Chapter 3

Separation, Dependence, Suffering

Daniel 1; 2:13-23; 3:12-30

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Him, and showed Himself to be God when He commanded those waves to subside. God opened the rock to supply His people with water, He sent down manna from heaven to feed them, He divided the waters for them to pass over, but that is not His way now, not the rule of His action now. It was the rule of His action once; that is, He operated upon the elements for His people of old; but He does not do that now, He carries us in His power. He *hides* us. It is not that He removes the difficulty but He gives me superiority to it, His own power carries me through it. He hides me in His pavilion. Think of that for a moment! Do you think the person is to be pitied who is in trouble, if Jehovah hides him in His pavilion? It is worth the trouble to be hidden of God, to be hidden in His pavilion, in the secret of His presence.

Now we come to *deliverance*, and that is the last thing. All that I have been speaking of is not *deliverance*, but now we have it. "And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me; therefore will I offer *in his tabernacle*, sacrifices of joy." Mark that the believer is never out of the dwelling-place of God. He dwells there, that is where the life of God, this blessed principle in us, abides. You must work it all out more fully for yourselves; I have only just given you the outline of it.

You will find all this portrayed to perfection in the Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect man, who manifested all the perfections of a man before God in this world as He walked through it. If you take His life, you will find to perfection those things that are unfolded here. He was "the Son of man who is in heaven." In trouble in this world, in difficulties, He hid Himself behind the will and pleasure of His Father. "I thank thee, and I bear witness to thee," as we have already had this evening; and farther on, after He had gone through that terrible judgment upon the cross, then He praises! "In the midst of the congregation will I sing praises unto thee." It is exactly the same thing in principle, and in our measure, to which we are called. It is the same life, the same dwelling-place, the same God! I know nothing more wonderful than the way God can sustain a man who has this blessed life in him, when everything is against him, as it is with you and me as Christians in this world. There is not a single thing connected with this scene that is not a hindrance. It is a blessed thing to find that out, and to find out, too, that our only secret of safety is in dwelling in the house of the Lord.

I was much interested the other day in reading Ex. 16 and 17. There you see that two things went to make up the history of the people through the wilderness -- feeding and resisting. There was the manna that came down from heaven to keep them, and there was the resistance. That is exactly what makes up the life of a Christian. Christ sustains us; He is the bread of our souls, sustaining this new life that is in us, and we dwell with Him in that blessed place where He is, beholding His beauty, our eye satisfied with the delights of that place. Thus I can resist the pressure of things around. What do I care for all the beauty here if I can be satisfied with Him? If I behold His beauty, do you think I am allured by the beauty here? And, further, if I "meditate with joy in his temple," I am hidden when trouble comes, and I praise Him.

The Lord instruct us by His Spirit! May He be pleased to use the simple things I have spoken to make you read the word of God more for yourselves. That is the true object of ministry, to bring hearts back to the word of God, with a fresh appetite for it. May God grant that we may have that appetite created, where it is not existing already, and strengthened where it is now, it may be, feeble and drooping; so that we may indeed be able to say,

> I have esteemed the words of thy mouth more than my necessary food!

Chapter 3:
Separation, Dependence, Suffering
Daniel 1; 2:13-23; 3:12-30

I have one definite object, beloved brethren, in my mind, in referring to these scriptures this evening. I am not going to touch the history itself, nor the circumstances connected with it, but I simply want to bring out the great principles which are connected with the history of this *remnant* of God's people -- which they were in their day -- principles which, I submit, have passed down to us as being the very principles by which God would characterize His people in these days. It is very interesting when you find certain great *principles* of God running through His word at all times. Of course the peculiar circumstances of Christianity in which our lot is cast, and the new and blessed position that we have been brought out into, in connection with Christ glorified at God's right hand, intensify these principles, but they themselves remain the same; and I take a history like this in the book of Daniel, because I think it serves as an illustration suitable to us all, and especially to those who are younger (for I have them much on my mind to-night), to bring out the grand, and blessed, and wonderful position, privilege, and power, that is ours by grace, in order that we may be *for* Christ in these days.

