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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham  
at Galeed Chapel Brighton  
on Sunday evening 30 November 1919

1 CORINTHIANS 16 V 13

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you  
like men, be strong"

The Holy Ghost has, by the Apostle in this Epistle, done several remarkable things. First of all He has reproved this strikingly disordered Church for the disorders that were prevailing. It was very much split up into factions and the members were ranking themselves under different ministers and calling themselves by the names of those ministers, and then he tells them, solemnly tells them, of a report which had reached him concerning an outbreak of most grievous sin and charges them to put away that wicked person who, until he repented, could not be permitted to communion with them. He is led to open various mysteries of divine truth concerning the Person and work of Christ and to tell the people also how rich they were, that they really possessed all things; that Paul, Apollos, Cephas, were theirs; that the world, things present and things future, were theirs; life was theirs, death was theirs, all things were theirs; that they were Christ's and Christ was God's. And in the 15 chapter you remember how particularly and beautifully he sets forth the great doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and in that chapter he sets forth two great Heads as being representatives of their two respective families, the first Adam and the last Adam; the Adam made by God a living soul, the last Adam a quickening Spirit, to quicken His church. And now at the close of this remarkable Epistle, containing so many different subjects, all enforced with Apostolic authority, he closes with exhortations. It is God's custom in the Scriptures, as you will have observed, to lay a foundation of doctrine and of experience, and then build exhortations on them. I have often remarked to you that there is nothing incongruous, nothing unseemly, nothing uncouth or improper in an exhortation in the Scriptures rightly understood, and if rightly used by a minister today it is as proper for an exhortation to be given as it was proper in Apostolic days. The mercy is, when exhortations are used, that

they should be used properly in an evangelical spirit, not legally, not putting an obedience to an exhortation as a cause of blessing, but as an evidence of filial affection, as a gracious act of obedience rendered to a Father, as the subjection of a subject to a sovereign Lord and King. May we be enabled so to view the exhortations of the Scriptures.

We took a little notice this morning of a kingdom, rather of two kings and two kingdoms; the kingdom of darkness under the god of this world, and the kingdom of heaven under Jesus Christ. Here some of the subjects of Jesus Christ, the great King, King of kings and Lord of lords, are spoken to. May we be spoken to; may these words speak to us.

"Watch ye". An important word to living people. "Watch ye". And first, watch yourselves - take heed to this my friends - watch yourselves. Not a legal business, this - "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life". "Ponder well the path of thy feet". Take heed to your spirit; watch yourselves. Watch yourselves in the attitude and trend of your minds. Where do you go? How are your minds bent? After what or whom do they run? What is your chief business and desire in life? If it be your own temporal advantage, if it be "What shall we eat and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed"; if it be, how shall we stand among and with our friends; if it be to commend ourselves to them; if it be the gratification of pride; if it be that we may, as much as possible, avoid trouble, and walk in all possible ease to the flesh; if it be making provision for the flesh in some way, to fulfil the lusts thereof, well we may, according to the Word of God, judge that we are in a bad state. It is quite evident that when such a state of mind prevails that faith is very low. Depend upon it, if any of you people of God are in that state of mind, your faith is very low; it is all but dead. It does not act toward God; it does not do you good at the present time. Watch yourselves in respect of your state, attitude and trend, because it is very important. All rivers run into the sea and where your minds run, whether to the sea of this world to get what you can, or to the sea of eternal love to enjoy God, judge you. "Watch ye". Watch the state of your mind with regard to the throne of grace. Is there more or less prevailing an indisposition to prayer, an aversion? Does the spirit of independence expressed by

James - you will hardly dare to say it arises perhaps - does the spirit of independence as expressed there, fit you? Do you say in spirit "We will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that." If such be your state of mind, if you are scheming without God, moving without direction, if your mind really goes against the throne of God's heavenly grace, depend upon it your faith is very much asleep, and you are very far from God. Watch yourselves with regard to your love. On what is your love fixed? There was a man once who, after being recovered from folly and backsliding said - "Whom have I in heaven but Thee and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee". His affections were in the right place, on the proper Object. Where are yours? It is a great thing to look at this. Love must have an object; it must terminate somewhere, not on yourself, but on someone outside yourself. Does your love go to the world, or does it go to Christ? Watch your love. As you think in your heart, that you are at such a time. If the things of this world have caught you who fear God, if you find an indisposition to run after God and a strong bent toward, and love for, the things of this world, well there is a rod in store for you. Watch your love.

