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But it is even more the *peace of harmony of will, mind and heart*. This has already been touched upon, but it is worth emphasising. The great apostle gives the true secret of this in his letter to the Colossians chapter 3; specially verses 5 to 17, addressed to the church; specially in the *local aspect*; and then in the home and family life in verses 18 to 25. The key-verse of the whole is verse 15, 'Let the *peace of Christ rule*, or, as margin and better, *arbitrate*, i.e., '*have the final decision*'. But make sure of verses 12 and 13 also!

Then there is the *peace of trustful restfulness*, based upon the certitude of the Lord's ability to fulfil every promise—yes, *every promise*! We may not follow all His doings, or understand all His providences, but the heart which has tasted of His peace is kept in perfect peace. So shall we learn, according to the degree of our full heart-response, to live the life of greatest influence in the fellowship of His people—in confidence, compassion and composure of mind.

AN EXPOSITORY STUDY OF ST JOHN'S GOSPEL

PROF. F. F. BRUCE, M.A.

II. Jesus Reveals Himself to the World (John 1: 19—12: 50)

(b) MINISTRY OF JESUS IN GALILEE, JERUSALEM AND SAMARIA

(John 2: 1—4: 42)

V. *Jesus and the Samaritans (4: 1-42)*

Ch. 4, v. 1—*When therefore the Lord knew how that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John*—The 'questioning' about purification which sprang from the concurrent baptismal ministries of John and Jesus (Ch. 3:25) had wider implications than appear on the surface. The Pharisees (cf. Ch. 1:24) viewed both John and Jesus with critical reserve, and if the increasing number of those who came to receive Jesus' baptism produced feelings of resentment in the hearts of John's disciples, and a tendency to estrangement between them and Jesus'

disciples, the situation might be exploited by the Pharisees to the disadvantage of John and Jesus alike. We wish we knew more of the details of the situation, thus incidentally referred to by the Evangelist. This at least is certain, that John and Jesus were not the only leaders of baptismal movements in the Jordan valley around this time. The recent access of information about the quasi-Essene community of Qumran (to whom the Dead Sea Scrolls belonged) has helped to fill in part of this background for us. But the once-for-all initiatory baptism administered by John, and then by Jesus, had a significance quite distinct from the repeated purificatory baptisms of those sectaries.

v. 2—*Although Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples,*— This parenthesis is felt by some readers to ruin the sentence and is ascribed to the hand of a redactor. Be that as it may, it does not amount to a contradiction of the previous verse or of the report in Ch. 3:26. He who acts through a duly appointed agent is the real author of the act performed. Therefore, in the new believing community constituted on the day of Pentecost, baptism was administered 'in the name of Jesus Christ' (Acts 2:38; cf. 10:48); the apostles in this as in other respects were acting as their ascended Master's agents, and not by their own authority. There are, indeed, those who believe that the reference in the present passage is to the post-Pentecostal baptism, antedated to the earthly life of Jesus, and that this explains the saving parenthesis (v. 2), which was on this hypothesis inserted by someone with a historical conscience. But we are dealing with a real situation belonging to that earlier Judæan ministry of Jesus which preceded His Galilean ministry. The imprisonment of John marked an epoch in our Lord's public activity, but this is the only Gospel which throws light on His work in the period preceding John's imprisonment. During that period, we are here assured, Jesus carried on a baptismal ministry which bore some relation to John's, although (unlike John) Jesus did not baptize with His own hands but by the hands of His disciples.

v. 3—*He left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee*—If there was any likelihood of an attempt to drive a wedge between

His work and John's, Jesus would forestall it. His regard for John was such that He could not tolerate even the possibility or the appearance of a cleavage, so He withdrew from Judaea and returned to His northern home in Galilee.

v. 4—*And he must needs go through Samaria*—Samaria lay between Judaea and Galilee, and must be traversed by those who wished to go from the one region to the other, unless they were prepared to make the long detour through Transjordan. The idea that Jesus 'must needs go through Samaria' because He was resolved to keep an appointment at Sychar's well reads more into the words of this verse than they will bear.

v. 5—*So He cometh to a city of Samaria, called Sychar*—Sychar is usually identified with the modern village of Askar, which lies on the slope of Ebal, rather more than a mile from Nablus (Shechem), on the main north and south road leading through Central Samaria. It has commonly been confused with Shechem, the more so as the latter word is spelt Sychem in the N.T. (cf. Acts 7:16, A.V.).

