

His Fullness

by Thomas Bradbury

The sermon emphasizes the overflowing fullness of Christ, which is available to all believers, and that this fullness is the source of all spiritual blessings and benefits.

Scripture: Genesis 49:10, Isaiah 11:2, John 1:16, John 3:27, 2 Corinthians 12:10, Galatians 4:4, Ephesians 3:18, Colossians 1:18, 2 Timothy 2:13

Topics: "Gods Grace", "Christs Fullness"

Description

Thomas Bradbury preaches about the all-encompassing grace of God, starting with the disputed point of who spoke the words in John 1:16, highlighting the ministry of John the Baptist and his humble acknowledgment of Christ's pre-eminence. The sermon delves into the vast subject of the fullness of Christ, emphasizing His overflowing abundance of grace and blessings for believers. Bradbury explores the concepts of predestination, election, redemption, justification, and forgiveness as manifestations of God's grace, leading to a deep reflection on the believer's journey from sinfulness to experiencing the fullness of God's grace and glory.

Transcript

"And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." (John 1:16)

It has been a disputed point as to who the person was who spoke the words I have read to you as my text. Some have contended that it was John the Evangelist, while others declare it was John the Baptist. Both, in their ministry, were wonderfully blessed and owned of God. In Matt. 3, we see the Baptist with his bold, unflinching, uncompromising spirit, denouncing the hypocrisy of his day, and telling the Pharisees to their face his estimate of them. We trace out his character and experience in his confession in the verse preceding my text: "He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for He was before me." He was content to lie very low at the feet of the ever-blessed and adorable Jesus. Look also at his testimony which you will find in John 3:27-30, and as I read it I am forced to the conclusion that the words of the text are those of the Baptist declaring the glory, excellency, and pre-eminence of our Lord Jesus Christ. "John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." You see how the testimony of John accords with that of Jesus, and how the testimony from this pulpit accords with both in respect to human inability. "Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom; but the friend of the Bridegroom, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice: this, my joy, therefore is

fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease." Christ must ascend, but John must descend. Christ must be everything, while John was content to be nothing. You see then how these words perfectly agree with those of my text, where John is evidently the speaker,

"And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace."

It is ours now, in pure and humble dependence upon the guidance of the blessed Spirit, to look at the vast subject in the following order:

THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST "His fullness."

THE FULLNESS RECEIVED "And of His fullness have all we received."

THE EFFECT OF THIS RECEPTION "And grace for grace."

I. THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST "His fullness." This is blessedly touched upon in that precious hymn of Fawcett's which we have just been singing,

"All fullness resides in Jesus our Head."

Not according to many hymn books which say,

"A fullness;"

but

"ALL fullness resides in Jesus our Head,

And ever abides to answer our need;

The Father's good pleasure has laid up in store

A plentiful treasure to give to the poor."

What are we to understand by this word "fullness?" It signifies abundance and perfection; having all it can contain; having no empty space; abundantly supplied or furnished; completeness. It may have reference to a vessel filled to the brim; or to a measure filled with goodly seed such as wheat or any other grain. This is fullness in abundance, but falling very far short of that set before us in these precious words. This is not merely an abundant but a redundant fullness, aptly described in the third verse of this precious hymn,

"The fountain o'erflows: our woes to redress,

Still more He bestows, and grace upon grace."

You see here that grace received is the earnest of greater grace descending upon it, and the forerunner of richer and more copious supplies.

"His gifts in abundance we daily receive;

He has a redundancy for all that believe."

But I like to come a little lower down than that, and I love to rise a great deal higher. Mark you this! "He has a redundance for those of His own who do not believe. That is what I like, for I do not like to limit God's grace to the poor weak stretch of my faith, or even to the longest and strongest faith that was ever manifested under the sun. It is the delight of my heart to look at these things and enjoy them according to God's own testimony in 2 Tim. 2:13, "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself." So the Saviour and Supporter of His body, the Church having, according to His Father's good pleasure, an "all fullness" of grace and spiritual blessings to refresh and enrich His poor and needy ones, then believe or believe not, and in the face of the opposition of all devils who will question the right of the children to their inheritance, He will communicate in His own good time the blessings, bounties, and benefits, the spiritual revivings and refreshings which flow from His alone.

The fullness of Christ is an overflowing fullness, not a limited supply, to be used according to the vain notions propounded from almost every pulpit in this our day. Grace is represented as a fullness into which the vessel of faith is to be dipped, and according to the strength and value of the same, so sinners can take out a supply for their necessities. Oftentimes you may hear the expression: "out of His fullness." Blessed be God, there is no "out of" in this matter, it is all in.

These perverters of God's precious truth are described thus by God in Jeremiah 2:13, "They have forsaken Me the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." But that which yields to you and to me a constant and copious supply, meeting every necessity, supplying every want, soothing every sorrow, allaying every anxiety, reviving my drooping spirit, and sweetly refreshing my fainting soul, is the full free fountain of covenant love, ever overflowing with showers of spiritual blessing.

From this Fountain, streams of full salvation flow, conveying to the hearts of elect sinners the blessings of the Father's purpose, the Son's purchase, and the Spirit's power. This is the fullness in and by which alone my soul can live. But what do we find in this fullness? Paul prays for the Ephesian Christians thus: "That ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." (Eph. 3:19) Absolute or abstract Deity cannot be communicated, so here we are shut up to that mediatorial fullness which the Father gave to the Son in the covenant of grace before the worlds were framed, with which He so lovingly and liberally meets and supplies all His poor and needy, hungering and thirsting brethren in the wilderness, and that unceasingly.

It may be that some poor longing soul is ready to say, "That is too good for me, because I find the supplies of grace are oftentimes wanting in my experience. I dwell in a dry and thirsty land where no water is. I remain in the land of far distances, and experience no communication whatever from the Fountain-Head of all spiritual blessing." Wait a moment, my friend. Art thou judging of that fullness of grace and glory which God has in Christ Jesus for thee, according to thy faint and feeble experience of the same?

