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Prayer Meeting address by Mr. F. L. Gosden at Galeed Chapel,
Brighton, Friday evening, 25th July 1975LIBRARY OF THE
GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTIST1 Peter iv 7-11.

Here we have many of the salutary exhortations for our instruction, to teach us lessons how to live. "But the end of all things is at hand." There were scoffers in Peter's day, and there are today, saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the Father's fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (2 Peter iii 4) And there are such scoffers today. They say, you have been telling us of the end for hundreds of years but things continue just the same. That is because they are ignorant, as it follows in the 3rd chapter: "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished....But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." But it is very evident that Peter here is speaking concerning our individual lives. But the time is short, our years are three-score years and ten, and even if we take it at the degree of which we have read, a thousand years as one day, it is a very short time compared with a never-ending eternity. "But the end of all things is at hand," and the end of all things, so far as we are concerned individually is the day of our death, and so Solomon in the Proverbs makes the same point: "Let not thine heart envy sinners; but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long. For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off." (verses 17 & 18. Ch.xxiii) O blessed are those people who have an expectation, a good hope through grace, that when the end comes they will then enter and take possession of that inheritance of the saints!

"But the end of all things is at hand." So that is the warning Peter gives and an incentive to be sober and watch unto prayer. Naturally, a man puts off the evil day, the day of death, but how can a man be happy who is moving on to a never ending eternity and has no hope beyond the grave? The best hope that a worldly man has in his end is the hope that death will annihilate and that eternity will be an oblivion; that is the best hope he has and that is his expectation, but that expectation will be cut off. "But the end of all things is at hand." Everything beneath the sun is very transitory and life is but a vapour: but he brings this for our consideration, that we may take it to heart; "So teach us to number our days", teach us in such a way and of such things that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom", and that really comes to the next clause; "Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." And we need to be taught in order that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

There are two main things that the Lord teaches His people, He teaches them to profit. He teaches them what this world really is, He teaches that which we have brought before us in the Ecclesiastes: I have felt that there is much teaching in the book of Ecclesiastes, if our dear young people should read it and the blessed Spirit would open their eyes, they would see the things of time and sense in God's light. There is no satisfaction in this world. The first chapter of the Ecclesiastes is wonderful, it shows how restless everything is in this world, it has no

purpose in it as to its end. All its rivers run into the sea yet the sea is not full, it speaks of the wind whirling about first to the south and then to the north and returning unto its place from whence it came, restless. Vanity and vexation of spirit, the Lord will teach His people, but there is another thing He teaches His people, that there is a better country, that there is an eternal portion, that there is an inheritance here in the Gospel and in heaven in the inheritance above, and both of these things are seen by faith, and thus they are taught the number of their days so as to apply their hearts unto wisdom.

"But the end of all things is at hand, and it is the only certainty in life - the certainty of death and the reality of it. It may be a very morbid kind of subject to those who have but an earthly mind, but O Miss Steele knew the secret of it -

"Eternity, tremendous sound !
To guilty souls a dreadful wound,
But O if Christ and heaven be mine,
How sweet the accents, how divine !

That is the conclusion of faith, and that is in this seventh verse "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober." There is a natural sobriety which is very desirable and very pleasant. The opposite to sobriety is drunkenness, to be surfeited, easily to get into a panic. But to be sober minded naturally usually accompanies a man of an elevated mind. Sobriety has humility in it. I am speaking naturally now, and natural humility, so that the opposite is pride, extravagance, intemperance, drunkenness; and if ever there is an evidence of ignorance it is pride, and nothing manifests ignorance as pride does, and therefore we need divine teaching. If we know ourselves we have got nothing to be proud of. I believe I am beginning to learn that a little myself, very late I admit, but O to know self and to really realise poor self as a self-destroying sinner, it will not leave much room for pride.

"Be ye therefore sober." Now the difference between natural sobriety and spiritual sobriety is this, that a natural sobriety has got no root to it, but a spiritual sobriety has faith for its root, and it is of a different nature. So look at it from that point of view, "But the end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore sober" "Be still, and know that I am God," and this can only be where there is faith; so be ye therefore sober with respect to the all-sufficiency and omnipotence of God, so that in all our private conflicts and losses and crosses and tribulations, to have faith in God, in His ability, in the all-sufficiency of His fullness, in His immutability, in His divine sovereignty, is to be sober; and the root of it is faith, to look beyond the veil, to look above second causes

The Lord encouraged Abraham really in this sobriety. He had told Abraham the troubles that were before Him, He had promised him great things too; but He said to him "Knowest thou that thy seed shall go into captivity 420 years" but, said the Lord, "Walk before me" you will be perfect, that is complete, that is, if you soberly walk before Me and keep your eyes upon Me you will be complete, because you will walk before Him who is infinite in wisdom to direct. "Walk before Me" My omnipresence, you will always be before My eye. If you walk before Me you will walk

before omnipotence which none can overcome. "Be sober". It needs faith to look beyond circumstances and second causes and to cast your burden and your cares upon the Lord.

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." And this soberness, by faith, will make the Lord Jesus and all His finished work a ground for your encouragement, your hope; and I should say that perhaps the Psalmist exemplifies this verse in the 42nd Psalm, and you see how David there walked before God, and the soberness of faith kept him steady. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God" That is sobriety which hath faith for its root, which looks beyond and through all circumstances and all conditions in this life. And you see the sobriety in some of those who cried out from the very depths. That outstanding case of ^{JOHANN} Job; he was in the belly of hell, "The end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore sober" in the belly of hell he was, "When my soul fainted within me" I did not panic, though the reeds were over my head, wrapped about my head, yet he said, "I remembered God and my prayer entered into His temple, into His holy temple." He was sober. Well, we have need for it in these solemn days.

"The end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." So that one effect of this sobriety is prayer, it is the very essence of it. Whatever may come to us or we enter into, whatever surprises may come into our lives, whatever mixed cup, whatever sorrow, whatever emptying in adversity, the remedy is before us, pray. O the spirit of prayer which can humbly laugh at impossibilities. Be sober. The opposite really is compared to the seed sown in thorny ground, the cares of this life and the lusts of other things choke the word, and so it is.

I just make one more reference to this sobriety and its opposite. We have a reference to it in Luke. I do feel it is a time ^{when} that we need this sobriety: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares" and that day is but the end of all things, is at hand; there is nothing abiding. But I do think of the dear young people; O the vanity and vexation of spirit you will find if you live, to be stamped upon everything in this world, and yet this life is very important. We are put here for a purpose and God has His appointments, therefore, we should be "Diligent in business, fervent in prayer, serving the Lord" and whatever our hands find to do, to do it with our might. The word of God never encourages laziness, but what a mercy it is if we can discharge our duties and bear our responsibilities before God, realising the support of His grace. It is a beautiful hymn we sing -

"In every condition, in sickness, in health,
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth;
At home, or abroad, on the land, on the sea,
As thy days may demand, shall thy strength ever be."

And when faith sees that then faith can be still amidst tempestuous motion and the whole thing is to have the eye of faith fixed upon God's incarnate Son. But I must not stay for more. "Above all things have fervent charity among yourselves.....use hospitality one to another without grudging." I

do feel thankful when I read that - we have the evidence of that charity among ourselves, and hospitality one to another without grudging. O may the Lord still bind us together ! But I do feel this 7th verse is very important: "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

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Called on in prayer - Mr. Royce
Mr. A. Saunders
Mr. Cottingham

and the church is a