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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Sunday evening 22 October 1933

2 TIMOTHY 3 v 16 and 17

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,
and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for
correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the
man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all
good works"

Every good man and bad alike has his case set forth in this divine Book. Not what we think of ourselves, but what God thinks of us, will stand, and from the decision, the judgement of this Book, there is no appeal. When the ungodly at the left-hand of the Lord Jesus replied to Him in the way of a question - When saw we Thee in such and such cases? - He told them and there was no appeal. When the rich man in hell lifted up his eyes and saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom and asked for a drop of water to cool his parched tongue, there was no word against his being there. There is no appeal. Men dare to say there is an appeal, that the Scripture is not the last court of appeal. They are religious teachers, but they are infidels. If God be pleased to give us a sight of the divine origin, the completeness of this Book, we shall know that our cases and our sentences are fixed for ever and ever. Very solemn; a very solemn consideration for us. God make it so to us. I ventured this morning to enter a little into that great doctrine of inspiration. It is a great doctrine. One more word I would like to add to what I said this morning. Though the doctrine of inspiration is distinctly taught us in this text, and in other Scriptures, how, how men were inspired we are not informed, and we have no right to enquire how the Holy Ghost did it, His teaching, His influence, His words, His power. We are not informed as to the manner but the matter is clear. If anyone should ask us how inspiration took place, all we can say properly is we do not know; God has not informed us how. He has told us that it was the Spirit of Christ that was in the prophets and that they did not know perfectly, sometimes not at all, the things which they prophesied, but they searched diligently as to what time and what matter they prophesied.

Holy Scripture, what a blessing for you who could and did heartily sing the hymn you have just had

Precious Bible, what a treasure

Did you ever feel you could kiss the Book, or some page of it, that God made precious to you? That you could hug it to your very heart as being the Word of the living God to you? That the testimony was undoubted in your heart at the moment when its power came to you? That is a proof, the proof to you, the best proof you can have that the Scripture was given by inspiration of God and was put into your heart by the Spirit. We are told that the Scripture, thus given, is profitable, that much is to be gained by it, that the merchantman who deals in this wonderful Book - if I may say so without undue familiarity, or lowering the dignity of the Book - the merchantman who deals in the market of Holy Scripture, led and taught by the Spirit, has great gain. The Psalmist found it so, and he esteemed the word of God more than all things. He gained so much wisdom and instruction by it that he said he had more understanding than all his teachers. God sometimes in a few minutes gives instruction that could not have been acquired by years of natural study of the Word of God. Some of you know the truth of that remark. You have said, I never saw this before. It has come suddenly; it is full of light and full of life. Light in the understanding, life in the soul, moving, teaching, enlarging, liberating, and establishing. Ah it is a great thing to have a word of God in your soul. It becomes a sea of glass. You can see into it and you can walk on it. Such is the Word of God; profitable, useful. It has great uses, great ends, some of which the Apostle here speaks of. Indeed he embraces all things in these few words: "For doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness". And the end, the end attained to by all to whom it is made doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction, we have here: "That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

Now for a little time, if I may be helped by the Lord, I shall speak about these matters. I entered a little on the word "doctrine" this morning. Doctrine is teaching and teaching is opening, alleging, expounding the Word of God. Doctrine is first, the

4 doctrine of God, then the doctrine of the incarnation of the Son of God, then the precious death of Christ, His precious blood. God keep us from a religion without the blood of Christ. That religion today is becoming popular. A book that has reached a hundred and seventeen thousand copies in a short time, expresses a religion in which the blood of Christ has no real place. It is mentioned incidentally but never set forth as a divine doctrine. Beware of a religion that has not in it, under it, above it, round you, within you, the precious blood of Christ. Hell must be the place of all who die without the blood of Christ made known to them. The doctrine of Christ's vicarious death, the doctrine of His burial, the doctrine of His resurrection, of His showing Himself alive after the resurrection by many infallible proofs. The doctrine, the truth of His ascension into heaven, and then of His presence there, seated on the victor's throne, ruling the universe, watching over His people, His eyes running to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him. In a word, it is the glorious gospel of Christ preached in the five Books of Moses called the Pentateuch, written by Moses under the inspiration of the blessed Spirit, and not patched up together as the Modernist tells us by men who wrote only a few hundreds of years before Christ. The blessed gospel announced by Isaiah - "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given". This is the gospel, this is the living word of the living God, and the Scripture reveals it, insists upon it; never, never deviates by a syllable from the doctrine of the gospel.

