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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS**

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed
Chapel, Brighton on Sunday evening 1st March 1925

TEXT: John 17 verse 3

"And this is life eternal, that they might
know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus
Christ whom Thou hast sent."

Solomon says that the soul be without knowledge is not good. The knowledge we can acquire is not the knowledge that he means. The knowledge that we can acquire makes men proud. The knowledge that the Holy Ghost gives makes men humble. This divine knowledge animates, moves, enlarges, quickens, guides. This knowledge brings God to the soul, and the soul to God, brings reality into the conscience, makes the sinner a little enter into that word "now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". You will find that the things God teaches you, leave, like a substance; move, with a hope in your soul after God. He is real, He is great, He is terrible, He is loving. To know God like this, is to have eternal life. To know God like this is to hunger and thirst for more knowledge of Him. Jesus is this life. "I am the life" is His own word, and the Spirit brings it, and as I said this morning, after speaking of knowing God in the law, a knowledge which repels and drives the subject of it away from God, that the whole of the knowledge that the people of God have and seek is centred in, and flows from, the Lord Jesus, and His blessed cross is, as it were, the embodiment of every living truth, that the saints of the Most High have brought to them. Hence the word which I read this evening. Says the Apostle, "I determine not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified". He was writing to a church that had become very carnal, and he said he could not write unto them as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes. And, because they were very much enamoured of human eloquence, he said, I did not come with that; I purposely kept that back, would not have

anything to do with it in the pulpit, because, if, by that, I could have persuaded any of you to believe, somebody more eloquent, might have followed me, and persuaded you out of your belief, but true faith stands in the power of God, not in the wisdom of man. Faith springs up when light shines into the heart; faith is exercised on God, when, and in whatever measure God does shine on Jesus Christ. Faith fixes there. It will go out to Him with every care, every known sin, every necessity, all weakness, all fears. Christ will be seen to be suitable, and everything that can be needed so that the soul goes out to Him, and says "Thou O Christ art all I want." If you have faith, that is your religion; if you have faith that is your religion. And while you live you wont get beyond it, as to principle. You will, again and again, and always be saying to Him, in spirit, I want none beside. "None but Jesus, none but Jesus, can do helpless sinners good" Then the devil and a wicked heart will oppose Him, and oppose your every step in the way to heaven. Every step in the way to heaven will be disputed. Reason will dispute it. Pride will dispute it. A legal heart will dispute it, and the temptation of the devil will dispute it. Then it will come to that, wherever the Spirit revives faith, by giving some fresh view of Christ, thou wilt say Thou art all I want. None but Jesus - no person but His, no redemption but His, no life but His, no righteousness but His. He is all you want. And you will beg for the knowledge of Him as for silver, and you will prize the knowledge of Him, whenever that knowledge comes, more than rubies. So great is He, and this, I say again, makes that word good. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" and when anything is propounded to you, brought before you, for belief, bring that to two tests. The test of the scriptures, and the test of what you have known in your own soul. If a doctrine is brought to you that will bear these two tests then you receive it. Everything else is short. There is a striking scripture in the first Epistle to the Corinthians "Let a man so account of

us, as stewards of the mysteries of God, and it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful", and everything that men may preach and practice in religion, that is outside these mysteries, is of the flesh, everything. O my friends, the scriptures narrow us up, and the teachings of the Spirit narrow us up, and bring us to one point, that point, that Christ is "all and in all" All in His Person, and so for a short time, as enabled, this evening, I will speak a little more about His blessed cross, for everything good, holy, pure, desirable, and of good report, emanates from the cross, and if we are brought there, we shall want to live there. We shall say,

Sweet the moments, rich in blessing
Which before the cross I spend.

Then you will want the moments to be lengthened into hours, and the hours into days, and all the days of your life to be spent there. There is a light at the cross; there is a life at the cross; there is purity there, a blessedness. God is there in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. And when you take notice of your sins, and you will do, as I do mine, and sometimes think how can God be gracious to such a person, you will find this, that He wont take any notice of them. It is when we are not taking notice of sins that we have, and that we commit, that he takes notice of them. But, when we are noticing them, judging ourselves, then we are not condemned. The cross brings relief. Mercy comes this way. Mind the centre, and anything that draws you away ever so little from this centre, is wrong, and is damaging to the soul, everything. O beloved friends, if I repeat myself constantly you must bear with it, for there is no subject worth preaching about, but this, Christ and Him crucified. I mentioned this morning about the justice of God coming to Christ, about the law of God, pouring its curses upon Him. And what a subject. If you see Him under the curse, how sorry you will be for your sins. O how grieved you will be for sinning. When you see by faith that your sins furnished the Jews with knotted whips and bands, and nails and hammers, and a crown of thorns, you will never be able to hate yourself

