

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

RIGHT SERVICE

A SERMON – by MR. JAMES WELLS

PREACHED ON SUNDAY Morning, 24th JULY, 1870

VOL. XII. - No. 611.

“Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things.”—Deuteronomy xxviii. 47.

We have already had one sermon upon these words, and our chief subject this morning will be the service of the Lord, and then the reason thereof, “for the abundance of all things.” And this is a matter essential to our eternal welfare. For instance, look at the work of the Lord Jesus Christ; his work was one of service to God, and it was essential that he should serve God precisely after that manner which the law demanded, which justice demanded, which the covenant of grace, our necessities, and the great ends to be answered demanded. The Lord Jesus Christ must keep in order with all these things, Therefore, you read of his being a priest after the order of Melchizedek; and you read also of some, that they sought not the Lord after due order. Our text brings before us, therefore, a subject essentially important, —that as the service of the Lord Jesus Christ must be such as answered the great end that was to be brought about, and did answer it, so the object of the service of the people of God is to bring them into possession of what the Lord has for them. There is but one kind of service that is acceptable in the sight of the Lord, and that can bring the people into possession of what the Lord has for them, for that is the end and object of the service. And yet we find in all ages a perpetual tendency among men to set up doctrines, inventions, and systems of their own, and to serve the Lord after their own way; but it has always been a way that has led from, instead of to, the things which the Lord hath in possession and will bring his people into possession of by those services. I will carefully describe; after reminding you that the Pharisees of old served and worshipped God, but they were regulated in those services by a spirit and by doctrines that led them away from the things of God instead of to God; and as they were thus led away from the things of God, when Christ, who is the embodiment of every blessing, came, their spirit and doctrines led them to crucify him. And yet men say, “It doesn’t matter, if you are sincere, how you serve the Lord.” My object this morning, therefore, will be to prove the necessity of being brought into that one and only one service by which we can be acceptable to the Lord.

The object of the service, then, is to bring the people into possession of what the Lord has for them. Hence, in Genesis xviii., the Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord;” and of course that way is the Lord Jesus Christ, “to do justice and judgment;” but you cannot do justice or deal justly with God in any way but by faith in Jesus Christ; and “judgment,” abide by the Lord’s decision, — “he that believeth hath everlasting life” —that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. Therefore, if we are the true servants of God, and are brought into that service we have now to describe, then the promises belong to us, and we are on the way to the possession of that which the Lord has for us; for all the true servants of God are sons and daughters of the Almighty; they are heirs of God and joint heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us take a twofold view of this service. First, that it must be by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, a service of faith; for without faith it is impossible to please God; and this delights those that know their need of its being by faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed. Then, secondly, the spirit of that service. The Jews did not serve the Lord joyfully, or with gladness of heart; they were ever for getting away from him. First, then, the true service of the Lord; it must be by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us hear what the Scriptures, say upon this, for it is a most essential matter; either we are serving God as Abel did, acceptably; or as Cain did, not acceptably. We are serving God either to be blessed in our deed, or we are serving him, if we make a profession at all, to be cursed in our deed. See how solemnly important the matter is. Romans iii., — “We know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law.” What is the effect of what the law says? “That, every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” Therefore, we cannot serve God by the works of the law; for the apostle says, “Whatsoever the law saith,” —and I may mention two things which it says, among the rest; first, that “he that offendeth in one point is guilty of the whole.” Now that one thing said by the law is enough to stop the mouth of any one. Then again, it says, “Cursed is he that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.” There are three things especially essential to serve God acceptably; these must be knowledge, faith, and love. You cannot do without these three. It is true there are many other excellencies arising from them. Let us look back to that scripture, — “What the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law.” And now, mark the purpose of the speaking of the law. Is the purpose that the people may make themselves good, and be as good as the law? Is it that the people may serve God by the law, and so attain unto life by the works of the law, and attain unto righteousness and the favor of the Lord by the works of the law? No, that is not the object; the object is to stop the mouth, to prove the man guilty, to lay him in the dust before God, and make him acknowledge what Saul of Tarsus acknowledged when he said, “The law is spiritual, I am carnal, sold under sin?” I cannot lay too much stress upon this branch of Christian experience and knowledge. “I speak,” said the apostle, “to them that know the law.” Oh! to know that you are utterly, entirely, originally, personally, practically, and finally condemned by the law of God; that there is nothing but wrath and condemnation there. Then, when you have a knowledge of this, and find out this, you see there is not access to God, no such thing as being pleasing to God, without being holy? and you cannot be holy by the law; that brings no holiness. There is no such thing as being pleasing to God without being righteous, and we cannot be righteous by the law, because that is holy, spiritual, just, and good, and we are everything the reverse. Let us hear how the apostle beautifully brings in the remedy: “Being justified freely by

