

Sermon Preached at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
by Mr J.K. Popham on Sunday Morning
13th February 1921

Text John 1 verse 16

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

The whole of the gospel is in the Person and work of Christ, all the purposes of God are in Him, and the promises of God are in Him, yea and amen. Whatever grace the people of God are to have and enjoy, they must receive from Christ, because grace is nowhere else.

A fulness resides in Jesus our Head,
And ever abides to answer our need; (Gadsby's-184 verse 1)

Therefore no child of God need fear dying of poverty, "the destruction of the poor is their poverty." (Proverbs 10 verse 15) But the poverty that God's people have, and feel to be their destruction, they shall give, and do give as you have just been singing, to Christ.

To Christ for help I fly,
The friend of sinners lost,
A refuge sweet, and sure, and nigh,
And there is all my trust. (Gadsby's 739 verse 2)

Friends this is a blessed fulness to answer all the needs that we feel in our soul. Oh Christ has a twofold fulness, first the fulness of the Godhead bodily, this is uncommunicative seeing that is proper to God the man Christ Jesus possesses it. Jesus Christ said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I Am." (John 8 verse 51). "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." (John 1 verse 3). He is omnipotent, and became incarnate. Everything that is proper to deity Jesus Christ possesses.

The second fulness is a communicable fulness of which John here speaks, and we read of this fulness in Colossians, "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell:" (Colossians 1 verse 19). This fulness is communicated to the Church, whose Head Christ is. Therefore poor sinner, raise your eyes to this fulness, you may feel your poverty, and as you are taught of the Holy Spirit, you will feel it increasingly. But there is no cause to despair, for your poverty will not destroy you. It will lead you, through the teaching of the Holy Ghost, to Christ.

And from Him you will receive all supplies of grace, of mercy, of wisdom, of goodness, of forgiveness, of justification, of sanctification, and of perseverance that you will need. God has given the stock to Christ. "The first man Adam was made a living soul; (he had humanity in himself, and was the federal head of all mankind, and in this he was the figure of Him that was to come.) "The last Adam, (Jesus Christ is the Lord from heaven.) was made a quickening Spirit" (1 Corinthians 15 verses 45). He has in Himself all His Church will ever need, everything that they stand in need of. And if we are true Christians, this will be true of us, that Christ will be the centre of our faith. He will be in us, our life and every good thing, and Oh to find that in your heart is a very great mercy. Christ is the centre, He is the one thing needful, without Him we must perish, think of it now, and by the help of God, meditate upon it. We will look, this morning at a little at this fulness, and Oh it is but a little of Christ's fulness that we can see here, as I said to one, this morning, we shall be looking at it through eternity if we belong to Christ. And the few remaining days of our lives here we shall, if led by the Spirit find the subject to be our meat and drink. Angels are worthy of imitation, in this matter, as also in others, we read. "Which things the angels desire to look into," (1 Peter 1 verse 12). Namely the mystery of Christ and His work of redemption, may we not be behind them in our desires. Sinners can do this more than the sinless angels, who can never look into redemption, and bless God for an interest in it. For they do not need it, but we as born of the Spirit, and led of Him, can look into Christ's fulness, and see that it is precisely suited to our needs. May the Lord give us more and more to centre our thoughts on this.

First I will speak of the fulness of life, that Christ has. "And this is the record, that God has given to us Eternal Life, and this life is in His Son," (1 John 5 verse 11). God hath given me to have life in Himself, and in this Gospel the Lord Himself speaks, as John records it thus, "I am come that they (the sheep) might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10 verse 10). It is in Him, it flows from Him, John tells us what was shown to him in the Revelation, last chapter, "And He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month:" Revelation 22 verses 1 & 2). The angel had shown him, the city the Church. This is the life that Ezekiel, got a sight of when he saw, "waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar." (Ezekiel 47 verse 1).

"Then said he unto me, these waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, withersoever the river shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh." (Verse 8 & 9). And Ezekiel again speaks of it under another figure, when he tells us that the child loathsome, helpless, unattended, and uncared for, "And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live,; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live." (Ezekiel 16 verse 6). "Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest Mine." (verse 8). There is a fulness of life for poor sinners.

