

THE
CLOSING TESTIMONY:

BEING

LECTURES BY J. B. S.



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THE CLOSING TESTIMONY.

NO. I.

THE RESURRECTION.

JOHN XX. 1-20.

I DESIRE, the Lord helping me, to bring before you in these lectures what I may call the closing testimony and how we are prepared for the coming of the Lord. The church has failed as the "candlestick;" we see in the church at Ephesus that they had "left their first love," and they were threatened with the removal of the candlestick. The candlestick, or lamp-stand, implied that from the church, light would be found on the earth. Hence when things had come to their worst in Thyatira, there is no longer the candlestick, but "I will give him the morning star." We should be characterised now by looking for the Lord to come. The morning star is the harbinger of the day; not exactly the day, but the harbinger of the day.

Any one who is accustomed to see the morning star knows when he sees it that the day is at hand. It is not the day, but it is the harbinger of the day. Thus Peter says, "the day star arise in your hearts."

I desire in some measure to set before you your preparation for the Lord's coming. We read in Luke xii. 47, of "that servant which knew his Lord's will and prepared not himself." I am not speaking of the rapture, but of being prepared for the Lord to come, how we are ready for Him. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." I do not think any one is qualified to say "Come," but the bride. As scripture presents it, no one can say, "Come," but the bride. It is not merely to say the word "Come." *All* the virgins went forth to meet the Bridegroom; but the question is whether you are up to what is involved in the wonderful invitation, "Come;" whether you are really in heart asking the Lord to come back to earth. It is a very solemn thing for any one to say, "Come." You may ask, Would it not be right to say, "Come?" If truly said, it would be right; but remember it is the Spirit and the bride say, "Come," and the effect is that others may be induced to say it.

I desire, in these lectures, to lead you to see the formation and calling of the bride. I begin with THE RESURRECTION; and in order

to make the subject plain, I shall divide it into sections.

The first section is—

THE RESURRECTION AS IT IS TO GOD.

You will not wonder if I proceed slowly and perhaps not always quite distinctly, because the subject, as I am presenting it, is new to me, and I have to speak carefully. But I see the importance of it, and I desire to convey it to you. The first part is to understand the resurrection as it is to God. The resurrection is a proof that a Man has glorified God. I cannot turn to every scripture which relates to it, but I will name the chapters. In John xii. the Lord says, "Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." The Son of God was glorified when He raised Lazarus, and He was glorified Himself when He was raised up; as we read in another place, He was "raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." John xiii. 31 gives you the whole in a small compass: "Therefore when he [Judas] was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in

himself, and shall straightway glorify him." I ask you to ponder the fact that a Man has glorified God. I believe there is an immensity conveyed in that—a Man has glorified God, and the glory claimed that Man. I ask you to dwell for a moment upon what that is to God. It is not merely that Christ has come when man had failed under every trial. If you look at the history of man as the scripture recounts it, you will see that the more God revealed Himself to him (and in every new dispensation God was more revealed to man than in the previous one), the more he failed. And so at the end the Lord says, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain." But now what has come? God has laid help upon One that is mighty. His own arm has brought salvation to Him; He sends His Son, and the Son says, "I come to do thy will, O God." Not only did He in private and in public set forth everything to the satisfaction of God—He came as the healer of the breach—but after having been for thirty years in all His walk and ways beautiful in the eye of God in private life, He so set forth God in His public ministry that on the holy mount there comes a voice out of the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son; hear him." It culminates in the mount of Transfiguration, where the glory itself claims Him.

And now from this point, He goes down to die. Not only was He in every way beautiful to God as a Man upon the earth, but now He will bear the judgment that rests upon man. That judgment is death ; there are not merely sins on man, but death is on him. Hence the Lord descends from the holy mount to die, and He says, " This is your hour and the power of darkness." We know that in the garden of Gethsemane this perfect One, the delight of God as a Man here upon earth, anticipated the terrible judgment He was to bear. Great as that was, it was not all. The marvellous work was that He who came to bear the judgment on man, not only bore it, but in bearing the judgment He glorified God. You will see presently the effect of this. He not only bore the judgment due to man, gave up the life to which sin could be attached, but could say, " Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." He so unswervingly maintained all that was due to God in that terrible moment, so glorified God, that He was " raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." Now contemplate the resurrection as it is to God ! God is no longer dealing with man as He had been dealing with him, working upon man, making trial of him ; *that is over*. But now God works (blessed be His name !) from His own side. If you appre-

hend this it will be an immense help to you : God works now *downwards* from a Man in glory. If you apprehend that, you will get some idea of the resurrection as it is to God. He now *works downwards*, and there is no one saved now but by the light which comes from the glory of God resting on a Man at the right hand of God ; it is the light out of heaven. And therefore, "If our gospel be hid"—mark the expression—"it is hid in them that are lost ; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ"—(the correct reading)—"should shine unto them." Man is utterly ruined, under the judgment of death ; but we are looking now at the resurrection as it is to God. I hope you can see that now He works from another Man. I am not yet looking at the resurrection as it is in relation to the believer, but as it is to God : even that when Christ bore the judgment on the man who dishonoured God, then He glorified God, so that instead of man being at the greatest distance, Man in His blessed Person is now at the right hand of God ; and from that point God now works. If you apprehend that, you will find it a wonderful opening out to your soul, and a delight to your heart. The resurrection implies that there has been death (death is the judgment

of God on Adam and his race) ; but it also assures us that the Man who died has risen out from among the dead, "In that he died he died unto sin once ; but in that he liveth he liveth unto God." The man who was under judgment has been judicially terminated in the eye of God. But I am rather anticipating now what belongs to another section. So far is the first section, and I trust that you will ponder it, for if you do, I am sure you will get more from it than I can convey to you.

Now I come to the second section—

THE RESURRECTION AS IT IS TO CHRIST.

Now the first thing with Him is, that through it He has opened the way for God to express His heart to His full satisfaction. That which was a puzzle to the prodigal's elder brother, is made clear, even that the one who was a disgrace to the family should be greeted with the greatest affection, and set in the highest place, and that the one who had always been well conducted should not receive anything of the same character. Why was that ? Because the prodigal is brought in on the ground of the glorified Man ; the other is on the ground of his goodness. People dwell on the importance of forgiveness ; but forgiveness—great grace as

that is—is a very small part of the gospel ; for the gospel is not merely the benefit and gain of the sinner, but there is God's part in it ; as Christ said after His interview with the woman of Samaria, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of. . . . My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." He says, as it were, I want to let my Father's heart come out according to all its mighty volume, and express itself to a poor prodigal. I do not think we can at all estimate what the joy was to Christ, when He said, "I have glorified thee on the earth ; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

That is the first point in connection with the resurrection as it is to Christ. The second is that He has a new kindred. In John xii. 24 He says, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." And again in chapter xx., "Go to my brethren." I know well, and I would like you to feel it, that while every one likes to have forgiveness, there is a terrible reluctance in our nature to accept the resurrection. Why? Because if you accept it, you must part with the old man. Nine-tenths of the believers who have faith in the virtue of the blood, have not in faith appropriated the resurrection. True they have got the good of the

resurrection on God's part, even though they have not appropriated it ; and it is an immense comfort to know that my acceptance with God is according to the perfection of Christ's work, not according to the measure in which I appropriate it. Acceptance with God never alters, nor can it be improved. Your own enjoyment of it will improve, but you cannot improve God's acceptance. But I have digressed. I was speaking of the resurrection as it is to Christ. It is consequent on His being heard from the horns of the unicorns that He takes His place in the midst of the church. And then He announces, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." He now has *brethren*. "Both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one ; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." That is the new kindred, the many grains out of the corn of wheat. Hence He said to Mary Magdalene, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father ; and to my God and your God." Now He can make known the Father ; "I will declare thy name unto my brethren ;" or, as in John xvii., "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." It is revealed that now He has a company of His own order, or as

we find in another scripture, "this is a great mystery." You do not get the mystery in Hebrews; but the great mystery is that we are of His flesh, members of His body; it is not that He is of us, but we are of Him. "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." I am now looking at the resurrection as it is to Him. Then as to Israel, though by dying He gave up all He was entitled to as man, yet "As concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David." (Acts xiii. 34.) And in Psalm ii. Jehovah says to Him, "This day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." I desire that the youngest here should apprehend the wonderful change that has taken place as to everything on this earth because of the resurrection. I think we do not really apprehend it; I speak for myself; I am learning it, thank God, and I am increasingly impressed, and thankful to be impressed, with the magnitude of things consequent on the resurrection. But as I said before, I believe there is a natural reluctance in us to accept it.

The next section is,

HOW GOD IS TO THE BELIEVER BECAUSE
OF THE RESURRECTION.

We have seen that the man under the judgment of death has gone in judgment in the cross of Christ, and the Man who bore that judgment and thus removed it, is the only Man now before the eye of God, so that God can be "just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." I have already spoken of the elder brother: how unaccountable it was to him that the prodigal, who was a disgrace and a scandal, should be received with the greatest affection and distinction. Simply because he is received on the ground of the glorified Man, and not merely on the ground of a forgiven sinner. God can now come forth in the fulness of His heart to every returning one, because He accepts us "in the Beloved." No one can fully estimate the greatness of this reception; how the blessed God can greet the returning prodigal! We read of it as a parable; but it is a communication of infinite blessing to us. You could not be in a better acceptance, it could not be improved.

Next you have to enjoy this acceptance; that is your side and quite different. I press it upon every one of you (you will find it of

great importance)—do not confound your enjoyment of the acceptance with the acceptance itself. The acceptance is according to the greatness of what Christ is to God ; your enjoyment of it is as you walk in the Spirit: the one is because of all that has been done ; the other is as you know by the Spirit consciously the grace of God. Your faith must first be simple and clear, that God's acceptance of you could not be greater than it is. Next, do you enjoy it? That is quite another question. The prodigal son did not enjoy it at first ; but he was brought into the enjoyment of it, he had to be fitted for it ; but his fitness did not improve the acceptance, it made him capable of enjoying the acceptance. I am speaking of the resurrection now, how God is to the believer because of the resurrection ; that the man who was under judgment has gone in judgment in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, who there glorified God. The man under judgment was not merely removed in the cross, but Christ glorified God in His death. The blessed Lord so unswervingly maintained, in the darkest and most distant spot, all that was due to God, that He glorified God there, and therefore He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father. Thus you can see how the resurrection is for God to us.

I turn now to the fourth section,

THE RESURRECTION AS IT IS TO THE
BELIEVER WITH GOD.

This section is of the deepest importance to every one. I have no doubt that the lack of power and divine joy in believers is because they do not in faith understand the resurrection as it is for them with God. I hope you will not confound the resurrection as it is for God to you, with the resurrection as it is for you *with* God. You have seen, I trust, that the man under judgment has gone from the eye of God. If you look at Christ as man's surety, He has removed the man under judgment in His death, but He who bore the judgment has been raised from the dead. To the believer the man under judgment has gone in judgment in the eye of God, and the only Man now before God is "the Man Christ Jesus," who glorified Him in bearing the judgment, and He is at the right hand of God, and from Him in glory God now works in opening eyes and turning from darkness to light. This is God's side; but now for your side. You must first realise, and it is an immense grace that our old man is crucified with Christ and thus removed, hence you can account for the reluctance

to receive the truth of the resurrection. You cannot be before God in the man who was removed in judgment in the cross of Christ. God never returns to that man. Lay hold of this by faith simply and distinctly, let not the enemy disturb you from it, that the man under judgment has gone in judgment from the eye of God, and the only man before His eye now, for every believer, is the Man who glorified Him. This is an immense step. This you accept in faith. Now comes your side. You are to be in keeping with the acceptance which you hold in faith ; and now it is not that by faith you see yourself free of the law of sin and death, but you are so by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Many are hindered and damaged here, they seek to be free by believing that they are free, instead of being really so by the Spirit of God. God's grace has two parts, and you must bear them in mind ; He has removed the man under judgment from His own eye in the cross, and as you have *faith* you enjoy it ; next, He gives you the Holy Spirit, the power of God, to maintain you in keeping with His acceptance of you in Christ. Hence we find in Romans v. that we are justified by faith, and next in Romans viii. 2, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law

of sin and death." "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;" you are clear. It is simple and wonderfully beautiful. God has removed it all from His own eye; hold that in faith ever. It is unalterable. One might say, "Yes, but it is not gone from my eye; I am like the prodigal, I am distressed at my disparity." But God has given you the Spirit that you might be in Christ before Him in divine power, and thus as clear of the old man practically, as you are in God's eye because of the work of Christ. I am speaking now of the new position which you occupy by the Spirit of God. This is our side. It is as you walk in the Spirit you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. One might say, I lost my temper this morning. Then you were not walking in the Spirit. It is faith ever which appropriates God's side, for He never alters; you are always in the same acceptance. He never returns to the old order, He never revives it; I do not say He does not see you walking in the flesh; He does, and He will judge you for it if you do not judge yourself; hence we read of a man delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh. When you understand your new position by grace, then you will understand that you are severed

from the old man by the death of Christ ; you are dead with Christ, and severed from the man under judgment, and now you learn to say, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ;" this is experimental. The man under judgment has gone in judgment from the eye of God (never to return) for the believer ; you must keep to that. If you say, "Oh, but it *does* return to me," it is because you are not walking in the Spirit. If you were walking in the Spirit, you would not fulfil the lusts of the flesh ; and you are walking in the Spirit when Christ is paramount. Nothing can be more wonderful than the position in which God in His grace has set you. Finally, there is another great gain to us from the resurrection ; we shall have a glorious body like unto His own glorious body (how little we know what that is), so that "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." Christ is the firstfruits of them that slept.

I have spoken on four sections, and I now come to the fifth, which is important for us to keep in mind,

THE RESURRECTION AS IT IS TO THE POWER OF EVIL.

