

PRECIOUS FAITH, WITH ITS BENEFITS AND BLESSINGS

Preached on Lord's Day Morning, August 10th, 1856, at Gower Street Chapel, London

"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." 2 Peter 1:1, 2

If to-morrow morning a letter were brought you by the postman bearing your name and address, you would consider yourself quite warranted to open it, and if that letter contained valuable remittances, clearly intended for you, to appropriate them in the manner pointed out. But, on the other hand, if, accidentally, a letter should be left at your house bearing the name and address of another person, you could not, durst not, break the seal, much less appropriate its contents as rightfully your own.

Now, if this simple, common-sense principle had been adopted in the interpretation of a large part of the New Testament, how much confusion and misunderstanding of its meaning would have been spared. We have before us "Epistles," that is letters, addressed by inspired apostles, some to believing churches, and others to believing individuals; and if addressed to believing churches, and believing individuals, what upon earth has an unbelieving world to do with them? Just as much as the first man I meet with in the street has to do with a letter addressed to me.

To set this in a clearer light, look at the persons to whom the apostle Peter addresses his second epistle. It is true that

names are not to be found, except in the case of special individuals, such as Timothy and Titus, but we have *characters*. And, therefore, would we know whether we have any interest in this or any other epistle of the New Testament, any right to appropriate to ourselves their rich contents—for they overflow with gospel gold, every verse is a bank note—we must first have this grand fact established in our conscience, that we are such characters as were those to whom they were originally written. To whom, then, was this letter addressed? When "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ," under the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, sat down to write this letter, to whom did he address it? "To them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." If, therefore, we have not "obtained like precious faith" with this holy servant and apostle of God, can we for a single moment entertain the thought that any promise or blessing in this epistle belongs to us? But, on the other hand, as in the case of a private letter, if one line of the letter belongs to me then the whole contents are mine; so, if we can only prove that we have obtained like precious faith with the saints and servants of God, then, not only one promise of this blessed epistle, but the whole of its rich and valuable contents belongs to us.

With God's blessing, then, this morning, in attempting to unfold the mind and meaning of the Holy Ghost in these words, I shall call your attention to four particulars:

I. *The characters* to whom the epistle is addressed. They are those "*who have obtained like precious faith*" with the apostles and saints of God.

II. *The channel*, the glorious channel, through which they obtained this precious faith. It is "*through the righteousness*

of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ."

III. *The blessings* which the apostle prays might be granted to those thus highly favoured. "*Grace and peace be multiplied unto you.*"

IV. *The spiritual medium* through which these divine blessings come. "*The knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*"

The Lord so help me to open up the mind and meaning of the Holy Ghost here, that that blessed Teacher and Comforter of the Church of God may seal it with divine unction and power upon believing hearts.

i. But first a few words as to the writer, "the servant and apostle of Jesus Christ." What a miracle of grace was that man! View him as the rude fisherman of the Galilean lake, as ignorant of God and godliness as the very fishes he entangled in the meshes of his net; and see how one word of the sovereign Lord of all power and might converted that rude fisherman into a believing disciple of the Lord of life and glory. Pass on and see that believing disciple left in a moment of temptation to deny his Lord and Master, and see how the rough Galilean fisherman seems, for a moment, to resume his pristine nature, and burst out in oaths and cursing. But see that look of tender reproach, and yet affectionate love, from his suffering Lord, which melted and broke that heart into tears, and restored that almost renegade to his place as a disciple; and view what he became afterwards as a blessed apostle to the Church of God. Anything from his pen would deserve our attention: but when we know that the Holy Ghost inspired that pen, though held by the hand of Peter, what he says demands all our faith, and all the attention of our awakened consciences.

ii. Now let us look to the characters to whom this servant and apostle of Jesus Christ writes. They are *those who have obtained like precious faith with the apostles and saints of God.*

