

likes to busy us, in this way, with the outside shell, whilst he carefully draws away the precious kernel." The ministry of the gospel has been committed to "earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God," says the Apostle, "and not of man." The vessel may be plain; but God's blessing may be with it. The hand that sows the seed may be feeble; but He can "give the increase." "Take heed," therefore, dear brethren, "how ye hear." Listen, not to find fault, but to be fed; and thus you will get many a refreshing meal, whilst others are sent empty away. Look not so much to the hand that brings the food to you, or at the manner in which it is dealt out to you; but look to the food itself, and try to gather from it all the nourishment you can. In other words, look above the messenger, to Him who sends you the message.

But we mentioned another means of grace that God has afforded us by the sanctuary, viz.:—the assembling of ourselves together for united prayer. "My house," said the Saviour, "shall be called a house of prayer." Not merely therefore, you observe, a place of hearing, or a place of preaching, but a "house of prayer." Now, many of us seem often to forget this. They let the one means, entirely, absorb the other, or rather—turn the secondary object of God's house into the first. They go merely to sit and listen, and think that they are all right, so long as they profit by the preaching. But oh! dear brethren, let it not be so with any of you. If it has been a failing with you hitherto, let it be so no longer, if you would grow in grace and in fitness for the judgment-seat. Come to the Lord's house for the special object to pray; remembering His words about it, and that He has added the precious promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst." Join in the prayers, not only outwardly with your