his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” The word “justify” sometimes signifies simply “to exempt,” and so you may use the word there, “being exempted freely by his grace.” It was an act of free grace to send such a Savior, and to make us sensible of our need of him; - “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” So that the exemption from the law and its curse, from sin, from everything that stands against us, is not only by the redemption that is in Christ, but by the freeness of the grace that is by that redemption.

Such a redemption as that must be by grace. What creature doing could give us an interest in such a redemption as that? Where shall we begin with the delightful theme of eternal redemption? Look at the infinity of the price paid for that redemption; and look at the infinite, innumerable, and eternal blessings that come in one after the other by that eternal redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It is thus then a knowledge of what the law is that gives us to see our need of Christ, and then to see the suitability of Christ; and here it is we can serve God joyfully and with gladness of heart, because he has not anything against us. It is only just as he comes in, and deals with us as he did with Isaiah, and Joshua the high priest, and with the woman at the Savior’s feet, when he shows to us that entire forgiveness and exemption that we have by this eternal redemption; then we can see the way in which we can pray to God, believe in and love God, and stand out for him; then we can see that faith in Jesus Christ will bring about the fulfilment of the promises, for all the promises are by faith in Christ; brought to know, and love, and believe in him, the promises are to such; and they, serving God in spirit in this way, are thereby every day coming nearer and nearer into possession of what the Lord has for them.

But we will follow the apostle a little further, for he himself, like every saved sinner, is very delighted with this way of praying to God, and standing out for God, and running in the way of the commandments of God, and rejoicing in God; therefore, he says, “To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” His righteousness will mean his own substitutional work, and that is to be set forth as the way of remission for sins that are past; and all we want is the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to lay hold of this eternal righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. And then look at the beautiful word “past;” — “the remission of sins that are past.” I apprehend that means two things; first, that the sins of those who are thus brought to look to God by the perfect work of Christ, their sins were passed over by the Lord from them to the Lord Jesus Christ: — “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all;” so that our sins are passed away from us, and were passed to him by imputation, and he put them eternally away by the sacrifice of himself. I think that is one thing meant by the sins that are past, or passed from the one to the other; and the other thing I think meant is that as their sins were passed over from them to Christ Jesus, and as he has put away their sins, God will pass over their sins; he will not lay one of their sins to their charge. This made Micah exclaim, “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever.” The Lord will not always keep you under the forebodings, doubts, and fears of being lost; “for he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old?” Thus, you see the difference between the law and the gospel. We cannot serve God acceptably without knowledge, faith, and love to his blessed name and to his truth. “To declare at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” So that God would not reckon himself just to that law

