

504

1182
La G-692

1182

1958/8/23

LIBRARY OF THE
GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

Sermon preached by Mr J H Gosden
at Rehoboth Chapel Swindon
on 10 October 1957

JOHN 4 v 13/14

"Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever
drinketh of this water shall thirst again; But
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 of water springing
up into everlasting life"

You are all familiar with the circumstances of these words of
Christ to the woman at the well of Samaria. Christ took advantage of
the incident of her coming to instruct her in spiritual things. She
was a Samaritan and was surprised that He should speak to her, for the
Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans; but to the Lord Jesus there
were no such distinctions; no Jew or Gentile to Christ; all in Him
are one.

Doubtless, this woman was one of the election of grace, but she
was confused, and was a sinful woman, and did not at present seem to
be conscious of her guilt. She had some notion about worship, but
knew not what she worshipped; and the Lord made this wonderful remark
to her: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again"; that
is, the water of the well, the well which they boasted Jacob gave
them. This represents drinking of earthly things, the temporal
blessings of God, the things that we can enjoy naturally in this life.
They all leave us deficient, they leave us needy, they do not satisfy
the soul. That is the great point. O, it is a wonderful mercy to know
that we have a soul, and a greater mercy to have what David had in his
soul, a thirst for God. As many of us as can honestly say the words of
David for ourselves before a heart-searching God, ought to thank Him
for that painful thirst that we may feel at times, for it is painful
until satisfied. But we are so apt to seek after satisfaction in the
things of this life, a kind of drinking down, a satisfaction from our
temporal enjoyments and blessings; and, alas, oftentimes in doing so
we forget our obligations to God for those temporal mercies. "Thanks

to Thy Name", said one good man, "for meaner things, but they are not my God". They cannot satisfy my soul

There's nothing here can satisfy
not gold, nor house, nor lands

Yet, unless the Lord gives us grace, we shall seek satisfaction where it can never be found. There is no real thirst for God in the soul of man by nature, for he is dead to God ; and the Lord has many means of bringing His people to a solemn sense of need and a real hunger and thirst after Himself. He knows how to make this world a wilderness because of sin. One of the chief blessings God bestows upon His people is to show them their sin. He showed this woman her sin; her secret sins He brought to the light of His countenance before her, and she marvelled, and perceived that He was a prophet because He knew all the secrets of her life. O, what a mercy it is if the Lord does the same thing for us - brings us out into the wilderness and contends with us there, makes everything down here in this world unsatisfying to us because, as I have said, everything is marred by sin. A fair world, by the Creator's hand, is this world; creation work is wonderful; but

All creation groans through thee
Pregnant cause of misery

the sin of man. The earth is defiled by the inhabitants that walk upon it, and we are involved. How solemn it is to feel it, and to realise that we have a soul which must go before God, which is either lost or saved! O, how vast is this issue! This life is but a journey; it is but a sojourn, a very brief period, and we are hastening to eternity; and if we are satisfied with the pleasures, the enjoyments, the riches, the honours, of this poor world, we are satisfied woefully short, and if we die with that satisfaction we must leave it all, and eternal dissatisfaction will be our lot. O, when I look at young people, and think of their pleasures - many of them quite lawful pleasures - and one would not wish to mar the lawful pleasures in the young, but O, when the soul and its needs are realised, then something beyond all natural pleasure is needed, and that is salvation, God's salvation.

"Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again". Now is it not true of every earthly thing that you may desire, honours, pleasures, social delights, domestic felicity, health and strength, learning and science, all the things that you may desire, that all of them leave you short? There is no satisfaction to the soul; and what is more, alas, the things that we may lawfully enjoy, we abuse, because we enjoy them with no reference to God. Whatever we do and think and say and enjoy and use, with no reference to God, we sin in that; even in using His mercies. Very solemn to consider! Very blessed when a child of God is favoured with some sweet enjoyment of the Lord's blessing in his soul! Then temporal things, providence and creation, are sanctified to him, and they are both made sweeter in the enjoyment of them, and also are subordinated to the soul's interest and the glory of God; but apart from that there is no real satisfaction away from God in Christ.

