

# SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

THE KINDNESS OF ETERNAL ELECTION.

A Sermon

BY MR. JAMES WELLS,

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

IN what a great variety of ways hath the Lord demonstrated the necessity that exists for a better state of things than the first paradise, and a better covenant than that which he made with the Jews! What a solemn matter is that of eternity! We see in this chapter the penalties which the Jews by their apostasies were to bring upon themselves; and though they are dreadful, they are at the same time righteous, and they have all been fulfilled, and are in a measure fulfilling now, though we hope the greatest bitterness and severity are passed, and all founded in their apostasy;—“Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart.” And we, who profess to belong to the Lord, as soon as ever the Lord and his service, his truth, his ordinances, and his ways cease, or begin to cease to be our delight, there is immediately then cause of alarm. The apostle might well say, “Examine yourselves.” It is a terrible thing to be deceived, and an unspeakable mercy to be kept in the spirit which is here indicated, and from which the Jews fell. But we bless the Lord that there is a better covenant, and that the people shall not be brought under this charge, but that they shall serve the Lord their God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things.

Our text lies before us in a threefold form. First, *the relation*,—“the Lord thy God.” Secondly, *the service*;—in order to be acceptable to God it must be “with joyfulness and gladness of heart.” Lastly, *the reason*,—“for the abundance of all things.”

First, *the relation*,—“the Lord thy God.” The way in which the Lord became their God represents the way in which he becomes the

God of the ultimately saved; in the one case it is true it was temporal, in the other case it is vital and eternal. I will simply name two things as the way in which he became their God, and that will represent the way in which he becomes the God of all that shall be saved. First, he became their God by his own sovereign pleasure; secondly, he became their God manifestively by the things which he did for them. First, he became their God by his sovereign pleasure. Hence Abraham (and perhaps we cannot be too clear upon that) stands as the representative of two races—namely, his literal descendants, the Jewish race; and then he stands the representative of a spiritual race; and as the Lord was pleased to choose the one in a way I will presently bring scriptures to prove, that will represent the way in which he chooses the others. Now he called Abraham as an act of his own pleasure, and constituted him the head and representative of the Jewish nation; and the Lord promised to Abraham, in Genesis xii., and to his seed, the land of Canaan, and Abraham built an altar; and so the Lord was to become their God in that temporal, national sense, and was to be their God by that temporal sacrifice. Now in Deuteronomy vii. Moses describes the way in which the Lord became their God;—"For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." The first step, then, in this matter was that he thus chose them. And it is also worthy of observation that election is always consecrative; even there, when it was temporal, it was consecrative. "Ye are an holy people;" that is, he chose them and set them apart, and brought them as on eagles' wings to himself, and consecrated them to himself, and chose them to be a special people above all the people of the earth. And Moses gives them to understand that they were not chosen because they were more in number than others, for he says, "Ye were the fewest of all people; but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers." And so they became his people by his choosing them. Secondly, they became his people, and he became the Lord their God, by the great things which he did for them, such as bringing them out of Egypt, sustaining them through the wilderness, and bringing them into the promised land. Now let us look at this spiritually, after I have made a few remarks upon this national election. The Lord chose that nation in a way he did no other nation, and he redeemed that nation in a way he did no other nation, and brought them to himself in a way he did no other nation. Now the Lord choosing the Jews, the literal posterity of Abraham, in the way he did, did his thus choosing them exclude others? Certainly not. And his delivering them from Egypt, did that exclude others from