enough then. But O brethren there is something else, and that is, the love of God. It sent Him from the throne to the cross, it brought Him willingly and lovingly to the cross. It brought Him to say to justice, when justice was claiming sinners, and threatening them, "Inflict it all on Me." What a subject, the love of God, the love of God. For love of whom, did Jesus suffer? "Of sinners base, a hardened herd, a rebel race" and faith in you will say I am one of the worst of them, a rebel race, that mocked and trampled on Thy blood, and wantoned with the wounds of God. O my friends, what is love? The answer is at the cross, in the suffering Saviour, and yet a legal spirit says, why He could not love me, and faith enables you to say, He could. Then you go out to Him and ask Him to tell you that He did love you from eternity and that that love brought Him to suffer for you. All doctrines have an application. All truths are to come into sinners. Truths in God are to dwell in the elect. The love of God is a divine truth and that is to dwell in the elect. I pray for them, I pray not for the world; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me, may be in them, and I in them. Then when you feel it you will sing

" On such love my soul still ponder
Love so great, so rich, so free
Say, whilst lost in holy wonder,
Why, O Lord, such love to me."

and perhaps tears will stream down your face while you sing it. A blessed word. I once sang it I have sung it many times. I once did sing it; On such love, that brought the Saviour to the cross, such love as made Him willing, as made Him say "Thy law is within My heart, I delight to do Thy will O My God" As made Him say "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life. No man taketh it from Me. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again." If you only get this you will be happy, and heaven will be yours in your experience. This blessed love of God, this eternal love of God, not a passion as it is in us, not a grace, as it is in us, rising and falling, but an eternal principle. An affection for men, such an affection

as caused Him to say to His Son Thou shalt go and redeem these sinners. Such an affection as made Him say, I will, O My Father. I will be Thy servant, and I will redeem these sinners. Such a love as moved the Spirit to go into that sacred human nature begotten and born of Him, and the Virgin. Such love as brings a sinner down to the dust, through the grace of the Holy Spirit. Well it is wonderful ever to feel it. There is nothing wrong in God then to the man who feels it, nothing wrong in trying providences, to the man who feels it. Nothing wrong in anything in God's creation, in any thing in His providence, when the love of Christ is felt. You know how the Apostle speaks of this blessed love of Christ. He prays that the Ephesians might be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. When it is like a shower, how refreshing it is, how fructifying it is, how beautiful it is, and when it comes over our transgressions, when it comes over all legal objections, when it comes again and again over all the backslidings of which we are so guilty, then it is seen, it is felt, to be love, and this is life, real life. No dead soul ever felt it, and no hard sinner ever remained hard under it. No distant soul, lying in a sense of sinfulness, of guilt, ever remained there, with the power of that in Him. No doubt can remain when this comes. No clouds can continue when this comes. Love, the love of Christ. You would like to say it, some of you, I would, the love of Christ to me. To me. And you will know how strong the emphasis is when you can use it. The love of Christ to me, of all people, the most unlikely, the most wicked. This is, I say, life. It unites you to God. It makes Him sweet to you, precious to your soul, acceptable to every feeling, and principle, and faculty of your nature. As blessed thus, it makes Him acceptable. All our justness and our holiness, come this way. When the Apostle had said that he determined not to know anything among the Corinthian church and people, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified, He at

once expands that truth. He begins in the unseen things. He brings in living faith, and he tells them his reason for not using eloquence and persuasive words, and this was it, that their faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. He tells them that the reason their faith stood and would stand was through the power of God. He then enters into mysteries, the mystery of Christ, the mystery of His Person, the mystery of Christ as the wisdom of God. "We speak the wisdom of God as in a mystery even the hidden wisdom, which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." But as it is written, "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." But God says, "He hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." And all this is in Christ crucified. It is all in Christ crucified. No wisdom out of Him, no faith but by Him, no knowledge of God, but in Him, and no opening of mysteries, but as His cross opens them and the Spirit opens them to faith wrought in the heart. This is a living religion that the Apostle preaches, a religion that enters into the soul, enters into the conscience, into the affections, into the will, into the understanding, into the mind. A religion that extends its influence to troubles, and troubled hearts, and troubled circumstances, and brings saints to say "Thy will be done". Love is in it all. I do not know much of this love myself. I wish I did. I remember, when quite young, and newly entered into the church at Lutterworth, one most blessed man of God took hold of my hand, and said to me, the religion of Jesus Christ is a religion of love. I believed it then, but I know a little more about it now, for then I had not sinned as I have sinned since. When you are young you have not sinned as you will say you have when you become old. When you have had 40 and 50 years of life, to those early days, and the backslidings, waywardness, selfishness, and lust and pride, and all manner of evil things, then looking back, you may say with Hart, I do sometimes "Can blood such horrid crimes atone" "Yes" is His gospel answer

