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GOSPEL STANDARD ASSOCIATION

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Prayer Meeting address by Mr. J. Delves at "Ebenezer" Clapham 14.2.53

Hymns: 1105, 1009

Reading: Philippians 4; Matthew 15 (22-28)

53A/PM

The Apostle, in this epistle, is writing to a church toward which he had a very tender affection, an affection which arose from their practical consideration of him, but more particularly the spiritual union that he felt toward them. Of this he speaks particularly in the first chapter, being able to thank God for them and for their fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now. In the last chapter he gives them a timely exhortation which is linked with a confirming and assuring promise. It is only when faith is brought into exercise, and a sense of the Lord's presence is with us that we can in a true sense be careful for nothing. To "be careful for nothing" does not infer a careless or indifferent state of mind with regard to necessary and needful things, but it arises more particularly from a gracious confidence of faith in God, believing that our times and our concerns are in His keeping. It is true that we may often be far removed from such a gracious composure of mind, especially when things within and about us are disturbing, and in themselves give rise to great anxiety of mind, as often they do, but it is at this moment that this complacency is peculiarly sweet to feel, and when we have to prove that we are entirely unable to give it to ourselves this also bears an evidence that it is the Lord's doing when it is felt.

There is quietness of mind which the Lord's people are at times favoured to enjoy, and it appears to consist in committing our way unto Him, as it is in Psalm 37, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass", that is to say He will bring the thing to pass that will be for His glory in us, and when we are helped to do this, then at such a moment we can leave everything to Him and return unto our rest feeling that the Lord has dealt bountifully with us. It is to cast our burden upon Him whatever that burden may be. It is sweet when we are so enabled to get access at the throne of grace, to lay our cares at His feet, with our future and all that may be involved in it, things from which we

may often shrink, and tend to burden and distress the mind. It is a wonderful moment when the Lord's presence is so felt that even in such a case we can be still and know that He is God. This is to be careful for nothing, and when it is rightly felt the rest will follow, for to be careful for nothing in this way will not lead to carnal indifference but to prayer and thanksgiving. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God". This then is the best way to arrive at such an even, quiet, restful state of mind, and is linked with this remarkable promise, "and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus", This is very, very different from trying to manage or prop up our faith, or to resolve ourselves into some constancy of mind in our own strength which will certainly fail, but consists in a sensible experience of divine support and quietness of mind arising from the Lord's presence graciously felt.

This can bring us into the 19th. verse where the Apostle says "But my God shall supply all your need". Is there not something very attractive about this? The Apostle could speak of what God had been to him and he was submissive and content in whatever state the Lord would have him to be, and to believe that all his needs would be supplied; my God who has done so much for me, who has supplied my need will supply yours, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus". And the one great need, as we know, is Himself, and if we have Him then everything else needful to us is embraced in that Gift. May the Lord mercifully grant us some little experience of this complacency of mind and help us even under bewildering things to "be careful for nothing".