

The healing waters of Bethesda : a sermon, preached at Buxton Wells, to the company assembled there for the benefit of the medicinal waters : on Whitsunday, June 2, 1811.

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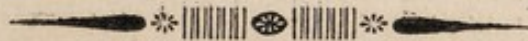
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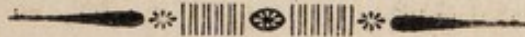
A
Sermon,

*PREACHED AT BUXTON WELLS, TO THE COM-
PANY ASSEMBLED THERE FOR THE BENE-
FIT OF THE MEDICINAL WATERS,*

ON WHITSUNDAY, JUNE 2, 1811.



BY THE
REV. CLAUDIUS BUCHANAN, D. D.
LATE VICE PROVOST OF THE COLLEGE OF FORT WILLIAM, IN
BENGAL.



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HEALTHY WATERS

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THE
HEALING WATERS
OF
BETHESDA.

John v. 2, 3, 4.—“ *There is at Jerusalem, by the sheep-market, a Pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue, BETHESDA, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water; whosoever then, first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.*”

I KNOW not any subject contained in the Scriptures, the contemplation of which is better suited to the circumstances of us who are here assembled, than that of the HEALING WATERS of Jerusalem. There are now collected here, as formerly at Bethesda, “a great number of infirm persons, of halt and withered,” who have come to the healing waters at this place; and who expect a cure, not from the hand of man, but of God. We have come to try the efficacy of waters which flow by the divine command; medicinal waters, which owe nothing to human art or power, and whose nature and origin man does not even fully understand.*

* Buxton is situated on the ridge of that mountainous region commencing in Derbyshire, which extends to the northern extremity of the kingdom, and which has been called by some geographers the British *Appenine*. The medicinal well is nearly in the middle of England, and is supposed to be upwards of 1500 feet above the surface of the sea. It further occupies a most interesting situation, as being surrounded by beds of shells, corals, and other marine products, the remains of the antediluvian world, and indelible

The first view of the scene before us will suggest to our minds some interesting topics of reflection.

While we behold this healing fountain flowing like a torrent,* and consider its long duration, and the benefit derived from it to multitudes perhaps in every age, we have to admire an illustrious instance of the wisdom and goodness of God in *creation*. How wonderful that this salubrious spring should retain the same degree of heat, through every change of season, and from age to age !† And again, what limit shall we assign to its duration? It is probable that it was first opened "when the foundations of the earth were laid," and that it will continue to flow

testimonies of the truth of the Mosaic Record. The temperature of the air in these regions is always cooler than in the lower countries. There is generally a turbulent atmosphere; but this renders the *change of air* greater, and more salutary in certain complaints, than in any other part of northern Europe. From vestiges lately discovered, it is ascertained that buildings were erected at the Well of Buxton, in the time of the Romans. In the middle ages it acquired the name of St. Anne's Well. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth a Treatise was written on the "Virtues of the Water of *Buck-stones*, by Dr. Jones of Derby," and it appears at that time (1572) to have been a place of great resort. But it is only within these few years that buildings have been erected for invalids suitable to the importance of the place. For these the nation is indebted to the Duke of Devonshire. His Grace is proprietor of Buxton, and of the country round it, and he has, with a liberality which ought to be more known and celebrated, erected a suit of extensive and magnificent buildings, called the *Crescent*, and a spacious and elegant church, both of hewn stone; also pools for bathing, besides various other edifices for the accommodation of the visitors and invalids; the whole expence of which is stated to have been not less than 150,000*l*. The munificence of this nobleman, referring as it does to the health of his countrymen, is entitled to a national acknowledgment.

* "The quantity of water flowing from the springs has been calculated to "be after the rate of *sixty gallons* in a minute."—*Denman on the Buxton Waters*, p. 56.

† The heat of the medicinal spring, called St. Anne's Well, of which the invalids drink, "is always 81 by Farenheit's thermometer. The heat of the medicinal pool in which the invalids bathe, is precisely and *invariably* 82 by Farenheit's thermometer. The temperature of these waters does not in any degree depend on rain, or other accidental circumstances."—*Denman*, p. 53, 57.

Philosophy has long attempted to investigate this subject, but as yet without any satisfactory result. "Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in search of the depth?"—*Job xxxviii. 16*. We neither understand accurately by what means the waters acquire their heat, nor, when they have acquired it, how the temperature should always continue the *same*, without being affected, like every other substance of this earth, by heat and cold, and distance from the sun. "Philosophers," says Dr. Hunter, "have differed much in their opinions about the cause of heat in warm waters; but I do not find that any of them have as yet been able to lay down an hypothesis, which is not liable to some objections."—*Hunter on the Nature and Virtues of Buxton Waters*, p. 8.

till time shall be no more. The same power which gave virtue to the well of Bethesda, hath opened the fountain of health in this place. These, therefore, may be called GOD'S WATERS. They flow by the divine mercy, and we expect that they will prove beneficial to our infirm bodies only by the divine blessing. Let us, then, approach them with sentiments of gratitude and piety, having our minds prepared to give God the glory for any benefit we may derive from the use of them.

In viewing any striking object in the works of creation, it is useful to reflect in what manner our blessed Saviour would have improved the scene; for He was wont to derive instructive lessons from the operations of nature, and even from the usages and works of man. Of this there is an instance recorded in the Gospel, which bears some analogy to the scene which now presents itself to our view in this place. It was a custom of the Jews, on the last day of the Feast of Passover, to draw water from the fountain of Siloam, which sprang from mount Zion, and to bear it in solemn procession to the Temple, where it was poured out before the Lord. These "waters of Siloa which flowed softly" (Is. viii. 6.) from their fountain, not far from the Temple of God,* and refreshed the inhabitants of Jerusalem, had been celebrated by the prophet Isaiah as an emblem of Messiah's gentle reign; and the Evangelist John alludes to the same emblem, when he says, "Siloam, being interpreted, signifies SENT;" that is, a type of him who is "the sent" of God; and the custom of drawing water from the well of Siloam on a certain day, was founded on the words of the same prophet Isaiah; "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."—Is. xii. 3.†

* —And Siloa's brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God.

Milton.

† This fact of drawing water from the fountain of Siloam is authenticated by the Rabbins. The water was carried in a *golden urn*, and the solemnity was called *ביסוד המים* *Nisuk Ham-maim*, the pouring out of water. In the Gemara it is inquired, "Whence was this custom?" The answer: "From the words of the prophet, Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."—*Talmud Babyl.* fol. 48. 2.

Our Saviour beholding this solemnity of drawing water on the great Feast-day, improved it to a spiritual purpose ; “ In the last day, that great day of the Feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink ; he that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the SPIRIT, which they that believe on Him should receive ; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given.”—*John vii. 37.*

Thus did our Lord spiritualize the scene. He shewed the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that their drawing water from the fount of Siloam was a just figure of their “ receiving the Holy Spirit,” which should soon be poured out from on high, and “ which they that believed on Him (not in that age only, but in every age) SHOULD RECEIVE.”*

Under the authority then of our Saviour’s example, who rendered the scenes of nature a theme of instruction, we may be permitted, in the application of this discourse, to consider the healing influence of the Fountain in this place, in a spiritual sense. The chief object of the discourse itself will be,

First, to inquire into what may have been the design of instituting the miracle of the healing waters at Jerusalem. And,

Secondly, To shew that these waters, which healed the diseases of the *body*, were an emblem of the influence of the heavenly Gospel, which heals the diseases of the *soul*, and fits it for the kingdom of God.

I. We are first to inquire, “ for what end God may have been pleased to institute the miracle of the healing waters at Jerusalem ?” The fact recorded in this place by the Evan-

* It is a remarkable fact, that the spiritual import of drawing water from Siloam was understood, and has been acknowledged and recorded by the Rabbins. “ Why is Siloam called כֵּיחַ שְׁאֵנָא בֵּית שׁוּבָא *Beth Suaba*, the place of a draught? Answer: רְחוֹק הַקּוֹרֵשׁ שֶׁשָׁם שׁוֹאֵבִים Because, thence they draw the Holy Spirit.”—*Talmud Hierosol. in Succah*, fol. 55.

