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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS
Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday morning 22 April 1928

JOHN 15 v 4

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me."

One branch of this abiding in Christ I would bring before you this morning, namely abiding in the doctrine of the Person and work of the Holy Ghost. The great promise Christ made to the church when He was about to leave the world was the promise of the Holy Ghost. The Scriptures are full of this divine Person. He does not speak of Himself; He is not sent for that purpose. Not speaking of Himself means that He does not speak alone, without the Father and the Son. He does not speak of Himself in any special way when He comes as the Spirit of Christ, for His great work is to testify of Christ, to glorify Him by taking of His things and showing them to His disciples. We have very early mention of Him in the Scripture. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void;..... And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." And from that moment, throughout the Scripture, the Spirit of God is set forth variously but unequivocally. He is God, a divine Person in the Trinity, equal with the Father and the Son, proceeding from them. Not an influence, not an emanation, not an effulgence, but a Person, to be worshipped, to be followed. And abiding in Christ is to abide in the doctrine of His Spirit, the Spirit who was given to Him without measure, and there is no benefit of the gospel, no saving knowledge of God, no exercise of faith, no access to the Father, no infallible work by which you reach heaven, that you will not owe, if you have such blessings, to the immediate grace and operation of the Spirit of Christ. A very solemn truth this. If He is with you, you will know Him. Says the Lord Jesus, promising Him, "Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14 v 17) And the manner of His indwelling we are instructed in by the Saviour Himself. "He shall be

in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life." And that upspringing we have explained when we are told that the Spirit shall be poured upon the house of Jerusalem as a Spirit of grace and of supplications and also by the Apostle Paul in the Romans: "He maketh intercession for the saints"; "He helpeth our infirmities"; "He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God", and He does it "with groanings which cannot be uttered". The Apostle Paul to the Galatians has this word: "If we live in the Spirit let us also walk in the Spirit." If you have the Spirit, you have conflict, must have, for you have a wicked nature, and the Spirit dwelling in a person will not permit that nature to have its own way. Hence that word in the Galatians: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." It goes both ways. If you say with Paul: "The good I would I do not", you must also feel with him, that the evil you would not, the evil that you oppose, hate, would flee from, be rid of, never feel again, against that the bent of your spiritual mind is. This doctrine of the Spirit then we are to abide in. He is the Spirit of Christ. He comes from Christ. Christ received Him without measure. He qualified the sacred human nature of the Saviour by His immeasurable gifts and indwelling. The Saviour believed, the Saviour hoped; He was cast upon God and the Spirit of God was with Him; as it is prophesied in Isaiah "The Spirit of the Lord shall be with Him a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and of might, to make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." Now to abide in this is to abide in Christ, that is to say, to make continual supplications to the throne of God's heavenly grace for this good Spirit so to be in you. This indwelling, this gracious teaching of the Spirit, will keep you from a flatness, idleness, deadness in your heart toward God. Nothing else will, nothing else will keep you from settling on your lees; nothing else enable you to continually come to the throne of God's heavenly grace for these supplies that you need out of the fulness of the Lord Jesus, and I would press this on your attention, I would press it closely because the only religion worth the having, worth the trouble of keeping, is this religion, this subjective work of the Eternal Spirit in the heart and you will find it consist in these following things generally speaking.

First in a continual conviction of your sinfulness, helplessness, ignorance and utter ruin apart from the Lord of Life and Glory. True conviction is not one act and done with, but more or less a continual thing arising from the inshining of the Spirit and teaching so that you may not forget what you are. O the pride of a man's heart would make him gladly forget that his heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it? But the Spirit won't let you forget it if He dwells in you. You will attain to some things as you grow in the ways of God that will surprise and pain you. Things that are in your heart, things which young believers do not suspect but they come to know them mercifully by degrees. Happily we are not made acquainted with all we are and all we have of sin at once. Now that is one thing, and do not call it legal. When you grow in the knowledge of your sinfulness, do not call it legal to attend to that. By Moses, God said to Israel of old, - be diligent, take heed to the leprosy. And if you have got leprosy do not think it legal to look at it. What people deprecate and call by that word "introspection" may be most gracious. It is not godly to shut your eyes to your disease. It is not wise to turn your gaze away from your sinfulness. The deeper the knowledge of your sinfulness - and I do not mean sinning openly; I mean inward discoveries - the more fitted you will be for the Saviour. The better you will be prepared to receive Him, to look on Him. Take heed to this, keep close to this, and when you get deeper sights of your depravity, and feel the piercing of some sins, do not say the devil tells you that you are sinful. He never will if he can help it. If God is telling you that is for your salvation. If you are gaining in knowledge of yourself, I say that is for your salvation. The Son of Man receiveth sinners. "I came not to call the righteous" The attractions of the Saviour are wonderful to those who see the repulsiveness of sin and their own sinfulness. Happy the man who abides here.

