

58
628
1361 k
La P 812

LIBRARY OF THE
GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Sunday evening 22 January 1933

JOHN 1 v 16

"Of His fullness have all we received and
grace for grace"

The Holy Ghost has been, so to speak, exceedingly careful of the honour of the Son of God. If He is kindly working in our hearts a measure of that carefulness, it would be well for us. It would keep us from thinking that any deviation, however small it may seem to be, from the truth which is revealed in Scripture concerning Christ is not a dreadful thing. The Apostle John, who is spoken of as the Apostle of love, or the loving Apostle, is very strict on this point. If you are enabled to read intelligently, that is with a spiritual intelligence by faith, what that Apostle advances respecting Christ and respecting the denial of Christ, you will see that I am right in ascribing to the Holy Ghost a singular carefulness with respect to the Lord Jesus Christ. I cannot express to you what majesty, mystery and glory I trust I have been favoured to see in the first verse of this chapter. "In the beginning was the Word". The Word in this chapter is convertible or, so to speak, just the same as you have it in another verse in this chapter. "The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father". As it is in the 1st Epistle of John: "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." May the Lord make Jesus Christ, the very Son of God incarnate, precious to us, and make His glory the great thing in our hearts that it is in the holy Scripture. We are dead without Him, we are under the law without Him, we are under condemnation without Him. We have no life without Him, no faith, no hope, no love, no liberty, no access to God, no hope of heaven without Him. It has pleased God to put into His Son incarnate everything that we need for life and godliness, for time and eternity. And this Word this Son of God, with the Father in the beginning, in eternity; who was with God and was God and is God, this divine Person came into the world, and how, we are told. "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us". And thus He came into the world and the world knew Him not.

6.

He came unto His Own, His own nation and they received Him not. They said, Away with Him, crucify Him. They hated Him without a cause. He was despised and rejected of them. But He dwelt among us, and "we" - "who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of men, but of God;" "we", the favoured objects of love, and the favoured subjects of regeneration and the favoured possessors of true faith - "we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father", that is of the only Son of the Father. "We beheld His glory". If we got a sight of it now we should worship Him. If we got a sight of it now it would deeply humble us, it would powerfully sanctify us, it would effectually separate us from the world. To behold His glory is to behold His Person. When men divide the Person of Christ they enter into error. The Father said by the prophet Isaiah - "Behold My Servant, Mine Elect in whom My soul delighteth. I have put My Spirit upon Him." Through that chapter the Person spoken of in the 1st verse is continually spoken of and spoken to. "I have given Thee" - My Servant, Mine Elect - "for a Covenant of the people". Never divide the Person of Christ. He is a complex Person, the Person of the Son of God who has partaken of flesh and blood so as to be like His children. John bore witness of Him and cried saying - "This was He of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for He was before me". He was in the beginning with His Father. He was with His Father and He was of the same nature with His Father and with the Holy Ghost. "And of His fullness have all we received and grace for grace."

This fullness first of all we must refer and ascribe to His Person. Of Him, at His baptism, God His Father said - "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." And of the same Person, Jesus Christ, it is said in this gospel the Lord gave His Spirit to Him not by measure. The fullness of the Spirit is in Christ. Christ, as the Scripture teaches us, is the Son of God, is the Son of Man, and all the fullness of the Godhead bodily dwells in Him, and all the fullness of God's pleasure dwells in Him. If we have living faith we go to this Person from time to time seeking His grace, seeking supplies out of His fullness. The Church lives in Him, lives on Him, lives by Him. The minister lives in the same way, on Him, by Him, and for Him, and there is no position of any sort or kind of a worldly nature that can enter into this. It is alone and so the church is alone in her being