The Jews of this day might derive a strong confirmation of the truth of the Gospel, if they would read their own ancient Turgums.

It is to be noticed that *Siloam* and *Shiloh*, another name for Christ, are distinct words derived from different roots. They have no relation to each other.

gelist, has been but seldom noticed; but to me it seems to involve considerations of much interest, and is itself a subject of instructive contemplation.

For a period of nearly four hundred years, there had been now no prophet in Israel; and the prophecies concerning the Messiah had not been fulfilled. There was no "open vision," nor other symbol of the divine presence, and the people were gradually declining to infidelity. In these circumstances it may have pleased God to arrest the attention of the nation by a new evidence of his presence, and to sustain the hope of those "who waited for the consolation of Israel," by affording a new proof that he had not forsaken his people. This new evidence may also be considered as an emblem of the Gospel itself, which was soon to appear, being at once a manifestation of *power* and of *mercy*; and it further resembled the same Gospel, in its being open to the view of all, and accessible to all; the place selected for its exhibition being in the very midst of Jerusalem.

"Now there is," saith the Evangelist, "at Jerusalem, by the Sheep-market, a Pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue, Bethesda." Bethesda signifies The house of Mercy; a name which had been given to it in consequence of the merciful cures effected by its waters. "For, at a certain season," continues the Evangelist, "an angel went down and troubled the water; and whosoever, first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had."*

* The Pool of Bethesda was supplied with water from the fountain of Siloam, the before-mentioned type of the Messiah's kingdom. It may be proper to observe that the *fountain* of Siloam is not the same as the *pool* of Siloam. "Upon the very highest point of the hill of Jerusalem, and from whence it had a fall either way, there sprang the sweet and gentle fountain, Siloam; from which two streams descended, one to the pool of *Bethesda*, and the other to the pool of *Siloam*."—*Lightfoot*, vol. i. p. 1054.

Josephus relates that the fountain of Siloam was flowing in his time, but that it failed during the siege of Jerusalem by Titus. Its failure, which was attributed directly to the divine interposition, added much to the distresses of the besieged city.—*Jos. de Bell. lib. v. cap. 26.*

This, then, was the kind of evidence, by which it may have pleased God to shew his people that he had not forsaken them, and to confirm their faith in the certain fulfilment of the evangelic promises by the mouth of his holy prophets.

But again, the Gospel was a dispensation of such transcendent dignity and excellency, that it was worthy of a prefiguration, or typical representation of its nature and effects before its arrival; even as the person of its great author had a harbinger or precursor "to prepare his way," and to direct the eyes of all men to wait his approach. There was a famed prediction of the prophet Zechariah, which would probably be often contemplated by the pious Israelites about this period, with great solicitude: "In that day (viz. the day of the Messiah) there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." These words referred to the diseases of the *soul*. And now, behold, a fountain is opened to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for the diseases of the *body*. What a lively prefiguration this of the fountain which was soon to be opened by "the blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sin!"—1 *John* i. 7. And so well known was this public interposition of the divine power at Bethesda, that suitable buildings were erected at these waters of mercy, for the reception of those who were diseased; and "five porches" or porticos were built around the pool for the accommodation of the people. "In these porches," saith the Evangelist, "lay a great multitude of infirm persons, of blind, halt, and withered, waiting for the moving of the water."

Our blessed Saviour, who went about doing good, visited this recess of misery. He came to the pool of Bethesda, and in its porches beheld a just representation of the world, into which he had descended, filled with beings languishing under the various spiritual diseases which sin hath introduced. And having surveyed the various cases of misery which pre-

sented themselves, he selected one of the most helpless objects for the exercise of his mercy.

“ A certain man was there which had an infirmity, thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the Pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk. And, immediately, the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked.”

Jesus did not say unto him, “Go down to the water and wash;” for this institution of mercy at Bethesda was now to be superseded by a new dispensation; and the ministry of angels was to be succeeded by the ministrations of the Son of God.

II. We come now to the important part of our discourse, which is, to consider these waters at Bethesda, which healed the *body*, as an emblem of the divine effects of the Gospel in purifying the *soul*, and fitting it for the kingdom of God. So just is this emblem, that Baptism by water was afterwards expressly appointed by our Saviour himself, as the initiatory rite of his religion.* By this institution of Baptism our Lord would signify to us, *That the soul must be cleansed and purified by the influences of the Holy Spirit, even as the body is washed with pure water.* The import of this sacred rite is well explained in the following words: “After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us by the WASHING of regeneration, and RENEWING of the Holy Ghost.”—*Titus* iii. 5. Here we see that these expressions, *The washing of regeneration, and*

* Jerom, on this chapter (John v.) observes, that “By these waters of Bethesda, the Lord exhibited the waters of baptism.”

Chrysostom in his 35th Homily on John, saith, “This pool of water setteth forth the waters of baptism, curing all manner of diseases of sin, and making those that descend to it dead, to come out alive.”

the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*, are synonymous. And this beautifully illustrates the whole doctrine of Baptism, shewing it to be a spiritual washing, typified by a bodily ablution.

The soul of man requires to be purified by a heavenly influence.

But are we to understand that the soul of man is in such a state by nature, as to require such ablution? So hath the great author of our religion declared; "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water, and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—*John* iii. 5. And again he saith to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."—*John* xiii. 8. And with this corresponds the doctrine of our own church. In the service of Baptism we pray that God would "sanctify the water to the mystical washing away of sin;—that he would grant to the person now to be baptized therein, THAT THING which by nature he cannot have; that he may be regenerated by water and the Holy Spirit, and receive the benediction of the heavenly washing, that so he may come to the eternal kingdom which God hath promised by Christ our Lord." It is moreover asserted by our church, that men are, "by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath."

But if such be the state of man by nature, how are we to understand what is sometimes asserted of the *dignity* of human nature? There is a sense in which we may speak of the dignity of human nature, which we shall now explain. This is an important subject, and we ought to have just conceptions respecting it.

Of the dignity of human nature.

The Scriptures declare that man was "created in the image of God;" that is, he resembled God in those moral and intellectual qualities which a created being could possess. But

man fell from his high estate, like "the angels which sinned," and he thus lost the divine image. And after his fall, the state of his *heart* is thus described by God himself; "Every imagination of the thoughts of man's *heart* is only evil continually." *Gen.* vi. 5. But though man's moral qualities were depraved, and he no longer resembled God in purity of heart, certain *noble faculties* remained with him; even as we may suppose that high intellectual powers remained with the angels that sinned. His reason approves those things that are excellent, though he follows the worse. He has a longing after immortality. And we know that his soul is immortal, and that a happy immortality has been offered to him.

Thus far then, and no farther, can we speak of the dignity of human nature. Some noble faculties remain with man, and some noble privileges; the chief of which is, that though he sin against God, he is an object of *mercy*; "While God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment."—*2 Pet.* ii. 4. High intellectual powers remain with man; but his heart is depraved; and, in his will and affections, he is alienated from God. Now our Saviour hath declared that man being thus depraved by nature must be renewed, and, as it were, "born again" before he can see the kingdom of God. And this change of heart, and the grace which produces it, are the subjects of the glad tidings of the Gospel.

Man's chief dignity then is, that he is a subject of *mercy*: a candidate for a new nature; an heir of immortality. Man lost the image of God by the fall; and the Son of God hath descended from heaven to restore that image: that is, to restore it to such a degree of righteousness in this life, that God shall look upon it with complacency and receive it to himself to be perfected in glory. That the image of God is restored man in this sense, is manifest from almost every page of the New Testament. The apostle Paul addresses believers in these words; "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds and

have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, *after the image* of HIM that created him."—*Colos.* iii. 10. And again it is written (in *Eph.* iv. 24.) that "the new man is created, after God, in Righteousness and true holiness." Further the children of God are said "to be conformed to the *image* of his Son."—*Rom.* viii. 29. And the apostle Peter shews us that they "become partakers of the *divine nature*,"—*2 Pet.* i. 4.