"Yes, blood so rich as Thine." This is Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, and this is life. There is no feeling of your soul that is not animated when this comes, when He says "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins" And when He says "for the iniquity of his covetousness I was wrath, I hid Me, I smote him." Was not that enough? No. He went on forwardly. A smitten son daring to do this? Who does not know it? Perhaps some young child of God does not know it, and if it would please God to keep the knowledge of it from him, I would be glad, but when he does come to know it, what then? O, he will repent, he will be sorry. I have been sorry for my sins under the power of that, and love is in it all. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." I have set my love on thee, and I have come to put my laws into thy mind, and write them in thy heart, and to be a God to thee, and thou shalt be a child to Me. "And they shall no more say every man to his neighbour and to his brother, know the Lord, for all shall know Me." And thou poor sinner shall know Me. "For I will forgive their sin, and remember their iniquities no more" Do some of you say that is not what you are experiencing. Well, if you do, what is the course you take? What course do you take? Hart tells us what course he took in a certain circumstance, when prayer was not answered. He said in this, "the course I take is still to wait and pray" And, if you have got faith, that is what you will do - wait on God and pray to Him, that He would bring this mercy, this precious, eternal, unalterable love, to you.

And this comes into the life of a child of God when he is in affliction. Love, inscribed upon trials. To see it is happiness. To see love inscribed upon them is happiness to me. The devil tries to write something else on trouble, and the legal heart helps him to do it. O, says the enemy, God is displeased with you and hates you. And, says your heart, that I believe; I am afraid it is true. Then love comes and writes upon the cross what you have longed to see, perhaps, "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten, be

zealous therefore and repent." This is new life, it is like that word "behold I make all things new". New feelings then come; new experiences come; new comforts come; new submission is felt to the will of God. Everything is new when this blessed life is renewed in you. "Faith, O what a gift it is". It will hold you to God, will take you to God. It will enable you to cast your care on Him, and you will find that the love of God flows in a stream of irresistible grace and mercy from Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. If I could only set it out as it ought to be set out, I believe you would be saying what a beautiful religion it is, what a beautiful religion. A loving God, a loving Saviour, a loving Spirit, a loving Trinity engaged to bless a sinner. A loving God engaged to comfort a sinner, to help him, carry him on through his troubles and difficulties, yea, and as one beautifully says, a word I met with the other day, "The thorns beneath my feet are planted by His care". Well, that is beautiful. We do not think it at times; we're not apt to think it at all. Thorns that you must tread on planted by His care? Yes. God cares for His people, cares for their safety, cares for their good. Then when faith lays hold of this in the power of the Spirit, this follows "casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you". Then His love will do another thing. It will work deliverances, as it is in the Psalms "Thou shalt preserve me from trouble. Thou art my hiding place." Thou shalt preserve me from trouble. Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." You look around and you say, there is no place; I am surrounded by troubles, thickly set troubles around me. O but this is what He will say to you in effect "where you have a trouble I will put a deliverance". I know it, it is so in my own case. Where you have a trouble, O child of God, God will put a deliverance. Love will move Him; care, loving care will move Him. He sees the waywardness of some of us. O what a wayward creature I have been. And He looks on this and He says a wall of stone is the only thing that will keep him from wandering. So He

builds a wall of hewn stone, and this creature says, I will get over it or I will break it down. No, says God. And how does He bring the man to it. He says, I will allure him, I will bring him into the wilderness, and I will speak comfortably to his heart. And then the man says "Thy will be done," and love is in it all, and love is in it all. Well, my brethren, the love of Christ is there, beaming, flowing, rushing down at times in its sovereignty into an unworthy heart. All gospel blessings come from this. All gospel blessings. Take those blessings in the 8th Romans "We know" says Paul "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose; for whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called and whom He called them He also justified, and whom He justified them He also glorified. What shall we say then to these things" What shall we say? "If God be for us, who can be against us." Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect, it is God that justifieth, yea rather Christ that died, who is risen again, who is at the right hand of God Therefore he says, in a divine challenge as it were, "who shall separate us from the love of Christ" All these blessings from Jesus Christ. A justifying God in Christ. A living God in Christ. A God who sanctifies in Christ, who has predestinated in Christ all these people to be His. This is life eternal. The knowledge of this in your heart would make you more loving, lively, godly. An increase of knowledge would do wonders for me. All blessings in Christ, and this is within the compass of that scripture - I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified, namely "It hath pleased the Father that in Him all fulness should dwell." It is wrought in it. You will never get a gospel like that outside Christ. All fulness, love, goodness, wisdom, mercy, pardons and power and blessings for ever and ever, all in Christ. Now then dear friends,

