

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 / By the Rev. Claudius Buchanan.

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THE
HEALING WATERS
OF
Bethesda;
A
S E R M O N
PREACHED AT BUXTON WELLS:

THE LIFE OF

WALTER

THE

REALLING WATERS

OF

OF

WATERS

WATERS

PRINTED AT WILTON WATERS

Emma Leighton

THE
HEALING WATERS

OF

Bethesda;

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT BUXTON WELLS,

TO

THE COMPANY ASSEMBLED THERE FOR THE BENEFIT
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.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES, STRAND.

BY J. M'CREERY, BLACK-HORSE-COURT.

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THE
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OF
Sedburgh
A
SERMON
PREACHED AT BUXTON WELLS
TO
BY
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LONDON:
PRINTED BY T. GADSDEN AND W. SAVIN, ST. MARTIN'S LANE.
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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

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 sea-

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 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. Ann'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 suite 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 expense 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.

son, 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 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

* The heat of the medicinal spring, called St. Ann'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?"

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. †

Our Saviour beholding this solemnity of drawing water on the great Feast-day, improved it to 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

"sea? or hast thou walked in search of the depth?"—*Job* xxxviii. 16. Whether 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.

*—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 נִסּוּךְ הַמַּיִם *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.

“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 Evangelist, has been but seldom noticed; but to me it seems to in-

* 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 בית שואבה *Beth Suaba*, the place of a draught? Answer: דנת הקורש משם שאבים 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 Targums.

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

volve 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.

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."

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.

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 presented 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 an-
 “ swered, 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 now come 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 ex-
 pressly appointed by our Saviour himself, as the initiatory rite
 of his religion.* By this institution of Baptism our Lord

* 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 set-
 “ teth

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 toward 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 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

"teth forth the water of baptism, curing all manner of diseases of sin, and making those that descend to it dead, to come out alive."

“ 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 this 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 remain-
 ed 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 to 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 alledge 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 be-

lieve 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. 21. 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 a 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 un-

hallowed 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 controul 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 in 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 honor, 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 understand-

ing 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 repen-

* 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."

tance 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 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 co-operate 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 began 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 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

* Whitsunday, or Day of Pentecost.

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 man 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.”*

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,

* See note at the end.

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 "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 honour” with the world, but “seeketh not the honour which cometh from God.” *Man that is in HONOUR, 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

* See Catechism of the Church of England.

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

* See Kempthorne's Hymns, page 89.

“ that LIVING 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 honourable; he was also a mighty man in valour; 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 entreated 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 ab-lution 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.”—*Is. 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.”—*Is. lv. 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 revolutions of empire; for "there is joy in "the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that re- "penteth."—*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, honoured 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 “ which 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. 5. 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 that tranquil and *satisfied* state of mind, and exemption from all wordly 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 again; 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 23.

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 system 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 subject; “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 labour 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 them-

selves, 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 labours 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."

FINIS.