And this is the true dignity of human nature.

Of the fallen state of man.

There are in this age some who will not "receive this saying." They do not believe that man becomes, by the Gospel, "a partaker of the divine nature." They do not believe in the restoration by Christ, because they do not acknowledge the corruption of the heart by Adam. But are there, indeed, persons receiving the scriptures, who deny this original corruption? There are many who deny it at least in words. Let us consider their argument for a moment. They allege that there is injustice in their deriving a corruption of nature from *their Fathers*: and therefore they deny that there is such corruption. But they do not think it unjust, that God should impute to them *their own* sins. Here, then, let them take their stand. On this ground let them defend themselves.—Let them be judged from what they *are*, and from what they have made themselves.—"Had we been in Adam's stead," say they, "we should not have fallen."—Presumptuous thought! The very conceit is begotten by *pride*, and proves that they have begun to fall already. The Son of God hath descended from heaven and hath appeared to men, as evidently as ever God appeared in Paradise; and hath delivered to them, as formerly to our first parents, his precept for eternal life, accompanied by the sanctions of heaven and hell. Adam disobeyed God once. They disobey him repeatedly, daily, presumptuously; in thought, word, and deed; against light, knowledge, and

experience : against heavenly admonition, god-like example, and the love of a Mediator, stronger than death ! After witnessing Adam's punishment they repeat Adam's sin ! and, with this accumulation of guilt upon their heads, which sinks their souls in deep condemnation, and fills their consciences with fearful forebodings of "the wrath to come,"—they affect to say that their hearts are not corrupt by nature ! Their proud and contemptuous disbelief, or affected disbelief, of their being the subjects of such corruption, is another evidence of the fact. And this disbelief is infidelity under a Christian name. Men having the revelation of God in their hands merely believe what natural religion taught before, and little more. I arraign not, I despise not the *intellectual* powers of such persons ; but I lament the state of their *hearts*. There is no humility of mind, no submission of the will to the declarations of God their Creator. The opinions of these men, however excellent they may be on subjects which terminate with this life, are not to be regarded, *on this subject*, with greater respect than those of a heathen philosopher. But we believe the record of CHRIST. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was *lost*."—*Luke* xix. 10. All men were *lost* ; But "God so loved the world," saith Christ, "that he gave his only begotten Son, that "whosoever believeth in Him, should *not perish*, but have everlasting life."—*John* iii. 16.

But let us expand this proof of the natural corruption of the heart, and endeavour to implant conviction in the bosoms of men.

Proof from fact that man is in a fallen state.

We have heard the testimony of Scripture ; let us now notice the evidence from fact.

God hath sent a revelation of his will to man and given him some view of the heavenly state. But so adverse is the heart of man to the will of God, and so regardless of the glorious subject to which it refers, that oftentimes he puts it from him ;

never reads the volume that contains it, and is perhaps ashamed to have it in his possession. What further proof can we require of man's fallen state, than his *unconcern* about his own eternal happiness! Nor is this unconcern confined to poor and ignorant men, but it is found among persons the most illustrious for rank and learning in this age of refinement and civilization. But further,

God the Son hath descended from heaven and hath described to us some particulars of the last *Judgment*. He hath admonished us solemnly to prepare for it, saying, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for narrow is the way that leadeth unto life." But many who profess to believe the Gospel, so far from obeying this admonition, prefer to walk in the broad way of the world, "that leadeth to destruction." Their ambition is to conform to the maxims and manners of the world in all things; and, in almost every case of competition, they resolve to obey the law of honour and of the world, rather than the law of God.

Our Lord hath also taught us the duty of *prayer* to God; saying, "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, will reward thee openly."—*Matt.* vi. 6. But, this rational duty many never perform. The voice of prayer or praise is never heard in their dwelling. They do not even acknowledge the Deity in the degree which is practised by the inhabitants of the *heathen* world.

We shall illustrate this subject by one instance more. Our Lord hath revealed to us the glorious privilege of "asking for and receiving the HOLY SPIRIT." "Ask," saith he, "and it shall be given you: for if you, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."—*Luke* ix. 13. But so far are some men from "asking for" this divine influence, that they do not know, or even wish to know, whether it exists.

The light which is from above sheweth the fallen state of the soul.

The cause of all this unconcern and insensibility in regard to the welfare of the soul, is this, men *see not* the state of their own hearts; and they *believe not* the record of God concerning them. His record is this; (and the sentence would never have been penned in his holy word, if it were not true): "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart."—*Jer.* xvii. 9. Out of the *heart*," saith our Saviour, "proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride." *Mark* vii. 22. Men see not their own hearts as God sees them; for the prince of darkness, who is called "the god of this world, hath *blinded* the minds of them *which believe not*, lest the LIGHT of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine unto them."—*2 Cor.* iv. 4. Suppose a man to be placed in a dark dungeon, and to be surrounded by serpents and other noxious animals. While he is in darkness, he sees not his danger. He may have some fears, but still he is quiet. But when light is let in from above, he exclaims with horror, What is here! So it was with the moral and self-righteous SAUL, whose name was changed after his conversion to PAUL. Saul was blind to his state, and at peace with himself. But when the light from above visited him, and he could contrast the *purity* of God's holy law, with the *interior* of his heart, he exclaimed, O wretched man that I am! When further he beheld the guilt he had incurred he was filled with admiration at the mercy which is offered to fallen man; and he said, "this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, OF WHOM I AM CHIEF."—*1 Tim.* i. 15.

Many persons who hold a respectable place in society for morals and learning, are in the state of Saul before his conversion. "We are moral," say they, "we are decent." And

so they are. They are moral and decent *in the sight of men*. But in the sight of God, their hearts may be filled with unhallowed passions which only need the occasion and some incitement to burst into violence and a flame. And if there be any man who thinks that in respect to *himself* such a thing is not possible ; that man "knows not what spirit he is of," and is actually in that very state of darkness which the scriptures describe. Further, he will be viewed by the well-instructed christian, who has some knowledge of his own heart, with the same sentiment of pity and forbearance which a father exercises towards an ignorant and froward child.

Of those persons who continue long in this state of spiritual ignorance, some may, as we have said, have made attainments in literature, or perhaps, like Saul, in theology ; and have written volumes on the subject. They may be men who say to themselves, and believe what they say ; "We are moral, we are learned ; we approximate to a practicable perfection." But when the light shines from above, and they behold the *dark* recesses of the heart and can contrast them with the purity of the Gospel precept which enjoins the control of thought, they will confess with penitence and shame, in the words which our Saviour applied to the ignorant but self-sufficient church of Laodicea ; "We are wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." And further they will behold the *guilt* of their souls ; and confessing that man has fallen like the angels that sinned, will "flee from the wrath to come."

Morality is not religion.

Every degree of morality which exists, is a benefit to the world ; and the individual is entitled to respect and esteem in the degree which he possesses it. Besides, we know not the hearts of men, and must therefore judge them by their actions. But what I would inculcate on your minds is this, All morality is not religion. True religion, indeed, produces the

highest degree of morality ; but a certain degree of rectitude of conduct may exist without any religion at all. The Deist or Atheist may be a moral man in this sense. Many persons in the heathen world are moral in this sense, highly moral. They are also tenacious of the law of honour, that is, the law of their *society* : and will lose their life, rather than lose their *Cast* ; just as a man of the world amongst us, would rather lose his life than the good opinion of the world.

There are two sentences spoken by our Saviour in regard to the morality of the world, contrasted with the righteousness of the Gospel, which every man ought to meditate on, till he understand them : for no word was spoken by the Son of God in vain. The first sentence ;—“ I say unto you, except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”—*Mat.* v. 20. By this saying it appears that the Pharisees had *some* righteousness, which yet availed them *not*.