So the Lord said, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again". Whatever you reach, whatever you attain to, whatever you acquire in this world, you will find it leaves you deficient; you will thirst again; and the poor worldling who has no thirst for God, well, he has to leave everything at the last. The miser who takes delight in accumulating wealth cannot take it with him. It never satisfied him here! It may induce an ungodly independence; it may have a power in his life that is damaging to his character; and "the love of money is" indeed, as the Lord said by His servant "the root of all evil". It never satisfies really. No, there is nothing; no honour. You may attain to certain things, and quite properly seek to attain to certain honours and eminence in your various vocations in life; to aim to discharge rightly our obligations and sustain our relationships properly is perfectly right; but when we attain to things, if we do, we want more and more. Insatiableness belongs to us in respect to the things of this life, and when we have got all we can, we must leave it at the last, and they are poor who have no desire, no prospect, beyond.

But the Lord graciously spoke to this woman, and taught her that there was something that did satisfy; and He calls it "the water that I shall give him". "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 of water springing up into everlasting life". And what is this water, but the grace of God, the favour of God? It is "better than life" - so says the Word of God; better than everything you can conceive to be profitable; for whatever we have, if we have not God's favour, we are in a desperate state. God's disfavour is worse than death, and God's favour is better than life; and this is what the Lord Jesus has to give. "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 of water springing up into everlasting life". This is salvation. "The grace of God", we read in Titus, "that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men". O what a wonderful thing that is in this dark world of sin and woe, that there should appear that grace, that God should indeed, in the fulness of time, send forth His Son, made of a woman; that the eternal Son of God should manifest that marvellous condescension and humble Himself in order to the salvation of sinners! "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." Well, it is this that is the water that He gives, the grace, the salvation of God. It is Himself, and all the fruits of His precious life and vicarious death. "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" He said of Himself. And if we have a hunger and thirst for God it will be satisfied only as we receive Christ and receive the virtue of His death, the forgiveness of our sins, the love of God in Christ Jesus, divine justification. What can compare with a crumb of divine mercy? Nothing in the universe! And mercy flows to sinners through Jesus Christ. He alone could open the channel for it and bestow it; and it is a gift, a free gift. No money could purchase it. God's grace is free. Do you feel to need it, to want it? Is there a panting, a painful, pinching thirst for a gracious God, for His love, His mercy, His smile, His favour - for Himself? It can be very painful, but blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after God, His righteousness, and His kingdom. "They shall be filled", said the Lord Jesus; they shall be satisfied, satiated. "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

But the Lord says, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall

give Him shall never thirst" and previously He had said "If thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is that saith unto thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water". The Lord gives it freely, but He gives a thirst for it; and that thirst for Himself and for the water of life, for the pleasures of God, the enjoyment of His presence, of His love, and mercy, this thirst for Him, is expressed by the soul in seeking unto Him. You know what that is. You will die of thirst, you feel at times, of pinching desire for God. You say what you were just now singing:

Give me Christ, or else I die

He is more needful to me than life itself. If a person were thirsty literally and physically until he was almost dead, and you offered him a bag of sovereigns, it would be like mocking him. That would not satisfy; it could not save his life. Only water could do it. And so it is with the soul convicted of sin. Is it so with some of you - a solemn matter? Lord, give me this water, or I shall die. This living water, this unction of salvation, this sweet pardon of my sin, this effectual justification of my person; O, grant it to me, Lord. It is a solemn thing to want Christ and not to possess Him. Some people say they would like to be right if it does not cost them too much trouble, if they are not too much disturbed out of their luxuries and earthly things. O, but what did Paul say? - and I believe what Paul said will be, in effect, in the spirit, the language of every soul taught of the Holy Ghost - He said, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in Him". It was his thirst, his need, his desire after God in Christ. It can be very painful, but it shall be satisfied. The Lord never gives a thirst for Himself to leave that thirst unsatisfied. He does not mock people. The poor world has no care about God, and the worldling has no care about his soul. What gave you a care about your soul? What made you restless, so that you could say, and do say sometimes: "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God", for His mercy, to know Him, to know the power of Christ's resurrection, to have fellowship with Him, to enjoy His love, to be sanctified by His truth, to be fitted for eternity. Who gave you

that desire, that felt need, that thirst? It does not grow in nature. It is God's work. And if He has begun that work, though it is painful to you at present, He will carry it on, and you will find, sooner or later, satisfaction in the reception of this water, the drinking of it. The hymnwriter expressed it like this:

'Tis a thirst Thyself didst give
Bid me therefore, drink and live

"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst".

