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Lalson

REVIEWS SECTION No 179

115
11/11/25

GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

OF THE

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday morning 14.8.1927

2nd Epistle Peter, Chapter 3 verse 8

"But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one
day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand
years as one day"

It is the will of God according to scripture that His
people have a remembrance of His words, His teachings, His
doctrines. Forgetfulness of His words is fruitful of
mistake, misjudgment of Himself, of His providence. The
disciples are examples of this; they forgot the word of
Christ and fell into erroneous judgments of His dealings and
of His ways and we who have been made as we believe true
children of God are also doubtless examples of the same
thing. What child of God present has not forgotten in times
of trial, things that were said to him in earlier and
different days - promises of guidance, forgotten in hours of
perplexity; promises of support forgotten when burdens are
pressing; promises of supply forgotten in an hour of need.
We need therefore to have a second epistle or a second
teaching on this point. This second epistle beloved, I now
write unto you, in both which I stir up your pure minds by
way of remembrance, that ye be mindful of the words which
were spoken before by the Holy prophets and of the
commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour."

Take notice of the scripture dear friends, pay very
close heed to everything the Lord has said to you. You will
need all He has said and you will find that forgetfulness of
what He has said to you will lead you astray; leave you
exposed to some erroneous judgment of Himself, and of His
dealings with you, and perhaps if you come into contact with
them, expose you to the scorn of scoffers who shall come in

the last days - "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers" and you may come into a very painful experience of some of the scoffing of these scoffers and you will find, if it is so, that no head knowledge of the doctrine will secure you altogether from the effect of those scoffings. God give every believing soul to remember what He has said. "Where is the promise of His coming?" and the scoffers say Look around, where is it, where are the appearances of it? Are not all the portentous clouds contrary to that promised coming? Are not the clouds full of judgment and may we not expect that they will empty themselves upon us? And do not things continue as they were, even from the beginning, and what will you say? You will forget, as these scoffers forgot, or neglect to observe, that while they were from the beginning of creation, they, I say, forgot there had been a marvellous change, that even the flood came and destroyed the world of wicked men, and also this is to be observed that there is no time in God and I think I implied, in the text is that great truth - there is no time in God. The text sets forth His eternity, as we have it also in the Psalm "For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past and as a watch in the night" Time is part of God's purposes but not in His nature. Time is made, so to speak, that place in which He will work all things after the council of His own will; a stage on which He will stand and work His own holy, divine, immutable purposes, and will do it by His own instruments. He is the Eternal God, in eternal repose in His own purposes, unhasting, while hasting to perform His work in His own time. "I the Lord will hasten it in His time." Pregnant, therefore, with meaning is that word "Your time is always ready, My time is not yet." We greatly err to our own discomfort when we measure God by our own time and reckon His days to be according to our days. The thing that emerges from this text to my mind is that whatever apparent delays, whatever length of time, as we speak, may elapse

between the giving of some promise and the performance of it; between the beginning of a dispensation and the completeness of it, between a begun work of grace and the finishing of that work; between some begun providential matter and the ending of that providential matter, and this may be a long period, He is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness, and it is a great error of judgment and spirit in us to measure God by what we call properly to ourselves, time. Time, may I repeat it, is not in God. It is with Him as a purpose, but it is not in Him as in His nature. It is evident in the scripture that the Lord is not, as we speak, in a hurry to do things, and He is not influenced in His working by our judgment of what should be done. One said "It is time for Thee Lord to work" and so it appeared, and so it may appear to us at times and in different matters. We may say it is time for God to work. How clear it is in scripture that the Lord has never been as we say in a hurry, ever reposing in His own eternal purposes, wisdom and power to bring to pass what He intends, and this may be enforced by the examples first of all of the scripture. I mean, look how long it took the Lord to write the Bible - age on age, age on age, elapsed from the beginning of the inspiration of it to the completion of it. Genesis to Revelation, thousands of years. May we not draw a lesson from that dear friends. If God begins to write something on our hearts it may not please Him to finish it in a day, week, month, or year; go on for year after year, writing here a line and there a line, here a word, and there a word, and there another word. How apt are we, notwithstanding that truth so patent, how apt are we to say, He has left it off, if He began; to think that He will do nothing more because He is not doing it as quickly as we should like it to be done, that great work. Is He writing your sinfulness on some of your hearts? Do not think because He does not and has not already written mercy as well, that he is not going to do it. He has not finished

