"These are as wells without water" 2 Peter 2:17
"These people are waterless fountains" Moffatt

"WELLS WITHOUT WATER"

Picturesque phrase which preacher durst not pass on peril of life. Leaps out at one. Simply demands recognition.

Text, like person cannot be evaluated apart from environment and context. Early church had acquired confidence in herself. Making impact on society was an intrusion. In world but not of world. In judgement upon society. However, there were some in church unfaithful; compromising; pagan. Of these Peter speaks in scathing terms. "Wells without water"; "Waterless fountains".

Tragic sight to see well where water once ran clear and sweet, now choked and dry. More tragic when a person capable of divine generosities becomes a waterless fountain. Basic assumption this morning: It is God's purpose for individual to open his inner life to Him - become instruments, wells, fountains, of God's beauty, truth, goodness - His water of Life. Peter is speaking of those who are living in practical denial of life's spiritual element and purpose - those in whom the waters have ceased to flow. "Wells without water" - "Waterless fountains".

NEGLECTED WELLS

Wells run dry for three main reasons. First of all because of sheer neglect. Any well by roadside will dry up in time if left alone. Dust from roadside gathers on surface; sinks; eventually forms a crust over tiny openings which communicate with depths beneath. Choking process goes on until water no longer can force through. That well is now a "well without water".

The well that symbolizes the soul of man is a well by the wayside. Most of us live there - by the dusty roadside from which there is no retreat nor escape. An unused well by the wayside soon loses its stream. An unused soul stands in
same danger. The well to remain sweet and clear must have an outlet. So with us - the dust of accumulated carelessness can soon seal the delicate openings through which holy things rise from depths within us.

**Must give more time to spiritual things and exercises.** Greater emphasis on public worship. "They that wait upon the Lord". "**SHOES MENDED WHILE YOU WAIT**". Must also give more time to private worship and devotion. All saints and great spiritual people have given much time to prayer and meditation. a'Kempis, Brother Lawrence, Stanley Jones. Douglas Steere tells of Pastor Oberlin - one solid hour of devotion each morning.

This would keep spiritual apertures open. Our lives would issue in refreshment and blessing to others. Would be stronger persons. No soul can grow on mere husks of time. **Like Trombley's Store. Butter and onions; clothespins and sugar uneasy neighbors.** Lives overcrowded. Need to simplify. Sacrifice the good for the best. We are as wells without water - waterless fountains because of neglect and carelessness.

**IRRESPONSIBLE PASSERS-BY**

Second place a well runs dry because of irresponsible actions of passers-by. Instead of being a sweet and serviceable thing, the well has become a ruin, and an ugly eyesore, because of the stones thrown in by careless and irresponsible passers-by. Always people ready to throw stones.

Likewise, human souls are hurt, dried up by irresponsible throwing of stones. Generous impulses stifled by our contempt. We roll stone of malice against door of person's life. Create an atmosphere that chokes and puts to death. Unconsciously we hurt other people.

Saint Augustine had motto on wall of dining room - "**WHO SPEAKS EVIL WORD OF AN ABSENT MAN OR WOMAN, IS NOT WELCOME AT THIS TABLE**". Dr. Horton, out of a log ministry in large church said, "I would not allow a known talebearer to come to the
Lord's Table". Dr. Alexander Whyte - "Gossip should be subjected to three tests: Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind?" Christ said - "Whosoever shall trip up one of these my little ones, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged around his neck ... cast into sea".

Wells have become dried up because of the unkindness of others; because of stones that have been thrown. But there is also an atmosphere of kindness and gentleness which releases and makes flow streams of blessing and influence. We can help people to believe in themselves; we can have faith in people and stimulate their faith. We can release streams of blessing.

**Ministry of Encouragement. Teachers in the Home. Teachers (Joy L ter).**

**SHIFTING FOUNDATIONS**

Yet another reason for wells without water - for waterless fountains. Can go dry because of some change in foundation - through shifting of strata far below surface. Original springs now dry and useless. Very foundations have been changed.

