

A LIVING WELL
(Bro. Bakht Singh, Balance of Truth 1965, August/Sept)

The salvation which we have in the Lord Jesus Christ is compared to a well of water. In John 4:14 the Lord spoke of "a well of water springing up into everlasting life" and in Isaiah 58:11 the obedient behaviour is compared to "a spring of water whose waters fail not." That is God's desire and His purpose for His people. Our Lord wants us to become as living wells, wells whose waters fail not, but spring ever fresh and clear.

In Isaiah 12, we see how we can become such a well. Verse 1 describes the sinner deserving the wrath of God. Every sin we commit by thought, word or deed deserves punishment as we read in Rom. 1:18 and 2: verses 5, 8 and 9. Because He is just God must punish every sinner, and that is why His wrath must be revealed against every ungodliness. Now Isaiah the prophet foresaw how the Lord Jesus Christ would take upon Himself that wrath on our behalf. Isaiah prophesied in detail about the birth, suffering, death, resurrection, and again of Christ's coming. In chapter 53, he foretold how He would be wounded for our transgressions. Because of that wounding he can say in Isaiah 12:1 "Thine anger is turned away." It was because the Lord Jesus Christ became flesh, and became our substitute, that God's wrath fell upon Him and on the day that He was crucified on the cross the sun itself became dark. God hid his face from His son. In John 1:29 we read how John the Baptist pointed to Him and cried: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world", now we too can say by faith: "God's anger is turned away from us; we are no longer under condemnation."

If so far you have not got that assurance, you can have it today. You have only to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has borne in your stead all your punishment for every sin, including your sinful thoughts. Again the writer says: "Thou comfortest me," or, Thou givest me true peace.

The great proof that the Lord has taken our punishment is the inward peace He has given us, a peace which the world cannot give. Our Lord says in effect in John 14:27, "I have come; I am suffering, that you may have peace." He said this at that time when the disciples questioned why the Lord should suffer like this and die, even

though He had told them plainly that He would rise again on the third day. He had come to give them peace and if you have not yet found true peace, only believe on Him and do not doubt your salvation, and the peace that will fill your heart will prove that your sins have been forgiven and that the Lord has washed you clean. Turning back to Isaiah 12:2, we find the prophet rejoicing in the fact that the Lord had become his righteousness and salvation. The name **Jehovah** there speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ, the clue by whom God revealed Himself.

Many people think of God in an earthly sense, that He is so far away, but we know that we can have a definite experience of the living God, and that is why He is called Jehovah in many parts of the Old Testament – a God who can be experienced, a God whom we can understand; whom we can hear; and whose presence we can feel; a God who wants to reveal Himself in every true sense. In Jer. 33:6 God promises “abundance of peace and truth.” As we receive a greater revelation of the truth of God, His ways, and His laws we are automatically given abundance of peace. This revelation does not come to us from head-knowledge, or from extraordinary books. Our experience is often like that of so many students who learn by heart so many books during the period of exams, but who have no experience. They have knowledge for the exams for that period, but what they have acquired has not become theirs by personal experience. In this way also many people are limited in their knowledge of God. They can talk about God’s holiness, and His grace, but they have no personal experience. Isaiah is able to say here so clearly: “God is my salvation” because in chapter six, he had had a definite personal experience of the holy God. He saw God’s glory. He saw Him highly exalted and he cried out: “Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips”; and then with coals of fire his iniquity was put away. Now he is able to say so joyfully: “I will not be afraid.” Now he can trust God for every situation.

If we have had definite experience of the living God, then we ought to be free from every fear. Fear is the sin before God; fear and unbelief go together. Fear indicates a lack of faith, but the prophet says boldly: I will trust and not be afraid.” He says in implicit faith: “God Jehovah is my strength and my song. He also is become my salvation,” what a wonderful experience! The living person, the Lord Jesus Christ, who rose again and is living in us, is our strength; so that we can say as in Col. 3:4 “Christ who is our life.” He is our strength! The life of the Lord Jesus

Christ flowing into us, becomes our strength day by day. That is a heavenly song, a song which we can sing everywhere in every tribulation. If earthly trial takes away our song, that shows our strength is not in Christ, for true experience in the Lord Jesus Christ will help us to have a song.