interest in the covenant and the commonwealth of Israel? Certainly not. And they being a special people unto him, did that exclude others? Certainly not. I have an object in view here which I may as well touch upon at once. And the Lord, choosing them as he did, did that exclude others from coming to God, and joining with that nation? No. Did that hinder Rahab from becoming one of the chosen people? Did that hinder Ruth from becoming one of the chosen people? Did that hinder Naaman from becoming manifestly one of the chosen people? And who shall undertake to say what numbers of the heathen around during the progress of that nation were brought to know the Lord? Whether the queen of Sheba went back with any saving knowledge of the Lord I cannot say;—my object here is to show that while they became his people by his choosing them, and by the great things he did for them, that did not exclude others. I make these remarks because our low doctrine friends are saying that we delight in excluding others; that we just preach to the elect, and to none others, that we care about none others. Now I do not hold the doctrine that eternal election excludes any. I hold the doctrine that eternal election has included a number that no man can number; but I do not hold that eternal election ever did exclude one soul from God or ever will. What, then, excludes us from God? Why, friends, our fall in the first Adam, the sin of which we are the subjects; herein lies our exclusion from God. My sentiment upon this matter is this:—"I rejoice unspeakably in the great truth of eternal election, because I know I could not be saved without it, if the Lord had not been pleased to choose us and to bless us of his own good pleasure with such a Saviour as he has sent, with such a salvation as he has wrought, with such promises as he has given, and with such a covenant as he has entered into wherein is all our salvation and all our desire; yet at the same time, while I glory in this, I know nothing of a gospel that excludes any one that does not exclude that. But you say, If I am not one of the elect, it is no use for me to try. But stop:—are you willing to be one of the chosen people?—that is the point. Are you willing to be one? Do you see yourself so lost, ruined, and wretched, that if the Lord has not been pleased sovereignly to undertake the salvation of your soul, there is no other principle in existence upon which your salvation could be undertaken? for you are under sin and the curse; and would you like to be one of these chosen people? Do you see your need of eternal election, and do you receive that election? Or do you say, I should like to be saved, but I should not like to be one of these elect, these chosen people? Then, if you shut that out, you must not be surprised if that should shut you out;—you shut it out, you do not want it." Just so of the great truths of the everlasting gospel. I know

nothing of a gospel that excludes any one but those who exclude that. Call myself a minister of the gospel, sent to preach the gospel to every creature, yet speak as though I knew who the elect were! I am to preach the gospel to every creature; and I say, if you feel and know your lost and ruined condition, and are willing to receive the testimony of Jesus Christ and of God's sovereign grace and everlasting love, we will set that down as a sign on your behalf. I do not hold a gospel that excludes any one but those that themselves despise the gospel. We meet with no case too bad for the gospel. It is nothing to me what a man has been up to the present moment, if he become this moment convinced of his lost condition, and is led to see in the Lord's own time that he can be saved only by the sovereign pleasure of God, only by the perfect work of Christ, only by God's undertaking from first to last to save him, that is a good sign. So, then, while men charge me with excluding others, I do not exclude others; I do not hold the sentiment that the gospel excludes any one but those that exclude that. Acts xiii.—the apostle Paul was preaching the gospel there to the Jews, and they despised it and turned away from it. "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you." First, to put them to the test as to what they were; and secondly, because there were many among the Jews who in God's secret purpose were his, and were by the preaching of the gospel brought to light; for notwithstanding the unbelief of the many there were some that were brought to believe; "But," he saith, "seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

I am sure people cannot do us a greater injustice than to represent us as delighting to see so many of our fellow-creatures excluded. I never held and never shall hold the sentiment that any one is excluded from this great matter of salvation but those that live and die excluding the gospel. The Lord's people are distinguished from all others by being convinced of their need of the grace, salvation, and mercy of God. And so here, as the Lord became their God by his good pleasure, and by what he did for them, see how many of the heathen were brought to join them. And so now, those who know the Lord know that their knowledge of him originated in his choice of them before the world was, for a knowledge of him is one of the blessings with which they were blessed in Christ Jesus before the world was. They must trace it up to this, and they can trace it up to nothing else; for "God, who is rich in mercy, and for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when dead in trespasses and in sins." I can, therefore, in my own mind see nothing in the blessed truth of eternal election but what accords entirely with the necessity