Now come to your own souls. What do you know about doctrine? Perhaps some young believer who dare not think himself to be a believer, may say, I do not know anything about doctrine. Well, one word of advice I give you, this, as enabled kneel before the divine Teacher and ask Him to teach you doctrine. When He does you will grow on it, you will feed on it, you will be strengthened by it. It will be a life in your soul. "Doctrine" - I have often quoted to you Luther's word - "Doctrine is heaven", that is to say it contains that which is necessary to heaven, necessary to salvation. You need not listen to these so-called theologians in their colleges teaching, not religion, but infidelity. I speak strongly because I understand from their books a little of what they teach, and I remember, some years ago, reading what one of the principals of the colleges in Oxford

said. "We do not teach religion; we leave the students to chose their own religion." God wont let you choose your religion if He takes you in hand. He wont let you choose anything that relates to your eternal state except in this way; He will bring you to where He brought Mary; she sat at His feet; she learned of Him. That is a choice you will make when the Holy Ghost brings you, if He has not thus far brought you, when He brings you to the Saviour's holy feet, spoken of in Deuteronomy. "Yea, He loved the people; all His saints are in Thy hand: and they sat down at Thy feet; every one shall receive of Thy words." Sometimes the Spirit comes without any particular word applied to you and you say, I do not know how He came, by what sense He entered my heart, but I know I found Him in my heart. I felt Him moving, teaching, prompting me to pray, helping me to believe, and breathing across my soul the sweet, gentle wind of divine grace and love. God comes in doctrine. I know nowadays, even alas in our own churches, there is, not a despising, but rather a decrying, a deprecating of doctrinal preaching, but God grant that we here may value doctrine. I value it, not as a dry, dead letter, but as that truth, without which I can never be saved. A truth which, coming into my heart at times I trust by the power of the Spirit, manifests God to me, makes Him real to me, makes His majesty and His truth and His justice and His love and His mercy precious to my soul. And I pray God may teach all of you, if it please Him, this kind, this blessed doctrine. The Scripture is profitable for that. See if you ever have had it. Watch when it begins to come. Then you will understand what Paul meant when he prayed that the Colossians might increase in the knowledge of God. Do you feel ignorant? O how often, sometimes I can say day after day, I have to go before Him and say to Him that I am ignorant. I have a little knowledge of the Scripture, you have, but you may say, Lord I am very ignorant of Thyself; teach me. "That which I see not teach Thou me".

"For reproof". For reprovng error. It comes after doctrine; for reprovng error. Error in others you may have to reprove, but error in yourself, and we are full of error. Worldly thoughts, over anxiety, drunken, surfeited with care. All these are errors in us and sometimes it pleases the Holy Ghost to bring some instruction. He may call us fools."O fools and slow of heart to believe", and there is life in such a reproof. Solomon says: "The ear that heareth the

reproof of life abideth among the wise". Reproof may be about the rod that drives folly from the heart of the child. It may be God's voice, solemn, powerful, full of majesty, making you tremble to feel your whole heart is erroneous; that your thoughts are, for the most part, erroneous; aside from Him, away from Him. And a reproof may make you say, Lord my iniquities have driven me away, away from the throne of grace, away from prayer, away from simplicity in the truth, away from a waiting on Thyself. Now if you get reproof of that kind with that gracious power, you will live to bless God for it. You will; you may think I am too confident about you. I say this again, if you get that kind of reproof in your heart, you will live to bless God for it. I have lived to bless Him for reproofing me. Yes; James Bourne wrote in one of his letters, this: "Much of the Lord's work with me is finding fault with me." Did ever God find fault where there was no fault? No, when you are in fault the lover of your soul will tell you of it. When you have gone astray from Him, your husband, He will make you know it. by sending a serpent to bite you; that will be reproof. Mark, O mark God's reproof. Tis very solemn, very weighty, very penetrating, but very profitable.

"For correction". Correction is to put a man right where he is wrong. Well, if you receive this correction you will be likely to say this - Where am I right? Wrong everywhere. Perhaps you will believe what Hart says, believe it about yourself - "Everything we do we sin in", in thought, word, and deed; in imagination, sin with the spirit. With the eye, with the ear, with the mind, with the tongue, we sin. I have lived a long time and have a long time upon which to look in what often is painful retrospect. What I have thought, and what I have said. O it is very solemn, very solemn to be a sinner while you are a child of God. O but how kind of God to correct us. Sometimes He will send a word, a teaching to your soul, and it may be in providence at the same time, that will be like a wall built round you, as if God should say, you have gone astray in every direction and now I will stop it, and He does stop it for a time. I will build about her a stone wall. A hedge is nothing, as it were, sometimes, so mad are some of us, so He said the hedge was not enough, now I will build a wall of hewn stone. Mark correction, heed it, bless God for it when you get it. O to think that He wont let you go to hell, that He wont let you damn your own soul, that He wont let you become an atheist.