And that can happen to a person. Something happens to a person. Becomes hard; cynical and bitter. Has gone through some experience that has shifted very basis of life and faith. Foundations have been disturbed. May have been deceived by someone he trusted. May have discovered something awful in one's self or in other person. "Will never trust anyone again".

**Sickness. Suffering of loved one. Death of loved one.** "Why should these things be?" "I can never trust God again!" The well ceases to flow because of that shock and dislocation. Let us not minimise that experience. Life can do that - life has its dislocations. Just when we think ourselves secure. Very foundations shaken.

Yet, amidst all these dislocations and the shifting of foundations, amidst all the upheaval and catastrophe, there are people who remain undisturbed in their faith. Triumphant and victorious. Their rest is in God. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His". "Perseverance of the
"AND ISAAC DIGGED AGAIN THE WELLS OF WATER WHICH THEY HAD DIGGED IN THE DAYS OF ABRAHAM HIS FATHER."

GENESIS 26:18

THE RE-DIGGING OF WELLS

WERE IT NOT FOR FACT ISAAC WAS NECESSARY LINK BETWEEN ABRAM AND JACOB HISTORY WOULD IGNORE HIM. OCCUPIES A DIFFICULT POSITION BETWEEN AN ILLUSTRIOUS FATHER AND A FAMOUS SON. BY COMPARISON ISAAC WAS A COLORLESS NONENTITY. YET WE ARE THANKFUL THAT HE PROVIDES FOR US A STARTING POINT FOR WHAT HAS THE POSSIBILITIES OF A DECENT SERMON. THOUGH ISAAC NEVER DID ANYTHING EITHER VERY ORIGINAL OR STARTLING, YET HE KNEW THE VALUE OF A GOOD WELL. HIS FATHER HAD BEEN A DIGGER OF WELLS AND ALSO A PLANTER OF TREES. AS A LEADER HE HAD SOUGHT TO PLACE HIS PEOPLE IN TOUCH WITH THE SPRINGS. THE STORY FROM WHICH TEXT TAKEN, TELLS HOW ISAAC, NOW A RICH MAN, HAD TURNED TO THE HOME OF HIS BOYHOOD AND SOUGHT FOR THE WELLS HIS FATHER HAD DUG LONG BEFORE. HE FOUND THEM; BUT THEY WERE USELESS. SOME WERE CHOKE BY DESERT SAND; SOME HAD BEEN FILLED IN BY THE MALICIOUS BEDOUIN; OTHERS WERE CHOKE BY THE RUBBISH OF THE AGES. "SO HE DIGGED AGAIN......"

