

July 2

"And from thence they went to Beer: that is the well whereof the LORD spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water. Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it: The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves. And from the wilderness they went to Mattanah: And from Mattanah to Nahaliel: and from Nahaliel to Bamoth:" — Numbers 21:16-19

Beer was a pleasing station to the Jews, and it is a very instructive one to us. They here came into a dry place, but they neither rebelled nor murmured against God, or his servant Moses.

See, first, how easily the Lord can supply the wants of his people. "Gather the people together, and I will give them water." Not only is every good gift and every perfect gift from above, but all our temporal comforts come from the hand of God. We are not to look for miracles, but we may be assured that his word can be accomplished without them: "For sooner all nature shall change, than one of God's promises fail." And he has said, "Thy bread shall be given thee; and thy water shall be sure." And what he has promised, he is able also to perform. Let us not limit the Holy One of Israel. Nothing is too hard for him. He can turn the shadow of death into the morning. Jehovah-jireh! The Lord will provide. "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water."

Secondly, see how want endears our blessings. "Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it" We feel unthankful for this precious fluid, because it is so common, and we have never been deprived of it. Had we gone several days in a wilderness without it, how should we have exulted and praised God at the sight of a refreshing supply. It is thus, by their removal or suspension, we are taught the worth of our comforts. How is liberty prized and enjoyed after bondage; and health after sickness; and spring after winter; and morning after night. We become indifferent to the means of grace. By a change of residence, or by accident, or disease, we are deprived of the privileges of the sanctuary. Then we remember these things, and pour out our souls in us, for we had gone with the multitude; we went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and gladness, with a multitude that kept holy day. Oh, says David, when he was faint, Oh that one would give me to drink of the water of the well that is by the gate of Bethlehem! And were we equally athirst, spiritually, how should we long for the well of salvation, and say, "Thou, of life the fountain art; Freely let me take of Thee: Spring thou up within my heart. Rise to all eternity!"

Thirdly, his agency does not exclude or supersede our instrumentality. "The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves." God filled it, but they digged it. This was their part. This they could do; and why should God have exempted them from it? He gives the increase, but Paul must plant and Apollos water. He furnishes the wind, but we are to spread the sails. He gives, but we gather. Prayer and diligence, dependence and activity, harmonize in the Scripture, and are only inconsistent in the crudeness of ignorant and foolish men. Paul makes divine influence, not an excuse for the neglect of means, but a motive and encouragement to the use of them" "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Fourthly, however pleasing any of our present stations are, we must, if we are the Israel of God, leave them. "And from the Wilderness they went to Mattanah: and from Mattanah to Nahaliel: and from Nahaliel to Bamoth." The part they left is called, indeed, the Wilderness; and so it was; but it was good for them to be there. There they had witnessed proofs of the power and goodness of God, and there they had enjoyed a tune of refreshing from his presence. But they had compassed the place long enough, and, decamping from this loved scene, had to journey on in the Desert. Here, also, Christians have their indulgences. But these are designed, not to induce them to tarry, but to encourage them to advance. In the midst of their enjoyments a voice cries, "Arise ye, and depart hence; for this is not your rest."

These people would have been the more willing to move, because they knew they were moving towards Canaan, a better country, the end and aim of their journey, and because they were under the direction of God, as their guide, and who would never leave them nor forsake them. So it should be with us.

Morning Exercises For Everyday In The Year
By Rev. William Jay