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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

Sermon preached by Mr. F.L.Gosden at "Galeed" Chapel, Brighton,
Sunday morning, 27th February 1966.

"Howbeit when He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you."

John 16, v.13, & 14.

The work of the Holy Ghost is equally important as the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. I feel that there is a need to speak of the work of the Holy Ghost because there is so much religion which is destitute of it, and all religion that is not of the Holy Spirit is dead. It may be correct, orthodox, but if it is not of the Holy Ghost it is a mere acquisition. The whole of it and all worship, apart from the Holy Ghost, is bodily exercise. and to know the Gospel without the Holy Ghost is to know it in word, in word only. Any person of ordinary intelligence could study the Scriptures and know about God, could know about salvation, but that knowledge is cold, it would leave a person where it finds them. Would do nothing in their hearts, would convey nothing of the Gospel to their souls. A dead letter.

We might well examine ourselves as to whether we have received the Holy Ghost. The Lord Jesus had told His disciples that He was going away from them. Indeed, He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you". We sing sometimes a truth,

"But all true Christians this may boast,
A truth from nature never learned,
That Father, Son and Holy Ghost
To save our souls were all concerned";

and we will feel it. You will believe it. Those of you who are exercised about your salvation, those of you who try to pray, those of you who come with exercise of soul to the services, have you not a mysterious, inward consciousness of the blessed Trinity ? "We have access through Christ, unto the Father, by the Spirit".

"Howbeit when He the Spirit of truth is come". He is a Person. The third Person in the Trinity, Not that there is any inferiority, but in the consels of Jehovah in the Covenant of Grace, it was the Divine Father Who foreknew, loved and chose His people, but He chose them in Christ. That foreknowledge was equal in the Son, equal in His love and equal in His choice. And so with the Holy Ghost. He quickens those who were sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ and called. Called by the Holy Ghost. It is very blessed, this revelation of the work of the Trinity and the interest of Jehovah in the church; but O to have an interest in it !

"Howbeit when He the Spirit of truth is come". I wonder how many hearts responded to our second hymn when the text was announced ?

"Spirit of truth, come down,
Reveal the things of God,
And make to ME salvation known,
And witness with the blood".

We were speaking lately of a vehement desire: "Drop down ye heavens from above, let the skies pour down righteousness, let the earth open and bring forth salvation." Now that would be the influence, the power, of the Holy Ghost. There would be no communications from heaven but for Him. We should know nothing but for His infallible teaching. We should see nothing but for His heavenly inshining. We should be dead but that He quickens the dead into life. O do you feel the importance of the Holy Ghost, and

feel a love to Him in His work ? "Howbeit when He the Spirit of truth", not the letter of truth, "the Spirit of truth is come", "He will guide you into all truth".

We would then look a little at how He guides into the truth, and the first truth that the Spirit guides into is the truth of God Himself. Do you remember when you first believed God ? Natural men are ignorant of God. Religious men are ignorant of Him, it is very evident by their utterances that the light, not only the darkness, but the light that is in them is darkness. But do you remember when you first believed God and you trembled ? "Thou God seest me". It is the Holy Spirit alone that can reveal the infinite God. He is manifested in the creation, and yet natural men, as we said I think on Friday, they see God in nothing. A carnal man sees God in nothing. Faith sees God in everything. Have you seen Him ?

"When He the Spirit of truth is come He will guide you into all truth", into the truth of Jehovah, that there is a God, and "Thou God seest me". O I do pray that this work of the Holy Spirit might be made manifest, to reveal Himself in the hearts of sinners, in the hearts of our young people. Because it is a Spirit-taught knowledge of God that puts everything else in its right place. If God is revealed to us we must know ourselves as God sees us, and if we are brought to know God it will give us to see His divine sovereignty which orders all things in the universe and our own lives' minutest circumstance. So that I feel that it is warrantable, indeed the only right approach to this word, "He shall guide you into all truth". We must begin with God Himself, He is the God of all truth, the God of all grace, and if we are ignorant of Him, we are ignorant of everything. To have a right conception, that is a revealed conception of Jehovah, lays a foundation for vital religion and vital godliness.

"When He the Spirit of truth is come He will guide you into all truth". This blessed God. Reveal to you Who and what He is. Though He is incomprehensible He has made Himself knowable to that degree that is necessary for salvation. We can never know God fully, otherwise He would not be God. I have been thankful that He is incomprehensible, but that knowledge alone would do us no good. But that the incomprehensible God can be known in the Person of His incarnate Son by the Holy Ghost is a great knowledge. Jesus Himself said that, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent". And when this great God is revealed it will lay a foundation, as He is revealed in Christ, for hope. Because when God is revealed to us the Holy Ghost will lead us into a knowledge of ourselves, and O how that will discover to us that we have need of such a God! None other but the eternal, infinite, omnipotent, immutable God, revealed in Christ is a foundation for a poor sinner .

