

same vine, and partake of the same spirit, unless they are branches that are withered and dried up. God will deal with us as a whole all the time.

How was it with Israel of old, as has been referred to by Elder Hyde? They were led by the hand of God all through the wilderness. God led Moses. Sometimes they were led in one direction, and sometimes in another. They were brought up against the Red Sea; and did not they, in their blindness, chide with Moses because he had led them thus? Looking at things naturally, they could say, "You might have gone round and avoided this snare: we might have taken another road, instead of running right into this canyon, between these two mountains, and against the Red Sea, where there is no chance to dodge; and so we are to perish by the armies of Egypt close in our rear and the sea before us." These were the feelings of a great many weak in faith and ignorant people among them; and they were ready to pick up stones to stone Moses because he had done it.

There are a great many instances of the same kind during their forty years' sojourning in the wilderness. Sometimes they were led into the wilderness when they might have followed some streams of water, had the Lord have led them in that channel. And when they were led into different circumstances there were always some who complained and threw the responsibility upon Moses, exonerating themselves.

Some wished to turn back unto Egypt, and a great many plans were in view to extricate themselves from difficulties; except fleeing to the Almighty, who had led them into those difficulties; and time and again the Lord rebuked them and manifested his power to deliver them. But who led them? Did Moses lead them?

No. The Almighty led them. Moses was his servant, and led them as the Almighty directed him.

Why did not the Almighty direct him to lead them round the Red Sea instead of through it? And why did he not lead them to follow the streams, instead of taking them across the desert? Why did he not lead them a straight course from Egypt to Canaan, instead of keeping them forty years in the wilderness? Who was most to blame for it? Was the responsibility upon him, or was it upon the people? Why was it upon the people? Because they were a stiffnecked people, a hardhearted people, and an ignorant people.

We read in the Scriptures that they were so stiffnecked as to provoke the Lord, and he came out upon them in his wrath and consumed them from his presence—sometimes by fire that came forth from his presence, at other times by causing the earth to open and swallow them up by thousands, at other times by pestilence, and at other times by fiery flying serpents which came among them and bit them that they died.

Why was the anger of the Lord kindled against them? Because of the hardness of their hearts and the stiffness of their necks. It was not because of Moses. Only in one instance did Moses offend. That was not in any of his movements in leading and controlling Israel, but because he did not sanctify the Lord God of Israel before their eyes when he smote the rock of Horeb. This was the only instance in which the Lord condemned Moses; but he directed Moses how to lead Israel, and Moses led them in the way he was directed; and they were tried forty years in the wilderness, until most of them were worn out and perished.

Were they a wicked people above all other people, that their carcasses should thus fall in the wilderness?