

orderly, in good taste and all that could be desired outwardly. In one word the machinery may be all but perfect, and yet the Spirit of God not in the wheels. It is beautiful and desirable to have all this, and without it there cannot be much real prosperity; but after all, it may be but a south land without springs of water. What is true of the congregation may be also true of individuals. By our privileges we may be raised to heaven. We may have had God-fearing parents; we may know much of God's Word; we may be under a faithful ministry; we may have experienced deep convictions of sin; we may have heard God speaking to us in his providence; but the question is, are we spiritually minded? Do we hold communion with God? Is God in Christ Jesus our portion? In our well favoured lot have we "springs of water"? Have we "a blessing"?

II. The duty and privilege of all such as find themselves in possession of a south land without springs of water.

1. To begin with the conduct of Achsa, you will observe that she was resolved to have springs of water which she could call *her own*. She would not depend upon borrowed waters, no matter how kind and accommodating her neighbours were. So should it be with us in reference to religious experiences. We should see to it that they are our own. We should not be content with a borrowed religious experience. It is to be feared that too many are thus satisfied. They have met with the people of God; they have learned their language like the parrot, and can therefore without any fine feeling or delicate sensibility become indiscriminately loquacious in this matter. It never cost them very much digging to get at it and therefore it is cheap. The man of God says: Come and hear, *all ye that fear God*, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. It is a great comfort when we are honestly able to say: "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." In this matter "drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters from thine own well."

Now in dealing with the matter of duty and privilege as it may present itself to others, let us refer to the conduct of Isaac, as given in the passage which we have quoted from Genesis, in opening the old wells which the Philistines closed with earth after the death of Abraham. We admire Isaac in his vigilance to keep the old wells open. Nay more, we admire his holding by the old names by which his father called them. There are sacred associations connected with these old names; and it would seem that God approved of the conduct of Isaac in this and other matters, for we find him soon after, addressing Isaac in the following terms: "I am the God of Abraham thy father; fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and will multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake."

2. Now the duty and privilege that may present itself to some of those who find themselves in possession of a south land without springs of water