of every poor sinner. But then the objection generally arises from ignorance, and from a secret antipathy to it; and if the Lord should bring you to pray that prayer in Psalm cvi., then I should say that you are one of the received. The enemy will say, It is no use if you are not one of the elect; it is no use for you to look if you are not one for whom Christ died; it is no use to strive; but if you are willing to receive his testimony, and receive him for your entire Saviour, it is the Lord that has given you this will, and he will receive you. And as to this great truth of regeneration, you say, Ah, it is no use if I am not born again. But if that great truth be laid home upon your mind, and you feel the solemn importance of it, and are unhappy and uneasy about it, and feel it is a Bible truth,—“Ye must be born again,”—if you receive the testimony of it in sincerity, and are concerned about it, even that will stand as one evidence that you are born of God. So, therefore, what is there in the sovereignty of God to exclude any man? Nothing at all. Let me again quote those words,—“Seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life;” that is, you do not reckon this gospel worthy to be received; you would not like to be one of these elect, you would not like to belong to this predestinated people, this eternally saved people. “As many as were ordained to eternal life believed;” and what did they believe? The testimony of the apostle; and the literal testimony is that the Jews were a chosen nation. Did that hinder others from joining them? No. And the people of God are a chosen people; does that hinder others who are yet afar off? It is one of the gates by which others are brought in; it is one of the great truths by which we are saved. I should like to see every man and woman under the sun, every child and old man, rich and poor, willing to receive the truth. What would be my rejoicing then? I should not have the least fear if I could see the will in them, but that they would be received; they would be received fast enough. If there be a willing mind, it is God’s gift. So, then, the Lord became their God by choosing them, and by what he did for them; and the Lord became our God spiritually, eternally, and unalterably, by choosing us in Christ before the world was, blessing us with all spiritual blessings, and by the great things he hath done for us. And the very first thing that the Lord doth is to make the soul willing; “Thou shalt make thy people willing in the day of thy power.” And if you go a little further you may see that the same argument—argument it is not, but only a quibble; we will call it an objection—that the same objection that is urged against election, namely,—If I am not one of the elect, it is no use for me to strive;—the same objection may be applied to other things as well. For instance,—If Jesus Christ laid down his life for the sheep, and I am

not one of those sheep, it is no use for me to strive. But I will say here, as before, Do you feel you are a poor lost sinner without him, and willing to receive his truth, and the testimony of his righteousness and eternal redemption? Then that is a proof that he did die for you, or else you would not be made one with him in your sympathies, and would not have been made to feel that you could not be saved without him, you would not have been concerned about him. And again, men say, Oh, it is no use for me to be religious, and strive, for it appears that all religion begins in being born again; and if God is not pleased to quicken me from death, there I am. But then the answer is, Is that truth a matter of solemn feeling with you? does it sink down into your heart? do you look at the great testimony of being born again, and feel a desire that you may know what it is to be born again? Do you look at the great testimony of what Christ has done, look at his finished work as far as at present you can understand it, and wish you had an interest in it? Then, again, you look at regeneration, and are concerned about it. Here is the great point. So, then, what we want in order for the Lord to become our God is for us to become willing to be his people, and for him to be our God in that way, and that way only, in which he will be the God of the people, and the people must be the people of the blessed God. Study the matter where you may, you cannot find an order of things so suited to us. Look at election; what was it? An act of free, sovereign, and amazing grace,—called “the election of grace.” And as sure as I see my need of it, and am willing to receive it, it is mine. Then if we come to redemption, what was it? To sum it up in the words of Jacob, it was a redemption from all evil. So, therefore, if I am made to feel that Christ’s blood alone can cleanse from all sin, that feeling is a sign of life in the soul. And as to regeneration, being born again, if that is made a concern to me, that concern is one proof at least that I am born of God.

Then, again, some people think that we hold these doctrines as mere articles of faith, or what they are pleased to term mere dogmas. I know nothing of that; I am a stranger to that. I will tell you this one thing, that if I hold any doctrine that is not both experimental and practical, that doctrine is not worth having. To carry with me a mere dogma, a mere opinion, what is the good of that? Money is no use unless it circulates; and what is the good of the truth to me if it be not both experimental and practical? Say you, Is election practical? Decidedly so. First, I feel my need of it; and secondly, the Holy Scriptures show so clearly that those who feel their need of it, and are willing to receive that testimony, that testimony is willing to receive them; and the practical result is that I make choice of God; the practical result is that I go on from day to day hoping that he