What an eminent grace is the grace of faith! I call it sometimes the Queen of graces; for faith seems to lead the van, though hope and love follow almost side by side. But still, faith, as the Queen, seems to go in the foremost rank, and to claim the most eminent place. Now, what is faith? That is a question of questions, for on it hangs heaven or hell. God Himself has given us a clear definition of it, where He says, "faith is the *substance* of things hoped for." In other words, faith in the soul gives a realisation to the things in which we are brought to hope, takes what to most men are airy shadows, mere words and names, and gives them a substantial existence, a firm abiding place in the heart and conscience. He calls it also "*the evidence of things not seen.*" That is, faith by believing the testimony of God, is to us an internal eye, whereby we see those things which, to the natural eye, are invisible. Thus adopting the apostle's definition, we may call faith the eye of the soul, as we read, "by faith he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." For it is only by faith that we see either God, or the precious things of God. It is only by faith that we feel their power. It is only by faith that we know they have a real subsistence, or that we ourselves have a substantial interest in them. But this faith is the special gift of God. It is not the exercise of any intellectual faculty. It is not the result of reasoning or argument. Nor does it spring from any historical proof. It is a special gift of God, a grace of the Spirit raised up by the power of God in the soul, and acting upon the truth of God as the blessed Spirit draws it forth. Jesus is the author; Jesus is the finisher of it; and we have no more, and I believe no less faith, than He Himself, by His almighty power, is pleased to

grant and to sustain.

But, looking at faith and some of its properties, we may branch out a little in describing how faith acts. There is an expression of the Apostle's that casts a sweet light upon the work of faith, where he says, "Unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Here he brings forward a special operation of faith, in that it mixes with the word of truth. And it does it thus. God the Holy Ghost applies God's word to the conscience. He thus raises up the grace of faith; this grace of faith embraces God's testimony, and so intermingles itself with this testimony that it enters into it, appropriates it, and gives it a substantial realisation and personal indwelling. See how this was done in the instance of Abram. God comes to him in the night visions, and says to him, "Fear not, I am Thy shield and exceeding great reward." But Abram, in a fit of unbelief, says, "What wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?" The Lord then takes him abroad into the air, shows him the stars of the sky, and tells him, "Such shall thy seed be." Now here was the testimony of God in a certain promise to Abram's conscience; upon this, faith immediately sprang up in his soul; for we read, "Abram believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." When God spake to his soul, Abram believed it by the operation of God's Spirit on his heart. So it is with every child of God. He believes what God speaks to him, he inwardly, spiritually credits it, because he feels what God the Spirit applies to his soul with power; for the same Spirit that applies God's word to his heart raises up the faith in his soul that mixes with the word applied, and thus gives the word a substantial realisation, a firm abiding place in his conscience.

iii. But faith here is called "precious"; and well it may be called so, for look at the precious exploits that faith performs, and the precious fruits that faith produces.

1. It is called "precious," first, because it is so *rare*. There are very few persons, speaking comparatively, who are possessed of this grace of the Spirit. To be a believer in the Son of God is a rarity indeed. Many profess, but very few possess, the faith of God's elect as a special grant from heaven. This divine grace—faith—is not like a stone in the street that every ragged boy may pick up, and keep or throw away as he likes; but like a jewel in the Queen's crown. Precious stones are valuable, not only for their beauty and intrinsic worth, but on account of their exceeding rarity. Thus faith is called "precious," not only because it is in itself so intrinsically valuable, but because of its comparative scarceness; "for strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it;" the reason being that it can only be found by faith.

2. But again, it is called "precious" on account of *the blessings it puts us into possession of*. Why, it saves the soul: "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your soul." Must not that faith be precious, the end of which is salvation? If you are delivered from the bottomless pit, and saved into an eternity of bliss; if you are rescued from all the miserable consequences of sin under which thousands will welter throughout a boundless eternity, and are taken into a heaven of eternal happiness, glory, and immortality—must not that be a precious grace of God, the end of which is this full, free, and glorious salvation?

3. Faith also is "precious" as giving us *union with the Son of God*. It unites us to Him as the branch is united to the vine; and therefore puts us into possession of all the benefits and

blessings of the Person and the work of Jesus. Must not that be a precious gift, and eminent grace, that unites us to the Son of God, and puts us into possession of all the benefits and blessings which flow through the consecrated channel of His sufferings, death, and resurrection?

4. Faith also is "precious" as giving communion with *the three Persons* of the sacred *Godhead*. It brings us to the Father to have communion with Him, to the Son to have a lively fellowship with Him, and to the blessed Spirit to have heavenly intercourse with and from Him. The grace that thus introduces us into the very courts of heaven, and gives us communion—holy and sacred communion—with the three Persons of the Triune God, what an eminent grace must that needs be! Well, then, may the Apostle call it "precious."