The second ;—“ Jesus saith unto them,” (the chief priests and elders of the people) “ Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.”—*Mat.* xxi. 31.

These sentences are very plain to the man who hath humbly prayed for “ the wisdom that is from above,” but the mere philosopher will never understand them.

The cause of the difference that exists in different persons, as to understanding and receiving the word of God.

Our Saviour, in a certain place, shews the cause of the difference that exists in different persons in regard to understanding and receiving the words of revelation. Speaking of the unbelief of proud Capernaum, which had rejected his word although it had beheld his works, “ Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from *the wise and prudent*, and hast

revealed them unto babes.”—*Mat.* xi. 25. We learn from these words, that those persons who are “wise and prudent” in their own eyes, that is, self-sufficient and self-righteous, shall not be blessed with the light which is from above, and which they seek not. And with this corresponds another solemn declaration of our Lord; “Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as *little children*, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”—*Mat.* xviii. 3. We here see the nature of that humility of mind and submission of understanding to the divine word, to which all must attain, who would enter into the kingdom of heaven. When God reveals his truth to man, and speaks of the conversion of the heart, of a heavenly influence, of a divine atonement, or of the wrath to come, “MAN REPLIES AGAINST GOD;” (*Rom.* ix. 20.) and marshals arguments against his Maker; although God hath forewarned him of his inability to utter a single sentence with just understanding, concerning things which are spiritual, invisible and eternal. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts; neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”—*Isaiah* lv. 8. But when this proud spirit of fallen humanity is subdued and man becomes “as a little child” who listens with docility to the instructions of the parent, then will he understand the words of the heavenly Teacher, and will begin to contemplate, with wonder and delight, the harmony and excellency of the whole revelation of God, as it respects the creation, probation, or redemption of man. As man fell originally by *pride*, so he must rise by *humility*; “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble;”—*James* iv. 6. and the conversion of the heart, taught by the Gospel, is but another name for this humility. Almost every page of the New Testament illustrates in some manner the truth contained in that sentence of our Lord, which forms the subject of the present discussion; “Except a man be born again of the spirit, he

cannot see the kingdom of God." The important inquiry then is, how we may obtain this inestimable blessing.

How the change of heart promised by the Gospel is to be attained.

The great and primary doctrine which Christ preached to mankind was the META-NOIA, or *change of mind*. His first word was "Repent," which signifies in the language in which he spake, "Turn ye" or "be ye converted," agreeing literally with the expression in the Old Testament, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, O house of Israel."—*Ezek. xxxiii. 11.** The word "Repent," in our translation, is sometimes ambiguous. "Judas repented himself, and went and hanged himself;" that is, he was sorry for his crime, for he dreaded the punishment. This repentance is very common; but it is not the Meta-Noia or repentance of the Gospel. That repentance is elsewhere described as being "a repentance *unto life*," and as "a Repentance *not to be repented of*." It is a change of heart from sin to righteousness; a revolution rather than a reformation; a "putting off the old man and putting on the new man," so as, in a manner, to be "born again." This change nevertheless is PROGRESSIVE; and proceeds sometimes from very imperfect and almost insensible beginnings; even like "the dawning light," to which scripture compares it, "which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

But we are to inquire how this new state of heart is to be obtained? It is to be obtained by the use of the means which God hath appointed; and by observing those ordinances which he hath prescribed for the restoration and nourishment of the soul. The ordinances of religion will be to us as the Pool of Bethesda. Though we wait long for

* The first word of our Lord's ministry, and of that of John his forerunner, in the Syriac language was THUBU, "Turn ye," corresponding with the Hebrew word SHUBU, in the Old Testament. The word which we translate "Repentance," is in the Syriac THIBUTHA, which simply signifies "turning," or "conversion;" and which the Evangelists have rightly referred to the *mind*, by translating it META-NOIA, "a turning or conversion of the mind."

the angel's arrival, yet hope will be imparted to sustain us, and relief will come at last. In the mean time the progressive change in our hearts is advancing, even while we only seem *to wait*, by mortifying particular sins, maturing various virtues, and increasing our faith, which acquires strength by exercise. But let it always be remembered, that the *first step* of the journey heaven-ward is submission of the understanding to the word of God. A man must become "as a little child" in the presence of his heavenly Father; believing implicitly his declaration, that a heavenly influence is necessary to change the heart, and praying earnestly for that influence. And if he be earnest in his supplication, HIS PRAYER WILL BE HEARD. The Holy Spirit of God will cooperate with his prayers; it will influence the mind, in a manner indeed unaccountable to us, and insensible as to the mode of operation, but perfectly evident in the *effects*. The bent of his affections and pursuits will be gradually changed; and the holy scriptures, of which he was once ashamed, will become his meditation day and night. He will acquire new and more distinct perceptions of divine truth, and his former difficulties and doubts in regard to the state of mankind and the moral government of divine providence, will recede from his view. He will begin to understand and to obey the indispensable precept, *Be not conformed to this world.*—Rom. xii. 2.; the opinion and example of the world will cease to sway him; and he will be brought to a peace of mind and enjoyment of life which he never knew before.

This, my brethren, is the doctrine which Christ delivered to his apostles, and which was professed by the confessors and martyrs of the primitive age. And this is the doctrine of our own church, as testified by her service on this day; for on this day * we commemorate the descent of the Holy Spirit on the sons of men. On this day those heavenly influences be-

* Whitsunday, or day of Pentecost.

gan to be poured forth, which were to continue with the church for ever.

Some would contend that the effects of this inspiration were confined to the first age of the church. It is true, the *extraordinary* powers of the spirit in working miracles, and in the gift of tongues, were confined to the first ages; but the *ordinary* influences of the same spirit producing love to God and faith in Christ, purifying the heart from evil passions, and renewing the mind, "will abide for ever." And this is the just distinction, which we are ever to remember on this subject. Our Saviour promised that the influence of his spirit should "be with us always, even unto the end of the world."—*Mat. xxviii. 20.* And this promise hath been hitherto fulfilled. In every age of the church, there have been witnesses of the true faith, who have supplicated and obtained this influence. At this day, there are as many examples of enlightened piety and exalted christian character, as at any former period; and those who exhibit such examples, acknowledge the divine influence of which we speak, and daily invoke its aid at the throne of grace. But there are many persons who are entirely ignorant of these facts. As in the time of the apostles, the learned of Greece and Rome knew but little of what was passing in the church of Christ, and, though they heard Paul preach, understood him not; so many persons at this day, men too of liberal education, are entirely ignorant of what is passing in their own land, in regard to Christ's spiritual kingdom.

I feel it always my duty to bear my testimony to the important truths which I have declared to you this day. They are the eternal truths of God. They are the solemn declarations of Christ, even of him who hath said; "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." The example or unbelief of a multitude no way affects the certainty of these things. The opposition of some men to these doctrines, is but a confirmation of their truth; a necessary confirmation; for our Saviour foretold that his doctrines should be thus resisted.

When we view this unbelief and resistance of men, we are ready to think that the eloquence and argument of angels are required to do justice to the glorious subject. "For who is sufficient for these things?"—2 *Cor.* ii. 16. For myself, I have a constant fear, lest I should not express myself with that affection and earnestness which are due from one speaking to his fellow-creatures on such awful subjects. For there is danger, while we assail the understanding with arguments, lest we should speak too much in the spirit of assailants, and not with that meekness and temperate suasion which win the hearts of our hearers; especially as man, in his present fallen state, feels a natural repugnance to yield to the argument of his fellow-creature, in subjects relating to a change of conduct; or even to that of God himself. On the other hand, I fear the danger of not being faithful, and of "shunning to declare the counsel of God;" particularly on the present occasion, when I consider that some, who now hear me, are in declining health, and may never hear the words of salvation again. But I depend not certainly on my own arguments to make an impression upon your minds, but on "the spirit of truth," which, if the words of Christ be true, will lead the mind of the humble inquirer "into all truth." The preachers of the Gospel are indeed called the "ambassadors of Christ, to whom God hath committed the word of reconciliation, as though God did beseech you by us."—2 *Cor.* v. 20. We indeed hold in our hands the treasure of the Gospel, offering it to your acceptance. But it is also true, that "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."—2 *Cor.* iv. 7. That is to say, the word of the glorious gospel is committed, not to angels, but to men of like passions with yourselves, to "earthen vessels, compassed with infirmity," who are often far inferior in eloquence and learning, to those to whom they preach; that the glory of conversion may manifestly "be of God, and not of us."*

* See note at the end.

