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Substance of Sermon preached at Petworth

by Mr Sperling-Tyler

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Lesson. Colossians 1.

And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. John 1.16.

It will be right for me to mention as I open the discourse this evening, that I have recently endeavoured by the Spirit to dilate on this word at Brixton and Rye. Following these services, this vital, sacred doctrine divine of tremendous significance and importance to all living things in the universe, (and ^{it} is especially applicable to the children of God,) abides on my spirit as a subject for hope, encouragement, relief, blessedness, deliverance, instruction. So I shall endeavour to seek the continuity of the revealing grace of the Spirit, so we may trust to enter into the vital testimony of St John here. Listen to this concise, abundant testimony of his. "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." I think possibly the first word should be one of definition, also to show how congruous the definition is with our condition as poor sinners in God's Creation, and, as we hope, His needy children.

What is the definition of this amazing Biblical, Scriptural term, fulness? What do we understand by it? I will give you (it may be an elementary definition) in a few words the meaning of it. It is this; containing all. That is fulness. In contrast with fulness we have our state ^{first} as God's creatures, and as we hope, quickened sinners and adopted children. What is our state as creatures? We have nothing. Fulness, containing all: we have nothing. This applies to us as creatures. We depend exclusively, utterly on the fulness of God as our Creator to supply all we need. We have nothing: no reservoir, no storehouse. We have nothing.

The next consideration is, as quickened sinners we are soon brought to understand according to the deepening work of the Spirit, we have nothing but sin: no righteousness, no goodness, no strength, no wisdom; all we have is the demerit of sin and shame. We have nothing.

I will make a brief observation on the third point. If we believe we are the Lord's adopted children, it is the Lord's pleasure that we should live a life of faith on the Son of God. It is the Lord's pleasure that we should be emptied, stripped, brought to Christ to receive from His fulness; that we should be wholly dependant on Him and draw from His ocean ~~fulnesse~~ reservoir of grace, love, mercy, truth, wisdom, strength.

So you see the subject is relevant and congruous with our desperate need, and it is to the glory of God that we receive from Christ's glorious fulness.

I want to look at this. I see in God three fulnesses. I see in the Lord Jesus Christ two fulnesses. Let us name the three fulnesses. First, I see in God is a fulness that abides in Him as Creator of every living thing, God's created creatures, from Adam to the last human being who will be born on this planet. If you just ponder the tremendous world population to day: they are all God's creatures; the nine millions in the Metropolis, and the population of Great Britain, and the world population of human beings. Go to all the animals, the birds, the fishes in the sea; to every thing in Creation that has life. When you are thinking of this in terms of the animals, I suppose you go from the king of beasts, the lion, through all the range, till you come to the lowest form you can only see through a microscope, an amoeba, a mass of protoplasm with a central nucleus that breathes, digests, and so on: life. What an amazing thing it is! Why name it? In God is a fulness as Creator to supply all the needs of all that has life in the universe. It is amazing. I have felt recently, you go to the door and take in the milk: you buy your bread and all the commodities needed. It is God supplying out of His fulness as Creator all that is needed by every one.

That is the first fulness. Look on the hundreds and thousands of people and everything on earth that has life. There is a fulness in God as Creator, and all needs are supplied. We are now trying to praise God for the harvest; for the millions of tons of grain that will be garnered, and is vital to life below. What a fulness there is in Him as Creator!

Let us go to what is of infinitely greater importance. I said I see two fulnesses in our blessed Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Son of God incarnate. The first is; "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." What does it mean? In the Man Christ Jesus dwell all the divine

perfections, the holy attributes of Deity, - immutability, omniscience, omnipotence; all the perfections of Deity in the Man Christ Jesus. They are not communicable to us. He cannot convey divine attributes to us, yet all that flows to the children of God flows through the channel of divine perfections. His mercy is holy: His love is immutable.

What is the second fulness? It is the vast reservoir, the ocean fulness in Christ of grace, mercy, love, wisdom, power, strength that is communicated to every soul. How wondrous this is! So John says; "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." We have received His grace, mercy, love, strength. How often? Constantly. Such a word by the Holy Spirit will dispel fear, dissipate temptations of the adversary. Take the Lord's ministers, very graciously helped. They have a sense of their emptiness, poverty, destitution, and the adversary takes cruel advantage of it. He says; "You will be brought to confusion. The Lord has left you. There is nothing in your ministry." and the Lord brings to your spirit; "And of his fulness have all we received." You make humble application to the blessed Lord that from the undiminished source which it hath pleased the Father should dwell in His Son incarnate you may receive, and there is an intake, an inflow as a river to your spirit. So what a word this is for those who fear God!

