

Lecture 4 "Rivers of Living Water;"

John 7.

"Another Comforter"

Thirteen Lectures on the Operations of the Holy Ghost.

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The Holy Ghost, under the figure of the "well of water," was what we looked at last Lord's Day evening. Tonight we find, in the chapter I have read, our blessed Lord speaking again about the giving of the Holy Ghost, but here, you will observe, He does not use the figure of "a well of water springing *up*," but of "rivers of living water" flowing *out*. We have not yet got out of the region of figures, in the Lord's speech, in this part of John's gospel. When we come a little further on in this precious gospel we find all figurative language dropped, and then we get most simple and plain statements from the Lord about the Spirit of God, His coming, and character, and what He would do when come. But here, we are still in the region of figures, and, you may depend upon it, there is some very wise purpose of the Lord in thus speaking.

How beautiful and charming are His figurative words: — "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Nor are we left to guess at, or conjecture what He means, for immediately the Spirit of God, by the pen of the evangelist, gives the meaning of His language. "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (vers. 37-39).

In the fourth of John we read about life in the power of the Spirit being given as "a fountain of water," in connection with the presence on earth of the humble, lowly, gracious, condescending Saviour - albeit *rejected*, as we also saw. In this chapter the reception of the Spirit of God by the believer is distinctly connected with the rejection on earth, but *exaltation* to heavenly glory, of the Son of Man. The world did not want Him, but heaven claimed Him, and the giving of the Spirit, in this scripture, is directly connected with the present place, in heavenly glory, which the Lord Jesus, as Man, has taken.

Before seeking, with the Lord's help, to unfold this passage, I should like to show you the setting in which this scripture is found. Everything in Scripture comes in a marvellous but divine order; and every one, who has been with us on previous nights, will feel that there is a growing light, a development of truth, in connection with that which here falls from the Lord's lips, as compared with what has gone before. Like a diamond properly mounted, its setting shows it off. What then is its setting? It is the sad, yet solemn fact that the world would have nothing to do with Christ. The world would not have blessing from Him, and therefore, go to speak, He retires

out of the scene altogether, and says, I shall go to the place that suits Me, and thence I will bless to the uttermost any soul that will follow Me there — will come to Me there.

Now if we turn back to the beginning of the chapter, we read that. "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him." He knew perfectly well that His death was determined upon by the Jews. He therefore goes now into Galilee. In the second verse we read, "Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand." In the previous chapter, at the fourth verse, you will find, "And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh." Now do you think it is merely what we call at haphazard, that we read of the passover in the sixth chapter, and of the feast of tabernacles in the seventh? Impossible! Both are remarkable types, and have a very large, and important place in Old Testament scripture. The passover was the type of the death of Jesus. We have no doubt about that, because the apostle Paul says, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5: 7). If you turn to the sixteenth of Deuteronomy you will find there recorded three occasions on which the Jew was to appear before the Lord. These three occasions were the passover, the feast of weeks, and the feast of tabernacles. Now the passover, as I have said, was a figure of the death of Jesus — the cross. The feast of weeks evidently finds its answer in Pentecost — the coming of the Holy Ghost (see Lev. 23: 15-20; Acts 2: 1-4). The feast of tabernacles is a type of the millennium — peace, rest, and glory, under the sway of the Lord Jesus. In the gospel of John we read of the passover, and of the feast of tabernacles being kept, but there is no mention of the feast of weeks, because in point of fact what the feast of weeks prefigured was yet to come, viz., Pentecost — the coming of the Holy Ghost. The feast of tabernacles has its antitype in a scene of blessing, and glory, by-and-by, when Jehovah's name — when Jesus' name — shall be delighted in, and rejoiced in over the whole world. That is what is to come. The feast of tabernacles, therefore, has no counterpart, or antitype in Christianity whatever. It remains to be fulfilled, and will be, when the kingdom of the Lord Jesus is come.

In the sixth of John we find that they wanted to make Jesus a king. Turn to it. At the 15th verse we read, "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone." But how could He take the kingdom with sin rampant on earth, and the world in the state it then was, and even yet is in? Impossible! Therefore you find later in the sixth of John that He tells the people plainly that He Himself must die, and unless they ate His flesh, and drank His blood, they had no life in them. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (ver. 53), are His words. I grant you His words were not apprehended then — nor, indeed, do they find general acceptance now.