APPLICATION.

To those of us who have come to this place for the benefit of the medicinal waters, there are some interesting topics of application suggested by the subject before us.

I. Let us pray that God would be pleased to accompany the means we use for the restoration of *bodily* health, with his blessing, without which the best means are in vain : and further, that the efficacy of those means may not be defeated by our *sins*. We learn from scripture and from experience, that our sins are frequently the cause of our diseases, and that our continuance in sin is the cause of the prolongation of disease. The infirm man whom our Lord healed at the well of Bethesda, had been thirty-eight years in a state of suffering ; and yet it appears, that during that long period, he lived in sin ; the state of his *body* being all the time a just emblem of the state of his soul. For when Jesus afterwards met him in the temple, he said unto him, " Behold, thou art made whole, Go and sin *no more*, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

There are many, whose condition may be justly compared to that of this man, before he was cured of his infirmity. They have contracted disease, the fruit (too often) of the sins of their youth : their bodies droop with weakness, and their minds with despondency ; and they go from place to place to drink the waters, seeking health, and finding none. And the reason may be, that during all this protracted suffering, they *retain their sin*. They fail not to apply to the physicians of the *body* : but they have not once had recourse to the heavenly Physician. They conduct themselves like Asa, king of Israel, of whom is left this memorial ; " Asa, in the thirty and ninth year of his reign, was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great : Yet, in his disease, he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians."—2 *Chron.* xvi. 12. They seek a renovation of health on the same principles, and with the same kind of reliance for success, as the ignorant heathen,

who knows no other God but the idol before him, and believes that after death his soul will animate the body of some inferior animal. They have no faith in the communications from heaven concerning the soul and body of man. They "live without God in the world," and are as destitute of the consolations of religion, and as inattentive to a divine providence, as the beasts of the field "to which God hath not given understanding." There is a sentence of the Psalms which ought ever to be remembered by the man, who is "in honor" with the world, but "seeketh not the honor which cometh from God." *Man that is in HONOR, and UNDERSTANDETH NOT, is like the beasts that perish.*—Ps. xlix. 20. How awful a spectacle to an enlightened and reflecting mind to behold a man of fortune, family, and education, carrying about his diseases in luxurious pomp from place to place, pained in body and restless in mind, incapable of any intellectual occupation or enjoyment, further than what is afforded by the intelligence of the day; and at last descending to the grave, without fulfilling the purpose for which he was sent into the world; unpitied too, and soon forgotten by the world, to which he was a slave; and carried reluctantly before the tribunal of a God, whom he never served. If there be any one here, to whom the former of these observations apply, let him summon up attention to the remaining part of this subject.

II. When we bathe the body in the medicinal flood, let us call to mind the baptismal flood, or "laver of regeneration," in which the soul is washed from the stains of sin. In our infancy we passed through the waters of baptism, a sacrament of most important significancy; by which we are admitted members of Christ's visible church. But this baptism by water is only "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace;" and when we come to age, we are supposed to understand its spiritual import, and to examine ourselves whether the soul hath indeed acquired "the grace" thereby signified, or whether it yet remains in its original, and unrenewed state.

“The inward and spiritual grace” here spoken of, is declared by our church to be “A death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness.”* The baptism by water is a type of the spiritual baptism, which is “by fire and the Holy Ghost.” This was plainly indicated by the *forerunner* of Christ, who first began to baptize with water: “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance,” said John the Baptist, “but he that cometh *after* me is mightier than I, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”—*Mat.* iii. 11. This is the true and spiritual baptism to which the heavenly Gospel invites the sons of men; and many there are who have come to this baptism in their old age, even “at the eleventh hour.”

III. When we contemplate the salubrious fountain in this place, which has been beneficial to men in successive generations, we may behold in it a fit emblem of “the fountain opened for sin, by the blood of the Lamb;” which has healed the souls of multitudes in every age, and which will continue to flow and to wash away sin, as long as the pardon of sin shall be asked by man.

“There is a fountain op'd for sin,
 “Fill'd with Immanuel's blood,
 “More healing than Bethesda's pool,
 “Or famed Siloam's flood.”†

It hath pleased God, in adopting human words to express spiritual things, in his revelation to man, to represent the atoning virtue of the sacrifice of his son by the figure of “a fountain,” and also of “living or flowing waters;” and we ought not to hesitate to use these words to express the sense which scripture intends; for we may be sure that there is no other expression more fit and significant. “In that day,” saith the prophet, “there shall be a FOUNTAIN opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness.” And again, “It shall be in that day that LIVING

* See Catechism of the Church of England.

† See Kempthorne's Hymns, page 89.

WATERS shall go out from Jerusalem"—*Zech.* xiv. 8. They are called "living waters" because they give *life* to the souls of men, which are by nature *dead* in sin. And in the vision of Ezekiel, these waters are represented as flowing from the sanctuary, like a *river*; of which it is said, "and it shall come to pass, that every thing shall *live* whither the river cometh"—*Ezek.* xlvii. 9.

Let every one then inquire for himself whether he hath come to this healing "fountain," and known the virtue of the "living waters;" or, to lay aside the figure of scripture, whether he hath come to "the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin;" and "being justified by faith, hath obtained peace with God."—*Rom.* v. 1. If we would enjoy happiness in heaven, a time must come to every one of us when the soul shall thus approach God in faith and penitence, and seek to be cleansed of its guilt in the atoning blood. If such a time hath not come to a man, he is yet in his sins. There are, indeed, many who do not thus approach God; and it will be proper here to describe their state and character.

There are in the first place some who refuse to come to this fountain, from *pride of intellect*; despising as too simple the way of salvation which the divine wisdom hath ordained. They allege (in spirit at least, if not in words) that they have opened a fountain for themselves, in which they may wash and be clean. And this fountain is their own *works* and merits. Their unbelief resists the idea that their sins are to be washed out by means so simple as faith in the atonement of *another*. Self is to be the Saviour, even when the *name* of a Mediator is admitted. And this is the fountain of atonement which corrupt nature opens to itself, and which is equally relied on at this day, though under a different name, by the heathen idolater, and the unbelieving philosopher. This state of heart is illustrated to us in scripture by the history of Naaman the Syrian.

Naaman was a heathen, and "captain of the host of the king of Syria, a great man with his master, and honorable; he was

also a mighty man in valor ; but he was a *leper*." The leprosy was a disease which could not be cured by human medicaments. Under the Mosaic law it represented the malady of sin, which only can be cured by the power of God. Naaman came, therefore, to the land of Israel (the land of miracle) to the prophet Elisha, that he "might be miraculously cured of his leprosy." "So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha" in great pomp ; expecting that the prophet would come out and do honour to his greatness. He had moreover brought with him "ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold." But Elisha sent a message to him by a servant (even as Christ sends the message of salvation by his ministers) saying, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times." But Naaman had no faith in so simple a remedy ; and he absolutely refused to try it. Besides his pride was offended, that his human acquisitions were estimated as *nothing* in the sight of the prophet of God ; and he said, "Behold, I thought that the prophet would surely COME OUT to me," and perform certain ceremonies, "and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus (in mine own country) better than all the waters of Israel ? May I not wash in them and be clean ? And he went away in a rage." But his servants intreated him to be obedient to the word of the prophet, and to try the appointed mode of cure, however simple it might be. After a struggle with himself, his pride and reluctance were in some degree subdued, and "then went he down and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God, and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."—*2 Kings* v. 12. Our Saviour hath, in the Gospel, referred to the history of "Naaman the Syrian, when he would illustrate the conduct of men who despise the way of salvation revealed from heaven, because the means are simple, and the instrument may be humble : for they had said, "Is not this Joseph's son ?"—*Luke* iv. 27.