If so, thou art falling far short of a true apprehension of that fullness of grace and those riches in glory which abound by Christ Jesus to His own. Fullness would be the wrong term altogether were it measured according to all that we experience or shall ever experience here below. Oh, no! my friends, that fountain fullness, that ever-abounding supply of grace and glory, is well expressed by Paul in Eph. 3:18-20, "That ye may be able to comprehend," or rather apprehend, "with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."

In the contemplation of the grand, vast, and glorious subject, the apostle breaks forth in this doxology: "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly." Mark that expression, "able to do." God's whole determination is included in it. Here we have not ability to do and falling short, but ability to do, and doing according to the ability. He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." It is high above imagination to comprehend all the fullness of God.

In it we can only think of every attribute, every thought, every word, and every work of His, conspiring for the salvation and glory of His Church. Just think, JEHOVAH, in all that He is and all that He has, for me a poor vile sinner.

In considering this glorious subject, my mind runs to the first two chapters of the epistle to the Colossians. In the first, after speaking of Christ as the Creator of all things, the apostle sets Him forth as the Head of the body, the Church. Christ, the Head of all influence and power, from whence the whole body derives all nourishment, strength, and sympathy. But what is the Church? It is not that awful confederacy against the sovereign rights of JEHOVAH and the good of mankind which some falsely style "The Church of Rome."

I do not call it a Church in any sense. Nay, I say it before God and man, there is nothing of the nature of a Church in connection with it. What is the Church? Is it the Establishment of this country? Some people are weak and foolish enough to believe that the Church cannot exist apart from it. Here I speak honestly before the Lord, though I have no desire to dwell upon these matters, I see very little of the nature of a true Church even there. As we examine our Dissenting communities, we see precious little of the nature of the Church there.

Look upon them! Policy, expediency, flesh-pleasing reigns on every hand. Look at universal Christendom, and so far as the power of the Church, the Holy Ghost, and the Head of the Church, God's Christ, are concerned, ICHABOD appears on every hand. What is the Church? It is the Ecclesia. What is that? Something vastly different to the idea given of it in religious periodicals and assemblies. The Ecclesia is the gathered out family of God. Those upon whom God has put His mark of electing love.

Those whom He has signalized by His blood-red mark of redeeming grace. Those whom He has characterized as His own living children in spiritual regeneration. "Unto Shiloh shall the gathering of the people be." (Gen. 49:10) The Church is formed of all those who are gathered by the power of the Holy Ghost to Him who is the beginning and the Head of all blessings to His people. He "is the Firstborn or Chief from the dead" in whom all the members live, "that in all He might have the pre-eminence.

For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell." (Col. 1:18,19) Not a fullness, but all fullness. Why did I direct your attention to Colossians 1? That you might notice a characteristic expression sometimes given in the word "all," and sometimes in the word "every." Here we have a display of the fullness of God's grace in Christ Jesus to needy sinners. No failure, no stint in God's provision of grace. Look at verse 9: "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."

Mark that. Not in some, but in all wisdom. You have the same in chapter 3:16, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly and in all wisdom." I knew one who, in preaching from this text, said, "When we meet with a statement of God's Word concerning His sovereignty, we must bow to it. When we meet with a statement of man's responsibility, we must accept it, and thus manifest not a particle, but all wisdom." A pretty all wisdom that! If I must look at part of this blessed Book in the light of my responsibility, the sight would sink me down to despair and death.

That is all that responsibility can do for me. As Christ Jesus my Lord is pleased to reveal Himself to me as the Bearer of all my responsibility, that will do for me. When He speaks of all wisdom, it is simply that I am to bow to the Word of Christ by His guidance, who is made to me "the Wisdom of God," and by the grace and indwelling of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. There is no all wisdom apart from the Holy Ghost, who is described in Isaiah 11:2 as "the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge."

Look at verse 10: "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." Now who are you to please? Everybody? I could never manage that, and I will tell you another thing, I have dropped trying, for I find that in attempting to please everybody, we please nobody. The more you can let the disaffected, as so many Ephraims, alone, only as you approach the throne of the heavenly grace with the whisper of their names and infirmities, and leave them in a loving Father's gracious hands, the more you will manifest the possession of all wisdom.

But what is this all pleasing? That manifested by the Father toward all persons and things in the Son of His love. Look at that precious testimony of His from the heights of heaven when Jesus was baptized: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17) Look at that! It is not with whom, but in whom I am well pleased." As the Father is well pleased, and He never does things by halves, He is all pleased with all that He sees in Christ. Therefore, as I am led, guided, and instructed by the blessed Spirit into paths of righteousness, or, as He led my gracious Master, up into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, it is that the good pleasure of my God shall be seen through the temptation, and the all-sufficiency of His grace vouchsafed to His tried and tempted one.

We will proceed. Look at verse 11: "Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power." Not some might, a little now and then, but "all might." Nothing short of all might, nothing but all strength, nothing but all power will do for those who have experienced the perfection of human weakness. Paul knew this when he said, "When I am weak, than am I strong." (2 Cor. 12:10) Strong in Him in whom all might dwells for His weaklings. If you wish for a comment upon that expression "all might," go the last verse of the chapter: "Whereunto I also labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily."

Now read the 16th verse: "For by Him were all things created" not some things, but all things "that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." No consistence or subsistence independently of the person, power, and will of the great and glorious Head of the Church. Mark this! He created all things for His own glory to be revealed in the Church throughout all ages.

I remember walking with a friend, a year or two ago, between Snodland and Halling in Kent. Pointing to the lime and chalk hills he said, "Why did God create these thousands of years ago? It was because He knew that in His own time He would place here and there an elect one whom He would have to earn his daily bread by the sweat of his brow, in working amid those hills of His creating." That is a marvellous truth, and would to God that we could carry it about with us more in our every day movements.

Would that we could remember it in our moments of despondency, dreariness, and repining. "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the body, the Church; who is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it please the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell." This all fullness must dwell in Him, that all the Church, all the saints,

all the elect, all the redeemed, might be brought by Him to experience the blessings and the blessedness treasured up for them in Himself.

