Before Elisha's gate
NaamanJohn Newton, 1779,
from Olney Hymns, vol. 1, hymn 38

Before Elisha's gate
The Syrian leper stood;
But could not brook to wait,
He deemed himself too good:
He thought the prophet would attend,
And not to him a message send.

2. Have I this journey come,
And will he not be seen?
I were as well at home,
Would washing make me clean:
Why must I wash in Jordan's flood?
Damascus' rivers are as good.

3. Thus by his foolish pride
He almost missed a cure;
Howe'er at length he tried,
And found the method sure:
Soon as his pride was brought to yield,
The leprosy was quickly healed.

4. Leprous and proud as he,
To Jesus thus I came,
From sin to set me free,
When first I heard his fame:
Surely, thought I, my pompous train
Of vows and tears will notice gain.

5. My heart devised the way
Which I supposed he'd take;
And when I found delay,
Was ready to go back:
Had he some painful task enjoined,
I to performance seemed inclined.

6. When by his word he spake,
That fountain opened see;
'Twas opened for thy sake,
Go wash, and thou art free:
O! how did my proud heart gainsay,
I feared to trust this simple way.

7. At length I trial made,
When I had much endured;
The message I obeyed,
I washed, and I was cured:
Sinners this healing fountain try,
Which cleansed a wretch so vile as I.