

A GOLDEN SENTENCE NO. 3135

A SERMON
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*“Jesus said unto them, my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.”
John 4:34*

[Another sermon by Mr. Spurgeon, upon the same text, is sermon #302, Jesus About His Father’s Business and another, upon verses 31 to 38, is #1902, mysterious meat]

THIS text contains in it *much consolation for those who are desirous of salvation, more of example to those who are saved, and most of all of matter for praise concerning our Lord Himself, who is its Spokesman.*

I. Let us begin by noticing that THE TEXT CONTAINS MUCH OF CONSOLATION FOR THOSE ANXIOUS ONES WHO WOULD FAIN FIND MERCY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

You who are trembling under a sense of sin will perceive that *the work of saving souls is called by Christ, “his Father’s will.”* I know you are very prone to imagine that Christ is full of pity, but that the Father is austere, severe, an avenging Judge. You slander your God by such a supposition. “The work of mercy is the will of Him that sent Me,” says Christ. “All that I am doing, when I am seeking the soul’s good of a poor sinful Samaritan woman, at the margin of this well is according to my Father’s mind.”

Christ was not, as it were, introducing men to a mercy from which God would fain keep them, but He was bringing to reconciliation with God those concerning whom the benevolent will of God was that they should be saved—and more—concerning whom the effectual will of God was that they should also be brought into covenant relation with Himself and should enjoy eternal life.

Sinner, if you get into the garden of the Lord’s grace, you have not come there as an intruder. The gate is open. It is God’s will that you should come in. If you receive Christ into your heart, you will not have stolen the treasure—it was God’s will that you should receive Christ. If with broken heart you shall come and rest upon the finished sacrifice of Jesus, you need not fear that you will violate the eternal purpose, or come into collision with the divine decree. God’s will has brought you into a state of salvation.

One of the most vain fears that a man can entertain is the dread that the Father will be unwilling to forgive or the equally absurd fear that he may possibly find a decree of God shutting him out when he is anxious to be reconciled. Where God gives the will to come to Jesus, we may be sure that the eternal purpose has gone before.

O awakened sinner, your anxious desire, your prayerfulness, your longing for God, are but the shadows of the divine will upon your own will! Imagine not that you can get the start of God in the race of mercy.

*“No sinner can be beforehand with Thee;
Thy grace is almighty, preventing, and free.”*

If you desire, God has long ago desired. If you purpose in your heart, God has long ago purposed. You need never be troubled about divine predestination. The Gospel which we preach is that to which you should give your attention. Rest assured that God has never spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth and said, “Seek ye my face in vain.”

He has never passed a secret decree in the council-chamber which shall contravene the open promise of His mercy. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” If you come to Christ and cast yourself upon Him, you need entertain no suspicion that you are violating the will of God, for salvation is the will of God which Jesus Christ has come to fulfill.

Another consolation is here given to every seeking soul, namely, that *Jesus Christ is sent into the world on purpose to save*. If I know that I am sick and that a physician has come into the street on purpose to heal, I feel no difficulty about inviting him into my house. If I know that I am poor and that a princely almoner has come with plentiful liberalities to distribute to the poor, I have no difficulty in asking of him. Why should I, if I know that he has come with the very object and intent to do that which I want him to do?

Now, wherever there is an empty sinner, a full Christ has come on purpose to fill that empty sinner. Wherever there is a thirsty spirit, the river of the water of life is poured out on purpose for that thirsty soul to drink. If you hunger after Christ, rest assured that Christ has met with you, and discerns in you one of those whom He came to call. He would not have made you hunger, nor made you thirst, nor made you feel your emptiness if it had not been His intention to remove your hunger, slake your thirst, and fill your emptiness to the full.

Look upon the Savior as being commissioned by His Father to save sinners. Never indulge the thought that He came to save better ones than you are and that you are just beyond the pale of His mercy. But instead thereof, let your sinfulness, your nothingness, your conscious weakness, your utter ruin and hell-desert inspire you with a surer hope that you are such a sinner as Jesus Christ came to deliver. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. Who is more lost than you are? Believe, then, that He came to seek and to save you, and cast yourself upon Him, and you shall find it so.

Perhaps the greatest consolation to a despairing sinner which this text affords is *the delight which Jesus Christ experiences in the work of saving souls*. It was His one object. From of old He looked forward to the day when a body would be prepared for Him that He might come into the world to redeem His people. When the fullness of time was come, He was no unwilling servitor to our souls. “In the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God!”