We must bear in mind that what we have in the sixth of John is the antitype of the manna — that bread which the Israelites had in the wilderness. I do not doubt that in the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters you have a striking picture of what every Jew would understand perfectly. In the fifth you find them, so to speak, in Egypt, in bondage; in the sixth, in the wilderness, with the manna among them; and, in the seventh, they are in Canaan, keeping the feast of tabernacles. But how, you may say, in the fifth chapter, are they in Egypt? What do you find there? You find a poor cripple delivered by the Lord from his diseases and distress. That was exactly what had taken place in the history of Israel. They had been delivered from Egypt by the power of God's grace, and here was a man whose misery resembled theirs, and whom Jesus — Jehovah Himself

now on earth - delivered absolutely. In the sixth chapter Jesus refers to their experiences in the wilderness. Had they not manna there? They had. He says, "I am the bread of life"; I am the true manna; you must eat Me — you must have Me. This they declined, and murmured at Him, so when we come to the seventh chapter, where we have the feast of tabernacles introduced, and in a manner kept, the Lord refuses to sanction it with His presence: the day for its establishment must be postponed. joy on earth must give place to joy in heavenly scenes, in association with the earth-rejected, but heaven-crowned Son of Man.

The Lord was outside, and those who would go to Him must part company with what is of man, and his world, and follow Him in present rejection. The Spirit of God is most careful to call the occasion "the *Jews' feast*" of tabernacles. So in the sixth chapter the passover is also called "a feast of the *Jews*." Those who are familiar with Scripture will remember that in the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus, where we have an account, given in detail, of the institution of these feasts, the Holy Ghost is careful, over and over again, to call them "the *feasts of the Lord*." Here, in John's gospel, the Spirit of God now stamps them as merely "feasts of the *Jews*." All was false, hollow, unreal, as, alas! much is unreal in Christendom today. He who was the sum and substance of everything — the antitype of all these figures — Jesus Himself, the Son of God, was there. In Him they were to find fulfilment, but He, alas! was unknown, unrecognised, unwanted, unwelcomed, nay, more, He was hated, and the Jews, while keeping the feasts that pointed to Him, were working for His death. He therefore goes outside.

Our chapter opens with His reason for this action. "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him (ver. 1). Thereon His brethren go to Him, saying, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest." He had been making the small supply of five loaves and two fishes more than abundant, and feeding the multitudes. His own brethren in the flesh did not believe in Him, as verse 5 tells us, but nevertheless they would have been very glad to have got a lift in the world owing to their connection with Him, when He was able to do such mighty works. Alas! man would use Christ's name to get into worldly popularity if he could so ensure it. Such is the heart of man.

His brethren further add, "There is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, show thyself to the world." Assert yourself. Bring in the real feast of tabernacles. Establish the kingdom. "Show thyself to the world." Take your right place in it, we shall benefit by the step. That is what they really meant. But what is His answer? "My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready."

That is a very solemn word for the unsaved man. "Your time is always ready." Unconverted one, today is your time. The present day is the world's time. Nothing can be more touching than our Lord's word as to Himself here — "My time is not yet come." He referred to His death. As to them, how different is the statement. It is the world's time now, the world's day, man's day, "Your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you." The world loves its own. You are part and parcel of it. It does not hate you. You are an integral part of it, and perhaps you are essential to its progress. "But me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast." The world and its religion were suited to each other, then as now, and every Christian should be exercised as to whether he is, or is not, helping today to re-enact the scene of

John 7. It was the outward semblance of joy without reality. It was merely external religious formalism - dead, because Christless, without a bit of reality in it, There was nothing to satisfy the soul.

But to His brethren the Lord says, "Go ye up to this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come." When they are gone he goes up secretly, not to join in, but to witness against it. He goes into the temple immediately, and speaks openly. There is a good deal of discussion about Him, and the people are divided because of Him. It is always so. Even in this hall the people are divided because of Him. There are hearts that love Him, and that delight in Him; and there are hearts that do not care the least about Him, and you know you are of the number, unsaved one. "There was much murmuring among the people concerning him" (ver. 12), but no certainty. What was He? and who was He? that was speaking in their midst. Was He the Son of God, the Christ, a good man, or only a deceiver? None knew. But He "went up into the temple, and taught" (ver. 14). "How knoweth this man letters (or learning), having never learned?" (ver. 15) was next the query. They had never heard such ministry. He had never been seated at the feet of the scribes. He had never gone to a theological seminary, nor attended the rabbinical schools of learning, and therefore they say, "How knoweth this man letters? "