the work. Has He begun to show you His greatness? You have much more to see. Nathanael getting an evidence of Divinity in Christ's apprehension of him under the fig tree said: "Thou art the Christ" "Because I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these" Mark, God's ways. They are slow as we reckon time, but they are rapid, that is why they are certain, and the end is sure though we are distressed. Has He begun to reveal to us that there is but one way of salvation, and do we repeatedly lose sight of that way and therefore conclude that He has never shown it to us? What foolishness there is in such a conclusion. "Be not ignorant of this one thing" and do not measure God by yourself, nor His time by your time. Has He begun to show the Person of the Lord Jesus and have you felt sometimes a singular sweet glow in your heart to Him as if, were you permitted and if He came near enough to allow it, you would embrace Him with all your heart's love, and notwithstanding that He has receded again from your view, so as that you say "Did He ever let me see Himself"? "Did the Spirit ever show Him to me?" Now judge not the Lord by feeble sense. "Say not He has gone for ever, though His visits He adjourns". He is a great God. A begun matter will try you in its various unfinished stages, but with God there is no change and there is no haste. See this in respect of the promise of Christ. More than four thousand years before the birth of Jesus God promised Him. "The seed of the woman" said He "shall bruise thy head" The serpent heard that. Eve thought very soon that the promised man had come but God waited four thousand years. He told Abraham that He would make of Him a great nation, and that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed. He promised the seed to Abraham. Abraham's faith stretched itself in the power of God to that great promise and then the Lord showed him, on a night the stars, and told him to count them if he could, and said so should his seed be uncountable, the sand of the sea would not be sufficient to

number the seed that should come from him, but the seed, Jesus Christ, was in that promise. O great promise, filling heaven with its glory in an innumerable company of spirits of just men made perfect, yet how long did God delay, as men speak. So may we reckon thus as God has reckoned in the scriptures. This is one thing for us to observe. How apt a poor tried sinner is, when under conviction of sin, when he has cried for mercy for a few months, it may be the months have stretched themselves out to years and no satisfactory answer has come, how tried and disposed to say, it is no good going on like this, and then the enemy, the enemy of God and man says "Give it up, wait no longer, ask no more, seek no further" "Beloved be not ignorant of this one thing" Here then is the line that I would pursue by the help of the Lord this morning. I would bring before you that great truth that in God is no time; that with us in His dealings, there is a great need of patience. Christ had told His disciples that He would come again and now the scoffers said a few years afterwards "Where is the promise of His coming?" With no evidence of His coming a second time without sin unto salvation, there are evidences of judgment, portentous clouds hang over our heads, over the head of the nations, in the earth, but these do not say "Christ is coming a second time without sin unto salvation." No, much has to be done before that day comes. The knowledge of the glory of God is to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, before that day comes. Multitudes who are now expecting His coming to reign in person at Jerusalem will be in their graves; though many of them are thinking that they will not die, multitudes there are, but they will be in their graves before that great and notable day of the Lord shall come.

A begun work; now there are two kinds of work I am going to name to you. I have hinted at them, now I will as helped enter upon them. The first is a begun work of grace.