The history of Naaman affords a lively illustration of the causes which prevent men at this day from coming to the "waters of life," whether considered as the laver of regeneration, or the fountain of atonement. In regard to the first, they condemn the simple ordinance of baptism, and say, "What virtue can there be in the waters of baptism? Are not the waters of Abana and Pharpar as good?" It is true, the element is the same. But the answer is, "These rites of ablution are God's *appointed means*." They are ordained to be a test of man's humility and faith; that the proud man may stand self-condemned before men and angels, like Naaman in a rage at the door of Elisha. "Until a man's pride be subdued, he cannot be saved by the Gospel of Christ." Again, in regard to "the fountain which hath been opened for sin," they say, "Is there not a better fountain than this *in our own country*, in which we may wash and be clean? And they turn away from it in a rage," and condemn others for going to it, saying, "Faith without works leads to licentiousness:"—the same speech which certain ungodly men addressed to the apostle Paul. Human wisdom and philosophy (the Abana and Pharpar of this country) furnish more rational methods of cleansing, as they think; and they try these methods; but the leprosy of sin cleaves to them still. Happy the man, who, renouncing his pride and unbelief, submits before he die, to wash in that fountain which is opened for sin and uncleanness!

There are others who consider this fountain as far remote and inaccessible, and view it with a hopeless eye. They do not so much argue against its existence or efficacy, as despair of its being beneficial to *them*. They perceive that they are *deep in sin*, and apprehend that their stains can never be washed out. But amidst these doubts they seek not the Spirit of God to reside within them, according to the admonition of our Saviour: so that their hearts (like habitations "swept and garnished,") are ready to receive the spirit of "the wicked one," who leads them onward from one degree of despondency to

another, till at last they begin to entertain thoughts of terminating their existence. They turn away from the fountain of life and plunge into the gulph of despair.

Others there are who contemplate the fountain of salvation with hope, and ardently desire to find it beneficial to their souls; but their habits of sin have been so inveterate that they feel that nothing but a divine power can change their hearts. And this is indeed true; the whole man must be changed, and it requires a divine power. But God hath graciously promised that it shall be given. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh; and I will put my Spirit within you."—*Ezek. xxxvi. 26.* And in regard to the *guilt* which they may have already contracted, the evangelic promise runs in these terms;—"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as white as snow."—*Isa. i. 18.* There is no impediment from God in the way of the most guilty, to come to the waters of life. "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters."—*Isa. iv. 1.*; and this the prophet spake, in anticipation of the "living waters which were to go forth from Jerusalem." And when Jesus himself appeared in the flesh, he stood and cried, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink."—Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise "cast out."—*John vi. 37.* There is no obstacle to coming to the waters of life, arising from the *greatness of our sin.*

CONCLUSION.

The blessedness of the Man who cometh to the living waters.

THE invitation to the living waters is expressed in the Gospel in the strongest terms of persuasion and encouragement that language can supply; and there is sometimes an ardor of entreaty in the words, to which even the heart of him who but imperfectly understands them, must desire to respond; as in the following passage in the last chapter of the Bible. "And the

Spirit and the Bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."—*Rev.* xxii. 17. When once the heart becomes obedient to this invitation, and the sinner, laying aside his pride, approaches in humility of spirit, and saith, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God," then the purpose of the grand dispensation which brought the Son of God from heaven, is answered in regard to that soul. The soul's acceptance of eternal life is a great event in heaven and earth. It is a greater event in the view "of angels and of just men made perfect," than the conflicts of armies, or the revolution of empire; for "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."—*Luke* xiii. 10. It is a transaction, I say, more illustrious in the contemplation of the heavenly host, than the grandest scenes produced by human power, wisdom, or greatness; for these are, in their nature, temporal, but that is eternal. It is of yet greater consequence to the individual himself. It is an important æra in the life of man, when, after a long struggle between God and the world, between duty and pleasure, between the voice of conscience, and the calls of ambition, between the fear of reproach, and the approbation of heaven, he deliberately resolves to lay aside the grand plans he had formed for this world, and setting his face Zion-ward, begins to fulfil the great purpose for which he was sent into the world. There is now a termination of all the pains and inquietudes of the soul; for he hath "come to Christ, who giveth REST."—*Mat.* xi. 28. Now also the enjoyment of this life (that practicable enjoyment which God intended) commences. God's Providence is always in view, like "the cloud by day and the fire by night" to the children of Israel travelling through the wilderness. There is thankfulness of heart for continued benefits, which is to the soul as a continued feast. And, above all, there is the frequent exercise of prayer and praise; an exercise more grateful than any which was ever before enjoyed, and now more to be desired than the

most splendid and interesting scenes which human power or wealth can exhibit, honored even with the presence of kings and princes; and the soul looks forward with delight to the enjoyment of the same spiritual exercise with the great company of the redeemed before the throne of God. Henceforward also there is a love for the house of God, and for the assembly of his saints, which can only be described in the words of the King of Israel; "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord." He even envied the swallow and sparrow which had found an habitation there. "Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, even thine altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God."—*Ps.* lxxxiv. 1. This is a state of mind "passes all understanding" of the men of the world. Even to those who have cultivated science to the utmost boundary of human attainment, or who have ruled kingdoms and swayed the world by their powers of mind, such *fervent love of an unseen Deity* is something beyond the power of conception. It implies an union or communion, like that mentioned by our Saviour in the New Testament, "I am the Vine: ye are the branches."—*John* xv. 3. It seems to them, as if they must enter on some new state of being, to understand it. Except, indeed, at the close of life, "when flesh and heart melt," and the soul ready to take its flight, and feeling itself in the hand of God, looks out with anxiety and terror for some foundation of hope;—then they begin to think that such a state of mind is attainable in this world.

Our Saviour has, in a certain place, a beautiful allusion to the blessedness, even in this life, of the man who has drank of the living waters. "He shall *thirst* no more." He refers to the tranquil and *satisfied* state of mind, and exemption from all worldly solicitude, which accompany the heavenly draught. When our Lord sat at the well of Samaria, he said unto the woman who was drawing water, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink,

thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." And then he added, "Whosoever drinketh of THIS water shall thirst against; but 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 springing up into everlasting life."—*John iv. 14.*

These are solemn words, and of eternal import. May they sink deep into the heart of every one who hears them! "Whosoever drinketh of *this* water shall thirst again." Whosoever thirsts for the enjoyments of this life alone, shall never be satisfied. He who drinks of our medicinal well shall thirst again. He who only seeks the health of the *body*, will not be satisfied with the restoration of bodily health; but he who seeketh the health of the soul, and "hungereth and thirsteth after righteousness, shall be filled." *He shall thirst no more*; for he will drink of the living fountain, which "will be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

May all who drink of the fountain in this place, be taught to drink of the living fountain! I pray that the heavenly benediction may descend on every poor sufferer who bows the head to taste of these waters; and that God would give to them their healing virtue to repair his bodily strength and relieve his pains. But especially, I pray that his visit to this place may be accompanied by a spiritual blessing, and that it may appear hereafter that Providence hath led him to this well, as formerly a sinful woman was led to the well of Samaria, that he might obtain eternal life. *Amen.*

NOTE TO PAGE 20.

