

Sermon preached at Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham
by Mr. G. D. Buss
on Lord's Day morning, 13th May, 2012

Text: *“And there He maketh the hungry to dwell.” Psalm 107, part of verse 36.*

God's servant, the Apostle John, in his Third Epistle (a part of God's holy Word that is very rarely read, but ought to be read more than it is), writes to a godly man called Gaius. John said to Gaius that he prayed that his bodily health would be as strong as his spiritual health; that his body would prosper as his soul prospered. Evidently, Gaius was a very godly man; a man who knew much communion and fellowship with his God. He was spiritually strong, but evidently, not so physically strong.

Dear friends, how is it with you this morning? How is your spiritual health? How does it compare with your physical health? If it were to be said to you this morning that according as your soul prospereth, so will be your physical health, what would it be like? Perhaps some of you might have had to have been brought here in an ambulance, you are so weak. Some might not even be here at all, if that were the case. Spiritually dead!

How strong is your soul's condition this morning? How does it compare with that natural life that God has given you? How careful we are about that! How we protect it! We eat and drink, and try to continue. But, all the while we may be neglecting that far, far more important part of our being: our soul. John said to Gaius: “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” May God give us spiritual health.

You may say: ‘What has that to do with our text this morning?’ Our text speaks of a hunger. Even in a natural way, if there is no hunger there is something wrong with the body. A parent will know that: if they set a meal before their child, and it were to say that it did not feel like eating it, (even though they had perhaps not eaten for some while), there would be something wrong. You recognize that something has to be done to try and diagnose what it is.

Again. I have often seen in the autumn, when farmers begin to plough

after the harvest (a very pleasant sight) as the plough is going down the field, sometimes there are hundreds of birds following behind. Why are they following? As the ground is turned up, the grubs and the insects are revealed, and down they swoop. They follow because they are hungry. Some of you have come this morning to follow the plough. It needs much grace to turn over the soil of God's Word and God's Truth. But, it would be a great mercy if, like those birds that follow the plough, you may find something for your soul this morning. Because, dear friends, when all is said and done, if you have no hunger for spiritual things this side of the grave, you will never sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb on the other side of the grave. Remember that. You may have a great appetite for wealth, for pleasure and for natural food, yes, and for sin and for the things of this world. You may fill your life with them and have what the world calls 'a good life.' But, what sort of eternity will it be followed by? The Lord Jesus Christ said, in the Sermon on the Mount: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

How is your spiritual health, then, this Sabbath morning? For what are you hungering? And, how strong is that hunger? Have you come to follow the plough this morning? If someone avoids the meal table when it is spread, there is something wrong. That is why Paul said: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." If that is what a professing believer is doing, there is something wrong with their health. I say again, this Sabbath morning, how have you come? Have you come to feed? Well, here is a wonderful promise; a blessed statement: "And there He" – the great God of our text – "maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation."

Now, you may say to me, 'But, this Psalm is largely one of providence.' It certainly is a scene of changing providence; from wanderings, and prisons, and affliction, and stormy seas. But God had His hand in all those things. He brought them out of them, and brought them through them. But, the reason they had those wilderness experiences and those prison experiences and those afflictive experiences, yes, and those stormy seas, was so that God could create in them a longing, a hunger. We have it in verse 9: "For He satisfieth the *longing* soul, and filleth the *hungry* soul with goodness." Some of you may wonder why your life has taken so many different turns, so many different changes. You thought you were out of one trouble, and then, lo and behold, another came. Is there this voice in it all, that you should have a

hunger for spiritual things?

“I hunger now for heavenly food,
And my poor heart cries out for God.”

J. Berridge

This is the spiritual side of our text this morning. “And there He maketh the hungry to dwell.” It starts in verse 35: “He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings. And there He maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation.”

First of all, we must ask: How does God make a hungry soul? Secondly, how does He satisfy it? That is why I read that part of God’s holy Word, Matthew 5. The Lord Jesus Christ, amidst those many precious, solemn, searching truths (which are as relevant today as they have ever been), said this: “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” Notice two things about that often repeated text which are often forgotten. The first thing is this: they are blessed *while* they hunger. In God’s account, they are as blessed in their hungering as in their being satisfied. That is because their hunger comes from the God who will satisfy the longing soul. While that hungry soul cannot be satisfied with his hunger, in God’s account, he is very favoured, because the day will come – it must come – when He who made him to hunger will also satisfy that longing soul, and fill that hungry soul with goodness.

