

observations respecting the context, we shall now endeavour to ascertain what is the meaning of the clause, above proposed for elucidation. The object we have especially in view, is to inquire whether Paul here states, as is generally supposed, *that the stream from the rock miraculously accompanied the Israelites in all their wanderings through the desert.*

Though it may seem presumptuous to reject an interpretation so universally received, yet there are reasons which may possibly convince the reader, as they have done the writer, that the general notion is erroneous. Now, allowing for the present that *rock* here is used for the stream issuing from it, still we have the following objections against this interpretation.

1. *There is no mention whatever of such a circumstance in the Old Testament.* Let the reader examine Moses' account in Ex. xvii. 6, and he will find no hint of so marvellous an event. Let him again read another account of a miraculous supply of water in Num. xx. 11, and there also he will find none. Is it, then, natural to suppose that Moses would thus pass over in silence an occurrence, which was, if true, far more wonderful and worthy of record, than the fact which he relates concerning the rock? It is, however, barely possible, that Moses, for the sake of brevity, omitted the circumstance, since we cannot fancy he recorded minutely all the wonders that transpired. But can the reader find it mentioned by any other inspired author? He will find the opening of the rock celebrated in Ps. lxxviii. 15, 16, and Ps. cv. 41; but in neither of these places are we informed that the stream followed the camp of Israel. Yet who does not see that, were it true, it could not fail to be attested in these passages, where the express design is to celebrate God's wonderful goodness to his chosen people, and that

not in the tame and precise language of prose, but in the florid hyperbolic style of poetry? If we think it possible for Moses to omit all mention of the fact, yet we cannot suppose the Psalmists would omit it, since no theme could better suit their purpose and style of writing.

2. *On the other hand, there are intimations in the Old Testament that such was not the fact.* The miraculous supply of water, mentioned in Ex. xvii. 6, took place at Rephidim in the wilderness of Sin; but this certainly did not form a meandering stream, flowing in company with the wandering host, for we find the people suffering in the same way at a subsequent stage of their journey, as appears from Num. xx. 1—11, where we see that a similar miracle was wrought also in the desert of Zin. Now surely this second opening of a rock would have been superfluous, had the waters from the first in Horeb followed the camp. Neither did this second supply follow it, since the people were again distressed for water, as is clear from Num. xxi. 5. Thus the Old Testament gives evidence *against* the common notion.

Having found that the matter stands thus, the writer was led to suspect the correctness of the common translation, which has evidently occasioned the common view, of this clause; and on examination he found that the Greek, strictly rendered, does not teach that the rock, or the water from it, followed the Israelites in their journeyings, for it has not the pronoun *them*, the insertion of which by our translators has unduly affected the sense, and which ought to be printed in italics. It may be easily seen that the exact version of the clause is this—*For they drank out of a spiritual following rock.* And according to this version, we are not required to suppose, that either rock or stream moved on along with the