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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham  
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton  
on Sunday morning 11 June 1933

Philippians 4 v 6

"Be careful for nothing but in everything  
by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving  
let your requests be made known unto God"

This is a very blessed heavenly direction given to a church which had not given the Apostle Paul cause of grief or called for reproof from him. It is a direction which every child of God stands greatly in need of. We are naturally apt to follow the practice of the heathen, the unbeliever, the atheist. How much care you bestow on the things of this life; how much anxiety you feel with respect to what you should eat, and what you should drink and wherewithal you should be clothed, God knows. What fear you may feel today, seeing that things are in such utter confusion, that the nations of the world are in a turmoil, jealousy. Full of talk of peace, endless, useless conferences, and yet all the time God's poor people are more or less affected by such things and so there is a certain untender, ungracious, unbelieving care with respect to temporal things. Who can plead innocence in this regard? There are some things that the scripture tells us we should do, or tells us that doing them is good. One is, that the people of God are to keep their heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. Diligence here is expressed constantly by the people of God who obey that word in prayer and supplication "Hold up my goings in Thy paths that my footsteps slip not." Keep me in the fear of God. Thou hast blessed my soul, bless me again; Thou hast given me Thy Spirit, give me a good supply of the Spirit unto the end of my pilgrimage. And this is one blessed way of observing that scripture - "Keep thy heart with all diligence". A gracious jealousy lest you should depart from the living God; a gracious fear lest sin should harden you as the nature of sin is, "lest ye be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin"; a fear lest you should become a prey to the enemy, either his deceit or his

violence. Christ has promised, it is promised concerning Him, that He shall deliver His people from deceit and violence. Deceit is more to be feared than violence. Violence puts you on your guard; deceit closes your eyes, hardens your heart. May the good Lord help us to look diligently, lest we fail here. Looking diligently lest any of you fail of the grace of God.

The Apostle in the Hebrews desires that the Hebrew christians then, and surely today Gentile christians and all the Lord's people anywhere and everywhere, should obey that word - Give diligence unto the end. Diligence to the full assurance unto the end. You say I have an assurance. You need it to be kept if you have it. There is also this in the Holy Scripture addressed to the people of God - "Pray without ceasing", which is, bring your cases to God. Seek communications from Him, help, teaching, guidance, unction, blessing, the blessing of the Spirit, the blessing of power, the blessing of unction, the blessing of light in your understanding, that you may be kept from the deceitful lies of the devil; and blessing in your soul with a tender conscience; blessing with communications from God. Prayer is not vocal necessarily; it may be, but mostly it is unuttered, the trembling of the soul, a feeble desire, an earnest longing. There is also in the scripture and in this epistle direction as to separation. What we are to beware of - dogs, the concision; dogs, making a barking noise to frighten us; the devil also. In another place we are told to be vigilant respecting him, for he walketh about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. These scriptures tell us, and God makes us know it, some of us can say, that we are in constant danger. Pilgrims need the pillar <sup>of fire</sup> by night and the cloud by day, and the ceaseless care of God. The water flowing, and following them, from the smitten rock; the manna rained down from heaven day by day for their nourishment. And it is thus that the people of God are to be more or less, and are made by the Spirit more or less, constant in their seeking God, fearful of coming short; fearful of missing that prize such numbers never seek, such numbers seek in vain. Christ's word is not confined to the beginning, but carries on all through as the Spirit is with us - "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." Seek His rule, the

rule of grace; seek His guidance that you may not mistake the way; seek Him for communion, for communion with God is one of the most gracious and blessed means of making and keeping us lively in the things of God. Communion means at least two persons. Communion with God is God speaking to a soul and the soul's response to that speaking. The communion that the Lord indulges some with is a poor hungry soul receiving the bread of life; a sensibly ignorant creature seeking the guidance of the Spirit. O it is a blessing to have communion; eating the bread of life and giving thanks for the food provided, that rich food provided.