This is in regeneration; a mysterious work and often in the subject of it, indistinct, so that no time, no means, can be laid hold of by the subject of it. Many and many a child of God undoubtedly possessed of grace, is unable to say when that blessed work was started, unable to put his hand on any means the Lord used. It answers to James in his epistle "Begotten again by the word of truth that you should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures", and there are two great enemies to every perplexed person, that is perplexed on this point. The first is the uncertainty of his own mind, as to the beginning, or if the work has been begun. If you are uncertain, if you cannot go to some place near Damascus when you, with enmity in your heart, and bitterness to the saints, were stopped suddenly, clearly, mightily, then you may say "Was I ever stopped" You can hardly say when you began to be in want like the prodigal, there is not as much distinctness in you, as there was in him in that particular point. It is just a kind of indistinct change, from being careless, to having a care about your eternal condition; from being indifferent to God, you became very conscious of His Being, and of your sinfulness before Him, but when that came you cannot say, nor how. It is like the seed sown; the farmer rose up in the night, and he looked and watched but the seed grew, he knew not how, and it may be so in the beginning of the work of grace with some, and that indistinctness, is by a legal mind, turned into an enemy. It is, if you are constantly assailed on that point, you do not know, you are not sure, and therefore there is nothing good in you. It is a very remarkable case to me that we have in the scriptures, where the Lord speaks of one who died young. He said of him "There was some good thing in him toward the Lord God of Israel" but there is no word that he uttered left on record. The young man may have said something to, perhaps his parents, or friends, but he died and God has left no word on record that he uttered, respecting the work of grace, but the young man had some good thing. You may

have some good thing, but know not when it came. God dropped it in as a seed is dropped into the ground and it is growing, growing into a deeper concern, into a more solemn realisation of your sinfulness. It is growing up Godward. It is making you feel the emptiness of this life, the vanity of all created things, again and again. You feel nothing is worth, but God, no riches can be called good but the state of grace, in the covenant of grace, and as this work grows, you will find, as you may be led to observe it, it is very much like the house that Ezekiel saw in the vision, it widened as it grew upward. We say - make the foundation broad, broader than the superstructure, but the superstructure grew in width as it grew upward. So in grace, a small beginning, an indistinct beginning, widening as it grows upward and with the Lord in this there is no hurry as we speak.

A second enemy is the devil. Significantly it is that we read concerning the Holy Child Jesus, two things are said of Him - The Lord commanded His parents to take Him into Egypt, to hide Him because Herod sought the young child's life to destroy it. What an amazing thing, the Almighty God sending His Almighty Son the Holy Child Jesus into Egypt to hide Him from a man, a man He destroyed later, suddenly, because he took honours to himself, that only belonged to God. He had but to touch Herod and Herod would have been removed in a moment, but that was God's method to hide the holy child in Egypt until Herod should die and that was not alone, there was a mystery in it. If anyone had said to Mary His mother, "Now when you come up out of Egypt one prophecy will be fulfilled, that prophecy in Hosea "Out of Egypt have I called My Son," why she would have said that really belonged to Israel. "No" says the Spirit, "not only to Israel, but to the child Jesus". Now God will hide the work of grace from the devil, though the devil seeks to destroy it, and He may send you into some trouble, some obscurity so as that even the enemy shall not reach that

work which seems sometimes close to His hand. It will not be destroyed. "Destroy it not" said the Lord of a cluster "for a blessing is in it". Destroy not that little work. Destroy not the holy child Jesus, who in His eternal life has been born in a sinner, destroy it not, hide it, go into a trouble, go into some obscurity, go into some darkness because the devil seeks to destroy that new life which I have given. There is no time here to obstruct the Lord, no hurry here. Mark this begun work. There are two things in a begun work of grace evident, brought to light, again and again, before the work is completed and the subject of it taken to heaven. First repentance, and I would draw your attention, I have said it before to you, but I would again draw your attention to what is said of repentance, that is genuine, that is evangelical, it is said to be repentance toward God. Now take the example of the repentance of a man toward himself, - Esau. It was not repentance toward God. He conceived vengeance against his brother at the moment he was repenting and seeking to return with tears, but it was to an earthly blessing to himself. Repentance toward God is different, and I would desire to express it to you as clearly as I may be enabled. It is a repentance that has respect to the character of God. It has not only this - some view of deserved hell, but more it has a view of the Holy God. "I have sinned against heaven", that is the thing. "I have sinned against heaven" "I have outraged God's justice, I have despised His goodness, I have disobeyed Him in His holy law, I have depraved and ruined myself." This is the repentance toward Him. It always flows upward. It is obscured sometimes by terrors of hell, by dread of damnation, and by many legal workings in the mind, but the nature of it will come up again and again. "I have sinned against God. God would be just in my damnation. God would be just in everlastingly punishing me in hell" Now notice that. Sometimes you will say - "But I have a lot of self pity" That is natural. Sometimes you will say "I

