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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

Prayer Meeting address by Mr. J. Delves at "Ebenezer" Clapham on
Monday, 2nd. July, 1951

Reading Ephesians 3 and 4 (1-6)

The apostle's prayer in the latter part of the third chapter has something in it very beautiful and very comprehensive, and for a few moments I would just like to mention three particular features in that striking petition for these Ephesians. The first is that they might be strengthened by the Spirit of God in the inner man, which evidently relates particularly to the labour and spiritual conflict through which believers pass in their souls, irrespective of outward things, though of course connected with them. It seems to link very closely with the Lord's words to the Apostle Paul, when He said "My grace is sufficient for thee!" and the need of inward strength spiritually in respect to faith, to be strengthened in the exercise of faith in the face of all the weakening opposition that is continually felt is very sweet, when that strength is definitely felt to be given. Some of you may understand this experience, that is to say, understand that the Spirit of God has so strengthened you as to make you an overcomer over things that had previously well-nigh overwhelmed you. Not only so, but we need this spiritual strength to bear the burdens that may be laid upon us, which are more or less upon all the Lord's people; and as to this, you will know for yourself the nature and character of that particular burden. It is very sweet to feel strengthened in the inner man to bear the cross and to bear it cheerfully, even though that cross may be particularly mortifying to flesh and blood. And not only so, we need to be strengthened in the inner man to endure and to hold fast our profession, which, if it be a real one, will be sure to be tried, and will be tried in a vast number of different ways.

The second point in the prayer was that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith. Surely he could have no greater desire for them, for that constitutes the very life and substance of a gracious experience of the Gospel, and an experimental religion. Moreover, if Christ be not dwelling in our hearts by faith, there is, with all we possess, no real foundation underlying that profession. But O, how wonderful it is when the Saviour, in the manifestations of His wonderful grace, does form Himself in the heart, and that is what He does, is it not? Hence He is Christ in us the hope of glory.

The third point is that they might know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God. This is very profound, very blessed, very real. There can be an entrance in a gracious experience into infinity, so that, though the love of Christ in the breadth and length and depth and height of it surpasses all comprehension, yet when His love touches, or is shed abroad in your heart, you will know it, and you will know it to be Christ's love, because it will draw forth your love to Him. There will be such a bond, profoundly sacred, humbling, breaking, that will draw your affections towards Him as nothing else can. To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that is in the fulness of it, so that though we may be filled with all the fulness of God, that is, though we may be favoured to enjoy as much as our powers can contain, yet there is still an infinity there which will need Eternity to enter more fully into. Even then there will be an infinity beyond all that we can conceive. Yet how favoured we are, and how profoundly blessed it is, to receive a drop of that ocean of infinite love and thus to be in our experience swallowed up in love and blood.