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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

Prayer Meeting Address by Mr. J. Delves at "Ebenezer" Clapham on

Monday evening 7th. January, 1951

Reading: 1 Corinthians 2      Hebrews 13.1-8

Hymns: 771, 636

The Apostle Paul, in writing to these Corinthians, makes again some personal reference to himself, and that particularly in relation to the nature, manner and substance of his preaching. None can know precisely the depths into which he went, the tremblings he had, not concerning men but in relation to the solemnity of his office and the majesty of God, or what fears he may have had lest he should be left after all to bring dishonour upon the name and cause of God, or even after having preached to others should himself be a castaway. He declares here that he was with them in weakness and in fear and in much trembling: and that is the only safe place for a minister of the Gospel to be in, and the only really wholesome and profitable state of mind in relation to the discharge of his ministerial office.

The Apostle here refers more particularly to the substance of his preaching. He feared no man; his fear was not the fear of man that tendeth to bondage, but an inward trembling as before God. He says, "I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Not that he never touched upon any other point, for he declared the whole counsel of God, both in doctrine, experience, precept and practice, as you may see by the force of his exhortations, his warnings, his encouragements and his general line of preaching, but here is the grand foundation, and here it must ever be. All through the ages of time no ministry has been worthy of a name unless it be upon this basis, Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And why? Because if we are to be delivered from the wrath to come, it must be through Jesus Christ and Him crucified. If we are to be brought to any hope of the mercy of God in the Gospel, it must be through Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Not through Jesus Christ alone abstractly viewed, but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, because without the merit and efficacy of His blessed cross there could be no means whereby

mercy could reach us, no divine channel whereby forgiveness could be applied. So it must ever be Jesus Christ and Him crucified. If we are to be brought to a blessed hope in the everlasting Gospel and are to see the comforts and consolations thereof, it must be through Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And if eventually we should be favoured to pass the river and enter that Celestial City, to cast our crowns at His feet, it must be through Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Then the Apostle speaks of that divine revelation of the Gospel that is peculiar to the living family of God. Are there not things that eye hath not seen nor ear heard neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him? There are things that have never entered into the heart of man by nature and there are things that have never been fully revealed even to the Lord's people, but still he says even concerning them "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God." Who knoweth the spirit that is in a man save he himself? He says here; so in the things of God, only the Holy Ghost knows the things of God, and what is in the mind of God, for He searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. There is nothing hidden from Him. The great matter of the redemption of man is a mystery of hidden wisdom. "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory. That is the wisdom and the mystery of Jesus Christ and Him crucified and the heaven and glory of the Church through Him, which none of the princes of this world knew when they crucified Him. Not only did they discredit His testimony and were filled with unbelief and bitterness, but the princes of this world, when they crucified the Lord of glory, did not know that they were accomplishing the hidden purpose of God in Redemption, and that that act, which did not extenuate their crime, should be for the furtherance of the Gospel and the glory of God in the Salvation of the Church. This is the discernment that the Lord's people have in relation to this great matter, "He that is spiritual judgeth", that is discerneth, "all things", that is this great mystery of the Gospel in Christ, Jesus Christ and Him crucified, - "yet he himself is judged of no man". Is it not all foolishness to the world? The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither should we ever have done so had not the Holy Ghost in great mercy convinced us and opened our eyes and brought some measure of gracious revelation of the Gospel into our souls.

Let this then ever be the main thing, Jesus Christ and Him crucified, because this alone will bear us through this wilderness, comfort our souls in times of distress, support us under the cross, enable us to bear reproach and shame, carry us through the floods of Jordan and land us eventually in that city, the house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.