Christ in rising from the dead has overcome

all the power of evil. If you ponder on the immense range which the resurrection embraces you will be greatly helped. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same ; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil ;" He fulfils the promise in Eden that one born of a woman should bruise the serpent's head. He could say, "This is your hour and the power of darkness ;" but, as we read in Colossians ii., He triumphed over all in death ; and as He says to John in Patmos, "I have the keys of hell and of death." I need not multiply passages ; but you will see that He must reign till all enemies be put under His feet ; "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet ;" "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." And you see in Ephesians i. 19 that we share with Him in the power of His resurrection ; "And [to know] what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." You will say

that this is a marvellous position accomplished by the resurrection of the Man Christ Jesus from the dead. A Man in the Person of Christ has overcome all the power of Satan ; He submitted to the utmost of Satan's power, and then vanquished it. He in death, death o'erthrew. God always, I need not say, was greater than Satan ; but in the gospels we see the marvellous fact that a Man has greater power than Satan, so that the devil himself exclaimed, "Thou art the Son of God." (Mark iii. 11.) But now Christ has risen out of death. He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Eventually when the man child is caught up into heaven, Satan will be dislodged. That will not be fulfilled, I believe, until the church is caught up to be with Christ ; then Satan is cast down. But even now, though we are in the world where Satan "as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour," (for there is no one for God here who is not assailed by him), "Whom resist, stedfast in the faith." "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Why? Because he will find Christ in you. But that is not all. Look at Ephesians vi, 10, 11 : "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Your power comes from Him who has risen from the dead. He glorified God, and has brought forth much fruit—His brethren; and He has put us in this wonderful place of superiority to Satan here. We are often assailed by Satan, but the Lord allows us to be assailed in order that He may prove to us the superiority of His power. When Paul was imprisoned at Rome, the power of evil seemed to have succeeded; but the Lord used it as an occasion to reveal His mind more fully.

The concluding section is,

THE RESURRECTION AS IT IS TO ALL
CREATION.

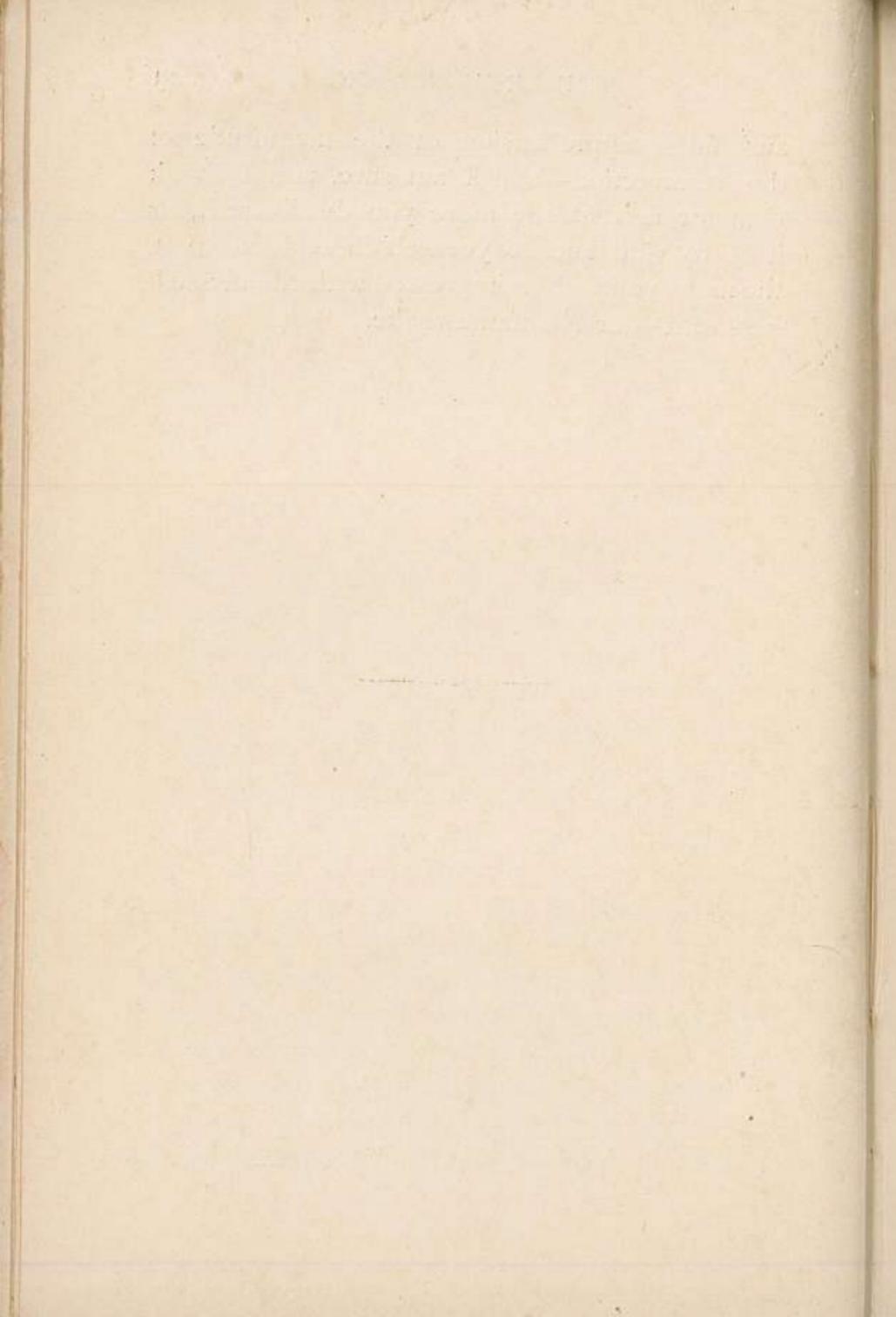
You get an intimation of it in the chapter I have read in the words, "The first day of the week." We read of our blessed Lord that He is "The beginning of the creation of God;" everything in creation will be suited to Him. The immensity of the subject is beyond my ability to explain. It is more to be meditated on than to be explained; and I believe the more you meditate on it, the more it will open out to you, and you will see the wonderful new

order of things because of the resurrection. When you see the resurrection as it is for God to us, that He can receive you in fullest affection and favour, because of Christ who glorified Him, bearing the judgment on man. He has given you the Spirit, so that you can say, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Christ also is superior to all the power of evil, and He is the beginning of the creation of God, and He will make all things new. If you read the last chapter of 2 Peter, you will see that the millennium is not referred to, but that there will be "New heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." You get the same in Colossians, where we read that He will reconcile all things to Himself; things in heaven and things on earth; which was typified in Leviticus xvi. I give you the chapters, because I trust the Lord will lead you all to meditate on the subject; I believe the great lack in souls is that they do not meditate on these things. There are three things necessary for any profit; the first is to receive; the second is to ruminate, or meditate; and the next is to assimilate; that is, be *of* it; you never will be of it if you do not ruminate.

I need not add more, but I trust the Lord will lead each one of you to have a deeper

and fuller apprehension of the magnitude of the resurrection—and I am sure, and I thank God for it, that the more you dwell on it, as it is to God and to yourself in relation to it, the more you will be impressed with the blessedness of it—for His name's sake.





THE CLOSING TESTIMONY.

No. II.

CHRIST FORMED IN YOU.

GALATIANS II. 20.

THE subject I desire to bring before you this evening is CHRIST FORMED IN YOU, of which the apostle speaks in this epistle, when he writes: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." (Gal. iv. 19.) You must first know justification. You will not receive this great grace, "Christ formed in you," until you enjoy justification. Many here may think that they know justification. Justification is more than assurance through faith in the blood. You are justified when you believe that God has raised up Christ from the dead; He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised for our justification." Let me exercise your hearts a little as to the acceptance with God which you have found because of the resurrection of Christ. Have you learned that you

are not only sheltered from the Judge by the blood of Christ, but that the man who was under the judgment of God has gone in death? If you believe this, it must be plain to you that the man under the judgment of God has been judicially ended in the cross of Christ. Hence the believer is not before God as the man who was under His judgment, but you, a believer, are before Him as Christ is—the Man who bore the judgment and has been raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Christ glorified God in bearing the judgment. There is a Man in glory at the right hand of God. If you study the latter part of Romans v., you will see the difference between Adam and Christ. Adam was a figure of Him that was to come, and “If by one man’s offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” It becomes of the deepest importance whether you are accounted by God as Christ, the Man who has risen from the dead, or as the man under the judgment of God. If you have accepted in faith that Christ has risen from the dead, you must see that the man ended in the cross of Christ cannot appear before God. You must admit that our old man is crucified with Christ: you cannot make anything of a dead man. After the Lord appeared unto Saul

of Tarsus, for three days he neither ate nor drank. What was he doing? He had heard the voice of the Lord; he had seen the light; there was no question as to the divine work in him; but what was he doing those three days? He was appropriating Christ's death. And that is where the great lack in souls is. Saul found that the only way to get clear of the man under judgment was through the death of Christ. And mind you, it was not that Saul was a wicked man, for he said, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day;" but he had found the death of Christ the only way out of the man who could not stand in the light of God. The type of this was when Israel walked through the Red Sea. They did not make the way, they did not even find the way themselves; it was God's light that shewed them the way, and it was God's hand that made the way, *but they walked through it*. I lay great stress upon that. I am speaking now of justification; I have not touched yet on the subject before me; because if you are not clear about justification, you will never understand what it is to have Christ formed in you; and unless Christ is formed in you you will never progress, you will never understand the things of Christ. It is necessary that you should have Christ formed in you before you can be in the order of things in

which Christ is. You must first be established in grace.

But to proceed with justification. God has now a Man before Him who has risen from among the dead ; and righteousness is imputed unto us " if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." The youngest here can understand that if you speak of resurrection you imply that one had died. But you must first see how God reveals the scope, the nature of His grace to you ; that is, that He has sent His own Son, and His own Son has borne the judgment upon man, hence that man is judicially terminated in the cross in the eye of God for every one believing in Christ. Adam sinned and fell ; but God has a Man before Him now who not only did all His pleasure, but glorified Him in the most distant spot in bearing the judgment upon man ; and according to that Man He now deals with the believer. It is an immense thing to see how God was so glorified by Man that there was nothing to prevent His heart going out in all its own fulness, and delighting itself in receiving a returning prodigal ; that is your acceptance. I want you to apprehend your acceptance. If you do, it must be upon this footing and no other, that the man under judgment has gone from the eye of God in judgment, and that you are as Christ is ; if you

believe that, you must see that you cannot improve the man, who is gone from the eye of God ; he cannot be dealt with. Saul could say that he had lived in all good conscience before God until this day. What did he find ? He found he could not stand in the light of God's presence, he fell to the ground. And what does he learn then ? That through the death of Christ he is clear of himself ; he learned "that in me [that is, in my flesh] dwelleth no good thing." As afterwards he could say, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." It was not the bad things he did that he counted loss, but the good things, what we call the naturally good qualities. Like the young man in the gospels (Luke xviii.). It is quite possible for a man to keep the five commandments that the Lord asked him had he kept. The Lord did not ask him his duty towards God at all ; He asked him as to five commandments ; and he says, "All these have I kept from my youth up." Saul found that he could not stand in the presence of God though he had lived in all good conscience, because he was under the judgment of God. "If there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." Now he found that there was no recognition of that man before God ; that man could not be maintained in the presence of God ; he

finds he is clear of him in the death of Christ ; and after three days he prays ; he is dependent on God ; and then comes Ananias to tell him, Receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

Now I come to my subject. Saul received the Holy Ghost. Every one justified has received the Holy Ghost ; but I press first that God has removed everything to His own satisfaction and glory in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that He accepts the believer now according to Christ ; and therefore, "As he is, so are we in this world." That is the acceptance ; no fuller, no greater, could be ; it could not be altered nor improved. But now comes our side. God gives the Holy Ghost to you believing in Christ, that you may be in practical correspondence with all that He has effected for you.

But before speaking of this, I must diverge a little, because I must look at the present state of many souls. I speak from my own experience. I long knew that everything had gone from the eye of God in the cross, and that to look up to Him was unspeakable satisfaction ; but when I looked at myself I did not see it gone ; and many a sorrowful day was I trying to correct it. Still God's side remained perfectly true ; all had gone from the eye of God in the cross, God had

perfectly relieved His own heart about the returning prodigal, but I, like the prodigal, was not in moral correspondence with Him. I have said to myself in those days, "Well, I believe that flesh is stronger than grace." I dare not say it now; I am only giving you my experience in order to shew you what one is liable to; for often we are enabled to help others by the way we have been helped ourselves. But the great thing to believe is, that God has not only removed all from His own eye in the cross, but He has given us the Holy Ghost that we might be in moral consistency with Himself. Otherwise it would be like the prodigal thinking—You are all happy about me, but I am not in keeping with you. But the father puts him in keeping with himself; he says: "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." That figuratively was Romans viii., because there you are in Christ, and there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ; and "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." My mistake, and the mistake of many others, was in trying to improve myself. How often I have tested people since, by asking them, Are you ever disappointed with yourself? "Oh!" they say

in the most contrite way, "Indeed I am." That shews they have not done with themselves, or they would not be trying to improve themselves. I shall have to shew you presently that the very best quality of man does not like Christ: "They that are in the flesh cannot please God."

Now we have come to a great point; that is, that the Spirit of God is given to every one justified. In Romans v. we are justified by faith; that is, I believe, that God has set me before His own eye according to His pleasure in Christ Jesus, and "therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this favour [grace] wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." I need not tell you that the first eleven verses of that chapter describe the terms on which God is with you; chapter viii. describes the state in which you are before Him: that is the difference. In Romans viii. it is not faith. Many have a loose way of looking at deliverance through substituting faith for the Spirit. Faith is for God's side. Why? Because God never alters; His satisfaction in the work of Christ remains for ever. He has expressed His love, and that love is co-existent with Himself; it never alters. He never revives

what has been set aside in the cross, and He can now cover with kisses the returning prodigal.

But now I come to our side. If you read Romans viii. 2, you will see, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death;" that is what I would insist upon. What was the mistake I made? I was trying to improve myself, instead of seeing that the Spirit of God has set me free. The first thirteen verses of Romans viii. shew you that you are free from the flesh. In that chapter you learn what Christ is to you. You first learn the work of Christ, and you are attached to Him because of the work He has done for you; every believer knows that. But believe me, there is a much deeper affection than that; it comes out in the end of Romans viii., that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Why? Because Christ is your life.