One may just draw attention to the exercise of His omnipotence, and say, "And God said , Let the earth bring forth the living creatures after his kind," And it was so. (Genesis 1 verse 24). There was a fulness in His creative powers, a fulness of formative power, a fulness He communicated to the creatures He made, both to men, and to beasts and fowls and to fishes. And also to the earth, He communicated a fulness of creative and recreative powers, out of Himself to all the creatures. What may we say to this, shall that God who had this fulness in Himself, for creation and for the continuance of that creation, and all that the creatures should need. Shall He have all that, and shall not Christ the head of the new creation, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature;" (Colossians 1 verse 13), the life of His people, have in Himself all that this new creation shall need ? And as it is a living creation, He must be its life, He is its life. Well now, you feel dead, bless God, not for the death, but for the feeling of it, because in Christ is a fulness of life.

He to the needy and the faint
His mighty aid makes known;
And when their languid life is spent,
Supplies it with His own. (Gadsby's 828 verse 3)

This is His life, He animates every soul born of the Spirit, with His own life, I will show by the Lord's help, how this affects those who partake of it.

The first effect is oneness with Christ, people may seem to be one with Him in a profession, but be infinitely distant from Him in life. Other poor people may not be even professing religion, and yet may be one with Christ in this life. "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." (1 Corinthians 6 verse 17). What joins them to the Lord ? First of all life, nothing precedes this in true religion. There is no other union in the sinners heart, that precedes the union of divine life. It is a great thing to be one with Christ. "I in them, and thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one;" (John 17 verse 23). "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." (Colossians 3 verse 4). All the animating desires, all the urging needs, all the pressing petitions which the people of God have in their souls, they derive from the life of Christ. They cannot keep away from Him, like needs will cleave to like, life cleaves to life, life cleaves to Him who is the Life. The closest union between men is the common life they live, the human life they have, and the closest union that can be between Christ and a new born sinner, is produced by this blessed eternal life, which He bestows upon them, and this carries them up to the Head.

To Christ for help I fly,
The friend of sinners lost,
A refuge sweet, and sure, and nigh,
And there is all my trust. (Gadsby's 739 verse 2)

This beautiful hymn you were just singing, how true it is, in every time of need, in every hour of distress, in every trouble that comes upon you, in every temptation that you suffer, you will find yourself running after Him because of the common life. Oh although I speak this, it is so great, so glorious, so mysterious a truth, that it is difficult to enter into. We may feel it, but it is hard to express it, what one may say, I a poor failing, falling, unbelieving, hard hearted, ungrateful creature, I live a common life with Christ. If you are born again it is true, and nothing will ever really contradict, and prove it false. This is the life, "When Christ who is our life," the life of the Colossians, of the Ephesians, and of the Galatians, of the seven Churches in Asia, the life of God's children. That is to say, those who get far off, have that very life which the Lord Jesus Christ possesses and has communion with them. The fulness is in Him, the stock is in Him my friends, the stock of human nature was in Eden, and we derive our nature from that stock which God placed there. and the stock of spiritual life is in heaven, in that Man who is at the right hand of God. Go poor feelingly half dead sinner, and more than thrice dead sinners, to that blessed fulness from which you have received eternal life, and you shall find more life.

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." It is a common life, and therefore how beautiful are the saints of God in His eyes. How one with Christ are the saints of God, how beautiful is that life that moves their souls against sin. How acceptable is every sigh of a sin burdened sinner to God. How pleasing to God is every desire that proceeds from the new life that is given. The hidden man of the heart, God sees the nature of it, we see the weakness, we feel the weakness of it, we feel it to be so mixed that we can scarcely discern it, and we wonder sometimes if we possess it. God's eye, "seeth every precious thing." (Job 28 verse 10). He withdrew not His eye from that life, that struggles, that is oppressed, and He sees it to be the very life that Christ has. There is a common life, and if I press this upon your attention this morning a little, it is that if it please God to use me for this purpose, you may see, the greatness and the grandeur, the beauty and the divinity of all this. For we are called, "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2 Peter 1 verse 4). Therefore if we have the life of God in us, that is the truth of the matter, partakers of the divine nature.