Let us notice one or two points about the satisfaction that comes by drinking this water that Christ gives. The first point that I would notice is that of divine forgiveness. When a sinner is really, feelingly guilty before God, when he knows himself a lost sinner, and that he has nothing in himself whereby he can make himself acceptable to God, that he is obnoxious to Him and condemned out of His law, that person is in a solemn place. And when it is made out to him that it is possible for him to be delivered, that there is in God an ability to forgive, and freely forgive, the sin of a guilty sinner, and that, because of Christ's precious death, that will create a thirst. If you do not believe in God, in His favour, in His love, in His grace, in His salvation, in His forgiveness, then there will be no thirst in your heart. It is the knowledge that God is satisfying, that the knowledge of God in Christ will satiate your soul, that draws you out to Him, makes you intensely long to partake of Him; and partake you shall. O, the Lord will satisfy the longing soul, and satiate the weary soul out of His fulness. To drink of the sweet enjoyments of divine remission is wonderfully sweet and satisfying. When the Holy Spirit of Christ brings into the conscience that sweet refreshment of divine, blood-bought pardon, it cools the feverish conscience, it satiates the weary soul that has grown almost faint with trouble about sin. O, it does bring new life! It brings liberty, it brings more enjoyment than any conceivable earthly thing. Did you ever drink this? It is a wonderful expression - to drink! The reception into your soul, an inflowing into your conscience, of the peace of God through Jesus Christ. No peace like it! A holy peace, a peace that "passeth all understanding". Paul in

Philippians speaks of it thus, and it is true to description. You will know it when you get it. You will say, I cannot understand this peace; it flows into my soul and refreshes me; it cleanses me, it satisfies me, it liberates me. It comes through Jesus Christ and one effect of it is, it draws out from the sinner's heart the sacred fruit of repentance and humility and love. Now you will never be satisfied with your graces. Repentance, humility and love are the fruits of salvation, but it is the salvation in Christ Jesus in this particular point, the forgiveness of your sins, that will satisfy. Wonderful to feel it! Why, you say, I am satisfied. I am at rest. The Lord has redeemed me; my sins are gone, my conscience is clean, my soul is refreshed, my fear is removed. I have peace with God! The day you get that, my friends, you will not covet any earthly thing; you will not envy any creature. There will be satisfaction in your soul in the possession of divine forgiveness, and in the knowledge that Christ Who died on Calvary's cross, there and then put away your sin. O, sweet day it is!

Faith in the bleeding Lamb,
O what a gift is this!
Hope of salvation in His Name,
How comfortable 'tis

Earthly comforts are vain to a troubled conscience. No earthly palliative can give you rest if you are guilty before God. But if you get this peace, this pardon in your conscience, it will bring such comfort to your soul that earthly discomforts, in a sense, are swallowed up by that divine comfort. It brings satisfaction. You do not thirst then for earthly things. No, but you will want a repetition; you will want more of this communion with Him. And when you drink a little of the wine of His love, that sweet wine of the kingdom; when the Holy Spirit sheds it abroad in your poor heart, warms you with love to Him because of His love to you; is not it gratifying? O, sweet it is to feel the love of Christ! It passeth knowledge. It is but a little we know of it, but it does satisfy as well as increase desire. If I know anything about the love of God in Christ, I know that it brings satisfaction, sweet satisfaction, but it intensifies the desire for the Object.