WE LIVE TODAY IN A PERIOD OF RELIGIOUS DROUGHT. THE ANCIENT WELLS OF FAITH AND CUSTOM, WELLS FROM WHICH OUR FATHERS DREW COMFORT AND STRENGTH, WELLS THEY DUG WITH TEARS AND TOIL, ARE FOR THE MOST PART RENDERED USELESS - THEY ARE CHOKE. MEANWHILE MEN DIE OF THIRST. THERE ARE THREE THINGS ONE CAN DO WITH A CHOKE WELL - THREE POLICIES ONE MAY ADOPT. FIRST PLACE, ONE CAN WORSHIP THE WELL. "BELONGED TO FATHER AND ONCE MET THE NEED. NO USE NOW. WE'LL FENCE IT IN. KEEP IT LOOKING DECENT. PLACE A BRASS PLATE ON IT AND MAKE AN ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO THE OLD HOMESTEAD". SO MEN VENERATE THE ANCIENT FORMS. THEY INSIST THAT WE FORCE OUR CENTURY INTO THE THOUGHT FORMS AND EXPRESSIONS OF THE 16TH CENTURY. INSTEAD OF BEING PRIMARILY CONCERNED ABOUT THE WATER, THEY BECOME WORSHIPPERS OF THE WELL. SINCERE OF COURSE BUT WHEN THEY APPORTHEMSELVES "CUSTODIANS OF THE ANCIENT WELLS" AND APPOINT THEMSELVES INTO AN "ECCLESIASTICAL WATER BOARD" THEN TROUBLE ARISES. THE SECOND POLICY ONE CAN ADOPT IS TO DISCARD THE WELL ALTOGETHER. PRETEND THAT WE HAVE OUTGROWN THIRST AND HAVE NO FURTHER USE FOR RELIGION. THIS POLICY IS MORE FUTILE THAN THE FIRST. THE PERSON WHO VENERATES AND WORSHIPS THE PAST MAY
"Eternity"
"The Fall of Man"
"The End of Christ's Coming"
"Divine Providence"
"Imperfection of Human Knowledge"
"Good Angels" "Bad Angels"
"Hell" "Dissipation"
"Danger of Riches" "Dress"
"Education of Children"
"Obedience to Parents"
"Obedience to Pastors"
"What is Man?"
"Attending Church" "Conscience"
"Causes of Inefficacy of Christianity"
"Deceitfulness of Human Heart"
"Salvation by Faith"
"Awake Thou That Sleepest"
"Spirit of Bondage and Adoption"
"Witness of the Spirit"
"The Great Assize"
"Circumcision of the Heart"
"Marks of the New Birth"
"Sermon of the Mount" (13)
"Nature of Enthusiasm"
"A Caution Against Bigotry"
"Christian Perfection"
"Wandering Thoughts"
"Original Sin"
"Satan's Devices"
"The Use of Money"
"National Sins and Miseries"
"The Cause and Cure of Earthquakes"
SQUEEZE A LITTLE SATISFACTION OUT OF THE CHOKED WELL; BUT THE PERSON WHO TOTALLY IGNORES AND SCORNS THE PAST GETS NOTHING. MUCH OF THE LIBERALISM AND MODERNISM OF TODAY IS ARID; IT FAILS TO SATISFY BOTH MIND AND SPIRIT. IT MAY BE JAUNTY NEVERTHELESS IT DOES NOT MEET THE NEED. WE CANNOT DISMISS THE PAST WITH A SNIER, NOR CAN WE GET RID OF RELIGION WITH A BRIGGER. ALL THE FEVERISH UNREST OF LIFE TODAY; ITS CRAVING FOR AUTHORITY AS EVIDENCED BY THE DICTATORSHIPS, WITNESSES TO THE ETERNAL NEED WITHIN US. WE ARE DISTURBED BY YEARNINGS AFTER TRUTH, BEAUTY, LOVE, WE MUST NOT WORSHIP THE WELLS, WE CANNOT DISCARD THE ANCIENT WELLS OF OUR FATHERS, THE ONLY THING LEFT FOR US TO DO IS TO RE-DIG THEM AND THUS GET DOWN TO THE ETERNAL SPRINGS ONCE MORE. AND SEEMS TO ME THAT IS OUR TASK TODAY IN THIS TIME OF SPIRITUAL DROUGHT. UNLESS CAREFULLY WATCHED WELL GET CHOKED. FORMS THAT ONCE CARRIED MEANING DEGENERATE INTO EMPTY CEREMONIALISM. SYMBOLS THAT ONCE EXPRESSED REALITY, DWINDLE INTO SUPERSTITIOUS MASCOTS AND CHARMS. CREEDS THAT ONCE WERE THE EXPRESSION OF MEN'S HEARTS CAN BECOME CHAINS TO MEN'S MINDS. PHRASES AND HYMNS THAT ONCE WERE THE WATCHWORDS OF A LIVING FAITH, BECOME MERE WATCHWORDS OF A SECT OR CLIQUE. NO AMOUNT OF THEOLOGICAL INCANTATION CAN GUARANTEE ETHICAL REALITY TO AN OUTWORN CREED. PREACHERS OF FIFTY YEARS AGO USED TERMS LIKE "FOREORDINATION" "PREDESTINATION" "JUSTIFICATION" "SANCTIFICATION" "EDIFICATION" "DAMNATION". TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO THERE WAS SWING FROM LATIN ROOTS TO GREEK ROOTS; WE THEREFORE HAVE PREACHERS PREACHING ON SUCH WORDS AS "CHRISTOLOGY" "ESCHATOLOGY" "SOTERIOLOGY" AND "APOCALYPTIC". THESE ARE TERMS FOR THE MOST PART NOT UNDERSTOOD OR USED BY THIS GENERATION. SOME PREACHERS AND LAITY ARE STILL WORSHIPPING THE OLD TERMS; OTHER MODERNS HAVE THROWN INTO DISCARD THE TERMS AND WHAT THEY SOUGHT TO EXPRESS. AND SOME OF THE SERMONS - JONATHAN EDWARDS' FAMOUS SERMON ON "SINNERS IN HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD". LIST WESLEY'S. READ THESE SERMONS AND ONE CAN FEEL THE PULSE AND THROB BEHIND THEM. FAITH SHINES CLEARLY THROUGH THEM ONCE THEY WERE WELLS INDEED. TODAY WE WOULD YAWN. LOOKING BACK WE DISCOVER THAT EVERY RELIGION THAT EVER EXISTED WAS A WELL TO SOMEONE. AND AT THE SAME TIME, IF WE HAVE INSIGHT AT ALL, WE DISCOVER THAT THESE VERY WELLS WERE ALL RE-DUG WELLS. CRY IS "GET BACK TO JESUS; TO PAUL; TO LUTHER; TO WESLEY". BUT WHAT DID JESUS HAVE TO DO WITH JUDAISM? WHAT DID ST. PAUL WITH JEWISH CHRISTIANITY? LUTHER AND CHURCH OF ROME? WESLEY AND CHURCH OF ENGLAND? RE-DUG WELLS.
THEOLOGIES, CREEDS AND ACTIONS ARE TESTED. THERE WE TAP THE ETERNAL SPRINGS. BUT LET US BE BRAVE ENOUGH, HONEST ENOUGH AND CHRISTIAN ENOUGH TO DARE TO CLEAR THE WELLS OF TRUTH FOR THE CHILDREN WHO FOLLOW.