It is no wonder to faith, that a sinner must be always going to this fountain. What else can he do? A created life is not an independent life, neither a natural nor a spiritual life is independent. Every created thing is dependant, and this life of Christ in the soul, new created by the Holy Spirit is dependant on the fountain of it. Hence every believing soul continually, more or less distinctly, is crying to Christ, who is its life. "When Christ who is our life shall appear," may this be impressed upon us, may we believe it, that we live a common life in Christ. Jude speaks of "the common salvation." (verse 3). Paul speaks of Christ being the life of the Church, "when Christ who is our life," Christ says, He came that His children might have life, and He says, "I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6 verse 40).

Oh to be, one with Christ, like, the true vine which has branches in it, the olive tree which also has branches, and the candle stick which had its branches. with the olive tree beside it to supply it with oil. And Christ is beside His candlestick, beside His children to supply them with this precious, blessed eternal life. And I would make this observation, this is the secret of all perseverance, "I give unto them (my sheep) eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." (John 10 verse 28). It comes in sweet streams, new supplies, watering His garden every moment lest any hurt it. "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." (Isaiah 17 verse 3).

That is why a man holds on, this is the life that many waters cannot quench. This is the life that makes its way through all difficulties and temptations to its source. Nature will always rise as high as itself, it can go no higher, and your spiritual life will always rise up as high as itself, and that is to Christ. He is this life, He imparts it to the feeble and the faint, and is its source. What can He not do ? what will He not do ? When Christ gives this blessed life, it is wonderful and it brings oneness, so also it brings likeness, yes every one born again is like Him, whose life he lives.

Adam begot Seth in his own likeness, well, now I speak what may be a great trial to some of us, it is a trial to myself, a real trial. Look at your selves, look at your spirit, at your thoughts at your aims. Look at your carnality, your unbelief and hardness of heart, and your wanderings from the Lord. As you look at yourself, you will say where am I ? anywhere but where I would be. My thoughts are on the world, on my troubles, on pleasures, on my aims, my schemes and earthy comforts. And is that all ? then you are dead, as dead as when you were born into the world, but if you can say, Oh but God knows my sorrow, because of what I am, of what I think, of what I feel, of what I aim at, God knows it all. I would not be like this if I could help it, I want to be at His foot stool, I want to be cleaving to Him. To be following Him, to be found in Him, and to be united to Him, I want to be like Him. To walk in His precepts, to avoid evil, and the appearance of evil. I want my spirit to be washed, and my tongue to be kept, and my heart to be renewed. I want to be the Lord's, and to do whatsoever is His will, and what will be for His glory.

If a man can confess to all that in secret, before God as his maker, that man is a true Christian, he may not know it himself as yet, but when the Holy Spirit reveals his true case, and he knows his enemies, knowing that he himself is the worse foe. The Lord will say, "Because thy rage against Me and thy tumult is come up into Mine ears, therefore I will put My hook in thy nose, and My bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest." (2 Kings 19 verse 28). This was said to Sennacherib king of Assyria, and shall the Lord know an enemy like that, and deal with him like that, and not know the poor child of His, struggling, panting, groaning, confessing, praying, weeping and sighing, Oh that I were other than what I am, Oh that I were a true child of God ? He prays thus to be new born, and knows not what he means, he think it is something very great, something thats undiscovered yet. "The Lord knoweth them that are His." (2 Timothy 2 verse 19). The Psalmist said, "Thou has known my soul in adversities." (Psalm 31 verse 7). This is adversity, and Thou hast known my soul in it.

