how He came in between Esau and Jacob. Said the Lord to Jacob, after his long trial with Laban; Return to thy father's house and to thy kindred, and I will be with thee and I will deal well with thee. And in humble obedience Jacob went out and went toward his father's house. Trouble came; trouble always comes when God gives some direction to His people, often in providence. Trouble came to Jacob. Esau was coming, and when Jacob heard of that then his conscience troubled him, and he was afraid of Esau. God came in between and a very remarkable word that of Jacob's is, to his brother Esau. He says: "I have seen thy face as it were the face of God". Esau was a reprobate, and yet to Jacob, Esau's smile was as the very favour of God. God came in between. All those 400 swords were put up into their scabbards; not one drawn against the servant of the Most High, and Esau fell on Jacob's neck and kissed him and they wept together. Have you seen some strange things in providence with respect to yourselves? Has not one solemn providence sometimes been set against another so that you have seen how that, though the Lord has permitted one to forge an enemy, a sword, as it were, to destroy you, He has raised up a waster. If the four horns went and pushed the church, God raised up four carpenters to fray the horns. (Zechariah 1 v 19/20/21). If you have a heart to watch and observe God's providence, you will find that He is working with you and for you, even when there is trouble, and so it will be to the very end. "In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His

pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me". Once a year the high priest went into the Holy of Holies. His high priestly garment was wonderful. He went into the presence of God there in a particular manner, typifying the Person and the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, and the presence and the favour of God therein. And this is the secret place of the Most High, called in the 31st Psalm, the secret of His presence. Whenever you are brought into this place, you are safe. This secret of His tabernacle, the Mercy Seat, what a wonderful type of the Lord Jesus. He said this to His Father: Thy law is hid within my heart. This was set out in a clear type by the Mercy Seat, the Ark in which the covenant was put. In Him the law has no sentence against a sinner. No threat does it utter, no curse does it breathe, no frown can it wear. It is there, in the heart of the Lord Jesus, satisfied and content with what He did, and yielded to it. On this Ark was the Mercy Seat and the cherubims, where God said, I will meet with thee. Now a soul put there is as safe as God can make it; as safe as omnipotence can render it; as safe as divine faithfulness can make it. O, what harm can ever reach your soul, beneath your Father's eye, and beneath this blessed security of the Lord Jesus Christ? Now when you get a sense of this - and this is what every living soul wants; a real sense of it, so that he can say, wherever it is, wherever it happens to him: This is God's house and my soul the Lord has met and He has spoken friendly to me and therefore I am not an unfriend of God; when you can say that in any measure for a few minutes, then, whether you think it or not at the moment - you have this experience: "In the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me." Hide me from wrath to come; hide me from sin and the devil; hide me from all the drawn swords of the enemies of Christ; hide me from all the wickedness of my own nature, and hide me from every possible storm that can come and beat against me.

"He shall set me up upon a rock". No need for me to fumble about and try to find out what this rock is and who is intended by it. It is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ; His very Person, because He is God. He is the Rock, the Rock of Ages. In a Psalm a little further on, the Psalmist tells us that he waited patiently for the Lord and the Lord inclined His ear unto him and heard him. He brought me up, says he, out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings, and put a new song into my

mouth, even praise unto God. The whole gospel is here; the covenant of grace is here, and the security, and the sense of security also here you will find. "He shall set my feet up upon a rock". Many people think they are here. Do you know that you are here? A religionist whose aim is to get his own religion may think he is here, may build, as he thinks, but he is only building on the sand, and when the rain falls and the wind blows, and the waves beat vehemently against that house, it falls, and great is the fall thereof. But if you have been taught to dig, and dig, and dig, and God has caused you to find the Rock and set your feet upon it, then whatever storms come, the house will stand, for it is founded upon the Rock. Now a sense of this is one of the sweetest, richest experiences that the Holy Spirit gives to His people. When they feel that they can say: I stand upon His merit; I stand on the Person of the Mediator; I stand on the gracious and all prevailing intercession of Jesus Christ; I stand on His infinite merit and name it to God when I pray; I stand on His righteousness for justification; then the sinner has the best standing that can be had. It does for time; it brings peace and solid satisfaction. It will do for eternity. O, what a mercy when God does this. Sometimes you are set on your feet on this Rock when you are in prayer, when some wave of God's goodness passes over your distressed soul and you find that the Lord is dealing kindly with you, and on this Rock you stand and pray and plead and confess and weep and rejoice. O, what a great thing it is, thus to stand on the Rock of Ages. Sometimes He sets your feet on this Rock when He speaks the gospel into your heart, when the gospel comes to you as it did to the Thessalonians: "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." And then you say, now I know. A good part of our time may be spent in fear and trembling. A good part of our prayer may be, do set me on this Rock. A little part of our experience is this: He has set my feet on the Rock; Christ is underneath me; Christ is about me; my hope, my life, my object, my love, my All and in All. He shall set my tottering feet upon this Rock; Rock of Ages. It is very beautifully expressed in the prophecy of Isaiah, where the Lord God speaks, saying: "I have laid in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone. He that believeth shall not make haste". It is spoken of differently, and yet it is the same thing, in Daniel, where we read of a stone cut out of the mountain without hands destined to destroy all

other kingdoms and fill the face of the earth, and it does so in every child of God. Whenever Christ is revealed other things go and He becomes "the chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely".

He sets our feet upon the Rock with respect to this life. How can you expect to get honourably through apart from the Lord Jesus? If you do expect to get through honourably you will be deceived, but if you stand here, then sometimes you will be able to say

Wisdom and mercy guide my way

and you will believe a little, and feel a little of the Psalmist's experience when he said: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want". The Rock Jesus Christ is then made everything to you. And in respect of eternity, this blessed Rock is here; Rock of Ages. A Rock that will never give way. A Rock that, as Philpot says, is not only above the waters, but beneath them; deeper, O deeper than all trouble, than all sin, than all temptations, all enemies, is Jesus Christ, the Rock of Ages. "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life" - this is spiritual; this is none other than the blessed place where God is; His dwelling place becomes the home of His children - "to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in His temple" - with regard to all my matters here and for eternity - "For in the time of trouble" - which is sure to come, which is with us - "He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock," and may the Lord put us here.

AMEN.