Down from the portals of the skies the Savior came with glad alacrity—willing, panting to save. When He was on earth, He was not loath to seek out the guilty—nay, it was alleged against Him, “This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.” He could have healed the leper, if He had pleased, while He stood at a distance, but He chose to touch Him when He healed Him, to show how near He had come to humanity, that He did not shrink from it, but that it was His delight to come into contact with all the woe and suffering of our fallen race.

He did not retire from sinners to guard His holiness in solitude. He did not surround Himself with a bodyguard to keep off the throng, but there He was among them, surrounded by a press of common folks. Many thronged Him and some touched Him who received healing virtue through their believing touch. He was at the beck and call of everybody. He had not time so much as to eat. And when He did, through weariness, seek a little rest, they followed Him on foot, and hounded Him with their entreaties. Yet He was never angry, but always full of compassion towards them.

He was a willing Savior and found His soul’s delight in winning souls. That great crowning work of suffering and death, by which souls were effectually redeemed, was no unwilling service. He said He had a baptism to be baptized with and that He was straitened until it was accomplished. The cup was bitter as hell, but He longed to drink it. His death was to be at once the most ignominious and the most painful that could be devised, and yet He thirsted for it. “With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer,” said Christ to His disciples.

He did not hide Himself away when He was wanted, but He went to the garden of Gethsemane—and Judas knew the place—and when they found Him, He was willing to yield Himself up. No bonds could have bound Him, yet He bound Himself. They could not have dragged Him to the cross, nor could

myriads like them, but He went like a lamb to the slaughter, and like a sheep before her shearer He was dumb, and opened not His mouth.

All that wondrous passion upon Calvary was a free-will offering for us. It was a voluntary sacrifice to the fullest possible extent. What if I say that even in His deepest agony, Christ had an unknown joy? I think we have too much forgotten the wonderful joy which must have filled the Savior's heart even when going to the cross.

Beloved, you cannot suffer for others, if you have a benevolent nature, without feeling joy that you are taking the suffering from them. And we know that it was because of "the joy that was set before him" that He "endured the cross, despising the shame." As He dived into the black waves of grief, He could see the precious pearl which He counted to be of greater price than all—and that sight sustained Him with a latent joy, if I may so call it, which did not sparkle at the time, but which lay there slumbering within even when His soul was "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."

And now that Christ has gone up on high, poor trembling sinner, He has no greater joy than this—in seeing of the travail of His soul in souls redeemed by Him, both by price and by power, from death and sin. Jesus wept over Jerusalem because it would not be saved, but Jesus rejoices greatly over sinners who repent. This is His joy and His crown of rejoicing—even you poor tremblers who come and look to Him upon the cross, and find life in His death, and healing in His wounds.

I cannot bring out the comfort of this text to you as I could wish. Words fail me, but I would urge those of you who want to find peace and faith, to make a point of thinking very much about Christ. We not only lay hold on the cross by faith, but it is the cross which works faith in us. If you would think more often of the mercy of God, and the will of God, and the mission of Christ, and the lovingkindness of Christ, your soul would probably be led by the Spirit, by that course of thought, to believe in Jesus.

Your constant dwelling upon your sin and your hardness of heart has a great tendency to drive you to despair. It is well to know your heart to be hard and your sin to be great, but as a man is not healed by simply knowing that he is sick and is not likely to get his spirits comforted by merely studying his disease, so you are not likely to find faith by raking amongst the filth of your fallen nature, or trying to find something good in yourselves which is not there and will never be there.

Your wisest course is to think much of Jesus and look to Him. You will soon find hope in Him if you look for it there. You will soon discover grounds for comfort if you look to God in the person of His Son. If you regard the will of God as it is revealed on Calvary, and read it in the crimson lines written upon the Savior's pierced body, you will soon perceive that His will is love.

Turn away from the wounds which the old serpent has given you and look to the brazen serpent. Look away from your own death to the death of Jesus and recollect that your repentance, apart from Christ, will only be a legal repentance, full of bondage, and will be of no avail to you. As old Wilcocks says, "Away with that repentance which does not weep at the foot of the cross." If you do not look to Jesus Christ when you repent, your repentance is not an evangelical repentance, but a repentance which needs to be repented of.

Do, I pray you, receive the truth which I have put before you, or rather, which the text so plainly presents to you. The salvation of sinners is the will of God, the work of Christ, and the joy of Christ. Is not this good news?