The second thing about that verse which is often forgotten is: it says: “Blessed are they which *do* hunger and thirst.” Why did the Holy Ghost and the dear Son of God see fit to put that word ‘do’ in? This, dear friends, is the activity of living faith in the soul. Faith is known by its works. If you have the faith of God in your heart this Sabbath morning, and your soul is healthy, there will be this ‘doing’ within it: hungering, thirsting after righteousness. So, how many are there here this Sabbath morning in whom this word ‘do’ is being fulfilled? “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to *do* of His good pleasure.”

Now, many of us here this morning can look back to a time when we *did not* hunger and when we *did not* thirst in the way of which our text speaks. Some of us sat under very good sermons; a very faithful ministry. We mingled among the people of God; we sang the hymns, we read the Word, we heard

the preaching, but there was no hunger. The most welcome sound of the sermon was ‘Amen.’ Then back we went to the ways we loved most: hungering after self, sin, the world and the flesh; bewraying, by our very attitude, no life, no light, no love, no grace and no hunger for the things of God. Now, dear friend, look back on your past week. How has it been? Has there been any hunger after things spiritual? Or have you been so taken up with “What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?” Have you been so taken up with your natural concerns (and they may be many), that, as for seeking something spiritual for your soul, it has altogether gone from your memory and thought? And here you are again, this Sabbath morning, as if you had no soul this past week! But you *have* had a soul, and you have still got a soul, and you will have a soul this coming week! And that soul is bound for an eternity of misery or bliss, depending on this great point: do you hunger; do you thirst after righteousness, or not?

So, we have to confess this solemn ignorance in man – a dreadful ignorance; a willing ignorance of this need of hunger. We have to come back to this vital point if we are to hunger and thirst after righteousness: we need a spiritual nature that will do so; a heart that will long, that will ache, that will “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” We are not born with it. You were not born with it, and neither was I. But, oh! that blessed moment; that blessed season in the hearts of some here, this Sabbath morning, when God did begin to create an aching void, an emptiness and a vacuum that the world could never fill! Have you that vacuum in your heart; that emptiness; that void? All the pleasures of this world, however much you seek them, they do not fill it. Rather they seem to make it emptier than ever. Your poor soul is crying out for God.

I will tell you a little of the history of my landlady in Coventry, many years ago, when I was a student. She was a godly woman. She told me that, before she was called by grace, she and her husband were blissfully happy in this world. They were devoted to each other. They had two children, and they were a most happy family, enjoying this world to its full, and to their heart’s content. They thought nothing else was to be desired. Suddenly and mysteriously, her husband was taken from her by death. She was left a widow with two children for whom to care, and very little means so to do. And, she found that, not only was she bereaved of her husband and of her former luxuries which she had enjoyed, but, deep, deep down she had a mysterious feeling which she could not understand. For some little while she went on

with this strange, deeper feeling that she could not understand, until she met a neighbour of hers. They began to talk. Her neighbour was a godly woman who attended ‘Rehoboth Chapel,’ Coventry. The godly neighbour said to the widow, ‘Why don’t you come with me to hear the Truth?’ ‘Oh!’ she said, ‘I don’t know about that. Why do I need to?’ The neighbour said, ‘Well, why don’t you come?’ It so happened that there was a service to be held at Abingdon Chapel, many miles away. The neighbour encouraged the widow to come with her. She told her that she would not be known there. ‘You come with me, and we will go there for the day.’ Well, the good minister got up that memorable day and gave out his text. “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” She said, ‘I came out of that chapel and I knew then what was wrong with me, or, at least, what had happened in me. My soul was thirsting for God. I had never known that there was such a God to be thirsted after.’ Thus began the work of grace in her heart. Am I describing one here this morning? Perhaps you haven’t quite understood what has happened. You are no longer satisfied with those things that once pleased you so much. There is an emptiness, and a vacuum in them. They do not get to the depth of this need that you now feel and your soul is crying out. What is it crying out for? For God. ‘Oh!’ you say, ‘but am I worthy of that God?’ Of course you are not, and nor am I. ‘Oh!’ you say, ‘but I realise now I am a poor, wretched, unworthy sinner!’ So you are, and so am I. But, that is all the more need for you to be reconciled to this God for whom you are now aching and longing. All the more need for you to know there is a way of salvation, for:

“The vilest sinner out of hell,
Who lives to feel his need.”