5. By faith *we overcome the world*; and if the world, our grand enemy, is overcome, must not that be a precious grace which obtains such a victory?

6. By faith, too, we *stand* where thousands and tens of thousands fall; and if by faith we stand, must not that be a precious grace that enables us to stand amid wreck and ruin on every side? By faith we *fight*; and by faith we gain the *victory*; and if faith be the grace that sustains us in the hour of conflict and which eventually brings us off more than conquerors, may it not well be called "precious"?

I have only run through a few Scriptural reasons why faith, above all graces, is worthy of the name that the Apostle has here stamped it by, "precious."

iv. But he says, "*like precious*." And what a thought it is that if you and I possess one grain of living faith, the same precious grace is in our hearts that was in the hearts of all

the saints of God, from Abel, the proto-martyr, in all the saints of the Old Testament, in all the prophets, and martyrs, and servants, and apostles of God, and will subsist in the bosom of every saint down to the remotest period of time. There is but "one faith," as there is "one God, one Lord, and one baptism;" and it is by the possession of this "like precious faith" that all the family of God are knit together into one glorious body, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the risen Head. You, in yourself, may be very poor and needy, for faith gives us to feel our poverty and need; you may think and feel yourself unworthy of the least notice of God's favouring eye; but if the blessed Spirit has raised up one grain of living faith in your soul, you stand on the same holy platform with saints, apostles, prophets, and martyrs, and you are as much "accepted in the Beloved," as much loved of God, and as much a member of the mystical body of Christ, as though you were the Apostle Peter, Paul, Enoch, Abel, Isaiah, or any of the prophets.

v. Now, those to whom the Apostle wrote had "*obtained* like precious faith." Not through their own exertions, their own works, their own merit, their own obedience, their own pious dispositions, or religious inclinations; because they had availed themselves of some peculiar advantages that others were deprived of, and had gradually drawn themselves up, by working at the winch, into the possession of this eminent grace. They had "obtained" it, but how?

This brings me to my second point.

II. It was *through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ*. You will observe that I adopt here the marginal reading, which is, in fact, the more literal translation. It stands in our Bible, "through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;" but in the original, as in the

margin, it stands thus, "the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ." I think the marginal rendering is by far the more blessed and beautiful, and therefore I adopt it. What a beauty and blessedness there is in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, when viewed by the spiritual eye. Our reasoning minds, it is true, may be deeply stumbled at the doctrine of an incarnate God. My own mind, I know, has sometimes been driven almost to its wits' end by this great mystery of Deity and humanity combined in the Person of Christ; for it so surpasses all human comprehension, and is so removed beyond the grasp of all our reasoning faculties. It is not, indeed, contrary to reason, for there is nothing in it impossible or self-contradictory; but it is beyond and above the reach of human thought and tangible apprehension. But when we are led to consider what would be the most certain and most fearful consequences unless the Lord Jesus Christ were what He declares He is—God as well as man—we are compelled, from the very necessity of the case, to cast ourselves with all the weight of our sins and sorrows upon an incarnate God, as the shipwrecked sailor gladly casts himself upon the rock in the ocean as the only refuge from the devouring sea. Thus as law-wrecked, conscience-condemned, most guilty and miserable sinners, who have feelingly damned ourselves to the lowest hell by our iniquities and crimes, we are compelled to throw ourselves upon the Deity of Christ, because without it we have not the shadow of a hope. When we feel what sinners we are, and have been, look down into the depths of the Fall, and see in some feeble and faint measure what sin is in the sight of a holy and pure God, what can save us from despair unless we see the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ investing His work upon the cross and His obedience with a merit that shall suffice to justify our guilty souls, wash away our aggravated iniquities, blot out our fearful crimes, and make us fit to appear in the presence of a righteous God?