Now, first of all, you will notice this, that there is an immense analogy between the times of Daniel and those we are in. There is a verse in Isa. 39 I would just refer to for a moment. It contains a prediction of the fact that we get here, namely, that the days were to come when the nation of Israel itself would be prostrate, which was exactly the case in the days of Daniel, and referred to in this history. The nation was to be, as it were, at the feet of a foreign power, and the very pick of Israel, the very flower of the nation, were to be eunuchs, and serving in the palace of the king of Babylon. That was the prediction of the prophet Isaiah long before these times -- God's warning voice to the nation. In Dan. 11 you will find it word for word accomplished. The nation of Israel was paralyzed, it was broken up, so to speak -- thoroughly prostrated. Jehovah had retired from directly dealing with the earth, and every single thing was in the power of the king of Babylon.

This is exactly what you will find *in principle* as to the times we are in just now. What has taken place? Simply this -- that which God set up here to be a witness for Himself on this earth, out of which His own Son has been rejected, has

gone to pieces in the responsibility of man's hand. That is what is meant by the ruin and confusion that is all round about is. It is a complete wreck. If you look at the thing that God set up here in the earth to be *for* Him, what is it? What has it become? I am not speaking now, remember, of that which belongs to Christ -- belongs to God -- which nobody can touch; that is genuine and true: but I am speaking of that which was committed to the responsibility of man; and if you have never yet seen the difference between that which the Holy Ghost builds, the true, and real, and genuine thing for God, and that which was committed to man in responsibility as a builder, you have got a great deal to learn. There is that which God builds, and there is that which man builds. Well now, when I look out all around me, I see that which was entrusted to the responsibility of man to build, and the consequence is that, like everything else that man has had in responsibility, it has gone to pieces.

And that is the difficulty with souls to-day. You see really inquiring, anxious, intelligent, true minds, finding an immense difficulty when they look out, and see the confusion that is all around; and, let me say this, sometimes I fear we do not help them. For are we not very prone to be forgetful of the fact that we have our share in the ruin which has been perpetrated by man as a builder? We give them, I fear, the idea that we are *reconstructing* something that is to take the place of the confusion. I am sure that if you have got that in your soul you will always be feeble as to the maintenance of the truth of God. It is an immense thing to understand clearly and distinctly what things have become in man's hand, and what God's principles for His people in such a day are. Now I want to speak as simply about that as I can, and to point out to you this evening what these principles are, simply and plainly.

Now the first thing that marks a feeble remnant who are a witness for God in days of confusion, and ruin, and wretchedness all round about, is exactly what you find in the character of these "children," as they are called here in this Dan. 1. And what is that? Just this -- intense distinctness and *separateness* for God. That is the first thing. Here are a few, a feeble few, a little handful, so to speak -- less than a handful; here are three or four men, poor, weak things, but there is the distinctness of their Nazariteship and separation to God wholly acting in their hearts. Nothing will induce them to break that separation.

Now, beloved friends, let me say to you this evening, that kind of thing has become very feeble with us. Is our Nazariteship kept intact? Is our separateness to God preserved? Have we refused what the world offers? You can fill up the details for yourselves. I ask earnestly, have you refused to "pollute" yourselves? Have you refused to compromise, not only God and Christ, but the truth of God? Have you refused, at loss and cost to yourselves, to compromise the truth of God, and the honor of the Lord Jesus Christ, in days like these? That is the question. I believe the great question that God is raising amongst us is the question of our Nazariteship. Are we separate? And never forget that inward separateness of spirit produces outward separateness of walk and testimony. That is the very first question for each one -- Am I inwardly separate? It is an *individual* question, though, of course, it passes into what is *collective*. You cannot raise the collective state unless the individual state is right first. The reason of our weakness corporately is our weakness individually, because it is the individuals that go to make up the corporate thing.