The first trouble that a believer finds is innate sin. This Romans vii. sets forth: "When I would do good evil is present with me." In Romans vii. there is a divine work in the soul but justification is not known; the power of the Spirit is not known. The defect with myself was, that I did not see that the Spirit of God would set me free. If you read on in Romans viii., you find, "If ye through the

Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body"—Why the deeds? Because we are first occupied with what we *do*; conscience is at work, and a man's conscience does not go beyond his light. But first I want to shew you that you judge of your conduct by your conscience. You will hear people say, I did not do so and so because it is contrary to my conscience. That is according to their light, and that is the first exercise. Hence we find, "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." But then it is by the Spirit one mortifies, that is the point; and I hope you will lay hold of this fact to-night. First that the man under judgment has gone from the eye of God. I see little papers about self-culture and self-control. Self-control! It is the Spirit of God that is to control you, not yourself. You may fit yourself, in a sense, for *man*; but you will find, if you really get hold of the first part of this verse, "I am crucified with Christ," your individual experience, that it is not simply that man has gone in the cross in the eye of God—our old man crucified with Him, as in Romans vi. 6—but *I* am crucified; how could you improve a thing that is crucified? If I had not gone through the experience myself, I should be puzzled about it; but I see it now very plainly, that as that man has gone

from the eye of God, with that man I cannot deal. On the contrary, though here in the flesh, I do not walk after the flesh. I hope we may look into that another evening; but now I desire to set forth how Christ is formed in you. I believe it is most wonderful to know that Christ liveth in you. But it is with Him you have to do, not yourself. If it be yourself you are thinking about—how you behave, and if you are seeking to improve, you doubtless think, “Well, if I get another opportunity, I hope I shall behave better.” If you knew yourself, you would not think so. Why? Because you would fear that you would behave worse. But if you walk in the Spirit, you will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. I press this, that faith lays hold of this great fact, that God accepts me on the ground of Christ, and that He never loses His own feeling about me, because of the work which has been effected by the Son of His love. But besides this, He has given me the Holy Ghost that I might be in practical keeping with Him; and as I walk in the Spirit I do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; I have in me a power superior to the flesh. “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye may not do”—it is not “ye cannot;” our translators could not see the greatness of it

—“that ye may not do the things that ye would.” The position of the believer is wonderful; that God has in the cross removed from His own eye the man under judgment. I lay hold of that by faith; but besides, He has given me the Holy Ghost, so that I may be free; “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteous claim of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.” (I have altered the translation a little in order to give the correct idea.) To the eye of God you are not looked upon as in the flesh, but in the Spirit. A person may say to me, How am I to get on in daily life? That is the latter part of the verse, and I have not come to that yet; I hope to refer to it another time. But if you have not the first part—Christ formed in you—you certainly will not know how to act as Christ in His path among men.

I turn now to the latter part of Galatians iv.: “Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was

born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." I can understand an exercised soul asking, and it is a very interesting question—But when does that happy moment occur when Christ really gets His place in my heart? Well, up to this I have only asked you to accept that this *is* His place; that the man born after the flesh must go out, must not be tolerated. The Corinthians and the Galatians were both defective: the one, the Corinthians, in giving place to the mind of man; and many like them think there is no harm in the pleasures of the mind who would think that there is a great deal of harm in the pleasures of the flesh; the Galatians, on the other hand, were trying to improve or check the flesh by the law. Both had received the Holy Ghost. The Galatians had received the Holy Ghost, but they were trying to correct the flesh. It is very interesting to note that the way the apostle corrects both the Corinthians and the Galatians is by putting Christ in His place. To the Corinthians the Lord's glory is presented (and there is no place for their own wisdom there) to bring

them into moral correspondence with Him, and the effect is, as in 2 Corinthians iv., to be "always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." That was the effect on the apostle. With the Galatians the apostle uses the type of the weaning of Isaac to illustrate what he is setting forth. You remember that in Genesis xxi. Ishmael was about fourteen years of age when Isaac was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast for him; it was a festive moment when Isaac was to be acknowledged in his rightful place in the house. And I say, and I thank God for it, that there is a moment in the history of the soul when you are so drawn to Christ, not merely because of His work, but you have tasted the truth of the passage I have read—"Christ liveth in me." He is with you personally; it is this which really attaches you to Him. I get in Romans vi. the way it begins: "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin; but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." You are severed from Adam (the man who brought you under death) by Christ's death and you have found life in Christ Himself, and there you have wonderful and unspeakable rest. You "reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Rom. v.) You were under death by

one man, Adam ; you get life in Christ ; you have passed "out of death into life," as we read in John v. 24. Our translators put "from death" instead of "out of death," because they could not catch the importance of having passed "out of death ;" for if you say "out of death," you admit that you were in death. And that is exactly what is true ; you are in death by nature. In Adam all die ; but Christ is our life. It is here many are puzzled. "This do and thou shalt live" was law ; it was addressed to the old man ; but in order to get life you must pass out of Adam and find it in Christ ; and here all the difficulty lies.

Now you find from this verse that there is a moment when Christ gets His right place. We sing sometimes :—

". . . . Thou art enough
The mind and heart to fill."

Did you ever know that moment? It is a very simple question to ask. I am not asking you to *do* anything, to arrive at any perfection in yourself, or anything of that kind ; but simply to acknowledge Christ's right. It *is* His right ; but do you acknowledge to-night that He has the right to live in you? That like Isaac, He is the rightful heir, and the One only to be acknowledged. In Oriental fashion all in the house

acknowledged Isaac except Ishmael, who was the son of Abraham, about fourteen years of age, brought up in all the culture and elevation that Abraham knew, and he mocked, "He that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit." That is man; *the cultivated man does not like Christ*. I know well the painful exercise of Romans vii.; even to find that you are incompetent to keep the law. But believe me, Galatians iv. is a much more painful experience, even to find that the best quality in your nature does not like Christ; it is a terrible experience that the amiable and most commendable quality in your nature does not like Christ. But when was that discovered? When Christ was given His right place, when His right is acknowledged; right to the office, right to the study, right to the nursery, right to everything in your heart. He has redeemed you; He has the right to you. Hence the apostle says, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Another Person—Christ, liveth in me. I do not ask you if you are attached to Him? but I do ask, Do you acknowledge Him? I believe, as I said, there is a moment when you are so entranced with the blessedness of Christ, that you can truly say to Him, This is Your rightful place; I acknowledge it. And that is

the moment when there is no toleration for Ishmael. There is the acknowledgment of the One and no toleration of the other ; Ishmael is cast out.

Now I have to shew you that your practical course will then be quite different. It is not your conscience merely which is the arbiter of everything, but it is Christ Himself and all that suits Him. You may say, This or that is not contrary to my conscience. A man of great integrity may say so, but he has not come to the inexpressible moment—I call it the coronation day—when Christ is acknowledged in His right place in his heart. The throne shall be established in righteousness ; and the moment you have done rightly, you know you are right ; you are confirmed in it. Consider the greatness of the moment when Christ has in you His right place ! See how thoroughly you can now enjoy the “great supper,” the celebration of grace ; you are now fit for it, and you make merry.

I hope it is so simple that the youngest believer here will follow it. You acknowledge that Christ has the right to all, and that Ishmael, the son of Abraham, the cultivated man, the man brought up under the law, must be cast out. “Cast out the bondwoman and her son.” Now, in chapter v. 1 we read, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,

and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." You are on a new footing now ; Christ is the arbiter of everything.

In John xiii. the Lord says, " If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Who is to be judge of a soil? A great many walk with a good conscience who are not near enough to Christ to have their feet washed. When you are in intimacy with Christ, He is the judge of the soil. He knows the causes of the cloud between Him and you. These two states are clearly expressed in the type of the cleansing of the leper. (Lev. xiv.) After the first washing the leper came into the camp ; that is, his own conscience was relieved. But on the eighth day after this he had to go through all the offerings and the anointing, then typically he was *brought to God*. It is not merely your conscience now, but you look at everything as Christ does. Hence the apostle Paul can say in the last chapter of this Epistle, " God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." I remember once being in a company, and they seemed quite astonished because I said, There is nothing about your sins in that passage, but about yourself. " God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Both are gone ; that is, " crucified," judicially

ended. "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." You are a new creation.

Now when you come to this, you see that to give Christ His place is simply the only right thing. Many are trying to improve this world ; but if you think of righteousness, there cannot be righteousness in the full sense in this world, or in myself, till Christ gets His right place. I do not ask you to do any great work or to do any particular service ; but I am asking each of you to avow, "I am crucified with Christ," (judicially terminated), "nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" ; and now I judge of everything in relation to Him.

I need not dwell further on it, but I trust many here will see what a blessed moment it is when Christ gets His right place in the heart. I have often said to myself, Ishmael knows the house well, and will try to regain his place. Yes, but I have got a power to keep him out, I have received the Holy Ghost, I must walk in the Spirit. You may say, What do you mean by walking in the Spirit? That is a very good question to be exercised about. I will give you a simple illustration to shew you what I understand by it. A sailor when asked, "How do you get on in bad weather?" replied, "I do not mind the weather so long as I can see the sun." When

I am walking in the Spirit I see Christ only. If I am going to do my business, who is before me? Christ. If I am going out to visit, who is before me? Christ. If I am going to write a letter, be it one of business or otherwise, who is before me? Christ. This refers to the wilderness; that is the latter part of the verse, "The life which I now live in the flesh." But you must begin above. Nothing has done more mischief than trying to work up from man to God, instead of working down from God to man. All the infidelity in Christendom has arisen simply from working upward from man, instead of working downwards from God.

Now for another deeply interesting point. As soon as Christ has His right place in you, His things become yours. And now you can understand that word, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." How cheering that saying must have been to the disciples, because they were personally attached to Him. It is not a question of any work, or any effort, but that you are personally attached to Him; He is your life, He liveth in you. You may say, "Oh, that is very great." Yes, but surely everything of grace is great.

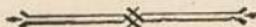
Necessarily now everything which is interesting to Christ becomes interesting to you. I do not believe that any one truly finds his way to

the assembly who has not found Christ as the object of his heart. If Christ is not formed in you, He is not the object of your heart ; and if Christ is the object of your heart, you come to this "living stone, disallowed indeed of men ;" you leave the ship to walk on the water to go to Jesus. And until Christ is formed in you, you will never progress ; you are not intimately acquainted with Christ till then. Many a believer has not yet acknowledged Christ in His own rightful place in his heart, and until you do you cannot be occupied with the things which are interesting to Christ here on earth. He could not confide in you if you have not given Him His place. And consequently you have not found your own true enjoyment, you are not in keeping with all God has done for you. Would it not be a delight to you to retire to your own room to-night, and be able to say, Well, God has removed everything of the man under His judgment from His own eye in the cross, and has given me the Holy Ghost, and I am before Him in the One who has glorified Him in the cross, and that One is my life. All this is for your own unspeakable comfort. At another time, if the Lord will, when we come to the christian circle and the Head, you will find how He ministers to you.

I conclude with one remark. If you do not

know Christ living in you for yourself, you cannot really enter on the wilderness path. I do not dwell on that now, but I trust, if the Lord permit, another evening to bring it before you, in order that we may understand how the grace of God enables us to be here.

I trust the Lord, in His own gracious care for us all, will lead you to accept the two things I have brought before you, which are not beyond the compass of the youngest Christian in this room. First, to acknowledge Christ in His right place, and then not to tolerate His rival. How is the rival to be kept out? By the Spirit of God. You must walk in the Spirit. If you do, you will not be thinking of yourself, or of what you are; you will be occupied with Christ; you will learn all that the Spirit of God is for you in Romans viii. In fine, He is your Friend, He "makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." May we all look more for the help of that great Friend, and the power of that Friend, for Christ's sake.



THE CLOSING TESTIMONY.

NO. III.

“PART WITH ME.”

JOHN XIII. 8.

I HAVE read this scripture that we might, by the Lord's goodness, meditate upon what the meaning of "PART WITH ME" is. In the last lecture, any who were here will remember that we were learning how Christ is formed in us; the Christ owned in His right place in each of us, like Isaac in Abraham's house. It is a wonderful moment, because you are free from the intruder; and you can say, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:" a new order of person lives in me. Hence you are not only free of the old, but you are in the new. The apostle illustrates this to the Galatians (who were trying to improve themselves), by the type of the day when Isaac was weaned and Ishmael cast out, which doubt-

less describes a moment which ought to be known to every one of us, that is, when Christ is acknowledged in His right place. It is a festive moment, a moment of deep joy; it must be so, because in true righteousness Christ is in His place; hence the apostle adds, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."

You must know the two subjects which I have already dwelt upon before you can address yourself to "PART WITH ME." One is the marvellous acceptance in which you are with God; the other is liberty. You are to His full satisfaction, because He has accepted you in the Beloved. It is on this ground you are accepted. It is not on the ground of a man who had not offended, but on the ground of the Man who glorified God in bearing the judgment upon man. The acceptance could not be greater, it could not be improved, it is unalterable. That is the first grace, and if there be any imperfection in the apprehension of it, there must be an imperfection in liberty. The first is that God has removed everything of the man under judgment from His own eye in the cross to His everlasting glory, so that His heart can in all its fulness greet the prodigal. The second grace is, that God has given you the Holy Spirit; and now Christ gets His place in your heart: "Stand

fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” Now you are free, and now you progress ; and you do not progress till you come to this. You now are occupied with Christ as He is ; now you begin to know “PART WITH ME.”

Two lines open out to every believer when he is in liberty, but not before he finds liberty. One is that as he is liable to infirmity, the question necessarily arises, How am I to be borne above my infirmity ? The other, as I am on the earth where Christ is rejected, the question arises, Where is the Lord to be found ? You see that one plainly relates to yourself, and the other to the Lord. There are two lines, though you will find by-and-by how they converge.

The first is, as I have said, that you are liable to infirmity. I do not refer to sins, because Christ having purged our sins, sat down ; there is no more offering for sin. It is most important to know that if you are not cleared of your sins, you cannot have to do with the High Priest, He who will bear you above your infirmities. In Christendom all is leavened, for the priest or minister is looked at as between the congregation and God, thus the truth is reduced to man's level. The truth is that you are already set in

the fullest acceptance with God, and you are in true liberty. Next, as you are in a scene where you can be oppressed by infirmities—not sins—you want to know how you can be above your infirmities. I turn to Hebrews iv. 14, "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into [through] the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, apart from sin." (Correct reading.) Infirmities cover a large class of suffering; there is the pressure of circumstances, the pressure of impaired health, and the pressure of bereavement; this is not sin, but infirmity. As the Spirit of God leads every one who has acceptance with God, and the liberty of the Spirit, the question arises, How am I to be borne above my infirmities here? Then you learn that it is through having part with Christ that you are borne above your infirmities. In Hebrews ii. 11, we read, "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." In a former lecture you saw that you were in liberty when Christ was living in you; here you find we are His brethren. May your heart enter into the great fact that you are now of His generation; as He said,

"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit"—His brethren; and you cannot speak of sin in connection with Christ's brethren. You are "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." I say to the youngest believer, If you enjoy acceptance and have liberty, you have Christ living in you; you can say, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." You have been freed from the old "I," and you have received another, even Christ Himself to live in you. You are now of His kindred. It is plain from scripture, that if you are not of His kindred you cannot understand His sympathy, you cannot have part with Him.