“Praise the Lord, call upon his name”, verse 4, that is the first part of the song. Our hearts should be full of praise in poverty, sickness, hardship, or in any other situation. Call upon the name of the Lord! Proclaim His name! That is the second part of the song. Thus our neighbours and friends will know the worth of the Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot keep His salvation to ourselves; the desire must be to share, and that is why we must proclaim that salvation in our schools, offices and neighbourhood; and the more we declare, the more joy we shall have.

The third part of the song is to “declare His doings among people,” by giving our testimony to those mighty acts of His in our own lives. It is not by giving sermons that we can convert people. We are to tell them how our Lord has done great things for us, how day by day He helps and answers prayer and gives us victory over all the desires of the flesh. It is that personal testimony to God’s faithfulness that brings conviction.

The fourth part of the song is to “make mention that His name is exalted!” Now we can say by experience that He is above all, and His name is above every power, and that is why every knee should bow to Him, according to Phil 2:10.

Fifthly our song is “unto the Lord, for He has done excellent things.” Following your example, other people will begin to sing till God’s power is experienced among all nations, as they hear of His greatness and come to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sixthly, we are commanded to “cry out and shout!” Here we are referred to Zion, the heavenly house which God is building, of which we are living stones. We are not only saved upon this earth, but are saved for a purpose, to build a spiritual house to proclaim God’s fullness. The name **Zion** speaks of that heavenly house for our heavenly King (Heb. 3:6). The tabernacle that Moses built in the wilderness and Solomon’s temple are shadows only. The shadow can never give a true picture of the reality. So the writer says in Heb. 3, that though the tabernacle built by Moses was

so glorious and wonderful; though it was built by God's command, it was only a shadow. It was not the true house of God. It is we who are building the true house for God under the Lordship of Christ. Every believer has a share in it, and it will not be complete till the Lord comes again. Now, however, we can sing that Heavenly song that we, who were once completely ruined by sin, have become living stones, in order to become part of God's glorious house for eternity. As he thinks on these things, the writer says in Isaiah 12:6, "cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion!" shout before the heavenly angels. What a song God has given to you who build that heavenly house, which will contain god's fullness for eternity.

The seventh and last part of the song extols the Lord; "Great is the Holy one of Israel in the midst of thee." Then we shall know God's true greatness; now we can talk about it, but we do not yet know fully how great He is!

In verse 3 the prophet says, "Therefore with joy we shall draw water out of the well of salvation." Surely we all want to know how we can have that happy experience. If we do not have it, it is our fault, because we are careless and negligent and have no faith. So the prophet says: "If you want such a heavenly song on your lips then become a well of the living water of salvation. The woman at the well side in John 4:12 was talking so proudly about the well: "It is a unique well, and a deep well: there is no well like it anywhere else. There is plenty of **water** both for human beings and animals. It is an old well, about 1,300 years old, and eve to this day gives water. Many wells become dry after 100 years, but this well, even though dug 2,000 years ago, yet gives good water." When He offered her living water, she said, "Art Thou greater than our father Jacob? How many cattle have drunk from this well, and even then it was not exhausted. The woman did not know then that our Lord had come there to make in her a better well that well.

The Lord wants us all to become good wells with plenty of water; living water for our neighbours, friends, relations and even our enemies. Some start quarrelling with their neighbours when they come to a well; but others will be happy to come and have plenty of water. Abraham's servant asked Rebekah for water for himself, and she gave water not only to him, but also to all cattle. Now camels drink plenty of water, not only one tumbler, but many buckets of water. Yet Rebekah very gladly said: "I will give water for your camels also." That is how our love should be. In

Christ we have good water and plenty of it for everybody. Let them come any part of the day or night and they can find water there. Has our life become such a well? Can we say truthfully that people have been coming to me day and night from all parts, and are being refreshed. How many there are who give out hatred, jealousy and bitterness wherever they go. They are like a dry well full of darkness, snakes and scorpions. Such have no right to be called a well at all. Others after a few years have no water left; they dry up. What kind of well are you? What does God say about you, when He sees your life?