W. Gadsby

Is there one here this morning who is beginning to hunger like that? What a difference it has made! You are like those birds that follow the plough. You have come this morning, not just to wait for the ‘amen’, not just to criticize the pastor in his preaching and his poor attempts to set before you the Truth: you are waiting to hear; ‘Will God speak? Is there something that meets my case? Will there be anything for me?’ You have come, following the plough. You are hungering for something out of God’s Word. You have never read it before in the way you read it now. Now it is reading *you*. It is uncovering *your* case, *your* deepest thoughts, *your* pathway, *your* sins, *your* wanderings and

your rebellion. It has all been uncovered in the sight of this God to whom now you are longing to be reconciled. Perhaps you have come to the house of God this morning with this question: ‘Is there hope for me? Can there be mercy?’ You now come to the house of God in such a different spirit. You come as often as you can. The Lord’s Day is no longer a drudge or a grudge. And, if you can, you will be found under the sound of the Truth in the week as well, because your poor soul is longing for food. Some of us can remember those early days of our spiritual experience, when our soul did so prosper; far more than our health. We could not wait for the next service; we could not wait for the next time that God’s people gathered together in the hope that there might be something for ‘a poor sinner like me.’ Friends, these are times of spiritual blessing in the soul and in the Church. Would to God we knew more of it!

“And there He maketh the hungry to dwell.” What are they hungering for? The Holy Ghost. What are they hungering for? Faith to believe in a precious Christ. What are they hungering for? True repentance; godly sorrow over sin, a broken and a contrite heart that God will not despise. What are they hungering for? A sight of Gethsemane; to see the dear Saviour bowing under the imputed sins of sinners, and to see their sin laid there. That is what they are aching for and longing to see. What are they waiting for? As our deacon prayed in the vestry this morning: “Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.” They want to hear Him say, (as the good hymnwriter put it so beautifully):

“ He wept, He bled, He died for you;
What more, ye saints, could Jesus do?”

B. Beddome

I say, dear friends, that is what you are longing for now. You are longing for that view of a once-crucified Saviour, and like good John Bunyan’s Pilgrim, you want to skip (as it were), saying:

“Blest cross! blest sepulchre! blest rather be
The Man that there was put to shame for me!”

You are hungering for a Word. You are hungering for His presence. You are hungering for love. You are hungering for life. You are hungering for light. In short, dear friends, you are hungering for Christ. In hymn 737 the last line of every verse says:

“Give me Christ, or else I die.”

W. Hammond

This is the hunger of which our text is speaking. Are you a stranger to it, or can you come along with me, in some little measure, in seeking after these things? Dry doctrine will not suffice. Opinion, speculation, theory; no borrowed religion and no denominationalism will do for you. No tradition, no orthodoxy: it is Christ you want in the life of it, the power of it, the unction of it and the authority of it. Nothing less will do. Well, dear friend, the Lord bless you if that is your religion. The Lord bless you indeed. He has *already* blessed you. “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall” - not might be – “they *shall* be filled.” “There He maketh the hungry to dwell.”

Now I want to speak of where God makes the hungry to dwell; where He gives them an abiding place. The first place I want to take you is the cleft in the Rock. At Mount Sinai, Moses saw so much of God’s glory, and realised so much of his infirmities as a poor, guilty sinner before God, that he knew he needed a place in which to hide. Where was he to find it? How could he stand in the presence of this sin-hating, sin-abhorring God? He was a poor, guilty sinful man. The Lord said: “There is a place by Me.” Listen to what it says: “I will *put* thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand while I pass by.” “There He maketh the hungry to dwell.”

“Within the clefts of His dear side,
There all His saints in safety dwell.
And what from Jesus shall divide?
Not all the rage of earth or hell.”

J. Kent

No, bless God for that.

