

Lecture 3 "A Well of Water;" or, "Worship in Spirit and in truth."

John 4.

"Another Comforter"

Thirteen Lectures on the Operations of the Holy Ghost.

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It is important to bear in mind that in the Gospel by John the Lord Jesus is from the very outset presented as rejected of men, whereas, in the synoptic gospels, He is presented to the responsibility, and for the acceptance of man. The first chapter, you recollect, is occupied with the unfolding of the personal glories of the Lord Jesus. That first chapter contains the statement, "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not." This gospel starts, then, with the fact that He is a rejected Saviour, while the first chapter gives us His personal glories, and these I might say are innumerable.

The second chapter carries us on to the glory which is His connected with the kingdom over which He is to reign, and you will find therein two points. You have the joy of the kingdom prefigured in the marriage scene at Cana (see ver. 11), and then you have the judgment that will characterise the kingdom, in the Lord's cleansing the temple, and casting out the money changers (vers. 14-17).

In the third chapter, which we were considering last Lord's Day evening, the question was raised as to the qualification necessary to enter the kingdom of God. We saw how only man could enter this kingdom. I have no doubt Nicodemus, when he went to the Lord, thought he was quite fit to go in. Nay, I think he was certain, but after that conversation he would go away thoroughly convinced, I am not fit to go in. I believe, nevertheless, he did go in afterwards. The flesh, however religious, was morally incompetent to enter therein. The only pathway to life is through death. The only way to reach the kingdom of God is by a wholly new birth, a new life, a new nature in us, and in order to impart that, which involves the judgment of the flesh, He, who had life in Himself, must die. This is the end, under God's judgment, of all that is of the flesh, and hence the introduction of heavenly things, and eternal life. That was what the learned doctor of divinity in chapter 3 was informed.

Now, in the fourth chapter, we come to the opening of the Lord's proper ministry in this gospel. (Compare John 3: 22, John 4: 3, and Matt. 4: 12, Mark 1: 14.) We get brought before us not the truth of the necessity of the new birth, but the Lord, in His infinite grace, addressing a

sinner as degraded, and absolutely outcast, as was to be found in the lowest level of human society, and unfolding to her the most wonderful truths. If I might so say, He proposes to set that woman up in the very scene of her degradation, misery, ruin, and wretchedness, in a new condition of unparalleled blessedness. You will see how well He did it. He is not only the giver of eternal life, but He is also the donor of the power necessary for the enjoyment and exercise of that life, — a power which leads into the enjoyment of the love of the Father and the Son, in a way never dreamed of, or hinted at in Scripture before.

The way that our Lord treats this poor woman here is blessed beyond description, and you will find interwoven with the narrative beautiful instruction as to what real worship is. Worship is the natural, unpremeditated, but instinctively Godward outflow of the new-born soul that has received the Spirit. But let us look a little closer into details.

You see the Lord had gone outside Judea (ver. 3). He had left the religious centre of men, that He might be untrammelled in the display of grace; and depend upon it, if the truth of God is to be reached and enjoyed, you have to leave human religion in every shape behind. You must go outside man's circle of accepted religion; and it is very instructive to note that the Lord left Judea, which was at that time the centre of what God had till then recognised. He left it because of the jealousy of the Pharisees, and because He saw rising against Himself the tide of hatred. He goes outside all the boundaries and limits of Israel. He goes, in the freedom of His own grace, to the spot where He can meet with the most wretched heart on earth, that He may fill it by the revelation of Himself. Despised and rejected of men, and not having where to lay His head, He went away to carry the testimony of God's love to the weary, and display it in His own Person. He takes His journey and goes down to a city of Samaria, "which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph."

