

the poison infused into their system, by the fiery serpents, was emblematic of the ruin brought upon man by sin; whilst the providing of the brazen serpent, and the deliverance of the people by simply looking upon it, in faith, was emblematic of our salvation by looking in faith to Jesus.

I am aware that imaginative men have sometimes found analogies, where none are intended; there can be no doubt, however, that the brazen serpent was a type of Christ, for the New Testament speaks, with sufficient plainness, in reference to that.—And we have equal scriptural authority for believing that the rock smitten in the desert from which the water gushed forth, was emblematic of Christ. Paul says of the Israelites, that they drank of that rock which followed them all the way, and that rock was Christ. And if the smitten rock symbolized a smitten Saviour, the water that gushed from it was an emblem of the Holy Spirit, whose gift flowed from the death of Christ.

There is no emblem so frequently employed in Scripture, as water, to denote the Holy Spirit. Thus we find Jesus saying on the last, which was the great day of the feast of tabernacles, when He saw the Jews drawing water out of the pool of Siloam, and bringing it into the Temple with great ceremony, in a golden vessel, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."—And St. John adds, by way of explanation, "but this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive." We know then, from the teaching of the Saviour himself, that water is employed in Scripture as an emblem of the Spirit; and we find it frequently used in this sense.—It cannot therefore be thought strange, if we interpret the water spoken of in the text, which God promised to bestow on the Israelites, as emblematic of the Holy Spirit, I do not mean to say that the incident here recorded was not a real event in the history of the Israelites, but it was one of those representative, or typical events, which was meant to lead men to look beyond itself,—from the carnal to the Spiritual. It is one of those events fraught with instruction to men in all ages; and I shall, in humble dependence on the promised aid of the

Holy Spirit, employ it, for our comfort and encouragement, and direction on the present occasion. And

I. I would draw from it instruction, as to the duty of ministers of the gospel, in regard to the Spiritual edification of their people.

There can be no doubt that it is the grand, the distinguishing and the most important part of the duty of a minister of the gospel to conduct the worship of God. For this the most careful preparation ought to be made, that God may be glorified, and that it may be rendered profitable, and attractive to the people; and to the regular and due performance of this duty every thing else ought to give way. The ordinance of public worship was appointed by God. It is that by which He is most honored, and it is that which He most honors and blesses with His gracious presence. Thus when, through the instrumentality of Moses, He would perform the glorious miracle of bringing water out of the rock, He made him first gather the assembly of the people together, that they might witness it. Again, when He would give them water out of the sandy desert, he said unto Moses,—“Gather the people together, and I will give them water.”—From these passages, as well as many others, it is easy to see the great importance which God attaches to the gathering of the people together, for the ordinance of public worship. When men are gathered together, they can be more powerfully impressed, and led to do, as bodies, what they would never do, as individuals.—When men are together as masses, feelings are contagious, and gather strength and intensity, as they pass from heart to heart, and it is proper that men, in their collective capacity, should give glory to God, and witness the gracious and glorious works which He performs for His people.

The giving of a plentiful supply of water, at this time, was necessary for the comfort, perhaps for the very existence of the thirsty multitude; but it was a typical act this, emblematic of God's giving the water of life to His people, when perishing for lack of knowledge; or, at least of the knowledge of Divine things brought home to their heart, and made available to supply the wants of their spiritual nature. That water is used very frequently in Scripture