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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

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Prayer Meeting Address by Mr. J. Delves at "Ebenezer" Clapham on  
18th. December, 1950

Reading: 2 Corinthians, 11 and 12

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In these verses the Apostle makes some particular reference to his personal case and experiences for the Gospel's sake, of the persecutions and sufferings he endured and also of the very particular revelations that he received, both of which are very particular and pronounced. Although he suffered greatly in outward conditions here related in some particulars, yet these bodily sufferings that he endured in his travels and journeyings seemed not so to affect his mind or to be so repugnant to him as that thorn in the flesh which one might have thought comparatively speaking quite a minor thing; yet in that thorn in the flesh was something, evidently, peculiar and mortifying unto him and of which he would gladly have been rid. For this he prayed, although it is very noticeable that he knew where the thorn in the flesh came from and why he had it and the purpose of it; but notwithstanding that, he would gladly have been relieved entirely of it. It was evidently very offensive to him; yet he says 'lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh', as though he would say it was to keep me from being elated or lifted up with air by these unusual revelations. He besought the Lord concerning it thrice, evidently with urgency. The Lord's answer was very striking. When the Lord responded to the Apostle's prayer He said 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness'. And the Apostle received that reply with much grace, being quite ready and willing from that time to glory in those infirmities upon him, that the power of Christ might rest more fully upon his spirit. Truly this when felt in the heart is a wonderful word unto us which may have been felt by some more or less in their daily lives and difficulties. It is a word which assures us of the all-sufficiency of God's grace whatever the need, whatever the condition or circumstances. For this

particular word 'My grace is sufficient for thee' covers all the need, the beatings, the rods, the stonings, the shipwreck, the perils in waters, the robbers, the hunger, the thirst, the fastings, the cold and nakedness; in addition to these in his case was the care of all the churches; burdens enough and sufferings enough, but which yet are all covered by this comprehensive promise 'My grace is sufficient for thee!

If that was so in relation to the Apostle does not it truly infer and cover the need of all and every one of His children? May not such a word come to you in such a case, in your difficulties or mountains or infirmities, your weakness, fears, burdens or trials? Is it not so to speak like a canopy that covers the whole and assures one favoured with some application of it, that God will bring them through. 'My grace', not 'Well you must get on as well as you can, manage, make the best of your sufferings, not think too much upon them, bear them as well as you are able'. No, but "My grace", that which He must give, "is sufficient for thee". And this is true in relation to the salvation of the soul which is all of grace from first to last; of grace, revealing and unfolding itself in the person and work of a dear Redeemer. This is all-sufficient to sustain the soul in affliction, infirmities and difficulties, seeing that the Lord has said "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest", The exhortation is "Cast thy burden on the Lord and He shall sustain thee". It is all-sufficient in provision, for it embraces the Lord Himself as the Bread of Life to nourish and feed the hungry, thirsty, fainting soul.

So then may you and I, each of us as our need or case may be, feel in each time of necessity, this spoken in the heart "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness", not 'My strength is made perfect with your strength', but it means that when we come to the end, as we feel, and are in a helpless condition God reveals His grace and manifests His power in sustaining and delivering.