One said to me as we walked up the hill this morning, "The preaching of the Gospel is a mystery indeed." So Paul knew and felt it to be. Read the 25th and 26th verses: "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, fully to preach the Word of God." Paul was a God-made minister, a Spirit-taught minister, not according to any human authority, or dispensation received from apostles, bishops, pastors, or ever the Church, but directly from Christ Himself.

In the consciousness of this he went not up to Jerusalem for confirmation from those who were apostles before him. He required none but a Divine dispensation, and sought none but a Divine confirmation, and those who are truly taught of God and led into the glorious liberty of the Gospel will esteem very lightly every ordination, dispensation, and confirmation that comes not from the gracious hands of the Shepherd and Bishop of souls. Mark, the dispensation Paul received was for the Church, not for his own personal exaltation or enjoyment.

As assuredly as God sets apart a saved and redeemed one to preach His truth and puts him into experimental possession of the same, he will know the worth and value of the ordaining and confirming grace of his Master, and will rejoice in the privilege of wholly, or fully, preaching the Word of God. "Even the mystery which hath been hid from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Not Christ in one person for that person's private advantage, but Christ in and among all the members, that the true communion of saints may be experienced by them. Now look! "Whom we preach, warning every man." Every man in Christ. All that the Father gave to Him. All He redeemed with His most precious blood. All those for whom in the covenant the blessings of the Gospel were designed. But the "every man" of this verse has a still further restriction. It means every man to whom Paul and his fellows were sent with a message of grace.

"And teaching every man in all wisdom." Now there were thousands of men whom the apostles never saw, and who never heard a word of Gospel truth from their lips. The expression must be governed by the subject. Therefore it must mean every person warned, taught, and presented perfect in Christ Jesus through the Gospel preached by the apostles. What a glorious statement! "Perfect in Christ Jesus." Mark! It is not that we may present every man perfect through the discipline and order we have maintained in our Church.

I have been advised more than once to bring about a state of discipline whereby the Church may sit in judgment upon erring and weak brethren. The Lord has graciously kept me from these Satanic suggestions, because if I begin to look after the failings and infirmities of my brethren, I shall not know where to begin nor where to end. Yes, I do know where I should begin, for I should be the first culprit. I cannot have to do with that business. My God has led me into the enjoyment of the solidity of His truth, and the experience of such freedom and liberty in His Gospel as to prevent my bringing any poor child of God into bondage to any rules or regulations devised by man, or to any histrionic performances based upon "The Acts of the Apostles."

I tell you candidly, I believe that rules and regulations for the government of Churches and Sunday Schools, are a prolific source of the contentions, disorders, and strife's so prevalent in the professing

Church in the present day. That is my judgment, based upon over twenty years' observation and personal experience. No rule, no law, no regulation but that of love, as revealed in the person of Jesus by the power of the Holy Ghost, can bind me to any person or persons.

But what about the fullness? This we see in the person and work of Zion's Prophet, Priest, and King, the Mediator of the everlasting covenant of grace. He is God's grand Conservator of all spiritual blessings, bounties, and benefits of all grace, life, pardon, justification, and salvation that His people can experience in time and through eternity. As the great and glorious Head and Representative of grace, He received from the hands of His Father a countless multitude of precious souls who, in time, should fall in Adam. Yes, should fall, but not from Him; should fall, but not from grace; should fall, but not from the blessings with which they were blessed in Him; should fall, from what? From that portion of legal standing in which they were placed by the covenant of works made with their federal head and representative, Adam. Do this and live, were the conditions of that covenant. Adam, while obedient, lived in a state of familiarity, intercourse, and friendship with his Creator; but when he transgressed and fell, dying, he died to all familiarity and friendship with God. Satan beguiled Eve, not Adam. He seduced the weaker vessel, who fell into degradation and death. Adam saw his wife plunged in sin, guilt, and condemnation. He loved her more than he loved his God, and would not be severed from the object of his heart's affections, but share with her her shame and doom. Down to her depths he fell, and in that same act all is posterity fell in him from that point of privilege upon which intercourse with God could be maintained on legal ground. See! From that moment for ever there was an impassable gulf fixed, over which no created mortal could pass to hold communion with God on the ground of law. But here is the blessed and glorious truth, in the mass of the Adam fall JEHOVAH has His jewels of election love safely hid. His eternally-loved ones are preserved by Him who received them from His gracious hands. There form the Church in His all-seeing eye, and this Church He declares is His fullness. Turn with me to that remarkable expression in Eph. 1:22,23: "And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." In the Church all the fullness of God is treasured. God's all fullness of grace, glory, and sovereignty is displayed in the eternal redemption and everlasting preservation of all those whom the Lord Jesus Christ took to Himself as His special treasure, His crown jewels, His heart's love, and as the bride of His bosom. In this we obtain a faint view of the all fullness of our God.

Still further we go, and behold all these persons sinful, depraved, and corrupt. They are brought by the Spirit into a true sense and sight of their undeservedness and hell-deservedness. By the application of JEHOVAH'S righteous law they are taught to know themselves as sinful and condemned, and to seek His face while they fear His frown. This is the spot in living experience where He displays His glorious all fullness. He has an all fullness of pardon for every sin I have committed, every sin I do commit, and every sin that I shall commit. This all fullness of pardon dwells in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and flows through His most precious wounds, and blood, and righteousness to sensible sinners. He held Himself responsible for His people's salvation, to redeem them from sin, to quell their rebelliousness, to succour them in helplessness, to bear with their waywardness, and preserve them to His eternal kingdom and glory. In the fullness of time He came forth made of a woman, made under the law. (Gal. 4:4) In the depths of Gethsemane He sighed: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." In the dreadful heights of isolation upon Calvary, amid the fullness of darkness and desertion due to His people, He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The fullness of wrath was experienced by God's Christ, that the fullness of love might be ours. The fullness of mourning was His lot, that the fullness of joy might be ours in the presence of the Father. He suffered the due reward of our deeds that we might enjoy the fullness of peace and quietness for ever. He endured the penalty due to our transgressions that we might experience

the fullness of blessing to all eternity. He died, not by the will or power of man, but by the authority with which He was invested in the covenant of grace. He cried, "It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost." (John 19:30) What was finished? All the penal wrath dreaded by His Church and people; all the condemnation which would otherwise have swallowed them up; all the sins they had ever committed; all questions concerning their sins in the presence of God; all the righteousness in which they stand everlastingly justified before Him. That is the finishing my soul loves. On this ground we enjoy pardon from a loving Father's heart; yet pardon itself will never truly satisfy the longings of living souls. It is the sweet forerunner of greater blessings yet to be revealed.

