

## A Drink, A Fountain, A River

by Dr. Walter L. Wilson

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"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37).

Whenever there is an "if" in the mind, there is an evident lack in the life. One of the thieves on the cross said, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us" (Luke 23:39), and he went to hell. But there was no "if" in what the other thief said, when he cried, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." He did not say, "If thou be the Christ." He left the "if" out and went to Paradise.

Here there is an "if" of blessing: "If any man thirst." Let every thirsty one come unto the Fountain of living water and drink.

As a doctor I have seen a great many kinds of thirst. I once saw a woman thirst for morphine. She had only one foot, and it was badly infected. That woman crawled on her hands and knees to my office door. When I opened the door, there she crouched like a dog on all fours. She looked up at me pitifully, and said, "Doctor" will you let me come in, and will you give me a shot of morphine?" She lost her other leg later. She was a morphine fiend. There was a real thirst, a real demand of the soul and body for morphine.

There are cocaine fiends, and nothing in the world will satisfy them but another dose of cocaine. There are heroin fiends. I could be a rich man today if I would accept that kind of business in Kansas City. I could charge three dollars a shot for stuff that would cost me only twelve cents, and I could have all the business I was able to handle, if I could avoid the law. Men thirst for liquor, and will pay any price to anyone in order to get it.

Twice in my life I have been thirsty; once, when I was lost on the back side of Mount Wilson. (This story is the last one in "Miracles in a Doctor's Life.") We ran out of water at about 10:00 A.M. on a very hot day, and were without any water until about 2:00 P.M., when the guide found us. I was never in such agony for water. We would have done anything to get it. Our lips and tongues were swollen, our throats were parched, and our whole system demanded water, but there was none. When the guide took us down the mountain side, and we got within six hundred feet of the stream, we could hear it dashing over the stones, and we ran to it. There wasn't anything else in the world that attracted

our attention. We wanted water, and falling down we stuck our heads into it, opened our mouths, and let it run in. We didn't care for our clothes or looks. We buried our heads in that water. It is terrible to crave for water and not be able to get it.

The other time was after an operation on my back. The doctor wouldn't let me have any water. The agony of those hours taught me a lesson. (I now let most of my patients have all the water they want.) My, I was thirsty! I begged the nurse and threatened her, but she merely said, "Doctor, you ought to have better sense." I had better sense all right, but I wanted water.

### **A Real Soul Thirst Needed**

Our Lord Jesus said, "If any man thirst." I want to ask you, have you a real thirst in your soul for something from God that you do not have? You will not come and drink from the Lord Jesus, unless there is a craving in your soul for that living water which He alone can give. If you are satisfied with listening to sermons, and then going home with nothing happening, you are not thirsty.

I'll tell you why that "if" is there. The Lord Jesus said "if any man thirst" at the end of the feast week. There, had been seven days of feasting. They could have anything they wanted to drink—just anything they pleased. They had had a whole week, not of fasting, but of feasting, and the Saviour said, at the end of that time, "If you are still thirsty and there is a definite longing in your heart for something you do not have, come to me and drink."

I have had patients crying out for water when they couldn't have it. How they begged and pleaded for it. Soldiers on the battlefield will do anything for water. I went to the battlefield on Lookout Mountain where men had fallen. There were bronze tablets marking the place where they had died. The river was down in the enemy's camp, and the Confederate men were up on that Mountain without water. They were dying of thirst and crying for relief.

Is there any thirst in your heart, or are you just a nice, peaceful individual without any sense of need?

"If any man thirst." You know thirst has a wonderful place in Scripture: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6). Have you a craving for something that will satisfy? Thank God for it, if you have. Ask your heart, "Am I satisfied?" Of course you may be safe from physical ills; you may be orthodox in your belief; you may have something that

pleases you now; and you may be quite contented for the present. Are you? If so, the Lord isn't directing this message to you.

"If any man thirst." If you have a craving for a Spirit-filled life that you do not have; a longing for a knowledge of God that you do not possess; a desire for a close relationship with God that you do not now enjoy; a walk with God that is not formal and cold and stiff, but a real loving fellowship. that will make you feel right at home in His presence, then heed His blessed invitation.

"If any man thirst, let him [that blessed one] come to me, and drink." We pick salvation up as a glass of water, and drink it. We want it; we are anxious for it; we are so thirsty for it; and we appropriate it, and say, "Thank you, Lord, for that lovely cold drink you gave me." Are we like that, or are we just complacent and content? "I am all right; my faith is all right; I believe all right." Is that what you are saying? If that is so, you should ask the Lord to create a thirst in your heart.