Secondly, abide in the truth that all saving acquaintance with Jesus Christ is by the teaching of the Spirit. "He shall glorify Me". "He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you". You may obtain an intellectual knowledge of Christ by reading the Scripture, but you cannot attain a saving knowledge of Him that way. Saving knowledge of Christ is a matter of revelation not of acquisition. Hold to this and as you keep close to it it will be for your spiritual benefit and

health. You will pray that God would reveal to you the saving health of His gospel, that He would bring to you the saving knowledge and comforts of the Lord Jesus. The comfort of His Person as a hiding place. The comfort of His love making Him poor that you through His poverty might be made rich. Now I think myself - I have often thought it, and I have said it before to you - that the gospel is so wonderfully full of comfort for people who realise their utter helplessness and their ignorance and their inability. It just comes to this; here is a man like dry bones, very dry, bleached white; can these live? Can my soul, one may say, so vile, so lost, so ignorant, so helpless, live before God, live with God? No, says nature. No, says unbelief. No, says the tempter. Faith says "O Lord thou knowest". Faith reaches heaven, reaches the throne of grace, goes to the Holy Spirit: "Thou knowest". There is no restraint with the Lord to help with many or with them that have no might. Nothing is too hard for Him. So faith makes application to the Holy Spirit. It is beautiful when He comes and gives a sinner a view of the Saviour, when He comes to an old man and says - as you received Me walk in Me. You received Me as a sinner; walk in Me as a sinner, as a helpless person. You received Me as a Saviour; walk in Me as a Saviour. You received Me as utterly helpless; hang on Me still; you have no might of your own. And this teaching of the Spirit is so encouraging and comforting that the young and the old together say: "None but Jesus. No hope but Christ. No life but His life. No strength but His strength. No light but His light." Abide in this. Keep close to this my dear friends. If you do, it will be the way God will take to keep you from apostacy, or to keep you from backsliding; to keep you from indifference to a present religion. I say a present religion, that is to say, a religion of exercise, daily exercise. Conflict; conflict with the enemy. Keep you from patching up an inglorious peace. It will keep you tender; bring you to and keep you at the throne of God's heavenly grace seeking that He would speak to you as is promised. "I will meet with thee there, and there will I commune with thee". Abide in this.

Abide in this in respect of the Spirit as the revealer of the Lord Jesus and the sealer of the soul unto the day of redemption. The revealer of the Lord Jesus; here He is in the Bible. Blessed be God for the Bible; this infallible Book. What testimonies the Scripture

contains of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus. But if you know no more than you can gather by reading Holy Scripture you may be very short, painfully, eternally short. O sinner, if you hold fast the inspiration of the Scripture, it is a good thing that you hold. May you not stop there; that is to say, may the Lord come and take of this blessed Book and the testimonies it contains of the Lord Jesus, and bring them so to your heart as that that will be true in you, that Christ will be in you; formed in you the hope of glory. How can I receive Him? You can receive Him if you are empty. The qualification of a vessel to receive something is its emptiness. You can receive the Lord Jesus if you are empty, when His good Spirit comes again and again and again and brings some testimony concerning Him and fixes it, that is fixes Him in your very heart and soul. A revealer. Why the Bible must be a perplexity to you unless it be opened; a sealed Book unless it be revealed and explained, and this work is the work of the eternal Spirit. Christ in heaven is brought to sinners, as well as Christ on the throne of His glory; comes down by His Spirit's teaching and enters the heart and conscience. Christ in His atoning work comes and the forgiveness of sins is received. Christ yours, is made known to be yours by the Holy Spirit graciously, powerfully revealing Him in you. Nor is this a mere imagination. If ever men are sober minded it is when the Holy Ghost reveals the Lord Jesus in them. And they say we are proud and think we are the only people to go to heaven, whereas the truth is if ever a man is humble it is when he knows the Lord for himself and is assured that he is going to heaven. Nothing makes a person so little as God's goodness to him. Nothing so fills him with wonder as that he is brought into a felt union with a revealed Christ. O why this love to me, is what he is continually, more or less, saying to himself.