Thus we are sometimes absolutely compelled to throw ourselves on the deity of Christ, as ready to perish, because in such a divine Saviour, in such precious blood, we see a refuge, and we see elsewhere no other. And when we thus flee to Him to hide ourselves in Him, and God the Spirit is pleased to testify to our consciences of His being God as well as man, and raises up and draws forth faith, hope, and love in Him and towards Him as such, then we see in every act of His holy doing and agonising suffering a divine merit investing the whole of His finished work. We then feel that if the deity of Christ be taken away, the Church of God is lost. Where can you find pardon? where justification? where reconciliation to God? where atoning blood, if there is no Saviour who merited as God and suffered as man? We might as well leap into hell at once with all our sins upon our head, as a sailor might spring over the prow of a burning ship into the boiling waves, to meet death instead of waiting for it, unless we believe by a living faith in the deity of the Son of God. But sometimes we are sweetly led into this glorious truth—not merely driven by sheer necessity, but blessedly drawn into this great mystery of godliness—when Christ is revealed to our souls by the power of God. Then, seeing light in God's light, we view the deity of Christ investing every thought, word, and act of His suffering humanity with unspeakable merit. Then we see how this glorious fact of deity and humanity in the Person of Immanuel satisfies every want, puts away every sin, heals every wound, wipes away every tear, and sweetly brings the soul to repose on the bosom of God. Sometimes, therefore, from necessity, driven by storms of guilt and waves of temptation, and sometimes sweetly drawn by the leadings and teachings of the Holy Ghost, we lay hold of the hope set before us in the essential deity and suffering humanity of the Son of God, knowing that there is a refuge in Him from sin, death, hell, and despair.

Now this it is which makes me love the expression the apostle uses, and which the margin preserves, "the righteousness of our God and Saviour." It is His righteousness as "God," as well as "Saviour." It therefore includes all that He is as God, and all that He did and suffered as man. Every thought He conceived, every word He spoke, every action He performed, were so many deeds of righteousness; His whole course was a course of righteousness. His essential, intrinsic deity implanted as well as stamped merit on every word and work that sprung out of His suffering humanity, and thus wove out a glorious robe of righteousness, which is cast upon the Church of God, clothed in which she stands "accepted in the Beloved," without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, before the throne of God. Now it is through this righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ that we have obtained like precious faith with the saints, apostles, prophets, and martyrs. It is not our own petty doings, our own peddling contrivances, a few alms deeds, a shilling, a half-crown, or a sovereign dropped on the charity plate, a few pious tears, and a few pious resolutions, as though we would truck, barter, and traffic with God, hoping He will accept all this small change in payment for our sins. Bear with my warmth. For if there be a subject on which I feel holy indignation, it is that man should presume to put his petty doings on the same level with the righteousness of Immanuel, and place his tears and prayers in the same scale with the sufferings and sorrows of God's co-eternal and co-equal Son. But what a blessed truth this is to the heaven-taught soul when realised by a living faith! You are often beset with a host of base lusts and powerful temptations; you see and feel what you are by nature and practice as a son or daughter of Adam; you say, under feelings of deep despondency, how can such a one as I ever have like precious faith with the saints and apostles of God? Yes; if it depended on your doing, you might well sit down in

despair, and conclude the case was perfectly hopeless. I repeat it; if this precious faith were to be obtained by anything you may do, or have done, you might well despair of ever having a single grain of it lodged in your bosom; but when you can see the gracious and glorious channel through which this grace is obtained; when you can lift up your believing eyes, and view the heavenly appointed way through which faith comes as the gift of God into the hearts of the election of grace, how it takes your mind away from all petty peddling doings of your own, and leaves you to repose as a poor sinner upon the arms of mercy which are opened wide for such as you. This is a remedy, and an all-sufficient remedy, against self-righteousness and against despair. When you look at Christ and yourself in this light, all pride and self-righteousness are at once beaten down in the heart. We never can exalt the righteousness of our God and Saviour enough when we look upon Him as the divinely-appointed channel through which the mercy of God comes. I do not hold, however, that Christ purchased mercy and grace, or any other gospel blessings; as though God grudged these gifts, and that they were extorted from Him by the sufferings of His Son. I cannot regard the Father of all mercies and the God of all grace in the light of one who needed Christ to fall upon His knees, and extort these blessings from His unwilling hand; but I can see how sin in the Fall dammed back, so to speak, the love of God; and I can see how the Son of God by suffering, bleeding, and dying, the just for the unjust, atoned for sin, thus removed the barrier, and opened a channel, through His Person and work, whereby the love of God might freely flow into the bosom of the Church. So that, not only without Christ's righteousness there can be no faith, but through it, as an open channel of divine communication, faith, with every other blessing, comes in full accordance with every perfection of Him, who can at the same time be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