of which he is determined not one jot or tittle shall ever fail, in exempting us by any other means than the righteousness of his dear Son: "That he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." If, then, we have this knowledge of where we are by the law, and of our need of Christ, then we come in with the noble army you read of in Hebrews xi.; and all these lived and served God, and died in faith, and obtained the ultimate blessedness. The Savior impresses this matter of knowledge upon our minds in a very solemn way, and indeed the Scriptures at large; but I refer now to one particular expression of the dear Savior. He said to the woman of Samaria, "Ye worship ye know not what." Such a worship as that could not be acceptable; it is like the worship of the Athenians—an altar to the unknown God, "whom ye ignorantly worship." Look at it even in a human sense; if you are a servant, your service has a special end in view, and you are taught what kind of service or work you are to do in order to gain an end; but as soon as your master's back is turned, you propose to yourself some other end, and adopt some means contrary to that which belongs to your position. What would your master do? Would he not at once dismiss you and send you about your business, unless he could instruct you, and put you and keep you right. Just so when the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world—he came not to do his own will, he came to do that which was determined upon already; he came to do God's will. And so, if we are brought to serve God, and serve him aright, we have certain ends in view, and we may sum them all up in the idea of eternal life, and we must serve the Lord in a way that shall lead to that end. Then, again, you will observe that in this knowledge of Christ as the end of sin and the law, in worshipping God in this way, you then have that which the Savior gives us to understand must be had in order for the service to be acceptable to God. He says, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." The idea is that the spirit means your mind, heart, and affections; and that gospel that does not unite my spirit, my soul, my heart, my affections to Christ, that gospel does not enable me to worship God in spirit; the Lord has not my spirit, and if he has not my spirit, he cannot rightly have my body. Therefore, said one of old, "The Lord said unto me, Seek ye my face; my heart replied, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." To worship him in spirit and in truth, then, means that you have this knowledge of him, where his mercy and love are revealed, and here you can love him. There is knowledge, and by that knowledge of him you love him and believe in him. Here you can walk in love; here you can serve the Lord, as our text indicates the Israelites should have served the Lord, with joyfulness and gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things. So then when we have this knowledge, it enables us first to appreciate the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is one very important matter in our religion—to appreciate the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, until he hath brought forth judgment unto victory;" until he hath wrought the victory. That is one test to try you by, whether you are serving God acceptably, —the estimate you put upon the service of Jesus Christ. Every one that knows what he is by the fall of man, by the law of God, and then sees how the Savior has met that law, and how we are dead to that law, and that law dead to us, and that the severation is an everlasting one, and that Christ has brought in a righteousness parallel in its duration with eternity, that he has brought in a salvation that is eternal, how highly will he estimate that righteousness, that substitution, that eternal redemption wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ! So, then there must be this knowledge of our lost condition, and this knowledge of Christ. In reading the Old Testament you will find that not one Old Testament professor ever served God acceptably without this knowledge of Christ. Abraham saw the day of Christ, and thereby could serve God acceptably; thereby Abraham was brought to where the life was—Christ; to where the light was

—Christ; to where the grace was—Christ; to where the liberty was—Christ; to where God was—Christ; “to wit, God in Christ reconciling us unto himself, not imputing our trespasses unto us.” This is the way we are to believe in God, and seek God; and we are to look with as much assurance for the fulfilment of his promises as we are that the sun will rise tomorrow morning, and more so indeed, because the world may end tomorrow morning; but bless the Lord, his promises never did, never will, and never can fail.