Watch your hopes in respect both of the ground of them and the great object of them. Do you hope for deliverance? How? Do you hope for good? What good? Do you hope for better days? What sort of days do you anticipate? Watch your hopes. Depend upon it, God watches them, and He says - "Keep thine heart with all diligence". O sinner, child of God, remember - "Keep thine heart with all diligence". That is, look at it, see how it moves, watch its workings, for it is a great thing to be engaged in, this.

Watch your prayers, the end of them. Watch your energy, - if you have any energy at all - as it moves. See what you labour for; what is it you design, that you desire, that you seek after in prayer? Is it further knowledge of God or is it that you may get out of some trouble with little or no consideration of how and what the result of the trouble may be? When prayer is rightly aimed, and, as it

were, shot like an arrow in the energy of the Holy Ghost, it goes to God; it aims at God, at God's things, at God's glory. It looks for Christ, it wants Him; for His kingdom - "Let Thy kingdom come". For His great will to be done - "Thy will be done". For His honour and His praise. Watch yourselves, for it is a great matter to be at this business, looking at the state of your own mind and the exercises of your own mind; it is a great matter.

Watch yourselves in regard to each other. "Be kindly affectioned one toward another" is the Scripture. A word spoken not without reason and a word that will continue in its authority to the very end of time. Says the Apostle Paul to the Ephesians - Walk as dear children. "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour". When hardness of heart comes upon us - alas how often it does - then that Scripture is practically disregarded. If it be not actively put aside by us, it is practically disregarded and it is not good for us to disregard any Scripture. Look at these things; see my friends; watch your spirit with regard to the ways of God. Once there was zeal, once there was simplicity, once there was a holding fast to those ways of purity which the Lord commends in the Scripture. Is it so now with us? Is there that zeal for our own soul's good and for the good of our brethren and for the glory of God? Watch these things.

Secondly, watch the providence of God. The providence of God is a most instructive thing, a most solemn thing, most momentous. We are much affected by providence. Whether we know it or not, we are affected. Watch it. Watch how it comes. Ask sometimes, and ask diligently if you can, why it comes. You may not always get an answer to your satisfaction, but I think if you are sincere you will often get an answer. Sometimes you may know very distinctly why such and such a thing has befallen you. Conscience will be quick to hear sometimes and be very distinct in its remark about some providence, very distinct. It may say, you went against your own prayers, you went against all warnings, you went against the very checks of your conscience, you seemed as if you were determined to trample it under foot to gratify yourself. Watch a providence like that and if conscience talks to you so, listen to it. It may make a small

providence a very great matter. It may make it a most important thing to you. You may look on that providence for years and say, I brought that on myself. I did it. My conscience spoke to me and I tried to avoid, I did not listen to, it. I provoked the Almighty and He sent this to me. Watch God's providence. If He bless you, watch that. If some deliverance comes, some answers to prayer in the divine dealings of the Almighty with you in His holy, wise providence; if He should send mercy; if He should raise up a friend; if He should send a deliverer to you; if, out of straitness He put you into a large place, watch that. It is not by chance. It no more comes by chance than did an affliction. It comes from His goodness. And see how it affects you. Does it elevate your heart and mind to Himself, or do you just revolve in the providence and rise no higher and look not outside the providence, but are content with it? It is not good if you are content with a providence and without God in the providence. It is not a good state of mind that you are in, and yet how apt we are thus to slip into sin, the sin of ingratitude and of sleep; sleep in respect of things which call for wakefulness. Watch deliverances; God commands them and the praise belongs to Him. It is asked - "Will a man rob God?" and yet we all rob Him when we forbear to thank Him for mercy, mercies which are countless as the sands. "Watch ye". Watch yourselves.