what shall we say? We must say this in the name of God we will set up our banners. And, if you set up a banner, what are you going to emblazen on it? What will you inscribe upon it? What will you say? This is the banner and what is on it? Oh, says faith, election is on it; predestination is on it; the love of God is on it; the death of Christ is on it; the righteousness of Christ is on it; the work of the Spirit is on it; the Trinity, the Trinity is on that banner. You will always put that there. Whenever you get the banner you will write that in the name of our God we will set up our banners. How near God is the faith sometimes; how real He is to faith sometimes. How kind He is to faith; how approvingly He looks on a believer; how sweetly He speaks to one who cannot take a denial at His hands "O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt" O He does approve of faith, faith in the bleeding Lamb, faith in the love of the Father, in the love of the Son, in the love of the Spirit.

How many of you can unite with me and say as in God's sight - Be this religion mine. Be this God my God. This Jesus my Jesus. This fountain of life, my fountain, a supply for my soul. Well, we hope to get to heaven and if we do we shall know upon whose head to put the crown. There is a beautiful scripture in the Revelation - On His head were many crowns. The first, the brightest of all, is the crown of His eternal, ineffable relation to His Father. That gives brightness, yea gives as it were being, to all the rest. He has a name that no man knows. He has fulness and beauty and glory. No man knows it, and yet it is written - He is the Son of God, the Word. That is the first crown, the brightest diadem. This is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true God, as distinguished from idols for, as Paul says, we know that an idol is nothing in this world, but unto us there is one only God. One only God. Only One God. O blessed is the man to whom this is true. One God. This is life eternal that they might

know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ"; one with them in the Godhead, subordinate to them in His mediatorial character. One with them in deity, serving them in His sacred humanity. Ah we do not worship an unknown God if we have been under the teaching of the Spirit. If we have living faith, we worship Him, a God we know. We may not know much of Him, but this is His covenant promise - I will make a covenant with thee, and this is it, in the promise of it - I will put My laws into their mind and in their heart will I write them and I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people and they shall not teach every man his neighbour and every man his brother saying know the Lord, for all shall know Me from the least of them to the greatest of them, for I will forgive their sins and remember their iniquities no more for ever. "This God is the God we adore, our faithful, unchangeable friend." The knowledge of Him is pleasant to the soul. Yes, wisdom, when it comes, is pleasant to the soul, and the soul by faith embraces Him and loves Him, for faith and love are never far apart. Faith worketh by love. If I knew Him better, what a different person I should be and what a much better preacher I should be. O but living tongues are dumb at best, we must die to speak of Christ. Altogether lovely. Now I will tell you one thing ere I sit down, that your faith will do. You will be feeling increasingly, as the Spirit teaches you, your utter unworthiness, your worthlessness, sinfulness, weakness, aptness to slide and to backslide. You will be feeling it more and more. I would not stumble any of you young people; when I say this it is not to stumble you. Be careful, be watchful, be sober, be vigilant. But this is what your faith will do as it sees Christ, that condescending Lord, that suffering Surety, that mighty King, that crowned priest, this is what your faith will do - it will venture to invite Him in. It will enable you to say Let the Beloved come into my soul, come into my troubles, come into my wilderness, come into my barren heart, come

into me and fill me with Thy life, and Thy goodness, and Thy mercy. This is what you will do. Well brethren seek knowledge. Ignorant people have knowledge, saving knowledge and this knowledge is life. The knowledge of a living God brings life into the soul; of a living Saviour, brings living, sweet experience of Him; of the living Spirit, brings an acquaintance with Him, and so these poor people say in their hearts "None but Jesus, none but Jesus." Yea, and sometimes they say to Him they desire that He would bear His Spirit's witness with their spirits that they are the children of God. Now brethren, may the Lord help you and help me, make us true believers and keep us hanging about the Saviour. Keep us at the cross and we shall never go far wrong then.

Amen.