



Devotional Thoughts :: Providence of Loss

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Streams in the Desert

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"It came to pass . . . that the brook dried up" (1 Kings 17:7).

The education of our faith is incomplete if we have not learned that there is a providence of loss, a ministry of failing and of fading things, a gift of emptiness. The material insecurities of life make for its spiritual establishment. The dwindling stream by which Elijah sat and mused is a true picture of the life of each of us. "It came to pass . . . that the brook dried up" --that is the history of our yesterday, and a prophecy of our morrows.

In some way or other we will have to learn the difference between trusting in the gift and trusting in the Giver. The gift may be good for a while, but the Giver is the Eternal Love.

Cherith was a difficult problem to Elijah until he got to Zarephath, and then it was all as clear as daylight. God's hard words are never His last words. The woe and the waste and the tears of life belong to the interlude and not to the finale.

Had Elijah been led straight to Zarephath he would have missed something that helped to make him a wiser prophet and a better man. He lived by faith at Cherith. And whenever in your life and mine some spring of earthly and outward resource has dried up, it has been that we might learn that our hope and help are in God who made Heaven and earth. --F.

B. Meyer

Perchance thou, too, hast camped by such sweet waters,
And quenched with joy thy weary, parched soul's thirst;
To find, as time goes on, thy streamlet alters
From what it was at first.

Hearts that have cheered, or soothed, or blest, or strengthened;
Loves that have lavished so unstintedly;
Joys, treasured joys--have passed, as time hath lengthened,
Into obscurity.

If thus, ah soul, the brook thy heart hath cherished
Doth fail thee now--no more thy thirst assuage--
If its once glad refreshing streams have perished,
Let HIM thy heart engage.

He will not fail, nor mock, nor disappoint thee;
His consolations change not with the years;
With oil of joy He surely will anoint thee,
And wipe away thy tears.

--J. D. Smith