Lord, make the union closer yet
And let the marriage be complete

will be, for substance, the language of that sinner who tastes the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Then there is the satisfaction of the truth; the truth of Christ's Person. Strong meat for the soul! Doctrine is nourishment to the soul and strengthens it. I know we are very apt to think lightly of doctrine, but I do believe the Lord's people are brought to that point where they are compelled and enabled to look at, and to assimilate, the doctrine of Christ. O, what satisfaction you may feel sometimes in seeing Who the Lord is, and what a fulness resides in Him to be communicated to a poor sinner! to a sinner who possesses the Lord for his Portion. An ocean fulness is in Him, a "treasure all divine", and durable riches, everlasting riches, everlasting life, and righteousness that can never be abolished. You may see more in Christ sometimes than you can ever express. And what does the sight do? Why, it makes you want to know more of Him, and to be possessed of Him. Said Paul: "That I may win Christ, and be found in Him".

Then there is satisfaction in receiving His Word. "Grace", we read, "is poured into His lips" and when He pours out from those sacred lips, through the Scriptures, by His Spirit, into a sinner's heart, there is satisfaction. O, what satisfaction you may feel sometimes - not often, perhaps, but when the Lord speaks! Nourishment. "Man doth not live by bread alone; but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live". Who can express the sweet contentment, the enrichment that you feel when the Lord speaks? the kindness with which He speaks, the power and Kingly authority and satisfaction and assurance that His voice brings into your heart, drawing you up to Himself?

"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst" - never thirst for earthly things. Lawful things may be rightly used by a child of God, but always in subordination to the Lord's glory, and everything that comes in competition with Christ will be considered an enemy, and especially false doctrine. O, false doctrine is dreadful! It is poison. But the truth of God is nourish-

ment, and sometimes you may feel a distinct difference. The dreadful heresies that are promulgated, and that your carnal reason would imbibe, and that Satan would tempt you to believe, the grace of God will make you revolt against them; but the precious truth of Christ, the doctrine of His Word, His sacred Person, His eternal Deity, His obedience, His righteousness wrought out, His death, that precious sacrifice that He offered as a Substitute, and His Priestly work and intercession in heaven, and all that He is, will be satisfying to you. There are times - I believe there is a time in the child of God's life, before he dies, when he is enabled to receive the Lord Jesus into his heart as his Portion. O, that is satisfaction! The world may be emptying to you in some things; things may be closing up to you in circumstances; you may be losing most of your friends, losing your health, and anticipating further disintegration, and trouble, then death; but if the Lord is your Portion there is satisfaction in that. Whatever occurs, whatever disturbances come, whatever losses you incur, if you have Christ you have a wellspring of satisfaction in Him, "a well of water springing up into everlasting life".

"Everlasting life". It can never be lost, never come to an end. The enjoyment of God; to be able to say, "The Lord is my Portion, saith my soul; the Portion of mine inheritance and my cup". The Lord has a cup and He pours out of that cup a mixture; and sometimes you may feel a real satisfaction in the will of God and His dispensations toward you, because you see in what He does His wisdom is exercised, His prudent love is exercised, and you are led to see that everything, even His chastisements, come through covenant love. You would not have a thing altered. "My times" said David "are in Thy hand". A mercy to feel it! O, what we need, what I need, and what some of you may need, are further communications. If the Lord withholds, if He is silent, if the Bible is a silent Book to us, if we do not get glimpses of Him or access to Him at the throne of grace, then we can understand something of David's words in the Psalm read (63) and the longing for Him, to thirst after Him, to see Him and to hear Him so as we have seen and heard Him in the sanctuary. But if you have that sorrow, that pain of unsatisfied thirst, it is a mercy for you, because the world has it not. The world finds satisfaction in fleshly enjoyments and pleasures. The child of God finds pleasure only in the Lord's presence, in His truth, in His ways. "Ye now therefore have

sorrow" said the Lord Jesus, "but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you". Sweet words; words that will pacify a poor sinner and draw out the patience of hope in his soul. You will be looking for Him, waiting for Him, praying to Him, and imploring Him to come and give you another token, another testimony that He is your Lord and Saviour and your Redeemer, and you will not be always put off. You dare not, some of you, charge God - it would libel His character - and say He never answered your cries, never gave you a touch, a look, a testimony. Each fresh testimony brings fresh pleasure and sacred satisfaction to the soul. The unchangeability of the Lord, His eternal youth, His rich fulness, His undying love, His everlasting righteousness, His sweet grace, His heavenly looks, His forgiving love, His longsuffering patience - why, in everything He is admirable! And if you can say, this is my Friend, this is my Saviour, this is my Redeemer, then you have satisfaction.