do not know that I have repented toward God, because the repentance toward God which you have felt may be just obscured by self pity, yea by rebellion, yea you may wonder why God created a man that should be lost in hell. O the questions, the objections of the natural mind, but none of these things will interfere with the upward flow which eventually will reach God - repentance. "Be not ignorant of this one thing, that with the Lord a thousand years are as one day and one day as a thousand years", So remember this my friends, though the work is not speedily done, it is being done, and one evidence of it is repentance toward God.

The second evidence given in the scripture with the other is this - and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Now that may be for a long time without the full assurance of interest. Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ will make you say "None but that Person can hide me. No blood but His can cleanse me from my sins. No righteousness but His can justify me from all things from which I could not be justified by the law of Moses" Now that faith that thus fastens in Him will keep you to Him and you must if you speak honestly bear witness. I speak to some who may be very tried about the work of grace. You must bear testimony that in your heart there is the leaning toward Him, the moving after Him, the desire to know Him and with the Apostle to be found in Him, not having your own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through

the faith of Christ. Take these two great graces - repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and wherever they are there is a christian. There is one bought with blood, born of the Spirit, and predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's dear Son. But this begun work, O how far from being complete it is. Why, the oldest, the best saint on earth, will say sometimes in himself - "How far I am from being like a tree of righteousness, full of sap. How far I am from honouring God as a believer should do. How distant I am from the throne of grace. How unlike a patient child of God I am. He may be often saying that who is very near to heaven, therefore O you who have not attained, mind the thing to which you have attained. The Apostle in the Galatians lays down a good rule for all of us - "Whereunto we have already attained, let us mind the same things, let us walk by the same rule", as if he should say "Have you attained to a knowledge of sin and some repentance? - now walk to that rule. Have you attained to faith in Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation, the only ground of hope, the only refuge for sinners, the only justification for the unjust? - walk by that. Put the Lord in mind that you have no hope but Christ; no way to the throne of grace but Christ; no righteousness to stand in but His; no fountain for cleansing but that which is opened and filled. Put Him in mind of it; let us mind that thing; let us walk by that rule. It is a good instruction for us and so to speak, it will leap over time. It will go right beyond time into that timeless mercy and opened fountain for sin and uncleanness. O but the weariness of waiting, the weariness of waiting. O but the disappointments when a good hearing lifts you up, or a gracious time in secret help you, or some scripture touches you, when on the top of that instead of a realisation of what your hope set before you, you go back again into deeper darkness perhaps than before. I will draw your attention to a remarkable thing in the scripture (Mark 1, verse 12 and part of verse 13)" Immediately after His baptism the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness, and He

was there in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan" and immediately, often it may be, when you get some good thing, the devil may drive you far from it, but this begun work is carried on. Ah, there are beautiful steps taken by a child of God when he goes tremblingly before the Lord, and confesses his sins, confesses the deadness that comes on him, the lusts that rise up to distress and destroy him. He goes to the throne of grace, and he says "Heal me O Lord for I have sinned; heal the bones which Thou hast broken; give me a clean heart, a right spirit. Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." When new troubles come, he takes the beautiful step that Asa and Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, took in their troubles. One said "It is nothing with Thee Lord to help, whether with many or with them that have no might" and "We know not what to do, but our eyes are up unto Thee". I call these beautiful steps and in one sense they were peaceful steps in trouble. The step of faith is a beautiful step, its order is beautiful in God's eye, and its effect is good in the soul. Wait on the Lord; be not mindful of the days so as to say He will never come. Be mindful of His promise and be mindful of the work already done. Be mindful of a full Saviour who can fill your empty soul; of a mighty Jesus who can strengthen your weak faith. Be mindful of Him who is wisdom, and whose wisdom findeth out knowledge of witty inventions, and who says "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. Whoso findeth Me, findeth life and shall obtain favour of the Lord." He will come; He will come.

