

Exod. xvii. 1, 6; and many other deliverances by the hand of God. AGAINST MOSES . . . AARON. Leaders and reformers must expect to find weakness, cowardice, and faithlessness among the masses.

Want of thankfulness characterized the Israelites not only in the solitary desert and the wild wilderness, but almost equally in the land that flowed with milk and honey. So it is generally with men under the Gospel dispensation. They forget all God's benefits, and are also unwilling to look to him for help in the midst of their sorest need.

It is a memorable tribute that is paid to the martyrs in the Epistle to the Hebrews. (xi. 35 :) "Others were tortured, *not accepting deliverance.*" May we not accuse ourselves that we are too apt to accept deliverance, any kind of deliverance, and from any quarter, *if only it be deliverance.* Infinitely better, my brother, my sister, cry for grace to "*endure unto the end.*"—Grosart.

2. A DIVINE SUPPLY, vers. 8, 9, 11. (1) *Human agencies.* God delights in human co-operation. Judges v. 23; 2 Cor. x. 4; Phil. ii. 12, 13. THE ROD. Through which miracles had before been wrought. Exod. iv. 3; vii. 12; xiv. 16, etc. It had been BEFORE THE LORD—in the ark of the Covenant. Thou and Aaron. The rod is impotent; Moses and Aaron are equally powerless; but God will use them for his glory. Ps. lxxvii. 16. SPEAK. Not smite; speak in God's name. God divinely joins the natural and the supernatural; thus a miracle becomes possible. (2) *Fullness of the supply.* WATER for the CONGREGATION and their BEASTS . . . ABUNDANTLY. Evidence equally of God's superabounding power and love. All earth's secret treasures await only a word from their Creator to make them available to man. With such fullness does Jesus give the waters of life; "enough for each, enough for all, enough for evermore." See Isa. lv. 1; John iv. 14; vii. 37; Rev. xxi. 6; xxii. 17.

Miracles in our time are like candles in the street at midday. We do not want miracles. They are to teach men how to find out truths themselves; and after they have learned this, they no more need them than a well man needs a staff, or than a grown-up child needs a walking stool. . . . In secular things, God helps them who help themselves.—Beecher.

A very worldly-minded man was convicted of his sins, but strove to conceal his emotions. His little girl artlessly inquired,

"Pa, if you were dry, wouldn't you go and get a drink of water?" Deeply moved by the question, the father thought of the waters of life of which his soul was so greatly in need. He came to Jesus and was saved.

We know a little of Christ, our Saviour, but, O how small a portion have we seen of the fullness that is in him! Like the Indians, when America was first discovered, we are not aware of the amazing value of the gold and treasure in our hands.—Ryle.

3. A HUMAN WEAKNESS, vers. 10, 11. (1) *An unauthorized charge.* MOSES was the chief actor, while AARON was stirred by the same impulses. YE. Moses had been commanded (ver. 8) to speak to the "rock," *not* to the CONGREGATION. REBELS. Literally, *complainers, fretters, a refractory people.* They were indeed rebels in the worst sense; but their leader had been commissioned at this juncture not to denounce them, but to supply their wants. He assumed the place of God, and acted as judge over his brethren. (2) *An impatient question.* Moses' patience was exhausted. Christ's kingdom is one of "patience." Rev. i. 9. Patience is one of the brightest and noblest virtues of the Christian. 2 Pet. i. 6; Rev. xiii. 10; xiv. 12. (3) *An impious assumption.* WE FETCH. Leaving God entirely out of their thoughts. Two weak mortals assuming Almighty power. (4) AVENGEFUL ACT. Moses had been ordered to SPEAK (once) to THE ROCK, but now he SMOTE it TWICE with his rod, as if he were wreaking vengeance on the heads of the people. Perhaps also he doubted whether God would open the rock by a single blow from the rod. Rom. xii. 19, 20. What foolish and vile acts men perform when filled with impatience and wrath!

Drive away nature, and back it comes at a gallop.—French Proverb.

Whosoever is out of patience is out of possession of his soul. Men must not turn bees, and "kill themselves in stinging others."—Lord Bacon.

Weakness, upheld by Almighty grace, is safe—while the strongest, without it, must fail. . . . The weaker thy grace, the faster let thy dependence be on Christ, and then thou wilt be more secure by that exercise of faith, than by the strongest grace without it. A small vessel managed by a skilful pilot may be preserved in a rough sea, when a stronger, left to itself, will dash in pieces.—Salter.

4. A DIVINE REBUKE, ver. 12. (1) *For unbelief.* BELIEVED ME NOT. Moses seems