Thou hast known that I would not be what I am, if I could help it, and Thou knowest it now, Lord appear for me. Now I say God looks beneath this, He sees beneath it, as the subject of it is not able to see, and what is it that He sees ? Why sin, and a panting life. a sinner's efficacious life, that will not be quiet under sin, that will not, and cannot submit to sin, He knows it. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (1 John 3 verse 9). It is true, and does not Christ sometimes look beautiful in your eyes, who is to be compared with Him in the midst of your distress, disturbance and distraction. Is there any to be compared with Him ? The soul says,

Compared with Christ, in all beside
No comeliness I see;
The one thing needful, dearest Lord,
Is to be one with Thee (Gadsby's 940 verse 1)

Now the Lord looks at that, and I believe I am not saying more than is right, or than is scriptural, when I say, that what the Lord sees, is just like the very life of Christ, when He was here, as He now is in heaven. The very life when men tempted Him, when sin was on Him, when the devil tempted Him, His own Holy Soul revolted against the temptations. And He sees the holy principal in His children, that revolts against the very thought of living in sin. I do not speak a fancy, it is not an imagination that I am speaking, it is a truth, a real blessed truth as between God and the sinner. And the Lord sees that it is man, He speaks of His children as jewels, this is beautiful, He speaks of them as His dear saints. So precious are they, the sons of Zion, He speaks of them as the body of Christ, bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh, and members of His body in particular. There is a likeness my friends.

"What will ye see in the Shulamite ? As it were the company of two armies." (Song of Solomon 6 verse 13). The bad and the black army of sin and Satan hankering after the world, that is in your fallen nature. The second army being that of Christ's Spirit in your new birth working against sin. As with Rebekah, "And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus ? And she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." (Genesis 25 verses 22 & 23). "(As we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil that good may come ?" (Romans 3 verse 8) For we cannot be lost, that is what the enemies say.

We say, and God knows what we say, If we could live as we want to live, we should live near the Lord. We should live at His side, we should live at His footstool, we should live as the scripture directs. We should walk in all the holy precepts of the gospel, we should love His likeness. Life is like life naturally. Mankind has a common life, and a likeness is in it, and so if we are born again, there is a likeness in our life, to that life which is in Jesus Christ. It is the same life and therefore there is a likeness.

A third point I should like to direct your attention to is this, I have anticipated it all through, but I will now speak a little more distinctly of it. Namely, a wanting to be in the fountain itself. This is expressed variously in the scriptures, the Psalmist expresses it thus, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee O God." (Psalm 42 verse 1). In another psalm He says, "I stretch forth my hands unto Thee: my soul thirsteth after Thee, as a thirsty land. Selah." (Psalm 43 verse 6). "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God ?" (Psalm 42 verse 2). No child of God can ever for long, be content to live the life of an animal, Berridge says,

The portion of a beast;
Will not content my heart;
The God of spirits only can
Fill up the vast desires of man. (Gadsby's 886 verse 2)

Less than God will not suffice, less than Christ will not do, you may have prosperity here, but if you are a child of God, your heart will be saying at times, these are not my God. Your portion here may be pleasant but you will say, it is not what I want, it does not satisfy my soul. Nothing here of a corrupt nature can satisfy an immortal soul, you must be at the fountain to be satisfied. The Psalmist expresses it again, when he says, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." Psalm 17 verse 15). And does not that make your heart pant for that day ? I should think that every child of God present, has in a measure, according to the measure of grace given him, felt on occasions, a longing to be far from this world of grief and sin, and with God eternally shut in. We are by nature carnal, and hang about and cleave to the earth, as Toplady says,

Bound down by twice ten thousand ties,
Yet let me hear Thy call,
My soul in confidence shall rise,
Shall rise and break through all. (Gadsby's 1072 verse 3)

We are very often fools, but there is a praying within, an immortal

principal within, that pants for its source, its author and its end which makes heaven desirable. If you get a view of the glory of Christ at any time, you will understand Doctor Owen who somewhere says, It is difficult for the child of God under such a view, to repress the desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better It is difficult. Oh if Christ's word was spoken into your heart "Where I am, there shall also My servant be." (John 12 verse 26). And if like Moses you pray, "I beseech Thee show me Thy glory." (Exodus 33 verse 18). To be with Christ, you will say, I do a little understand that panting to be with Christ which is far better. Paul speaks of this in the Corinthians, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." (2 Corinthians 5 verse 1 & 2). You will want to be there, the Trinity is the end, the Trinity is the end of the soul's desire. To be with God is the end.

