

“THINE EYES SHALL SEE THE KING.”

THERE is a peculiar and instructive beauty in the *reflected light* which the Psalms throw upon the hidden motives and feelings of the Lord Jesus. What is designedly lacking in the Gospels is furnished prophetically by the Psalms, but in an indirect way, which we cannot help seeing to be the one most appropriate to so sacred a topic. Thick darkness, and the silence of death, hid His deep sufferings from the enquiry of the curious; but a prophetic echo is heard in the experience of another, through whom the Spirit of Christ found expression. There is a delicacy and beauty in such a treatment of the subject which commends itself to all, and has suggested the propriety of following so valuable an example.

The thought came to the present writer whether some of the well-known types of Scripture might not be handled in such a way as to shadow forth, indirectly, that which the heart feels must be true in Christ, but which cannot with propriety be made the topic of direct descriptive treatment. A freedom of language will then be permissible which would otherwise be impossible, but which, it is thought, will bring the lesson home vividly to the soul that is prepared to discern the analogy, while veiling it from others who are not interested to learn. If this is kept in view, and the following pages are read in the spirit in which they were written, it is believed that the profit which the writer found in the study will be shared by the readers.

* * * *

“So your long-cherished wish has at last become an accomplished fact!”

“I can hardly trust myself to speak of it, and yet I feel I must unburden my heart to someone. My joy is full, overflowing, and no one will understand me better than you, dear friend.”

“I think I can appreciate something of what you are feeling, but we will not speak of the interview just yet. Let us review the past, and thus prepare our thoughts to enter more fully into the import of the present. When was it that you first saw David?”

“It was on that never-to-be-forgotten day when I saw him as my saviour, in Elah’s drear valley, where he met the enemy’s champion in deadly combat, and gained the victory alone. Even

now I can recall the emotions that then filled my soul! The fear and trembling, as the champion's defiant challenge rang out on the morning air; the hope that revived in our hearts when it was rumoured that one had arisen in our midst—bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh—to face the uncircumcised Philistine; and then the excitement as we strained our eyes towards Saul's tent, to see 'the hope of Israel' sally forth to the combat. Before even Goliath had called for a champion, I had heard some stout braggarts boasting of their prowess, and I looked to recognise one or other of them in the hero of the hour."

"No doubt you were surprised to see so youthful a warrior adventuring himself in such a serious cause?"

"I was, indeed, and, though I could not expect him to conquer in the unequal encounter, my whole soul was filled with admiration at the heroism of a youth who could lay down his life in the glow and freshness of its early years, in one desperate attempt to free his people from the Philistine yoke. As he crossed the green valley I could only think of him as going down to his death, but when I remembered that it was for my sake, I loved him for it."

"Did you see his face?"

"Just a passing glance, but I never forgot it. You know I have always reckoned the countenance—not the features, but the expression—as an index of the soul, and in his there was a purity and grace that charmed me."

"And you saw the champion fall?"

"I did; and joined in the shout that was raised."

"And doubtless you gained some material benefits from the spoiling of the Philistines' tents?"

"No, I lost my opportunity, for I hurried to the open space in front of Saul's pavilion to greet the shepherd-lad as he returned victorious from the valley. The elders of Israel were there, and many veteran warriors, but they all made way for David, as Abner led him to the presence of the king, with a flush of triumph on his cheek, and the trophy of victory in his hand. And then I experienced a new pleasure."

"What was that?"

“ I heard him speak. In answer to a question from Saul he made some communication about his father’s name, and the grace of his address was added to the charms of his person and the benefit of his work. I felt that I loved him as my own soul, and when I saw the heir to the throne stripping himself of costly robe and jewelled sword to put them on David, I could not help saying, with a full heart, ‘ He is worthy ! ’ ”

“ But you did not do the same ! ”

“ I had nothing fit to offer at such a moment, and I felt it keenly. How little I thought that within a few short months, David would be in circumstances to value even my humble service. He was owned the chiefest of ten thousand then, but in the hour of his reproach, I found my opportunity to serve him.”