In the next place I would say, watch God. "He is not far from every one of us." The Apostle Paul declares it by the Holy Ghost - "He is not far from every one of us for in Him we live and move and have our being." My friends, old and young, we are all God's creatures; we are His offspring; it is He that hath made us and not we ourselves. Of one blood He has made all nations of men. Watch God. Particularly watch Him in His dealings with you, in the dealings of His Spirit with your souls. Watch Him here. Do you find an operation? Do you feel a moving toward, an attraction to, God? Do you feel as if sometimes, quite suddenly, there comes upon you a disposition to pray? Do you feel sometimes as if suddenly there is a change in your mind from an indifference toward God to a real belief in Him, to a real belief in Him? It is a great thing to be a believer, and the supply of the Spirit is greatly needed to keep us believing. I know that faith will never die, it will be secretly sustained, but I am speaking now of experience. And do you experience sometimes a sudden motion and a

change; a feeling one minute as if there is no reality in religion at all, as if the Bible is a Book that has little or no attraction, and no sense of reality and weight and truth in the Bible, and the next as if everything is different? The Scripture is different, God is real to you, and there is a going out to Him with strong cries for mercy. Watch this, it will be for your edification; it will edify you in one particular, even to name no more, it will edify you in this, to show you the difference between flesh and spirit, between form and power, between death and life, and the difference is very great, and it is good for us to observe it. Watch God in that particular. If you find that He does draw you, that He does effect a great change and that sometimes quite suddenly, that He does attract you to Himself and make Himself to you very wonderful, be thankful; watch this. He who is led to watch God will find that he has a good deal to edify Him from time to time.

Watch the Spirit; He is to be known. He is known in the Church; He is known by all His people. Ye shall know Him, is Christ's promise, for He shall dwell with you and shall be in you. Now watch Him in several particulars. First in the illumination that He blesses men with, blesses men with as they are in Christ. "Ye are not of the night or of darkness; ye are all the children of the light and of the day". You see that. What is it that eye has not seen, that your ear has not heard? Is it not that that God has prepared in Eternity in His Son Jesus Christ to give to His people? Who lets you see that? What is it that enlightens you sometimes so as that you, in a moment, see what in years you could not have imagined; by all your thinking and all your reading and all your hearing, could not have imagined? - "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him". And how is it that in a moment a poor creature, perhaps illiterate, in a moment, on a certain day, perhaps when on his bed, perhaps when working with his hands, he gets a sight that draws him, that awes him, that humbles him, that teaches him more than all the ancients could ever know of themselves, so that in a moment he can say he knows more than the ancients. All the philosophy of the whole world never taught a sinner what God the Holy Ghost causes to beam upon his heart and shine in his understanding, sometimes in a moment. Was there ever a moment when you got a sight - you have not had it since perhaps

- you could never forget of God, of something in God, some mercy that is communicable, some blessing prepared for a sinner, justification for the guilty, holiness for the polluted, salvation for the lost, guidance for the ignorant, bread for the hungry, water for the thirsty, and God for the portion of a poor, portionless sinner. Watch that. It is different from a natural imagination, from a carnal excitement. These may come to a person and he may think he sees something in truth and in God, but O the pride that comes with his understanding, as he calls it, of those things. The truth, as God brings it in that sudden, sweet view that heavenly view, carries the heart away from itself, so to speak, carries the heart into heaven; the affections are there. Then says the sinner - "Whom have I in heaven but Thee" and all the beauty of holiness and all the purity of life and all the greatness of grace that he sees, I say will carry him away from himself. Later he may find that abominable thing, spiritual pride moving, but at the moment how humbled he is; how little he feels. "Watch ye". Watch God. Watch the operations of God's Spirit upon you in prayer; how He carries you away from the world, how He conforms you to that Scripture - "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God". In a moment He conforms you to that Scripture and you say - "I will cry unto God most high, unto God that performeth all things for me." It is edifying to him who has grace given to him to watch.