You get in Leviticus xvi. the type in Aaron and his sons; Aaron had to offer for himself and his house: "Whose house are we." Many refer to their old nature in one way or another, but if you have part with Christ you are upon entirely new ground—in liberty; you are free of the old: "And if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." You are on new ground, and now you can say that you are of His kindred. The only thing Abraham's steward was sworn to was, that the bride for Isaac must be of his kindred. Many have the idea that Christ is our elder Brother.

No ; that is not correct, we are His brethren, He never was our Brother ; and this is a very great difference. "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." He is not ashamed to call us brethren. He liveth in you ; but you have infirmities. Well, you have a High Priest which can be touched with the feeling of your infirmities ; who was in all points tempted like as we are, apart from sin. But where is He now, beloved friends ? He has risen from the dead, He has passed through the heavens, and has gone within the veil. Hence in order to get His sympathy you must have part with Him. When you are with Him you are borne above all your infirmities. He draws you to Himself. He alters nothing in this place, but He draws you out of it. First the word exposes to you everything inconsistent with Him, for you cannot have part with Him if there is any darkness at all. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." "The word of God is quick, and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It is light ; it clears away all darkness. I am looking at the great result of having

part with Him who in all our afflictions was afflicted, but who is now out of them; and the fact of having part with Him where He is, assures me of His sympathy, because He was tempted in all points as we are, apart from sin, and He is now out of them. It is not that you are out of them, but when you have part with Him, who is out of them, you are borne above them. If you have His sympathy, you have part with Him; when you drop out of communion you do not enjoy His sympathy. I am dwelling long on this point, because it is of great importance (I hope to shew you presently what it culminates in) that you should know that the effect of His company is that you are borne above every pressure; you have part with Him.

If I look at the Old Testament, I find a variety of cases in which God has relieved a person under pressure; for instance, Elijah, or Ruth, or Daniel; but here it is not that He removes the pressure, but He bears me above the pressure; the pressure is there, but I am borne above it, because I am in company with the One who is out of it. I have part with Him. No one who has not tasted of it knows what it is. It is illustrated in the case of Mary of Bethany. She, in the blank which was caused by the death of Lazarus, so

learnt in that walk to the grave what the Lord was to her, that when she knew that *He* was to die she was a great deal more affected by the prospect of His death than by the death of Lazarus. That is a pattern which you get in the gospels, but I want to press on you the wonderful reality, that you have passed to Him outside of all here. "We have a great High Priest, that is passed through the heavens;" gone out of it all. He *was* in it all, and if you are in company with Him, the simple result of being in His company, of having part with Him, is that you are borne above the pressure. That is the first point connected with the first line. I hope to be able to return to it afterwards; but it is the main point, that in all the pressure which the saints are going through, the first thing to learn is, that if you have part with Christ you will be borne above that pressure. I do not say it will end there; I will come presently to what it culminates in; but this is the first step.

Now I come to the second, and that is, I am in a world where Christ is not, and I want to know where I am to find Him. I am speaking entirely of the individual now; I ask, Where do you find Him? You will find Him only in the assembly. Now I come to His side, if I may so say. In the first line it is about myself, and about my own pressure; I must have part with

Him to be borne above it. But now I am looking for Him here. A young believer may say, I do not see anything for the Lord here, I see everything contrary to Him: where shall I find Him? I am not speaking of going to heaven now, but of finding Him here. You will find Him in the assembly. We get a pattern of it in John xx.; He came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and "then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." Let me dwell upon this for a moment, because I believe that, like the first step in relation to Him as the Priest, so is the first step in relation to Him in the assembly, it is the important step; and if you do not take the first step, you will never reach the second. The first step is—the Lord is risen, and He is outside all the ruin and misery of this world; He is the "chief corner stone," "disallowed indeed of men." But where can He be found on earth at this time? There is only one spot here in which the Lord can be found, and that is in the assembly; and there He is supreme. He is risen from the dead. He educated Peter for this in Matthew xiv. The Lord was walking on the water; He had changed His position; when He was here with us, He was in the ship and asleep; tranquil; but now when He is rejected, as you find in the early verses of

Matthew xiv., He takes new ground ; He sets forth that He is above all the power of evil here ; and therefore He is educating Peter for the assembly, for in chapter xvi. He says, "I will build my assembly ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it ;" and that is the only place where He would be. I can understand a believer saying, Well, I have got immense comfort from being really with the Lord outside of all the pressure that lay upon me here ; but now it concerns me that here I am in a place where the Lord is unknown. Where shall I find Him? *You can only find Him in the assembly.* Surely any devoted heart, however young, would say, I should like to join Him where He is. Like Mary Magdalene, she had the right sentiment, though she was ignorant. She could not find Him, and she was inconsolable without Him ; and the Lord then makes Himself known to her. But I only take that as a sample. I ask a young believer, Would you like to join the Lord here upon earth ? Peter said, " If it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." That is an immense step, I admit ; but it is not the step that I would put before a young believer ; I would put before him affection. If you have affection to join Him, I know the step you will have to take : that you will pass outside of man, out of all the ruin and misery

of this world ; you will pass outside of man, because Christ is outside ; He is "disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, precious ;" and if you join Him, you do take a momentous step. But then, like the disciples in John xx., you will be glad when you "see the Lord." I think saints think too lightly of the assembly ; they have not really learnt the immense nature of the blessing of getting into the presence of the Lord risen from the dead. Just for a moment think what it is to be in the presence of One risen from the dead, risen out of all the depths of man's misery ! The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord, and the Lord breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost : " they must be there in His life. But I do not pursue that ; I present it as the first step. It is interesting for any one who studies the subject, to know that John vi. occurred at the same time as Matthew xiv. You may say they are very different. Yes ; I believe one is God's side, and the other is our side. But I do not wish to expound so much as to point out the new course of the believer who has found the rest of acceptance and the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free ; that is, I have learnt that in company with Christ I am made consciously sensible by Him, that I am above the pressure that lay upon

me here ; and, beside that, I have found the spot here upon the earth, outside of everything, where He is, and my heart is glad that I have come to that spot where He is, outside of everything, and Son over God's house.

Now having spoken of the first step in those two lines, I turn back to the first line to see, as I said, where it culminates. It is very blessed when the heart lays hold of it, to see how the two lines coalesce. Christ draws you to Himself to have part with Him above all here, and to conduct you into the Holiest of all. Here it culminates—you have boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus. You may say, It is so wonderful, we shall never be up to it. The Lord grant that our hearts may be so touched with His grace that we cannot be satisfied with anything short of it. Christ Himself is the antitype of the Holiest. To the Gentile, it is described in 2 Corinthians iii. 18, "Beholding the glory of the Lord." In the type there were only the golden box with the cherubim of glory, and the golden censer. The antitype is Christ. So that when you join the Lord in the assembly you are in the Holiest, for He is the antitype of the Holiest ; you see the Lord's glory. Here the priestly service culminates. Then follows the result which is the race ; you now run on to Him. Instead of looking for

anything in this world, you are like Israel after Numbers xxi., making for Canaan. In the race you are "Looking off unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Now let us turn to the second line. Read John xiv. 18-20: "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." I trust that many here know the joy of joining Christ in the assembly; nothing can satisfy a true heart in a scene like this but to have part with Himself outside of all the ruin here. He says, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice." "I will not leave you comfortless." "You" embraces the whole company. Remember, I began with the individual, for it is individually we learn the Priest; but when you enter the Holiest, you know Him, "The great Priest over the house of God;" you are in company now. You enter the assembly individually, you, a living stone, are built in, "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious; to whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God,

precious." Now you are built up. The Lord grant that each of us may know better by the Spirit of God the great joy which Peter had when he joined Christ walking on the water. Surely you are thankful to see Peter taking the step. I do not present the step to a young believer; but I say if you have affection for Christ, you would like to join Him, and you would not be deterred by the step. You cannot join Him without taking this immense step. It could not be possible otherwise. I do not deny that you may have been helped spiritually at the meeting, but unless you have taken the step to join Him, you have not experienced the joy of having part with Him where He fulfils the word, "I will not leave you comfortless [orphans]; I will come to you," "Because I live, ye shall live also." Now note how it culminates, "In that day you shall know"—(now it is about Himself)—"that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." I am not going to attempt to explain this blessed announcement; I only say that wonderful things are now revealed to you by the Spirit, and this is the culmination. But then you cannot have it, but as you have PART WITH HIM.

Before I proceed, I just refer to an interesting point in John xiv. 22, 23: "Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt

manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." I refer to this because one might say, In this wonderful place, "Part with me," collectively, is there anything for the individual? Now this is for the individual. In the rest of the chapter it is all "you" collectively that is used. But in these verses it is "If a *man* love me, he will keep my words." Generally we are looking to the Lord to do something for us, to receive a mark of His favour, some temporal mercy. But here He gives the highest favour in part with Himself; to the company He says, "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." I will come to you, and acquaint you with Myself, and how you are in relation to Me. Surely any one who dwells upon verse 20 will know how profound it is. I do not attempt to explain it; it embraces immensely more than you imagine. Then in verse 23 we see the portion for the individual, "If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." As another has said, "They will have a room in your heart." It is not that He is always there, but He has a room there; it is *His* room.

Now you will be prepared for the result of all this grace. We find it in John xiv. 26: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." The Spirit of God revives to the disciples Christ's ministry here, so that the result, having part with Him in the assembly, is that you, as we read in chapter xv., come out in service, fruit-bearing; you are in that sense a branch of the vine, bringing forth fruit on the earth where He was rejected.

Now I should like to recapitulate the blessings of each line, and I trust that you will follow me prayerfully. The first line is, that when you are under pressure here, and have part with Christ, you are borne above it, because **you have part with Him**. And **this culminates in your accompanying Him into the brightest spot, the Holiest of all, so that you can behold the Lord's glory with so much effect that you are transformed into moral correspondence with His pleasure at the time**. I am speaking now of the effect of having part with Him. Like the disciples at Emmaus, they saw the Lord; He did not give them, any directions that we know of; but the effect of seeing Him was that they went off to Jerusalem; the fact of being in His

company made His interests paramount with them. Hence the practical result on that line is, that laying aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, we run with patience the race that is set before us. We look for nothing here, but we are looking for everything where Christ is. We are not come "to the mount that might be touched and that burned with fire," but we "are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God," &c.

In the other line you pass outside of all the ruin and misery of man, to find the Lord in the assembly on the earth, and you are there outside of all here, for you have part with Him. Then is fulfilled, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice;" "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." You sit under His shadow with great delight; you have part with Him; and this culminates in that you come forth to bear fruit here as His disciples. It is not merely relief now; you begin with being borne above the pressure here, and this culminates in your being absorbed with Himself; you are so attracted to Him who is outside of all here, that you are not looking for anything here; you are running on to Him. Then in the second line you have joined Him in His assembly, you have part with Him there, outside of all the ruin and the misery of man; you have

tasted of the reality of His words: "Because I live, ye shall live also;" and you are in a sphere altogether unknown to man. You are so absorbed with Him, outside of all the ruin, that, like the Queen of Sheba, "there is no more spirit in you," you are beside yourself. If Christ were thus known in the assembly, how you would long for it! You could truly say, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD." In Christendom the most advanced go to church to enjoy their salvation; they have no true idea of the house of God. The house of God is where He is; "the habitation of God through the Spirit;" and hence there you would learn His mind, as we read in Hebrews ii. 11: "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." He unfolds the Father; you cannot worship until you are in His presence.

I need not add more. I have tried to present to you the blessedness of having PART WITH HIM, how it begins; and if you are led to dwell upon it before the Lord, you will be thankful that there is such a portion for you while on the earth.

THE CLOSING TESTIMONY.

No. IV.

THE WILDERNESS.

EXODUS xv. 22-25 ; NUMBERS xxi. 4-9, 16-18.

THE subject I desire to bring before you is "THE WILDERNESS ;" for though we so often speak of the wilderness, perhaps there is no subject (I speak for myself) we know so little about according to God. I have read the passage from Exodus xv. to shew the way you enter the wilderness, where you prove that the flesh profiteth nothing, where you learn yourself : while in Numbers xxi. you are brought to see a new state. You learn the incompetency of the flesh, of your own state, in Exodus xv., and you are given a new state by the Spirit of God, as seen typically in Numbers xxi. But firstly, and it is of the deepest importance, you cannot enter the wilderness except you have been delivered from the judgment of death, and are on

the other side of the Red Sea. You may sometimes hear a person speaking of the trials of the wilderness who has never entered the wilderness. If you have entered the wilderness, you have entered it through death, and you are clear of death in the sight of God.

In Romans iv., when you believe that God has raised Christ from the dead, you are justified by faith, you can joy in God. But consequent on this every believer finds that he is sinful. In Romans vi. and vii. you find that the first thing you are occupied with is relief from sinfulness. Hence the true character of the wilderness is death to the will of the flesh; it is *Marah*; properly, the water of the Red Sea. I feel, in myself, how little one accepts the wilderness in its true character. You have been delivered from the judgment on man by the death and resurrection of Christ here in this place, where you were under the judgment of God, and now this place is a wilderness to you; there is nothing for you here naturally. If you maintain your new ground through grace, it must be a place of death to the flesh. You can only maintain your new ground by death. Hence the first thing your conscience is occupied with is your sinfulness. Hence you read in Peter iv. 1: "Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind,

for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin:" you must not gratify yourself; when you have suffered in the flesh you have ceased from sin. Many are surprised when they find, consequent on the joy of being justified in the sight of God, that they are so distressed by their own state. And why? Because they are not drinking death. But it sweetens death to see that Christ was in it for you. Nothing else will. Though you know that your sins are forgiven, yet you find that you commit sins; this is simply because you do not arm yourself with the same mind, "for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin:" that is from doing sin. This experience gives you the character of the wilderness. We speak familiarly of the wilderness, but have we really entered it? There is nothing for the saved soul in the wilderness but God, and if you really apprehended this, you would respond, That is a great deal. You will find that Christ trod this path; He made a path through the wilderness. Manna can now be found on every leaf, for even the smallest thing. In His public course He said, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." The manna is, that He was here, a Man, God the spring of all His ways, He learnt nothing

from man ; He was born of a woman, but we read of Him : " I was cast upon thee from the womb." As has been said, It was not anything He found here, but what He brought here. The more you study His path, the more you will understand what the wilderness is to you from God. But it is very different to us, because we have been alienated from God, and we could not be relieved of the judgment on us but by death. Hence, as you get out of death through Christ's death, you must accept His death as the only deliverance from the old man ; that is the bitter water ; and the bitter water is made sweet when you connect it with Christ's death. The great education of the wilderness at first is, that you should know yourself, what is in your heart. Many have not learnt themselves. When you have learned yourself you will say, " In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." If any one can say that with a true heart, be assured he knows something of the wilderness. Your most amiable quality has no good thing in it. Now you have learnt that nothing can come from your own side. That is the first thing.