Has He ever placed you in the cleft of the Rock? Have you ever seen the riven side of the Lord Jesus Christ, where the law has done its work, exacted its payment and received its answer? Have you ever seen the water and the blood flow from it? Water to cleanse, blood to atone. You say: ‘Lord, put me in. Put me in with Thine own hand. That will make me well.’ How does the Lord put His people in? We may describe it in two ways. One is by causing them to flee to it. We read in Hebrews 6 of those “who have fled for refuge to

lay hold upon the hope set before” them. They saw such an attraction in Christ, they fled. You read of Bunyan’s Pilgrim – when Evangelist met with him and gave him the little scroll in which was written: ‘Flee from the wrath to come’ – he saw that little wicket gate. ‘Do you see yon wicket gate?’ ‘I think I do,’ says Christian. Evangelist said, ‘You run to it.’ So Christian ran towards it. And, as he ran, he cried, ‘Life! Life! Eternal life!’ Something this world could not give: riches could not give it, his loved ones could not give it, his career could not give it, his bell-ringing could not give it. (That was his favourite hobby). All that could not do it. It was Christ he wanted. ‘Life! Life! Eternal life!’ Oh! dear friend, do I describe one of you this morning? You so ache for it; so long for it. “There He maketh the hungry to dwell.” Within the cleft of His dear side, there is a place for this hungering soul; a place where the law is satisfied, where God is reconciled, where sin is pardoned, where the blood speaks for them (and not against them), where Christ is precious and the sinner is safe. A cleft in the Rock.

The other way the Lord may put a sinner into the cleft is by giving them some sweet, precious promise that places them there in their experience, with perhaps a word like this: “But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine.” Now, dear friends, if God put you in the cleft with a word like that, you are there securely. “Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it.” Have you got a word like that which put you in the cleft and gave you sweet hope that it was rent for you; riven for you? That, unworthy as you are, do you have a hope that “Rehoboth” is a name for you? “The LORD hath made room for us.” ‘For me!’ “There He maketh the hungry to dwell.” Friends, give Him no rest. I exhort you this Sabbath morning, dear friends: give this great God no rest until you are well persuaded that you have a place in the cleft of the Rock, and that you can say with good Toplady (we sing it often, but can we *really* sing it?):

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me;
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.”

A. M. Toplady

You may say, ‘How will I know if I have been put in the cleft of the Rock?’ Well, have you ever received anything from the Rock? Has the water and the blood ever imparted anything to you? A gospel blessing? A sweet touch of His mercy? A favour of His love? A smile from His face? It all came from the cleft in the Rock. “There He maketh the hungry to dwell.”

Another place where God’s dear people desire to dwell is at the foot of the cross. If ever we lose sight of the cross, our spiritual health solemnly subsides. The good hymnwriter says:

“Lose sight of Jesus and His cross,
And soon we fall a prey;
Our lust and pride, by power or craft,
Will carry us away.”

W. Gadsby

And so it does. Friends, when were you, when was I, last at the foot of the cross? When did we last say:

“Here it is I find my heaven,
While upon the Lamb I gaze;
Love I much? I’ve much forgiven;
I’m a miracle of grace”?

J. Allen & W. Shirley

But, have not we to say that we wander? Our affections wander, our feet wander and our ways wander. We are taken up with this, that and the other. All the while we are taken away from the foot of the cross, we lose sight of Christ. Then all the spiritual life in our soul subsides. Sometimes it subsides so low that you can hardly discern it at all. What John said to Gaius becomes a question: what would your natural health be if it was to be gauged on your spiritual health? These things come very close, do they not? But, oh! it is a blessing to be at the foot of the cross: there to gaze upon the dear Lamb of God, bleeding and dying for poor sinners, and say: ‘This is where my rest must be. I dare not leave it. I have no hope but in that blood, no hope but in that righteousness, no guide but in that cross, and He who hung thereon.’ “There He maketh the hungry to dwell.”

There is a promise in Zechariah's prophecy: "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they *shall* look upon Me whom they have pierced." They *will* be brought to that place where they will dwell at the foot of the cross and see 'Him, whom their soul loveth,' bleeding and dying for them. "There He maketh the hungry to dwell."