And the Sealer. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption". Grieving the Holy Spirit, I am afraid, is a common sin, and, just by the way, I would speak of it in two particulars. First, as it is done by a person, by a child of God, when he disregards some admonition, when he turns away from a prompting to seek the face of God, when he is disposed to turn a deaf ear to something that tells him that he is wrong in a certain case. Indulging in those oppositions is grieving the Spirit. He is rebelling and vexing the Spirit; he is not abiding in Christ then.

He is distant from His Saviour; he is distant from the fountain of life; he is distant from all that, that in better moments and better days, he esteemed highly, and in this he is grieving the Spirit. Is this true of any of you my brethren? Is it true of any of you now? Then you are not abiding in this word, and very solemn it will be for you when, instead of allowing you to remain in that condition, He begins to fight against you, for He will do so. Fighting against the child of God by the Spirit means that He rebukes him sharply, sends conviction of the sin into his conscience, and does not permit him to get very near and withholds all comfort for the time. And the second way of grieving the Spirit I would name is when a church grieves Him; when a church brings on itself such a word as that: "I have not found thy works perfect before God". When the Spirit says, why you have such and such things among you; you hold wrong things. You have received false things; errors of doctrine. You are walking in wrong ways; errors of practice. I am concerned about this. I am not aware of anything of this kind among us, and I hope God won't allow it. Members of a Church may grieve the Spirit and the Church not grieve Him as a Church, and may we be kept from grieving the Spirit individually and collectively. Abide in this doctrine of the necessity of the Spirit.

Now the sealing. "After that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise". There are degrees of grace, degrees in teaching, degrees in operations. When a child of God gets the first view of the Saviour he has got what is the beginning of heaven and of peace in his soul. Some of us will never forget the first sight we had of Him. I think I shall never forget the first hint I got of the power of Christ's blood. Wonderful, good news from a far country. Something that tells a sinner that he need not despair, that tells him there is a God in heaven who forgives sins. O the shining of this, the beauty of this, the glory of this; you know it. Happy man who has had that. Then there is a further manifestation when the Lord comes very near to a sinner, so near as that the sinner afterward perhaps says, why I almost got it in the hand of faith; I nearly brought it in, but it resisted. But it was a token, it was a good token. Then this Holy Spirit brings Christ in and forms Him the hope of glory in the heart. Forgiveness is felt, justification is realised, nearness to God is enjoyed, the love of God is felt, and the peace of God which passeth

all understanding keeps the heart and mind by Jesus Christ. How happy is that person, how near heaven, how fit for heaven. What a glorious Saviour is the Lord Jesus to one in whom He is thus revealed. When he loses the enjoyment of this he is ready to think all is wrong, does not realise the faithfulness of God to His Word and to His work, becomes a practical Arminian. Now a further teaching of the Spirit and a further manifestation of the Lord Jesus, another work on the heart like writing. Ye are our Epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of God, (II Corinthians 3) until at last it comes to this, as if the Lord Himself closes the letter by His own divine signature, and you look at all He has done for you, His teachings, His providences, His helps, His deliverances, His mercies, and now you see that under all there is His great Name. "I am the Lord thy God". "Thy God thy glory". And the sealing of the Spirit is such as that a sinner for the time says now "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day". "My times are in Thy hand". "Thou hast redeemed me O Lord God of truth". "I will be glad and rejoice in the Lord." "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord". "Bless the Lord O my soul and all that is within me bless His holy Name." Such things as these attend the sealing of the Spirit. Enlargement, walking with God in peace, finding plenty of room in the Name of Christ. "They shall walk up and down in His Name, saith the Lord", and it is a walking indeed, a walking in peace, peace with God. Peace in your conscience, peace with providence, even if providence is adverse. Peace with God. Peace like a river flowing sweetly, placidly flowing. Nothing wrong; God everything; God right, Christ good, the Spirit gracious, the Scriptures beautiful; providence just and tender. We are not to have two heavens. This does not last always for a long time but it is something to remember, something to be highly valued. We are to have tribulation in this world but when we get this it is like a man who is newly married. Now says God you can rest at home for a year; do not go to war, just rest at home. And so, when you get this sealing, the only thing you want is more of what you have got, more of the blessing, larger communion, sweeter, closer, more intimate fellowship. Well dear brethren abide in this if you have got it. If you have not it, do not pretend to it but pray for it. Do not say you have got what you have not, and do not ever measure yourselves in experience, but go empty of it, needing it, desiring