Watch lest you fall into temptation. Watch the enemy, watch your own spirit in its motions. Watch lest you be ensnared by something, by a religious disposition or an irreligious disposition. I am not troubled with the first but I am plagued sometimes exceedingly with the second. May the Lord help us to watch in these things. Watch each other, watch over one another. "Look not" says Paul, every man on his own things but every man on the things of another." Let each seek another's wealth. Be jealous over each other, pray for each other. "Brethren", says Paul, "pray for us". These matters, I think I may say legitimately, we may put into this word "Watch ye", and many other things but I must leave this point and notice the second thing.

"Stand fast in the faith". Do you think that too much ado is

made about doctrines? Do you think that in the pulpit I make too much of doctrine? The Scripture sets forth doctrine as of infinite importance. "If ye shall know the truth the truth shall make you free". "This is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent", and there is the truth. And perhaps you who are younger will live to prove that I have not stated the thing as fully, nor insisted upon it as strongly and as constantly, as I ought to have done. You may come to prove what a distinguishing mark, what a straight and narrow line, the doctrine of salvation will be, as in the world hated, opposed, strongly opposed. We will look therefore first at the faith for a few minutes and by the faith, of course, we are to understand, as you will observe, the doctrine of faith; that is obvious. "Stand fast in the faith" is not stand fast in your own faith. It has been observed, and very wisely observed, that it is one thing for a person to prop up his own faith and a different thing for faith to prop up a person. If you prop your own faith up by reasoning that this must be, and that; if you prop your own faith up by getting Scriptures like props, you will fail, you will fail, you will fail. But the doctrine of faith is the great matter in the text. Stand fast in the doctrine of faith. Let me detain you a minute or two here; let me say first the doctrine of the Godhead, the doctrine, that is to say, of the Trinity. Wondrous doctrine. The Lord give us to see and feel the beauty and importance of it; not for speculation, but for faith. This is revealed in the Scriptures - "There is one God and there is one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." And there is one Holy Ghost and these three bear record in heaven and they are one. The Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost and these three are one. Stand fast in this. The devil will make a great stir sometimes about three in one and one in three. Three persons in one God but not three Gods; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, not three Gods. Will make a great stir about the Sonship of Christ, and go on the wrong line altogether of reasoning. It is a wrong thing for us to bring our natural notions of relationship and apply them to the Deity as if they could be applied with any propriety. It is a wrong thing my friends. Naturally we say of course, and it is so, that a father is prior to the son and the son is subject to the father as in some sense inferior or beneath him. But if you take that rule and apply it to the Godhead you make a huge mistake and you will fall into some error. Sabellianism,