We are here on the most interesting, traditional, and historical ground in Scripture. There was Jacob's well, and Jesus, "being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well." He who was God had stooped down, in infinite grace to be a wearied man, and appeared to be such. He never used His Godhead power to shield Himself from the wilderness circumstances with which, as a true and real man, he was' surrounded. He accepted all the external conditions of humanity, when, in love and grace, He came down to earth, and became man, that He might in His life present God to man, and in His death bring man to God in righteousness. He never used His divine power to shelter Himself, or relieve Himself from that which was the portion of manhood, as He passed through a scene where man was, not now in paradisaical circumstances, but an exile, and sunk under the power of Satan. He tasted and felt all this to the uttermost, for while ever the object of the Father's delight and love, there never was one who trod this earth who had *outwardly* so little of the expressed favour of God. Homeless, penniless, and at length friendless, the Lord of glory passed through, and out of the world He had Himself formed. Mystery of love!

Jesus then was wearied, and sat *thus* on the well. By these words the Holy Ghost means that when the woman came up she simply saw a tired-looking man. That is all she saw; but oh! the grace of Christ is exquisite, and if I may so say, He leaves His glory in order to unfold the deep grace of His heart. Nevertheless He is never more glorious than when He is in the lowest places of humiliation. Never is His glory more enhanced than when, apparently stripped of it all, He sits as man in weariness at the well. Out comes this woman from the city. It is the sixth hour

- twelve o'clock. The sun, in meridian splendour, was pouring its burning rays upon the and ground. That is the moment the Lord chooses to pass that way, in order to meet that soul. The Spirit records the fact. And why? Because that was not the time when the women in the East went out to draw water. That was done in the morning, or in the evening, when the heat was not so great (Gen. 24: 11). But this woman comes out in the middle of the day, and you may ask, Why? There is no doubt about the reason. Her sin had isolated her. Her sin drove her into absolute solitariness. She shunned the face and company of men, and went out to be alone, but got into the company of God. She shunned the face of man, for she feared his frown, and his judgment. But see the grace of Christ, He goes to the spot at the moment when He knew He would meet her. He knew the isolation of her heart, and felt for her, for He, I believe, was really more solitary than she. There never was one so absolutely solitary as the Saviour. It was the solitariness of a divinely perfect life, in the midst of a scene where nobody wanted Him. Can you conceive anything more solitary? And He proposes to Himself this — to find a place in a heart that never thought of Him till that hour; and to effect this, in beautiful grace, He stoops now and says, "Give me to drink."

Although there in the lowliness of manhood, He was God, and to that soul He was going to reveal the heart of God. In lowly grace He was there, but nevertheless it is with all the dignity of Godhead that He says, "Give me to drink." He does not ask for the water. His word is "Give me!" Whether she ever gave Him the water which, as a thirsty and weary man He desired, we are not told, but she was surprised at His demand, and says, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." All that she saw was a weary Jew, and observe how far short the woman of Samaria comes of the truth. What was the truth? He that had said, "Give me to drink," was the One who made the well, and the water therein. He was the Creator Himself. She knew it not. He knew it. She, a needy sinner, can alone be met and saved by the grace He could bring. The Saviour is outside the circle of promise, and yet some one is saved and deeply blessed. There are depths of grace in God which promises cannot express. What is a promise? It is only measured grace, but what we have in Christ is immeasurable grace. He is life, and all else, to the needy soul, and there is no measure for His grace towards the heart which will take from Him what He is able to give. It is immeasurable grace which comes to us through the life and death of the risen Son of God, and all are welcome to these untold stores of the grace of God which flow through the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the lovely grace that could say, "Give me to drink," was only met by, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." To this the Lord replies, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." How beautiful are these words! "If thou knewest the gift of God." Did she know God as the Giver? not a bit. Do men know Him any better now-a-days? I trow not, oftentimes. She did not even know the law of God, nor what the law's claim might be, much less did she think of God as a Giver. Man regards God as a claimant, a receiver, a demander, like the servant spoken of in the gospels who said, "I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed." In the blindness of nature we think of Him as always looking to gather something. I know I did so before I was converted. I remember it perfectly well. I thought the eye of God was upon me, and that I could not render to

Him what He desired. Did you not think so? I believe every Christian would say, Yes. Then came the moment in your history when you found, first of all, that you could not render anything, and secondly, what was more surprising even than this, that God did not want you to render anything. What was the next step? God came to you as the Giver.