it, to Him who can give it to you. The sealing of the Spirit, blessed, sweet sealing, when there is not a cloud; a blue sky with no cloud. Christ, the bright shining after rain. Now I have brought this before you because I believe it will be for your good if you are enabled to attend to it, seek the Spirit to dwell in you, to be in you a fountain, a well of water springing up into everlasting life. O the religion this is, the softening influence of this, the tenderness of this, the safety of this, the heaven of this.

There are Three Persons in the Godhead. You will become acquainted with the Three if you possess the Third. If He is your teacher you will get access to the Father by the blood of the Son, through the grace of the Spirit. When you get access like that then your heart is freely opened and fully poured out: "Pour out your heart before Him". When you get that access sensibly through the blood of Christ then the blood of Christ is your treasure. Then you say to the Lord

My treasure is Thy precious blood;
Fix there my heart, and for the rest,
Under Thy forming hands, my God,
Give me that frame which Thou lik'st best (740)

Dear brethren pray that God would keep us as a church and people from grieving the Spirit, from rebelling and vexing the Spirit. If ever this Church should do that, God alone knows what the result would be. May we be kept careful in this particular, that in heart, in lip, in life, we may walk in the clean fear of God, seeking the favour of God continually, seeking the presence of the Holy Spirit, seeking the love of Christ, seeking the love of the Father. As a Church if we are thus favoured we shall be well dealt with. But if we grieve this Spirit - if I am left to grieve Him the ministry must be barren; if you are left to grieve Him your hearings must be dead hearings. And one day a reproof will come to us, and a threat, an exhortation: "Repent" and "If thou repent not then I will remove the candlestick out of his place". Do you ever look at the carcasses in the wilderness? I do. Do you ever think of them? Do you ever think of the lesson? They are left there for the teaching they are intended to give. We are exhorted by those corpses. We, upon whom the ends of the

earth are come, are told why they are left there. May they not be there without some influence upon us. May we remember them.

Abide in Me, abide in the doctrine of My Holy Spirit who comes from Me and whom I, with My Father, will send unto you, that He may teach you. It is an awful thing to be left without the Holy Ghost. I hang about this this morning because I know it will be for your good, as for my own, if we are enabled to take heed to the matter. Why are we so hard hearted? Why so indifferent to the glory of God? Why so ready to gad after various vain things that cannot profit us? Why so carnally minded? Because we lack, we greatly lack the Spirit. But if we are enabled to take heed to this word: "Whom I will send unto you" and deprecate any inattention to Him and to His teaching, it will be well for us.

One word, and I close. Abide in My Word. Christ is in His Word, this blessed Word. I know that as a people we hold the inspiration of it, believe it to be an infallible Word. Every Word of God is pure. The Spirit gave it; He chose penmen. Beginning with Moses He chose penmen just to write the words He would have written, "written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope". Now be attentive to this. Some make an inner light, an inner consciousness, their guide. Beware of that. Some make conscience their guide, even if the conscience goes against the Scripture. Beware of that. Take heed unto this Word as unto a light that shineth in a dark place. God magnifies His Word above all His Name and if we are enabled to cleave close to this we shall come, sooner or later, to know what Christ means in the chapter preceding the one from which the text is taken. "If a man love Me he will keep My words". And what then? "My Father will love him". And what next? "We will come unto him and make our abode with him". We will sup with him. There shall be intimacy. Do you get intimacy? Do you get near Him? Does He come near to you? Does He speak to you? These things; they are not strange to the Scriptures; they are in the Scriptures. Are we like the Scripture at all in these matters? "Abide in Me". Now may the Lord help us, graciously look on us, and cause us to obey Him in this solemn word "Abide in Me."