You could do it all in a minute if He let you, but, No He says, I love you. Listen - "Is Ephraim My dear son, is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him" - against his waywardness, ill-manners, stiffnecked ways in the wilderness, murmuring, fretting, ingratitude; bringing all this to your memory, yea fixing them on your consciences - "since I spake against him I do earnestly remember him still, therefore are My bowels troubled for him." What does Ephraim say? He says this - God dealt with me and I was like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, but now, by His grace, I smite on my thigh, I repent in dust and ashes. O my brethren, what thanks we owe to God for correcting us. Wild as the wild ass, stubborn as the mule, mad as the horse; I have been all of those myself, and yet God says, I will correct you - and how - in measure. O how I have thanked God for that word "measure". It has said as it were, in my heart, I will stop short of hell. Bless God for a measure. O my brethren it is great. A measure of judgement, tempered with mercy. Stroke on stroke, mercy in the stroke and the Scripture effects this when God makes use of it. He says, What hast thou to do by the waters of Sihor? What hast thou to do in the way of Egypt? God says it. You say, Lord, I have done wrong, I have started aside, I have been mad in my foolishness. The Scripture is profitable. O if God uses it you will love it; you will love the precepts and esteem them in all things to be right as He pleases to use them. "For correction". Individual members of the church need it. The church of God needs it. How solemnly, but mercifully, He spake to the five churches in Asia which had become more or less corrupted. Mark His word, study it, look at it, see it on this side and on that side, and notice how it touches your case, how it brings to light some sins, some stubbornness, some evil, and as that is so, bless God for it. The Scriptures are very useful; would that we read them more diligently and prayerfully; we should get more out of them than we do. "For instruction in righteousness". The meek, a teachable person. You see a fool, wise in his own conceit, wiser than seven men that can render a reason; try to teach him, he will despise you. Come across a poor, broken down sinner, meek, anxious to be taught of God, and the Lord may open your mouth to say a word, and O how thankful he is for it. Instruction, teaching, opening up, in righteousness. Leading poor self-condemned sinners in the way of righteousness. Some of you younger people who fear God may have a great deal more legality in you than you think you have. Many of your

longings may have ever so much legality in them. You may be saying sometimes, if I had a broken heart, I could believe. If I had a tender conscience I could believe. If I felt my soul more hungry I could believe. I could believe God had a purpose of good to me. That is to say, in plain language, if you were not so big a sinner you could believe in Christ, whereas the truth is this, you are not half lost enough, you are not half bad enough for Christ. When the day of deliverance comes then you will have Job for your companion - "Behold I am vile". "I have uttered things I understood not, I will say no more". "Lord save or I perish". Sinners near hell, snatched from it; sinners in the fire, being consumed by their consciences and ready to perish; sinners drenched in sin, from whose very pores, as it were, sin oozes; these are the people for Jesus Christ. I do not say every one has the same measure; in some measure, it comes to that, a poor condemned creature. Then He sends His word, or He may send it by a minister, to instruct him, a poor creature, in righteousness, the righteousness which is of God by faith. Then he will enter into the language and experience of Paul related in the Philippians: "That I may win Christ and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Now this is not too high for poor sinners. This is not too high for any poor sinner here. It is just the blessed gospel of the grace of God expressed by the Lord Jesus when He said - "I came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Sinners are high in His esteem
And sinners highly value Him

I was not twenty years old when that was a revelation in my heart; more than 60 years ago that was a revelation in my heart. I was packed with legality, wondering what I could do to please God, and I was offended with Him when I read that Scripture: "So then it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" I said it is too bad for a poor creature to be running and walking as well as he can and God takes no notice of it. But O when it came to a divine teaching, when the minister quoted these lines