The fact is, man thinks there is no learning except that which comes from himself, and his schools; God is left out, and His Spirit ignored. Jesus rejoins, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." How lovely the grace of this answer! Christ ever hides Himself behind God — the Father. Mark, too, how clearly you have Him here as the "sent one" of God. "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself." Any one that desires to do God's will, will learn it; on the other hand, "he that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him" (ver. 18). He had come — the sent One of God — to bring out the thoughts of God, and the heart of God, to unfold the nature of God, the purpose, the counsels, and the love of God. God's glory was His motive and object. Self-seeking was unknown to Jesus. He spoke ever from, and for God, hence "he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him." Let the eye rest abidingly upon this. Jesus' object, as He passed through this world, was to reveal the nature of God, to unfold that which was in the heart of the Father, and to bring out to man that which would meet him in his ruin, his misery, his need, and his sin. As for taking the kingdom, it was then impossible. He knew that nothing but His death could meet the claims of God, and the need of man; and therefore He came to do the will of Him that sent Him. His words elsewhere are, "For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6: 38).

The Lord then asks why they were angry at Him for what He had done. He had healed the poor cripple, who, for thirty and eight years, at the pool of Bethesda, had known nought but disappointment. "If a man on the Sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken, are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day?" In the fifth chapter we are told, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (ver. 17). How could God rest in a world of sin — in a world where evil was rampant, Satan ruling, death governing, and man miserable and wretched? How could God rest here? His nature of love made it impossible, hence "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." That is all Christ's answer. You cannot shut up the bowels of God, you cannot stop the outflow of His grace and goodness, and so

here, the Son of the Father, the blessed living expression of the unspeakable grace that fills the heart of God, says, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." The result is that there was a good deal more discussion with regard to Him, and then the Pharisees sent officers to take Him. They determined they would kill Him, but did not know how to manage it. No man laid hands on Him because "his hour was not yet come" — the hour when He was to lay down His life for the glory of God, for man's salvation, the putting away of sin, and the destruction of the power of Satan.

A crisis had, however, arrived. The rulers of the feast of tabernacles had determined on His death, and as the officers appear, in obedience to their orders, to take this blessed witness for God, mark what He says, "Yet a little while am I with you, and then *I go unto him that sent me*. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come" (ver. 34). He does not mean this for the anxious seeking soul. That statement is not for the heart that loves Him. It is not for the anxious inquirer after salvation, or the seeker after grace. Nay! these words are meant for His implacable enemies, the foes clamouring for His blood. "Where I go ye cannot come." "Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go?" The fact is He will go back to the spot whence He came, and, as He goes, He will open up the way to God, so that, whoever will follow Him thither, may do so, on the righteous grounds of accomplished redemption. His foes are completely puzzled by His words, as evidenced in their query, "Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come?" (vers. 35, 36).

This leads up to, and gives occasion for the Lord's remarkable words, now to be considered. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." The feast had gone on for seven days, and this was the eighth day. Seven is the number, in Scripture, for completeness, whereas the eighth day is connected with resurrection blessing. It was on the eighth day, the first day of a new week, that the Lord rose from the dead. It was eight days after the sayings recorded in Luke 9: 23-27, that He was seen in glory on the mount of transfiguration. You will find then in Scripture that the eighth day is connected with resurrection blessing, and resurrection glory too.

The feast of tabernacles had a double aspect. It was typical of the coming kingdom, and it was commemorative of Israel's entry into Canaan. God had enjoined on His people, who had come out of Egypt, had passed through the wilderness, and had got into the pleasant land, that once every year, at the end of the harvest and the vintage, they were to keep a feast for seven days. Now, what do the harvest and the vintage teach? I have no doubt as to their meaning. The harvest, in Scripture, is the figure of the judgment, which the Lord will yet bring upon the world; a discriminating judgment, in which He will save the righteous, while the wicked are cut down (see Matt. 13: 38-43). After this will come the vintage, and what is that? It is the indiscriminate judgment which the Son of Man will pour forth on a guilty blood-stained world, and upon those who bear His name falsely and hollowly. After that vintage you have His kingdom brought in and established, and therefore the feast of tabernacles was not to be kept until the harvest, and vintage, were over (see Deut. 16: 13). In it Israel commemorated the fact of how they had been brought out of Egypt and bondage, how the Lord had kept them during the forty years' sojourn in

the wilderness, and how He had planted them at last in the promised land, where He had placed them, according to the dictates of His loving heart. It was to be a feast of joy. Gladness was to be its characteristic!