Now let us see when and where Jacob dug that well. Gen. 33:16-20. It is said that Jacob dug this well about 1039 B.C. In Gen. 31, Jacob was full of fear because he was trying to find happiness in earthly prosperity. He deceived his brother Esau, and took away his birthright, thinking that thereby he would have a double portion of the property of his father. Among the Jews the first-born son was given a double portion of the land and property. Jacob was born one minute after Esau, so he lost that privilege. When Esau realized his loss, he made a vow to kill Jacob, and Jacob ran away and served 20 years in the house of his father-in-law, and became very prosperous, but not happy. Though he had much cattle and everything in plenty, he had no true happiness. His own father-in-law deceived him ten times, so one day he took his family and goods and ran away from the house. But Jacob was afraid how he was going to meet Esau who had wanted to kill him. On his way to he stopped at night near the river Jabbok, and there God met him. Though God appeared to him in a dream 20 years before, Jacob had no real experience of God. He had only seen in a dream, a ladder joining heaven and earth, and in his dream he had no personal experience of Him. He was thinking only of earthly prosperity and to that end he made a vow. Gen 28:20. He was thinking only of food and raiment and safety, so his prayer was: "Lord! Fill my tummy, and give me good raiment, and protect me from danger, then you will be my God." But now he discovered, after 20 years of hardship, that none of these things made him happy. What we cannot learn through meetings or books, we learn through sufferings; and that is why God permits in our lives many many painful trials.

In Genesis 32, Jacob confesses that he was not happy; "I will not let Thee go," he says "except thou bless me" verse 26. According to Ps. 133:3, the real blessing is always everlasting life. God answered Jacob's prayer and gave him a new

name, Israel, and he became a new person and a prince with God. He learned how to lay hold of God, and now he is going still further, after having that experience with God. In Gen. 33:4, he thought Esau would kill him, but he found to his surprise, that the same Esau ran and embraced him; those who were once enemies now became friends and all the fears he once had, vanished away. Esau could even see the living God in Jacob now. God's promise in Isaiah 54:17, was fulfilled, and "whosoever toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye" became true in Jacob's life.

If God has come into you He will take away all fear. First of all the fear of death, and secondly the fear of man, Heb. 13:6, that was the experience Jacob had in Gen 33; and when he came to Shechem first of all he built an altar and called the altar by the name El-el-o-he-Israel. "El" means God, El-el-o-he-Israel, means God, the very God of Israel; the God whom Israel knew personally because God had met him in Gen. 32. God had become real to him, and had begun to work through him; so he built an altar in order to praise and worship God. Now he could understand what God was trying to say to him in chap. 28. There are many of us who have a real experience of the Divine mystery. How many there are who hear about the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ for many years, but they have no real experience of that cross in their lives. After Jacob had that deep experience of the living God he was full of worship, praise and peace. His fears have all gone.

After that Jacob dug a well, and that well of Jacob speaks of his experience. Shechem means peace, and Jacob had found peace. God has become real to him, and you find from that day onwards his whole life was being transformed.

If you want to become a well of living water then you have to have a definite experience of living God. Bible knowledge will not make you such a well, howsoever good it may be. Knowledge will not take away fear. It will not give you peace, but the living and the living God can give such peace. Jacob was a completely broken man in Gen. 32:32, wholly and solely depending upon God. Before that he was depending upon his brains or his mother's brains for his blessing. Even though he schemed and told lies, yet he failed. Now God touched the hollow of the thigh of Jacob. He took away his physical strength and taught him how to trust God completely, and live up to the name which God Himself had given him. That is Jacob dug a well.

Now you find a greater temptation coming to Jacob in Gen. 34:6. Shechem was also the name of the prince of that city. He saw Jacob's daughter Dinah and wanted to marry her. So Shechem's father went to Jacob with a proposal. Hamor said, "The whole land is before you, you can stay among us, and make business and trade with us." What a subtle temptation, and that is how many believers have become drawn away. They were good wells in the beginning, they loved God, they had faith in Him, and were full of good works. However, because they were tempted to marry unbelievers by many arguments that they would be mutually benefited and profited, the result was that they became spiritually barren, but God saved Jacob at that time from that situation (Verse 25). God saved Jacob from becoming a dry well. If you have any such temptation, take warning. You can become prosperous in earthly things or you can get money or worldly gain, but you will get dry spiritually and barren. Through mixed marriages many believers have lost their first love and joy.