Again. Has He made you to dwell among God's people? You say: 'Well, I do not feel worthy to be numbered among them. But, once I despised them. Once I was not willing to be numbered among them.' Perhaps some of you younger ones say, 'When I am old enough, I will have no more to do with them anyway. the narrow minded people that they are, the obscure, peculiar people that they are in the eyes of the world. I will be better off if I had no more to do with them.' That may be how you feel, deep, deep down. But, there is more than one sinner who has felt like that. And then God has 'changed their heart, renewed their will and turned their feet to Zion's hill.' God's people have become their choicest friends. I pray it may be so with you, as it was with Ruth: "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me." Are you hungering for a place among God's dear people?

My mind goes to our late friend, Mrs Wilderspin (a dear memory we have of her), and that precious Ordinance hymn that brought her to the Lord's Table many, many years ago now. I will read a part of it:

"Lord, in Thy house I read there's room,
And, venturing hard, behold I come;
But can there, tell me, can there be
Amongst Thy children room for me?"

I eat the bread, and drink the wine;
But oh! my soul wants more than sign!
I faint unless I feed on Thee,
And drink the blood as shed for me.

For sinners, Lord, Thou cam'st to bleed;
And I'm a sinner vile indeed;
Lord, I believe, Thy grace is free,
O magnify that grace in me."

J. Hart

Is there one here, this Sabbath morning, who would long to be found among God's dear people, although vilest of them all? Why? Because you know they are a favoured people; a blood washed people, a people prepared for God's praise hereafter. Although they are not a perfect people this side of the grave (they have many faults and failings), there is something in them that you feel you want and must have. Yes. Have you ever looked on a dear, gracious saint, near the end of their days, and said: "Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." "There He maketh the hungry to dwell."

And, He gives His people a spiritual home; a place where they can feed. That is a mercy. In Psalm 37, we have another very beautiful word which runs parallel with our text. Let me just read from that well-known, well-loved Psalm. We have these words. "Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily" – truly; 'in truth, or, stableness' it says in the margin – "thou shalt be fed." It is a wonderful thing if God gives you a spiritual home where He feeds you; where your soul is nourished, nurtured, sometimes reprov'd and rebuked. That is part of it. Yes. "There He maketh the hungry to dwell."

The ones who are the life of the Church of God here below are those who come to the house of God hungry. They are hungry for the Word, hungry for the Spirit, hungry for the dear Beloved to show His face, hungry to feel His presence and hungry to have some fellowship with His dear people in the things of God. "There He maketh the hungry to dwell."

Then again, has He given you some portion of His Word that belongs to you for you to dwell in? When the children of Israel went into Canaan, they were given a part of the land appointed by God. They were not to fight over which part they were to live in. God appointed the tribe of Judah, the tribe of Benjamin and the tribe of Simeon, and all the others, their appointed place. They were all within the Promised Land, but, where their feet trod, that was to be their possession. Now, dear friends, has God given you a possession within the Word of God? Perhaps you may not have such a large portion as someone

else. You may say, like Jabez: “Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast!” That is a good prayer. It is a hungry prayer, isn’t it? Have you got a foothold in the spiritual Canaan? Is there *one* part of God’s holy Word that you can call your own? You can say: ‘The Lord spoke that to me. He visited my soul with that word. He gave me a hope in it. He placed my foot in it, and, in my darkest moments, I can go back to my God and say: ‘Lord, Thou didst say that.’” “There He maketh the hungry to dwell.” Some of you may have waited long for a dwelling place in that respect. You may have waited long for the Lord to give you some sweet intimation that it is well with your soul. You dare not assume it, you dare not presume it, and dare not take it for granted. You want *Him* to tell you:

“Tell us, Lord, and make us feel it,
We are Thine, for ever Thine.
Take each wounded heart and heal it,
Let Thy glory in us shine.”

W. Gadsby

“There He maketh the hungry to dwell.”