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it was not a deliverance, but it was a teaching. Sinners esteemed by Christ, and I was a sinner. Why, my friends, that was an instruction in righteousness for a time and in a good measure it just emptied me of my legality. Yes, you will have access by faith, not by getting better. You will be justified by faith, not by having good things that you want to recommend you. You will have access to God and rejoice in hope of the glory of God when you are ruined enough, bad enough, weak enough, ignorant enough for the Lord Jesus. O but it means a great deal; the corruptions that will nearly kill you, the infidelity that will shock you, the mocking Ishmaels in your heart mocking at your good things. Instruction is needed, and instruction may be this sometimes - and the Scriptures say this - "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not", and that will open to you a way. Why here I am a poor fool, wondering where to go, to whom to turn, shut up in myself, and now God opens that living way. "If any of you" - poor creatures - "lack wisdom" - lack goodness, lack power - "let him ask of God", as if the Spirit should say, God puts no bar in the way; yes, He puts no bar in the way. Let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally who ask of Him, and He upbraideth not. O, it is a beautiful word, He upbraideth not. And you have gone astray. He might have said, He did say to Israel, the gods you have gone to, let them deliver you, but when a poor creature comes, confessing his faults, He does not say that to him. He gives him what he goes for, instruction as to how a sinner may be just. Think of it. Ah the Arminian, the Modernist, he says it is not possible. O they dare say anything against God. It is not possible, he says, that God should make a person just who is unjust. Ah, with God all things are possible and more, with the believer all things are possible. "Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. How one who has forfeited life can have a right to life; it is a mystery, but the gospel reveals it. "The Lord our Righteousness", that tells a sinner, that assures a sinner that he is without fault, unblameable and unreprieveable in God's sight. "Instruction in righteousness". So the sinner says

Bold shall I stand in that great day
For who aught to my charge shall lay

Who shall condemn the Lord's elect? "Who is he that condemneth? It is

Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God". This is the instruction Holy Scripture gives and which the Spirit of God seals on the soul.

"That the man of God may be perfect", may be fitted, that is the word. The learned tell us that the word "perfect" in the origin here may be "fitted", "furnished"; that he may have that wherewith to answer him that reproacheth him. "The man of God". It might mean that the Apostle had, first of all in his mind, by the inspiration of the Spirit, that Timothy, called "O man of God", might, in his ministry, be well fitted for preaching the everlasting gospel, but it goes beyond that. It says that a poor sinner who has received the blessed gospel of the grace of God into his heart by the Spirit is thereby covered, fitted to meet men and devils and indwelling sin. The Apostle's whole armour of God, written in the Ephesians, that will fit you. "Put ye on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand". You stand in yourself, and the devil, and indwelling sin will be too much for you any day, but a sinner, led by the Spirit to Christ, putting on Christ, as the word is, and making no provision for the flesh to stand and fight, that sinner is fitted, he is furnished. Righteousness furnishes him, mercy furnishes him, love furnishes him, truth furnishes him, the Spirit of God furnishes him, with all these things, so that he has that which leads him to good works. "Unto all good works". One good work is belief. "This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent". And the work there means that is the work God works in you - He gives you faith. "This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." Another good work is prayer, another love. "Owe no man anything but to love". "Love the brotherhood, fear God." Good works; and when you go outside this gracious experience and come to your life, your daily conduct, if you are furnished by the truth, with the truth, with the gospel, with a tender conscience, then you are furnished for good works toward men. "Giving no offence in anything that the ministry be not blamed." I beseech you, says the Holy Ghost by Paul to the Ephesians, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called in all lowliness and meekness; that ye love the brotherhood; that ye endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; that you work with your own hands as God may help you, that you may have sufficient for

yourselves and something to help the poor. "Good works". Somebody in Manchester pointed to a drunkard but who attended William Gadsby's chapel, and the man mockingly said, "This is one of your converts", and Mr Gadsby said, "It is like my work". But he said on another occasion how the boaster had boasted of good works. Gadsby said he was quite willing to compare what he and his congregation did with what the boaster did, and the people of God may be able to say that, with all humility. Good works among men will commend the religion that God puts into your heart; mind that. Men may behold your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. If you live inconsistently before men you will bring a reproach on what you profess. Be very careful about your tongue, your eyes, your ears, your feet, your hands. Mark the Word of God respecting conduct, external conduct; it is very strict. The precepts of the gospel are many and very clear against all ungodliness in the professing people of God.

Now my brethren I leave this. May the Holy Spirit if it please Him to stoop so low, make some use of what I have said today on this very important Scripture. It is important, and may we not disesteem it nor turn aside from it. May the Lord in great mercy look upon us and help us to walk according to His Holy Scripture.

AMEN.