It is not to be wondered at, that some persons of liberal education should have such imperfect notions of Christian doctrine; for they derive their Divinity (if it may be called such) from the works of men, as if it were some human science, and not from the Bible. They take their systems from some two or three authors known in their particular society, in favor of whom they have had an early prepossession; and merely refer to Scripture (if they ever refer to it at all) for the quotations which support their system. In this way a man may become a Papist, a Socinian, a Calvinist, or an Arminian. But in this way, he will hardly become a *Christian*, and "an heir of eternal life." Let us remember the words of our Lord on this sub-

ject; "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye have eternal life." He who being qualified by Providence *to read*, does not search the Scriptures, is not worthy of the Scriptures, and will not be likely to find out the religion which they teach. The opinions of authors of this description (whose very language shews that they have not "searched the Scriptures") are not worthy of notice. Our Saviour has, again, cautioned us against following implicitly the opinions of *men* of any attainments, or calling any man master; saying, "One is your master, even Christ. Call no man your father, upon the earth."—*Mat.* xxiii. 9. To this reverence for "names upon the earth," are to be ascribed chiefly those contests about doctrines and modes of worship, in which men sometimes wear away their lives, quoting each other, and "calling many men masters." Hence, also proceeds the *hatred* to names of an opposite opinion. One man writes a book to prove that he is not a Calvinist, or that his church or sect is not Calvinistic; another, that he is not Arminian, or that his church is not Arminian; and neither of them, it may be, proves that he is a Christian. But he thinks that he has done somewhat, if he has taken his rank in the *human* scale;—and having assumed this, he too often slumbers quietly in his place to the end of life. Whereas he ought to have known, that one week's labor in "preaching the word of life" to his flock, is more characteristic of a shepherd of the sheep, than a whole year dedicated to such volumes; in composing which, moreover, conscience too often bears witness that we are anxious and laborious architects of our own fame, and are building up ourselves, instead of the church.

To the same source also is to be ascribed an opinion very common among superficial theologians, namely,—that every man, as well as themselves, must necessarily rank himself under some standard, and "call some man master;"—than which there cannot be a sentiment more unfounded. The intelligent Christian (like Paul the Apostle) acknowledges no name but that of Christ. Those ministers of Christ who are chiefly instrumental in promoting his spiritual kingdom at this day, would be ashamed of the imputation, that they had taken their theology from any *man*. No; they have it "not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ,"—*Gal.* i. 1.; and to this high extraction of their doctrine they owe their success in preaching it to the people; a success which is wondered at by some, and unaccountable by them on any principles which compose their system.

But this propensity to render the religion of Christ a human system is so general, that almost every man at this day, whose labors are useful in the church, is supposed to adhere to the tenets of some "master," and most generally, of Calvin or Arminius. Nothing can so fully prove our assertion, "that in this age, as in that of the Apostle, many persons of liberal education know little of what is passing in the church of Christ," (which is confined to no particular communion) than such a supposition. CALVIN and ARMINIUS! Is it not an insult to men of intelligence and learning, humbly receiving the revelation of God, to suppose, that instead of drawing pure water from the fountain-head, they should drink from such shallow and turbid streams! CALVIN and ARMINIUS! These might possibly have been very respectable men in their day (the former, indeed, has shewn in his works more classical learning, profound knowledge of the Scriptures, splendid eloquence, and exalted powers of mind, than are to be found in the united works of the principal polemical divines of the present day); but to compare the creed of Calvin or Arminius with the life-giving doctrine of Christ, as illustrated by his "chosen vessel" Paul the Apostle, would be to compare (if things so dissimilar may be brought together) a hedge-stake to "Aaron's rod that budded."

DR. BUCHANAN'S SPEECH

RELATIVE TO THE STATE OF

THE JEWS IN THE EAST,

DELIVERED AT THE PUBLIC MEETING OF

THE LONDON SOCIETY,

FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIANITY

Amongst the Jews.

DURING my residence in the East, my mind was much occupied with the present state and circumstances of the JEWS. I visited them in different provinces, examined their books, and discoursed with them on the subject of the prophecies, and I found that no where do they despair of being restored to Jerusalem; no where do they despair of beholding their Messiah. It is with great satisfaction, then, that on my return to England, I contemplate the establishment of your society. It is, indeed, with much surprise I behold three hundred gentlemen assembled on the present occasion, under the patronage of noblemen of our country, to promote this noble design. The sudden elevation of your Institution, and the interest which it has almost instantaneously created in the public mind, are sure prognostics of perpetuity.—It is one of those institutions which, like the BIBLE SOCIETY, need only to be proposed, to recommend itself to the minds of men, by its perfect reasonableness and propriety; and I may add, by the Divine obligation it involves. I entertain a confident hope that this society, or some institution analogous to it, will be perpetual in the Church of Christ, and that it will endure, to use an oriental expression, as long as sun and moon endure; or, at least, as long as there is a Jew in the world who is not a Christian.

There is a measure I would propose to the consideration of

your society, which I think will contribute to its celebrity and success : which is to open a correspondence with the Jews in the East.

Perhaps it may not be known to some, that by the events of the late war in India, a colony of Jews have become subject to Great Britain. This is the colony of the white and black Jews of Cochin. The number is calculated to be about 16,000. Mr. Frey informs me that the number of Jews in the united kingdom is not reputed to be greater than 14,000. So that our Jewish subjects in the East are yet more numerous than those in the West ; and they are equally entitled to the regard and attention of your society.

I visited Cochin soon after the conquest of the province. The Jews received me hospitably, and permitted me to examine their libraries and their synagogues ; and they presented to me many valuable manuscripts, which are now deposited in the library of the university of Cambridge. One of these is a roll of the Pentateuch, on goat skins dyed red ; one of the most ancient perhaps which the East can produce. The white Jews live on the sea coast, and have commerce with foreign nations : the black Jews live chiefly in the interior of the country. The Hindoos call them ISRAELI : they call themselves BENI-ISRAEL, and not JEWS ; for their ancestors did not belong to Judah, but to the kingdom of Israel. They consider themselves to be descended from those tribes who were carried away at the first captivity.—In some parts of the East, the Beni-Israel never heard of the second temple. They never heard of the Christian account of the coming of the Messiah. Some of them possess only the Pentateuch and Psalms, and Book of Job.—Others have no portion of scripture left. But their countenance, and their observance of the sabbath and of peculiar rites, demonstrate that they are Jews. The white Jews at Cochin, despise the black Jews as being of an inferior cast, and do not approve of intermarriages with them, because they do not belong to the second temple. Both among white and black Jews, I found that there was a general impression that there would soon be a rumour of wars, and a commotion among the PEOPLE, on their account. The white Jews expect a second Cyrus from the West, who shall build their temple the THIRD and LAST time.

You may address the Jews of Cochin with great advantage on the subject of the Christian religion, for they have the evidence of the Syrian Christians before them.

These ancient Christians live in the vicinity, and are YOUR witnesses. At one place, in the interior of the country, which

I visited, there is a Jewish synagogue and a Christian church in the same Hindoo village. They stand opposite to each other : as it were the LAW and the GOSPEL : bearing testimony to the truth, in the presence of the heathen world.

I was informed that many years ago one of the Jews translated the New Testament into Hebrew, for the purpose of confuting it, and of repelling the arguments of his neighbors, the Syrian Christians. The manuscript fell into my hands, and is now in the library of the university of Cambridge. It is in his own hand writing ; and will be of great use in preparing a version of the New Testament in the Hebrew language. It appears to be a faithful translation, as far as it has been examined ; but about the end, when he came to the epistles of St. Paul, he seems to have lost his temper, being moved perhaps by the acute argument of the learned BENJAMITE, as he calls the Apostle, and he has written a note of execration on his memory. But behold the providence of God ! The translator became himself a convert to Christianity. His own work subdued his unbelief. IN THE LION HE FOUND SWEETNESS ; and he lived and died in the faith of Christ. And now it is a common superstition among the vulgar in that place, that if any Jew shall write the whole of the New Testament with his own hand, he will be a Christian by the influence of the evil spirit.