Then, in meditation, my mind went in two directions. First of all, to the Prodigal son. What was wrong with the Prodigal son when he went out and slammed the door, as it were, on his father that memorable day? Naturally speaking, his health was good; he was strong. ‘I am going to enjoy the world! I am turning my back upon my father’s prayers, worship and way of life. I want something better. I want to see the world as it is, and enjoy myself.’ Off he went, full of the pride of life and in the prime of life. But, spiritually speaking, what can we say about him? There was certainly no evidence of grace at that point. Out he went into the world with all his schemes, plans, ideas and prospects. While he had a little money about him, he had plenty of worldly friends to help him on his way. Until, dear friends, he wasted all of it (every penny of it) and became a beggar, literally so. All he could do was to hire himself out as a feeder of the swine. So, into the fields he went. There he saw what the swine were eating. He was so hungry that he would have eaten of their food himself. Then we read: “When he *came* to himself.” That means, not just that he fainted and came round again (he may have literally done that), but more than that; he came to himself *spiritually*. ‘Here am I: hungry and thirsting. I cannot find anything for my soul in this barren wilderness.’ He looks back to his once despised father’s house, and

remembers the table spread there. “How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!” ‘Back I must go!’ He began to return with that note of repentance in his heart: “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.” It was hunger that drove him back. So, back he went. You will notice it was only when he began to return like that; that the father brought forth the best robe and the ring and the shoes for his feet. The gospel is for *feeling* sinners; remember that. If his father had rushed out to that place when he was with the harlots that would not have been right. That would have been casting pearls before swine. But, “when he *came* to himself”; when he was a mourning sinner; a broken-hearted sinner, a self-ashamed sinner: *then* he was ready for the gospel. That is why that little hymn is so important:

“Convince us of our sin,
Then lead to Jesus’ blood;
And to our wondering view reveal
The secret love of God.”

J. Hart

Yes, the gospel is for sinners, but not for *careless* sinners; not for *indifferent* sinners. It is for those who have been made to feel their sinnership: “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” That is why we must preach conviction of sin first, and then the balm of Gilead of the gospel. We must uncover the wound first, then apply the balm that is in a precious Christ. That is God’s order, and we are to maintain it. So, as soon as the dear father saw signs of this hunger and thirst, out he hasted and kissed him. He received him just as he was: in all his rags and poverty; with all the smell of the swine and the disgrace of his history. But he put his arms around him: ‘You are my son. You are returning.’ What love there was! Then he brought out the blessings of the gospel for him. “Blessed are they that do hunger.” “There He maketh the hungry to dwell.” Not as a hired servant, but as a son; one of the family.

Then again, I think, in this respect, of Joseph and his brethren. You will know that the history of Joseph was such that the Lord sent him before his brethren that he might make provision for them in their time of need. The point I want to make is this, that in the end, it was the famine that drove them to Joseph; it was the famine that made them need what Joseph had to give; it

was the famine that made them depend on Joseph's mercy, kindness and clemency. And so it is, dear friends. We have despised, rejected, neglected and cared nothing for God while we are in our state of having no hunger. But, when the famine strikes, and the law demands what we cannot give, when we are bankrupt in our soul and have no payment to make up the breach, then we need One to stand in our place, our room and our stead; then we need a heavenly Joseph. And so, just as Joseph brought his hungering brethren back again and again - "the famine was sore in the land" (it drove them back again) - so, child of God, it will drive you back again when you have wandered. Time and time again you will have to go back.

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Thy kind arms I fall,
Be Thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus, and my All."

I. Watts

"There He maketh the hungry to dwell." In the end, Joseph was so determined his brethren should not go out anymore (nor his father), they went to dwell there continually - a wonderful type of heaven itself: where God's dear people go out no more. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more." They dwell forever with the heavenly Joseph at His marriage table. Yes.

At the Annual Meetings at Clifton, a few weeks ago, there was a woman sitting in one of the seats before the evening service. She was weeping copiously. One of the ushers went up to her and asked if there was anything the matter. 'No,' she said, 'there is nothing the matter, but I have been so blessed under the singing of the grace.'

"We thank Thee, Lord, for this our food,
But more because of Jesus' blood;
Let manna to our souls be given,
The Bread of Life sent down from heaven.

In Paradise, within the gates
A nobler entertainment waits,
Fruits new and old laid up in store,
Where we shall feast, and want no more."

I. Watts

She said: 'I have such a longing to be in that place where we will "feast, and want no more." A simple testimony; but a real one. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

"They're blessed on earth, for 'tis by grace
They see and know their mournful case."

S. Medley

But, they are blessed in that which is yet to come, as well. "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Who are they that are called? The hungry, the thirsty and the longing. Sinner, will you be there?

Amen.