"His fullness" of righteousness secures our unceasing justification in the courts of heaven. As we are taught by the blessed Spirit, and led into the experimental possession of that grace treasured up for us in Christ Jesus, we find Satan's accusations abounding on almost every hand. He roars; he accuses; he insinuates; he assaults; he will come to you, as he has frequently come to me, saying, "You boast of your being pardoned, but look at yourself now! Where are you? What are you?"

Do you experience the warm embrace of Him whom you call your Father? You know that at this very moment you have no real desire for His embrace." Ah! my dear friends, we are forced to be honest and confess that we are oftentimes so taken up with the things of this world, and so bound by a spirit of accursed indifference, that, for the time being, our desires are concentrated in self. Satan injects his blasphemous, filthy, and profane insinuations, and then fathers his own hellish progeny upon the child of God.

You see this in Zech. 3:1-5. Here is an elect one plucked as a brand from the fire of sin and lust. Satan is at his right hand to resist him; but, blessed be God, there is One nearer to him than Satan. It is the ANGEL JEHOVAH, to give him not only the sense of pardon, but the experience of justification. He says to those who stand before Him, "Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him He says, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment."

God-sent ministers love to be the instruments in His hands in removing doubts, fears, unbelief, and condemnation from the minds of exercised sinners who are dear to Him, while the blessed Spirit takes of the things of Christ, His precious blood and perfect righteousness, and as He shows these to them, the fullness of Jesus' righteousness is revealed and received. This all fullness of righteousness I have endeavoured to describe to you again and again, but, according to my judgment, I have fallen far short of describing its beauty and glory.

I love to see all fullness of righteousness in Christ for me. I was once a child, a sinful child, but He was a child, a righteous child for me. The sins of my childhood are all taken away by His one offering and precious blood-shedding, while the righteousness of His childhood is made sweetly mine. I was a youth, a naughty youth, I was about to say a dare-devil of a youth, and I was too, but He was a youth, the Father's sinless child, who never gave His Father any anxiety or care concerning Him.

The eye of His Father was always upon Him, and His eye and heart were always with the Father. As a youth, He perfectly obeyed God's holy law. He was a righteous youth. In spirit I sometimes sigh: "Remember not the sins of my youth," but, Lord, remember the righteousness of the youthful Jesus at Nazareth for me. I am a man, and I often feel myself one with Peter when he said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Oh! my dear friends, I cannot express to you the burden and oppression my heart experiences oftentimes in ascending these pulpit stairs to speak in the name of One so holy and so pure, while I can see my life unclean, and feel the surgings of iniquity and corruption within.

But here is my comfort and my confidence. My Christ was an obedient Man, a righteous Man, a spotless Man, and so He is now in heaven for me. The sins of this man in the pulpit were borne, by the Man who is now in glory, into the land of never-ending forgetfulness, and He has told me, in unmistakable terms and by many infallible proofs, that His righteousness is mine, that He is made unto me RIGHTEOUSNESS, and that I am made "the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD in Him." (2 Cor. 5:21) I glory in that fact that all fullness of righteousness dwells in Him for me.

But I have not only the fullness of pardon flowing through precious blood, and the fullness of acceptance through His perfect obedience, for in Him I have an all fullness of supply, the supply of every grace which my poor soul can need or experience while here below; for as I am brought into the sweet enjoyment of His pardoning mercy and justifying grace, I long to know how these are mine, and how I am kept in the spiritual possession of them. I long to enjoy them unceasingly, for I read: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life." (John 3:35,36) Free willers taunt God's tremblers with portions like this, saying, "There is God's Word, why don't you believe?" while others frisk away with their

"I do believe, I will believe,

That Jesus died for me."

The poor child of God listens, and with a sad heart and sorrowful spirit, sighs, "Lord, I do believe, help Thou mine unbelief." That is a painful yet profitable and precious spot to be brought to, but I will tell you of a spot still more precious. It is in connection with the all fullness of God in Eph. 3:16-19, That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Arminian heretics will say, "There, you must exercise faith." I answer, "I cannot exercise faith." "Then you will be lost." "Then I must be lost." I will tell you what I desire. It is to experience the fullness of Christ according to the second part of the text: "Of His fullness have all we received." If I have received of His fullness, I long to know it by spiritual signs and Divine proof wrought in me. Where is my faith? I have none of my own producing. How am I to be saved? By faith. That is a paradox to many a child of God. Look here! Is it the faith that springs from corrupt and depraved human nature, or that communicated from the Fountain Head of all grace up yonder? Which would you rather have? Oh! say you, let me have that which comes flowing down from the redundant all fullness ever dwelling in Him. I rejoice in the fact that my salvation and justification depends not on my knowledge of Him, but according to Isaiah 53:11, "By His knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many." It is His knowledge of us which secures our justification, but we want a faith that "laughs at impossibilities, and says, It shall be done." It is not a faith enabling me to say this, but faith itself in me. We have this clearly set before us in Gal. 2:16. Are you justified? Yes. How? By faith. Whose faith? The faith of Christ which I have direct from Him by the power of the Holy Ghost. See! "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ." Will that do for you? It is the faith of the great and glorious Head, the faith of the Responsible One. "Even we have believed in Jesus Christ," not to be justified because of our believing, but "that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

With all the faith that we may possess, deadness, leanness, barrenness, will often be our lot. We know by painful experience that we cannot quicken our own soul, and our only plea for quickening mercy is that all fullness of righteousness we possess in Him. "Quicken me in Thy righteousness." (Ps. 119:40) "Thy righteousness." That perfect obedience which He brings nigh when He visits our souls with His salvation,

and gives us to know our eternal union to Him, and identification with Him. With Him in covenant before the worlds were framed, therefore we are God's covenant people. With Him in His wondrous incarnation, therefore we are His brethren. With Him when He was circumcised, therefore we are also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." (Col. 2:11) With Him when He was baptized by one Spirit in one body. With Him when He was crucified, therefore we can say, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2:20) Now come to Phil. 3:8,9: where you have the same glorious truth. Paul says, "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung." His own righteousness, his own works, his own faith, all loss and dung. "That I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ," the obedient and faithful Man, the believing and confiding Man from Bethlehem's manger to Calvary's cross, and right up to the heights of glory. In the power and preciousness of His faith every soul redeemed by blood and brought under the constraining power of God the ever-blessed Spirit, shall soar aloft to its native home to the bosom of its God, to spend with Him a never-ending eternity.