David said, "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is" (Ps. 63:1). Again, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God" (Ps. 42:1), There should be a craving for God in the heart, in the life, and in the soul, that will not be satisfied with anything else. Is there a great hunger in your heart for God?

### **Satisfied With His Sweetheart**

When I arrived home one evening, there was a pile of mail on my desk. I went into the kitchen and kissed my sweetheart, put down the satchel, and started opening the letters. Soon I heard a step, and the wife came into the office. Putting her face next to mine, she said, "Lover, when are you going to think more of me than you do of the mail?" I looked up into her face, and said, "Right now." I helped her put the food on the table, and after the meal was over, said to the children, "You children can clean up the table; your mother and I are going to have a good visit." We went into the front room, sat down on the davenport, and had a grand time of fellowship together. I had been paying the bills, buying her clothes, giving her money, and had been a real husband to her, I thought; but that wasn't what she wanted. It wasn't my money, but myself that she was interested in.

There is such a thing as being satisfied with the affairs of God, and missing His lovely Person. We are so busy doing church work that we are missing Him. This service is very lovely—I wish we had much more—but that isn't what He is talking about. "If any man thirst." "If

you want Me, come and drink." Just drink in the Spirit of God. Drink in the Lord Jesus. Go and take all you can get of Him. He wants us to be good customers of His. Get everything He has for you. We want You, Lord Jesus, and we want all we can get of You!

### **The Best Eye Doctor**

I remember a fine boy in Kansas City. His father was the oculist who gave me my first glasses. His son became interested in the study of the eyes, and gave up everything as a boy, in order to become the best eye doctor in Kansas City. He studied in this country and in Germany, so when he came back to Kansas City he could say, "I think I have learned as much as I can about the eye." He spent ten years learning to be a good doctor. He is now at the top of his profession in Kansas City, and is also a fine Christian.

I wish all of us had a thirst for all of Christ that we can get; for all of His Spirit that it is possible for a redeemed sinner to know, love, enjoy and possess; to be wholly sold out to Christ, because we thirst for Him in our souls. Don't be professional religionists! An unsaved man could preach to you in a swallow-tailed coat, a step-ladder collar, and use beautiful English, but you would remain as dead as a door-knob, and so would he.

We want an honest-to-goodness fullness of our blessed Lord, until the soul is saturated, even as the body becomes saturated when we drink water.

Have you ever had such a thirst in your heart? Is there a longing in your soul for Him—a craving, a thirsting for Him? My precious friends, do you have that thirst that nothing can satisfy but Christ?

Notice that "if." I am sorry He had to put it there, as though we might not be thirsty. I wonder how many of us would be concerned about these spiritual matters if we should fall heir to a million dollars in cash. Would we have any thirst after God, or any interest in the Bible class, or the preacher, or the Church? We could then buy anything we wanted: a couple of autos and a man to drive them. We could go to Europe, and do all the things we might wish to do. But would we have any thirst for Him? Would it take away whatever thirst there is, if we had everything our hearts could wish?

### **The Best Christian God Can Produce**

Wouldn't it be wonderful if there was only a great thirsting in our hearts to be the finest Christians God can make? Suppose you start

right now, and turn over every talent and gift to God in order that you may become the finest Christian that He can produce. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me." Have a meeting with Christ, and drink in all He has to give. Is there a thirst? I hope that there is. If there isn't, I hope that it will be aroused soon—a real longing in your heart to be the most spiritual, useful Christian it is possible to be in this world. "If any man thirst."

My one great desire was to become a doctor, no matter what it cost. I had to obtain an \$80.00 microscope, and how I schemed and planned to get it. I finally acquired it through a multitude of "trades," and gathering enough stuff to get the microscope for nothing.

We will pay most any price to obtain what we want in this life. Oh, I urge you to give your lives to the Lord! I mean really, not just in fun. Study your Bible: carry it, read it, love it, develop a thirst for it, feel at home with it; have a desire for it, as I had a desire for my book on heart diseases, obstetrics, and anatomy. I wanted to get it. I still do; I love it. Don't be satisfied to be just a Christian, but be an unusual Christian.

The Lord is looking down on you and me. Does He see no fruit, or little fruit, or does He see a life saturated with Himself, loaded with fruit, lived for His glory every day in the week, and every hour of the day? I saw these words in the front of a dear man's Bible: "I wonder how my life affects God?" Think it over. Just how does your life affect God?