Now where there is this knowledge, you will go on to serve the Lord your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart. First, you will be glad there is such an order of things established. What could you desire more? You could not desire anything more. I make no hesitation in saying that the order of things which I will say a word or two more upon presently, that order of things for our welfare and God’s glory, is the very best that infinite wisdom itself could contrive, that everlasting love could suggest, that God himself could bring about. I am afraid that those who may be the strongest among you in faith have but little faith in God, in comparison, I had almost said, of that confidence to which he is entitled. Shall he show us our lost condition, and give us to see that we cannot endure that which is commanded by the law? that we have nothing but wrath and condemnation there, death, lamentation, and woe; and shall he show to us, on the other hand, how the Lord Jesus Christ came, took all these woes, and curses, and sins, and put them eternally away, and how the Lord has laid on him the iniquities of us all; and imputed his work to us; and here it is the great challenge stands, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” Here is indeed a foundation; here is indeed a way in which we may run with pleasure and delight in the ways of the Lord. Shall he show us all this and we be lost at last? Never. No language can describe the wonderful advantages of being thus brought aright to serve the Lord. The great object of his service, then, is to glorify him by the way; but the chief object is to bring us to what he hath in possession for us. But if we do not receive his truth, his covenant, his Son, —in a word, if we do not receive those testimonies that contain the things, how can we come into possession of them? Therefore, when men say, doctrine is of no importance, do you not see that if you receive a falsehood that falsehood cannot bring you into possession of what the truth contains? and if you are deluded, however sincere you may be in your profession, that delusion cannot bring you into possession of what the truth contains? Hence in olden times, when the people set up other gods, they thought it did not matter; but it so mattered that we see the dreadful consequences—the thousands that fell in the wilderness, and the woes unnumbered—pretty well, as set before us in this chapter, all originating in their bringing in false doctrines. Well might the apostle say, “If an angel from heaven should bring any other gospel than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” Thus then, the service of Christ had a definite end in view, and his service must accord with that end; and our service as Christians has a definite end in view, and our service must accord with that end. Every man that preaches the gospel has a twofold end in view; at least that which he has in view may be summed up in two ;—the one is to help the people of God along in the ways of the Lord, by endearing the Lord to them, and by ministering from time to time those testimonies that the Lord is pleased to bless, to strengthen, and encourage their hearts; and the other end the minister has in view is the ingathering of them that know not the Lord as yet, and do not as yet obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here is God, then, in and by Christ Jesus, after this order of free and ample mercy; here it is that he is to be served with joyfulness and gladness of heart.

Now what shall I say to the Savior? What an example he has set us in this matter! He had to be a man of sorrows, and yet delighted to carry those sorrows; he had to live such a life as none ever

could live but himself, and yet delighted to live that life; he had to die the most awful death that anyone ever could die, for none but himself could embody in a death what he embodied in his death; yet he delighted to do so. "I delight to do thy will, O God; yea, thy law is within my heart;" and you hear him saying, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Oh, for more of this spirit in our own souls; and then I am sure we should serve the Lord more joyfully and more readily. There are some professors, heaven knows what to make of them, I do not; —they skulk and shuffle about; and if the cause of God should require a little temporal assistance, it goes to their very hearts and souls; and there is a sprinkle that will look about from year to year and watch to see whether they can get a seat, but never think of paying for one, never think of putting their hand to the cause of God, or anything of the kind. God alone knows what will become of them when they die, for I do not. I cannot understand such a religion. I make no hesitation in saying that all our services, let us do whatever we may, ought to be services of thanksgiving to God. Do we not owe him a debt of infinite gratitude? Oh, can we ever love him, praise him, serve him, exalt him, in a way that is at all commensurate with what he has done for us? His love is indeed wonderful, his mercy is indeed wonderful—with us while we live, and presently, when we come to lay down our heads on a dying pillow, there he will be with us, strengthening the heart, comforting the soul, and enabling us freely to part with what he calls upon us to leave; opening to us the pearly gates, opening to us eternal glory, eternal joy.

I will now look at some of those occasions on which the people of God have served the Lord joyfully. I would not give you to understand that I hold the idea that the child of God can always serve the Lord joyfully and with gladness of heart. There is indeed always the same cause; and in our better judgment we see that there is no privilege on earth, next to our eternal salvation, to equal that of being kept diligent in the holy, heavenly, advantageous service of the most high God. I will mention two or three occasions wherein the people served the Lord joyfully for the time, as a type of that which is perfect. In 1 Kings viii. there are four things that have struck my mind upon this subject. I thought if we could have those four things always before us in the spirit of them, there is the cause of rejoicing. First, there was the bringing in of the ark; for the people greatly rejoiced, and one cause was the bringing of the ark into the temple. And oh, my hearer, the bringing into the church of the ark of God's everlasting covenant, a covenant of sure mercy, a covenant wherein the truth of God is insured in our possession for ever: "My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth;" a covenant ordered in all things and sure, all our salvation and all our desire; as to sin, death, hell, the devil, trouble, it is all gone, swallowed up and passed away; there is nothing here but a covenant of life, and light, and love, and peace, and joy; there is nothing else—the everlasting covenant, and that is where David died, where all the saints have died, and where they will die; and the more we have of this the better. When this ark of the everlasting covenant is brought in, everything goes out that is against you, — not a single thing against you. Our God is a covenant God; he has formed a covenant of infinite wisdom and perfection in all its provisions. That covenant in its progress through time has never met with anything which the Lord did not foresee, and for which he was not prepared.