See! "Of His fullness have all we received." Then we have received His faith. Sometimes we long for a little hope. Well, it is a marvellous mercy for us to know, by the teaching which is from above, and the operation of His Spirit in our hearts, that the only hope we have is, Christ in and among us. Whatever hope can ye want beside that? Ah! say you, I want to feel it. So do I. Nothing short of a living Christ, my only Hope, known and felt, will do for me. I may have my nice frames and feelings here in the pulpit, but I may descend these stairs, go into the vestry, and feel as miserable as Satan can make me, therefore I rejoice that Christ is my Hope, whatever my frames or my feelings may be.

Now do not go away and say I have been ignoring, or making light of frames and feelings. I do not, and I would not give a rap for a religion without them; but let us not make of them that which God never designed they should be. God's Christ is all I want, and when He is all in all to me, I am exercised about my faith and hope. In Him we have all fullness in thoughts of love and peace. The thoughts of JEHOVAH toward His people were all communicated to the Surety before all worlds, and now through Him the Father speaks to us by the grace and indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and says, "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." (Jer. 29:11) An end of all your sins, of all your sorrows, of all your anxieties, and of all your cares.

Do we long for words of eternal life? There is all fullness of these in Him. Do we desire words to express our wants before the throne? There is all fullness of these also in Him. Therefore, says the merit monger, you ought to pray. Ought to pray? I hate the idea of "ought to," or duty in this matter. Filthy hypocrites and unclean professors may talk such rubbish as that, but a tried and exercised child of God who has been crushed and bruised between the upper and nether millstones of God's law, Duty to God and our neighbour, knows full well that the outcome of such a process is unprofitableness and damnation.

But, here I can tell you, that a soul brought into spiritual oneness with the Man of sorrows, into possession of eternal life, a new heart, the Divine nature, will never be satisfied with anything short of His own inheritance, which is God Himself. Will you tell me that it is the duty of such an one to pray? You may rest assured of this, the lazy legalist may require his whip of small cords to drive him to his duty, but the broken-hearted children of God will desire alone the allurings of His love.

In the consciousness of this I know that "of His fullness I have received." Ay, of the fullness of words given to my Saviour and my God for me I have received. Look at that precious petition in the prayer of the Divine Intercessor recorded in John 17:8, "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me, and they have received them." What on earth else could they do but received them, when they had nought else wherewith to express their wants to His Father and theirs. Every word of spiritual prayer and supplication flowing from this anxious heart, and dropping from these faltering lips, comes straight down from that mediatorial all fullness with which the Father invested our most glorious Christ for His people before the foundation of the world. When I cannot pray as I would, and my pent-up desires cannot find utterance, then His all fullness is precious to me.

"How shall a contrite spirit pray?

A broken heart its grief make known?

A weary wanderer find the way

To peace and rest? Through Christ alone."

He is my Daysman, my Umpire, the only One who can "open His mouth for the dumb, in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction." (Prov. 31:8) He is the Intercessor for transgressors. (Isa. 53:12) He is the all-powerful Advocate for sinful children. (1 John 2:1) He is the Great High Priest before my God, who bears my name upon His breast-plate of judgment, and also the iniquity of my holy things, as He appears with His priestly crown, that I may be accepted before the LORD. (Exod. 28:38) In Him there is a glorious all fullness that secures for the elect of God all their sin and guilt put away, every question of sin for ever settled, their persons accepted, their wants supplied, their enemies defeated, and their heaven sure. The last words of the text are, "and grace for grace," but the time is gone. I must stop.

May He add His blessing. Amen.

HYMN SUNG BEFORE THE SERMON.

ALL fullness resides in Jesus our Head,

And ever abides to answer our need;

The Father's good pleasure has laid up in store

A plentiful treasure to give to the poor.

Whate'er be our wants, we need not to fear,

Our numerous complaints His mercy will bear;

His fullness shall yield us abundant supplies,

His power shall shield us when dangers arise.

The fountain o'erflows: our woes to redress,

Still more He bestows, and grace upon grace.

His gifts in abundance we daily receive;
He has a redundancy for all that believe.
Whatever distress awaits us below,
Such plentiful grace will Jesus bestow
As still shall support and silence our fear;
For nothing can hurt us while Jesus is near.
When troubles attend, or danger, or strife.
His love will defend and guard us thro'life;
And when we are fainting and ready to die,
Whatever is wanting His grace will supply.

THE reception of gracious supplies from the all fullness of JEHOVAH was the subject of our meditation on Sunday morning last. In pondering over a subject so vast as so glorious, with a mind tutored in Divine things, and led by the Holy Ghost into a spiritual apprehension of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, we almost come to the conclusion that it is presumption to touch upon a theme so glorious, a theme so precious. To endeavour to comprehend that which is incomprehensible is folly to the natural mind, but to the spiritual man it is a felt necessity, for he knows that without the knowledge of that love which passeth knowledge he must be destitute indeed.

Without an experience of these things there must be death in trespasses and sins. In contemplating God's glorious truth in this light we discover one of those paradoxes so prevalent in the course of Divine tuition, which appear so often in the experience of God's taught ones, and which yields a little encouragement to those who often come to the conclusion that they are amongst the number who are ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth. This is the awful state of reprobate professors who have the form of godliness, but deny the power.

