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reached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at "Galeed" Chapel, Brighton,
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"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God".

1. Corinthians 2, v.4-5.

Paul in this chapter expresses his manner of preaching and the matter of his ministry. It would be well for us who profess to preach to follow his example. He was a scholar, he could have come before the people with excellency of speech and of man's wisdom, but grace in his heart, the teaching of the Holy Spirit in his soul, gave him to realise what he afterward wrote, even in the 3rd chapter, "Let no man glory in man, for all things are yours" - and the reason was - "because ye are Christ's and Christ is Gods".

The matter of his ministry was Jesus Christ and Him crucified. That expresses the whole of salvation, the whole of the Gospel in its entirety is Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and he determined to know nothing among the Corinthians save that as the matter of his ministry. Then he says, "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling". I have been thankful for this word, the mighty Apostle, speaking to the same point he says, later, "we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything", that is of spiritual things, "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves but our sufficiency is of God". "I was with you in weakness". The Lord demonstrated this to the apostle by giving him a thorn in the flesh, that he might learn that when he is weak, then is he strong, and that the power of God is made perfect in weakness.. In order to know that we will be brought to weakness.

"I was with you in weakness", he said, "By the grace of God I am what I am", not by education, or by learning or by scholarship, but "By the grace of God I am what I am". As a christian he was with them in weakness and in fear. Not the fear of man, but the fear of God. He feared at one time lest having preached to others he himself might become a castaway, therefore, he said, "I keep under my body", this fear was a knowledge of himself. He knew himself to be a wretched man. He knew he had another law in his members bringing him into captivity to the law of sin and death. He needed to be held up. He feared.

He feared too because of the majesty of God. He stood in awe of Him. A blessed fear this is, I do covet it, I pray I may never be in the pulpit other than in these three verses. "I was with you in weakness and in fear" of God. Said David, "Thou art very great Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the Gods, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders". And if a man has any right conception of the infinite God in all His glorious majesty, he will fear before Him. "I was with you in weakness and in fear". Fear too, with respect to the responsibility of the immortal souls of the people. Felt to need the wisdom of the Holy Ghost to rightly divide the Word of Truth. A great responsibility. It will make a man fear and much tremble. A political meeting needs a political acumen, wisdom, but that is only the natural affairs, the things of this world. But to stand before the Almighty God and His people. Moses reminded the Lord, he said, "Consider that this nation is Thy people", that is why it was so heavy upon him. The Lord's people, and as it has pleased the Lord by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe, what a responsibility it is to preach! one will be brought to feel his weakness, and fear and much tremble.

"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom". Well, I could not speak with the excellency of speech and human wisdom, because I do not possess it, but the apostle did. "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words", the margin says, with persuasible words. This is very important, to my mind it is a very solemn thing for a preacher to attempt to exercise a

personality and an influence upon a congregation whether it is by gesticulation or manerisms, it is a very solemn thing.

"My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom". A preacher may work upon the emotional feelings of people and bring tears in their eyes, but nothing of the Holy Ghost may be in it. That is a solemn word in the 30th chapter of Exodus. There we have the ingredients of the holy oil, and at the end of that chapter there is a warning; that if any should compound anything like unto it they shall be excluded from among His people. To attempt by any plausible or persuasible speech or by exercising any personality upon the people is very near to imitating the Holy Ghost. I know it will suit itching ears. There is something perhaps more entertaining in it, I can understand young people being attracted by it, I remember I was many years ago, but O if the Lord begins a work of grace in the heart and turns a poor sinner to destruction, makes his beauty to consume away like a moth, gives his conscience such a deep wound of sin, he wants something different from persuasible speech. He will want salvation.

"I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling, and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom". Of course, hearers can examine themselves by these Scriptures; important chapter I feel this to be, and how it does separate between a light preaching and a light congregation with all the fanciful interpretation of Scripture, with all the innovations and side shows that are to be found in some places. "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Who needs it? Who needs demonstration? Who needs power? not a nominal professor, not those that are whole and need no physician, but those who are in conflict in their souls; exercised with many doubts and fears. Those who know not what they are or where they are. Those in whose hearts there is a strange work going on.

"In demonstration of the Spirit and of power". The thing is, what is the demonstration of the Spirit? Well, we have the Word of God, and the letter of the Word is not a demonstration, the demonstration of the Spirit in the Word is for the Holy Ghost to take the Word of God and accomplish it, what it declares, in your experience. There may be a plan of a building. The plan is absolutely perfect, but that is not the building. The only way that that plan can be demonstrated is in the building. The same with doctrine, doctrine is good but we need the demonstration of the doctrine. We may go to the doctor for a prescription, the prescription may be a right one for the disease but there is no demonstration in the prescription, the demonstration is the application of it.