But, you may ask, What about forgiveness? Well, it is a remarkable thing that you read nothing about divine forgiveness in John's gospel. He presents the positive, the life-giving side of the Gospel, whereas forgiveness is the negative side of the Gospel, and if you want to learn from his pen about forgiveness, you must go to his epistle for it. It is never spoken of in the gospel. There God is the *Giver* — "If thou knewest the gift of God." When we come to the epistle of John we learn about forgiveness also, as that is based on redemption. How blessed to know God as the giving, as well as the forgiving God. I need forgiveness because I am a sinner. But supposing I am forgiven, that would still leave me helpless, and bankrupt, unless I learned, what we have here, that God, come here in Christ, is a Giver, and what He gives is worthy of Himself. Let us learn what that is from what follows.

The "gift of God" the Lord speaks of to the woman is not simply life, as it was introduced in the third chapter. There we are told of the communication of a new life by the Holy Ghost to the soul, which by faith in the lifted-up Son of Man, and the opening of heavenly things, takes the character of eternal life. What I find the Lord proposes here is an added blessing — the Holy Ghost as the power of life forming a *well* (Gr. a *fountain*) *within*. He says, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Christ Himself is here the giver, and therefore "the gift of God" cannot be Himself. You may say to me, Is it not eternal life? We find in the Epistle to the Romans that "the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6: 23). Again, we find the apostle Paul saying, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9: 15). That may refer to the Lord Jesus. Scripture never repeats itself. Here, however, is something new proposed. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is" that has stooped down so low as to say, "Give me to drink," your heart would have been attracted, your confidence won, and "thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." He makes no claim on her, but her need is a just claim on His gracious heart. Love and need are face to face, in this touching scene, and therein is always the point of contact between the soul and God — need on my side, love on His.

Thoroughly interested, "the woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with." She is surprised. She does not understand the Lord, she does not rise to the thought in His heart, so she goes on, "and the well is deep." What a revelation! There are volumes contained in these four words, "The well is deep." They bespoke a weary existence. She was tired of life. Her will and her sin had but left her heart empty. Despised of all, isolated, and abandoned, she came at a time when the well was very empty. And is not that exactly what every man, passing through this world finds, "The well is deep," and gets deeper every year he lives, and he has to lengthen the rope by which he seeks to draw the water with which he would fain satisfy his heart. That becomes more difficult as time goes on, and the Lord tells us the reason, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again." The water from the world's well can never satisfy the soul that drinks thereof, but observe the deeper meaning in the next words, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a

well (*a fountain*) of water springing up into everlasting life." "The well is deep," indeed, for you, if you have not found the Lord. You have not received eternal life, nor the Holy Ghost, and you are not satisfied. There is no satisfaction here except in the love of Christ. No one can be satisfied without Christ. You may be seeking after your pet objects, following your pet occupations, and be engrossed by your choicest pleasures, but, mark, there is sin coupled with every one of them. And what is the result? Man is unsatisfied. He is lost, at a distance from God, and he never can be satisfied until he comes back to Him. What a contrast exists between an unsatisfied sinner in his sins, and on his road to hell, and a real Christian who possesses Christ, and enjoys Him, too, because he has within him "a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Without doubt the Lord is here speaking of the Holy Ghost, under the figure of "living water," not yet however as a divine Person come down to dwell within the believer (though what He speaks of could not be without this) but as the power of life. Water always rises to its own level. We noticed in chapter 3 that the water, so to say, came down from God — the Word communicated by grace being operative by the Spirit, and a new life and nature the result. Now we find there is to be a new power within to enable that life to rise up to its source — to that life of heavenly relationship and communion in which eternal life consists. The Lord proposes here that the water He shall give, shall be in the believer "a well of water springing up into everlasting life," a divine and ever-springing up fountain of joy. Life is dependent on external supplies for its sustenance, but here we find a fountain spoken of — a constant, continual source of supply. It is a new privilege and blessing. We have not as yet the personality of the Spirit, indwelling the believer, spoken of, but it is couched under the lovely figure of "living water." It is the thought of a power acting in the new nature, and leading the possessor into the enjoyment of divine, and heavenly joys, and relationships. It brings the soul into the full joy of grace, tasted, and proved, and leads to deep communion of heart with Him who is the perennial source or spring of everlasting joy. The heart is brought by the Spirit into a region of entire satisfaction in the Lord.

