

Articles by H. C. Spence

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The Beauty of the Lord

Beauty always appeals to the human heart. The Lord has given us marvelous visions of beauty in nature, and all around us we see the perfection of His creatorial powers. The beauty of the fragrant rose, the loveliness of the violets, and the purity of the lily are ever a source of delight to gaze upon.

However, the beauty of nature is fading and subject to decay. So is human loveliness, which will sooner or later pass away. Alas, no beauty is permanent in this changing scene among the sons of men. But the beauty which surpasses all others is the excelling beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ. The psalmist expresses ardently in Psalm 27: 4, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." May we say in the language of the hymn writer:

One thing, my Father only one

My heart desires of Thee—

To know Thy well-beloved Son,

And all His beauty see.

The Holy Spirit delights to bring before our spiritual gaze glimpses of the beauty of the Lord Jesus. There is the beauty of His character. The Lord of glory is the only One who ever possessed a character unstained by sin. His moral beauty could not be hid, and shines out so brightly in His humanity, in His Deity and in His written

Word. How rich the character He bears exalted on the throne in whom all glories shine.

There is the beauty of His walk. The pathway of our blessed Lord would we retrace with adoring hearts. Truly, it was one of unsullied holiness, a perfect path of purest grace unblemished and complete. His perfect obedience to accomplish the Father's will was displayed throughout His pathway to the cross. And the beauty of His love was displayed in His holy walk and seen in all its fulness in His sacrifice on the cross. His pathway gloriously ended with His resurrection and ascension back to His heavenly Father.

There is the beauty of His words. Many are the words which flowed from His blessed lips and today as in every generation since His fragrant words were first heard, they have brought to countless multitudes comfort, joy and peace. The psalmist exclaimed, "Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever," Ps. 45:2.

Truly these are words of secret power in hours of grief and loneliness to kindle thoughts of praise! The two disciples, at the end of the Emmaus journey, said one to the other, "did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?", Luke 24:32. Even His enemies had to confess, "Never man spake like this man," John 7:46.

What a joy it is to be occupied with the beauty of the Lord. We remember well the time in our life when the Lord of glory was nothing to us, and when we were like the people whom the prophet Isaiah describes in 53:2 who saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. He is now the "chiefest among ten thousand," Song

5:10. We are reminded in the Song of Solomon of the supreme beauty of the Lord, and the daughters of Jerusalem challenge the bride concerning her Beloved, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?", v.9.

So the bride enumerates the loveliness of her Beloved and exclaims, "My beloved is white and ruddy the chiefest among ten thousand... yea, he is altogether lovely," vv. 10, 16. Surely this is the language of every lover of the Lord Jesus Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom of our hearts:

Thou glorious Bridegroom of our hearts,

Thy present smile a heaven imparts;

O lift the veil, if veil there be;

Let every saint Thy beauty see.

Lastly, there is the transforming beauty of the Lord. As we contemplate His beauty we shall be transformed into His likeness in some measure: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. 3:18.

What will it be to be completely transformed into the image of the Lord of glory when we shall see Him as He is, and the promise of the prophet shall be fulfilled, "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty," Is. 33:17. The beauty of the face will perhaps win admiration, but only the beauty of a heart full of Christ can attract others. Physical loveliness will fade and decay, but the beauty of the Lord reflected in the soul is eternal. May we appreciate more the beauty of our Lord as we are occupied with Him until faith shall give place to sight

and we shall see His face. May we say again with the hymn writer:

O fix our earnest gaze

So wholly Lord, on Thee,

That with Thy beauty occupied,

We elsewhere none may see.