He will lead you into the truth of the fall. It is a solemn fact, the fall of man. We have evidence of it in the world, "all creation groaneth" because of the fall of man, the entrance of sin into the world.

"When He the Spirit of truth is come" He will guide you into the truth of your own condition as a ruined sinner. That is the place where He convinces of sin. We may feel the inconvenience of sin in the world, the havoc that it has wrought, but to see sin in its effects in the world, though it is terrible, is not to know ourselves as sinners. "But when He the Spirit of truth is come He will guide you into all truth". Into the truth of your personal individual ruined state. It is a reality. It is a knowledge by which we receive the law, a knowledge of the completeness of the ruin of our being, and we need the Holy Ghost to reveal our real state before God. Now have we that work of the Holy Ghost in our hearts ? We hear about it, we may understand it, we may say it is right, well it is quite correct to say so and if that was never spoken of there would be something short. Well, so far so good, but has the Holy Ghost

so revealed our state that we are brought in guilty before God ? Feel the depth of the fall ? Realise that we deserve eternal punishment ? O may that beast reason be subdued and bowed down. The question was asked once, How God could be just to punish a sinner in eternity if he only lived 70 years ? A very subtle dart of the devil that is. But there is a solemn answer to it, It means this, that punishment can never remove sin, and if sin is never removed then there will ever be the wrath to come. It is a delusion of the Papists in purgatory that punishment will eventually bring pardon. But O to see and feel the nature of sin by the Holy Ghost. There is only one cure and that is the blood, the sin-atonement blood of the Lamb of God. Have you ever thought of it ? punishment cannot remove guilt, punishment cannot pardon sin. Sin is against an infinite God and therefore, it is infinite. I have often thought of a remark of Mr. Popham, it is very true, "The act of sin is transient, but the sin itself is permanent". Nothing can remove it but the blood of Christ. And when He the Spirit of truth is come He will guide you into that truth, and you will know it.

A nominal professor would think well, that is unnecessary to burden a troubled people with that kind of thing, ignorance of sin is no cure, and if the Holy Ghost leads you into your sinnership you will not want to be ignorant of it. What you will want is its removal. You will want the Gospel, you will need that fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. This is the work of the Spirit in the heart.

"Howbeit when He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth". It was for this that David prayed, "Show me Thy ways O Lord, teach me Thy paths, lead me in Thy truth and teach me, for Thou art the God of my salvation, on Thee do I wait all the day". Now that is the exercise, that is the attitude of faith in a sinners heart in whom the Holy Ghost is, and is teaching. O what an infallible teacher He is !

"Howbeit when He the Spirit of truth is come", Is come. I know He came and was poured upon the Church at Pentecost profusely, when 3,000 souls were quickened in one day, although we are not given to look for such an outpouring of the Holy Ghost, yet when He comes He is the same Spirit, The same mighty power and effect. Do you feel at this moment how vital the Holy Ghost is in your religion, in your salvation, in your profession, do you feel it ? A vital life. He alone Who can shine the pure truth, heavenly light, into your understanding. "He will guide you into all truth". He will guide you into the truth of the Gospel. Paul gave this - or rather Peter, as an evidence of election, "Our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance". So that it is the Holy Ghost alone that can lead a sinner into the Gospel. The law is a spirit of bondage, it is a ministration of death. Holy, just and good is the law of God, and by the Holy Ghost the law takes effect upon the conscience when He reveals, as we have said, what we are as fallen, ruined sinners, but He also shows the way of escape. The law which will utterly condemn the wicked becomes to those who are appointed to obtain salvation a schoolmaster. It is not a schoolmaster to reprobates, it is a final condemnation, but to those whom the Lord determines to save He makes the law a schoolmaster not that the law can bring relief, or show mercy, not that the law can liberate captives not that the law can preserve those who are condemned, not at all. It would lose its glory, its authority, and yet that very act of the law is, by the Spirit, made a schoolmaster because it will shut a sinner up from any hope until the same Spirit reveals that door of hope, reveals the Lord Jesus Christ in whom is all the fulness, the whole fulness of salvation, the fulness of the Gospel, the fulness of grace, the fulness of merit, of power. He will guide you into the Gospel, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free". And when He guides into the truth then the truth has a sanctifying effect, and we may well consider how we were brought into the truth, whether it was by the Holy Ghost. You take the doctrines of the Gospel; How do we hold them ? The doctrine of the incarnation of

God's dear Son, How do we believe it ? How would we receive it ? What connexion has that blessed truth with our experience ? I do believe I can say this, that I received the doctrine of the eternal Son of God incarnate because I was shut up to that one door of hope. When the Holy Ghost reveals the Son of God in human nature He thus brings before a poor sinner a Refuge, a Door of Hope, a Way of Escape from the wrath to come, and that foundation will so be laid in your poor soul, that the whole of your religion and your experience and your profession will be built upon it. There will be times when you will be sensible that that glorious Emmanuel, God with us, is the Rock upon which your hope is built, and it is only the Holy Ghost that can lead you thus into that truth.