Socinianism, or Arianism will be the snare you will fall into. O may the doctrine of the Godhead, the Eternal Father, the Eternal Son and the Eternal Spirit be revealed in us that we, receiving that doctrine, may stand fast in it. Give it not up my friends, yield not to any temptation respecting this. Fly, if you are tempted, to the throne of grace and pour out your tempted spirit before that blessed One in whom you believe, and you will find help. Stand fast in the doctrine of the Trinity. Stand fast in the faith of the incarnation of the only begotten Son of God, the incarnation of Christ as it is made known in the Bible, not as men talk today, but as it is in the Bible, the overshadowing of the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. What a mystery, within that very body that was born of the virgin Mary the Eternal Son of God took up His residence. May the Lord make us to believe it. Do not try to understand it by reason; you never will. It is an incomprehensible mystery but it is an apprehensible mystery. You may, by the Spirit apprehend what, by reason, you cannot possibly comprehend. Watch this, stand fast in this, look at it, it will bear all the investigation of faith as it is worthy of all the adherence and of all the love of faith. And stand fast in doctrine of the precious substitutionary work of this Lord Jesus Christ. He took the dying traitor's place and suffered in his stead; that glorious God, that weak Man Jesus Christ, One Person, took the dying traitor's place and suffered in his stead. This is the way to heaven, the removal of sin from sinners by the imputation of sin to the sinless person Jesus Christ. This is the way to heaven, bringing in an everlasting righteousness by Him who delighted to do His Father's will. This is justification, the opening of a fountain for sin and for uncleanness whereby polluted sinners might come to God. This is the way to holiness; no other, no other. This is the faith of the Church of God, this is the faith that will save you if you are saved, and there is no other faith will save you. This doctrine of the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ, that wondrous, that glorious Man, sent by His Father to take the dying traitor's place and suffer in His stead. This is the way, the only way to heaven. Stand fast in the resurrection of Christ. Stand fast in the doctrine of His ascension into heaven, entering there with His Own blood in the behalf of His children, for whom He shed that blood. It is a great matter this, to believe that that very Man who suffered without the gate of Jerusalem who died on Calvary's cross a voluntary death,

dismissing His Own spirit, when all He came to do had been accomplished, that that very Man, with the marks of His crucifixion on Him, is in heaven. "I saw a Lamb as it had been slain". Christ is there, Christ is there my friends; sitting there and also on the circle of the earth watching over His children with infinite carefulness and delight, delighting to do them good, watching their state of mind, watching their troubles, watching them as in a fire, as in a crucible to refine them as silver is refined. He is there doing all that. Stand fast in this. Stand fast in the doctrine of divine providence. I said, watch it. Now there is the doctrine of providence and this doctrine of providence may be divided into two parts. One, general, universal, reaches all men and all motions of all men, and all devils and all circumstances, leaving nothing out of His understanding at all. Seeing, observing, knowing, guiding, ordering, directing all things to the accomplishment of His Own will and the advancing of His own glory, and a particular providence in the Church; yea a particular providence. Something special in your birth, your parentage, the time. Something particular in your education, or neglect of education. Something particular in movements here and there. Something particular in your being guided to a ministry, to a church. Oh something particular in that time that you did not know what to do and God just simply opened a way for you and you had to look at what He was doing as Manoah and his wife did. There is this providence. Why Christ made the fiery furnace the sweetest atmosphere, one would say, that ever those three noble men breathed. And one would say that God, Jesus Christ, made the locked jaws of the lions most beautiful in the eyes of His servant Daniel. It was a particular providence. And you may see sometimes a beauty inexpressible in a turn in providence. Perhaps at the moment not observed, but later on you see it to have been a particular guidance of your Redeemer. Stand fast in the things of providence, the great doctrine of the rule, universal rule of Jesus Christ, and in the providence, the particular, special providence of God sending out a word lighting upon Jacob, sending a word into a congregation and it passes this and that and the other person and lights upon one, that particular word sent in the providence of God and guided by the Spirit of God to accomplish a purpose. All these things are in the hands of God. Stand fast in this. Stand fast in all the doctrines of grace embraced, one may say, in a word; embraced in the word "Covenant".