This also exists in the fears, but not in the fact, of many a living child of God. He is ever learning, and the more he learns at the feet of Jesus, the more he concludes that he is further off the mark than ever. Is he graciously lifted to covenant heights? He is almost sure to sink to deeper depths than before. The brighter his apprehension of the glory of JEHOVAH'S grace, the darker are his seasons of gloom and despondency. At one moment he is able to grasp in the hand of God-wrought faith a rich cluster of covenant promises, the next moment they are gone, and he experiences not a single token for good, not the faintest evidence of life, nor the slightest manifestation of mercy.

Mark you! strange though it may appear to the untutored in Divine realities, yet the exercised one would rather remain in this position, he would rather doubt the reality of God's work in him, than presume to appropriate anything revealed in this blessed Book without God's warrant and sanction. Yes, he would. I endeavoured to point out to you, a few Sundays ago, that John the Baptist at one time could face a Pharisaic multitude and tell them who the Christ of God was, and also what He would do.

John could point them to the inward and spiritual kingdom set up and maintained by the Lord Jesus Christ in the hearts of His people, while the ceremonialists, sacramentalists, ritualists, and mere professors were interesting themselves in those things which come with outside show. John could baptize with water; but he could not baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. He could preach truth; but he could not carry a single truth home to the heart. He could speak of himself as the messenger going before the face of Christ; but he was not the messenger of the covenant, in whom was all Jehovah's delight. (Mal. 3:1) John testified of this great and glorious One thus: "And of His fullness" (the fullness of JEHOVAH-JESUS) "have all we received, and grace for grace."

Here we see a reception of grace, or a gracious reception of those spiritual blessings which the Father had entrusted to His care against the set time of favour, to meet the tried and tempted ones of His flock when Satan should assault, when the world should persecute, when sins and fears should oppress, when flesh and heart should fail, and when they should feel that they had nothing to do but take one step more to fall into hell, their due desert. But such cannot be, because of the fullness of grace and glory reserved in Christ to meet their case.

Having endeavoured feebly to notice the all fullness of Christ for His people, the all fullness of grace, pardon, justification, faith, hope, prayer, and glory, we will now, in humble dependence upon the guidance and grace of His good Spirit, endeavour to find a little instruction, comfort, and consolation from the four words I have read to you by way of text:

"And grace for grace."

We will not look at them in any laboured arrangement, or nicely-defined divisions, but according to the order in which the Holy Ghost has been pleased to place them before us. Look at that precious word

GRACE!

What is grace? It is free, unmerited, unbought, uninfluenced favour flowing from the heart of Israel's covenant God to the hearts of all those who are eternally interested therein. favour to the unworthy, favour to the miserable, favour to the lost, favour to the helpless. Look at this in whatever light we may, we shall see JEHOVAH'S covenant love and mercy flowing to His own people through the person, love, blood, wounds, and righteousness of Zion's Surety. According to the necessity of the recipient, so is grace described and expressed in God's blessed Word.

favour to the unworthy is styled Grace.

favour to the miserable is called Mercy.

favour to the rebellious is designated Patience.

favour to the suffering is revealed as Compassion.

favour to the destitute is expressed by the term Pity.

Thus you see that, according to the state, condition, or necessity of a child of God, so is favour expressed in the Word of truth.

Let me now direct your attention to God's revelation of His grace, which is not according to any given rule or order. In tracing the course of a river, sometimes we begin at its source and continue until it loses itself

in the ocean. Another time we commence where the river ends and prosecute our tracing up to its source. In God's revelation of Himself we see the river of eternal love flowing in pure and silvery streams. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God." (Ps. 46:4) This is sometimes described as flowing from the covenant settlements of eternity past to the covenant consummation in eternity to come. On its bosom are borne elect vessels of mercy filled with grace here, to be swallowed up in wonder, love, and glory hereafter. At other times this river of grace is portrayed from its consummation in glory back to its outburst in JEHOVAH'S sovereign and unchanging decrees, and in the exceeding great and precious promises made to Christ for His people before the worlds were framed. Again, this grace is sometimes declared according to the experience of the child of God, while at others it is stated according to the purpose of JEHOVAH in that precious eighth chapter of Romans, which it was my privilege to read in your hearing this morning. "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." There we have four links in the golden chain of God's purposes of love to His own elect: predestination, calling, justification, and glorification. Mark you! there is not a link missing in respect to one elect vessel of mercy whose name was inscribed in the Lamb's book of life from before the foundation of the world. In other portions of God's Book we have grace revealed from the necessities of the saints up to the glorious covenant made on their behalf by the great Three-One. As we are brought to know and enjoy this, we shall be able to sing with the redeemed Atheist,

"Up to my Father's high decree

Each act in time I trace;

Up to the glorious Sovereign Three.

Almighty Fount of grace."

We will notice in the first place that grand and illustrious title given to JEHOVAH by Peter, in his first Epistle 5:10, "THE GOD OF ALL GRACE." From Him all grace proceeds, is conveyed and communicated to the souls of His eternally-loved elect, and redeemed people. Grace saving them from eternal death. Grace quickening them into spiritual life. Grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. As we contemplate the river of God from its source until it is swallowed up in the sea of eternal glory, we first obtain a glimpse of

GOD'S PREDESTINATING GRACE. Grace predestinating the lot, the position, the experience, the deliverances, the comforts, everything in connection with all those in union with the Christ of God. Everything concerning me predestinated from all eternity. You may ask me, Do you believe this? Ah, my dear friends, my belief of it and the thing itself are two different matters altogether. I know it is God's truth, having the warrant of God's Word and the witness of His Spirit thereto. Sometimes I believe and sometimes I do not; but believe or not believe, let faith flourish or fade, the judgment consents to this glorious truth revealed throughout the whole of God's written Word. We may rehearse the creed we have received from Him, and give our hearty assent and consent to everything contained therein; but let Him in His perplexing providence cross us in our comforts and pleasures, and where is our faith in His predestinating providence? I know there is not a soul within these walls this morning that can at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances give a lively and glowing assent to the working out of JEHOVAH'S predestined purposed concerning it. Not one. As we are men and women of like passions with each other, we can take to ourselves a large amount of shame and confusion of face in respect to our

accursed unbelief and want of faith in the very things which our Father has lovingly settled upon us, and from which the faith of His own giving can never be moved. This is a paradox which the worldling and hypocrite can never understand.