"Our lives through various scenes" (and very trying scenes some of them), "are drawn,
And vexed with trifling cares;
But his eternal thought moves on
His undisturbed affairs."

Here, then, we serve him joyfully when this everlasting covenant is brought in; here we can serve the Lord our God joyfully and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things which he has not only promised, but which he has in possession. He has not, put more into his promise than he has in possession, nor so much; for he is able to do abundantly above all that we can ask or think. The second thing that made the people rejoice was that the glory of the Lord filled the house; and this sets forth the completeness of Christ Jesus. "Ye are complete in him," full in him; he himself is our fulness. "In thy presence is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore." The third thing that made the people rejoice was that beautiful prayer of Solomon's. Whatever there was the matter with the people, there was the remedy by the mercy-seat; and whoever the stranger was that looked towards the temple, there he was received. The people may well rejoice; it matters not who or what they are, favored to look towards that temple spiritually, meaning the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, if put to the worse before the enemy, or if there be blasting, or mildew, whatever sore or sickness there may be, or if the heavens are shut up, and there be no rain; or if any man sin (and there is no man that sinneth not, parenthetically, said the wise man, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost), here is that that is adapted to all our necessities. So that there is no excuse for running away, for if we do not find mercy at the Lord's hands, you may depend upon it we shall not get the mercy we need, and that can save us, anywhere else. And the fourth thing that made the people rejoice was the costly consecration of the temple. At the erection of the temple what a vast amount of sacrifice was made to dedicate that temple to God! You will catch the thought here, I am sure, friends, that all those sacrifices were a type of that one sacrifice of infinite value, Christ Jesus, by whom we are consecrated to God. It is a sweet thought that it is his sacrifice that carries us to God, that it is his righteousness that carries us to God. It is his truth, faith in his truth, that carries us to God; it is his spirit that carries us to God. And so, Solomon sent the people away on the eighth day, typifying Christ's resurrection, and the people rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done for his Servant David, and for Israel, his people. This by the way, then, in which we are to serve the Lord joyfully and with gladness of heart. But passing by many circumstances, we come to another, in Isaiah lvi.; you have there another representation of the same subject which is very encouraging to some of you, if you are only just beginning to seek the Lord. "Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord;" perhaps you will say, how am I to join myself to the Lord? Why, it is done; just as it was done by the jailor. "What must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"; and that faith that receives the testimony of Christ, that joins you to the Lord; you feel joined to him then; you say, —Well, I do believe in that eternal redemption; that joins you to him. I do believe in Christ's eternal righteousness; that joins you to him. I do believe in his yea and amen promise, that he has made it yea and amen; that joins you to him; and if you are joined to him, you are joined to God, for the Savior said, "He that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." "Joined to the Lord!" what a blessed joining it is; "ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Here is nothing human in the matter it is all of God. There is only one way of being joined to him, —that is, by faith; and one way of being disjoined, and that is unbelief. They could not enter in, because they disjoined themselves from the Lord, and so could not enter into rest; but precious faith joins us to the Lord. And then mark the motives and objects, which you will not understand at the first, but you will as you go on; — "to serve him;" yes, that is the object: O Lord, teach me how to serve thee, how to reject all others, and to stand out for thee, and to go on in thy ways; "and to love the name of the Lord." Would you not like that? Yes, I am sure I am right when I say, what would not some of you give if the Lord would but give you to know what it is to love his name? You do not know what it is to love his name. You do love his name, but you cannot believe you do. You say, Well, I believe in these testimonies, but I have never yet realized the