There is a Covenant of Works; we are all under that naturally. There is a Covenant of Grace and some are in that, graciously put there by sovereign love, bound in the bundle of life with the Lord their God. Stand fast. O, but why so particular? That is the devil's suggestion. The Bible is one, the Bible is for all time. There are to be no additions, there are to be no subtractions. The doctrines are here once delivered to the saints, delivered once for all, and if you will at all take off this corner, remove that angular piece that does not please your flesh, if you will soften down and tone down this and that doctrine and say it is not necessary - it was well enough for the fathers but for the children it is quite another thing - you are wrong. I have lived now for more than 50 years in the Church of God, in the Strict Baptists, and when, in His kind providence, He brought me amongst them, I believe that He had taught me a little of His truth. I then saw some of the importance of the doctrines, but I must say this, today those doctrines are to me unspeakably more important, more strict, more wonderful, more beautiful than they were in the beginning, and I hope the Lord will never let me tone down anything. I am certain I shall give offence here and there - I know I have done it for years - but depend upon it - let me say this to you as in the sight of God - in one way or another you will prove the truth of the doctrines of grace. Stand fast. What is it to stand fast, to stand fast in the doctrine of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the great work of salvation effected by the Trinity. What is it to stand fast in this doctrine? To cleave to it, to beg that you may know it. When you are discouraged by a sense of your ignorance to go on begging and beg and beg that the Holy Ghost will reveal it in you; He can; ignorance is no bar to Him. "Ye were children of darkness but are now the children of the light and of the day." And He who made the Thessalonians children of light can make us the children of light and of the day. There is no bar here in our ignorance as I have said to you before. Nothing is so encouraging as the doctrine of grace. It does not say a man must be this before he can know it and must be that and must study and must acquire; it does not say so because it is all a matter of revelation, and Philpot spoke the truth when he said - If I were asked to say what is true religion, I should say, revelation, revelation, revelation. It is wrapped up there. Pray for revelation and God wont count you as a stumbler in this matter if you are led to Him with a sense of your ignorance and ask Him to teach you, saying -

"That which I see not teach Thou me". "Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law". O ignorant sinner, come with another ignorant sinner, and let us say to each other, "Let us go up to the mountain of the house of the Lord for He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths. For every one will walk in the name of his god, and we will walk in the Name of the Lord our God" Let us go to Him with all that ignorance, all that sense of ignorance that may depress, that may distress us, that may be turned into a temptation to us, let us go therewith and entreat the Lord who is merciful, to be our heavenly teacher; ask the Spirit of Truth to lead us into the truth. Stand fast in the faith. One word here, stand fast in the faith of a general resurrection. Christ is coming a second time without sin unto salvation, and the dead in Christ shall rise first and together with all saints then living will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and so they will ever be with the Lord. Hold this fast. There are two appearances of Christ spoken of in the Scriptures, two comings. The Apostle evidently had some in his mind; there were some who looked upon the coming of Christ the second time as near at hand in Apostolic days. The Apostle says, now do not be disturbed in your minds as if it were so; we have not written it; we have not said that to you. There are two comings; one has been, the other is to be. One was when He appeared on earth, a poor Man, and wrought the great work His Father sent Him to do and the other will be when all things shall have been accomplished, the world no more to be used because no more saints in it, no more saints to be called, and then shall be the end. And O then, then will that Scripture be fulfilled "O death where is thy sting; O grave where is thy victory?" Stand fast in this whatever men say to the contrary, whatever devils say to the contrary. Stand fast in this. Adam's body and the body of every saint from his death to the last shall be raised from the dead and be fashioned like unto the glorious body of Jesus Christ now in heaven. Well may the Lord give us to participate in that first resurrection; the dead in Christ shall rise first. And then shall there be a lifting up, so to speak, of all men and all shall stand, good and evil, before the Lord and the wicked shall hear the voice of God saying - "Depart from Me ye cursed". O what a sound, what a sound.

"Quit you like men", men who have been taught, men who have been

with Jesus and learned of Him, men who have heard the Lord's voice and seen the Lord working in them and for them, men of this kind. "Quit you like men". Be not afraid at every appearance of evil and trouble but stand as men who know their God. There is a gracious courage, there is a blessed standing at times when men are enabled to say

O I have seen the day, when with a single word,  
God helping me to say, my trust is in the Lord

my soul has stood and I have quit myself like a man in Christ. "Quit you like men; be strong". "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might". And Paul expresses this when he desires that the saints may be "strengthened with all might in their inner man by the Spirit unto all joy and longsuffering". So may it be with us.

Now brethren may this word of exhortation given to us by the Spirit be applied to our hearts and made useful to us, that we may not be always as children tossed too and fro, but grow in grace and come to the stature of a man in Christ.

AMEN.