has chosen me: I go on from time to time rejecting that that would reject election, and choosing that that has chosen me. It is a practical doctrine. Why do I go on choosing God? Because he has chosen me. He will never cease his choice of me, and I shall never cease my choice of him; he will never cease to accept me, and I shall never cease to accept him. It is a practical doctrine. Whereas take away election, I should not know what to do to-day—whether to choose the Lord or not, because I should not know whether he had chosen me or not. I should be at sea altogether. But let me have election, and there stands the testimony: "The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." So eternal redemption also is an experimental and practical doctrine. What does it do? It enables me to serve God. I could not draw near to God but by the redeeming blood of Christ; I could not have peace with God, forgiveness of sin, freedom, deliverance from the curse, the terrors of the law, or from hell, but by the redemption of Christ. And the practical result is that those who know these truths experimentally, serve God "with joyfulness and gladness of heart for the abundance of all things." So, again, of regeneration,—it is an experimental and practical truth. The eyes are opened; the man sees new objects, and what are they? The things of eternity, revealed in and by Christ Jesus. Ah, he says, here is love; I never saw such love as this before; here is mercy, I never saw such mercy as this before. Here is a Saviour; I never saw him in this light before; here are promises, I never saw them in this light before; here is a kingdom, I never saw such a kingdom before; here are true durable riches; here is a righteousness; here are robes that will never wear out; here is a state of things wherein the people shall go on from strength to strength, till they appear before God in Zion. The man now is enabled to contrast the things of time with those of eternity; and the things of time sink in his estimation into their native littleness; the blessed God, in the greatness of his love, salvation, mercy, power, glory, promises, and care, rises in the estimation of such; and the soul sometimes is enabled to throw itself into the very river of God's pleasure, and while at the first it may seem shallow, only to the ankles, it rises to the knees, then to the loins, then a river that cannot be passed over, waters risen to swim in; and the soul breaks out in the song,—

Thou art the sea of love,

Where all my pleasures roll;

The circle where my passions move,

And centre of my soul."

I tell my fellow-creatures, if they know their need of God's grace,

that knowledge God has given them ; if you are willing to sit down at Jesus' feet ; if you are willing to be nothing, and for God to be all in all, it is God that has given you this knowledge of yourself, that makes it needful that you should be nothing, that God may be all in all,—these feelings and desires are a proof that you are one of the chosen people.

Don't go to where election is preached, say they ; it is no use, for if you are not one of the elect you will not be saved, therefore don't go there. Well, then, we become one of the elect manifestively by receiving the testimony of election. It is exceedingly encouraging if we know our need of God's choosing us ; for there is no other principle upon which he could have taken us up. He could not have taken us up on the ground of anything good in us, for he himself hath testified that "there is none righteous, no, not one ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one ;" therefore it must be on the ground of his own free love and good pleasure. If we are brought to know our need of this, and willing to receive this, together with the other truths of the gospel, as sure as we have the will to receive him he will receive us. Was there ever one that came to him in his humiliation that he cast out ? Does he cast out one now ? Say you, he cast out the man with the one talent ? Yes, because he had the talent of truth, and did not trade with it, did not like it, kept it out of sight. He cast out the five foolish virgins. True, because they had not the truth, they held false doctrines, and they will go out just when you want them. But the wise virgins had the truth, and that truth when the necessity came shone forth. Here again is my idea established, that he excludes none but those that exclude his truth. I cannot lay too much emphasis upon this. How much the word of the Lord saith about receiving his word ! When Moses came to the Israelites, those that rightly received his word, see how well they did,—no serpents, no famine, no pestilence, no foes, could touch them ; they travelled as safely in danger as when there was none ; and were as safe when the others fell as though there was no danger around them. He, then, that receives the word is brought by that word to dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Do we, as they say, exclude our poor fellow-creatures, then ? do we preach election up barbarously ? Why, God forbid. Were I preaching to an antediluvian sinner, who had been as profligate for 900 years as Manasseh was in the early part of his life, I would say, Come, poor sinner, if thou art brought to feel thy wretched condition, and thy need of Jesus Christ, and to see and feel that unless the Lord is pleased to have mercy upon thee of his own good pleasure there is no other principle upon which he can take thee up, and cry to God in the name of Jesus Christ, there is in



his blood all the excellency of his person, there is in his righteousness and in the promises he has confirmed all the excellency of his person; and if you plead the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, you plead an atonement of omnipotence, a divine righteousness, a divine power. What cannot the Saviour do? "He is able to save unto the uttermost all them that come to God by him."