"And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace," that is, the communicable fulness that is in Christ. You say; "Tell me what there is in this fulness for me." All you need and all you can ever desire is in that fulness for you, - pardon, peace, justification, forgiveness; a supply of all you feel your need of in all your days for time and for eternity: the needs of soul, body, mind, Church, family, circumstances, all that is communicable. So I am thankful to name it to you again, child of God. The Lord help you to take courage; give you to feel a sense of nearness to Christ, and a sweet sense of an inflow from His fulness to your soul that you may know something of Thanksgiving.

What is the door into this? How do we come to understand the glorious truth that in Him dwells a rich fulness? and how do we receive it? We have it in the context: it is this. O this word! this rich, vital word! I will give a personal reminiscence, "And the Word was made flesh." This shone into the soul of our late beloved brother, Edgar Delves, brother to Stanley and Jesse. I laid him to rest one year ago. One testimony of

his was; "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." The Son of God, co-equal, co-eternal in Person, work, glory and majesty with the Father and the Holy Ghost, assumed holy humanity in the virgin's womb into indissoluble union with His divine Person. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, in our hearts and in our midst. What was the result? "and we beheld his glory." We have touched a vital thing in true godliness: "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The word 'glory' means refulgence; the shining of all divine perfections with the transcendent beauty of holiness and glory. I hope the Lord will help me to bring it out.

The glory of God, apart from Jesus Christ, is repelling and consuming. Those who behold the glory of God, not in Jesus Christ, that glory will be to them a consuming fire. The Son of God clothed in sacred humanity, that glory shone forth in grace and truth. It means grace to save you, and truth, His precious gospel of which He is the sum and substance. So it pleased the Father that glory should shine forth in Jehovah Jesus, not in anger; in grace and truth. That glory is not consuming; it is saving: it is not repelling; it is impelling. It will draw you to Him. When it shines into your poor soul you know the meaning of salvation. I hope this definition will be helpful to the friends. We could never behold the glory of God, only in Jesus Christ in salvation. The word describes the end of the world and the great Judgment. His glory will be so terrible that men will call on the rocks and mountains to cover them. That glory is consuming. The glory that shines in the Word made flesh His dear people behold. You can always find a child of God on this point. All who fear God behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and you know what it is to realise that God loves you, and you are a sinner saved by grace, and you behold His glory.

What is the door to receiving this? Do we know what it is to behold His glory? Who is it beholds His glory? We might ^{say} all the glorified saints in heaven behold His glory face to face, with no veil between. They have a glorified capacity to behold His glory and for ever adore Him. That is what you are longing for; I hope all of you. We could say the angels, archangels, prophets, apostles, martyrs, all the saints of God behold His glory. Who beholds it on earth? Every poor quickehed sinner, broken hearted, blessed with repentance. As Christ is divinely revealed to your

soul you behold His glory. What are your dates in life? When was the first time you beheld His glory? Refulgent beams shone from Him into your soul and penetrated the gloom, darkness, fear, temptation, misery, and those beams reached you. I know the first time I believe the Lord revealed to me the Person of Christ and I saw His glory. I was in my teens, a poor perishing, guilty sinner expecting hell. Christ was revealed on the cross. This is no fantasy; it is not euphoria; it is not a phantom. I saw the precious Person, the dear Man of sorrows on the rugged wood. There was nothing remote about it. He cast His compassionate eye on me from the cross, and in a moment I beheld the glory of the Word that was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. I desire that you in the pews make an examination. When did you behold His glory? How often have you viewed it? The transcendent beauty and preciousness of Christ felt in the soul, and those beams bring healing, peace, love, comfort, joy, salvation to the soul.