Take the church for instruction and encouragement in this. The Saviour and Intercessor said "Awake O north wind". It is not the devil always who stirs up storms. It is not the devil always who brings trouble. The intercessor said "Awake O north wind and come thou south" The same intercessor, "and blow upon my garden" The north wind called upon by the Lord to nip you like a sure frost; yes awake, come to this soul fallen asleep perhaps even in the midst of his troubles and concern, got easy. Awake O north

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wind and come thou south in thy sweet softness and blow upon My garden. Now see the effect. This garden, the church, said after that intercession, "Let my Beloved come into His garden" Have you courage to ask Him to come into your soul? You say I have nothing to offer Him. O but He knows, He knows the spices and can distinguish them from all the motions of sin and nature. He says "I have come into My garden My sister, I have eaten my honey with the honeycomb" Now this is God's work, a begun work; heaven is in it, heaven is in it. "I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish".

Now take for a moment or two a few of the works of the Spirit in this connection. You take this; it is His business to reprove of sin, to convince of it. Do not be surprised at this. If the Spirit is gracious to you, He wont let you be ignorant of your sins. If He is gracious to you He will cause you to read them again and again. You will see your sins, not only those of unregeneracy, but the still blacker sins of your regenerate state. That is one of His works, that you may not rest in yourself, that you may not rest in your own righteousness. You will say "I have none" And another of His works is this - He brings tidings from heaven, good news from a far country; today some hint of the Lord Jesus, another day some word shines into your heart, a heavenly promise. Something makes you say, "Why Christ is good, a willing Saviour, I will go to Him like the prodigal went to his Father. Another day you will find perhaps some thoughts of the tender compassion of the Lord Jesus. "His compassions fail not, they are new every morning, great is His faithfulness," and then you will say "It is good to wait on the Lord, I will wait" Sometimes he may set before you this "The vision is for an appointed time, though it tarry, wait for it," then all this may recede from your view, and die away from your feeling until you are ready to say, was it real. There is another thing I would draw your attention to, that is said of Christ - "He shall not fail nor be discouraged" What a word for a

discouraged people. Sin in us discourages us; sin in us makes us wonder if God is there, but Christ the Saviour of sinners shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment unto truth. The hills shall wait for Him and He will come. All this, if I may so say, is implied in this text "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day." May I say it again, time is not in God; tis only an instrument, a means, a purpose, a dispensation, a speck between, and here we are. If it is a begun matter, a begun work of grace, He wont leave it unfinished. Paul had that confidence with respect to the Phillipians. He said "Being confident of this very thing that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Twenty years Abraham waited for Isaac; many years David waited for the throne after he was annointed to it; seventy years did the Jews wait for their deliverance from Babylon, and when the men who went into captivity as young men or children returned at the end of seventy years, then they remembered the first house and how, brought out of this captivity and that captivity, out of this trouble and that darkness, you will say "The Lord has been faithful" "Do not be ignorant of this one thing" and if a scoffing devil says "where is the promise of His coming"; if an Ishmael in your heart mocks at the sacred feasts that you sometimes have had, and says they were only imagination, and you will never get right, you will never reach heaven, remember this - a begun work must be finished.. The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation, His hands shall also finish it. Before you get to heaven you will see Him by faith who is the heaven of your soul, and you will mourn for having pierced Him as for an only son. Now may the Lord give us wisdom to consider this important word. I hope you may perceive it to have some bearing on your own cases, may hear it as the voice of the Lord in your hearts, telling you to wait on God. That is the point, wait on God. He is not slack, as men count slackness; He is not slack. He says "I the Lord will hasten it in His time, and heaven is at the end of it all, and

seeing that we who are blessed with grace are looking for a new heaven, and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation. May the Lord help us to believe this His word - One day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day."