"Our calling, growth, and robes we wear,

Our conflicts, trials, daily care,

Are for us well arranged above

By God's predestinating love."

In the survey of this glorious truth, Paul leads to consider

GOD'S ELECTING GRACE. See Rom. 11:5, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." In this, faith sees a definite and distinct number of Adam's posterity elected to all the goodness, grace, and glory a covenant God had designed for them, to delight in His thoughts of love to them, to every spiritual blessing they were to enjoy from the first sigh of the new birth to the last groan which shall heave their throbbing bosoms ere they enter into His own glory home. God's living children, who tremble at His word, are often filled with anxiety as to their election by Him. With their feelings of coldness and deadness they are ready to call into question the reality of so marvellous a benefit. See! "Of His fullness have all we received." Have I received His fullness of electing love? The reception of this rich and glorious grace is not the mere assent of the natural understanding, for the natural mind can receive nothing of a Divine or spiritual nature. This vast, eternal fact must be brought to the spot of experimental necessity, where the Divine supply will be heartily welcomed and sweetly enjoyed. How do I long to know, to feel, to experience and express my election of God? Is it in appearing before a Church or a dignitary thereof, my lips giving unfeigned consent and assent to the articles of religion? I answer, No. Hart knew something of the mode of God's communicating this precious truth when he penned those lines,

"Though God's election be a truth,

Small comfort there I see,

Until I'm told by God's own mouth

That He has chosen me."

Do I want to know this? Then I must be taught it in the footsteps of God's elect ones. According to Luke 18:7, I must be brought into those spots of painful but profitable experience known only to the living children, where His gracious interpositions will be highly prized by me. "And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him?" As assuredly as the marks of God's election are seen in you, persecutors, tormenters, and despisers will appear to your annoyance, but you can well afford to leave them in His righteous hands. God's elect, in spots of necessity, toil, trial, and tribulation, have none to cry unto but Him. Ofttimes, not in a prayer-meeting, or amid rejoicing saints, but on a restless bed when every voice is hushed save that of sorrow, the heart goes upward in longings, hopes, and expectations for the revelation of Zion's gracious Deliverer. A desire for the presence of God is a safe evidence of the possession of electing grace. God in the midst of His people is the gracious and infallible proof of their separation to Himself. You see this in the confession of Moses, recorded in Exod. 33:16, "For wherein

shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? is it not in that Thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." There you have the reason given why any child of God takes to himself the precious fact of his election. It is all mere mockery my talking about receiving the election of God except I have received the God of election. Now turn with me to that precious portion in 1 Thess. 1:4,5: "Knowing, brethren, beloved of God, your election." Mark the way I have read it, according to the marginal rendering, which is perfectly correct. Love comes first. Beloved of God, then elected of God. How do we know it? "For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, and joy of the Holy Ghost." That is vastly different to the superficial receiving of the truth from a pious mother or a dear Sunday school teacher. It is received in much affliction. "The God of all grace" revealing His predestinating and electing favour. "And of His fullness have all we received."

GOD'S REDEEMING GRACE.

"Eternal, free, electing grace,

Redemption's bound'ry sets:

And those whom Jesus died to save,

The Spirit ne'er forgets."

The living family having received predestinating and electing grace are brought to rejoice in the possession of redeeming grace according to Eph. 1:7, "In whom" the Beloved in whom they are graced and accepted" we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Thus you see our redemption is all of grace, not because of anything we do, or think, or say; but because of all that God has thought, and said, and done. That is the redemption which the souls of God's dear children truly love. But mark this! to be brought into the experience of God's redeeming grace we must be brought into those spots of vital experience where this grace will be highly prized. Where is that? In Satan's prison-house, doing his drudgery, and held captive at his will. How many of us have experienced the convincing power of God the ever-blessed Spirit, the piercing light of God's righteous law, and the power of that tremendous Scripture, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal. 3:10) No failure in any part of the obedience demanded; but a perfect and perpetual yielding up to God of the body in every member and of the mind in every movement, all in perfect harmony with the Divine mind and will. Who has done this? None of us. Are we conscious of it? Well, the moment we are, and that by the convicting power of the Holy Ghost, hell becomes a terrible reality, the judgments of JEHOVAH are dreaded, and His indignation feared, until, by the teaching of the same Spirit, we look from the pit wherein there is no water for that redemption effected by the death of the Surety of the covenant. Then to sing, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed His people. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." (Luke 1:68; Gal. 3:13) We stop not here, but proceed to notice

GOD'S JUSTIFYING GRACE. Turn to Rom. 3:24; Titus 3:7, That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Not only predestinated, elected, and redeemed, but

justified, and that eternally, in union with every loved and elect one. Through the provision of rich and sovereign grace, justified from all things that law, men, devils, or an ever-watchful conscience may bring against us. But the question will arise in your minds, How can God be "just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus?" (Rom. 3:26) How can He be just and take into blessed association and sweet communion with Himself a host of hell-deserving sinners? Only according to the rich provisions of His grace made in the everlasting covenant for the consummation of His sovereign decrees concerning the salvation and justification of His people in Christ Jesus. Only in accordance with His own purpose and grace given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began. (2 Tim. 1:9) I love to see Him as Zion's Surety, the great and glorious Head of the Church. I love to see God's First Elect in eternal unbroken union with His own elect. I love to see Him when He took upon Him to deliver elect men, not abhorring the virgin's womb. I love to see Him from the virgin womb of Mary, to the virgin tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, working out a perfect obedience, a glorious righteousness, in which His people stand with Him eternally justified. Look! He with them, and they with Him, in the unalterable purpose of the Father. Thus in Him we render to the Father the righteousness due to His law, to His justice, to His name, to His glory, in which He Himself became the Righteousness of God to His people, and they are made the righteousness of God in Him. (Rom. 10:4; 2 Cor. 5:21) Oh, how blessed to know this by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. "Of His justifying grace have all we received." But there are lower spots in vital experience still to be explored, and more magnanimous displays of grace to be enjoyed. The true meaning of the Scripture term "justified," is cleared from all charges. Now notice

GOD'S FORGIVING GRACE. "The forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." (Eph. 1:7) Is not that glorious grace? Look at it. The predestination of my lot, the election of my person, the redemption of my soul, the justification of my whole being before God, and the forgiveness of all my sins. Though this is my lot, yet I find myself still sinning: but He is still forgiving.