I make these remarks in order that your minds may be clear,—that we are to preach the gospel (and election is one part of the gospel) to every creature. Ah, saith one, suppose I am not one. Well now, be honest with yourself. On what ground do you make that remark? Do you secretly hate election, and think that the great Creator had not a right to do as he pleased among the armies of the heavens and the inhabitants of the earth? Is that it? If that is it, then your quibbles are hypocritical. But if your mind be sober, and you are convinced of your lost condition, and desire to be one of these happy people, then you are one, and especially if you can pray that prayer before a heart-searching God, "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour thou bearest unto thy people; visit me with thy salvation; that I may see"—that is, recognise, realize, and partake of, "the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance." Thus, then, the Lord became the God of the Jews as a nation by his good pleasure, and by the great things he did, and those that received his word reaped all the temporal benefit of it; none were excluded from the benefits of that covenant but those that excluded his word. When they excluded Moses, God's minister, excluded his testimonies, —Very well, the Lord says, now you can do without me; and serpents, pestilence, and ten thousand evils, soon came in upon them. But those who received the word, how well it was with them! Just so now in the spiritual sense;—those that are concerned for eternal things, see what they are called to attend to. "Hearken unto me, ye that follow after righteousness;" that means a sinner that is brought to feel there is something awfully wrong between him and the great Judge of all, and is therefore led to seek after that that will make all things right; and he finds out in time that nothing but the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ can make things right between him and God. Let us substitute here another word for the sake of explanation;—"Hearken unto me, ye that follow after reconciliation to God;" and this reconciliation to him can only be by submission to his way of salvation and to the mediatorial work of Christ: "Ye that seek the Lord, look unto Abraham your father;" —you are seeking this reconciliation to God, you are seeking the righteousness of Christ, you are no longer ignorant of the righteousness of God, but are brought to submit to it, and to his sovereignty;

—"look unto Abraham your father." Ah, is then my seeking after righteousness an evidence that I am one of the seed of Abraham? Yes;—"Abraham your father." Is he spiritually my father? Then I am one of the seed of Abraham, then I am included in the sworn covenant, in the eternal priesthood, in all that Abraham ever had or can have. "Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah," who is allegorically the new covenant; "for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him." Yes, Lord, thou hast done that for him, but here am I, a poor solitary creature. "The Lord shall comfort Zion, he will comfort all her waste places;" and if you can say your soul is a waste place without his blessing, "he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord;" and when he shall bring you thus by the Spirit of adoption to see that he is your God, then will be fulfilled the other part of the verse,—"joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody." Thus, then, as the Lord became the God of the Jews temporally, so he has spiritually and eternally become our God by choosing us, and by the great things he has done for us; and one of the great things I will just name, lest I should not seem clear. One of the great things he has done for us is opening our eyes to see our lost condition, and to see our need of these things; one of the great things he has done for us is to bring us into sweet harmony with himself in this new and everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.

This 28th of Deuteronomy is an awful chapter; none of us can read it without our blood running cold, our hair standing on end, and we think, What an awful thing is apostasy from the truth, enmity against God. How dreadfully blinded were they to take up with the contemptible, paltry heathen gods around! "Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit;" changed away the God that chose them, saved them from Egypt, lightly esteemed the Rock of their salvation. Infinite thanks that that is only temporal; infinite thanks for a better covenant, a better state of things, where no such calamities can creep in. "This people," in the new covenant, "have I formed for myself; they shall serve me joyfully and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things." "Be astonished, O heavens!" I should think the heavens were astonished in our day at Popery and Puseyism, those two systems of infinite foolery and insult to God. Ladies, honourable women, ought to be the first to abhor, detest, and fly from those systems, where a parcel of dirty-minded fellows want to get at all the secret thoughts and feelings of honourable women. Surely, surely, the English women must be losing their modesty,

their self-respect, and everything for which right-minded men will respect and honour them. I hate those systems; I should think heaven itself was astonished at the foolery, and at the foolery of any that could submit to that that insults every fine, Christian, right-minded feeling possible. They come to your houses and know everything in every possible way. It does lower the ladies—I mean those that do so. “Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be ye horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” It is a great thing, therefore, to be kept earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints.