This event occurred in the south of India : but a conversion no less remarkable took place, some time afterwards, in the north. Jacob Levi, a Jew from Smyrna, travelled over land to Calcutta, and heard the Gospel from one of the Lutheran preachers belonging to the Society for promoting Christian knowledge, and became a convert to the truth. He delivered a testimony to the Jews, Hindoos, Mahomedans, and Christians ; for he was acquainted with various languages, and spoke eloquently, like Apollos. But his course was short. He was ordained (like many witnesses of the Christian faith) to shine but for a moment. These solitary instances of the power of the Gospel seem to occur in almost every nation, previous to the general illumination. This conversion of Jacob Levi is recorded in the proceedings of the Society in Bartlett's Buildings, London.

But there is another body of Jews, not a colony but a kingdom of Jews, to which this Society may also address itself ; and this is the Ten Tribes. For we have reason to believe that the Ten Tribes, so long lost, if they exist in a body at all, have at length been found. It has been sufficiently ascertained, by the investigations of the learned in India, that the Aff-

ghan nation consists of the descendants of the Jewish Tribes of the first dispersion.

When I was in the south of India, I asked the black Jews, where their brethren the great body of the Ten Tribes, were to be found? They answered promptly, that they were to be found in the north, in the regions adjacent to Chaldea, the very country whither they were first carried into captivity. On my return to Calcutta I prosecuted the inquiry, under the advantages which the learned natives of the College of Fort William afforded me. Sir William Jones had recorded it as his opinion, that the Affghans were Jews, and referred to various authorities. A further investigation confirmed the judgment of that illustrious scholar. There were Affghan Jews in Calcutta at the time: one of my own servants was an Affghan. The Affghans are generally reputed by us to be Mahomedans, I asked my servant if he was a Mahomedan? "No, said he, I am a Mahomedan Jew." I plainly discerned in his countenance the features of the London Jew. The general account of the Affghans is this:—That their ancestors were Jews—that their common histories record the names of David, Saul, and other kings of Israel—that the Mahomedans came upon them with an invading army, and said unto them, We are Jews as well as you: we observe circumcision and keep the sabbath; let us incorporate our nations, and be one people, and unite against the Infidels—that they made a shew of yielding to Mahomedanism (as the Jews of Spain and Portugal pretended to yield to Christianity); but in process of time the ascendancy of the new religion corrupted their ancient institutions: their sacred books began to diminish in number; and it came to pass at last, that in many places they could be only recognized to be Jews by their countenance—by tradition—by peculiar rites, and the observance of the Sabbath; which are the only marks which distinguish some of the Beni-Israel of the south of India. Let us, therefore, address the Ten Tribes, and receive them in the state in which, by the providence of God, they are to be found. Some of the Jews of London are as ignorant, and as little entitled to the name, as the Affghans of India.

But there is a third body of Jews to whom you ought to write: I mean the SAMARITAN JEWS. They are not far from the shores of the Mediterranean, and are easily accessible. They possess only the Pentateuch. They are few in number, and will receive with much deference any communication which you will be pleased to make to them relating to their religion and to the present state of Jewish nations.

Let letters then be addressed to these three bodies of Israelites ; not in the names of CHRISTIANS, but in the name of converted JEWS, who compose a part of this society. Let Mr. Frey write to them, not in the rabbinical Hebrew (for there are upwards of twenty dialects of rabbinical or commercial Hebrews in the world), but in the Hebrew of the Old Testament, which all understand ; let him inform them of the great events that have taken place in the west, namely that Jews have become Christians ; that the Christians are sending forth preachers to teach all nations ; that the Messiah is surely come ; and that the signs of the times encourage the belief that Israel is about to be restored, in a spiritual sense. Let him further direct their attention to particular PROPHECIES, and invite correspondence. And after Mr. Frey has exercised his ministry a year or two longer in this country, he may go forth as a missionary to the Jews of Cochin, with some of his brethren, that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." After preaching among them for a time, he may return again, and report what he has heard and seen.

But when you write these letters, a PRESENT must accompany them after the oriental manner. And let this present be the BIBLE. You need not, indeed, send the Old Testament to all ; for the Jews of the East possess that book intire, with every jot and tittle that belongs to it. They are OUR LIBRARIANS. They are ordained by Providence, as it were, to be the official guardians of the perpetual purity of the sacred volume. But you must send them the NEW TESTAMENT in the Hebrew tongue : in the language and character of the Old Testament, which all understand and revere. And let it have the MASSORA, that the text may be settled by good authority, before it pass out of your hands. We Christians are, in regard to the New Testament, the Massorites ; we are qualified to determine the sense. If the version be sent forth without POINTS, the words of our Saviour may be expounded by the eastern Jews in different ways.—The Arabic, Persian, Chaldaic, and Syriac languages, all have points. You may take them away, indeed, as has been done in the Old Testament Hebrew ; but if you do so, you will not be able to understand what is written, unless you have got it previously by heart. All the children learn these languages in the east, with points ; and they are constantly used by grown persons when the sense is doubtful. A letter, without points, on a new and difficult subject would be an enigma. It is commonly said in Europe, that "the points are not of Divine ori-

gin." But I do not understand the meaning of these words. If the CONSONANTS be of Divine origin, the VOWELS are of Divine origin. The consonants cannot be pronounced without the vowels. A consonant implies the presence of a vowel. The Hebrew consonants, which are said to be of divine origin, were changed in form by a heathen people. A child, in the time of Moses, would not have been able to learn the Book of Genesis without points. When he had got it by heart, indeed, the points would be of no use: and for this reason, and for no other, are they not used in the synagogue. It is sometimes the labor of ten years for the Hebrew reader in the synagogue to learn to read the scriptures without points. Had not providence ordained the Massora of the Old Testament, it is impossible to say how great our difficulty might have been in translating that volume at this day: but the same providence which has preserved the CONSONANTS, has preserved the VOWELS also. Neither do we know that EVERY consonant (which is thus said to be of Divine origin) is preserved. Nor is it necessary it should.

It is with surprise I learn, that as yet you have not obtained a version of the New Testament in the Hebrew language, for the use of the Jews. It is surely the very first duty of your society to execute this translation. You are beginning to work without instruments. How can you find fault with a Jew for not believing the New Testament if he has never seen it? It is not to be expected that he will respect a version in English: but give him the New Testament, in the language of the Old Testament, in the imposing form of the primæval Hebrew, the character which he is accustomed to venerate and admire, and then you do justice to his weakness, and may overcome his prejudice.

How strange it appears, that during a period of eighteen hundred years, the Christians should never have given the Jews the New Testament in their own language! By a kind of infatuation, they have reprobated the unbelief of the Jews, and have never at the same time told them what they ought to believe.

I shall conclude with observing, that the chief difficulties which this society will probably meet with, will be from the opposing Jews at home. But when they see that your converts multiply in number, and when they hear that you are writing to other nations, regardless of their ignorance and opposition; when they learn that you have *discovered the ten tribes*, that you have sent to them the *New Testament* in the Holy language; that you are discussing with them the subject of

the *prophecies*, and that Mr. Frey and his brethren are going forth as "*ambassadors*, in light ships, to carry the tidings of gladness to a nation scattered and peeled, terrible from their beginning hitherto," Isaiah xviii. ; the *hostile* Jews will be alarmed, their spirits will sink within them, and they will begin to think that a great day in Zion is at hand.

Every time you meet here in this public manner, in the presence of the Israelites, your cause acquires strength.—Every time that these *annual sermons* are preached, and the *voice of prayer* and supplication for the outcasts of Israel ascends to Heaven, it is like the *blast* of the *rams' horns* before the walls of Jericho : and so the enemy will soon begin to consider it : and I doubt not that before you have encompassed the walls *seven* times, an impression will be made.—It may be the will of God, that before the *trumpet* of your anniversary assemblies has been *seven* times sounded, the wall will begin to shake, a breach will be made, and *Joshua*, the spiritual *Joshua*, will enter and take the city.

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