Now all these things are consistent with the text - "Be careful for nothing." It does not mean casting off a care about your souls, about the Name and honour of the Lord God. No, the more faith, the more care about your souls; the more faith, the more desire, the stronger the desire to be right with God, and to have a clean conscience, a confidence that is kept alive by gracious communications. The manna corrupted when kept, when more was gathered than necessary, but day by day it fell. Day by day we need to be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. It is a mercy for a church to be careful about its spiritual standing. What is a gospel church but a gathering in God's order of poor sinners, believing in and hoping in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. A church, professing church, may be very well organised and all its outward concerns be very well attended to, while yet there is death within. But when God is with a church of Jesus Christ, the outward things are not neglected, but the inward conditions of the heart and seeking the honour of God, to walk according to the truth, as the truth is in Jesus, will mark that church. My brethren take heed to this; not only are we individuals as we trust, many of us, concerned about eternity, and how we shall stand before God; concerned about our daily walk; concerned lest we should in any way dishonour the name that is named upon us, but <sup>some</sup> many of us are united in church membership. It is not a little thing to be a member of a church. It means a great deal, and this you may gather from the seven letters sent to the seven churches in Asia, and the particular notice that Christ took of each church;

noticing what was good and acknowledging the same, and reproving the discovered sins, and exhorting each church, commanding it to repent and do the first works, with this solemn word "Lest I come". Lest I reprove and remove the candlestick out of its place. Do any of the members here fear that we shall get to that state, that God will remove the candlestick? Do you ever feel afraid of it? I am not now to enter particularly upon that wonderful, mighty, subject, but I just name it to you. If you do fear it at any time, one effect of that fear will be, you will seek the presence of God and the walking in the midst of us of Jesus Christ.

But this word "Be careful for nothing" appears to have a particular reference to externals, that is, to the natural things which are calculated to fill us with care. Christ speaks in the gospel of Matthew thus - "Take heed lest your hearts be filled with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life." Take heed to that. What we shall eat, what shall become of us; whether God will continue to us what we possess, or whether the day is approaching when there shall be such an upheaval, such an earthquake as never was before, as never shall be afterward. We may be very near to that my friends. An earthquake gives no notice. Christ will come as a thief and yet we have before us, if we look at all the nations of the earth, sad evidence that God will gather them together to pour out the fierceness of His indignation upon them. What shall we do should persecution come in some form? What will become of us should we witness the silencing of the witnesses, when there will be a severe silencing of the ministry and the ministers shall lie unburied in the streets three and a half days, three and a half years? What will become of us should we see the famine, not of bread, nor of thirst of water, but of hearing the word of God, when men shall go from the east to the north seeking it and shall not find it; when Israel shall be many days without a priest, without an Ephod, without a king, that is, - there shall be many days a silence of God, and the enemy shall prevail, and the nations of the earth rejoice over the slain witnesses who lie unburied in the streets. The dreadful state of things moves me, as I see them, to speak this morning in this manner. We know not what is

to take place, and when, but apparently the day is not very distant from us; substance will be made as water to flow away from us. The Name of Christ will be disgraced in the eyes of the world. What shall we do, on whom it is named, when the godless movements today shall have prevalence? What then? I put this question to you as protestants, and more, as many of you, true children of the living God. Now the Word of God answers these questions. "Be careful for nothing". Do not turn into yourselves and see if you have strength enough, if you have got today strength enough for a year or two hence; do not turn into yourselves to see if you are wise enough to make provision, so as that you will escape that day; do not turn into yourselves to ask if you have grace enough to resist in the evil day and having done all to stand, resisting. God's blessed teaching never leads a child of His to look into himself for support, protection, wisdom, and resources. The text tells us what the Spirit leads the people of God to do. Be careful, that is, be not over anxious in anything. Be careful for nothing. Not for bread, nor water, nor clothing, nor protection. Then what. O, says the atheist, there is no God, things will happen by chance, or the communist will come with his godlessness and none will be able to stand against him. What shall the church do? " In everything by prayer and supplication" "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart".