The more you are in communion with the Father and the Son, the more you enjoy His grace, and His sunshine, the more will your heart live in the atmosphere which is characteristic of everlasting life. This can only be in the power of the Holy Ghost, hence the Lord says, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst." They are remarkable words. I admit you may turn to me and say, Who is thus satisfied? I never saw the person. Well, if you never saw the person, let me say to you, Drink yourself of that "living water," and be the person. Get to know in the practical experimental history of your own soul what the Lord says here, "He that drinks of the water that I shall give him *shall never thirst*; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." I have no doubt this refers to the Spirit of God as the power acting in that new life which is possessed by the believer in the Son of God now.

We have not yet come to that part of John's gospel where the Holy Ghost is presented as a divine Person come to earth, but you notice that the Lord speaks of eternal life as evidently possessed by the soul that has received Him. Life is not power, nature is not power, hence what He suggests here is of paramount importance. The new-born babe has no power. What does that babe need? It needs a nurse, one to care for it in everything; and, thank God! if you get this new nature in the way presented in John 3, we find in chapter 4, that it is nurtured, cared for, and

energised by the Spirit of God, that blessed third person of the Trinity, who comes and dwells in the body of the believer. And what is He in the believer? He is the source of joy, of communion, and of delight in the Father and the Son, and in all that suits them. The Lord teaches us by the most expressive figured — "a well of water springing up into everlasting life" — what our eternity will be. It will be joy in communion with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost. We shall have dropped everything that will be a hindrance. There will be nothing but the unhindered action of the Holy Ghost when we reach the heavenly land by-and-by, but the point here, I apprehend, is that the believer is to enter into all this even now upon earth. We are brought to the sources of eternal joy even now.

I pray you to notice that the "well springing up" and "everlasting life" are distinct, and they must not be confounded. When the soul, through the sovereign grace of God, has been born of Him, and possesses the divine nature, the next thing the Lord proposes is this — I will put a power within you, the exercise of which will ever lead you to enjoy that which belongs to you in heavenly relationship, and to which you belong. It shall be "a well (fountain) of water springing up into everlasting life." It is not our idea of a well that is here represented. You know what a fountain is. It is a perennial spring, ever bubbling up, and unhindered. The statement which the Lord here makes is a wonderful one. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst." The soul that thus drinks is landed in a region of satisfied desire.

Evidently the woman of Samaria did not comprehend the Lord's words, as her next words were, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." She knew not then who He was, but as He passes on, in His marvellous presentation of grace, she gradually gets her eyes, as well as her heart, opened. His grace evidently greatly attracted her, while she also felt what a toil was connected with sin, and you may depend upon it no man can sin, in this earthly scene, without having toil and sorrow connected with it. But she thought as yet, doubtless, more of her toil than of her sin, therefore the Lord now begins to deal with her conscience. Man has a conscience, and the conscience must be met, and reached, and the springs of the soul's history be touched with a sense of its sin, and guilt, or there never will be a link with God, or the true enjoyment of His grace. She would greatly have liked to be relieved of her toil, forgetting that she would not have been there trying to get a drop of water to quench her thirst had it not been for her sin, so the Lord now touches her conscience. "Go," He says, "call thy husband, and come hither." It was not often that the Lord bade any one go from Him, but it was necessary in this case. It was this "Go" which tested her heart, as to whether she cared enough for Him to induce her afterwards to come back. She was now sensibly alone with Jesus — alone with God, and I ask you, Have you ever known in your soul's history, what it is to be alone with God? She was consciously alone with God, but her conscience is not yet fully reached. "Go, call thy husband, and come hither," deeply touched her, however. She quibbles, and without a blush replies, "I have no husband."