"Here's pardon full for sin that's past,

It matters not how black the cast;

And, O my soul, with wonder view,

For sins to come there's pardon too."

Forgiveness of the sins of the past week. Forgiveness of the sins of the past night. Forgiveness of the sins of this very morning previous to my coming into this place of worship. Ay, and the forgiveness of my sins since I commenced preaching to you. Sins of infirmity, sins of ignorance, sins of negligence, and, may I not say? sins of presumption. Yes, in Christ, through Christ, by Christ, and with Christ we have the forgiveness of all sorts of sins according to the riches of His Father's grace.

Have we received it? Then we shall receive it all our journey through. We hear much of giving to the Lord, and working for the Lord; but I love the gracious revelation of the fact that the Lord has thought for me, planned for me, wrought for me, and is constantly giving to me, and that I shall be the recipient of His grace until the last breath has departed out of this body. Then through an eternity of bliss and blessedness I shall be the recipient of His glory. "The LORD will give grace and glory." (Ps. 84:11) O what a glorious receiving!

That which He gives I gather, and gladly yield to Him His own. You remember that precious saying of David's in 1 Chron. 29:14, "Of Thine own have we given Thee." Do I render to Him the thanks of a grateful

heart? He inspires my heart with thankfulness and gratitude. Is faith demanded from me? Satan will demand that I shall produce my faith, and when I fail, he will accuse and harass me; but, blessed be God, each accusation of Satan is God's opportunity for the display of His patient grace, uncomplaining love, and enduring mercy.

Does Satan taunt me that I have no faith? Does my restless heart seek for this heavenly fruit in its own earthly soil? Does the Church demand a confession of the same? Do the searchings of the Spirit discover within me a desert land made desolate by the ravages of sin and Satan? As assuredly as I am brought to experience my desert-like condition, my desolation of spirit, and destitution of soul, so will He who has begun His own good work of grace in me make the wilderness and the solitary place to be glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. (Isa. 35:1) Have I faith?

It is the faith of God (Mark 11:22, margin) the faith of His own giving, the faith of His own working, the faith of His own communicating, not a faith produced because of the presentation of truth to my mind, but faith communicated from the fullness of my great and glorious Head. Does Satan suggest, "You ought to pray?" I know this better than he or any of his brood can tell me. Ought to pray? What! When the mind spiritually is a perfect blank? Pray! when the heart is as hard as the nether millstone?

Pray! when we are tossed with tempest and not comforted, and we appear to be the make-sport of the perplexing circumstances and influences surrounding us? It is a marvellous mercy when we are privileged to pray in sincerity and truth, and we know that from the fullness of the Inspirer and Hearer of prayer we have received words by which we communicate our wants and sorrows to Him at the throne of the heavenly grace. We may still proceed in contemplating the supplying grace of our God.

We mourn our lack of godly sorrow, and with felt hard-heartedness we know our repentance needs to be repented of. Satan reproaches us that our repentance is not deep enough, our experience too shallow, and our afflictions too light. See! If I were to go through a hell of suffering, I should come to the right conclusion that all my repentance, experience, and afflictions were too shallow and too meagre. What is deep enough? I will tell you. The breaking of the heart of the sinless Surety, the terrible sufferings He endured in gloomy, dark Gethsemane, the awful desertion He experienced on Calvary's dreary heights.

Nothing but fellowship with Him in His sufferings will suit my case. It is a rich favour to know He pours upon us the Spirit of grace and of supplication, though we cannot command it at will or hasten the time of favour to our souls.

We have endeavoured to trace the river of grace from its source down to the deepest necessities of God's children. Now let us try to trace it up from the first pulsations of Divine life in a redeemed sinner. Naturally we want to reverse God's order and begin where He ends, and end where He begins. You may receive a hint of this in the order of the offerings in the first six chapters of Leviticus. God begins with the whole burnt offering, which meets all His demands and delight, while we would begin with the trespass offering, which only meets the need of an erring saint. As I am brought to experience the convicting and convincing grace of the Spirit, revealing to me my sins and my sinfulness, I want my sins and trespasses disposing of first, but God will teach me that His righteous demands must be first met and answered. Yet He who brought to my knowledge the awful nature and weight of sin, led me to the experience of pardoning grace through the precious bloodshedding of Christ. Though pardoned I found myself a sinner still, while the accusations of Satan daily distressed me; but He led me to see that through His righteousness, which is the righteousness of God, justifying grace clears me from every charge of law, and earth, and hell. See! He

strips me and I am filthy and naked. He washes me from all sin and clothes me in garments of glory and beauty, and I am hungry and thirsty.

"He brings a poor vile sinner

Into His house of wine,"

and feeds me with Himself, the Bread of life and the Wine of the covenant, but I pant for the sweets of Divine communion. He brings me into the secret of His presence where my delight is His Person, and my bliss is His love. But we go on from strength to strength, from grace to grace, ay, from grace to glory. Upward! upward! upward! is Heaven's order until EXCELSIOR, which means the highest, is seen inscribed upon the banner of eternal love. We go on in the order of that precious declaration in Eph. 2:4-6, "But God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ." Up! up! up! is the order of JEHOVAH in His purposes and work, though, because of our short-sightedness, it is oftentimes Down! down! down! in our soul's experience. Look at these three precious words

"Grace for grace." In them we have a comforting and encouraging truth for our souls this morning. As assuredly as we have been put into possession of grace, however small the conception in our poor judgment, it is JEHOVAH'S earnest and pledge that we shall experience still greater supplies, and that glorious grace in the ages to come will most assuredly be ours. It is a blessed encouragement to me to know that when grace is brought home to my heart, by solemn and sovereign power, I am bold in my God to enter into His sacred presence, and tell Him that He has created such an appetite in me that nothing but Himself will satisfy in a little measure here, and fully throughout the ages of eternity. But it is mine this morning to direct your minds t

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