In Gen 35:1, God said to Jacob, "Arise, and go up to Bethel". Even though God had blessed Jacob wonderfully in Shechem, he had far greater blessing in store for him. It is God's purpose to give yet greater blessings to every believer in the days to come, Eph. 2:20. God wanted to give Jacob a greater blessing, but he could not because there were some hidden strange gods in the family of Jacob. According to Gen. 31:19, Jacob's wife Rachel, unknown to him, had stolen the images of her father. Jacob did not know about it; but because of it God was unable to bless him fully. In chapter 35, Jacob said to his family, "Put away the strange gods that are among you and be clean, and change your garments:" and all the images were buried under the oak near the well. From that day God began to bless Jacob still more abundantly, and men round about began to realize that he was a man of God.

Unknown to father, mother, husband, wife or children the enemy gains ground; there is some friendship or association unknown to the father or mother or vice versa. When that is put away, there is fullness of blessing. That is the message of Jacob's well.

(Balance of truth September)

Part II

Isaiah 12:3, John 4:14

A well of water springing into everlasting life. (John 7:38, John 10:10). A woman of Samaria transformed; this seems to be the message of the whole of John's gospel, to tell us how our lives can become like a well or a river. Both have the same message; first of all we should have abundant life for ourselves, and the same life becomes like river going in all directions. The prophet in Israel 58:11 was trying to show the great secret of the spring of waters whose waters fail not. That was the secret of that old and deep well called Jacob's well (John 4:11). This well had been dug 1400 years before, yet it had plenty of water, and was used by many people and cattle. Now the Lord was showing the very same lesson to that woman, how her life could be like that well. Till the Lord Jesus Christ met her, her life had been like dry well. Though she was an intelligent woman and had everything yet her life was spiritually barren. But wonderfully her life was transformed when she met Jesus Christ. Her life became like a well with plenty of water, and through her the whole town came to the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now God had been giving the same message through the same well for many centuries, but the people had not understood the message. In Gen 31, we find Jacob full of fear. In chapter 32 God met Jacob and changed him. In chapter 33, when Jacob met Esau, Esau ran and embraced him, and the fears of Jacob vanished because God became real to him. In chapter 33, he builds an altar in Shechem and called the altar El-el-o-he-Israel, which means God who had become the personal God of Israel. Jacob found God by experience, and finding Him, he began to worship the Lord. His heart was full of worship, and it was at that time that he dug the well at Shechem. In John 4:5 we see that the well became the inheritance of Joseph.

Read Gen. 48:20-22, Gen 50:25, Joshua 24:32. The same ground was given to Joseph and the well became his inheritance. Joseph's bones which were in Egypt were brought and buried at the very same spot in Shechem. Together there are these three places of note, Jacob's well, the place where the strange gods were buried, and the tomb of Joseph. The well was a symbol also of Joseph's life. We have seen already how Jacob's life became a living well with plenty of living water. Now

the same spot is given to Joseph by Jacob. Jacob could see that the life of Joseph had become as such a well. It was evident in his wisdom and prosperity, and the blessing of God upon him.

In Gen 37:13-23 we see that Joseph begins his life in that very place Shechem. When Joseph was 17 years old he was cast into a dry pit by his own brethren. By this experience God was preparing him for a high position and triumphant life. We too have to go through such experiences, till we put aside our human glory and wisdom. Even though the brethren of Joseph were hating and trying to kill him, the Lord was preparing him for a high position, wherein he would be the means of blessing unto many nations. To that end he had to go through trials and sufferings and hardships for fourteen years. He was 30 years of age when he was brought before Pharaoh, and for fourteen years he had had to go through those trials. First he was taken away from his father who loved him so much, and his coat of many colors was removed from him. Then he was cast by his brethren into the dry pit. Later on we see in the same chapter that he was sold as a slave – Gen. 37:25-27. By all these means God was molding Joseph to His own end and purpose. If he had to supply bread to the people of that land during the famine he must be impartial which is not easy at the time of famine and scarcity of food. To the people of so many countries at that time he had to supply grain without partiality. God had to take away all the objects of his affections that he might treat everybody alike. In one sense he was dead to the affections of his father and all other relations.