II. But I said that the text was MUCH MORE AN EXAMPLE TO BELIEVERS, and so it is.

Note in the text, first of all, *Christ's subserviency*. He says, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." He says nothing about His own will. Thus early did He say, "Not my will, but thine be done." The man of the world thinks that, if he could have his own way, he would be perfectly happy—and his dream of happiness in this state or in the next is comprised in this—that his own wishes will be gratified, his own longings fulfilled, his own desires granted to him.

This is all a mistake. A man will never be happy in this way. It is not by setting up his own will and crying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," but perfect happiness is to be found in exactly the opposite

direction, namely, in the casting down of our own will entirely and asking that the will of God may be fulfilled in us.

“This is my meat,” says the sinner, “to do my own will.” Jesus Christ points to another table and says, “This is my meat, to do the will of him that sent me. My greatest comfort, and the most substantial nourishment of my spirit, are not found in carrying out My own desires, but in submitting all My desires to the will of God.”

Beloved, our sorrows grow at the roots of our self-will. Could a man have any sorrow if his will were utterly subdued to the will of God? In such a case, would not everything please him? Pain, if we did not kick against it, would have a wondrous sweetness. Losses would positively become things to rejoice in, as affording opportunities for patience. We would even take joyfully the spoiling of our goods.

When we have conquered ourselves, we have conquered all. When we have won the victory over our own desires and aversions, and have subdued ourselves, through sovereign grace, to the will of God, then must we be perfectly happy.

Notice in the text, however, in the next place, not only subserviency, but also *a recognized commission*. O Christian, cultivate full subserviency to the divine will and let it be your desire also to see clearly your commission from on high! It is the will of God, ay, but it is well for us to add, “the will of *him that sent me*.”

If I am a soldier, when I am sent upon an errand, I have not to consider what I shall do, but having received my commander’s orders—I am bound to obey them. Do not many Christians fail to see their commission? It has come to be a dreadfully common belief in the Christian church that the only man who has a “call” is the man who devotes all his time to what is called “the ministry,” whereas all Christian service is ministry and every Christian has a call to some kind of ministry or another.

It is not every man who will become “a father in Israel,” for “ye have not many fathers.” It is not every man who can become even an instructor, or an exhorter, but each man must minister according to the gift he has received. You are a nation of priests. Instead of having some one man selected who becomes a priest and so maintains the old priestcraft in the Christian church, Jesus our Lord and Head has abolished that monopoly forever. He remains the one great Apostle and High Priest of our profession and we in Him are made, through His grace, kings and priests unto God.

You are each of you, as believers, sent into this world with a distinct commission—and that commission is very like the commission given to your Master. In your measure, the Spirit of the Lord is upon you and He has sent you to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Into the atonement you cannot intrude. Christ has trodden the winepress alone and of the people there was none with Him, but in the place of service you will be no intruder, it is your dwelling place. You are called to follow Christ your Lord in all holy labor for souls. “As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” Is not this a part of His dying commission, not to the apostles only, but unto all the saints? Let us endeavor to recognize this.

When Christ was sent of God, He did not forget that He was sent. He did not come into this world to do His own business after He had been sent to do His Father’s will. So you and I must not act as though we were living here to make money, or to bring up our families, and make matters comfortable for ourselves. We are, if we are Christians, sent into the world upon a divine errand, and oh, for grace to recognize the errand and to perform it!

Further, notice *the practical character of our Lord’s observations on these two points*. He says, “My meat is”—what? To consider? To resolve? To calculate? To study prophecy as to when the world will end? To meditate upon plans by which we may be able one of these days to do something great? Not at all. “My meat is *to do* the will of him that sent me.”

The meat of some people is to find fault with others who do Christ’s will—they never seem to have their mouths so well filled as when remarking upon the imperfections of those who are vastly better than

themselves. This is like glutting one's self with carrion and is unworthy of a man of God. Did you ever know a man whom God blessed who had not some crotchet or singularity? I think I never knew such a man or woman either.

Whenever God blesses us, there is sure to be something or other to remind men that the vessel containing the treasure is an earthen vessel. Foolish people are so fond of crying, "Look at the meanness of the vessel," as though no treasure were contained within. Were they wise, they would understand that this is a part of the divine appointment, that we should "have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

Could *you* do God's work better, think you? I wish you would try! It is generally true that those who cavil at others find it inconvenient to walk in any path of usefulness at all.