Prayer was appointed to convey  
The blessings God designed to give  
Long as they live should christians pray  
For only while they pray they live

Prayer in secret. There is, as I have often said to you, no substitute for secret prayer. This may be carried on sometimes when you are lively in the ways of God from morning to night as you are about your duties as well as the times that you turn aside from all things and enter your prayer closet and shut your door about you. Prayer is the moving of the soul after God. Is danger apprehended? O says a praying soul - spread the wings of Thy healing righteousness and of Thy protection over me. May I

know that the eternal God is my refuge and feel that underneath are the everlasting arms. That is the best my friends. In everything, by prayer, secret prayer. The Psalmist says in one place - "I give myself unto prayer." A wonderful occupation that was to him at that time. "I am prayer". O it is a blessing when the Holy Ghost enables one who often lies hard and cold and as dead as a stone to rise and go his heavenly Father and pour out his confessions of weakness, of sin, and all his fears and pray for forgiveness and protection unto the end. It was God's appointed way. "Pray" he says "without ceasing". When you have an unceasing pressure, then prayer will be given by the Holy Spirit, that you will pray without ceasing in that. When you have an abiding sense of your ignorance, prayer will be moved in that direction by the blessed Spirit, and when you are sensibly apprehensive of coming danger, nature will say - do this or that - but the Spirit will say - Pour out your heart before God. "In everything" everything relating to you, every providence. Providence is God's rule in the world; providence is Christ's motion in the nations of the earth, for He is King of kings, Lord of lords. He has in the hollow of His hand, the heart of the kingdom. He turneth that heart whithersoever He will as He turns rivers. Providence? Ah many a man has thought himself secure till God's providence like a net has taken him. Many a child of God has said - "What shall I do Lord in this, and the Holy Ghost helps his infirmity and he casts his care and his burden on the Lord, and he finds the Lord arising for him, saying "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle; the battle is the Lord's and not yours." You may be tried in circumstances particularly. An income that has been sufficient may be made insufficient. Yes, you say - my investments are all sound. Yes, that may be true. You may have put your things into a bag and the bag is sound to your own judgment, and what if God pierces it, what if He makes holes in it? "Be careful for nothing" not for this. You may take a proper course as a reasonable person, but when you have done that, may God the Holy Ghost help you to do what Jacob did when he was alone. He prayed. The Man came to Jacob; may God come to us in any perplexity of this nature. We are not secure my friends.

"In everything". In temptation, when you may be tempted to infidelity; when reason begins to work about omniscience. Does God see this? Is this minute matter open to His gaze? Temptation to infidelity may be a great snare and a great trouble for a time. Then the direction as in the scripture, and in the Holy Spirit's grace, is this "In everything by prayer and supplication". Prayer, approaching the Most High God. Supplication when you reach His divine throne. Supplication means the very opposite of indifference. You are not indifferent when you have the Spirit of grace and of supplications in your hearts. "Lord help me". And it is not an indifferent cry, nor a parrot cry, but the language of a needy, weak, fearing saint. "In everything" even in temptation, when trouble comes, perhaps in the family. Real trouble. What then? "In everything". When the parent has the Spirit of grace and of supplications poured into his heart, O how he brings his children; he brings them to the Lord. Children do not know what friends they have in praying parents unless God makes them know it. You children here who know not God let me say this to you - you do not know what friends your parents are to you. When you are asleep they are awake, praying for you, committing you to God and perhaps often saying O let them live before Thee.