"We beheld his glory." I ask first, what is it like to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? First you will realise it is a supernatural, celestial, divine experience. It is an experience out of this world, yet it comes down to earth to a poor soul. Something supernatural and divine takes place in the room, house, Chapel, in your soul. It is divine. A glorious light shines; not to consume; to save: not to repel; to draw. A beam of glory has a most tremendous effect on the soul. I will give three definitions, and I will say this initially. One effect is, you are conscious of immortality; that you have an immortal soul, and a sweet hope that you will live for ever in glory with Christ. You will find the world and all in the flesh and time recedes until it becomes remote from view. If the Lord increases glory in your spirit to this degree, you will be in the place the apostle was; "Whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth." You will be unconscious that you have a human body. Your soul will realise the most intense, sacred, holy, vital satisfaction it is possible for God to give you in the Person of Christ. You will be dead to sin by the body of Christ, and alive unto God, to holiness and righteousness.

I will name three effects you will realise in a view of His glory. First, to view the glory of Christ, the bright shining of divine love into your soul will produce precious, beautiful, spiritual emotions of

joy, holy delight, pleasure, happiness, peace, satisfaction, You taste the heavenly bliss of His presence. These that you enjoy will eclipse all earthly, mundane, terrestrial things. Those rills, blessed feelings of intense joy, happiness, satisfaction and peace are surely a foretaste of heaven; a foretaste of enjoyment above. You will know in a moment: you have not a trouble in the world; not an anxious thought because He loves you, a poor sinner, with an everlasting love, and you know it. He has made it known to you, and you do not doubt it. For a while it is a cloudless sky.

Now the three effects. The first effect on your soul, irradiated with the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, is of translation. By the blessing and special grace of God in the soul in the Person of His dear Son, He has powerfully, vitally translated you into the glorious Kingdom. You are no longer a stranger and a foreigner, "but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." So the first is you are translated into His glorious Kingdom. I remember well a dear friend, - possibly our brother remembers him, the late Bertram Gurney of Ashwell. After I had preached there the dear man was so favoured with "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." He had business in London, and he said he was dancing with joy. He said; "I am an heir of bliss on the way to glory." You cannot describe the joys there are in beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and beaming into your soul. You will know it. How wonderful to be an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ! one of the blood washed multitude 'who of life are winners.'

The second effect is transforming: glory irradiates your soul from the Person of Christ. You are made like your Saviour. You receive the nature and Spirit of your Saviour from Him. This is the grand objective of the people of God. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."- your whole person in the perfect likeness of Christ. So this is transforming. O the wonder of it! "They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." I expect in your time, and now, you look on the dear saints of God who have been anointed for their burial, and they are so matured, and you see

the likeness to their blessed Lord. He gives it to you, and makes you like Himself, and it shines forth in humility, love, the spirit of mercy, forgiveness, tenderness. I will just stop to say there^{are} two facets to this effect. The first is you are transformed, and you realise it. You know your spirit is so meekened, enriched and filled with heavenly unction. You are delivered, separated from the world and the flesh, and united to Him. You have entered into depths and heights you have never known before. The other point is beautiful and precious. The apostle felt it when he wrote to the Corinthians that he was determined to know nothing among them, "save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." When you see such a person you see Christ. You see ~~the~~ person in a different manner from what you have seen before. You look on the man or woman and now you see them in Christ, and as you do, you so love them. I believe the Lord gave me a view of His Church and of my own flock in my early days here. At first perhaps, I felt an affection for some, and some I had little feeling to. One day the Lord showed ^{me} His Church in Him, clothed in white robes, washed in precious blood, clothed ⁱⁿ in righteousness. This is the way to see His ministers; the pastor; and ~~for~~ a pastor to see the people, in Christ. Wonderful this is!

If I just keep you for a moment, years ago I was brought into the company of a good man, though rather eccentric. I had heard about his peculiarities: some could see nothing else. On this occasion we were together conversing, when suddenly I experienced a miraculous thing. He was changed before my eyes, and I saw him in Christ: he was a blessed man. I buried him, and "I knew a man in Christ." This is the effect of viewing the glory of Christ that is transforming. Nothing else succeeds. I came to prove I should never succeed unless I saw the glory of God in Christ Jesus. It is not to see flesh and blood; it is to see ^{these} the Lord has chosen in Christ complete.

The third effect is transporting. You are lifted in ~~the~~ spirit to heaven you are gone. When last did you experience this? The Lord's glory so shone in your eyes you were gone from this world: you knew nothing of it. Beholding His glory is where you will know an inflowing from His fulness to your soul,- an inflowing as a river of grace, truth, mercy, love, comfort, peace, bliss. Amen.