### **Efficient Workmen Are Praised**

I used to take visitors through my factory. We had between three hundred and four hundred employees, and I used to point out the ones who were particularly efficient in their work. There was one girl who could do anything quickly, thoroughly and well. She was always a step ahead of others. Then there was one who could put more binding on awning scallops than three ordinary girls. I was proud of her, and paid her well for it. But we had one boy, poor Henry, who was drunk most of the time, and he was so foul in his language. We had him sit in one corner alone, for we didn't want him to be with the others. We kept him because he could make a splice on a big tent much easier and better than anyone else. There was never much good to say about Henry. He died a drunkard. I was not proud of him.

As our Lord looks down on us is He proud of us, or are we disappointing Him because we are satisfied just to be saved?

"Every morning I read my chapter," said a friend, and I asked her, "What did you get out of it this morning?"

"Well, let me see," she said hesitatingly, "what chapter was it I read?"

It is tragic to read a chapter and get nothing from it. I went to see a baby that was sickly and his parents were much concerned about him. The little thing kept crying continually, but the mother couldn't find out what was wrong. She was starving her little one. She would nurse it, but the milk was not nourishing. "Give him a bottle of milk properly prepared," I suggested, "so he can get something satisfying to eat."

Are you satisfied just to read one chapter? Oh, for a thirst! God grant there shall be a thirst in our hearts that will not be satisfied without a close fellowship with a loving Lord, making our souls loving, happy and peaceful. We should know more today than yesterday; we should love Him more today than yesterday.

"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him." Come and take it! Drink it! "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water"—a fountain of water—"springing up into everlasting life." It will be an artesian well, a fountain springing up into life abundant. Have you that well in you?

### **The Pump Had to Be Primed**

When I was at Gull Lake, Michigan, we moved into a cottage that had a pump in it. We were right beside the Lake, and could have all the water we wanted in the house, so after we were settled, my wife said, "Beloved, I wish you would fill a bucket with water, so I can clean up."

I found the bucket and started working the pump, but all I got out of it was a mournful groan. I went out to find the man who had sent us to this cottage, feeling a little peeved that he should have given us something like that. As I stepped outside a boy of twelve or thirteen came up, and said, "Where are you going, Dr. Wilson? Can I run for you?"

"I'm looking for the owner to see why he gave me a dry pump," I replied.

"Let me fix it for you, will you, please, Dr. Wilson?" he asked eagerly; "I've fixed 'em lots of times."

"All right, come along, son," and I took him back into the cottage. He

picked up a can that I thought was a part of the trash left by the former residents, and dipping it into the Lake, brought it back full of water.

"You see, Dr. Wilson," he said, "if you don't put nothin' in, you don't get nothin' out." He started pouring in the water and working the pump handle. The thing groaned miserably, then gurgled, and all of a sudden the water came gushing out of the spout.

Has the Lord ever poured anything into you that put you in touch with the reservoir, so that you became a fountain?

I pumped out all the water I wanted, and took it out to my wife. As I came back into the kitchen, I heard a sort of forlorn gasp from the pump—it had gone dry again.

Are you like that, stirred up when the preacher comes along, and down and out when he goes away? God help us to have a fountain inside, whether the preacher is around or not—in school, at the store, in the kitchen, in the parlor, and at the office—always a fountain flowing for Christ. That is your birthright privilege. The Lord wants you to be that.

### **A Scripture-Saturated Home and Heart**

I was invited as a guest one day to the home of a precious friend, and saw there something I had never seen before, and have not seen since. When I looked at the piano I saw the text, "Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19). I looked at the bookcase, and saw there, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God" (II Tim. 2:15). On the vase there was the phrase from II Timothy 2:21—"A vessel unto honour." Then I got to really nosing around. On the broom I read, "Doth she not sweep diligently till she find it?" The text on the stove was Revelation 3:15—"I would thou wert cold or hot." She had a scripture text on everything in the house. On the bed, she had "Come unto me...and...rest" (Matt. 11:28). "Dr. Wilson," she said, "I want my mind and heart to be always saturated with my Lord."

"A fountain!" You remember Billy Bray who said to his persecutors, "If you put me in a barrel, I will call 'Hallelujah' through the bung-hole." That is the fountain you should have in your soul.

One day, while I was still engaged in business in Kansas City, a contractor came into my office, and said, "Dr. Wilson, do you know that there is a spring under your desk? It has been there since 1881 when the building was erected. Yesterday, the city engineer and I walked through the large drainage sewer under Delaware Street, and we were examining it to see if everything was all right. When we got

down to Seventh Street, I saw the pipe that I had placed there in 1881 to carry the water from the spring in your building down to that sewer. We couldn't stop the spring when we were erecting this building, and the water was still running when we went through the sewer yesterday, after about fifty years." Nothing could stop it. They had tried and failed.

