

## Our Contributors.

### "Living Waters."

BY MRS. A. GORDON.

Scripture—John 4: 1-15.

As familiar and well known as this incident is, the woman coming to the well in Samaria—yet it is one of the most deeply interesting and precious records in all the New Testament.

Jesus, you will remember, is making disciples; John, Philip, Peter, Andrew, Matthew, and Nicodemus had all decided to serve the Master. Then He adds to the number, a poor, nameless, sinful woman.

What a contrast between the conversation of Jesus with this woman and that of the learned ruler! How differently Jesus presents the truth! The ruler, a man of rank and intelligence, does not feel his need, and therefore, must be shown the necessity of a new birth. She knew and felt her sin; it was cleansing she required and power for a new life—he same Gospel from different points of view.

Contrary to the custom and to the bigoted prejudices of the Jews, when He came weary and foot-sore to the little village of Samaria, He sat down at the side of the well instead of pressing onward, while the disciples went to buy meat.

It was Jacob's well and is a true type of the sources of earthly good. God has made the world full of streams to satisfy our physical thirst, and full of streams to satisfy our natural longings and desires. By each earthly fountain of good we find Jesus sitting, pointing men to better and higher things. From our pleasure He points to heavenly and spiritual joy, by earthly riches, He teaches us of treasures in heaven; by earthly love, He indicates heavenly love; by earthly desires, we are reminded of heavenly desires; by earthly activity and business, there is brought to our minds the zeal and earnestness of a life consecrated to God.

Let us look at this woman as she meets Jesus who is to be her Saviour. She must have been very poor, otherwise, she would not have gone to the well to do her own drawing, as this was not customary, except for the poorest and those who served. But Jesus came for the poorest and the most sinful, as well as for the richest and the most moral. Again, she was a wicked woman, so bad that she was shunned by the poorest and most common of her sex; hours before in the early morn, women had drawn the needed supply for the day. But this woman did not venture forth until the heat of the day, when there was no possibility of her meeting any one. Jesus knew better than anyone else her character, just how depraved she had become, and also how much there was remaining in her heart that was good, and which would perhaps kindle into righteousness. What a condescension of the Lord God, what a humiliation! Perhaps the most of us would have passed her by unnoticed. Ah! but not He. How it thrills our hearts to remember His great love, love for souls! When we note the emphasis on the "thou" in the tenth verse, we see how reversed the position is. It is "thou" who art weary and foot-sore and parched, close to the well, yet unable to drink! It is "I" who can give thee the water from the well and quench thy thirst forever. He knows her, He speaks to her; He does not seem-

ingly notice the flippancy of her remarks, but gently seeks and wins her, becomes her Redeemer. She seemingly would make a most unlikely disciple.

The Jews never thought it worth while to teach women of this class, but Jesus saw in this woman a soul, and life to save a soul just as precious to the Father and to Him, as the soul of a Master in Israel, who had come to Him by night, and to whom He had taught the mysteries of the kingdom. With Him all are sinners, who need God and whom God loves. The thought is "here is sin, I have holiness, here is wretchedness, I have happiness, and I will dart an arrow of the spirit of conviction into that heart, and where there is ignorance, knowledge, peace, joy, and love will abide." And we have the same Savior.

What a lesson! How alive He was to His opportunities! Truly opportunities have wings; we must grasp them or they will leave us forever. So many souls like this woman all around us are unsatisfied and wandering hither and thither, trying to quench an unsatisfiable thirst—are we pointing them to the Fountain of Living Waters? But to return to the incident, He courteously asks her for a drink. Wonderful request! She knew He was a Jew by His dress-color of fringe on garment was probably white, the Samaritans wore blue and the local peculiarities of His dialect. The way to gain another's good will is not at first by doing a kindness but by receiving a kindness, here we see the greatest tact, He asks a favor and leaves himself under obligation. There is no line of procedure more likely to reconcile the woman and make her ready for his teaching. The wisdom of the act appears when we consider the significance among Orientals of giving to drink. Among us, an enemy might receive a drink of water, it is a covenant implies.—Not like a covenant of blood or salt indissoluble, but a covenant of bread is sharing a truce for the time being.

"Can you dig a better well or find sweeter water?" was the question. But her poor heart has no conception of anything but material water, and she argues and evades the subject, and would fain enter upon a theological discussion. How like the human heart in all ages, so slow to discern spiritual things, and to delay to appropriate spiritual blessings when they are even within our reach. We keep looking at the material. And now comes a great truth: Jesus says, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again and again, but who soever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." Thirst is a type of intense human desire, which impels men to activity, and in the satisfying of which lies happiness, life and progress. If the thirst returns it is the fault of the man, because he has been trying to quench with riches, fame, or pleasure. How true it is that "Man has a Soul of vast desires that burns within with restless fires," and only Jesus quenches and satisfies. The text says, "drinketh" and implies continual drinking—this is the secret.

Observe the representation throughout, that the water is a gift from Christ to hu-

manity. God's good things are never bought. Sin has its wages and its rewards can be bought, but eternal life is God's gift.

"Tis heaven alone that is given away,  
Tis only God may be had for the asking."

—Lowell.

When we think of the great army of un-saved in the world, those living without God and without hope, the thirsty ones who are waiting to hear some one of God's children tell them of the living waters, how essential it is that we should be filled with the Spirit, and be bearers of living water to weary souls.

Mr. Moody said, this woman came for a pitcher full and got a well. That is just like our heavenly Father, and yet there are *pitcher Christians* and *well Christians* and *river Christians*. Which are we? Which am I?

Let us turn to John 7:37-39. See our privileges. Christ stood in the temple on that last great day of the feast and cried aloud, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink, out of his heart—the seat of corruption—shall flow rivers of living water." Not a river, but rivers, Amazons, St. Lawrence, Ottawa, Mississippi etc. And I believe, if any one is filled with the Spirit of God, there will be rivers of influence and blessing flowing from them. No four walls will hold their influence, their words will touch hearts everywhere, for the breath of God is upon their souls. Oh, if we would only live in that verse. "If any man—" that means minister, evangelist, man or woman,—yea, boy or girl. Some may ask what it is to be filled with the spirit. The Great Teacher in this verse makes answer—it is to have rivers of living water flowing through the soul. See the universality of the promises—"He that believeth on me." No worker, even the weakest, most obscure, is outside its magnificent sweep, unless by her unbelief she puts herself there. Let us not argue or whittle away the vast, God-like promises of the Divine Word until they come within the cramped limits of our poverty-stricken experience, but let us labour to make our experience abreast of God's will and promises.

Notice its hugeness, its God-like vastness, its prodigality. "Rivers," This promise is for you my sister worker, has it been verified in your experience and life?

### Leading Members of the Church.

The phrase "leading members of the church" is often used, and it is generally understood to include those who hold official position, those who contribute largely to the expenses, and those whose various abilities make the church a powerful agency for good. There can be no particular objections to the use of the term, since those who lead in the church are of course its leading members. And it is a worthy ambition to seek to belong to the number, for leadership in such an institution as the church of Christ is honorable and altogether good.

It, however, one should seek to make distinctions of rank among the leading members, it would seem to be invidious. This was attempted at Corinth. The Corinthians were intensely interested in the church. It was not one of many interests with them. It was paramount. Christianity was new, and was in its first enthusiasm. The gifts of the Spirit were clearly recognized as such. And those who could preach, teach, administer affairs, heal the sick, or give vent to emotional ecstasy, believed themselves to be exercising gifts of the Spirit of God. There was a natural tendency to