preciousness of Christ; I have never been where the woman was—at the Savior’s feet; she loved much, but then it was a sight and sense of much forgiven that made her love much. Ah then, are you joined to the Lord by faith? If so, your object will be to serve him and to love his name. And if you cannot yet feel that love to him, you could, wish, you must wait, you must look; still read his blessed word, still come out from all contrary thereto; walk in his ways, and the time of love will surely come. You read in Ezekiel xvi., “I passed by thee, and said unto thee, Live, and thou didst live;” then after that, “I passed by thee again, and I cast my skirt over thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, and it was a time of love;” now was manifested his love, now was his love revealed with power. “Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants.” Where is the difference between serving him and being his servants? There is a difference in meaning, and it is this; to serve him is simply to walk in his ways; but to be his servants in the sense there intended is to be his servants forever; never to think of going away again. It is a thought that never, entered into my mind.

I have no more desire to leave one particle of God’s blessed truth than to go to hell. I have found the house, and do not want to move from it; I have found the tree of life, that lasts forever; the water of life, that lasts forever; grace and truth, that last forever; and so, I am very comfortable. If I am uncomfortable, it is because I cannot get more of it. The fact is, I am married and settled in the spiritual and divine sense of the word; I want no alteration; the bond, is indissoluble. “Thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name, and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called.” Then it is added, “Every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it;” —that Sabbath is a type of Christ; and they were to do no work on the Sabbath day. That just suits me; —there is no work to do; it is all done. “Thou shalt do no work on the Sabbath day.” If you do anything on the Sabbath day, you pollute it; you must do nothing but enjoy what Christ has done; enter into rest, and you will find plenty to do in blessing God for what he has done; you will find plenty to do to eat and drink, you will find plenty to do to go forth in the dances with them that make merry. There is a Sabbath for our enjoyment, —the rest that remains for the people of God, and that lays hold on the everlasting covenant; “Even them will I bring to my holy mountain,” —meaning eternal consecration by the one offering of Christ; I will bring them to this eternal consecration by the one offering of Christ, “and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar.” Here is the way, then, in which we may serve God joyfully and with gladness of heart.

Now, in conclusion, a word or two upon this—to serve him with joyfulness and with gladness of heart. I think we need the spirit of prayer upon this subject. I question whether I myself am so eager, zealous, and anxious for the house of God as I ought to be, and I question whether some of you are so anxious and eager for the house of God as perhaps it would be much to your credit and advantage to be. I have no particular reason to find fault, but I do. say it is a great thing for our souls, and hearts, and minds to be kept alive. And while we have a few ministers that can speak to us these vital and eternal things, may we be preserved from slighting such; for when such are taken away you will feel that there is a dark mist, a heavy cloud, a something there; —we did not think much of him when he was alive, but now he is gone we feel that the breach is not so easily made up. So then may the Lord give us the spirit of prayer, that we may pray to be quickened, and to be made more and more lively in the service and ways of the Lord; for it is sure well to repay us; as said David, “In keeping his ways there is indeed great reward;” a reward that far surpasses gold, even much fine gold; and there is a sweetness therein sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. So,

I say, we need the spirit of prayer for the Lord to keep us more and more in his blessed ways. For I can tell you this, that the more hungry and thirsty sort of feelings he gives to the people, the better the minister can preach. When the minister is only half wanted, as it were, carelessly wanted, there is a something in his feelings that seems to hold back, and he cannot preach with that outlet and freedom he can when he has to pour water upon the dry ground, and floods upon the thirsty ground; or when he has to feed the hungry, and every morsel is caught up as fast as he can hand it round. There is a secret in this, but it really is so. I have felt it in my time when I have preached to Pharisaic congregations in different parts of the country; I have felt, that the things I have been advancing were not received by the people, and they have come back to me again; it is astonishing what bondage I have felt.