"But in demonstration of the Spirit and of power". Now where there is a work of grace in the heart the Holy Ghost will bring such a soul into conditions that only demonstration can satisfy that soul. I was thinking of it as we were singing the hymn, and indeed in every chapter that we read. The beautiful hymn that we have just sung; now what would be the demonstration of the Spirit in that hymn? why, it would be an answer to the prayer, there is no demonstration of the Spirit in prayer itself until that prayer is answered. Although prayer is indited by the Holy Ghost the demonstration of the Spirit is in answers to prayer, and is not that just what some of you need? enticing words would irritate you. If a man is wounded, wounded and dying, persuasible words would be no use to that man neither would it be any use to take to that man a medical book and explain to him something from that book with respect to his disease, he would want demonstration, he would want to be taken to a surgeon, to a physician, to a surgery to have the skill demonstrated in dealing with that disease. Demonstration of the Spirit. You will want something done in your soul. "My speech and my preaching was not with 'persuasible' words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." I believe that this will touch a chord in every anxious soul and where there is the

tender fear of God you will not be satisfied or rest short of some demonstration of the Spirit in your own soul. Take for instance the doctrines of the Gospel. Redemption. "In Christ we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins". You can read it, read it in the 1st chapter of the Ephesians, 7th verse but to read it is not a demonstration, and if you have been taught and convinced of sin there is nothing that will cleanse and heal and deliver you but for the Holy Ghost to take that verse and apply it and accomplish in your heart that healing.

Look at the Psalm that we read at the prayer meeting, the 51st Psalm, that blessed Psalm. Now David there wanted demonstrations right the way through that Psalm, plausible or persuasible words or enticing words would but mock him, as he lay prostrate in the dust, as a guilty sinner before God, but look at his prayer right through that Psalm, what did he want? the demonstration of the Spirit, the application of that fountain filled with blood, drawn from Emmanuel's veins, and you will know when you get it, you will know it. I have sung and read that hymn thousands of times but I shall never forget when that was given out about nine months ago when I was sinking, and sinking before I came into this pulpit and really thought I was coming to this pulpit to make complete shipwreck of all my preaching. You won't feel very strong if you come into a pulpit like that, but our friend gave out that hymn, unusual to begin a service with,

"There is a fountain, filled with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins".

I had the demonstration of the Spirit and immediate application of that precious blood, it raised me from the gates of hell to the gate of heaven.

"My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power". To demonstrate what He can do, "that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men", very solemn if it does, there is a kind of faith that does. You have not that danger here because I have not the ability, but I do believe it needs much grace to sit under an able minister of the Gospel. I believe it is true that Mr. Popham once said, "When I am gone it will be seen who came to hear me and who came to hear the truth".

"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men". Not in enticing words, not in excellency of speech, not in oratory; but what a long way one can go, how delusive it is, how deceiving. I have felt sometimes that it is a good and profitable occupation to consider our latter end, and there may be two things, two questions, which will give you to judge a preaching, one is, is there anything in it for a broken hearted sinner, and the other thing is this, will that preaching do when I come to lay my head upon a dying pillow? O how much, how much preaching and how much religion will not reach the heart of a poor broken hearted sinner and that will be of no use when we come to die. Cannot you then see, and do you not feel your heart go after the demonstration of the Spirit and of power? Where that is the case, then your faith stands not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, and it is power that you must have, that is, if you have the work of the Spirit which has given you to feel what you are. You will need the power of Christ to lift you from the ruins of the fall, to bring you up out of the low dungeon, out of the horrible pit. You need power to believe in His name. You need power to pray, you need power to walk in the tender fear of God. None of these things are in our nature. Faith is a grace of the Spirit.

"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men" These truths are very discriminating. There were four hearers, three were wrong and only one was right. Solemn consideration that. And they heard the same word, it was the same seed sown. O my friends, we are hastening on to eternity! to an eternal fixed destiny and there is a solemn connexion between how we are living as to how we shall die, and where we shall spend eternity and if these things,

lay with weight upon our hearts and consciences we shall want all the way along the demonstration of the Spirit and of power that our faith in walking through this wilderness might not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

I remember the wise remark of a deacon made to me some years ago. Speaking of different ministers, he said, "It is not the person, it is not Mr. so and so at all, this is the point, if there is no power it is of no use whoever it is". And do you come at times into the Sanctuary and want something definite done? And you will find this intimated in almost every chapter of the Bible, especially perhaps in the Psalms; look at those prayers. Take the 142nd Psalm, "Bring my soul out of prison that I may praise Thy name". He was in prison, it was an experience and he wanted a demonstration of the Spirit and power which alone could bring him into liberty. And that Spirit was upon the Lord Jesus Christ immeasurably. He was anointed to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to give liberty to the captives. You can read that but there would be no demonstration in reading it - and you will not want any demonstration unless you are a mourner, unless you are broken-hearted, unless you are a captive. So this demonstration is connected with experience.