I ask you tonight, beloved friends, does each individual here who is a member of Christ's body, each one who, by faith in that blood which cleanseth from all sin, belongs to Christ -- I ask, have we the sense of the distinctness which pertains to us as being set apart by that blood unto God, as those who are "elect according to the knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ?" Is there among you the sense of what it is to be a *member of Christ*? It is not a question of being saved. People say, "I am not afraid to die: I am not afraid of going to hell: I expect to go to heaven when I die." Ah, but there is a great deal more than that, if you are a Christian. Let me tell you this evening, if you are a Christian, you are a *member of Christ*, united to that blessed One in heaven, that glorified Man at God's right hand, by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. I say it is a wonderful thing to know I am a member of Christ. Just think of it for a moment! Why it separates me at once, the moment that it gets hold of my soul. Think of being united to Christ in glory! Beloved friends, the measure of His separation in us must be the measure of those who are one with Him. There can be no contradiction as to this. If I am united to that blessed One who is at God's right hand in the heavens, if I am a part of Christ, I belong to that which is the complement of Christ. You see I pass now from the individual to the collective; if I belong to that which the Spirit of God speaks of as "the fulness of him who filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:23), I have my separation marked out for me at once. It is not, "*May* I do this, or *may* I do the other?" but I have the distinctiveness of my position, and my separateness, marked out at once for me; there can be no mistake as to it.

You know very well what the separateness of Christ was here. Look at His path as a man down here in this world of sin and sorrow. Look at that beautiful, wonderful, isolated, separated pathway through this world. Trace it from the manger, where He was ignominiously laid at His birth, because "there was no room for him in the inn," down to the cross. Look at the separateness of it, the holiness of it, with Him the divinity of it! But mark what He says --

> As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world.

Think of that! You see, we have not the sense of these things. I feel it in my own soul, I am often compelled to say, Blessed God, is it true that I am not only united to the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven, but I have as distinct a mission on this earth as He had from Thee! Oh, it is wonderful! I do believe in my soul, and I speak what I believe tonight, that it is in this question of Nazariteship that we are feeble. I believe that is the point of our departure; there is not this distinctness, there is not this divine, thorough, complete separateness to God. Look at Daniel. He "would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat." He would not touch it. But what people say is this -- "Ah, that was a wonderful thing, but the Providence of God so ordered that Daniel was in those circumstances." Just exactly as they say about Moses: "The Providence of God so ordered it that Moses grew up to be the reputed son of

Pharaoh's daughter. There never was a more distinct case of providence than that." I do not deny it for a moment; but, beloved friends, do you think I touch that? Do you think I say one word against that? God forbid. But I am speaking of a thing that does not relate to the Providence of God at all.

The Providence of God is always blessed; but when I come to a principle that is to actuate me on my side, that is not Providence -- it is *faith*, another thing altogether. And it was on that principle that this man Moses acted; as soon as he came to years, as soon as he passed out of childhood into the maturity of years, that divine principle of *faith* asserted itself in him. "He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter," and he chose to suffer affliction with the people of God. That is exactly the very principle manifested here in the case of Daniel, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. It is beautiful to look at them. Their names were changed; the king called them by other names, to obliterate from their hearts, if he could, all remembrance of the land of Israel, and the Jehovah of Israel. Every sort of thing that could be brought to bear upon them was tried, to efface, if possible, any little lingering trace of their connection with the people of God, and the Jehovah of Israel.

For myself, when I look at it, beloved friends, all this is most blessed. Here is this first principle, this blessed principle, living and dwelling in the heart of Daniel and of his three friends: "He would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat," and he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

Now it would be entirely outside my present purpose, and I will say quite unsuitable for me to refer to the details of this great principle as it applies to you. We, beloved friends, are better able to do that than we would fain persuade ourselves. People are fond of saying, "Well, how does that apply to me?" and so forth; and they feel all the time that it applies to them more closely than they like: all the while conscience is wincing under the application of it. So that I do not mean to go into details, but I simply press this first great principle as an *individual* principle, applicable to everyone of us in our individual character before God, and applicable to us in our corporate relationships as well. This is the first thing for each of us -- have we kept and preserved, and are we keeping our Nazariteship intact? Have I refused to pollute myself with the portion of the king's meat? That is the first thing.