But "in the last day, that great day of the feast" (it alone of the feasts had this overlapping day outside the seven ordinary days), when everybody was rejoicing, where was Christ? He was outside, and apart from the scene altogether. "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man *thirst*, let him come unto me and drink." He knew that, spite of the festivities before His eyes, He was surrounded by weary, wretched, thirsty hearts. He knew that amongst that immense crowd, engaging in religious services, there were hosts of unsatisfied, empty, thirsty souls; and are there not thousands today in the same position? In the midst of abundant religious formality, what thirst, what misery, and what need in the heart! How blessed it is to hear the Saviour say, "If any man *thirst*, let him *come unto me and drink*." Who does He mean by "any man"? I should like to know whom He does not mean? Is there a thirsty soul here? It is he that is meant. But you may say, Does it not mean the saint and believer, who, when he wants refreshment, is to come to Jesus and drink? It may embrace that, but I should be slow to limit the Scripture to that. I find, "If *any* man *thirst*, let him come unto me and drink." You must come to Me, Jesus says. But you may tell me. that those spoken of are they who are to be filled with the Holy Ghost, when He comes, for the fact is here contemplated of Jesus having gone to heaven.

True, but there can be no doubt of this, that while our Saviour, who is now ascended, and glorified, was here, and passing through this dark, weary, restless, and thirsty world, He invited any who would, to come and drink; and every wretched heart in this company tonight should heed what He said, "If any man *thirst*, let him *come to me and drink*." I grant you it presupposes thirst, presupposes need, and that we must come to Him because we are thirsty, but He it is that quenches the thirst. None come to Him unless they feel thirsty, and I quite admit that the Spirit of God produces this thirst, this sense of misery, and of unsatisfiedness. And are there not such hearts in this company tonight? My friend, listen, "If any man *thirst*, let him come unto me and drink." And if you come, what do you find? That He satisfies you, and your thirst is quenched? Far more than this. One drink of cold water would quench one's thirst. What does He say? I will quench your thirst? Nay, He says, I will make you to quench the thirst of a great many others. I will make you — not the source, for He Himself is that, but — the channel of blessing to others. You come to me, and I will meet the thirst of your own soul first, and then you shall be made a channel, through which the rivers of God shall roll to the thirsty, and weary all around. When the heart, drinking of that which is in Jesus, is satisfied, then the waters overflow and refresh other thirsty souls. Testimony becomes simple and natural. This is a wonderful theme; I am almost afraid to touch it. It is so magnificent, so perfect, so blessed. You come in your misery, and want, and need, to Jesus. And what do you find? All that heart could wish, and then are made the channel of deepest blessing to others.

All this depends on the Holy Ghost, "which they that believe on him should receive." Not only is the thirst quenched, but "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." This is clearly by the power of the Holy Ghost, which comes from the glory where Christ is, and fills the heart of the believer with the glory into which He has passed. Wondrous words, "Out of his belly shall *flow rivers of living water*. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (ver. 39).

And what is more suited to an and wilderness, like this world, than "rivers of living water" flowing through it. We may well marvel that we should be the channels through which those rivers roll. But that is just why we are left down here after conversion. We are to witness for our absent Lord. This figure manifestly differs from that in John 3, where by the "water and the Spirit" we are new-born. Nor is it like "the well of water springing up" — the power of the Spirit within you, giving you to enjoy the sense of association with the Father, and the Son — the believer entering into the enjoyment of things not seen, because heavenly, and eternal, as spoken of in John 4. In John 7 the "rivers of living water" are undoubtedly connected, more with service, than with worship. They further suggest the thought of connection with an inexhaustible supply of perennial refreshment, making the believer, through grace, really superior to the circumstances that surround him. What is your thought of living water? Is it not a thing that sparkles with blessings? It conveys to me the idea of the fullest refreshment.

It is to be observed that the Lord Jesus says, "He that believeth on me, *as the scripture hath said*, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Where does the Scripture say this? There is no passage, that I am aware of, that so reads. it is therefore the spirit of the testimony in Scripture, that I conclude the Lord refers to. For instance, "The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook" (Prov. 18: 4). Again, "The Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isa. 58: 11). We also may learn much, I think, by observing the use of the term "river" in Scripture. If you turn to the 46th Psalm, you will find, at the fourth verse, "There is a river," says the Psalmist, "the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God." (Ps. 46: 4) There it is something that flows from God. In the 65th Psalm, and at the ninth verse, it says, "Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water." (Ps. 65: 9) If you have not drunk of this river, if you have never been brought, in the history of your soul, to know what this means, let me assure you, you are missing a great blessing.