There are others, of a somewhat better disposition, who find it their meat to project new methods. They invent grand schemes. There is a house to be built for God's people to worship in—and they always know how to build it, so many people are to give so much, and so many so much—the practical part of the business being how much they will give themselves, but upon that point they have remarkably little to say. They are always talking of some grand scheme or other for impossible Christian union, or some magnificent but impracticable Christian effort.

Our Lord was practical. You are struck, in the whole of His life, with the practical character of it. He was no visionary and no fanatic. Though His holy soul was on fire as much as the most fanatical zealot who ever lived, all His plans and methods were the wisest that could possibly be arranged, so that, if men had sat down in their coolest prudence to devise schemes, had they been rightly led, they would have devised the very schemes which this warm-hearted, passionate Savior carried out. He did not theorize, but acted. My dear brethren and sisters, I hope we shall earn the same commendation.

Many Christians are too fond of mysticisms, quiddities, oddities, and strange questions which minister not unto profit. I heartily wish they would try to win souls for Jesus in the old-fashioned Bible way. Every now and then, some particular phase of truth crops up and certain Christians go perfectly mad about it, wanting to pry between leaves that are folded, or to find out secrets which are not revealed, or to reach some fancied eminence of self-conceited perfection in the flesh.

While there are so many sinners to be lost or to be saved, I think we had better stick to preaching the Gospel. As long as this world contains millions of those who do not know even the elementary truths of Christianity, would it not be as well for us first of all to go into the highways and hedges, and tell men of our dying Savior, and point them to the cross? Let us discuss the millennium, and the secret rapture, and all those other intricate questions by and by, when we have got through more pressing needs.

Just now, the vessel is going to pieces—who will man the lifeboat? The house is on a blaze, and who is he that will run the fire-escape up to the window? Here are men perishing for lack of knowledge and who will tell them that there is life in a look at the crucified One? He is the man who shall give men meat to eat.

But all others, though they may carry a dish of most exquisite china, will probably give them no meat, but only make them angry at being tantalized with empty wind. Christ's satisfaction of heart was of a most practical kind—He was subservient to God as a commissioned servant, and busy with actually *doing* the will of God.

But the gist of the text lies here. *Our Lord Jesus Christ found both sustenance and delight in thus doing the will of God in winning souls.* Believe me, brethren, if you have never known what it is to pluck a brand from the burning, you have never known that spiritual meat which, next to Christ's own self, is the sweetest food a soul can feed upon. To do good to others is one of the most rapid methods of getting good to yourselves.

Read the diaries of Whitefield and Wesley and you will be struck with the fact that you do not find them perpetually doubting their calling, mistrusting their election, or questioning whether they love the Lord or not. See the men preaching to their thousands in the open air and hearing around them the cries of, "What must we do to be saved?"

Why, brethren, they had no time for doubts and fears. Their full hearts had no room for such lumber. They felt that God had sent them into this world to win souls for Christ and they could not afford to live desponding, mistrustful lives. They lived unto God and the Holy Ghost so mightily lived in them that they were fully assured that they partook of His marvelous power.

Some of you good people, who do nothing except read little Plymouth books, and go to public meetings, and Bible-readings, and prophetic conferences, and other forms of spiritual dissipation, would be a good deal better Christians if you would look after the poor and needy around you. If you would just tuck up your sleeves for work, and go and tell the Gospel to dying men, you would find your spiritual health mightily restored, for very much of the sickness of Christians comes through their having nothing to do. All feeding and no working makes men spiritual dyspeptics.

Be idle, careless, with nothing to live for, nothing to care for, no sinner to pray for, no backslider to lead back to the cross, no trembler to encourage, no little child to tell of a Savior, no grey-headed man to enlighten in the things of God, no object, in fact, to live for, and who wonders if you begin to groan, and to murmur, and to look within, until you are ready to die of despair? But if the Master shall come to you and put His hand upon you, and say, "I have sent you just as my Father sent Me; now go and do My will," you will find that in keeping His commandments there is great reward. You would find meat to eat that you know nothing of now.

Let us have practical Christianity, my brethren. Let us never neglect doctrinal Christianity, nor experiential Christianity, but if we do not have the practice of it in being to others what Christ was to us, we shall soon find the doctrines to be without savor and the experience to be flavored with bitterness. Christ found joy in seeking the good of the Samaritan woman. Her heart, hitherto unrenewed, satisfied Him when He had won it to Himself. Oh, the joy of winning a soul!