"In everything by prayer and supplication". Prayer is one of the sweetest employments you can ever be engaged in; one of the holiest exercises that we can ever have put into our souls; one of the most solemn engagements upon which we can ever enter. Prayer, it is the approach of a sinner to the Holy God; it is the language of a needy soul before Jehovah; it is the confession of sin; the petition for pardon; it is the acknowledgement of ignorance and the prayer for divine teaching; it is the sense of need and the supplication for a supply out of the fulness of the Lord Jesus. It is the coming of a vile leper to be healed by God; it is the coming of one who does not know what to do, either in his circumstances, or his soul, and he is brought by the Eternal Spirit to pray with all prayer and supplication. This is the direction; may the Holy Ghost give it a place in us. I believe we need it. I need it myself; I know I do, and I am persuaded you need it, and I believe some of you

know your need of it. And this is to be accompanied with something which is quite consistent with it. "With thanksgiving". What, when a man of God is pressed and oppressed, troubled, anguished, full of affliction, circumstances adverse, must he then, in such a case, give thanks? So says the scripture and so works the Holy Ghost. What, am I to give thanks for, one says? Well, I would say first, thank God you are out of hell; you deserve to be there, I do, I know that. I can say sometimes there is not a day passes in my life when I do not, over and over again, confess I deserve hell. Thank God, my friends, that you are out of hell. Hell is awful, everlasting punishment. What have I to thank God for? Are you convinced of sin? Give thanks for conviction. Are you pierced with a sense, painful and deep of your utter vileness? Bless God that you are thus kept from uttering the hypocrisy of the pharisee - I am not as other men. Are you a poor, ragged, naked wretch, unjust. Thank God that you are stripped, that you know that you must have a better righteousness than that of the scribes and pharisees. And give God thanks then also for the throne of grace to which He calls His poor dear people. "Come boldly to the throne of grace". Not only come to it, thank God there is a throne, but O thank Him that He has said "Come boldly"; come with liberty. It is free; no toll; no tax at all here; come boldly. On what ground? The ground of the High Priestly work and sympathy of the Lord Jesus. That is the ground. O how it suits a sinner. No good works; no good tempers; no pleasing frames, but just a poor, sinful, undone wretch, guilty and conscious of his guilt - come boldly, with thanksgiving. God knows that the Holy Ghost has made some of us here thankful that there is a throne of grace. How often has He helped us to go there with our troubles and desires and needs. This beautiful throne; this tabernacle in which God dwells and will dwell with men, Jesus Christ. With thanksgiving for any encouragements that have been given to you, any scriptures that have dropped upon your heart, any power that you have felt to go to God, any openness of mind, any sincerity of heart, any contrition of spirit, giving God thanks, that you have had such blessings. "With thanksgiving". Ah, where this is, trouble is not an unmixed evil; where this is, trouble is not sent for destruction; where this is, you may be sent to Babylon, but it is



that you may be delivered from a worse condition. Good figs were sent to Babylon that they might be delivered from corruption; gracious people have trouble that they may be preserved in a gracious condition, yea and increase in that gracious condition.

In everything giving thanks, let your requests be made known unto God. One word here - do not put all your troubles on your coat sleeve for your friends to see; do not make them known. I have found it best in my own case to make the thing known to God and not open it to a creature.

Let your requests, your request to be saved, your request to be helped, your request to be preserved to the end, your request to be made a good soldier of Jesus Christ, your request to be enabled to build up yourself on your most holy faith, be made known unto God. "In all things" This is it that the Spirit does in the heart. He says - "Cast your burden on the Lord". "Pray in secret", you will get an open answer. So may the Lord help us; may He help us to regard this important scripture - "Be careful for nothing". Take the matters, whatever they may be that you have to trouble you, whatever may yet come to trouble you, take them to this blessed Lord God, Father Son and Holy Ghost, who knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, who has said "Who is he that shall harm you if ye be followers of that which is good"; who hath said "God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly"; who has said also this - "I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also."

"And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus." The peace of God is first by the blood of Christ. The peace of God next may be this - the sweet persuasion in your heart that God loves you, and will take care of you, provide for you, give you bread to eat, raiment to put on and power to keep you believing to the end, unto the salvation of your souls. May the Lord give us grace to regard this blessed scripture. I have found it abiding in my own mind, and therefore I have brought it before you. May the Lord

make it something to you, even His own word and His own power.

AMEN.