“ You must have been put to some expense during the time you were caring for David’s interests ? ”

“ I scarcely looked at it that way, but all I had I thought it a privilege to use for him and his. He said something about repaying with interest when he should come into his kingdom, but I did not occupy myself with that.”

“ I believe you suffered some bodily injury in his service ? ”

“ Well, I feel it a very special honour to bear in my body the marks of the Lord’s anointed. He faced death for me, and I was but wounded for him.”

“ Was he the same when hunted on the mountains as when you first saw him, going down to meet the Philistine ? ”

“ The change of circumstances threw other characteristics into relief, but the person was the same. My earliest impression of him was of a youth fresh from the home-circle of a father’s love. Indeed, I understood that what brought him to the battlefield was some little service which his father had entrusted to him for the benefit of his brethren. However, they did not appreciate either his message or motive, and, as events turned out, he found they needed not only food, but salvation ; and that, too, he accomplished, though without taking counsel with them about it.”

“ And what do you now say of the days of his rejection ? ”

“ I would not for anything have missed the fellowship of his reproach. Some of the loveliest traits appear in adversity ; and they would seem to have reflected themselves in those who accompanied with him. But, of course, he was not at his ease ; the circumstances were not suited to him.”

“ You have allowed many years to elapse before your first visit to court ? ”

“ It was his wish. He gave me to understand that I could serve his interests better where I was. However, the summons came at last ! ”

“ What was your first thought on receiving it ? ”

“ ‘ I shall see his face ! ’ There had been frequent communications between us, but you know that nothing can be like the very presence of one we love.”

“ There were many awaiting an interview yesterday, were there not ? ”

“ Yes, but not all for the same reason. I asked one who was in the ante-chamber, and who had been occasionally employed by David, if he was waiting to see the king, and he said he should see him, but not now, and behold him, but not nigh. I understand he was waiting to be sentenced for his unfaithfulness. I told him I had a brighter prospect before *me*.”

“ Did you think the presence-chamber very magnificent ? ”

“ I thought it very appropriate, and I looked at all from his point of view, for I had learnt to know and love his tastes in days of old. There was a glorious burst of music while I was there and in majestic cadence I heard one of the airs that he used to sing softly, almost beneath his breath, when hiding in the caves.”

“ Were you alone with the king ? ”

“ Yes, in spite of the crowd. I confess I noticed no one, nor did he seem to me in any way preoccupied with the presence of others. His first word was ‘ Welcome ! ’ and then ‘ well done ! ’ but I cannot tell you how his voice thrilled me ! Erstwhile there had been a touch of sadness in his tones, a weariness, and at times a stern reproof ; but yesterday his voice rang with an exuberant gladness, to which it somehow seemed that my presence contributed. And then his embrace ! It may be from a sort of deference

on the part of our neighbours, or because I have no near relative, but my life has lacked the touch of intimacy for which, somehow, the soul hungers. But though the lack has been noticed, I never dreamed that it would be supplied from Israel's throne! We spoke together of the past, and much was explained that had once been hard to understand. Present circumstances and future prospects were referred to, and the personality of the king seemed to fill every period."

"Was no state business transacted in your presence?"

"Yes, several matters received attention, and I could not fail to notice David's great administrative ability. He seemed born to rule, and you know how much a nation's welfare depends upon the one who holds the reins. Some would call his a 'paternal government,' but what I saw was the skill and integrity of a shepherd-king."

"Your interview was a long one, was it not?"

"It seemed but a moment. As I left the presence I felt an overwhelming longing to go no more out, and yet, if you can understand me, I seem to have been dwelling there ever since."

"And what have been your reflections since the event?"

"I seem to have had a foretaste of some infinitely greater occasion, still future, which will exceed my ideal of bliss far more than the interview came short of it."

"If I may add a wish to your prospect, I would say, 'May we realise it together!'"

Men place their choicest wares for exhibition in carefully prepared showcases; a Christian is God's showcase of wonderful structure in order to exhibit the virtues of Christ.

"In comforting others shalt thou be comforted; in strengthening others shalt thou find strength; in loving others shalt thou be loved."

We are promised grace for to-day, not for to-morrow, why should we go on a warfare to which we have not been sent. Let us wait until the order comes.