But really in this life there is more of desire than satisfaction. I do not want to imply that the Lord does not satisfy His people sometimes, but, comparatively speaking, the life of a child of God is one of desire, longing, and hunger and thirst, with a little satisfaction. Another thing about the life of a child of God is this, he needs the Lord so constantly to cleanse him afresh from his pollution and guilt. Why, when you first got that sweet enjoyment of His forgiving love in your heart, and His redeeming mercy that melted you, you may have thought you would never sin against Him again, and that was your desire. But we have to prove that we do sin - O, how painful it is! - therefore we shall want mercy, sweet mercy, down to the end. O, we shall never get beyond mercy! However much enjoyment of the Lord you may have here, you will have to go to Him again and again as a poor sinner: "Be merciful to me". Mercy is very sweet, very solemn, because of how it comes. And the peace of God is very sweet - heavenly peace. Yet that is solemn, because it comes through the chastisement of Christ.

But there is to be full satisfaction presently. O, what a prospect the people of God have! Here below we get hardly enough to satisfy us for five minutes, but those touches and blinks that we get, those drops of honey, those few grapes of Eschol that betimes come to

us, are beyond all earthly things sweet and satisfying. But the best is to come, the fulness is to come; the milk and honey lie beyond the wilderness. And this is the prospect of pilgrims, the prospect of those who are given grace to choose, because the Lord has chosen them. I believe in a choice; I believe the will is very active in a life of grace. Not what people call "free will", as if salvation were suspended upon the human will, but a renewed will is after God positively, and there is a choice in that will. Your understanding and affections and will are all after God, the need of Him and the desire after Him, and you choose Him. Moses chose rather the worst of Christ than the best of Egypt. He chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season". And has not that been your choice? Who gave you to make that choice? Why, the Lord! And He will condescend to give you your choice; and when He says, "I have redeemed thee, thou art Mine"; when He permits you to claim Him for your Portion, the Portion of your inheritance, and when He gives you that sweet assurance that He has gone to prepare a place for you, and will come again and receive you unto Himself, why, your soul will be in your hand, as it were; you will want to be gone. "I would not live alway" said Job; perhaps partly because of the trouble he was in; but another thing operated in Job's heart; he said: "I know that my Redeemer liveth .. and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another". To see Him will be to be satisfied, to be satisfied with His righteousness, with His image. "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness" said David. "At Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore" - and holy pleasures. If the blessings of the gospel were not holy blessings, they would not satisfy a renewed heart. You cannot be satisfied, if you have grace, with anything but what satisfies God, and what satisfies God is perfection. Where is that to be found? In the Lord Jesus. You are satisfied where God is satisfied; you rest where God rests. What a mercy it is to have a little faith and a little hope sometimes that enables you - even in your distress, when your enemies and Satan say, Where is your God - to say to your soul: "Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him Whose presence is salvation". And that is it! The margin reads "Whose presence is salvation", and to be in His presence is the end of faith. "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your

souls".

This satisfaction will be expressed. It is expressed here sometimes, in praise, and in worship, and in thanksgiving, but it will be expressed better and perfectly in heaven - heavenly worship, the ascription of praise, and honour, and glory, to the eternal God in Christ. The employment of heaven will be a satisfying employment, not because we shall merit anything, but the very liberty to worship the Lord in perfect holiness; that will be glory. It is beyond all our thought, but may the Lord let a little of this water of life into our hearts, and say to us, "Drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!" It would be wonderful to get a deep draught of this water of life in our souls. It would sequester us from all the noise and pomp and lust and pride of this life, and it would fit us for pilgrimage, and fit us for heaven.

AMEN.