The great characteristic of any one truly in the wilderness is dependence. Turn to Deuteronomy viii. 2 : " Thou shalt remember all the way"—mark how definite that is ; all your history, remember it—" which the LORD thy

God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee. . . . And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know ; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live." The Lord, when He went into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, quotes this scripture. He needed not to go into the wilderness to learn dependence, for He was in circumstances the contrast to Adam in the garden of Eden. Adam was surrounded by every mark of God's goodness and care for him, but in the midst of it all he gave way. Here is the Lord, forty days without food ; He takes the lowest place, there is no intimation of God's care for Him, but Satan comes to Him and says, so to speak, Use your own power. It is there where we fail. Be assured there is no one who has either material or mental resource, who is not in danger of using it, and when he uses it he is not walking by faith. That is the first temptation, and if you yield to the first, you are a prey to the rest. The first is that you leave the place of dependence, and therefore it is the man of natural resource who really wants faith most. Satan says : " If thou be the

Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread;" but the Lord replies, "It is written, that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." Who can describe what the manna is? One can adore at the sight of it, and seek to appropriate it; but it is a wonderful thing; the One who had all power took the place of dependence, and found all His resource in God. There was nothing to be found for Him in this poor world. He quotes this verse; I read it to shew how we are taught; "That He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only." What you are brought to practically is dependence. The highest point you can arrive at is dependence. Dependence is what should mark us here. There is nothing for a believer here. It is a life of absolute dependence on God. God can shew how He can be gracious to you in the wilderness, and therefore there are "twelve wells of water and threescore and ten palm trees." But that is not from the wilderness, but what God can give you in it. The only support in the wilderness is the manna and the water from the smitten rock. I consider that the manna is the grace of Christ as He walked here. At the same time, while the grace is there, I do not think you appropriate the grace until you accept death with Him.

I ask any conscientious person, Were you not first occupied about your sinfulness even after you had peace? Though I am afraid what is called peace is not always true peace. Forgiveness is not peace; peace is when there is not a cloud, when the enemies are gone. If you want to know what peace is, go and ask a soldier, Have you succeeded? Oh! he replies, we crushed the foe. That is peace. "Who hath abolished death and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel:" that is peace—that is the Red Sea.

Now you enter the wilderness; you have got out of judgment through death, you then enter the wilderness; and as you accept death with Christ you are in the wilderness. I cannot go into detail, but I commend to you Romans vi., because there the question of dead to sin is raised. It goes further than Peter; but then chapter vii. shews (what was really the education of Israel in the wilderness) that the flesh is unmendably bad. And we all have to be brought to say *with truth*, "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. . . . Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." The wilderness is where the life of Jesus is known concurrent with the dying of Jesus.

Before passing on, let me make one remark—

Israel encountered opposition there. When you have got clear of Satan as Pharaoh, he opposes you as Amalek; that is, to prevent you from taking the wilderness condition. If you look at the history of young Christians, you will find that they are diverted from taking the wilderness condition by some worldly pressure; that is the opposition of Satan as Amalek; he acts against you in order that you may find something here; if you resist him, you will not be carried away. Take an example, Peter went into the high priest's house; he was invited in, and might have thought he was favoured. But it was a terrible moment; Satan had gained the day. Alas! if you know yourself, and have read your own history, it is not once nor twice that you have thought, when a snare was laid for you, that is a good opening of which I may avail myself. Like Lot, when he saw the green fields towards Sodom, why should not I avail myself of them? he thought. Woe betide you if you do! If you knew yourself better, you would not trust yourself.

“I have nothing to seek nor to choose,
I've no thought in the waste to abide,
I have naught to regret nor to lose.”

Now let us turn to Numbers xxi. There Israel learnt that they are irretrievably bad;

they speak against God and against Moses. Let me call your attention to the way this was manifested. Israel sought to stand for the Lord before they were qualified ; you cannot stand for the Lord until you have come to His side.

In Numbers xxi. you get the new state. You have first, as we have seen, to learn the unprofitableness of your flesh, that there is no escape from it but as you accept death with Christ ; then you are brought to say, " In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." You learn that " the Son of man must be lifted up ;" He who knew no sin made sin for us. And then, as in Romans vi. 6, " our old man is crucified with him." You have learnt the bitterness of the serpent's bite ; you have cried out, " O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?" It has been said, you never could be out of Romans vii. until you were first in it. Some think it is a hopeful state ; I think it is a most miserable state.

When the day of everlasting blessedness dawns upon your heart then you say, " I thank God through Jesus Christ." Then a new state is entered on ; you speak no longer about yourself, no longer about the weakness of the flesh and how you can get relief ; that is the first thing,

and I am not objecting to it, for you have to learn that you are irretrievably bad, but having learned it, you are cast upon Christ. Hence you get in Romans viii. what I believe is pre-figured by the well in Numbers xxi., "Whereof the Lord spake unto Moses, Gather the people together and I will give them water." This is the first time in scripture that I know of that it is said, "I will GIVE them water;" the water *followed* them before. And if you ask me what is meant by the type of the water from the smitten rock, I believe it is the grace of Christ which meets us; I have no doubt that when we look to Him we obtain His grace to enable us to act in the circumstances we are in.

But I have digressed. Now you can reckon yourself dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus. Suffering from the serpent's bite you have looked to Christ who knew no sin made sin for us. Hence we read, "I will give them water." In Romans viii. 1, we read, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus;" you are not occupied now with the sinfulness of the flesh, but you are in the power of the Spirit of God—"for the law of the Spirit of life"—mind you, it is *the Spirit of life*—"in Christ Jesus hath made me free"—(a wonderful moment!)"—"from the law of sin and death. For what the law could

not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of flesh of sin"—the antitype of the brazen serpent—"and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Sins, transgressions, are forgiven, but sin is condemned, removed in judgment from God's eye. Now as we read in the end of Romans viii. you are not occupied about yourself, but "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." You now stand for the Lord; you enter on your new history in the wilderness. You, like Israel, now stand for the Lord; they encounter Balaam, a new and very dangerous power of opposition. Balaam succeeds by drawing you into the society of unbelievers. Of course you have to meet them in business and otherwise, or you must needs go out of the world; but I speak of social intercourse with them, joining with them in their tastes and pleasures. There the Corinthians failed, and hence the apostle writes to them, "What communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you." In Revelation ii. you find that at Pergamos the church suffered from Balaam; consequently the reward to the overcomer is, "I

will give to eat of the hidden manna." May we know more of "the hidden manna," the wonderful way that the blessed One walked here according to the pleasure of God.

Your new course is detailed in the Epistle to the Hebrews, you "run with patience the race." Every obstacle in your way is not discomfiture but an opportunity for faith, according to the last clause of Galatians ii. 20, "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." That is the new course ; you are now led by a new power, hence every obstruction is only an occasion for the manifestation of His divine power. You are in the race, though still in the wilderness ; you know the power of faith and can say, "By my God have I leaped over a wall." You are now in the power of the Spirit of God ; you entered the wilderness to learn what the flesh is, now being dead to sin, you are in the power of the Spirit of God and your course is simply to run the race set before you, overcoming every obstruction. As an illustration, you are like one seeing a mansion five or six miles off, and your one object is to reach it. The mansion is where Christ is ; hence "looking off unto Jesus." It is a wonderful course, and like Israel, you are victorious all along it ; over Og, king of Bashan, and Sihon, king of the

Amorites. God appears for you, and in a wonderful way displays His power.

I turn now to Romans xii. and xiii., to present to you your responsibility in the wilderness. When I speak of responsibility I do not refer to church fellowship, I refer to you as individuals. I commend these chapters to you ; I glance briefly at some points. The first is, your body is the Lord's. The next is that you are responsible with reference to the church, to be faithful to the grace committed to you, from the highest gifts down to shewing "mercy with cheerfulness." Your responsibility is, first to Christ, second to the church, and then, in chapter xiii., to the powers that be, and to your neighbour. There is no such thing ever contemplated in scripture as levelling. I need not say, we are all one in the church ; but in the wilderness there is no levelling. You are subjects, though not citizens ; you obey the powers that be implicitly, and in your dealings with one another you are to love your neighbour as yourself, in business and everything else ; you owe no man anything, and you render honour to whom honour is due. You are on the earth a stranger and a pilgrim, running a race ; you are to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." I need not dwell more on this. Any one who desires to learn will study

these chapters in order to apprehend his responsibility in the wilderness. You cannot appropriate the grace of Christ for your walk here until you know first that you live in Christ's life outside it. The order is "I am crucified with Christ" (in type, Numbers xxi.), "but Christ liveth in me;" it is not merely that He has given you life, but He lives in you—a much more wonderful grace. And then, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

So much for your responsibility in the wilderness as in Romans xii. and xiii. I will not detain you long, but I cannot conclude without turning for a moment to the Epistle to the Philippians. I can only refer to the subject of the chapters, a mere sketch of it. The great difficulty in understanding this epistle is that it is the experience of a heavenly man down here. Many read it as if it were practice, but I believe it is the experience of a heavenly man, and you cannot have experience without knowledge.

In the first chapter the apostle longs to depart and to be with Christ; no doubt he felt the pressure of prison-life; he had lost everything he naturally valued in this world, even Jerusalem on which his heart was set for God; he had nothing now personally to keep him here; he

was a heavenly man in the wilderness, hence he longs to depart and be with Christ. But it is better for the church that he should remain, so he will remain; but his expectation, as always, so now also is that Christ shall be magnified in his body, whether it be by life or by death. How beautiful!

In chapter ii. the subject is the low place the Lord came down to from the highest in order to be a servant. He made Himself of no reputation, emptied Himself. He who being in the form of God, thought it not rapine to be equal with God, became a man, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Paul was a prisoner in Rome, and he was ready to go down to any degree to be a servant.

Chapter iii. is more within our reach, as I might say. You prefer Christ to anything of man; all that is gain to you you count but loss for Christ; you count all but rubbish that you may win Christ. There is a connection with chapter i.; Paul there longs to depart and be with Him, because to die would be gain; hence now he says, as it were, I am not going to Him, but I want to gain Him now. This chapter ends with a very important experience. In the Epistle to the Ephesians there is nothing about the Lord's coming. Why? Because you are

in company with Christ in heavenly places. But when you find yourself in the wilderness, you as a heavenly man would say, "Our conversation is in heaven;" we are subjects on the earth, we are citizens of heaven. That is the characteristic of a man in the wilderness, he is a subject here, but a citizen of heaven. This would settle a great many questions. "Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." The moment Christ rises off the Father's throne, it is in the power by which He will "subdue all things to himself," and the very first wave of that power is towards the saints. And this Paul was looking for. The heavenly man in the wilderness looks for this.

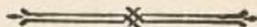
Chapter iv. is more within our practical experience. Here is Paul, a man in prison, and he tells us that he has learnt in whatsoever state he is, to be satisfied; he knows how to be abased and how to abound; whether he is in the lowest position, or in affluence, he is the same in either. A man in very low circumstances is naturally depressed, and when he is prosperous he is elated; but the apostle can say,

I have learnt in all things to be satisfied. Our translators could not catch the idea, and they put in the word "content;" it is "satisfied."

I trust many in this room will feel that the wilderness is a wonderful subject. I may not have helped you much, yet I believe you will get great help if you simply accept that you are delivered from the judgment of death by the death of Christ, and that you expect nothing but Marah—death to the old man in this world, and yet abounding grace from God. "When he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them." Thus you learn the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in a wonderfully real way; how it meets you at every turn; you ought not to enter on anything here except you have previously gathered the manna. Then you know "My grace is sufficient for thee." I believe as you are real and true, you will not move without it; so that you would address yourself to every new demand according to Psalm xxiii.; you have been lying down in green pastures and led beside the still waters. The figure here is not to feed; a cow does not lie down until it is full. You survey the green pastures; you lie down to be assured of the resources you have in God. Then you are led into the paths of righteousness, because you are in a scene of corruption. Next, "Though I walk through the

valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." And eventually, He prepares a table for you in the wilderness, an expression of His favour in the very place where you have been slighted.

I thank the Lord for allowing me to speak on this subject, though I have felt how very limited is my knowledge of it; yet I am thankful that our hearts have been led to it, and I trust to Him that many of you will be helped to understand better your true path upon the earth as those who have been redeemed from all iniquity through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, for His name's sake.



THE CLOSING TESTIMONY.

No. V.

CHRIST THE HEAD AND SOURCE OF EVERYTHING TO THE CHRISTIAN CIRCLE.

COLOSSIANS I. 26, 27.

I MUST recall to your remembrance the subjects which we have had before us, in order to see where we are. We had first

THE RESURRECTION

and its effects. Then, No. 2,

CHRIST FORMED IN YOU ;

and consequently that you are in liberty. I pressed that if you do not know the second, you cannot progress in divine things : it is there, as a rule, every one is detained. It is a very striking statement, " I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." One man gone in the cross, but the One who bore the judgment on me, now lives in me. I

hope you enter into the comprehensiveness of this statement. We familiarly speak of getting life; but there is vastly more in this passage, even that Christ lives in you; and hence you have His motives and His tastes. Nothing could be plainer. Consequently you have liberty—you are free. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free;" this is the start; and if you do not know it you cannot progress.

From that we went on to No. 3,

PART WITH ME.

You enter on new ground; now you know Him, first in relation to your infirmities while living upon earth, the great Priest, the Son of God, passed through the heavens; that is one line; and the other line is that you know Him in His own assembly, above all the power of evil on the earth, outside of man. But you have not yet come to Him, Head of His own circle.

No. 4, I was on

THE WILDERNESS,

where we learn that there must be death to the man in the flesh, but by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus I am free from the law of sin and death.

Now I come to No. 5, to

CHRIST (*outside the world*)THE HEAD AND SOURCE OF EVERYTHING
TO HIS OWN CIRCLE.

Hitherto I have only conducted you outside of man ; now I trust to conduct you outside of the world. Some one might say, and very justly, I do not know that I have learned to be outside of man. That however is not my inquiry. I seek to interest the youngest of you in the desire of your Father's heart for you. And surely that is enough to arrest you. When you hear what is His desire for you, you turn to Him and pray that you may answer to it.

I press first, that Christ liveth in you, because if you have not entered into the liberty of Christ living in you, you are not free of the man under the judgment of God. I have already illustrated this by the feast at the weaning of Isaac in Abraham's house ; he was then acknowledged heir, given his right place ; and when you realise Christ in His right place, as living in you, you are in liberty.