This was true, but not all the truth, so the Lord rejoins, "Thou hast well said, I have no husband, for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband in that saidst thou truly." To answer that she had "no husband" was only using the truth to hide it. Oh! what cowards we are! How we like to keep away from God. Sinners will bring in anything and everything rather than come into close quarters with God. But it will not do. There is nothing like facing all out with the Lord, and this is what He effects here, as He tells her she was living in

open sin. All was out; He knew all. In a moment the conscience is reached. Conscience is the avenue by which God, now that man is a sinner, enters his heart. It is also the door of intelligence by which man learns God. Man feels he is known of God, and thus learns to know Him. She is discovered in the presence of Him, before whom she stands, and she exclaims — as she slowly discovers His glory, and that He whom she had never seen before, knows all about her — "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." Her eyes are opened, the sense of her sin is pressed in upon the soul, and this is always the moment when the soul really gets God's blessing. She does not, however, go away. The fact is that the grace of Christ had triumphed, and it was the deep sense of His grace that now bound her to the spot. There was a deep change in her soul's condition. God had spoken to her, and she recognised His voice.

Nevertheless what had before occupied her mind, at once comes out, as she now says, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Should I worship at Mount Gerizim, or in Jerusalem? is the point. It is to be observed that whenever you get a soul exercised about its state, and about the truth, Satan will seek to obstruct that soul, by raising questions, and difficulties, as to the differences which have taken place among the people of God. Here this poor soul says, "You say in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship," while "our fathers worshipped in this mountain." Gerizim was a well-known name in Israel's history, and there the Samaritans had a sort of mongrel worship. The Lord takes the opportunity of revealing what was altogether new — the worship of the Father in spirit and in truth. His reply is most remarkable, — "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." First of all He speaks to her of the gift of the Spirit, and now He proposes that she shall know the worship of the Father. "Ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." The Father must be revealed before He can be worshipped. This the Son was doing. Worship, connected with an earthly Jewish system, gives place to the introduction of heavenly relationships. This change depends upon the revelation of the Father in the Son, a change not then apprehended, but nevertheless true as connected with the presence of the Son here; hence He could say, "The hour cometh, and now is" (ver. 23).

If therefore you have not known the Son of God, do you think you can worship? Never! You cannot worship the Father unless you come to Him through the Son. Unless you have been born of God, and have received the Holy Ghost, to enable you to take up your place consciously as a child, do you suppose you have ever been a worshipper? Certainly not. Most seriously do I entreat you to weigh this matter, if you be a professed worshipper.

To this Samaritan woman the Lord now adds, "Ye worship ye know not what." That was a dreadful blow to her ideas of religion, and it may equally be said of every man, who is not born of God. "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews." Yet Christ was now outside the land of the Jews. To a certain extent the truth was among the Jews. The temple, and the oracles of God, had been with them, but now the Son of God had come, and they had refused Him. He was thus quite outside — and there can be nothing more solemn than this break with the place of recognised privilege — and therefore He says, "Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. But further, in verse 23 of our chapter, He adds, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they

that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (verses 23, 24). I draw your careful attention to this.

