

When we attempt to analyze the complex feeling and act which constituted this sin of Moses, we find *three elements*.

1. *There was an absence of the patience which God manifested with the people.* God was grieved, but He endured with this generation. The terms of the command to go and bring water out of the rock, ought to have been, as it was designed to be, a revelation to him of God's great patience with the unruly and ungrateful. Moses had *no right* to be impatient and passionate with those whom God was willing to put up with. How vast the patience of God! How slow the wisest and best of His children to be like unto the Great Father in this respect? "Let me fall," said David on a memorable occasion, "into the hands of God rather than into the hands of man." It was the immense patience of Christ that amazed His disciples. Christ is our example. We profess to "learn of Him" and to be His "followers!"

2. *There was a latent distrust of the Wisdom of God.* Out of the impatience of Moses there grew that distrust of the Wisdom of God in so freely meeting the wants of an ungrateful people, which is charged on him as the sin of unbelief. Moses never questioned the Power of God to bring water out of the rock; but he did secretly question the propriety of giving the people just now what they wanted. He would have done differently. He was afraid of humouring them too much. Severer measures would do them more permanent good. This, then, was a sin of *unbelief*, and considering the position of Moses, a sin of very deep dye. Its effect on the people was most damaging. They saw in their leader's tone and gestures, the shameful spectacle of his not quite approving of the long-suffering of God. "Jehovah was not sanctified" before them.

I imagine that many good people fall into this sin and mar their usefulness, as well as break up the calm of their own souls. They would do things very differently if they had their way! God is too slow, or more patient with some transgressors than they would be! Verily, the action of sin in the best human nature is very subtle.

3. *There was a feeling of disgust with his work.* This was the natural attendant on distrust of the Divine Wisdom. Moses had no objection to lead a people for God, but he heartily wished God would give him a people less rebellious—less trying to his spirit.

The desire for agreeable, easy work in God's cause, is common enough. Conscience and decency require that a man should do something to make the world better and to save the lost. It is only the noblest and bravest souls that search out how much they can do, without asking in detail how far it will trench on bodily and mental ease and comfort. There are many things in the higher service of God that involve self-denial, repression of private feelings, and frequent surrender of personal convenience for the sake of others. Some men never get so high in the Christian life as to know this in their own experience. Our Saviour had harder and more unrequited toil than any of us, yet He never complained. Let us do work in its nature disagreeable to our judgment, with the conviction that it is right, and wise, and then, disagreeableness will vanish in the absorption of our energies in the Will of God. It is a sign of health when we sing at our work.

*The chastisement which fell upon Moses*, as a consequence of his sin, requires a few remarks, in order that its equity may become apparent. Apart from its intrinsic badness in virtually calling into question the propriety of the particular course of treatment God had thought fit to adopt in dealing with a restless, discontented people; there are relative features in this transgression which, of themselves, would indicate *a priori*, a form of punishment that would combine the elements of security and publicity. The sin was *public in manifestation*, though secret in its inception and early progress. It was, therefore, dishonouring to God in the eyes of a less privileged people. The natural inference of spectators would be, that Moses, the wisest and best of men, did not, in his heart, approve of the method chosen by God for dealing with the restless, thirsty mob of men and women. Moreover, this manifested distrust of the wisdom of God's pro-