as the bride of Christ, and the ministry is alone, apart from all the worldly education that may be esteemed; stands alone as an angel in the hand of Christ, as a star in the hand of Christ. All the conviction of sin comes from His Spirit. All the conviction of grace comes from His Spirit. All the forgiveness of sin that is felt comes by His blood. All the justification of the church comes in His righteousness. All her holiness she derives from Him. All her perseverance and her access to God, all the conflict and all the victories she has spiritually speaking, she has from Him. "Of His fullness". If all the fullness is in Him, what must be said of the people who receive of it? Well, this must be said; they must be empty - a very mortifying truth - they must be empty. If the oil of grace flows in a ministry, under that ministry there must be empty vessels. No receiving of this fullness by full vessels, by full souls. "The full soul loatheth the honeycomb". Well it is good for the heart to be established in this. Meats will never satisfy you. That is the meaning of the Spirit in that word in the Hebrews. You will never get really satisfied in a profession of religion in observing this or that ordinance unless first of all, and last of all, and through all, there is a reception out of the fullness of the Lord Jesus. And this means this, an exercise about Him, an exercise about your interest. Faith is that great grace which is moved and guided and strengthened by the Holy Ghost. That great grace is exercised first toward the Lord, then exercised in Him, then exercised in drawing out of His fullness. If you have faith you will never be satisfied except you be receiving from the fullness of the Lord Jesus; never. If you have faith you will never be pleased without Him. There is nothing in the world that He will permit you, for any length of time, to find real pleasure in. There is no unalloyed pleasure in this world to the people of God. This fullness is a fullness of life. You may, as gracious people, sometimes feel almost as dead as a stone, as cold as ice, as unlike godly people as sin and the devil can make you; swallowed up of many things here below. Business, money, friends, pleasures, ease, will swallow you up. According to your situation in life you will be swallowed up of things belonging to this life. But being born again there is another life in you that will testify against the pleasures you are seeking, testify against your barren, dead condition and tell you honestly that you are making a rod for your own back, stocks for your feet, the frown of God for your

4.

conscience, and a time of barrenness in your experience. When fresh motions of life come, when new teachings and operations of the Spirit begin, then will begin your grief at your deadness, and your prayerlessness and your indifference to this full supply - the Lord Jesus. Then faith, standing in the power of the Holy Ghost, will go out to Him again

Lo glad I come, and Thou blest Lamb
Shalt take me to Thee as I am;
Nothing but sin I Thee can give,
Nothing but grace shall I receive

Prize faith; O believer, prize the gift of God; faith; for without that no man can be a Christian; with that no man can be an infidel. With that poor sinners flock to Christ. "Who are these that fly as doves to their windows?" In a healthy state the church of God flies to Christ in her captive state. Individual members who have kept their garments clean will be finding their way to Christ, for that life that He gives is holiness, and it tells a sinner that there is nothing clean on the earth since sin has cursed it and the only clean life that any person can ever live is the life that Christ imparts. Nothing but sin.

And there is in Christ a fullness of power, real power. Having obeyed unto death He is now exalted at the right hand of His Father, having a Name above every Name and all rule and authority and power He possesses and authorities and angels are subject unto Him. What of this power? If we have it not, we sink. Easy victims we fall to every lust and every carnal thing in our nature. You know I am speaking the truth. When the Lord Jesus conveys His power to the soul there is a real rising up. The church found herself on her bed with lazy desires yet real want. "By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loveth" When He came to her she objected to being disturbed, but power belongeth unto Christ, and He puts His hand in by the hole of the door and leaves power behind; He leaves myrrh on the handle of the door. A fullness of power is in Him. Yes; you may think sometimes when severely condemning yourselves for your laziness, for your indolence, I will arise and pray more, read more, seek God more, and when you say it in your own strength you are saying nothing but

vanity. You will never do it. But when little faith cries to God, O do grant my soul power to arise and seek Thee, then there is some experience of this power. Power to give you strength to resist the devil, that he may flee from you and power to believe that the day is coming when Christ will bruise Satan under your feet; when the enemy who has made you afraid many times shall see you a conqueror, himself conquered. "Of His fullness". Power to pray, power to wait on God, power to believe in hope against hope; power to love and not be offended with Him in anything. "Great peace have they that love Thy law and nothing shall offend them." And the power of God is in this, you can accept the punishment of your backslidings; kiss the rod, confess your sin, forsake it. Power to look back and see your folly. Power to examine yourselves and see your wickedness. Power to kneel down and confess your sins. Power on awakening some mornings to say, "O Lord pardon mine iniquity, for it is great." Power to hold fast to the throne of grace. Power to see vanity stamped on the whole of creation through sin, and power to plead the unchangeable promise of God, on which He enables you to look as being His own word to you. O I feel it is an amazing mercy to have one word of the gospel in your heart that you may be enabled to plead again and again and again. And power to wait for the fulfilment of it. All power. However men look at Cyrus, God moved him at the appointed hour to proclaim liberty to all the Jews who might have a heart to return to their own country and build a house for their God. Cyrus was the servant of the most high God. Have you some man or men to deal with in whom you can put no trust? Have you some circumstances you cannot manage? Have you some disappointment that cuts you very much, that is like a blast upon every prospect you have cherished? Now how helpless you are, how utterly helpless. You need wisdom; wisdom is strength but you are helpless; you know not what to do. But mark this, if you have faith to commit that to God, just trust in Him, lean not to your own understanding; put the whole case before Him and into His hands; in some way you will find the power of Christ working for you. Trust in Him, trust His wisdom, trust His goodness, trust His power. There is nothing too hard for Him.