In the preceeding verses we have this, "And when He shall come He will reprove the world of sin", we have spoken of that, "and of righteousness"; The margin says convince, convince of righteousness. He will convince a poor sinner that he has none of his own, and what he has is as filthy rags. He will convince him that he needs a righteousness better than the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, and so you will see that as the Holy Ghost has taught a sinner what he is, in that proportion He also teaches him Who Christ is and His sufficiency and suitability to his universal destitute and ruined condition. "He will guide you into all truth", and therefore, He will guide the sinner into the truth of Christ's righteousness. Reveal the Person of Christ. He is righteousness because He is God. His intrinsic righteousness in His blessed divine Person. But that is not the righteousness imputed, That could not be imputed to a creature. But it is important, I have mentioned it before, that whereas those perfections of Christ cannot be communicated to a creature, yet the truth, the righteousness that He wrought out partakes of the virtue of His personal righteousness. Not only was His work perfect, "He is the Rock, His work is perfect", not only that, and it was not only because His work was perfect and absolutely complete, but it partook of the virtue of His righteousness, His perfection, His divine Person. If any other could have lived a sinless life, it would then have been the life of a sinner, and it shows the vital importance of union to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Holy Ghost will lead you into the truth of Christ's righteousness, that He went to the end of the law for righteousness. He must do, He went to the end of the law and exhausted the law, not only its penalty and all its curse, but being made a curse; He went to the end of it by rendering absolute obedience. So that His divine Father was pleased for His righteousness sake, "This is my beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased". Now the Holy Ghost will convince of this righteousness. O it is very blessed to be convinced of the righteousness of Christ ! There is a beauty, when you feel it by the Holy Ghost you will pray, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us"; and as you sit in the Sanctuary you will say, "One thing I have 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, to behold the beauty of the Lord". The beauty of the Lord is His divine Person. The beauty of the Lord is His finished work, the beauty of the Lord is that love with which He loved His people, that love that many waters could not quench, could not drown. "And the Holy Ghost will guide you into all truth".

"And of judgement". He gave to His Son to have judgement. The government was upon His shoulder. But when the Spirit convinces of sin and of righteousness and of judgement, there is more than one kind of judgement. He will convince you poor sinner of this judgement, that in Him is a fulness of wisdom. A God of knowledge said Hannah, and that is a God of judgement, and when you have been brought to realise that your judgement is altogether wrong, that nothing merely human is right, and the Holy Ghost leads you into the truth and convinces you of the righteousness of Christ, and your need of it, and of judgement, convinces you of the infinite wisdom of God in all His judgements and all His methods. But then He will also convince of judgement to come; and that is solemn. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgement". It will be a

just judgement, and upon the throne will not be a poor mortal, but a faithful witness. And when the Holy Ghost leads you into truth then, and convinces you of your sins, convinces us of our righteousness that it is as filthy rags, convinces us of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus in all His perfection and His beauty, convinces us that whereas we in our fallen judgement, in our carnal reason, see nothing aright, yet convinces us of the judgement of God in His infinite wisdom which orders all things according to the Covenant of grace, and then convinces us of the judgement to come; This knowledge of the truth by the Spirit will stablish, strengthen and settle a poor soul upon Christ Himself, and at times will make Him so precious in the need of Him that you will sing in your heart, "Give me Christ, or else I die".

Howbeit when He the Spirit of truth is come". He is sent by the Father and the Son. He is a Gift. "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" O I say again, what an empty dead thing religion is where there is no Holy Ghost!

"He will guide you into all truth". He will guide you into the truth concerning the atonement and you will see this, that everything every truth, is connected with your need of it. There would have been no need for the atonement, no need for the sufferings of the Saviour, no need for Him to leave His high and glorious abode if it were not for sin and sinners, and that will be a comfort. It is a mystery, we shall never fathom it.

We have said, and it is true, there are really but two mysteries, in salvation, the mystery of iniquity and the mystery of redemption. And between those two mysteries will be the exercise of faith, and although they are completely opposite - the mystery of iniquity which concerns the unspeakable nature of sin and its unspeakable effects, all defilement, all pollution all death, the entire absence of anything good, the presence of every evil, that is the mystery of iniquity. The mystery of redemption, the very essence of life, of glory, of purity, of holiness, of righteousness; there is the two. The one is set over against the other and in those who are under the teaching of the Spirit, the mystery of redemption will swallow up the mystery of iniquity one day. As it did in the sin-atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus when He said, "It is finished". It was finished, the works of the devil were destroyed. Death, that is, those dead in sin, was abolished. Death was swallowed up in victory; and when the Holy Ghost guides into this blessed truth of the mystery of iniquity and the mystery of redemption, O how attractive the Gospel is! and how precious is Jesus Christ!

If these feeble remarks are true, have you any evidence of the Holy Ghost in your heart? In your experience? Do you feel the vital importance of that blessed Spirit? But we must leave it.

Amen.

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