Sometimes, upon your knees, perhaps, you feel your guilt and unworthiness so keenly that you can hardly dare to lift up your eyes to God. Now, when the soul is in this state of self-abasement, the Lord will often come with some melting sense of His goodness and mercy, or some sweet testimony of interest in His precious blood and obedience. How your mind is filled with wonder, your eyes with tears, and your mouth with praise, and you say, "How canst Thou bless a wretch like me, who has never done anything but sin against Thee, or backslide from Thee!" The Lord replies, "I do not bless thee for what thou art, or hast been; nor do I withhold My blessing for what thou hast been, or hast done; but I bless thee for My dear Son's sake; the blessing that I give thee flows through the Son of My love." When we can see this by the eye of faith, how it puts prevailing petitions in our lips.

III. But I pass on to show *the blessings that the apostle prays for*. He says, "*Grace and peace be multiplied unto you.*" He desires for them two eminent gospel blessings, one the source and spring, and the other the end and result; one the cause and the other the effect; one that brings the soul near unto God, and the other that keeps it near unto Him. And he prays that these two choice graces might not be given in a common ordinary measure, if I may use the expression, but that they might be "multiplied." God gives as a prince. I have sometimes thought there is great sweetness in the account of the Queen of Sheba receiving the gifts of Solomon's bounty. We read that "King Solomon gave unto the Queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty" (1 Kings 10:13). So it is with the King of kings and Lord of lords, of whom Solomon was but a faint type and figure. He not only gives us what we ask, all our desire, but out of His royal bounty grants what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor

hath entered into the heart of men to conceive of His goodness and love. A king cannot give niggardly; it is unbecoming the dignity of his exalted station. Thus, in our petitions before a throne of grace, we should do as the precept invites, "Open thy mouth wide;" and as the prophet bade the king, make our petitions deep and large" (Isa. 7:11, margin).

i. The apostle then prays for those that "had obtained like precious faith," that to them grace and peace might be multiplied. How suitable the petition! And first, as regards "*grace.*" When we see and feel how we need grace every moment in our lives, we at once perceive a beauty in the blessing thus asked for in an abundant, overflowing measure. We cannot walk the length of the street without sin. Our carnal minds, our vain imaginations, are all on the look out for evil. Sin presents itself at every avenue, and lurks like the Arab in the wilderness, or the prowling night thief for every opportunity of open or secret plunder. In fact, in ourselves, in our fallen nature, except as restrained and influenced by grace, we sin with well nigh every breath that we draw. We need, therefore, grace upon grace, or, in the words of the text, grace to be "multiplied" in proportion to our sins. Shall I say in proportion? Nay, if sin abounds, as to our shame and sorrow we know it does, we want grace to much more abound. When the neap tide of sin flows in with the mud and mire, we want the spring tide of grace to flow higher still, to carry out the slime and filth into the depths of the ocean, so that when sought for they may no more be found. Thus we want grace, free grace; grace to-day, grace to-morrow, grace this moment, grace the next, grace all the day long; healing, reviving, restoring, saving, sanctifying; and all this multiplied by all our wants and woes, sins, slips, and falls, unceasing and aggravated backslidings. We want grace to believe, grace to hope, grace to love, grace to fight, and grace to

conquer; grace to stand, grace to live, and grace to die. Every moment of our lives we need keeping, supporting, holding, and withholding grace; for, as a good man has said, "If the Lord leave us for one moment, He leaves us that one moment too long."

ii. But to "grace" the apostle adds "*peace*." Sin breaks our peace, and sets our souls at a distance from God; trials, too, and temptations, sins and sorrows, occur every day to mar our rest; so we want peace to be multiplied as well as grace. Peace like a river, of which the stream is ever flowing; peace like the sea, of which the tides, if they do ebb, yet rise higher than they fall. We want peace, too, to establish our hearts in the truth, and in the love of it, so as to prevent our being carried about with every wind of doctrine. We are often entangled in the wily snares of Satan, and we want peace to be restored to our soul. When it is thus sadly broken, and sin has filled us with guilt and terror, we want peace to come and heal all those wounds, and establish our souls firmly in the gospel of peace. And when we shall be called upon to enter the dark valley of the shadow of death, how then we shall need "peace to be multiplied," that we may fear no evil, but find the comforting staff and supporting rod. Thus we never can have too much grace or too much peace. The more we know of sin, the more shall we want grace, and the more we know of sorrow the more we shall want peace.

