

THE

# GOOD NEWS.

A SEMI-MONTHLY PERIODICAL:

DEVOTED to the RELIGIOUS EDUCATION of the OLD AND YOUNG

## THE WELL OF WATER.

A SERMON PREACHED BY THE REV. W. B. CLARK, OF QUEBEC, AT THE OPENING OF THE SYNOD OF THE LATE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, AT MONTREAL, JUNE 4TH, 1861.

"And from thence they went to Beer; that is the well, whereof the Lord spake unto Moses,—Gather the people together and I will give them water. Then Israel sang this song,—Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it. The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the Lawgiver, with their staves."—Numbers xxi. 16-18.

The Jewish people, as a race, had nothing prepossessing about them; considered as a nation, they had no peculiar excellence to recommend them. They were no way distinguished above other nations for any superiority in arts, or in arms. They did not establish, like the Assyrians, or Persians, a mighty empire, and dazzle the world by the splendor, or extent of these conquests. They did not, like the Greeks, excel in science, or literature, or the arts, and transmit imperishable monuments of their genius to all future ages. They did not, like the Romans, excel in the science of government, and stamp the evidence of the practical, and common sense character of their mind, on great works of public usefulness, which have been transmitted to our times.

They were favoured by God, above all other nations, not because of any peculiar excellence in themselves; but because they were the descendants of Abraham His friend; and because He had chosen them as the depositaries of His truth, in the midst of a world given over wholly to superstition and idolatry. It is because of the peculiar relation, in which they stood to God, that their history possesses for us an interest so vastly superior to that of any other nation. Their history is the history of God's Church; and, in the inspired record of it, the veil is partially drawn aside, which hides the spiritual from mortal vision,

and we see the Divine hand at work, in regard to the affairs of men.

But there is another respect, in which the history of the Jews is of vast, and never to be exhausted interest to men. It is a history fraught with divine instruction to men in all ages. In it God teaches by events, the grandest moral and religious truths, just as men attempt to teach them, by parable and story. The Jews were a typical, or representative people, and their history, in all its grand, leading features, is symbolical or emblematic of something corresponding, in the spiritual history of man. Thus, while their wanderings in the desert were emblematic of man's pilgrimages through the wilderness of this life, their rest in Canaan was typical of the rest which remaineth for the people of God in heaven. And there can be no doubt, in the mind of any one, who draws his doctrines from the Bible, that many of the particular incidents in their history, were symbolical of corresponding events in man's spiritual history. "Now all these things," says St. Paul, with reference to some of the leading events in their history, "happened unto them for types; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."— Thus the murmuring and discontent of the Israelites in the desert, finds a counterpart in man's general dissatisfaction with his present condition, and ingratitude to God for the blessings which he enjoys. Thus