Get a grip from the hand of one whom you were the means of bringing to Christ—why, after that, all the devils in hell may attack you, but you will not care for them—and all the men in the world may rage against you and say you do not serve God from proper motives, or do not serve Him in a discreet way—but since God has set His seal upon your work, you can afford to laugh at them. Do but win souls, beloved, through the power of the Holy Spirit, and you shall find it to be a perennial spring of joy in your own souls.

But notice also that our Lord says, in addition to His finding it His meat to do God's will, that *He also desired to finish His work*. And this is our satisfaction—to persevere till our work is finished. You do not know how near you may be to the completion of your work. You may not have to toil many more days. The chariot wheels of eternity are sounding behind you. Hasten, Christian! Use the moments zealously, for they are very precious.

You are like the work-girl with her last inch of candle. Work hard! The night comes wherein no man can work. "I paint for eternity," said the painter, so let us do—let us work for God as those whose work will endure when selfish labors shall burn as wood, hay, and stubble in the last tremendous fire. To finish His work! To finish His work! Be this our aim.

When the great missionary to the Indians was dying, the last thing that he did was to teach a little child its letters. And when someone marvelled to see so great a man at such a work, he said he thanked God that when he could no longer preach, he had at least strength enough left to teach that poor little child. So would he finish his life's work and put in the last little stroke to complete the picture.

It should be our meat and our drink to push on, never finding our meat in what we have done, but in what we are doing and still have to do—finding constantly our refreshment in the present work of the present hour as God enables us to perform it—spending and still being spent for Him. Never let us say, "I have had my day. Let the young people take their turn."

Suppose the sun said, "I have shone so long, I shall not rise tomorrow"? Imagine the stars in their beauty saying, "We have for so long a time shot our golden arrows through the darkness, we will now retire forever." What if the air should refuse to give us breath, or the water should no longer ripple in its channels, or if all nature should stand still because of what it once did—what death and ruin would there

be! No, Christian, there must be no loitering for you—each day be this your meat—to do the will of Him that sent you and to finish His work.

III. And now, lastly, I have not strength, neither have you the time to consider THE GLORY WHICH JESUS CHRIST SHOULD HAVE FROM us, when we know that He could truly say, “It is my meat to do the will of him who sent me, and to finish his work.”

How could He ever have loved us? It is strange that the Son of God should have set His affections upon such unworthy beings. I should not have wondered, my brother, at His loving you, but it is a daily marvel to me that Jesus should have loved me. It is a wonder of wonders that He should come to save us—that when we were so lost and ruined that we did not even care about His love, but rejected it when we heard of it, and despised it even when it came with some degree of power to our hearts—that He should still have loved us notwithstanding all.

“’Tis strange. ’Tis passing strange, ’tis wonderful!” Yet so it is. He has no greater delight than in saving us and in bringing us to glory. Shall we not praise Him? Do not our hearts say within themselves, “What shall I do, my Savior to praise? Wherewithal shall I crown His head? How shall I show forth my gratitude to Him who found such delight in serving me?”

Beloved, may the love of God be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us! From this day forth may it be our meat and our drink to do the will of Him that sent us—and to finish His work!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

JOHN 4:1-39

Verses 1-3. *When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) he left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.*

Our Savior was not a man of strife. He was quite ready to contend with the Pharisees on fit occasions, but just then He avoided an encounter with them. Besides, one woman of Samaria, whom He was going to save, was worth more to Him than ten thousand Pharisees who would not be saved by Him. Most of the learning and culture of Palestine was possessed by the Pharisees, but Christ thought nothing of it in comparison with the soul of the one poor woman of Samaria whom He was going to save.

4-7. *And he must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. [See sermons #2570, Jesus Sitting on the Well And #2423, The Model Soul-Winner]*

The “sixth hour” means noonday, and that was a very unusual time for a Samaritan woman to draw water. But the reason why she went at that unusual hour was because she was one whom other women shunned, so that if she went to the well at all, she must go alone, for they would not be seen in her company.

What a wonderful thing it is that this woman who was not thought to be fit company for her fellow creatures was, nevertheless, thought by Christ to be worth looking after and saving! But those who are the castaways of men are often among those who are the sought-out and chosen ones of Christ.

8. *(For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)*

This was quite a right thing for the disciples to do, for meat must be bought for men to eat. No doubt it is better to pray than to eat, but if one never ate, he would not long be able to pray. I have heard these disciples condemned for their worldliness and carnality, but I fail to see anything of the kind—it does seem to me necessary that somebody should go into the city to buy meat—and although it is not the noblest kind of work, yet, being necessary, it may be the stepping-stone to higher service.