Observe what comes after that. It is exceedingly blessed for us to remember it in these days, as an encouragement and comfort to our hearts. That which follows the preservation of their separation to God is this -- God marks His appreciation of it by giving these men wisdom, and understanding, and knowledge. That is the way He marks it. And, beloved friends, let me say this to-night -- there is not one who can contradict it, it is impossible to gainsay the fact -- that what at first characterized the feeble few (that is the only way I would speak of them) to whom God was pleased to make known His mind in these last times, and who have escaped, through mercy, out of the corruptions of Christendom all around, to know the simplicity of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the holiness of that name, was understanding and knowledge of God's mind, in a word, divine intelligence. Does that characterize them now? That is the question. It was not *work* that characterized them in former days. I hope nobody will be offended with me for saying this -- it was not *activity* which made them remarkable. There is where *our* danger is; there is where we are feeble, beloved friends. We have practically lost our *separateness*, and we have correspondingly practically lost the premium that God puts upon it, and we are obliged to make up for it by a sort of pretentious display of activity before men. You know perfectly well that is the tendency, and that is what catches the young especially. They are caught by it; it has a certain amount of attractiveness about it, and I will tell you why. A round of continued activity, a series of perpetual evolutions of that kind, is a sort of quietus to the exercise of the soul. There is no time for thought, no time for heart-searching, little time for meditation or prayer. It is a most wonderful thing and I repeat it again, I do not in the least feel that I am going over old ground -- I say it is sorrowful how little we pray; it is sorrowful how little people read the word of God, how little they meditate. I am sure our prayer-meetings are humbling at times. Why is it so, beloved friends? What is the reason of that? Why is it that there is so little real waiting of soul upon God? Why so little dependence upon Him? Why is it one finds so few hearts that are burdened?

Now let us ask you this as a practical question. How much today have you prayed for the church of God? How much have you prayed for the saints of God? and how much do you pray every day of your life? How much is it upon your heart as a *burden*, because it relates to the interests of *Christ* and the glory of *Christ*? How much do you seek solitude with God, and retirement with Him and long to be at home with God, to shut the world out, and yourself in, that you may be there with God about those wonderful interests of Christ, because you have got communion with His mind about that which is so dear to Him on this earth? I tell you the lack of all this is simply the result of the want of separation; and it is not merely a person being separated *outwardly*. It is possible for saints to satisfy themselves if they have *outwardly* escaped from the wreck and the corruption that is all around. They say, "Oh, well I have escaped from the corruption that is outside; my body is not in it." But the question is, is your *heart* outside the world, and is your *spirit* separated from it as much as your body? Do you think, if I may speak strongly (though I do not apologize, for I speak before God, I trust) do you think that what the blessed God wants is a number of individuals brought together into a place before Him, but whose hearts are far away elsewhere? Do you think it is a mere question of what is outside and seen? Beloved friends, what He is looking for is the affection of a heart, and the earnestness of a soul that has found His own Son in heaven! If it is merely a question of your bodily presence, while your heart and affections are outside, what I say is, and I say it with all gentleness tonight, "My son, give me thine *heart*!"

This is where the feebleness is; it is this want of separation. Inward separateness would lead to outward separateness; but outward separateness will never produce inward separateness. If your heart and affections, your intelligence, your inner man, are separated to God, then your body, as a vessel, will soon follow that which controls it.

