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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel, Brighton

Sunday evening 31 August 1924

2 TIMOTHY 3 v 16-17

“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, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”.

This morning I endeavoured to lay a foundation, that is to say I brought before you the glorious doctrine of the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. This doctrine stands first. Without the Scripture we can know nothing savingly of God; nay we can know nothing of why and whence and whither with respect to our being; but the Scripture informs us as the why and the whence and the whither mortals, who are immortal, are going and are and shall be forever and ever.

I believe that one day it will be seen that much of the profanity of the Lord's day and wickedness of the nation are attributable to the weakening in the minds of the people in all this land of the belief that we once held in the inspiration of the Word of God. That belief weakened and in many ways destroyed what is there to enforce the observance of the Lord's Day. What is there to make men afraid of sinning, if the Book is not what it claims to be and what happily we believe it to be; then the reins are thrown down and the neck restraint is removed in so far as God permits it to be so. Woe be to that man, who under the garb of religion and the ministry, have weakened the respect of their followers in the Scriptures. May it please God to enable us to hold fast to the faithful word.

This is the foundation. The Scripture reveals God, reveals Him as the great object of worship and the end of all things. His glory is to be the end of His creation, His providence, His redemption. Now I should like to build a little this evening in a measure on this foundation. Building is good work where the building is good, and where the materials are good. The apostle Paul was a wise master builder and God can make men in a measure such a builder otherwise I cannot be such a one. First let me say this that the gospel on which every child of God is brought to rest is emphatically the gospel, the glorious gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; further the wonder, the importance, that He is the chosen of God, the loved of the Father. He was sent of the Father to express the Father's love, to declare the Father's name in the church and then also to preach the Father's righteousness. He was sent to be a sin-bearer who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree. This is beautifully and wonderfully

and gloriously expressed by the preacher of the everlasting gospel. Isaiah, again and again does so and particularly in that 53<sup>rd</sup> chapter, so well known. We have there the Lord Jesus the sin-bearer; the Lord Jesus the object of His Father's punishment, the sword of justice was called upon to awake against Him and it pleased His Father to bruise Him and to put Him to grief. Also that glorious One was sent to make known in the hearts of His people that life which He came to give them. "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." And in John 17 the same gracious Lord says that what glory had been given to Him, He had in turn given to His brethren. The gospel then is a wonderful doctrine, a doctrine of imputation of sin to the harmless, separate and holy Son of God. The doctrine of the imputation of righteousness to the sinner and this two-fold doctrine has in it all the glory, all the mercy, all the sweetness, all the holiness, all the liberty and all the peace that the saints of God are to know here and hereafter. O then is it not worthy of all the attention that we may be enabled to give it? Is it not a wonderful doctrine, and if God the Holy Spirit has given any of us a hope, a good hope through grace, that the Father did lay on His Son our sins and gave to us the righteousness of His Son, then we understand experimentally what reconciliation to God is in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I would take this great doctrine for our consideration this evening. First of all in this particular namely that God the Father gave His Beloved Son Jesus Christ life, that He might give it to whomsoever He would and this is the eternal life of which He spoke in John 17. This is that life, the eternal life of the church. Life that animates the soul, that gives it spiritual hunger and thirst, that makes God necessary and when known, the chief joy, and makes his alter such a glad place and gladdening to the soul. It makes the life of God everything so that those who possess it come to say "Bless the Lord O my soul and all that is within me bless His Holy Name." This pure life rises to its source, is always in conflict with sin and the stronger it is in the soul the greater, and in one way the fiercer, is the conflict. Sin will never sleep, sin will never take defeat, sin will never allow the subject of it to hold Christ and the truth in peace, so far as God permits it to work; but the pure, holy divine life in the soul will be ever moving Godward. Hence the conflict, the sorrow, the hope, the joy, the hunger, the fasting, the satisfaction that the people of God by turn experience. O what a mercy it is to have this life.

To speak a little particularly, let me first of all say it is holiness "Ye that love the Lord hate evil" Holiness becometh the house of God for ever. What is holiness? In a person under the operation of the Spirit of God, it is conformity to the revealed will and mind of God, as that will and mind are known and declared in the Lord Jesus. It means this then that you are straight with Christ, that you look to Him for redemption, hang on Him for salvation, follow Him for peace, cleave to

Him for justification and look to Him for His word and for guidance and help, for the subjection of your sins. This as I understand it is holiness.