There is no true worship unless we know God the Father as He has been revealed in the Son; we are dependent solely upon the Son, the Lord Jesus, for the knowledge of the Father. "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father." Who are the true worshippers? you ask. No one is a true worshipper unless he be able to take up his place consciously in relationship with the *Father*, as revealed in the Son, by the Spirit of the Son dwelling in him. That is a most sweeping assertion, you say. I do not deny it. Will you deny it? I only ask you, Do you know what worship is? Perhaps you reply, I thought it was a giving of thanks. Not at all. The giving of thanks is a right and very blessed thing to do. It is a happy thing to give thanks, but then thanks are given for benefits received. Is that worship? When you come home after a few days' absence, and enter into your house, and your dog comes bounding to meet you, careers around you, and shows its deep delight in your return, is that thanksgiving? No. You have given it nothing, for which it should return thanks. What is it then? It is the delight of that creature in you. That is worship. Worship is the outflow of the heart towards the One who delights and fills it. If I may so put it, it is the overflowing of the full cup. Filled with the sense of what God is, and, in purest grace, revealed as the Father, in the Person of His Son, the heart overflows in worship. Therefore to be a true worshipper you must not only be born of the Spirit of God, and thus have a nature that delights in God, but possess also the Holy Ghost, in indwelling power of relationship and joy, whereby this worship flows out to God the Father.

Observe carefully that the Lord speaks here of "*true* worshippers." This is not a question of form. You may have all that the most aesthetic mind could desire; a suited building, pompous priestly paraphernalia, incense-laden atmosphere, windows stained, and dim religious light, music in perfection, and ritual to the uttermost, and yet — solemn thought for Christendom's professing millions — be utterly devoid of all that is necessary to be what the Lord calls a "true worshipper." Let no soul be deceived. Unless you are born of God, and have the consciousness of relationship by the indwelling of the Spirit of God, you have not the capacity for true worship.

But now notice the statement concerning the "true worshippers." Of them the Lord says, "The Father seeketh such to worship him." Beautiful words! God, if I may so say, is searching the world to find — what? To find worshippers. How are they produced? Elsewhere we read, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19: 10), and the lost ones He does save. He sought not even worship, or aught else from us as sinners; He sought us till He had found us, and saved us. Then become sons and children of the Father, by love that gave us all that love could give, and thus true worshippers, the Father — wondrous thought — seeks our worship, and we can give Him what He seeks. Such is the co-working of the Father and the Son.

I wonder if you know what it is to be a worshipper. It is said that we are in a day when all the world worships. Such a thought is deep folly. Do you for one moment suppose that "the children of disobedience" who are "by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. 2: 2, 3), unconverted, and utter "men of the world which have their portion in this life" (Ps. 17: 14), can worship, together with the children of God? Impossible! The Lord says, "The *Father* seeketh such to worship him." They must be His children, and know it by His Spirit in order to worship Him, for

"they that worship him must worship him *in spirit*, and *in truth*." I cannot worship Him unless I have received the Spirit by which alone true worship is possible. Reality must be the thing which marks the soul. Coupled with the worship of the Father, you will observe, is this expression, "*God* is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" — in the power of the Spirit, and according to the truth of the revelation He has given us of Himself. It is important to dwell for a moment upon this. You may say, I really can go and call Him "Father." Thank God if you can. It is your right and privilege. It is written, "Because ye are sons, *God* hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4: 6). But there is more than this. Can you draw near to God — get right into His holy presence — with this sense, I am welcome here; I am wanted here; I am fit to be here; I am delighted to be here? Does the blest knowledge of God fill your soul with joy and delight? "We joy in God" (Rom. 5: 11), is the highest possible experience of the soul. While it is well that we Christians should know that God is our Father, let us never forget that our Father is God.

All this, I do not doubt, was a little beyond the woman's then understanding, so, taking relief in her prophetic knowledge, she says, "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things." Mark the Lord's answer, "I that speak unto thee am he." Save in the ninth chapter of John, you do not get another instance where the Lord absolutely reveals His Person, as He did to this poor soul. There are only two souls in the gospels to whom the Lord told who He really was. Here, in the fourth of John, He reveals Himself to the outcast *sinner*, and in the ninth of John He reveals Himself to the outcast *saint*, the man who had been blind. You may be a moral outcast, or an ecclesiastical outcast, but if you thereby get into the company of Christ it is a most blessed thing. In the ninth of John He says to the man who was endeavouring to witness for Him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He replies, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" *i.e.*, I should like to believe on Him. To this Jesus replies, "Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." The result is lovely, for the man became a worshipper, as he replies, "Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him." I believe we do not really enter into the spirit of true worship until we have been cast out for Christ's sake, so we need not fear to suffer shame for His name (Heb. 13: 10-16).

