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THE SIN OF MOSES.

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There are few readers of the Bible but that have, some time or other, been puzzled concerning the precise nature of the sin of Moses in smiting the rock in Kadesh, and also oppressed with the unexpressed feeling, that there was something in the chastisement inflicted for it, out of harmony with the calm and impartial justice we are wont to think of, as ever characterizing the actions of the Divine Being. Yet, in this instance, as in many others, the disquiet of our minds arises from an imperfect view of the facts presented by the sacred story. The Bible is like a living organism of delicate structure, and very minute parts, through which there runs a subtle line of commingled influences, difficult to trace and detect, except by a steady and very minute exercise of the perceptive faculties. The broad principle that the "Judge of all the earth" must do right, is our sheet anchor, saving us from being drifted off to seas of everlasting doubt and dismay, where the night is dark and our search along the line of truth is difficult and unsatisfactory. But it is equally our duty and delight to seek out the works of the Lord, and advance toward an exploration of His strange paths whenever a glimmer of light can be secured. It may be of service to some of our readers, if I offer a few suggestions with respect to the nature of the sin of Moses, and the propriety of the chastisement that fell upon him in consequence of his transgression.

It will be seen, by a comparison of dates and events, that at the time mentioned in the xx Numbers, Moses was far advanced in years. The suns of a hundred and twenty summers had shone upon his head, and his brow was furrowed by the cares generated by the toilsome work of leading a perverse and stiff-necked people through varied perils. It was, therefore, no new thing for this wise and much-enduring man to have to listen to the thankless tongues of a discontented people, and to seek, by some unusual means, provision for a restless crowd of starving men and women. Moses was an unrequited benefactor. But, so far as information is given to us, we notice that, on every occasion of difficulty, he pursued a course becoming a prudent and holy servant of God. He never, in any one instance of trouble, took upon himself to relieve the necessities of the people by the exercise of plenary powers of miracle-working, if ever he possessed such powers. His first step always was to enter at once into the sacred presence of God, and there relate his perplexities, and seek for guidance and power,—a beautiful example to us to carry our private and public cares as they arise, to our God, that He would help us to bear and deal with them, one by one. And on looking over the history of Israel's Exodus, we find that, at the Red Sea, at Marah, in the wilderness of Sin, indeed, everywhere, he was distinctly informed what next to do, and received a guarantee that the result would meet all his expectations.

It is well known to those who study human nature, that there are hours in the