One may say that he lives almost without sin but I would say that he is one of the greatest sinners under delusion. The sinner says that he is drenched with sin that it is always working and lusting and hurting him. It is always turning him in the wrong direction and can have no peace because of sin. It never leaves him alone and yet that same person can say that he goes to God and cannot keep away from Him. He is driven, runs and hastens to the throne of grace. He is drawn there and loves to be there and there is his relief. There he pours out his heart, there he looks to the Lord and there also he receives mercies. I should say that that person has real holiness. You will find that he does not consent to sin “the good that I would I do not” and he says that “the evil I do I allow not,” I am not a consenting party to it, it wounds me and weakens me but I do not consent to it. My soul loathes it. Now this is from Christ and I do not think that I go too far when I say that the glory which Christ said He had given to His disciples, (which glory he had received from His Father) is here in part. It is the glory of grace to make sin hateful and to turn a sinner from self to God from all that may appeal and all that is abominable and makes him pant after God. The glory which Thou gavest Me. – the glory of this pure holy life rising in fervent desire, rising up to its own source this glory and the Scripture is profitable for this. It teaches us to look at our life. There is a religious life that is not this eternal life. Sometimes in the country you may notice a tree with ivy twisting around it. Left alone the tree may languish after a while but the ivy flourishes – it is one life as it were strangling another and there is a religious life that may appear to be very vigorous and green and proper but it is not. The child of God will have to realise that he has a wrong life in him, a wicked life which may for the purpose of self- deception appear to be religious but it behoves him to be very careful, and he is made very careful, on this point that he may live that pure, and blessed holy life. This will bring him into conflict with everything that is wrong and make him pant after holiness, holiness of heart, holiness of thought, holiness of worship and holiness in faith and the scripture teaches this holiness.

It teaches also the blessed doctrine of reconciliation. “He hath reconciled us in the body of His flesh through death.” This is the doctrine that the scripture sets before us of that pure, blessed reconciliation of a sinner to God. We are enemies by sin, born in it, alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in us. We are stuffed with prejudice against Christ. We are moved by principles of death and ignorance to walk contrary to Christ. We have enmity which is of the worst kind – enmity to God. Now for one that is born in that condition and has lived in it, and in whom that life has grown strong, to be brought to his knees, to have that prejudice

removed, that hardness melted, that enmity killed and to be brought to God's terms of salvation is a wonder. To be ruined in his feelings, and brought again and again in his conscience to acquiesce in salvation's plan in his judgement, to approve of it in his affections, to close in with it; his will supplanted by grace, going out after it, and willing to be saved by grace, is no little thing. I esteem it to be a miracle of grace. Every sinner who from his heart can sing that he is willing to be saved by grace is already saved. He is in the way of being sweetly experimentally reconciled to God in the body of the flesh of Jesus that he may be presented spotless and without blame. O what a wonder! Do you approve of the cross? Do you approve of Christ crucified? Do you approve of the imputation of sin to Him that you might be reconciled to God and have your sin taken away/ and do you approve of being plunged into debt, everlasting debt - the debt that you will pay in praises and in no other way. Reconciled to God in the body of the flesh of Jesus through death. O sinner, how happy is your state though, you may be very troubled in your feelings, if you are reconciled to God. What a comfortable doctrine it is.

"I know the thoughts" said the Lord who is the author of this doctrine "that I think towards you, thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you an expected end," When men are in Babylon they cannot see Jerusalem. Their thoughts may be about their captivity but says the Lord to the captives "Let Jerusalem come into your thoughts, let that place where My name is placed come into your thoughts and let My holy gospel come into your minds" and when this is so the sinner sees how he, a vile creature, may be with God being reconciled in the body of the flesh of Jesus through death. O how sweet is the feeling, when the Eternal Spirit says as it were, God has put smiles and blessings which are stored up in Christ from eternity all for your enjoyment. Here by occasions, then without interruptions. It is a profitable doctrine to know this that God set up Christ to be the Head of his people, the Head of the Church that she might receive of Him not only grace to subdue but also strength to live and run. "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning on the arm of her beloved?" and she has power with God and prevails in various ways from time to time. O it is great to have a Head, one who takes up your case, who looks after your soul, who guards your heart, who watches over your steps, who numbers the hairs of your head and allows nothing to pain you but that which is profitable for your soul that shall advance the growth in grace.

The scriptural doctrine of final perseverance is a very profitable doctrine. It is a doctrine that will never leave a person who knows it savingly to carelessness or hardness or indifference or worldliness .It is a doctrine which is fitted for the weakness that is felt, for the fears that are also often felt, fears of failing, fears of coming short, fears of which the apostle speaks "looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God" and none but those who are engaged in that can

understand the fears that are felt lest one should come short, should fail or miss that blessed grace which the people of God possess. This doctrine when it is opened and applied by the eternal Spirit is exceedingly profitable. It takes a person out of himself and enables him to say my strength is in Christ, my hope is there, my peace is there, my perseverance is there and my cleanness of hands is there. Everything that I need, everything that I can pray for God has put there and so I look to Him to keep me and hold me up and preserve me to the end, blameless. The scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for these doctrines.