We have, to my mind, another definition of this demonstration; it is an anointing really. But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you. Whatever the Lord does by His Spirit, is an anointing. Everything, if it is but the smallest thing. If by the Spirit you lift up an eye, or if there is the falling of a tear by the Holy Spirit's teaching in your heart, it is an anointing. If ever you feel in reading the Word of God or under the preaching of the Gospel, the dew rest upon your spirit making Christ precious, clothing you with humility, it is an anointing. If ever you feel the Lord's presence it is an anointing, and it will abide. Not always in the sense of it, but it will be there, nothing can be destroyed and it has a demonstration in it because it is a work, it has done something. And when you get it again, it may be after a long time, you will recognise it. It may be the same taste you have tasted, that the Lord is gracious, you have had it for yourself and you will know it. Again if you have felt His touch, inimitable is His touch, when He touched you again you will say, that is the same blessed hand. If you hear His voice and hear it again you will say that is the voice of my Beloved. It is an anointing and it abideth in you. Not that you have got beyond teaching, you never will, but it means this, that you need not to be taught what the Spirit has demonstrated in your experience. If He has delivered you, brought you out of prison, turned your darkness into light, you will need no man to teach you that He has done it.

You take that demonstration of the Spirit to the blind man, that beautiful chapter of the 9th John. "He said, One thing I know", not by some plausible words, not by some excellent speech, but it was something done, "Whereas I was blind, now I see". And the Lord Jesus came and deepened the work in that dear man; "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?", O his honesty, "Who is He Lord, that I might believe on Him, He it is that speaketh unto thee". Gave him a demonstration of Who He was, and under that power, demonstration and power, he said, "Lord, I believe, and he worshipped Him". Do not some of you want demonstration? nothing else is of any use, that your faith, that is, your believing may be strengthened. You do not believe it because of persuasible speech, excellency of speech, not because of the wisdom of the preacher. It is possible for an orator in the pulpit to be so persuasive as to persuade people to believe without the Holy Spirit. Paul, writing to the Hebrews speaks of believing unto the saving of the soul, but there is a believing which is not saving. There is a believing of the truth which is not saving. I know this comes very close and I speak soberly, it is a believing the truth by the natural intellect by being brought up to

hear it, understand it in the natural mind and to believe it. Well, what is the matter with all that believing? It is not a revelation, there is no demonstration of the Spirit, the thing believed in has no influence in the heart, there is no new birth, there is no root.

"My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of men's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." I have felt to need this. I have always felt to need it but not like I do today. I need the Holy Ghost in my feeble preaching to exercise that demonstration of the Spirit and power to your hearts. If you only hear me you may receive it as the truth, but it is only the Holy Ghost that can take the words and make them effectual in your hearts so that through the foolishness of preaching to save those that believe, and that is a saving faith, and if you have this demonstration of the Spirit there will be power, it will move you. Your believing would cause you to come; your believing would open the arms of your faith to receive Him. "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men".

It brings us to this, "Let every man prove his own work", and that is a very important thing. Very important with respect to a minister, to prove his own work. To be assured that what he delivers he has first received of the Lord. Paul said that more than once, "I have received of the Lord that which I have delivered unto you", and if it is otherwise, the Spirit will never demonstrate what is spoken that is not received of the Lord.

And you will feel this too, that you will desire to receive from the Lord that which is delivered from the pulpit, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men; but prove your own work, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling", and the only way to work out your own salvation is for the spirit of faith to seek, as you read a chapter, as you hear the Gospel, for the Holy Spirit to demonstrate what is spoken and what you read and translate it into your souls experience. And that is to assimilate the Lord Jesus, eat His flesh and drink His blood by faith. O there will be times when you will feel to long to be like Him, "Make me wholly Thine .

"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men". If it did then the wisdom of men would die when they die; and if our faith stands in the wisdom of men it is not the gift of God. It is not the faith of God's elect. It is very important to have a religion that the Holy Ghost begins. And it will be a religion of our own personally. There is a right kind of independence in vital religion, and it will stand in the power of God, O what security there is there! "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" and the power of God is Christ. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.". The fullness of power is in Christ as is the fullness of wisdom and the fullness of grace, and the fullness of merit, the fullness of riches. O what a Christ He is! and you will need Him in all that He condescended to become. His relationship, His characters will be so suitable to your lost and ruined condition, and you will need the demonstration of the Spirit with power to unite you unto Christ in all those characters and offices and relationships, nothing but demonstration and power can thus unite a poor sinner unto Christ, enticing words will never do it. Do you feel the vitality of it? perhaps in your feelings as the Holy Ghost now is demonstrating to you your need of Him. You may see better than I can express the blessedness, the suitability, the desirability of this demonstration. O to have demonstrated to you that you are a child of God! Take for instance, that hymn, that prayer,

"Show me a token Lord, for good,
Some token of Thy special love,
Show me that I am born of God
And that my treasure is above".

What would satisfy you as an answer to that ? excellent speech, persuasible words to persuade you by man's wisdom that it is so ? perish the thought ! Nothing but the demonstration of the Spirit and power to bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God.

Amen.

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