Now look at this in Daniel, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Take that second chapter {Dan. 2}. I will just say a little more about prayer. As soon as ever that decree of Nebuchadnezzar goes out to slay the wise men of Babylon, because they could not make known the dream—not the interpretation, but the dream; the dream itself had passed out of Nebuchadnezzar's recollection, and the interpretation, of course, was gone -- what was the first thing that Daniel and his companions did? They took the thing to *God*, beloved friends. What is the first thing you would do? I would bring it down to homely, every-day, circumstances. When difficulties come, what is the first thing you do? Do you go to God? Let us be honest now before the Lord tonight. When you have a difficulty, is not the first thought in your mind whether there is anybody that has wisdom enough to give you direction about it? And if you knew of any wise man, or any man of skill, if he was in the very farthest end of the city, would you not find him out, and get all you could out of him? Exactly. And is not that the very thing that is creeping into the church of God? Take, for instance, any difficulty coming into the company of saints. Do they go down on their knees, and humble themselves before God, first, because there is a difficulty, and next, because they have not understanding enough to meet it? Does the thing really burden them at all? Is not the first thought that comes into their mind just this -- if they could get some person of ability or skill, some great man that has a name, to settle the difficulty! I am speaking of practical things tonight, beloved friends, and you and I know that what I have been saying is exactly what takes place.

Now look at Daniel. The moment that his life was at stake, the instant this difficulty was presented to him and his companions, he says, "Give me *time*." For what? That they might make supplication to the God of heaven! They are dependent, they go to God about it. Now I will tell you what all around reminds me of. We ought to feel it. Our conduct is far too like Jacob, who skillfully made all his arrangements, and then went and prayed! He made every arrangement with all the consummate skill of a tactician, made himself perfectly safe first of all, as he thought, and then went and prayed! That is exactly what we do. But here I find, in this simple representation of the remnant of God's people in those days, they come and make supplication to the God of heaven, in the dependence of hearts that knew what it was to be cast upon Him, Jehovah their resource, their help, their *only* stay, but at the same time their *all-sufficient* stay.

I often think, beloved friends, and oftener find myself saying, and often hear others say too, "We have no one but God to go to; we have no one but the Lord"; as if He were not enough. Our very expressions, I feel in my heart, show exactly where we have dropped. "We have no one but the Lord." Do you think we are the worse for that? Are not we well off for that? Nay, are we not ten thousand times better off that we have no one but God? Do we want anybody else? Is He amongst His people? Is He sufficient? Is He equal to every emergency? Has Christ forgotten that which is so dear to Him? Do you think the Head in heaven is indifferent to the necessities of the members on earth? Do you think the ear of the blessed God is not interested by the cries of His people?

But, alas! so poor is our testimony to the blessedness of prayer, that you would never think that there was an ear up there that was waiting to be interested with prayer. You would never think that there were hearts down here that felt the burden of things around. You would never think that there was a blessed, wonder-working God, who stoops to hear the whisper of a poor heart that has nothing but wants to spread before Him. That is what He looks and waits for. Look how blessed it is here in this history. What is the result of this waiting upon God? Of course the result of it was that the thing was made known at once to Daniel. There was a way out of the difficulty at once, of course there was. I often think of that passage in Hebrews about Abraham:

> For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself,

and, says the Holy Ghost, commenting upon it,

> so, after he had patiently endured, he *obtained* the promise.

Do you think that anyone ever waited upon God in sincerity and reality, in true earnestness of heart, without finding that God came in and marked His sense of it?

You may depend upon it, in proportion as we have the sense that we are interesting God's ear, there will be real earnestness, though my soul may be burdened with but one thing. It is most blessed oftentimes to see a person whose spirit is burdened with one thing, and who, in the simplicity of a full heart, can tell that one thing out into God's ear. The Lord give us more true dependence, and real prayer! I do feel we are not people of dependence and prayer as we might be, and I feel that in our difficulties, and exercises, and straits, we run hither and thither, looking for help from every quarter but God. Let me say this, that the result of that is simply going down to Egypt. That is the full-blown result of taking the eye off God, and looking to an arm of flesh, whatever that arm may be. We cannot avoid it. It is simply the story of Abram going down to Egypt repeating itself.