There is a fullness of cleansing and of this we are to receive. Cleansing. Cleanse me from all mine iniquities. "Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." My dear friends, there is not a tender

conscience in this chapel that has not confessed more or less distinctly every day to the contraction of some defilement, and the more tender the conscience the more humble and constant will be the confession that some defilement has been contracted. Motives, words, desires, designs; who can bear the sight of himself as he sees such and such things in his life, and were it not for the precious, blessed blood of Christ how soon would the soul sink into despair. I am old enough to know this and God has made me know it, that my life, very clean among men, cannot stand in the light, the discovering light of divine truth, and I need the precious blood of Christ.

The fullness of forgiveness. Forgiveness for past, forgiveness for present, forgiveness for future sins. This will bring out, to those who are brought into the experience of it, the fullness of forgiveness in Christ. And so the fullness of liberty is from Him. "If the Son shall make you free then are ye free indeed." Mind liberty. True gospel liberty is a wonderful thing. It consists of free access to God, bondage of spirit being removed. God, says Paul hath not given us the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of love and of a sound mind. There is liberty in this, high liberty. Liberty to plead His word, liberty to hold fast - Hold fast that which thou already hast - liberty to deal with God about your circumstances, liberty to take your troubles and your difficulties and your burdens and your sorrows and cast them all on the burden bearer, the Lord Jesus. Liberty to seek wisdom which is profitable to direct. Liberty to say "Thou art my Father, the Guide of my youth". A wonderful liberty this is and it is given to people whom the Lord charges with sins. Having charged them with their unfaithfulness, He says, "Wilt thou not from this time" - that I again begin to deal with you - say, Thou art my Father, the Guide of my youth". That has ashamed me more than once in my long life, that the Lord should ever speak, whisper and let fall that word upon a poor, guilty creature's heart; very wonderful, and this is belonging to the liberty of the gospel. You may enjoy it alone; you will want your friends to hear about it perhaps shortly, but it will begin in your heart, grow in your heart, and praise will grow, love will grow, honouring God will grow, cleaving to Him will grow, embracing Him as your all will grow, in your heart in secret, as you get this blessed liberty; and the fullness of liberty is by the Son. If the Son shall make you free from

the law, free from your guilt, and free from the dominion of sin, of any sin, ye shall be free indeed. [We should go to bed tonight happy, as many of us as might be favoured to feel this freedom.] Of His fullness there is no end. "And of His fullness have all we" - "who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God", have we, new born souls - "received." What a wonderful church the church of Christ is, and the glory of God is in her by Jesus Christ, world without end. May the Lord look upon us. [We are in the midst of affliction. This poor little congregation tells us that so many are sick and unable to be with us, and ere long we shall see places made vacant by death for a good many of us are old.] May He keep us in His holy fear waiting on Him. Never, never fear poverty if you have got this fullness. No. Not in providence? Really no. The cattle on a thousand hills, the gold and the silver, the Lord says, belong to Me. Ah He has wonderful ways of supplying the providential requirements of His poor, afflicted people. Take those things that trouble you to this ever full, ever blessed God, and He will supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Well, I will say in conclusion, we are witnesses for Him. Yes, there are people here who are witnesses that Christ's fullness is exhaustless. What has He done for us? Sin's whole cancelled sum. What a witness is a forgiven sinner. Love melting a stony heart, and begetting love to God. What a witness is such a sinner. A poor creature drawn up and favoured with communion with God; what a witness for the reality of God is such a creature. And all this is in Christ; this experience flows from Christ and this witness is for the glory of Christ.

AMEN.