AS WE DIG IN SINCERITY AND TRUTH WE SHALL FIND THAT WATER OF WHICH JESUS SAID "WHOEVER DRINKETH OF THE WATER THAT I SHALL GIVE HIM SHALL NEVER THIRST. IT SHALL BE IN HIM A WELL OF WATER SPRINGING UP INTO EVERLASTING LIFE".
saints”. Fathers preached about it. But what
amazes me is the fortitude and courage of the
ordinary person, who in the midst of trouble
keeps going on. There may be a shifting of the
foundations, but they are brought nearer the
sources of power and sweetness.

In closing - a word particularly to young
people. You want to make most of your life do
you not? What do want from life? Old Jacob
lay a-dying. Gathers sons around him and has
blessing for each of them. Knows life. Rather
crafty old schemer. Now he blesses his sons.

Comes to favorite son, Joseph. Holds the
world before him. Wants the best for Joseph.
Vanity Fair had snared him. But now Jacob will
not be fooled. Blessing is also a prayer for
Joseph. Does not pray for Easy Street.

"Let him be like a fruit tree by the side
of a well; his branches running all over the
road”. In other words, "Let him be of service
to his fellowmen. Let his branches give shade
and refreshment to every weary traveler."

But notice the well. There has to be a
well. Otherwise you’ll tire. Otherwise you’ll
quit because of disappointment. Otherwise you
’ll grow cynical. There must be a well.