Well, now, the last thing I notice in connection with this remnant in Babylon, as also being characteristic of what should be found amongst the people of God in these days, is *suffering*. That is the last thing I will speak of thus evening.

You see here the king tests the fidelity of these men, as to whether they will give up the worship of the true God, and their allegiance and adherence to the true God, and bow down to the great image that Nebuchadnezzar set up. There is a little word here that is to me exceedingly interesting. It occurred to me as I was reading the passage this evening. It comes in in connection with another passage of scripture I was speaking of elsewhere last evening -- that passage in Philippians, where the apostle speaks of Christ being magnified in his body (Phil. 1:20). The one desire he had, the ruling desire of his soul was, that Christ should be magnified in his body, "whether by life or by death"; that is to say, that which originally was the platform whereon Satan displayed his power, man's body, that wherein he manifested all his hatred and all his malignity against God and Christ. God says, "I am going to take up that same vessel, and make it the platform on which I will display the power of Christ"; and the apostle says in Phil. 1 -- it is wonderful to think of it -- "I have full communion with what God is doing." That is the meaning of the words," My earnest

expectation and my hope." He had full fellowship with the thoughts of God. It is a wonderful thing to have fellowship with the purposes of God concerning Christ: and here, in Daniel, are people who have this same thought before them, according to what was then known, and hence we find that the king is obliged to own (Phil. 3:28),

> They have yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God.

You see these men thrown into the fire, bound hand and foot, the emblem of weakness, cast into a furnace heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated; that is, the perfection of malignant power to destroy them. Was not God magnified in their bodies? And what is the result? They come up out of the furnace, not even the smell of fire upon them, not a hair of their head singed. And, more than that, there was companionship. "I see four men walking, and the form of the fourth is like the son of God." There was most blessed company. They were cast down bound into the midst of this burning, fiery, furnace, and there is not a word of complaint. They were not careful. Think of that. "We are not *careful* to answer thee in this matter." They were not disconcerted, not "put out," as we say, but yielded themselves entirely into the hands of God, in patient meekness. They are prepared to suffer at any cost. God is their stay and strength, and God comes in, and intervenes for them, and they are the exhibition, under the circumstances in which they were, of that blessed power of God by which He can in magnify Himself in bodies like yours and mine.

Now just look how little Christ is magnified in our bodies! Alas! there is a great deal of the magnifying of the world in our bodies, and of self, and of the flesh, but how little there is of the magnifying of Christ! It is humbling when you think of it. If you look around, and see the bodies of God's people, and look at what they are, what are they an exhibition of? The power of the flesh too often, and the power of the world, and the power of nature, but very little of the power of Christ. "That Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death," was Paul's desire. Oh, may it be ours likewise! Well, now, I believe those principles that come out of these three chapters of Daniel, namely, first, separation to God at every cost; secondly, thorough dependence upon Him in difficulties; and thirdly, patience in suffering for His name, are the three great characteristic principles that ought to mark the people of God today. I am not speaking now at all of what relates to us in our church position, but of that which would *bear upon* our church position, of that which enters into it, of that which would give a wonderful vitality and wonderful power, and wonderful freshness, to our church position.

May I say one word on another remnant that you find in the OT, comparing it with a remnant in the NT? Just turn with me to Mal. 3:16.

> Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.

You see what characterized the remnant in the closing days of OT history -- the fear of God, and communion one with another. Does that characterize us, beloved friends? Is there anything like that amongst us? I say it is a good thing that we should see where our dangers are. Is there anybody here tonight *satisfied* with the state of things as it is? Are you satisfied to see things as they are? Well, I should think a person who is satisfied with things as they are must be very far from God. Any person who could sit down in self-complacency, and say, "Oh, well, I think it is not so afflicting after all. We are not so bad as all that. That is an extreme view of it; that is a very hard thing to say"; I say such a person has no sense whatever of what is befitting the testimony of the Lord.

