

## **EVEN THE STONES TESTIFY**

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*Lesson: Luke 19:29-40*

A song we sing at Easter time has the following words: “Lo! they come at break of day, find the great stone rolled away; Hark! and hear the angels say, the Lord, the Lord is risen.”

A prayer that has been used many times on Easter morning has the following words: “Grant that the stone may be rolled away, and that we may hear from the angels the glad message of Thy resurrection”.

Men had sealed a great stone on the sepulcher where the Lord’s body was laid. Angels from heaven rolled back the stone that all might see that the Lord was not in the grave but had risen. That very stone, rolled as it was from the door, told a story by itself.

Can you understand what would be meant if someone said a stone or a flower was saying something? On Palm Sunday, when people were rejoicing loudly and the Pharisees told the Lord to stop them, He replied, “I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out” (Luke 19:40).

What good tidings could a stone proclaim, or what glad message could the growing things of the earth proclaim? Let us begin with flowers. Ever since you were very young you can remember the color and the lovely smell of flowers at Easter time. The flowers seemed to say something good to you. They speak of life, and they particularly affect us after the wintertime. Their beauty and freshness awakens us with a message of life.

Once the Lord said to people, “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow...” If God so beautifully clothes growing things, will He not surely clothe and care for us? In a way each flower of the field is saying, “God cares for you.”

And when a tree breaks forth into blossom, or any plant puts forth flowers, there is something people could see if they wanted to. They could see a gladness. “If they knew anything about the rebirth or regeneration of man, they would see in the flowers a representative (picture)”—or a blossoming within people who are being made new by the Lord (*Arcana Coelestia* 5116:5). For all of nature is a kind of theatre showing the Lord’s kingdom (AC 5116:2). The whole world is like a stage, upon which it is constantly being declared that there is a God and that He is one (*True Christian Religion* 12).

Our lesson from the Writings today reminded us that there are flowers that seem to turn their faces to the sun (TCR 308). “Certain plants strive to rise above the herbage that surrounds them to look at the sun...Some of them turn towards the sun from his rising to the end of the day that they may ripen under his care” (TCR 767:13). Some flowers open as the sun rises, and close as the sun sets, and songbirds sing sweetly at the early dawn and also after they have been fed by their mother earth. “Thus do all these honor their father and mother” (TCR 308).

They all honor or praise their heavenly father. The Psalm says, “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord” (Psalm 150:6). The Psalm says, “Let the stars praise Him. Let animals and fruitful trees praise Him” (Psalm 148). And a beautiful passage says, “The mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands” (Isaiah 55:12).

“Watch a fruit tree. Does it not first have birth as a slender shoot from a small seed, and does it not afterwards gradually grow to a trunk and spread forth branches, which are covered with leaves, and then put forth blossoms?” (*Divine Providence* 332). “Examine any other object on the earth... If you are able to think deeply, you will be astonished, and if you will let wisdom speak within you, you will say in amazement, ‘Who can fail to see the Divine in these things? All things are of the Divine wisdom’ ” (DP 3).

The things upon the earth tell a story, and it was to this that the Lord called attention when on Palm Sunday He said, “I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain” (John 12:24). Notice that He said the grain of wheat would die that it might bring forth much grain. The Lord was then telling people that He would die, but that His death would bring life. He had already said He would lay down His life. “I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (John 10:18). Now He spoke of the grain of wheat being buried in the earth, and said, “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself. This He said, signifying by what death He would die” (John 12:32,33).

The Lord Jesus Christ overcame death to give life. And we turn to Him at this time in knowing that He is life. “I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE,” He said. “He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die” (John 11:25,26).

The Lord came to His people, and He said, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). He comes to each one of us, and gives life to each one of us. And He says, “Because I live, you will live also” (John 14:19).

And so at this time we choose to look at living things, branches of palm and flowers of all kinds. And we think of them as giving praise to the Lord, as does every created thing upon the face of the earth.