If I were asked to make a choice today of this sort, to be asked, you may return to your youth, you may have uninterrupted health, you may go on preaching, you may have a voice to preach for many years to come, or be as you are and hasten to eternity as you long to be there. I believe, at this moment I should say, Lord I will be as I am, I would not have one day before me that is behind me, no, I know it is natural to love life. It is natural for you young people to love life. Why ? It is in very man to love it, to live many days that he may see good. Ah but there is that in grace, which turns that which is abhorrent to nature into a desirable thing. It is an abhorrent thing even to think of dying with this enmity in our sinful body. To cease to exist, to be buried, to decay and corrupt, and dissolve away, is abhorrent to us. But for faith to look beyond time into eternity, through the veil into heaven and see the Redeemer there, and sometimes hear the whisper of His mercy, "where I am there shall My servant be." Oh Father I would that Thou wouldst cause me to see Thy glory, says a loving soul, that is what I want. Far from a world of grief and sin, with God eternally shut in, and there with all the powers of my soul extended, with all the glory of God falling on it. Having now the power to bear the "eternal weight of glory". (2 Corinthians 4 verse 17). The sinner says, that is what I want to behold. Do you not want to feel such communications, touches of such power, inshining of true light, the word made over to you, helping you to bear your infirmities and troubles, to deny yourself, helping you to pray the prayer which the Lord taught His disciples, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." (Matthew 6 verses 9-13). We live a poor life, we are living in a cursed world, and living in terrible days, and perilous times. Oh but to have grace, to make us upright and keep us so, grace to fear God, and to press after a knowledge of Himself. All this is from life, do you pant for God ? if you do, that is because you live His life, Now one word more on this point, namely, this life that Christ gives to His children, out of His own fulness, wants to enter into communion with Him. And communion is assured to all who live a common life with Christ. It must be so, He gives out to them, gives of His grace, of His mercy, of His light, of His truth, of His power, of His goodness. He gives out and they want to be receiving, so He says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11 verse 28). Bring your troubles, your burdens, your necessities, your fears and your sins bring all to Me, and I will give you rest. Rest in My love and in My goodness, and in My purposes, My will and faithfulness, you shall rest in Me. You will be held to this, as the Spirit is with you,

None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good.

(Gadsby's 723, verse omitted in our book)

I hope you will be held to it, the Spirit will hold you to it, I wish I knew more of this experience. The wandering heart, a gadding spirit, turbulent wild thoughts, Oh what troubles there are, I know, for I am troubled by such things. But there is a fulness, as one sings,

A fulness resides in Jesus our Head,
And ever abides to answer our need; (Gadsby's 184 verse 1)

Communion is great, the fellowship of the Spirit, bowels of mercies, and pity. These things the people of God experience, and as Christ speaks in the chapter I read this morning, "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." (John 17 verse 22). "I pray for them:)" (verse 9). "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth. (verse 27). It points to communion my friends, to fellowship with Him, who came that His people "might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10 verse 10). "And of His fulness" a fulness of life, I have dwelt on that one thing this morning. Look at it as God may help you, if it occupies all your days until you come to die, you will have a subject of endless interest, sweetness and goodness.

The life of Christ, and Oh to think and to hope that eer long, we who fear God, and are born again, as we hope, shall be with Him to live on this fulness." And He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." (Revelation 22 verse 1). The river of God is full of pleasures for ever more, and the trees that grow on its banks, whose leaves are ever green, and whose fruit is for the nourishment of His children. What a hope it is, "and of His fulness" the fulness of Immanuel, the fulness of eternal life given to Him by His Father, for His children. "And this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." (2 John 5 verse 11).

May the Lord give it out to us in some blessed measure, to overcome our death, bondage and fear, and mortify our sins.

Amen