

Rock Turned to Water

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What a thirsty crowd! How they hasten to catch the flowing water, and cool their parched lips, and quench their burning thirst! A little while before, they could see nothing but death before them, and were almost ready to stone Moses, whom they looked upon as the cause of all their troubles.

How could this be, when day by day the manna fell from heaven to feed them, and the pillar of cloud and fire was ever in their sight, proclaiming the presence of God with them, and showing that they were divinely led?

Ah! God "was grieved" with them, because, He said, "they saw My works," but "they did not learn My ways." If they had learnt His ways, they would have rejoiced at every fresh difficulty, because it was but another opportunity for God to show them His mighty works, and His marvellous loving-kindness, and their deliverance.

But instead of quietly waiting to see how God was going to provide them with water, they "strove with Moses," and wished that they had stayed in Egypt.

Do you think that these people were very rebellious, hard-hearted, and unbelieving? Yes, they were; but not more so than we, if ever we doubt the love and care of God for us, if ever we murmur or fear when in a trial or difficulty.

But they had manna falling from the skies every day; they had seen the waters of the sea divided to make a path for them; they could see the glory of the Lord in the pillar of fire, you say.

And have not we from our birth been daily fed by our loving Heavenly Father sending us bread from the skies? for "every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father."

Have we not seen His mighty power holding back the waters of the sea, saying, "Thus far shalt thou come, but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed"? Is He not now dividing the waters above from the waters below the firmament, that we may have a place to live?

Do we not see the tokens of His presence everywhere, His glory in the cloud? We may, for "the heavens declare the glory of God," and "the whole earth is full of His glory."

Yes; we are seeing His works daily and hourly, as much as did the Israelites. Are we learning His ways, learning so to know Him that we trust Him and rest in His power and love, everywhere and under all circumstances? If not, we are quite as much to blame as the unbelieving Israelites, and God is as grieved with us as with them.

"How oft did they rebel against Him in the wilderness,

And grieve Him in the desert!”

“But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not.”

God said to Moses, “Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of all the elders of Israel.”

Then the water had been with them all the time, had it not? But because of their unbelief they had not seen it, and they had mourned because there was no water, when the living Rock was with them; for “they drank of that spiritual Rock that went with them, and that Rock was Christ.”

Notice that they drank not from the Rock only, but of the Rock; for God

“turned the rock into a pool of water,
The flint into a fountain of waters.”

You do not see much likeness between rock and water, do you? And if you were thirsty would not think that you could quench your thirst with a piece of rock. But all things are alike to God, for all are made by His Word. All things that we see are only different forms of the same thing—the Word of God.

That Word which formed everything, can change everything. The Word which caused light to shine out of darkness, can turn rock to water, or water to rock, and stones into bread. Indeed, God is doing this all the time, for He is taking up in the plants the minerals which form the stones and rocks, and changing them into food for us.

Many like wonders God is constantly doing for us by His Word. Remember that “man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord,” and study the wondrous working of that almighty Word in all creation.

They drank of the Rock, and “that Rock was Christ.” Therefore they drank of Christ. Water is life. Look in our picture at the fainting form of the child in its mother's arms. [no picture on the CD-ROM] Without water they would all soon have died. But they lived by the life of Christ given to them in the water flowing from the Rock, the smitten Rock.

Here was a wonderful object lesson for them, and it was written for us. Why had the Rock to be smitten before its life-giving streams flowed forth, and “ran in the dry places like a river?”

Think this over through the week, and the question will be answered in our next number.