

12: 3; 44: 3; Jer. 2: 13; Zech. 13: 1; 14: 8. She, not he, was the really needy one (Rev. 3: 17, 18.)

**11. The well**—The woman can think only of this well and its water. There were no appliances at hand for raising water. Usually an earthen jar was let down by a rope and the stone curbing of ancient wells in Palestine is often deeply grooved by the friction of such ropes for many centuries. This well was about 100 feet deep and nine feet in diameter with a spring at the bottom, which is now choked up with rubbish. It is quarried through the solid rock. The word for well in verses 6 and 14 means properly "a spring or fountain," the word used in this verse means "a cistern or pit," our word "well" has both meanings according as we refer to the water, or to the depth and shape of the excavation.

**12. Art thou greater**—with emphasis on "thou." Compare ch. 8: 53. If Jesus was able to give spring water, where Jacob had to bore a hundred feet through the rock for it, he must be possessed of extraordinary powers. **Our father Jacob**—The Samaritans traced their descent from Joseph, who was buried near Sychar. Their blood was mingled with that of heathen nations (2 Kings 17: 24ff.) The Jews shewed similar pride of race (Matt. 3: 9; John 8: 33, 39, 53.) The woman means to say "The water was good enough for Jacob and supplied all his wants, what better do you claim to have found?"

**13, 14. This water**—By how much the water he gives is better than Jacob found, by so much is he the greater. "This water" stands for every kind of earthly satisfaction. **Shall never thirst**—"Shall certainly not thirst for ever." Compare ch. 6: 35, 58; Rev. 7: 16; 21: 6; Isa. 55: 1; 49: 10. **A well of water**—"a perennial fountain." The water of salvation is a continual supply to him who has once partaken of it, and he becomes a dispenser of the blessings to others. **Unto everlasting life** (R. V.)—(John 7: 38; Isa. 58: 11.) For the purpose of imparting eternal life. This is the certain result of this living fountain within the soul itself. "This water" may preserve the life of the body, "the water that I shall give" sustains the life of the immortal soul.

**15. The absence of deeper spiritual cravings** prevents the woman from understanding by "everlasting life" anything more than continued earthly existence. Her request is almost amusing in its childish simplicity. **Come hither**—R. V. "come all the way hither." The sigh of a poor weary woman bearing a load of poverty and toil. (Lange.) She had to come nearly a mile.

**16. The first condition of receiving this water** is to become thirsty for it. Therefore he skilfully touches the tender spot that she may be aroused out of her spiritual insensibility. (Ps. 90: 8.) Observe the delicacy with which Jesus broaches this subject. He knew all about the woman but preferred that her own lips and conscience should accuse her.

**17. I have no husband**—This answer proves her sincerity and her deep interest in the conversation. If she had been speaking in a frivolous spirit, she would have pretended to go for her husband without any intention of returning; if she had expected to receive miraculous water, she would have hastened for him the sooner to get it and share it with him. But she feels indistinctly that there is more in the speaker's words than she has quite grasped and that he is one who constrains her to speak truly. Perhaps she had not been accustomed to be spoken to so gently and so seriously, and her better nature is awakening. She cannot utter a direct falsehood under his pure eye. In quoting her words Jesus emphasises "husband." "*Husband* I have none." Under a commendation of her truthfulness, too mild and gracious to be sarcastic, he draws her out. With a firm yet tender hand, he probes her conscience until it is thoroughly aroused.

**18. Five husbands**—All were either divorced or dead. Divorce was permitted for very trivial reasons and carried with it little disgrace. Dr. Van Lennep says, "We have known a man, not forty years of age, who had successively put away and married a dozen wives. Women, too, not far advanced in age, are sometimes met with who have been married to a dozen men in succession." **Not thy husband**—The Greek would warrant our laying emphasis on "thy," but not necessarily. We need not make her case worse than it may have been. Notice that no opprobrious terms are used by him who, when occasion warranted, well knew how to call things by their right names. The repeated commendation of her truthfulness conveys a covert reproof which the woman feels, but accepts without resentment as coming from one whose character warranted him in administering it. She felt that she was respected as a woman, sympathized with as a sufferer from sin, and compassionated for her lot which must have been made miserable enough for her at times, but not despised with pharisaic selfrighteousness. She could give respect and confidence in return.

**II. Spiritual worship. 19. A prophet**—She thus virtually confesses her guilt. Others who called him a prophet, Luke 7: 16; 24: 19; John 6: 14; 7: 40.

**20. Why did the woman raise this question?** "With a woman's dexterity, and uneasy under the exposure, she seeks to turn the conversation into a less unpleasant channel." (Reith.) But would our Saviour have given such glorious truths in answer to a merely evasive remark? We prefer the view of Westcott, "Here is the very natural reply of a soul which finds itself face to face with an interpreter of the divine will." Her conscience has been moved and the question arises "How is pardon to be obtained?" Sin is confessed, how is it to be removed? Where is God to be found? On this mount, or in Jerusalem? **This mountain**—Mt. Gerizim, at the foot of which lies the well (Deut. 11: 29; 27: 12).