Now I come to Christ in His own circle of things, not merely what He is to you, but as He is in His own things. I have to know more fully "Part with Me." You may remember that when I was speaking of "Part with Me," I did not go farther than outside of man, whether in relation

to one's self or in relation to Him (the assembly is on earth ; and in your infirmities here of every sort, you need Christ as Priest to bear you above them). Now I desire to conduct you into His own circle. I have read this verse about the mystery, "Christ in you the hope of glory." Mind you, it is the same Christ who lives in you. Thank God, if you know that He lives in you ; now you see Him in His own place, not merely to relieve you, but drawing you into *His* things. It is the same Person as in Romans viii. where we read, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin ;" but it does not mean the same ; the difference I desire to shew you. If Christ lives in you, you can, in His own life, enter into His things. It is not so much that He can vouchsafe full relief or liberty to you ; He has done that ; hence, I want to direct your attention to His things. You may be conscious that you do not know much about them. Who does ? But would you not like to know more about them ? The apostle writes to the Colossians of the mystery. They evidently were a godly company but they did not know it ; they had heard of it, but they had not received it in faith, like many in the present day. Yet it was the only truth which could preserve them from the impending snare of rationalism and ritualism. "Christ in you the hope of glory." Who can

explain all that is comprised in those words? "Christ in you the hope of glory;" it is not now your side, but on the contrary it is the greatness of His side made known to you. Now the more you dwell on this, the more you must see how He has blessed you; that He who has freed you from every pressure on yourself, is the same One who conducts you into His own circle of things. I can quite understand how we like to limit His grace to our side of things, as the apostle writes, "All seek their own." I do not think that means worldly things. I see often in books, and in conversation I hear much about Christ's services to us, but comparatively very little as to His thoughts and interests. You like to know that He thinks of you; why do you not think of Him? It ought to affect you that you are so little occupied with His things. This accounts for our lack of freshness and vigour. What was the cause of the blight on the captives who returned from Babylon after all they had gone through? They were intimidated by the force of the enemy, and they stopped building the temple for about sixteen years; consequently, "Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why, saith the LORD of hosts? Because of mine house that is waste." It was their own interests they were thinking of; it was

not worldliness ; they were entitled to earthly blessing, and for earthly blessing they were looking. Having been hindered for sixteen years, the prophet comes to them and says, when they would resume building, "From this day will I bless you." I believe souls would be immeasurably happy if they were occupied with thinking of the Lord's interests. You are thinking of how He is interested about you. Right enough ; but if you know His interest about you you know it could not be greater. Then I ask you, Are you interested about Him ?

I turn to Colossians ii. 2, 3, to see the greatness of the mystery : "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God ; in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Mark all you obtain, "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." The Colossians were a faithful company ; they had not been drawn into the impending delusion, even that man's mind and religiousness contribute to the Lord's service. It is a remarkable combination. The Corinthians were diverted from spiritual wisdom by cleaving to natural wisdom, and the Galatians sought to be religious under the law. With the Colossians it is also the mind and the body, though not in the same

way as with the Corinthians and the Galatians, but to contribute to or help on Christ's work. Hence in Christendom to-day, except a man is formally religious and educated, he would not be accepted as a minister of the gospel. One is ritualism, and the other rationalism; the one is carnal religiousness, bodily exercise; and the other, the powers of the natural mind. In order to preserve the Colossians from this impending snare, the apostle writes, when he was at Rome and in prison, "For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh." And for what? That they might know the mystery, "in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." I say to the youngest in this room, Do you believe that if Christ is living in you, that He is not enough for everything? I feel much impressed with the profound blessedness of this truth, that as Christ lives in you He personally expresses His mind and motive, everything in you! He is the source of "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

I shall not dwell long upon the different points, but I must call your attention to them.
Next

"YOUR COMPLETENESS IN CHRIST."

"And ye are complete in him, which is the head

of all principality and power." As you are "complete in him," you cannot add to what is complete ; neither mentality, nor religiousness can help what is complete. Again I ask the youngest here, If Christ lives in you, is He not enough for you ? You are complete in Him. That is the mystery, and as you apprehend it, you will find yourself in His circle. Still, as to this verse, one might say, Would not a religious demeanour be commendable ? Would it not have an effect upon others ? I reply, if you are walking in the power of Christ you will be naturally solemn and sincere. Affectation is occupation with your behaviour ; if you are in the power of His grace you would walk according to His pleasure, not occupied with your appearance. If you are "complete in him," you do not want to go outside Him "who is the head of all principality and power."

I turn now to verse 11, and you will see how it is consequent on the previous one, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh"—not "*sins* of the flesh"—"by the circumcision of Christ." There, beloved friends, the body of the flesh is put off in the cross of Christ. It is the antitype of Gilgal, the rolling off ; the circumcision after Israel had crossed over Jordan. In the previous lectures I did not come

so far as Jordan, only outside of man. Now you are outside the world ; " dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world " and in Christ's circle of things. Now you find that you cannot make any trial of man in the flesh ; that you, in the circumcision of Christ, have put off the body of the flesh. Some pious copyist put in the words " the sins of ;" he saw that if the body of the flesh was put off there would be no place for his religiousness, so he added " the sins of." If a monk were the copyist, he would say, If that means simply " the body of the flesh," then all my religion is worthless. Hence " the sins of " would make it easy for him. The true meaning is " the body of the flesh " put off in the circumcision of Christ ; it is a stronger expression even than " crucified." Now that you are complete in Christ, what can be added to Him ? You cannot require an addition if you are complete in Him. I say to the youngest, Where is your affection for Christ if you do not think Him enough for you ? Now you will learn that He is everything, and having put off the body of the flesh in the cross, it is not your work, it is His work that is to be carried out practically by you. It is very definitely stated : " In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands." Israel were not circumcised in the wilderness ; not until they came to Gilgal were they circum-

cised, the rolling off the reproach of Egypt. If it has not been effected for you you are trying to effect it ; and you sink, alas ! to carnal religion, where many are. You are called to carry out practically what has been effected for you ; but that is very different.

Now I turn to verse 19,

“ HOLDING THE HEAD,”

not with the intention of explaining it, but proceeding step by step, that you may the more easily apprehend this great subject : “ Not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth.” Now you see that “ the Head ” is common to all the members ; the Christ, who is living in you and living in me, He is your Head ; and you know Him now in a new capacity ; it is not merely as affording to you the greatest relief, but He is your Head ; and the Head of every one of His own. I do not say that all know it ; would to God that all did ; but I am presenting to you the only way by which you can be preserved from the intrusion of the flesh in one form or another. In that day the snare was Judaism and gnosticism. In this day in Christendom they are designated rationalism and ritualism. Nothing can preserve you from this leaven but the assurance that Christ is

“the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” Can you read that scripture, and believe it possible, without being cast upon God? and like the apostle exclaiming, “O the depth of the riches!” “His ways past finding out!”

In chapter iii. we come to the practical application of the truth. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.” Literally, you have not left this place: you have accepted that you are dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world. In Romans, you are dead with Christ unto sin; here you are dead with Him from the rudiments of the world; you are outside of the order of things here; and hence over Jordan. Now, “seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth.” You are brought into a new circle: “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” It is not now for your relief, but to make you acquainted with the interests of Christ in a wonderful way. “For ye are dead”—or “have died”—“and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore”—now you come to the practical application of the circumcision effected for you in the cross. All the members on the earth are

to be mortified ; all to be swept away ; there is not to be any acknowledgment of them. In the life of Christ you are outside all. It is like Elisha's act when he got power, seeing Elijah taken away ; he took hold of his own clothes and rent them in two pieces, as much as to say, I have done with them ; I render them useless, they cannot be worn again. That is the intention ; and he took up the mantle of Elijah to appear in a new character. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth ; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry"—all the works of the will are to be mortified—"For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience : in the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these ; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth." These latter are habits ; the former are indigenous to the nature ; they must be mortified ; the habits put away. "Seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds ; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

Now you come into personal acquaintance with Christ, and you are consciously in His circle ; you realise, as you read in Hebrews

ii.: "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." Hence here in Colossians we get: "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is everything." You have come to a great experience—where Christ is everything. Surely I am addressing those who apprehend something of the profound blessedness of Christ as Head of all the members of His body. This is the mystery. Only one Head for us all. Little you may know of this grace, still if you do not look for it, if your hearts are not attracted by it, you will not advance.

Now you come to the qualities which you derive from Him as Head. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." These are divine affections. Whence do they come? You have now a new Head. However contrary your character as a man, when you get a new head, and so great a One, you will come out in accordance to Him. Now not only Christ lives in you, but you are brought into His circle,

the christian circle. I think the youngest here can understand the difference ; when you know Christ as Head you are in His order of things ; it is not merely that He has effected for you all you need. When He was down here, His disciples were conscious that He could satisfy the hungry soul, for He said, "When I was with you, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing." But now He has gone away ; and as you have part with Him, He bears you above everything of man ; but now you come to Him, Head of the christian circle. The Colossians were a true assembly, but they did not know Christ as Head, though doubtless they had heard of the doctrine. I should like myself to see the assembly which knows Christ as Head (though individuals may so know Him). I believe that it would be a wonderful assembly where each was governed by one Head. Consider the qualities which the Head supplies to you in relation to one another in the christian circle, even to "forgiving one another ;" with "humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering" &c. ; you derive all from Christ the Head. The Lord lead your hearts into the knowledge of this great grace, for, as it has been said, you never understand anything until you are in it. Little as I know of it, I can see the profound blessedness of having Him

as Head instead of my own. What a wonderful company the church would be on the earth, if each of us consciously had only the one and selfsame Head; however great the number, only one Head. Great indeed would be the effect; ministry would be traced to Christ Himself, and not merely to the channel—a ministry which would arrest every spiritual soul. We read in Acts ii., they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, but they had no knowledge of the Head; and the Colossians were not in the power of this knowledge. I have been asked the question, What would be the difference between an assembly or an individual knowing the Head, and Acts ii.? I believe that the Spirit of God never leads the servant beyond his light, that He would help him in what he knows; but I believe if Christ were known as Head, that He would dictate to you a ministry which was new to you; but the fact that He was your Head would make you conscious that you had the light of it; the dictation itself would give you the light, so that you would minister according to Christ's pleasure. A great deal of the discrepancy which occurs amongst us in the assembly arises from the fact that Christ is not known as Head. The Corinthians, with all their gifts, did not know Him as Head. It is a wondrously solemn

moment when you are conscious that you have nothing to say, that you are like a blank sheet of paper ; and then that Christ the Head should dictate to you some word on which you have but little light ; yet the moment you serve, you know it is from Himself ; and though you may be feeble in your exposition of it, yet it meets the state of souls at the time, because it is from the Head.

Now I come to another quality which is individual : “ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which also ye are called in one body ; and be ye thankful.” It is as the peace of Christ rules in your heart that you are qualified for any service. In His peace—His profound tranquillity—you come forth to serve. Hence finally, “ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” If Christ is your Head, you will be soon enlightened. “ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly ; in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord :” your service is in His own circle.

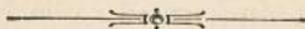
I must add in conclusion that you do not get union with Christ in this scripture ; you are in His life. You are conducted into the greatness of His life ; and I press this, that if you do not understand Christ’s interests as

knowing His life, and that He is your Head, I do not see how you can enjoy union. If the Lord permit, I hope to speak on union the next time. I now only press that you cannot enjoy union except you are suited to Him. There can be no moral disparity between Christ and one united to Him; nothing would be more incongruous. Hence we read, "They twain shall be one flesh;" we must be of Him; it is not merely that He came and took part with flesh and blood, and bore the judgment on us; but we are to be *of Him*, otherwise He would abide alone. He was unique: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die"—now comes out a new generation—"it bringeth forth much fruit." Hence it is stated in Hebrews ii.: "Both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one"—note, "WHEREFORE he is not ashamed to call them brethren." It must be plain to the spiritual that nothing of moral disparity, nothing that is not of Christ, could be united to Him. Do not be surprised, beloved friends, but be assured that God cannot support any one now on the earth who is not of Christ; He has been rejected here, and God cannot support any one but Him. If you are not included in the "Me" ("Why persecutest thou ME?"), you cannot receive

divine support. What is not of Christ will all vanish. This gives the church its peculiar elevation, it belongs to Christ in the place of His rejection; and therefore there is nothing that God can do to bless the church that He does not do; there is no blessing to which He does not call it. In the place where Christ is rejected, God could not support a David nor a Moses.

Now if you accept this truly, you will discern how it is that you have been often disappointed with the course of things. Why? Because you were looking for something besides Christ. God will support Christ, and nothing but Christ. The only thing Abraham's steward was sworn to was kindred; he was sent to get a bride for Isaac, but she *must* be of the kindred of Isaac. According to the type, you must be of Christ's kindred; it is not enough that you are converted, but you must be of Christ's kindred.

The Lord grant, beloved friends, that every one of us may understand something of this blessed mystery, and that our hearts may be set upon "Christ in you the hope of glory"—for His name's sake.



THE CLOSING TESTIMONY.

No. VI.

UNION WITH CHRIST AND THE RESULT.

EPHESIANS II. 4-7.

THE subject of the former evening was

“CHRIST THE HEAD.”

In His own light we know that He is our life, and we learn the resources which are in Him. If you have not entered into this side, and known Christ as Head, you are not ready for the subject now before us, even that through God's grace we are quickened with Him, and raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ. The meaning of this scripture is not apprehended when “in Christ” is quoted before “in heavenly places.” *The place* is the prominent idea in this passage. In scripture the prominent idea is put first. The Greek is a very simple language, just as a child would speak. This is an immense help in the study of scripture.

The subject I desire to bring before you this evening is,

“UNION WITH CHRIST AND THE RESULT.”

In the verses I have read, it is stated that God for His great love has “raised us up together.” This is true of every believer, but every one does not know it. Hence in the prayer in the preceding chapter we read, “That ye may *know* the exceeding greatness of his power which He wrought in Christ;” it is not merely that God has done it, but you have the benefit of it when you are in the conscious knowledge of His grace.

I shall divide the subject into parts, in order that you may be able to follow it more easily. The first part we find is

FITNESS FOR UNION.

(Chap. i. 1-14.) I need not comment on these verses in detail, but I merely dwell on the nature of the fitness—you must be of Him. You read in verse 4, “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world”—before ever there was any sin—“that we should be holy and without blame before him in love”—you must be fit for Him. All moral disparity must be removed or you could not be united to Christ; you must be of Him. This I have dwelt on previously, when referring to Hebrews ii.; “all of one;” you are of His order. In the type, Eve was formed out of Adam; and in

Ephesians we are called the "members of His body;" and "this is a great mystery."