The "river" in Scripture has an early place, and is a remarkable figure. Let us trace "the river of God" a little in His Word. Its channels will be found to differ, according to the different dispensations, but it is the same river. Turn to the second chapter of Genesis, where it has its rise in Eden. Creation blessing is the order of Genesis 2: 10, "A river went out of Eden *to water the garden*, and from thence it was parted and became into four heads." There we have the river of God, carrying with it refreshment, and blessing, all over the world. The dispensation was one of blessing, and good on earth, and all man's joys were connected with creation, and with God, known as Creator.

But sin came in, and where do we next find the river? I believe you have it in the seventeenth chapter of Exodus, the book of typical redemption by blood. In that chapter you will find the Israelites in the wilderness, and there was no water. What happened then? In the fifth verse we have Moses thus instructed: "Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go: Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb: and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel." (Ex. 17)

Let us pass on now to the seventy-eighth Psalm, and hear what the Holy Ghost says about that scene. The Spirit of God describes it most graphically. "He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths. He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers. Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed" (Ps. 78: 15, 16, 20). Yes, the servant struck the rock, and there gushed out the refreshment that God gave, for His weary people. It followed them in all their wilderness course, for they were the redeemed of the Lord. The channels might be many, through which it ran, to assuage the thirst of those mighty hosts of God, but the source was one, the smitten rock. In the tenth chapter of first Corinthians we are told what that Rock was, as we read, "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10: 4). The rock was Christ, and the water, the Spirit of God. It is a figure, I admit — but how apt, as every figure of Scripture is, — of the Spirit of God which would come from a glorified Christ. It is the Spirit of God, coming from a living Christ, filling the soul that turns to Him, and believes in Him, with unfailing refreshment, so that it flows out from him to others.

When Israel was settled in the land of promise, Jehovah's dwelling-place was there, and He watered the land "with the rain of heaven," but, at the time we have reached, in John 7, the moment had arrived for leaving Canaan a dry land — spiritually — and the river of God is not found there any more. Henceforth, as Jesus here tells us, it would take its rise in the glorified Son of Man in heaven, and flowing down through altogether new channels — the bodies of His believing people on earth — should refresh the spiritually thirsty. For the time earth, as such, is neglected. The present moment — or dispensation, is one marked by "spiritual blessings in heavenly places," and to use the figure, earth is not now to be watered, but only the people of God — the Church, formed by the descent, and indwelling of the Holy Ghost. This is what the Lord means in our chapter. When the Church has been taken up to heaven, at the moment of the Lord's second coming, the River of God will find other channels, and earth again be blessed. This will be in the coming kingdom of the Lord. The heavenly side of that kingdom we see in Revelation 22, and there the it river of water of life "is seen" proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb" (verses 1, 2), and preserving all in freshness and gladness. If we gaze at earth in the millennial day, we see this river rising under the sanctuary of the earthly Zion, and flowing out, to water, not only Jerusalem, but all the earth (see Rev. 7: 17; Ezek. 47: 1-12; Joel 3: 18; Zech. 14: 8). It will be a wondrous time of heavenly, and earthly glory, and due really to the "river of God which is full of water" — type of the Holy Ghost — flowing in unhindered streams in every possible direction, although the character of blessing then will not have the depth and fulness it possesses now.

But to return, where does that river rise today? From the heart of the ascended Son of Man in glory, who gives the Holy Ghost to every soul that, thirsty, really comes to Him. Of this there can be no manner of doubt, as we read, "This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." It is not now a material thing, outside, in creation. It is the Spirit of God coming from the ascended Saviour, to be the witness of His glory, and the power of the enjoyment in us of all that flows to us from the glory in which He is, consequent upon accomplished redemption, — forgiveness, justification, peace, acceptance, and to give us the knowledge of the relationship in which we stand to God, as our Father. It is by the Holy Ghost received, that we are set in the Christian place, and state. It is not only thirst met, gratified, satisfied, and quenched, it is more

than that. The soul first has its thirst quenched, is filled, and then out of "his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

There is immense force in this statement. There are souls, I am persuaded, in this hall tonight who are thirsty, who have been quickened by the Spirit, and have desires after Christ. They are anxious, exercised, possibly pious, and prayerful, like Cornelius, yet they are not at rest, because they have not the Spirit of God. They are never at peace, and more, they never will have peace in their souls, until they have done with themselves, bow to the righteousness of God revealed in the cross, and see all that they *are*, and have *done*, set aside by that cross, and know that they are even now accepted by God in Christ, who died on the cross, and has risen again.