Now there is another word that I would wish to say here in respect of doctrine, namely that Christ does give to His people the word which His Father gave to Him and He prays in that wonderful intercession that God would sanctify His people through the truth. "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth" and this takes us beneath the form, brings us to look lower than the form, that is to say we are taught that there is a deep that coucheth beneath the word; here we understand in a way and in a measure out of a form of sound words (and a beautiful form itself, may we never let it go but hold it fast,) but there is something which is opened by the Spirit which is very wonderful. A word comes into your heart that occupies you and it sinks into your heart like rain percolating to the roots of things, the word sinks into your heart and meets your needs, meets your fears, meets your weakness and your ignorance and instructs you in the things of God. Promises are profitable. Words spoken to you as to making God over to you; making the covenant over and known. How profitable they are. They make you see that the whole world is of no value compared with one single word of the living God made known and profitable to your heart by the Spirit. My beloved friends what is profitable without this? "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" - but when he has the doctrine of the gospel in these particulars that I have named and others - has the forgiveness, the sweet forgiveness powerfully spoken to the heart, has union with Christ, his being a child of God and an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ- then there is profit here.

Just finally on this point the scripture teacheth that there is a rest for the people of God. They get it here. O yes, sinners get rest here; rest from their bondage, from their heavy fears, rest in their afflictions, rest in the will of God. O how sweet this rest is, but it is but a foretaste. They are to have another rest, that is to say the same rest in another manner and without interruption, and this is very profitable. It tells a man that he need not fear trouble he need not fear death for Christ has said "where I am there shall my servant be."

Now in the next place we are told that that the scripture is profitable for reproof, not a pleasant thing to a proud spirit when you would justify yourself perhaps in something and then a word of

God comes and opens your eyes and speaks to your heart and shows you that you are wrong. Reproof as it is called in the scripture, the reproof of life, because spoken by the Spirit, taken out of this Book and spoken by the Spirit it enters. You go and tell your friend something that you disapprove of in him, something in which you think he is wrong. You need a great deal of grace to do it properly and he needs a great deal of grace to receive it from you. When the Lord comes to you and says "What hast thou to do in the way of Egypt? What have you to do my child in the world? What have you to do in this thing? Did I not deliver you from it? Are you a home-born slave? why then are you spoiled? Have I been a wilderness to Israel, a land of darkness?" Let the Lord say such words to you and you won't lift up your head. You may do so before a friend but not before God. You will fall flat and will acknowledge your sin. You will confess it and forsake it. The scripture is profitable to you: it does you saving good. It delivers you, helps you and gives you strength to forsake that for which you are reproofed. It brings you out of wrong ways and wrong things. Some here will never forget the reproofs of the Lord. How they entered into our hearts more than a hundred stripes could affect the back of a fool. The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise. Mind God honours you with the reproof and you will thank Him for it and the scripture comes right on to the cause. We might easily make a mistake and wrongly judge but God makes no mistakes and He comes and puts the word right upon the spot. I know it and so do others. Not ineffectual or useless but very effectual, very profitable and we have to say it is good for us to have been reproofed that He might bring us to His footstool.

Then the Lord corrects from wrong ways and wrong things just as children need to be put straight. The Lord shows you where you have gone astray and turned aside and brings us to confess your sins and seek to turn from the defiling thing. The parent who is wise corrects a rebellious son sometimes by depriving him of privileges and then when the will is broken or subdued forgiveness follows. God, the Father corrects His dear children and tells them to walk in love as Christ has loved them and redeemed them.

For instruction in righteousness. This is instructive training, teaching us, as when a tree is subject to the training of the husbandman. Pruning is necessary and the husbandman does not spare to cut back and remove that which is evil and would affect the tree. God instructs and trains His children "Train up a child in the way he should go and afterward he will not depart from it." He teaches in these ways and if you observe the dealings of God with you, you will find instruction will come in several ways as from the living God. Sometimes it will come in the way of sacred communion whereby you will be trained up to seek more intimacy with God. Sometimes it may come by way of a promise whereby your heart will be gathered up to the Lord

and you will see that everything is in Him that you can possibly need and more than you can ever receive.