That is what He wants you to be. It "shall be in him a well of water springing up." What people say about you won't stop it. It will run every day of every year. There is plenty of water, and more where that came from.

So often we find in a church, when Mrs. Jones is asked why she doesn't come anymore, she will reply, "They can run their own whole shebang better without me, and I'm not going back. After me being there twenty-three years, and giving more money than that Mrs. Charles ever did, and then for them to do a thing like that. She hasn't been there half as long as I, or given a third as much money. If they want to run their church like that they can run it." They had not asked her to give the flag to the Sunday school.

The Lord wants us to have in our hearts such a knowledge and love of our Lord and His Word that nothing can stop that living water from springing up in the soul. It "shall be in him a well of water." Do you have that well, or have you just a nice little religion that keeps you nice?

When folks get around you, do they find a dry well, or a lovely stream of eternal water from heaven's reservoir? That is your privilege and right. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Look at John 7:38, and you will see the result of this drinking of heaven's water. Out of him shall flow "rivers of living water." Water for the little children, for the aged ones, for fathers and mothers, for high school children, for sorrowing and for sick ones, for disabled and suffering ones, for sad ones and singing ones. Water flowing, not just a few drops, but "rivers." I am not telling you fables; these are the words of the Lord Jesus. Is there anything flowing out of you? Notice it doesn't say, "Into him shall flow rivers of living water."

### **No Living Water in the Dead Sea**

The Dead Sea has water from the Jordan flowing into it continually, but nothing ever flows out of that Sea, and therefore it is Dead. You



can attend every Bible Conference and every meeting, and be dead because nothing ever flows out. "He that believeth on me . . . out of his belly shall flow." If there is a spring within, there will be a river flowing without. You can't hold it in. It will spring up of itself. You will have to talk to be refreshed. "I will speak, that I may be refreshed" (Job 32:20). "I believed, and therefore have I spoken" (II Corinthians 4:13).

One evening a certain group of young people asked me to speak to them on church work. I called a young lady to the front, and asked her to sit down, and then called up another young lady to tell her how to be saved. It was a heartbreak. Both of them had been in the church for I don't know how long.

The second girl started the conversation, "You're a stranger in our city, aren't you?"

"Yes," her friend replied, "we just moved here from Oklahoma."

"Have you ever gone to church?" she continued.

"No," was the answer.

"Then we should like for you to come to our church. We have a fine young people's group, and we play games and sing."

"That is enough, sister," I interrupted at this point, "you may go back to your seat." There wasn't a drop of life in her. I tried out four of these young folks, but not one of them had a drop of water to give to this poor sinner. They talked about their church, their society, and their good times, but said nothing about the Lord Jesus.

Beloved, let us quit playing, and be out-and-out for Christ. "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." That will bless others and give life more abundantly. "I am come that they might have life,"—do not stop there—"and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

### **The Flow of Living Water**

Did you notice that He said, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water"—not "out of his head"? Why out of his belly? Because the belly is that particular part of the anatomy, way down in the bowels, where the food that you have eaten has been thoroughly mixed with the saliva and gastric juices until it has become chyle, a white substance ready to go into the blood. At that place in the bowel this substance goes through the bowel wall by the process of osmosis, and

goes into the lacteals. They take it up, and in them it turns to blood. It isn't in the stomach, but way down there in the bowels that the food goes out of the bowel into the blood stream to give life.

The living water isn't something you have heard and not felt. It is a living message; it has life in it; it comes into your very soul because you have been in touch with God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. You give that message and your friends are saved. You reach their hearts because something that has life in it is coming from your heart and soul. It isn't just a dead, dry talk about religion; it is a living, vital message, savored with heaven's perfume, and the life and love of God flows from your soul into the hearts of others.

Has anyone ever learned of Christ through you? You never have to force the river to flow, it flows of its own accord, and you can't help it or stop it. Have you that river?

First, have you that thirst? There will never be a fountain within or a river without, unless you have that thirst. "If any man thirst." If there is a lack of thirst, kneel down right now, and say, "Lord, give me a thirst for the things of God." Don't go on in your deadly religion. It is a tragedy not to have a thirst for the living water. He will give it to you, if you ask. After the thirst, the fountain within produces a river without.

Beloved, the Lord Jesus calls you now. "If any man thirst, let him come . . . come unto me." Go to the Lord Jesus personally, and drink and drink all you want, all you can hold, and then there will be an out-flowing river to others.

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