Near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph—This reference is to Gen. 48:22, where the dying Jacob says to Joseph: 'Moreover, I have given to thee one portion (lit. 'shoulder' Heb. *shechem*) above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword, and with my bow.' (The occasion of this military conquest is not detailed in the O.T.; it can hardly be identical with the action of Gen. 34: 25 ff.). Many years later, when the Israelites occupied Central Canaan, they buried Joseph's bones, which they had carried from Egypt, 'in Shechem, in the parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of money; and they became the inheritance of the children of Joseph' (Josh. 24:32; cf. Gen. 33:19). The place therefore had ancient and sacred associations. Joseph's tomb is still pointed out in the neighbourhood.

v. 6—*And Jacob's well was there*.—Here the word rendered 'well' is literally 'spring' or 'fountain' (Gk. *pegé*); in verses 11 and 12 the word used is *phrear* ('well' or 'cistern'). Both words are

appropriate; 'for the well is fed by an underground stream, which rarely gives out' (E.F.F. Bishop). The identity of the well has been recognized from early Christian centuries. A church stood there in Jerome's time early in the 5th century; the Crusaders built another 700 years later. Both these were destroyed by Muslims. An unfinished Orthodox church, begun early in the present century, now marks the site. The well-head is no longer exposed to the sun and open air, as it was in Jesus' time, but lies in the shadow of a crypt.

Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus by the well—Our Evangelist, who insists so unambiguously on the divine Sonship of our Lord, nonetheless emphasizes those traits which attest His genuine humanity; He is no impassible visitant from another sphere, untouched by ordinary infirmities. This passage has inspired one of the immortal lines of the *Dies Irae*: 'Seeking me Thou sat'st there weary' (*Quaerens me, sedisti lassus*). For 'thus' the margin of R.V. suggests the alternative rendering 'as he was' (which aptly conveys the sense here); the word for 'well' is *pegé* as in the first part of the verse.

It was about the sixth hour—That is to say, it was about midday, the hours being reckoned, as usual, from sunrise. This was a very natural time of day for a traveller to sit down and rest, but a most surprising time for a woman to come and draw water.

v. 7—*There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water*—Women came to draw water normally at a cooler time of day, preferably towards evening; and the women of the village would normally come together. It looks as if this woman was deliberately avoiding the society of her neighbours by coming at noonday. This may be the reason, too, for her coming to Jacob's well, over half a mile from Sychar, when her own village abounded with springs. Or was some special virtue thought to inhere in water from Jacob's well?

Jesus saith unto her, give me to drink—A natural request, one would think, from a tired and thirsty traveller to a woman who was drawing water; but it surprised her. Yet a greater surprise

awaited her in the course of the conversation to which this simple request gave rise.

v. 8—*For His disciples were gone away into the city to buy food*—They had apparently, to some small degree at least, been influenced by their Master's liberal spirit, for strictly observant Jews would have thought themselves defiled if they ate food received from Samaritans. However, certain dry kinds of food were regarded as being not so susceptible of defilement as most. The city is presumably Sychar, as in v. 5. The implication of the conjunction 'for' is that the disciples would have drawn water for Him, had they been with Him.

v. 9—*The Samaritan woman therefore saith unto Him, how is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a Samaritan woman?*—The woman saw an opportunity for a little theological argument. There are some people whose interest in religion is confined to the differences between religious people. But the religious differences between Jews and Samaritans were real and serious. The cleavage between Samaria and Judah in the days of the Hebrew monarchies might have been healed after the return from exile in the 6th century B.C., but the returning Jewish exiles rejected an offer of co-operation from the Samaritans, suspecting the purity both of their racial derivation and of their religious practice. The hostility which resulted was made sharper by the erection of a rival Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim about 400 B.C., and the destruction of this temple by the Jewish king John Hyrcanus about 125 B.C., did nothing to improve relations. Quite apart from general feelings of animosity, many a Jew would not dream of asking a favour from a Samaritan for fear of incurring ritual defilement. This scruple would be even more prohibitive in the case of a Samaritan woman, for there were many Jews at this time who held the view which acquired the status of religious law a generation later, that all Samaritan women must be assumed to be ceremonially unclean.