For us also our Lord has said: He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and we have to go through the same experience of dryness and dearth in order to love the Lord more than anybody else. By taking Joseph away from his father and brethren and sending him to a far country the Lord is giving him a new love for all people. He had been much loved by his father being the son of his old age, and it was not possible for him ever to get as much love anywhere else as he had received from his father. So Joseph was taken away as a slave to another country, as the only way by which he could be made a source of blessing to the people. If we really want to do God's perfect will, then we must learn to love God more than anybody else at any cost.

For Joseph's training, while he was lying in the empty pit the Lord was telling him that he had to be emptied of affection, honor and everything he had. He might have had many desires and plans in his heart, but God broke all his plans and took him away from his father and relations. That is how God may have to deal with us also. God purposely breaks all our plans, howsoever strong or precious they may be; one by one they must all be broken. He takes away our friends one by one; those people whom we love so much will be taken away from us. That is the way the Lord takes us through, so that we may be useful to Him and become more fruitful. He will take us wherever He likes, He will take us far away from friends and places to which we are attached. Some people are unable to do God's will because of a certain affection, they are hindered from doing His will because of somebody in their lives; but we have to obey God. What a great reward God gave to Joseph in Gen. 39:2-4, 21-23. On the one hand was that great sacrifice while he was young, and on the other hand the offer of a great reward. The Lord was with him, and because of Joseph others were blessed by God. Those in the master's house looked upon Joseph with great respect; the same thing will happen to us also if we are in God's will. He may take us to far off places among enemies and strangers, and people whom we do not know, yet we will become the means of blessing to other people. God brought Joseph to Egypt that he might bring blessing to Jacob and many other people. Even though Joseph was tempted, in temptation also the Lord helped him and gave him victory, and he was lifted up. Ps. 105:16-22. God had planned to give Joseph such great responsibility over corn and bread to be supplied to all the nations who were in the great famine, for which purpose he had to be extremely wise. Nowadays we see a shortage of food in India, and the Government is puzzled, how, in spite of so many schemes and plans there is corruption everywhere and very bad rice is given to the people. At that time there was great famine which brought many nations around Egypt. Through one man, Joseph, the Lord had to work and Joseph had to go through fourteen years of painful experiences, in order to train him for that position. Psalm 105:19.

While Joseph was being falsely accused he was meditating upon the word of God and the Lord took him away from home because of jealousy and hatred of his brethren, who wanted to harm him. Those days of meditation were of great help to him, and he was given divine wisdom. As we meditate upon the word of God through sufferings and trials, we get wisdom. In our lives we have to have these experiences.

Whatever God was showing to Joseph at that time became his experience and he became a wise man. We read further in verse 22, that he had to teach wisdom to the high officials. Even though the officials were highly trained in good universities for their jobs, yet none of them were efficient at the time of famine. So at the command of Pharaoh all these officials came to the feet of Joseph. He trained them and taught them to work with him in the distribution of the corn. If he found any of the officials corrupt he had to put them in jail, and it was a very bad task. There is, alas! Corruption among government officials, but they have friends in high circles, and that is how they escape, and such corruption cannot be removed. Pharaoh told Joseph, if you find in my servants any corruption you can bind them and put them into jail. He knew that Joseph would never take bribes. Because Joseph had learned through many painful situations, he was able to capture the high officials. Through Joseph's sufferings and testing his life became like a well, and he supplied food to all people. Through one man so many received life.

There is a great scarcity of the word of God everywhere, as it is written in Amos. 8:11-14. The prophesy of the end days, which is being fulfilled before our very eyes. There is famine for the word of God. Even though the word of God is given everywhere in schools, colleges, and other places, they do not give the pure word of God; they give man's word instead. They do not give the word of life, nor do they give the pure gospel. There are so many that go about with wrong motives, because they want money, honour or a job. They use so many schemes and devices as a means of getting money, from America. Do not believe all those who go about with tracts and Bibles as though they are doing God's work, for they do it with so many wrong motives in their hearts. There are few, however, who have a real message from God and help the people. If you really want to be used by God like a well of water, then you will have to go through many sufferings like Joseph, so as to be able to give the word of God in power and in great authority.