Now for "fitness." You are not only chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, but you are given the highest position; you read in verse 5 your position, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself:" you cannot be higher than that; union does not put you higher than that. And we are "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." I press that the first step is "fitness;" and it is important to bear in mind that the only point to which Abraham's steward was sworn, when he was sent to find a bride for Isaac, was that she should be of his kindred. The great lack in souls is that they do not apprehend that they are of Him, of His order, and therefore you are not really in rest of heart, you are not ready to be conducted to Him as Rebekah was to Isaac. How was Rebekah proved to be fit to be conducted to Isaac? By her grace. When the steward asked her for some water to drink, she said, "Drink, my lord," and added, "I will draw for thy camels also"; she might have acceded merely to the letter of his request; but she had grace, she was fit to be conducted to Isaac. I cannot say every one is conducted. I wish all were; I see that they are not ready to be conducted. Here the apostle writes, "After

I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints." I need not dwell more on "fitness ;" it is a wonderful privilege, that you are of His kindred. "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one ;" there is no moral disparity.

Now I come to the second part,

THE COUNSEL OF GOD.

From verse 17 to the end is "the counsel of God." The first thing necessary in order to understand the counsel is enlightenment, "The eyes of your heart being enlightened," &c. Let me press on you how this great grace is effected, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." It is very interesting that we are enabled to help others by the way we have been helped ourselves. I used to dwell on being enlightened until some one said to me, You are enlightened when you are given "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." I believe many are well acquainted with this epistle who really have not grasped God's counsel in it. Why? Because they have not "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." They think that they can understand it by studying it with great care ; but all that will not be sufficient until they get "the spirit of wisdom

and revelation in the knowledge of him," and hence they are not enlightened; they do not apprehend God's counsel. You might ask me, What is it? I could not explain it to you, but it is the most magnificent thing which could be conceived, even that the body of Christ is on the earth during the period of His rejection. I do not think any one can convey it to you, but I hope to point out presently what the object of it is, even that throughout the ages there should be glory to God by the church. Our Lord in John xvii. (he is a well instructed man that can explain John xvii.), first sets us as Himself in the presence of the Father, and then sets us as Himself in the presence of the world. But bear in mind that Satan had so worked upon man that Christ was cast out and rejected, and then the secret of God, the mystery, was divulged, which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world, even that Christ's body is on the earth. Hence as I pressed on a previous occasion, God cannot support anything which is not Christ: "Why persecutest thou ME?" This "ME" embraces all of Christ. In the place where Christ was refused, God cannot support any one but Christ. You may say, There are the powers that be? Yes; God has ordained them "for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well." Hence when

Christ rises from the Father's throne all who belong to Him will be gathered to Him. I have been speaking of enlightenment; when you are enlightened you understand something of the counsel of God, His great purpose in the church. I need not say that we have failed in maintaining it, but let me add that the familiar way in which we speak of this truth indicates that we do not really apprehend it. It is often said we are gathered on the ground of the one body. I understand what is meant by the expression; but I believe that if you apprehended the truth, you would see that not only are you bound together, a confederacy, but that you are *of Christ*.

I now turn to the scripture I have read for the third part,

THE REALISATION OF UNION.

I must dwell a little on this, because, though union is true of you all, yet without deep exercise you do not realise it. Take the type, Rebekah was conducted by the steward to Isaac. First, she is fit to go, not only because of her kindred but of her grace. Then she has to encounter family influence; they say, "Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten." It is not so much worldly interests as family interests which interfere with the realisation of union. The interest nearest to you is the one which most

interposes. Many think that because family ties are in themselves right they will not be hindered by them. The steward said, "Hinder me not:" and they said, "We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go." She overcomes the family hindrance, but she has not reached Isaac yet; she has to traverse the wilderness. Every step she takes nearer to Isaac is farther from family influence; it is experimental. You rise above all the things which would detain you here, and you are conducted by the Spirit of God to the place where Christ is, and you have a sense in your soul, a marvellous sense, of the *place* where Christ is. You not only know Him as Head, but you know that you are united to Him in the place where He is, a place in perfect keeping with Himself; as the Lord said to His disciples, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice because I said, I go unto the Father." You can sing:—

"The Spirit's power
Has ope'd the heavenly door,
And brought me to that favoured hour
When toil shall all be o'er."

Here union is known. Each one must be conducted individually; it is experimental. You may rejoin, and it is perfectly true, Are not we

all united? Yes. God has set each of us in the body as it hath pleased Him. (1 Cor. xii.) It is not when you know it that it is done; it was done before you knew it. But I lament that we are so little interested in this great position to which God has called us. The realisation of union takes place when you have reached Christ in the place where He is. If you enter the assembly, you join the Lord outside of men; He is disallowed of men but chosen of God. He is superior to all the power of evil. In the next step, you know Him as Head outside the world; you are over Jordan, but you are not yet consciously on heavenly ground. When you are consciously united to Christ in heaven where He is, you are on heavenly ground. It is profound. It is most blessed to join Him in the assembly outside of men; it is a wonderful moment to the soul when you find that here where He has been rejected He has a place, and in that place He is supreme; that is the assembly. Next you find that He who is supreme in the assembly is your Head. He is apart from every human voice: "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew" [the whole scene], but "Christ is everything and in all." You derive from Him. Next you are conducted to Him where He is. The Lord grant that you may believe it in your hearts; you must believe it first, and then look to

be brought by the Spirit of God into conscious knowledge of union with Christ in the place where there is not a discordant note; "Thy pavilion," free from "the strife of tongues."

Now I come to part 4,

THE ENDOWMENT.

Ephesians iii. 14: "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Here we have detailed the gain from union with Christ. I call it "the endowment." I am afraid the nature of it is little understood. But without the endowment, you could not be qualified to be here for Christ according to Himself; you may in many ways serve, but you are not in His confidence. In order to be in His confidence you require two things; one, to know His mind; the other to receive from Him ability to carry it out. How could you carry out His mind without His ability? How do you get this ability? Except you are united to the heavenly Man, you could not have His heavenly

ability. Hence it is evident when you are in conscious knowledge of union with Christ, because if you are you receive "the endowment." The endowment is composed of three parts. The first is that "the Christ" dwells in your hearts by faith. Be on your guard as to the application of scripture. I have read that Christ dwelling in your hearts by faith means that you are holy. The passage does not refer to your state; it refers to Christ's interests. As to yourself, Christ lives in you, He is formed in you. But when *the* Christ dwells in your hearts by faith, you enjoy the first gain from union with Christ. Your individuality is merged; it is now "the Christ" dwelling in your hearts by faith; if you are in conscious union with Christ, His interests are paramount with you. Perhaps your family was your interest before. It is not that the interest is morally wrong, but have you at heart Christ's interests? It is possible to know the doctrine of the mystery, and yet not possess the endowment because union with Christ is not realised. You might be useful and acceptable in your service up to a point, and yet not have "the Christ" dwelling in your hearts by faith. His interests, not yours. Paul could say of Timothy, "I have no man like minded who will naturally care for your state;" that means care like a relation. Though I am condemning

myself, I must not weaken the truth. I believe the endowment is unaccountably great. Your individuality is merged and now Christ's interests are paramount with you. Did not Rebekah, when she came to Isaac, adopt his interests in preference to her own? She did not cease to care for her family, but now Isaac's interests were her own.

The second part of the endowment is, that you "may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height"—that you may know the range, the domain, of His glory. And the third is that you may "know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that you might be filled unto all the fulness of God." Christ Himself is the fulness of God.

So far for the endowment. Surely you would know you had received it? You might feel that you knew very little of it, but you could not but be characterised by it if you had received it, because in order to receive it the prayer is, "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." Now you have received the two things which qualify you for Christ's service here; the one, you are in His power; and the other, you are in concert with Him. If you apprehend this

scripture, you will see a wonderful position conferred on you by union with Christ, which you could not get in any other way. It is difficult to accept all I say; I admit that first you will pass through much exercise and self-abeyance in order to be in correspondence with it. No one, I suppose, has laid hold of a truth without being first impressed with the magnitude of it, that it is of God. If you see it easily you have not a sense of its magnitude. Often your heart may cry: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." I say it feelingly, my one cry is that I might know this great endowment, that Christ may dwell in my heart by faith; that I may know the range of His glory; and that I may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that I might be filled unto all the fulness of God—a wonderful statement. You might say, Can we be brought to this moral height here? Yes; and now you are qualified to be descriptive of Christ here; now you come, as in verse 20, to

THE OBJECT OF THE CHURCH.

"Unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us"—a power working in you beyond all you can conceive; "unto him be glory in the church

by Christ Jesus throughout all ages." This is the object of the church.

Let me for a moment call your attention to all we have gone over ; first, fitness ; secondly, enlightenment ; thirdly, realisation of union ; fourthly, the endowment conferred by union. I do not attempt to unfold it more fully, but it is a comfort to me to know that the Spirit of God can unfold it to you more than any language could convey. It is yours by the grace of God ; it is not merely when you enjoy it that it is yours ; it is yours by His grace, though you have not realised it ; if you had realised it, you would have received the endowment. However true Rebekah's heart was to Isaac, she could not be endowed until she came to him.

It is not future but present, and this I press, because when you realise union with Christ you are acquainted with Him where He is in a scene of unparalleled brightness, apart from all the contrariety where you are.

The next part is,

THE TESTIMONY.

The testimony is twofold : one is to be descriptive of Christ, the heavenly Man, in the assembly ; and the other is in your own family. You begin with, "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (chapter ii.

presents the vocation), "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." If you are not holding the Head, you cannot know the unity of the Spirit. How could you? "Until we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown [perfect] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"—even that you should be here as Christ, and this is the testimony. I turn to John xv. 26: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." Mark the words, "He" [the Holy Ghost] "shall testify of me." The apostle John sets forth the divine power by which only your calling can be carried out. Thus John resuscitates Paul's teaching: this is very interesting. The Comforter, the Holy Ghost, is sent to you by Christ, and "He shall testify of me;" HE will testify of Christ, a Man in heaven; and hence in chapter xvi. the first work of the Holy Ghost is to demonstrate the state of the world: it is sin. Righteousness has gone to the Father, and the prince of this world is judged. So much as to the state of things here. But to Christ's own, "He shall glorify me;" the very thing you desire is vouchsafed to you. "He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine,

and shall shew it unto you." Some suppose that "mine" refers to Christ personally; but it is not correct; it refers to His things. "All things that the Father hath are mine, therefore said I, that he shall take of mine and shall shew it unto you." I desire to draw your attention to the nature of the testimony: it is that you are descriptive of Christ, the heavenly exalted Man, on the earth. It is not possible for a man holding position from the world or seeking it, to be descriptive of the heavenly Man, however zealous he might be, because the first work of the Holy Ghost in him is to demonstrate the state of the world which rejected Christ. As I have already said, there are two circles in which this testimony is to be maintained: first, the church, and secondly in your own household. The testimony is to be descriptive of the exalted Christ in the world where He was refused and cast out. I admit the church has failed as the candlestick. It is a ruin in the eyes of man; but the body of Christ according to God's counsel remains. I press the importance of the testimony in these two circles.

One word as to the household. Under the law there were no directions respecting it, except "Children, obey your parents;" nothing about it in the Epistle to the Romans, and not

much in Colossians ; but when you are united to Christ, the heavenly Man, you are descriptive of Him not only in the church, but in your own family circle. The most amiable husbands must feel how imperfectly they come up to the divine standard, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it that he might sanctify and cleanse it." The principle is the same in all the household : "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath ; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." How few answer to it ! I have not seen it done in half-a-dozen instances. The standard is on the ground and principle that you are united to Christ, the heavenly Man, and consequently capable to be descriptive of Him here.

Now I come to the last part or section, which is in chapter vi.

THE CHARACTER OF THE OPPOSITION.

It is difficult to speak on it, because some suppose that they understand it ; and nothing more hinders or obstructs the reception of the truth than the supposition that you apprehend it because you see something like it. Every Christian knows that there is opposition, but the opposition of Ephesians vi., the complete force of Satan, set forth in type by the seven nations of Canaan, cannot be encountered by

any one until he is here in the power of a heavenly man, but the moment you are in the power of a heavenly man, the whole force of Satan will be arrayed against you. Some have comparatively easy times, because they are not in this heavenly power, hence Satan does not strenuously oppose them. If you read 2 Timothy iii. carefully, you will see that the opposition there is from within; the whole force of Satan resists the truth. All in Asia had turned away from Paul, but he was strong in the Lord and in the power of His might; he was enabled to stand. You cannot know what the character of the opposition is until you face the enemy. How could Israel know the forces of the seven nations of Canaan until they were in Canaan? Impossible. You cannot know the force of Satan until he opposes you; you then have to face him. It is very easy to describe the perfection of the armour and all the requisites to encounter the enemy; but if you have not encountered the enemy you have never used it, for you never wanted it. You see Satan all along the line with Israel; he was Pharaoh in Egypt, but when destroyed as Pharaoh, he comes up as Amalek; and when they are leaving the wilderness in divine power Balaam encounters them. Balaam is a great foe to the Christian. The Corinthians

suffered from Balaam, they were on social terms with the world. Every one is characterised by the lowest society he keeps. It morally colours him. When they came into Canaan the combined force of the seven nations is opposed to them.

When you know union with Christ and are qualified to stand for Him here, then you encounter the whole force of Satan. "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." (Eph. vi. 13.)

May the Lord lead the youngest in this room to enter into the reality of being united to Christ. I am not asking you, Do you realise it? I insist that it is true of you, and I say, Would you like to enter into the deep reality of it, and share in its wonderful effect? When you realise union with Christ, you are qualified to be here for Him; you are given His ability, and know His mind, and then you can be descriptive of Him here.

I need not add more; but the impression left on my own mind in dwelling on this wonderful subject is—the blessedness of it! The Lord grant that each of you may see that it is magnificent, and also that it is true now *of* you. And may He grant that it may be true *to* you, for His name's sake.

THE CLOSING TESTIMONY.

No. VII.

THE COMING OF THE LORD.

REVELATION XXII. 16, 17.