Lord, save us from being waterless foun-
tains; from being wells without water. Grant we
shall find that water of which Jesus said, "Who-
soever drinketh of the water that I shall give
him shall be in him a well of water springing
up into everlasting life".
TODAY WE ARE PASSING THROUGH SAME PROCESS. MEN FOR MOST PART ARE NOT PREACHING ABOUT "ORIGINAL SIN" OR "PREDESTINATION" OR "ELECTION" OR "ETERNAL TORMENT". THAT IS WE DO NOT PREACH IN THOSE TERMS. BUT MANY OF THESE OLD BELIEFS ARE RE-EMERGING BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CHURCH IN NEW FORMS AND ARE BEING RE-ASSERTED WITH TREMENDOUS EMPHASIS. MEN BOTH CONSCIOUSLY AND OFTEN UNCONSCIOUSLY ARE DISCOVERING WATER IN OLD WELLS OF THE FATHERS. TAKE DOGMA OF "ORIGINAL SIN" "SHAPE IN INIQUITY AND IN SIN DID MY MOTHER CONCEIVE ME". DISCARDED THAT AS THEOLOGY BUT ACCEPT ITS IMPLICATIONS IN PSYCHOLOGY AND BIOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY EVERY DAY. THIS DOCTRINE BEING PREACHED BY SUCH MEN AS SHAW, WELLS, O'NEIL. THE LANGUAGE THEY USE IS THE LANGUAGE OF TODAY; BUT WHAT THEY DECLARE IS THAT WE ALL PERSONALLY PARTICIPATE IN THE CORPORATE MORAL LIABILITIES OF THE RACE. THAT IS, THIS GENERATION SUFFERS FOR THE SINS OF THE LAST GENERATION. "SINS WE DO BY TWO AND TWO WE PAY FOR ONE BY ONE". "SINS OF FATHERS ARE VISITED UPON CHILDREN UNTO THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION". NEVER HEBREW PROPHET OR PURITAN PREACHER DECLARED THIS TRUTH WITH MORE FERVOR OR IN MORE TERRIFIC TERMS THAN THE BIOLOGISTS OF TODAY.

ALSO TRUE OF "CALVINISM". GREAT WATCHWORDS WERE PREDESTINATION, FOREORDINATION AND ELECTION. MEANT THAT SOME WERE BORN TO BE SAVED AND ENJOY ETERNAL BLISS, AND OTHERS BORN TO BE DAMNED AND SUFFER ETERNAL TORMENT. THE WORDS HAVE BECOME ALMOST OBSOLETE; BUT THE SAME TRUTH IS BEING PROCLAIMED IN NAME OF SCIENCE.

SCIENTIST TELLS US OF THE GRIP OF HEREDITY AND OF THE RESURGENCE OF ANCESTRAL TENDENCIES. WE TREMBLE WITH THE NEW DOCTRINE OF FATALISM. IT IS A CALVINISM WITH GOD LEFT OUT. IT ISN'T ALL THE TRUTH OF COURSE; BUT POINT IS THAT MEN TODAY ARE FINDING WATER IN OLD WELLS AND EVE IN THE GARDEN GIVE PLACE TO THE "APE AND TIGER" IN THE BLOOD. NOT APE AND TIGER ALONE BUT THE WHOLE MENAGERIE. MEN DISMISS THE OLD MEDIEVAL AND THEOLOGICAL HEAVEN AND HELL; BUT WE HEAR THEM SAYING "I MYSELF AM HEAVEN AND HELL". MEN TODAY ARE AS TRULY "CONVICTED OF SIN" AS WERE OUR FOREFATHERS. ONLY TODAY INSTEAD OF SPEAKING OF THE SEVEN CARDINAL SINS SUCH AS DRUNKENNESS, GAMBLING AND VICE, MEN STRUGGLE WITH SUCH PROBLEMS AS HOUSING, UNEMPLOYMENT, WAR, POVERTY, SOCIAL INSURANCE, OLD AGE PENSIONS. AND WE ARE CHRIST, CALVIN, PAUL, LUTHER OR WESLEY LIVING TODAY, THEY WOULD BE SPEAKING IN THESE TERMS ALSO.

LET NO ONE FEAR THE CHANGING EMPHASIS; LET US HOLD FAST TO SPIRIT OF CHRIST; THERE ALL OUR DIFFERING
The Methodist Episcopal Church

Union M. E. Church, Alplaus, N. Y.
M. E. Church, Rexford, N. Y.
Fred Clarke, Minister

ALBANY DISTRICT
TROY CONFERENCE
NEW YORK AREA

R. F. D. No. 7
SCHENECTADY
NEW YORK
Compassion

"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted (were tired and lay down) and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."
Matthew 9:36

To the above account Mark adds that "Jesus began to teach the multitudes many things"; then He fed them and sent them away. Mark 6.