The Lord having thus revealed Himself to the woman, her eyes are fully opened, and now she drops her waterpot, the symbol of her earthly toil. At that moment His disciples returned, and "marvelled that he talked with the woman, yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?" He knew, and so did she: and so she leaves her waterpot in a moment, for she has Christ instead of her cares, as well as her sins now, and goes away filled with unspeakable joy, and her message in the city is, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" She is a transformed creature, and I do not think any man or woman can be filled with the grace of God, that met me in my sins as it met her in hers, without desiring to tell every one else about Him. Anyway she left her waterpot and went into the city, where everybody knew her, and where people might have sneered at her, and where women would not be seen walking on the same side of the street with her, and there proclaimed, "Come, see a man, which told *me* all things that ever I did." What confidence she had in Him! What a spirit without guile!

Now see what is the result? Many come out, for the fields, as He tells His disciples, are white unto the harvest. The woman, like the good sensible soul she was, went in to reap. She was the first reaper, and the Lord goes in after her, to further reap. And many more believed, for I

read that "many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, he told me all that ever I did" (ver. 39). Then in response to their invitation Jesus tarried two days in Samaria, "And many more believed because of his own word." God had His eye, in deepest grace, on guilty Samaria, for we later read, "And the people *with one accord* gave heed unto those things which Philip spake," and "there was great joy in that city" (Acts 8: 6-8).

This I may style the superabundance of grace. Where would there be a less likely spot to find the deepest blessing going on than in godless Samaria? But this is God's way. It is God's grace. How refreshing — first, *many* believed because of the woman's word; next, *many more* believed because of His own word; and lastly, Philip reaps nearly the whole city.

There is great force in the testimony of the "many," as they say to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying," but note this, "*we have heard him ourselves*, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world" (ver. 41). Marvellous discovery! Priceless treasure-trove! Have you, my friend, heard Him for yourself? and do you know indeed that He is the Christ, the Saviour of the world, and therefore your Saviour? The fact is certain that if, without doubt, you are assured that you have heard the Lord's own word, you have heard Himself. What a wonderful fact, and oh! how happy it makes us to be able to say, "We believe, for we have heard him ourselves."

In connection with the well, and the parcel of ground that Joseph possessed, how beautiful is it here to see the Lord, in His own Person, fully answering to the type, and showing Himself to be the true Joseph! His name has been changed to Zaphnath-Paaneah — meaning, in the Coptic, *a revealer of secrets*, and, in Hebrew, *the Saviour of the age* (Gen. 41: 43). The woman learned Jesus as the revealer of the secrets of her guilty life, while the Samaritans discerned, and proclaimed Him to be the Saviour of the world. Such must He be to all our souls.

In this chapter then we find that the water flows up to God in worship, and it is very important to bear that in mind. When people are saved they are often at once set to work. If *you* are saved, before you set yourself to work for the Lord, get right into the spirit of worship. The moral order in John's gospel is very important. The fourth of John follows the third, and the seventh of John the fourth. In the third we have the water coming *down from* God. In the fourth we have the "well of water springing *up*" — the worship of the renewed heart going *up to* God. In the seventh we shall find "rivers of water" flowing out, *i.e.* testimony *for* God in service of every kind. The importance of this order cannot be overrated. All service will be poor and fruitless, if we are not first of all rightly exercising our priestly functions in the assembly of God, and as children before the Father, in worship. In other words, the claims of the Father, the claims of God must ever supersede the claims, or the need of man. Herein lies the difference between worship and ministry. Worship is what flows from the heart to God, and must have the first place. Ministry is what flows from God to man. It is the exercise of a spiritual gift, as we shall see more fully hereafter.