MY desire in these lectures has been to set forth the grace and calling of

THE BRIDE,

and now I finish with the testimony which marks the church at the close, which you get in these two verses. The true heart is arrested and influenced by Christ's communication, "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." This is your prospect; "The root and the offspring of David" intimates that He is the King; and "the morning star," that the day is at hand: the morning star is the harbinger of the day. To Thyatira, which is Romanism, when corruption had begun, the promise to the overcomer is "To him will I give power over

the nations." There is now a distinct change in the nature of the rewards, concluding with "I will give him the morning star." Now the morning star is not an independent manifestation, it obviously refers to the day. I admit that the morning star includes the rapture; but it is specially connected with "the day." The morning star naturally attracts you to the day, and when the morning star is vividly before you, it is not your own benefit from the rapture which engrosses you, but that the day when Christ shall reign is at hand. It is the prelude of the day, as Peter writes, "Until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." Any one acquainted with natural things, or who has travelled by night, knows that the appearance of the morning star is hailed as the intimation that the day is at hand. Surely your gain will be great when the morning star appears, when Christ rises from the Father's throne. Then the rapture will take place; His own, blessed be His name, first share in His glory. But as far as I know the rapture is not spoken of but in Thessalonians iv.; though, as in John xiv. 3, the gain to us is prominent. Even in 1 Thessalonians the great subject is "the day."

Now the first point I insist on is that Christ, "The root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star," is your hope. The

church has failed as the "candlestick," that is, as the recognised light-bearer among men. I know there is a great attempt in Christendom to be acknowledged as the candlestick; there are large buildings, called churches, ringing of bells, and other religious demonstrations, all to regain a lost position, and some devoted servants of Christ seek to be acknowledged—as has been said, trafficking upon the toleration accorded by the mere professors. A distinction forfeited is never restored; but John prepares the church for Christ. The church visibly is a ruin, yet the remnant is ready for the Lord, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." The remnant is part of the original, and is distinguished by the special grace of the original. I gather this from scripture. Until you know and accept that the church has failed as the "candlestick," you are not occupied with the "morning star," looking for the Lord to come according to His own communication. Hence in the closing churches the kingdom is brought prominently before you. To the church in Philadelphia Christ appears with "the key of David," the rejected king. And consequently to Laodicea, when the assembly is characterised by pretension and lukewarmness, the reward to the overcomer is that he shall "sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father

in his throne." First you are arrested by the Lord's communication, "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." You have before you the day of Christ's glory, not merely the relief which will be vouchsafed to you at the rapture. At the rapture we shall all be caught up to "be for ever with the Lord," but subsequently we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ prior to our appearing with Him. Hence we read of the servants, "That when he shall appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." Limiting the coming of the Lord to the rapture has tended to foster laxity in walk. The grace at the rapture is most touching, that the Lord, the moment He takes to Him His great power, descends from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God in order to liberate His own ; He is thinking of them first, and hence we read in Philippians iii., "According to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

It is very striking that as soon as Christ takes to Himself His great power to reign, the first wave of that power is to gather all His own unto Himself in bodies like unto His body of glory from Adam downward. That is the rapture. The Thessalonians were very zealous ; they had

“turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven;” they did not know of the rapture before this epistle was written. They had thought that their fellow-Christians who had died would not have part with them in the kingdom. Hence the apostle tells them that the first demonstration of Christ’s power will be with reference to His own. “The dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them.” The morning star may indicate that great event, but you must bear in mind that the morning star refers to the day, or otherwise you will not understand the figure. The first demonstration of that day is for our great benefit; but no true heart could limit the day of Christ’s glory to his own immediate benefit. “The day of Christ” is when He appears in glory, and no blessing can be consummated or anything be in its right place until Christ is in His place. That He should come is the one desire of the bride.

Next, you are looking for Him to reign. Hence in John xxi. we read that John was to tarry “till I come.” Now when the Revelation was given, everything was ready for the Lord to come. The Revelation was written to the seven churches. You should read it as one letter, then you will be impressed with the state of things here, but

that the grand issue or dénouement will be that the Lord will reign ; the Lord will take to Himself His great power and reign. Hence your place with Him in His kingdom will be determined by the way you are for Him here during His rejection. It is important that you should be looking for Him to come and reign.

In Luke xix. we read, "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return, and he called his ten servants and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come." They were to be rewarded when he returned according to the measure in which they had gained by trading, as they had turned his gifts to good account. Note that in Thyatira, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, the rewards to the overcomer are connected with the kingdom ; and the least place is given to the Laodicean. The overcomer in Thyatira receives a much higher place. "To him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron." If the Laodicean overcomes it is said, "He shall sit with me in my throne"—not ruling. The youngest believer will be with Christ to share with Him in His glory. I am pressing on you that your hearts should be set on Christ's coming to reign, because you are in the place where He was rejected. Hence you are not

thinking exclusively of joining Him in heaven, but that He should come and reign.

In the Lord's supper you announce His death "till he come." No doubt the rapture is preliminary, but the prominent desire is with reference to Christ Himself. The tendency with us all is to be pre-occupied with our own benefit; but as your heart is true to Him you are not thinking of your own relief merely; your eye is fixed on the morning star as the harbinger of the day when Christ will have His right place here. If you look at Revelation iv. you will see that the saints are with Christ in heaven. He has not demonstrated His rule yet; but they are with Him and ready for Him; they had been caught up together to meet the Lord in the air; the rapture has taken place. No one can truly say, "Come," but the bride, because she has present affection for Him, the first love has been revived. The candlestick has been removed; but love for Him has been so revived that you want Him to come; you are not looking for a restoration of the candlestick, but that He Himself should come. Hence you read in Matthew xxv., the last appearance of the kingdom of heaven, "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom," but "while the bride-

groom tarried they all slumbered and slept." There was an awakening at midnight, "Behold the bridegroom." Five were wise, and five were foolish; there were as many false as there were true. The imitators were as many as the real—a terrible state of things! Could anything depict the character of this day more than that there should be as many foolish virgins as wise ones going forth to meet the Bridegroom without any divine power! They had the form of godliness, as Paul predicted (2 Tim. iii.); but they denied the power thereof. Here doubtless John's ministry comes in.

I also refer you to the end of Mark xiii., where we read He gave "to every man his work;" and "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." The true heart was simply looking out for Him to return.

I turn now to 2 Timothy iii., "This know that in the last days perilous" (difficult) "times shall come." Paul did not live in those days; he was conversant with the state of things described in chapter ii., where they had "erred" from the truth. But now we find they "resist" the truth. Paul describes the perilous times prophetically. Most interesting and important for every servant in this day, and indeed for every saint, because you are either helping the servant or hindering him. Perilous times shall come and it is of all

importance that we should understand the state of things which constitute the difficult times. It has often been remarked that in Romans i. you have heathendom, and here you have Christendom, and you have the same principles of evil, though you have not the same manifestation of them. In heathendom the wickedness is open and notorious ; while in Christendom there is an effort to preserve a good exterior "a form of godliness" (a cloke) "but denying the power thereof."

As I have said, there were five foolish virgins with their lamps going forth to meet the bridegroom, but without spiritual power. The grievous and effectual opposition in these times is imitation. "As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth." They withstood Moses by imitating his works. Their aim was to neutralise the power of God by human ability. This is the aim of imitation, a most effectual opposition to the truth. Take a simple case : a Christian leaves system with the desire of being on true ground with the Lord. If he is faithful, all goes on well ; but if after a while he becomes disaffected and forms a party, he resists the truth by imitating it. If he had returned to system there would be no imitation ; but when he imitates separation the truth is resisted. Now it is most solemn and interesting

that Jannes and Jambres were defeated when the power of life was manifested, they could not imitate it. It is here John's ministry comes in; John's ministry presents the wonderful power given to you, it is subjective. Hence, "They shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was."

Take any sect you like, and you will see that they betray the folly of their pretensions when confronted with the truth of God in the power of the Holy Ghost. See Wesleyans or Quakers. I can remember the Irvingites, I knew them in their first attractiveness; their great point at first was the coming of the Lord; but from this they were diverted by seeking for a manifestation of the Holy Ghost, and that without it you could not be ready to meet the Lord; they eventually degenerated so much as to read the Litany.

It is of the deepest importance that you should apprehend the nature and character of the difficult times divinely, for if you do not, you never will be able to cope with them. Timothy was qualified to cope with the state of things in the difficult times, he was fully acquainted with Paul's "doctrine, manner of life," and "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures." Paul's teaching, which embraces the gospel and the church, inculcates God's present object. In

“the holy scriptures” you have divine principles (man in all his deformity, and God in all His greatness): and by them you are taught that the man who has God’s object at the time, whatever that object is, is the man of power, supported by God. Open the Bible anywhere, and you will find that this is a divine principle: and surely no one is equal to the difficult times who does not understand the mystery. I do not mean that he is not a Christian, but I am speaking of a man equal to the crisis. How could you counteract the worst state of things brought about by Satan in the last days if you did not stand for God’s object for the time? and you could not stand for it if you did not know it. Hence Timothy was told in chapter ii., “The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

The blessed God revives from the lowest point, when any one has faith in Him as to His object at the time. This is properly “the remnant.”

I have already referred to the remnant. To the church of Thyatira it is said, “And unto the rest” say I: “the rest” means the remnant. The remnant in scripture is not a residue. You will get the scriptural idea in Isaiah vi. 13:

“But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten : as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves : so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.” The tenth or tithe is the Lord’s. He will not leave Himself without witness, hence the remnant is characterised by the brightest feature of the original, God’s object for the time. I cannot refer to all the remnants in scripture, I will refer to one or two. Jacob is the remnant of Abraham’s period ; he is worshipping God, leaning upon his staff ; he is fully a stranger and pilgrim, he says, “As for me, Rachel died by me :” he no longer looks for anything here, but he blesses Joseph’s sons.

The difference between Abraham and Lot was that Abraham was in faith set for God’s object ; Lot was seeking his own advantage. Many Christians, like Lot, are righteous ; but they are not in faith set for God’s object for the time, they are not dispensationally right. Now, if Satan can divert you to a dispensation which is not God’s present object, he has through you defeated the purpose of God. Many Christians assume to be in the dispensation before the descent of the Holy Ghost, and consequently are not advanced beyond the Lord’s Prayer. They may be pious, but they assume to be in a dispensation where God is not working,

and thus they miss the "trade winds," the present course of the Spirit of God. If you are set for God's object at the time, it is wonderful the way He will uphold you. Look at Samuel, the last of the judges ; he cried unto the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him, and the Philistines were discomfited, they were smitten before Israel. Then Samuel took a stone, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto hath the LORD helped us ;" "and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel." There is the remnant.

One example more, when our Lord first entered the temple (see Luke ii. 22, &c.), not only Simeon acknowledged Him, but Anna, the prophetess, a widow of about eighty-four years, "which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." Simeon and Anna were the remnant for that time ; they were set upon God's purpose in the lowest state of things. If you are set for God's object in the lowest state of things, you must be in the line of His power and pleasure, hence the brightest and most important characteristic of it will be most prominent in you. Many say, all is in ruin: that is the moment for the man of faith to stand for God's object. If you know it and have faith in Him

to stand for it, then you are the remnant. In every way you are sure to be helped if you are set for God's object.

Look at Anna; the moment she saw the child Jesus she recognised Him, "gave thanks likewise unto the Lord." Where did she get her information? All the learned men in Jerusalem did not know it. She was set upon God's purpose for the time, she was greatly favoured, and she "spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem"—a bright example for us all.

You see, I trust, how the remnant should be characterised: consequently the remnant now is set for God's present object, which is the mystery—that Christ should be described by His own body here where He has been rejected. Nothing satisfies you, if true in heart to Him, but known union with Him; and you could neither share in His power, nor be in concert with His mind, except you were consciously united to Him.

It is very interesting to note the effectiveness of John's ministry in the difficult times. Every servant of God knows something of the help of the Holy Ghost in John xiv., but I judge that not many in this day know the leading of the Holy Ghost in John xv. 26. In John xiv. the Lord says, "But the Comforter, which is the

Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Thus they should be fruit-bearers. Now, in chapter xv. 26 we read, "The Comforter whom I will send unto you from the Father he shall testify of me"—the rejected Man in heaven. Connect this with the Epistle to the Ephesians, and you will see how John's ministry supports Paul's teaching. The Holy Ghost is sent from Christ in heaven, that you might be able to describe Him in His exaltation on the earth where He was rejected. John does not present the form as Paul does, but he presents to you the power by which only the form can be maintained.

I turn now to the verses which I have read: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." The Spirit and the bride invite the Lord to come. This is the absorbing thought in response to His communication, "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." No one could invite Christ to come if he were not in happy concert with His own mind; you could not invite Him to come if you were not ready for Him.

"Let him that heareth say, Come." I believe if you were saying "Come" practically, you

would draw hearts to join you in saying "Come." I would to God that many were saying "Come." The effect would be very great. It is not merely that you are going to Him but that you are ready waiting for Him to come, as we read, "Every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." This is very definite; you are characterised by your hope, you are being prepared for Him. The knowledge of the truth will not do this; there must be personal devotedness to the Lord; nothing is more attractive or has more influence with others. The failure of the church is that they had left their first love; and there is no moral restoration until you begin at the point of departure.

There is one mark more of those who are waiting for the Lord, it is that they are giving the household their "meat in due season." When the servant is evil he will say in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;" he does not care for the "household." When I hear any one referring to the coming of the Lord, even in giving out a hymn about it, I am arrested, for as he is true, he is interested in getting ready the saints for the Lord. The true servant in any house does not attend merely to his own duties, but if he sees anything neglected by the others he

rectifies it, because he is thinking of his master. And the greatest proof of your love for Christ is that you care for those who belong to Him ; if you love Me, feed My sheep. You give them meat in due season. No assembly, as far as I know, rises above the ministry there ; I do not limit ministry to one man, for surely the highest element of ministry in a place, by man or woman, gives a character to the ministry. Hence it is added, "Let him that is athirst come ;" you have an interest in the benefit of others. And then finally you are, I may say, evangelical, in the opposite order observed by men. If you begin with the bride looking for Christ to come, you will seek that every one belonging to Christ should be according to His pleasure, for He is coming ; hence you will rejoice to be the herald of this wonderful invitation, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The gift of an evangelist comes from the Head, and he should know that the church is Christ's treasure. The greatest evangelist that ever was, was the most enlightened servant of the church, I mean the apostle Paul. God is wiser than you. The gifts come from the Head ; Christ is the fountain and source of them all, and if you come really from the Head and answer to Him, you must understand what His chief interest is, and you are not working merely for the benefit of

man. The chief work of the evangelist is that he is looking for the "silver piece."

May the Lord keep the subject of His coming fresh before your hearts, that you may be so set for it that you have no other hope in this scene of misrule and contrariety, your only expectation is that He would come and take His place.