There are two things I should wish you not to forget; the one is the way in which the Lord becomes the God of the people—by choosing them by the salvation wrought by the Saviour, and by regeneration. Of course there are other things, but I will stop there. The next thing I wish you not to forget is that if you are convinced of your need of this order of things, and willing to receive them, then you will go on seeking the Lord. Let me set an example or two before you. We will suppose that some one had whispered to Rahab—Rahab, suppose you are not one of the elect, you will be rejected. Suppose when they come into the land by and by, and destroy all the Canaanites, you should be included in that destruction. See what you have been—a harlot; and next, you are a Canaanite, upon whom the curses rest; next, you are not an Israelite, you are not one of the elect. Well, she says, I will stop and see; I will not betray the spies, I will not give them up, I will not utter their business, I will put the scarlet cord of truth in the window; I am not afraid to own God's truth; I will abide and see. Was ever a person more kindly treated than Rahab, and all that were with her in the house? Suppose some one said to Ruth, Why, Ruth, you are not going with Naomi? You must be out of your mind. You one of the elect! You one of God's people! You share in his favour! Just look at your awful origin; of all the circumstances revealed in the Holy Scriptures, the origin of the Moabites and Ammonites is the most revolting. How can you think you are one of the elect? Well, I have nowhere else to go; Naomi has given me a little encouragement; I have been worshipping cursed gods, I am sick of them all; I see there is no god like the God of the Hebrews; I will go at any rate. And who was ever more kindly received? “The Lord recompense thy work; and a full,” not a spare, scarce, or partial, but “a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.” Rahab was willing to receive the truth, and

she proved that the truth received her; Ruth was willing to receive the truth, and did receive it, and the truth received her. Then let us come to Naaman. If we have got a plan of our own, we do not like our plans upset. You may see Naaman riding along—a great, big, important man in his own eyes,—says to his servant, Now, John, do you know how I shall be healed? No, my lord, I do not. Oh, I do; I shall tell the prophet how to do it—just strike his hand over the place, and there will be a sort of mesmeric influence, and the leprosy will go away. So he brought his plan with him. But oh dear, dear, when that high-doctrine, surly, decisive prophet came out—Good morning, Mr. Naaman; go wash in the river Jordan. What! do you know I am a gentleman? See how you are insulting me; go and wash in the river Jordan! Well, I am a fool for coming all this way; I have always heard that the waters of Syria were better than the waters of Israel. No doubt about that; you have always heard that a false gospel is a better gospel than the true one. I am not going to your river Jordan; the very name of it is enough. So the servant thought, Well, my master talked to me, now I will talk to him. “My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it?” Well, so I would, John. He has upset your plan, has he not? Well, yes, he has. Well, the leprosy is still with you; I should advise you to try it. So he went reluctantly—went into the river, went under once, twice, three times; the leprosy is not gone; presently the seventh time; up he gets—it is all gone. The prophet is right after all, and I am wrong. We think there is a good deal in our own plan; bring us to his own plan, and when he has broken the neck of our pride, and brought us down, it does not matter whether it is the river Jordan or what it is—it is the Lord that healeth us. That was the way the Lord was pleased to deal with Naaman; and I might name many more instances, but your time is gone, and I shall not be able to finish the subject this morning.

See, then, the way in which the Lord becomes the God of the people in a way that is suited to their necessities. Can you think of a better way than that? I cannot. It is a truism throughout nature that you prize that the most that meets your necessities. We do not want useless, but useful things. And so our God becomes the God of the people in a way that suits their necessities. It was needful he should sovereignly choose, needful that this redemption should be entire; needful that he should call you effectually; needful that he should keep you, guard you, form you for himself, and bring you home at last. What more can we wish or desire?