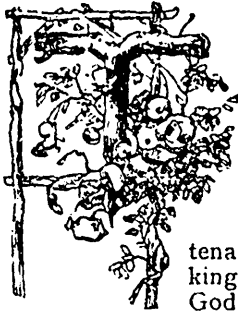


We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted.—Isa. liii. 4.

[ORIGINAL.]
The Three Smittings.

BY GEO. SOLTAU.

1. THE SMITTEN RIVER.—Ex. vii. 14-25.



HE river Nile, in the land of Egypt, was the source of wealth and life to the whole country. On its periodical rising to fertilize the soil the whole nation depended for their crops and means of sustenance. When Pharaoh, the king, denied the existence of God, and defied the power of

God, Moses was commanded of God to take his rod and smite the river, that its waters should become blood. Thus in an instant the source of life, and health and wealth became death. When the things lawful and necessary in themselves are used by men, but God is not acknowledged, then they become the source of destruction and death. The love of money has slain many. The mental faculties when used to disprove the Word of God, became the source of spiritual death. Health, opportunities, talents, and all the bright surroundings of life, become only the means of self-destruction, unless God be sought and His truth obeyed.

2. THE SMITTEN ROCK.—Ex. xvii. 1-6.

All around the nation of Israel was dry and barren. There was no water, nor any sign of water. Apparently there was no help for them; in vain they looked around. The black rock towered above them, forbidding, cold, stern, unfeeling, mocking their thirst. Then did God command that the same rod be taken by Moses, and the rock be smitten, when the waters should gush forth, and life flowed freely and abundantly. "Whosoever will, let him take the water freely!"

When Jesus of Nazareth was here below, He found there was no water of life anywhere. Men searched in vain for it: all around was dry and barren. And yet none would believe that in Him was the fountain of living water. His stern rebuke of sin, His uncompromising attitude toward the hypocrisy and falseness of the religious teachers of the day, His withdrawing so frequently from the social surroundings of the people, made them wonder who and whence He was. Said Nathaniel, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Said the woman of Samaria, "Art thou greater than our father, Jacob, that gave us the well?" Said the people, "Is not this the carpenter." "From whence hath this man learning?"

But when the rod of God's infinite justice smote Him for our sakes; when the soldier with a spear pierced His side, water and life flowed from Him—life for dying man, water for thirsty. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." "The water that I shall give shall be a well of water springing up into everlasting life." He was stricken, *smitten of God*, and afflicted. "I gave my back to the smiters."

3. THE SMITTEN FOES.—Ex. xvii. 8-16.

The dark hosts of the enemy had swarmed around the rear of the camp of Israel, and were endeavouring to destroy the redeemed people. The hands of the mediator were upheld in prayer on the mountain top, whilst the fighting hosts were led to victory, and Amalek was smitten. Refreshed and strengthened by the water from the smitten rock, and rejoicing in the power of God, Israel marched to victory. So we as believers in the infinite resources of our God, and refreshed by the Water of Life from the smitten One, go forth in holy confidence and boldness to wage war with an ungodly world, and to gain the victory. Sin shall not have dominion over you. The Intercessor's work avails, and victory is promised. The vow of vengeance against sin and the world power has gone forth. God is at war with the powers of darkness, and must prevail.

GEMS RE-SET.

It is not so much what we *renounce*, as what we *receive*, that makes us Christians.

GOD willed our salvation; Christ effected it; the Holy Ghost testifies of it (Heb. x. 7-15).

THE Son of God became the Son of man, that we, the sons of men, might become the sons of God.

CHILDLIKE innocence is "not to know evil." Christian saintliness is to know evil and good, and prefer good.

LORD, I find the genealogy of my Saviour strangely chequered with four remarkable changes in four immediate generations. (1) Roboam begat Abia; that is, a bad father begat a bad son. (2) Abia begat Asa; that is, a bad father a good son. (3) Asa begat Josaphat; that is, a good father a good son. (4) Josaphat begat Joram; that is, a good father a bad son. I see, Lord, from hence, that my father's piety cannot be entailed; that is bad news for me. But I see also that actual impiety is not always hereditary; that is good news for my son.—*Thos. Fuller.*