Joseph had a reason in telling his brethren: "take my bones with you." Only Mohammedans and Roman Catholics worship tombs, and it is a sin before God. Joseph told his brethren to take his bones with them, because he did not want to identify himself with Egyptians. Though he was a great man in Egypt, he said, "I am not an Egyptian." He remained a Hebrew. Many in these days who go to America want to settle there. Before they leave India they give many promises, saying that

they will return after 2, 3, or 5 years, but they go on extending their periods, and finally have no desire to return to India. They say that India is a very poor country; they forget their friends, relations and everything. Joseph, however, said "I am not an Egyptian; I belong to the Hebrews." Even though the brothers hated him, and sold him as a slave, still he identified himself with them. The reason was he brought everything in his life to the Lord. Gen 50:19-21, if any body had reason to have a desire to take revenge, it was Joseph. If he wanted to he could have taken revenge when his brethren came to buy corn. But God had taken away from his heart every thought of hatred, bitterness and jealousy, because he saw God's hand on his behalf, making him like a well of water. He wanted to share the inheritance given by the God of Abraham, the well that had become his well, and like which his life, too had become a blessing. Through hardships, poverty and sufferings he had become like such a well. He had learned how to love his enemies and how to keep his heart free from every bitterness and jealousy. When our own brethren, children, relations, and friends whom we love say anything about us, it is very hard to forgive them. We do not mind when enemies work against us, but when friends, or near relations turn against us, we cannot forgive or forget. That is why Joseph called his son Manasseh, which means to forget, because God had enabled him to forget all his past sufferings and trails and whatever had been done to him. Joseph called his second son Ephraim, which means **fruitful**, to show how God was making him fruitful by his afflictions, and his life a blessing to all people. Through his life God was showing that Jacob's well had become Joseph's well; a well of blessing to all nations and people, a well full of life, peace, joy, and happiness, and a well free from all worldly glory.

Thirdly, the same well became Joshua's well (Joshua 24:1). In these verses we find Joshua calling his people together at Shechem (Deut 11:26-30). These two hills Gerizim and Ebal are very near Shechem and not far from Jacob's well. It was God's command that they were to enter Canaan after Jordan. After they had conquered Jericho they came to Gerizim and from that mount Joshua pronounced all the blessings that would be theirs if they obeyed God (Deut. 28:1-24). Now 40 years later in his old age Joshua gathered the people in the very same spot, because what God had promised had to be fulfilled. As long as they were under Joshua's leadership the Lord worked with them, and they saw the blessing of God being given to them individually and as a nation, as they obeyed God. In old age after forty years of serving the Lord He again tells Joshua to gather the people at Shechem, Josh. 24:2-

13. Here he rehearses what God has done for the past forty years, and he sums up his own attitude in verses 13-15. "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord." These words were spoken by Joshua at the well of Jacob, when he rehearse what God has done for so many years, keeping His promises and covenants. How many blessings we receive by obeying God and by serving Him whole heartedly. We become like a well of living water by obedience, by wholehearted service and by refusing to be deceived by others. Joshua says: "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord" verse 15, and he kept on claiming God's promises and obeying His commands. Those people did not conquer by the power of weapons, or in their own strength, but only as they obeyed God the Lord, who helped them to conquer the land.

We too can receive such blessings if we serve Him wholeheartedly and our lives will thus become more fruitful. Though the people promised on that day to obey the Lord, yet afterwards they failed and in Judges we see how they became like a very dry well. In verses 16 and 19 they promised to serve the Lord boldly, but Joshua said: "I don't believe you, I know you will not serve Him. Today you are saying you will serve the Lord, but the time is coming when you will depart from the Lord," and in Judges, we see how they left God. In Joshua they were like a well full of water, full of victory and blessing. In Judges they were full of defeat because they disobeyed God.

If you want to be a well of living water you must obey God wholeheartedly, and whatever happens you must not be deceived by the world. Then and then only can your life be like Jacob's well, Joseph's well, Joshua's well, the well by which the Lord Jesus Christ sat and promised living water to those who believe in Him.