

## **The Smitten Rock**

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Do you remember our talk last week about the Rock, and the water that flowed from it? Have you been thinking of the smitten Rock, and can you tell the reason why it had to be smitten before the people could get the living water?

You will remember the text that we read: "They drank of that spiritual Rock that went with them, and that Rock was Christ."

Now do you know that we, too, drink of that same spiritual Rock? Water is life to us, for without it we should soon die. But the only Fountain—the unfathomable sea—of life, is Jesus, so everything that brings life to us must come from Him.

Jesus, the spiritual Rock, had to be smitten, so that His life might flow out to all the world, to give life to all things. "He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities;" and "with His stripes we are healed."

Jesus died that we might live. He poured out His life-blood, to free us from our sins so that we might live for ever. Sin is death, but when all sin is taken away there is no longer anything to cause death.

If Jesus had not died for us, and so made it possible for us to be washed from our sins and live for ever, we should never have had even the present earthly life that all people have. For if Jesus had not taken upon Himself the curse that came upon this world through sin, all things must at once have perished.

So every living thing on this earth should be a reminder to us of the Cross of Jesus Christ. In the new leaves just bursting forth on the trees and bushes, in the springing vegetation everywhere, we may read the story of the Cross and of the resurrection. We may read in these tokens, of the love of Him who suffered death, to give life to His creatures, and of the power of that life that has conquered death, and so can keep as alive for ever more. For no living thing could grow in this earth, except for the Cross of Christ.

The happy birds, just returned to their summer home, joyful in the thought of the new life soon to take form in their broods of tiny nestlings, sing to us, if only our ears are open to hear, the same sweet story of the Cross. For they, like ourselves and all other created things, live only because of it.

When Moses smote the Rock with the rod of God, it was an object lesson to the people, of Him who was "smitten of God and afflicted, because the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." It was to show them that their life, and therefore everything that sustained their life, came from Jesus, who died that they might have it.

Remember that God "turned the Rock into water," and you will see that was to show them also that God is giving us Himself in all His gifts, or, rather, that in giving us Himself, He is giving us all things. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall he not with Him also freely give us all things?" for "in Him all things consist." Every blessing we have shows that God has given Himself for us.

It was to show them, too, that by drinking of that Rock, which was Christ, they might, by receiving His life, partake of the nature of the Rock of Ages, and so become "living stones;" that should abide for ever.

O if only they had learned the lesson, as they drank "spiritual drink" from "that spiritual Rock," every draught of water from that time on would have brought them spiritual life. It would have taught them of Him who gives us "rest by His sorrow, and life by His death."

"Now all these things happened unto them for examples" to us, and are written so that we may learn the lessons that God was teaching them.

So as you see the life-giving water falling from the skies, or flowing through the land to carry life to all, remember that it comes from "the smitten Rock," and carries to us His life, poured out for us.

Then every drink of water with which you quench your thirst; indeed all the food that you take, for there could be none of us without water; even the air that you breathe, will keep you ever in mind of the Cross of Jesus Christ. For you could have had none of these things, you could never have been born into this world at all, if Jesus had not given His own life so that you might have life.

May you ever so drink by faith of the Rock of Ages, that you will become like the rock, steadfast and unmovable, and abide for ever in His kingdom, when "all things that can be shaken" shall have passed away.