But then we must all die and become loathsome and there is nothing better respecting the body; and yet this body was purchased by Christ as were all the bodies of the church with His own blood. When the soul goes to heaven the spirits of just men made perfect are not complete men but there is the resurrection assured of the saints because the King of saints rose from the dead and He is the first fruits of them that slept, the harbinger of the coming harvest and the first fruit says the rest is coming. This will be the case with all the saints and their poor bodies which here are liable to all sorts of disease, trouble and inconvenience and ultimately death. If they are purchased by Christ they will be raised again in a peculiar manner with a wonderful change taking place and this vile body shall be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. As John tells us we know not what we shall be but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is. Now faith when it is able to take hold of this breathes that spiritual word of the psalmist "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness." Now we have the likeness of Adam which is death, that is the image of the earthy, but O, saints of God see what is before you. If we have born the image of the earthy we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwell in you then this awaits you; every body of every saint shall be raised up again and re-united to the happy perfect spirit to become one glorified person and to be forever with the Lord. So there is a prospect for these bodies. Death is but for a time and then there shall come an eternity of glory. Think of it my friends and think of the earnest that God has given to you that know Him. The earnest of this resurrection as in Adam all die even so in Christ shall all be made alive. "O death I will be thy plague, O grave I will be thy destruction." Death must come my friends but as the death of the soul is swallowed up in regeneration so the death of the body will be swallowed up in the resurrection; as the soul is united to Christ by the Spirit of life and the indwelling of the Spirit so the body will be united to Christ and be like Christ at the resurrection and the everyone will behold God. O think of it. The eyes that wept for sin will look on Him who was made sin; and a poor sinner who groaned here being burdened will sing with his harp "Worthy is the Lamb." What a prospect this is.

Death is terrible to nature and the grave repulsive and who can think of death without a sort of horror naturally but all of this is done away in Christ. Then He will deliver the kingdom up to His Father and say "Behold I and the children which Thou hast given Me." Shall we be there? Do you want to have apart in it? Some of us do believe it; sometimes very comfortably and we desire earnestly to look to the Lord and not be indifferent to experience and long more and more

to be established in the things of God. He then is becoming more mature and can say that he trusts His righteous character, His promise and His oath, His holy covenant, and dare not trust the sweetest frame but trust a righteous God. I want communion with Him, but for wise purposes for reproof and rebuke and chastisement He withholds that communion: still I trust Him and look to Him and look to Him to return in His great kindness that the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished in his understanding and his judgement and in his affections.

Thoroughly furnished with the Word of God that tells me what to do. In the church the word furnishes him with “love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the King.” He is to walk in this way which is a good way and you come to those who live a life of faith on the Son of God and the Lord says in His word and by His servants now follow Him. But how am I to follow Him? says one. Follow Him in His word, what is that? Why says the Lord “Baptise them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost.” Then He says there is the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper – “This do in remembrance of Me” and the man of God furnished with the scriptures sees what is right and asks the Lord to bring him into that way and enable him to walk in it. See in all the duties of life which fall to us, and the ways wherein we have to walk in the providence of God, we need the furnishing of the scriptures. Do riches increase with any of you people of God? then says the Lord “Be not high minded, trust not in uncertain riches but in the living God.” Is poverty a pressure? Does it pinch at times any of you? It says Trust in the Lord.” My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” He says “The cattle upon a thousand hills and the gold and the silver are mine.” Trust in the Lord, bring your grief, bring your necessities to Me. Are you in some difficult path? Have you a burden on you? The scripture furnishes you and saith “Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify Me.”

Now all these scriptures are plain as being in the Word and they are in it for our instruction that we through patience and comfort of them may have hope. We do need this that the Holy Spirit should bring them to our hearts and make them effectual that the man of God may be perfected, matured and brought to a good state. A man in understanding, knowing His God, and walking unto all pleasing. Let us look constantly by the help of God to our foundation and seek again and again by His grace that we may have that foundation under us, to build upon it. Then to take notice of the scriptures and see if they be useful to us, if the Holy Spirit applies any of them and makes them spirit and life in our hearts and in our understanding. If it be so we shall certainly be in conflict because, as Rutherford says, if you possess Jesus Christ you will never keep Him in peace as long as the Devil lives; and if you have grace you will never have it in peace in this world because there will be an enemy and you have got it in you. There will be an enemy about,



a roaring lion and these two together will make plenty of work for you and often you will feel your weakness and your frailty. The little measure of grace that you have and the great measure of sin that you have, but by these things you will live and in all these things you will find the life of your spirit. May the Lord bring you to look at this and bring me also to look at it. What foundation you have? And then the scriptures have been made profitable to you in doctrine. Do not think that doctrine is unimportant. It is very important for reproof and who does not need it for instruction in righteousness? Who does not seek it who fears God? That is the man of God may be perfected and throughly furnished unto all good works.

Amen.