

the homeliest acts of common life, and intensifies and quickens every other motive to a life of exalted piety. Avoiding on the one hand the mere moral essay so much in fashion some half century ago, and on the other the mere stirring appeal, which makes impressions, but fails to give direction, we purpose, however humbly and defectively, to preach the great doctrines of the cross in their bearings on Christian duty—by which we mean sanctity of life and character, and a growing conformity to the image of our Lord Jesus.

It is impossible to express in words the necessities of a single human soul. Being created, we are left in a state of absolute dependence, and must be sustained by a power beyond and above ourselves—nor can the lapse of ages alter this necessary condition of our existence. To this we must add the truth attested by God's word, and conformed by all experience—our sinfulness—our corruption—our alienation from God. Men dream of being rich and increased in goods, but when they awake at the call of Christ, their dream is dispelled, and they find themselves poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked. To the sinner in his now awakened sense of deep, urgent need, how gracious the voice of infinite love which proclaims that it hath pleased the Father that in Christ should all fulness dwell.

The object of this Epistle is to warn the church in Colosse against pretentious philosophy and pharasaic Judaism; but in doing this the Apostle dwells with wide and joyous freedom on the Supreme glory and Godhead of the Saviour; he expatiates on his official relations and his glorious work as the Saviour of the sinful and lost. Redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of Divine grace, and translation from a state of alienation into a state of acceptance in and through Christ are his grand themes. And then he warmly and affectionately exhorts the Colossians to maintain an enlightened and unwavering attachment to their faith, and to watch with holy vigilance lest any man should spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ. The declaration of the text occupies a central position in the doctrinal part of this Epistle—and traces all blessings to the love of the Father as their ultimate source, while it presents Christ in his indissoluble relation to the redeemed, as the immutable fountain and spring of life, in whom according to the Father's good pleasure all fulness dwells.

In considering this fulness, we call attention first of all to the Deity of the Saviour, the fact of Christ being essentially one with the Father in nature and glory—the very fulness of the Godhead dwells substantially and unchangeably in Him. This is emphatically expressed in the next chapter, (v. 9). “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” This does not express something derived and superadded to a merely human being, it is not a flowing in of the Divine element into the human form. Jesus is not simply a deified man. All this comes infinitely short of the bodily or substantial fulness of the Godhead. The idea is the union of the Divine and the human in the person of Christ constituting Him both perfect God and perfect man—involving a pre-existent Divine nature, which has taken humanity into mysterious union with itself, and in which is included every property common to our humanity, and every attribute, perfection and excellence which belongs to the one self-existent and eternal God. This fulness is essential and underived, and therefore something of which it cannot be said that “it hath pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.” Yet it is this glorious constitution