

all, leads us to be sure that He prepares for such "chance" meetings, as we call them, and that the heart that is to be impressed is prepared for the conversation that is the instrument of His working. If we had not this faith, no one could undertake the work of seeking to lead men aright; but when we have such faith we need never be afraid that our efforts shall be in vain. Unthinkingly she drew near, although the greatest and most important page of her life was being turned. Let us learn that no day and no task are unimportant. Each morning when we wake let us remember that perhaps to-day the "great thing is to happen. Be on the alert for the word from God at all seasons.

*"Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink."*

Jesus was a Jew, but one who rose above the prejudice of His people. We are all subject to prejudices, and it is only the larger natures who rise above them. Doubtless there was many a proud Pharisee who would have suffered any inconvenience from thirst rather than humble himself to ask a favor from a Samaritan woman. A distinguishing characteristic of Christ was that He had a kindly interest in men as men. Even in our day men are prone to limit their sympathies to those who belong to their own particular class, and seem to think that they can do more for their fellows by hating all others. There is a spurious patriotism that thinks to exalt its own nation by condemning and denouncing all other nations. The truest Canadian is not the man who thinks Canada faultless and all other nations unworthy, but who, whilst loving his own best, has a kindly thought for all peoples.

*"How is it that thou being a Jew askest drink of me which am a Samaritan woman?"* v. 9. Although Jesus rose above prejudice, the woman did not, and would seem to have taken a malicious pleasure in prolonging the inconvenience under which He suffered. She was ready for a controversy, ready to denounce the arrogance of the Jew. It is always very easy to find fault in another, and to exalt one's own virtue in contrast to another's failing. If this was her object, she was disappointed. Jesus at once raised the conversation to a higher level. A lesson we very much need to learn is that it lies in our power to turn the conversation, which has been frivolous or malicious, to that which is profitable. We are so apt to let it drift along low levels. In

this incident we have an instance of the skill that Christ displayed in such work. We may complain that we have not such skill; but if our hearts are set on the better things we shall find that, just as our natures are purified, so shall we be unwilling to waste time in profitless controversy or frivolous talk.

*"If thou knewest the gift of God,"* etc., v. 10. Surely this is true. When one is led to see the truth, he never can be satisfied with less than the best. All the desires of men fade when they are shown the great blessing. And we should seek to be shown "the gift of God," to have our eyes opened that we may see its true value; for if only we have that, we shall never know abiding discontent.

*"Jesus answered and said unto her, Every one that drinketh of this water,"* etc., v. 13. Christ did not despise the good things that are ours through our bodily senses. The water of the well of Jacob was good in its place, but its satisfying power was only momentary, and he whose thirst had been quenched must needs return again and drink. But the water of the well of truth and life, which He had come to lift to the lips of man, had in it the eternal satisfaction for which the souls of men crave. The figure under which the teaching is here given is beautiful in its simplicity and comprehensiveness. There is not one who has not known the distress of thirst, and the gratification with which one may quench his thirst with pure spring water. In fever's delirium, how men have longed for a draught of the water of a spring from which they had drunk in boyhood's days! (2 Sam. 23: 15.) How they have sung of "the old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket, the moss-covered bucket that hung in the well." And so men are delirious with many fevers, and try one draught after another from the "broken cisterns" of earth, and all the time there is flowing this well of salvation that springs up eternally and satisfies the soul of man. It was not entirely a new figure. It has all along commended itself to man's thought. Long ago, the ancient prophet cried, in the words of one who went about the crowded streets with a water-bottle upon his shoulder: "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" (Isa. 55: 1).