(*For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.*)—The first hand in Codex Sinaiticus and several Western authorities omit this clause, but their authority cannot outweigh the evidence for its retention.

The current translation implies that the Evangelist was informing his Gentile readers in Asia Minor and elsewhere of the unfriendly relations existing between Jews and Samaritans. The verb rendered 'to have dealings with', however, is *synchraomai*, literally 'to use along with'; and Professor David Daube has argued cogently that the words mean: 'For Jews do not use (vessels) along with Samaritans.' If the woman complied with Jesus' request for a drink, He would have had to drink the water from her vessel. This would have involved a risk of ceremonial pollution for Him even if the owner had been a Samaritan man, but the fact that the owner was a Samaritan woman made that risk a certainty, from the strict Pharisaic viewpoint. No wonder that His request astonished her; He had shown His goodwill towards her by asking a favour—and such a favour!

v. 10—*Jesus answered and said unto her, if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water*—Jesus does not pursue the argument which she had so provocatively introduced, but lifts the topic of conversation to a higher plane. Had she known who was sitting at the well-head, and what He was able to bestow, she would not have waited for Him to ask a favour of her, but would have got her request in first, and received 'living water'. Water, in a land subject to drought, is appreciated as a true gift of God, but Jesus now speaks of a greater gift of God than the purest of earthly springs. In the miracle at Cana (Ch. 2:6 ff.) and in the conversation with Nicodemus (Ch. 3:5) water has already figured in a spiritual sense; here the water in Jacob's well, symbolizing that old order inherited by Samaritans and Jews alike, is contrasted with the new order, the gift of the Spirit, life eternal. The expression 'living water' was in current use to denote running water as distinct from the water collected in a cistern. In this sense it is used metaphorically in the O.T., as in Jer. 2:13, where the God of Israel compares Himself to 'the fountain of living waters' which His people have forsaken in favour of cisterns hewn out by themselves. At best the water in these cisterns would be stagnant; as it was, they were 'broken cisterns, that can hold no water.' Running water aptly illustrated the fresh and perennial supply of God's grace.

v. 11—*The woman saith unto Him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?*—But the woman thought only of ‘running water’ such as that of the spring which feeds Jacob’s well. The stranger obviously had no bucket (Gk. *antlema*) or anything to draw water with from the depths of the well. Even today the well is said to be about 100 feet deep, and it must have been deeper then. Canon H. B. Tristram, a Palestinian explorer of last century (author of a standard work on *The Natural History of the Bible*), is said to have sat thus by the well and read the fourth chapter of John. At that time the well was not built over; as he read he grew drowsy in the hot sun, and his Bible fell from his hands into the depths of the well. It was not recovered until several years later, during an unusually dry winter. Here the word for ‘well’ is *phrear* (‘cistern’). The woman’s failure to comprehend Jesus’ words about living water is comparable to Nicodemus’s failure to comprehend His words about the new birth (Ch. 3:4).

v. 12—*Art thou greater than our Father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof Himself, and His sons, and His cattle?*—Anyone who could make such a promise as Jesus did, and keep it, must indeed be greater than Jacob, who with much trouble had dug this well (*phrear*) for his family and his descendants. There is no reference to the digging of this well in the O.T. narrative of Jacob; it probably belongs to the context of Gen. 33:18-20. The question indeed arises why it was necessary to dig a well at all in a neighbourhood so well provided with springs. Probably strained relations with the people who lived in the vicinity made it advisable for him to secure a separate water supply; we may compare his father Isaac’s trouble in this matter with the tribes of the Negeb (Gen. 26:15-33). The Evangelist no doubt discerns a deeper significance in the woman’s words: the descendants of Jacob whether Samaritans or Jews, are still content with inferior spiritual refreshment to that which Jesus bestows.

(To be Continued)