9-10. *Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, 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. Jesus answered and said unto her, 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.* [See sermons #782, Saving Knowledge and #2277, Sychar's Sinner Saved]

How much we lose through ignorance! Ignorance is often like a great stone laid upon the well so that the flocks cannot be watered—blessed is everyone who helps to roll away that stone. It is a great thing to know the gift of God, “If thou knewest the gift of God,”

10. *And who it is that saith to thee, Give me a drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.*

There are two things worth knowing—what grace is and who it is that gives it. Want of this knowledge often leads to lack of prayer—and lack of prayer leads to lack of receiving. Perhaps someone asks, “Why does not God give without prayer?” Because it is not His will to do so. His will is that we should pray about everything.

Did you ever notice that even when the harvest is ripe, it cannot be gathered in without prayer? Jesus said to His disciples, “The harvest is truly plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.” Prayer seems indispensable. It is part of God's necessary machinery. He has pleased to make it so.

But what condescension of love it is that the prayer of man should be necessary to effect the purposes of God! God even said to Christ Himself “Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” So that, from the woman at the well up to the Lord Jesus Himself, prayer seems to be the indispensable requisite of blessing.

11. *The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?* [See sermon #2897, The Source]

You who reverence the majesty of Christ's deity, the perfection of His humanity, the glory of His atoning sacrifice, the splendor of His resurrection power—you who know whence He has this living water, the power to save and to bless—worship and adore Him with all your heart and soul.

12-14. *Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? 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;*

You know that there are some who preach of a salvation that does not save—they teach that one may be a child of God today and a child of the devil tomorrow. That is like the water in Jacob's well, “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again.” But Christ's salvation is of a very different kind, “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst;”

14. *But the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.* [See sermons #770, The Water of Life; #865, Life's Ever-Springing Well; and #1202, Holy Water]

The grace of God is a living thing, a springing and abiding thing, an everlasting thing—and he that has it in his heart has that which has saved him forever.

15. *The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.*

Christ's words were coming true. He said that, if she had known, she would have asked. And then, in her poor groping way, she began to pray, hardly knowing what she was asking for. I advise you also to pray even before you quite understand your own prayers, before you are sufficiently instructed to know what you really need. Ask God to give you what you need. Very often we make a discovery of our needs through having them supplied.

16-19. *Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, 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. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.*

She perceived that there was something about Him which marked Him out as a prophet, so she seemed to say to Him, “As You are a prophet, solve me this riddle.”

20-24. *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. 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.*

Let us never forget this. Even if we all believe it, we do not always act according to that belief. For instance, we sing through a hymn, but it might almost as well be an old song, for our hearts do not go with the words. Or while our heads are bowed in prayer, perhaps our thoughts are back with our children, or our shops, or far away in some foreign land.

Yet there is no benefit in coming up to a place of worship, or in listening to sermons and prayers, or joining in the singing of sacred songs unless our heart is there. Let us always remember this, and sigh and cry rather than rejoice if we have been up to the holy assembly and yet have not worshipped God “in spirit and in truth.”

25-26. *The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.*

Now she had made the greatest of all discoveries, for the Messiah Himself had come to her and told her “all things.” This was her test of the Messiah and Christ had answered it.

27. *And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?*

They had too much respect for Him to ask such questions, except in their own hearts, but their Oriental prejudices made them marvel that He was talking with a woman.

28-33. *The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?*

They did not like to ask Him plainly, although they were very curious about the matter, they scarcely dared to pry further into it, and His next words may have deepened the mystery still further.

34-35. *Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. [See sermon #707, Fields White for Harvest]*

“Look at those Samaritans trooping out of the city, drawn by that woman’s testimony concerning Me. They are coming, at her invitation, to learn more about the Christ.”

36-38. *And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.*

The prophets had spoken and written concerning the Messiah. Their words had prepared the minds of the Jews and also of the Samaritans, to receive the Gospel, so the great success of the apostles must not be traced merely to their teaching, but also to the preparatory work of the other laborers who had gone before “Other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.”

The church is always ready to praise her reapers, let her not forget her sowers. There are some of us who bring many souls to Christ, who are greatly indebted to the work which was done by other men who preceded us. There are some who, perhaps, have few conversions although they preach the Gospel faithfully—they are sowing and there shall come others, by and by, who shall reap bounteous harvests as

the result of their sowing the good seed of the kingdom. No matter who sows, or who reaps, the glory of the harvest shall be unto the Most High.

39. And 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.

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