Beloved friends, all I say is this, the nearer we are practically to God, and the closer we walk with Him, and the more the thoughts of God are controlling our minds and affections, the more we shall feel how lacking we are, and how infected we are by that very spirit of self-complacency which characterized Laodicea, which said of itself, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing"; not knowing that it, of all others (such is the force of the expression), was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

But looking at that blessed characteristic of the remnant at the close of the OT, "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another --" Do you get that now? Where is that now? Where is there "fearing the Lord, and speaking often one to another," beloved friends? But think of God hearkening to, and noting that! Think of that having an interest for the ear of the blessed God! "The Lord hearkened, and heard it." And think of Him writing that in a book of remembrance! He thinks it worth His while to record in a book of remembrance before Himself, this expression of "fear," and communion, and fellowship.

Well now, the same thing we find in the remnant when the Lord Jesus Christ came. In the New Testament, what do you find about Simeon and Anna? Turn to the beginning of the Gospel of Luke, where you find the remnant, in principle just as you did at the close of the OT. What do you find about it? Do you find any great thing marking it, any activity or display of wonderful deeds distinguishing it? Nothing of the kind. It is simply this, that Simeon was "waiting for the consolation of Israel," and the Holy Ghost on him, and a revelation to him that he should not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ. And when he went into the temple, and saw the child Jesus, as soon as ever he got that blessed One in his arms -- the salvation of God in the person of Jesus -- he said, My cup is full, and I can die now. "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

It was the same with Anna. She did not depart from the temple, and her one thought was, "Him." She "spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Just as in the Old Testament remnant I was speaking of, "they feared the Lord, and spake often one to another," so her one thought and subject of conversation, the thing that occupied her, was "Him." "She spake of him" to all them that were of like hope, and expectation, and affection, with herself.

Beloved friends, I feel it is a good thing for us to look at these traits of character marking the people of God, in times when there was general departure, and declension, and

feebleness around, because such are the times we are in now. We are in a time of the most exceeding departure from God. I believe Satan's great object at the present moment is to get us to take up with something -- it may not be wrong in itself. I do not think that is the temptation now -- but something other than *the one thing* that God would have His people occupied with. It may be *activity* for God towards man, or anything with which he can get your heart engrossed and occupied, except this -- the simple maintenance of "the testimony of our Lord." As the apostle says in 2 Tim. 1:8, "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the *testimony* of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God."

Observe that the great thing that is the regulating power for days like these is to know one's *position*. It is Christ who marks that position for me. Where is He? He is at God's right hand in heaven. Then, I say, I am a heavenly person. As regards this earth, He is rejected out of it. That separates me clearly and distinctly from it. The acceptance of Christ in glory gives me a heavenly character, if I am one with Him, and the rejection of Christ on the earth puts me into an outside place, if I have devotedness and affection for Him.

The Lord stir up our hearts, beloved friends, by His Spirit, in these last times, that we may not be unmindful of what Satan is doing, that we may discern the counterfeit that he is spreading before the people of God. You may depend upon it, it is a counterfeit, it is a wile; if he can get our hearts off Christ, and fix them on anything else than the testimony of our Lord, that which I have feebly endeavored to set forth this evening, though it may be something that appears to be for God, then he has succeeded in his object.

The Lord, by His Spirit, give us to keep our Nazariteship, to be a separate people. What a wonderful thing to be separate! The Lord, give us to know, too, that He is sufficient for us! The Lord save us from looking to man, and teach to look simply to Him, to have our resources in Him, to have our hearts confident that He cares for His own, and that He is *amongst* us! Blessed it is to think of that! Look how little we have the sense of that -- that He is *amongst* us!

The Lord bring these things before our hearts this evening by His own Spirit, and quicken us, and give us a sense of what is due to His own name, that we may be more distinctly *for* Him in these times, to the praise of the glory of His grace, through Jesus Christ!