Confused and floundering man still calls forth the compassion of our loving Savior. And never has man been more in need of compassion than he is today. Never in all history has there been so much physical suffering and such deep spiritual bewilderment.

During the great blizzards of the winter of 1949, hundreds of thousands of sheep were caught in the drifts of deep snow. Without shelter and without food tens of thousands of them died. But many were saved because intrepid fliers discovered them and relief was brought by tireless ranchers.

The compassion of Christ reaches the masses in distress only through the efforts of those who profess to know and represent Him, that is, the Christians. Physical want and suffering, coupled with a despairing thirst for God, cry out for mercy.

It is true, the need can never be fully satisfied. It has become too great. But the Christian Church must never falter in its effort to bring relief and comfort to those who are like sheep without a shepherd. Material help must be provided by those whose hearts are moved with compassion. The comfort of the Word of God must be supplied by those who know and believe that Christ alone can fully satisfy the soul athirst for God.

They Know His Voice.
FREMONT STREET METHODIST CHURCH
Gloversville, New York
May 1, 1949

ORGAN - "Beloved Jesus"  Zechiel

CALL TO WORSHIP - By the minister

HYMN 12 - "Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee"  Hymn to Joy

Minister: The Lord be with you.

People: And with thy spirit.

Minister: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up unto the Lord.

DOXOLOGY - To be sung by all

CALL TO PRAYER - By the minister

PRAYER OF CONFESSION - To be said by all

Have mercy upon us, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out our transgressions. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquities and cleanse us from our sins. For we acknowledge our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us. Create in us clean hearts, O God, and renew a right spirit within us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYER FOR PARDON - By the minister

Amen

RESPONSIVE READING - 16th Sunday - 2nd Reading

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SCRIPTURE LESSON - John 4:1-15

ANTHEM - "Be Joyful in the Lord"  Purvis

PASTORAL PRAYER :: LORD'S PRAYER

ORGAN OFFERTORY - Sonata "A"  Bach

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

HYMN 419 - "Jesus, united by Thy grace"  Beattitude

SERMON - "Wells Without Water"

HYMN 455 - "Awake, awake to love and work"  Sheltered

Benediction :: THREEFOLD AMEN (Danish)  Dale

ORGAN - "A Mighty Fortress is our God"  Luther

Rev. Fred Clarke, Minister
Miss Gloria Iacone, Minister of Music
Mrs. Harvey Connor, Minister's Assistant
Mrs. Keith Gifford, Church Secretary
Mr. Lewis Cuming, Sexton

CALENDAR FOR TODAY

10:30 Morning Worship and sermon.
10:30 Children's Division of the Church School.
11:45 Youth and Adult Divisions of the Church School.
6:30 Annual Conference. All youth invited.
7:30 Union Evening Service at First Presbyterian Church with the Rev. Harry L. Lueting preaching.

Altar flowers today are given in memory of Moritz Gundersen by his family.

THROUGH THE WEEK

MON. 11:00 Weekday Class in religion.
7:30 Boy Scouts at the church.
6:00 Board of Trustees meet at the church.
TUES. 8:00 Skidmore College Choir Concert under the auspices of the Triangle Club - Y.M.C.A.
8:30 Board of Education meeting. Important.
THURS. 8:00 Fremont Choir rehearsal.
8:00 Winning Six Class at the home of Mrs. Geo. Conrey, 52 Wooster Street. Members please bring contributions for "Linen Fund" for the class's German adopted family.
FRI. NOON Youth Choir luncheon and rehearsal.
2:30 Fellowship Tea auspices of Council of Church Women at First Methodist Church with Mabelle Rae LeGrand as the speaker.
6:30 Harmony Class covered dish supper at church.

CALLING ALL FREMONT WOMEN - Annual Meeting of our Woman's Society of Christian Service will be held May 10 at the church. Election of officers etc., Last year the woman's society of the total Methodist Church expended approximately $6,000,000 for service projects at home and abroad. This is a great and effective society.

UPPER ROOMS ARE IN THE UPPER HALL.