IV. But I now come to the fourth and last point—the *blessed medium* through which grace and peace flow, and by which too they are "multiplied." It is "through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." This opens up a vast field, upon which—my time being nearly gone—I can but briefly enter. There is one expression in the prayer of the blessed Redeemer (John 17) which I very much admire, as full of divine blessedness. "This is life eternal, that they might know

Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." How similar are the words before us. How the language and spirit of the servant resemble those of the Master! "Through the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord."

1. The *medium* through which grace and peace come, as well as the *channel* through which they flow, is, first, the *knowledge of God*. Before we can have this saving knowledge of God, we must have a spiritual manifestation of Him to our soul. We can only know Him by His own teaching, only see Him in the light of His own countenance. Otherwise we know Him not to any saving purpose, to any spiritual or sanctifying end. But when He is pleased to manifest Himself to our souls, then we have a living knowledge of Him ("Acquaint thyself with God and be at peace"); so that the more we know of Him by spiritual teaching and divine manifestation, the more will this multiply grace and peace in soul experience. We must know Him as our Father by having the Spirit of adoption breathed into our hearts, and this will produce peace of conscience, a peace that flows from grace. We must know Him as faithful to His promises, and to the Son of His love; and that His word stands as firm as the everlasting hills. This gives a firm foundation for the multiplication of that grace which the promise declares, and of that peace which its fulfilment brings. If we know what He is as the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, anything of His everlasting love to His people, of His unchanging purposes of grace and mercy to them, and know Him too as our God, Father, and eternal Friend; a knowledge of this unfolds and communicates grace, and the knowledge of this grace brings with it peace.

ii. Again, there is "*the knowledge of Jesus our Lord*." If we do not know Jesus for ourselves, by some spiritual discovery of

His person and work, what testimony have we of an interest in His grace? Because there is no grace except that which flows through Him, for "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." This is what we should ever labour after. Our daily, hourly desire and prayer should be to have spiritual discoveries of Christ; to see Him by the eye of faith; to enter into His glorious Person and finished work; to realise His presence, taste His love, and know Him and the power of His resurrection. This is what Paul so earnestly laboured after (Phil. 3:10); and for the excellency of this knowledge he suffered the loss of all things, and counted them but dung that he might win Christ. To know Him as our Surety and Sin-bearer, our Advocate and Intercessor, our Friend, Husband, and Brother; to know our interest in Him, and our union with Him; our place in His heart, our name on His breast, our memorial on the palms of His hands—what can surpass the blessedness of such a knowledge as this? Through this spiritual, experimental knowledge of Him, grace flows. As a watercourse opening upon a river brings down its irrigating stream into the parched meadow, so a knowledge of Christ opens up a channel through which the grace that is in Him flows into the barren, parched soul. Thus, as through grace alone we know Him, so every fresh communication of grace not only makes Him better known, but flows in through that very knowledge. The grace that comes through this knowledge of Him brings also peace; for He is "our peace." He has "broken down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace." He, therefore, came and preached peace "to those which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." His blood speaks peace to a guilty conscience; His voice says peace to the winds and waves of the surging heart; His last legacy was "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you;" His dying promise

was, "In Me ye shall have peace;" and, as the Prince of peace at God's right hand, He is able to fill us with "all joy and peace in believing," for His kingdom is "righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." And thus, through a knowledge of Him as our Lord, "grace and peace" are both "multiplied."

What I want to impress on your minds is this, that "grace and peace," these two rich gospel blessings, do not spring from anything in self, but are stored up in Christ, and are received out of His fulness. I want to beat down self, whether self in sin, or self in righteousness. Profane self, and professing self, must be alike beaten down, because till they are we cannot see the righteousness which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. As these are beaten down, faith springs up; a "like precious faith" with the prophets, martyrs, and saints of old. And this precious faith puts us into possession of every gospel blessing. If we have right views of Christ and of His work, and are led by the blessed Spirit, we shall see how suitable these truths are to our necessitous case, and shall bless God for providing a way whereby His grace and peace might be revealed and multiplied to our comfort and His own glory.