The Spirit, given from the glory where Christ is, is received by the individual believer the moment he believes the testimony of God as to the work on the ground of which He has set Him there (Eph. 1: 13). The Spirit of God is then the seal of the faith that believes God's testimony to the work of Christ, and the power of the enjoyment of the place which depends upon it, and which is the normal Christian state. I say the Christian state. What is that? It is the new place, measured and marked by Christ, who risen from the dead, on the ground of redemption takes a new place, as man, before God, into which He introduces all His own. This place the Holy Ghost, dwelling in the believer, consciously sets him in, with settled peace as the result, for what is there left that could disturb it?

Now the truth is that we get everything in, and through Jesus. We first of all get our sins forgiven. We get our thirst quenched, and we receive the Holy Ghost, who, in the character of "living water," flows out through us to others. If we come to the Lord, and get our own souls blessed, and refreshed, and helped, by the knowledge of His grace, we have to represent Him in this scene. We are empowered, by the Spirit of God, to be here channels of blessing to those around us. The Saviour in glory is the source of all, while the believer, still in this scene, is the channel of the "rivers of living water" which, through the energy of the Holy Ghost, are to be apparent. It is the thought of service to, and testimony for Christ, that is here presented. If we have received the Holy Ghost, and are, by daily, hourly communion with the Lord, drawing from those unfailing springs of living water, which are in Him, we cannot help answering to what, is described here — "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." We come out of the enjoyment, into which we have been first brought in our own souls (the belly not the brain), in testimony and in service — in the preaching of the Gospel, the ministry of the Word, the feeding of the lambs, and sheep of Christ's flock, the seeking of the lost, the recovery of the wanderers, in visiting the sick, looking after the poor, the sorrowful, the widow, and the orphan; in fact every branch of Christian service is included, from the giving of a cup of cold water in Christ's name, to the highest form of spiritual ministry.

It is the overflowing energy of the Spirit of God, as come from, and so intimately connected with, the glory of Christ, that in the heart of the believer, leads him to be a channel of blessing all through his course, and wherever he may be; opening his lips, and moulding his life, so that he becomes a living testimony to those with whom he comes in contact. He becomes an illustration of those of whom Peter writes: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the virtues of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2: 9). It is a wonderful thing to be not only

a "holy priest" in worship, but a "royal priest" in service. As the former you are in John 4, as the latter you are in John 7.

I will read the Lord's Word once again — "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." You may say to me, I know nothing about that. Well then, my friend, it is high time you were deeply exercised that you should know something about it. That is what, in conclusion, I have to say to you, each one. Do you not think it is a wonderful thing that in a dark, miserable, wretched, sin-stained, and Satan-governed world like ours we should be called to this? Would it not be a wonderful thing for you to get filled with Christ, and with the Holy Ghost? And would it not be a still more wonderful thing if you were to pass through this world in communion with Christ, deriving from Him, and thus be the means, in His hands, of helping and blessing others. It would make a great difference in your life. I believe that most Christians are looking to get, rather than to give, in spiritual things. Getting is all right, but if I do not keep the sluices open, to let the blessing pass through me, the heart's joy is soon spoiled. Not untruly did the poet write: —

"Dig channels for the streams of love,
That they may broadly run;
For love has overflowing streams,
To fill them every one.
But if at any time thou cease
These channels to provide,
The very fount of love for thee
Will soon be parched and dried;
For thou must give, if thou would'st keep
That good thing from above:
Ceasing to give, we cease to have —
This is the law of love."

If we were filled with this thought, that we have everything in Christ, and that we are but channels of communication, from the inexhaustible stores of grace that are in Him, to the needy souls around about us, what an immense difference there would be in our daily lives, and what joys would mark them. May the Lord grant this grace to each of us that we may go to Him, and drink deeply of His grace, and Spirit, and thus become, in this scene, the witnesses of His love,

and be free, and able to show forth the beauty, and charm of that grace, by which He has called us to such marvellous privileges.