

RADIANT FACES ... reflecting the glory of God
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(Exodus 34:29-30; Matthew 17:1, 2; Acts 6:15)

It has often been said that a man's face is a mirror reflecting his soul. As a general rule this must be true, for when a man is disturbed, he frowns; when he is pleased, his countenance reveals satisfaction; when he is overcome by grief, his face inevitably reveals anguish. This is also true in the realm of the spirit. If a man loves sin, his face betrays the habits of evil living. If a man serenely looks into the face of his Lord, the glory of the Infinite leaves a glow upon his countenance. There is a sun-tan which is the hall-mark of heaven! "They looked unto Him and were radiant."

The Resplendent Moses

"And it came to pass, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai . . . that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with God." Surely the secret of this facial illumination lay in the fact that Moses had talked with God. Much of what we call prayer-time is only a waste of time. We leave our prayers until we are either too tired or too busy to pray, and consequently our intercession is but a succession of requests made prior to some hurried departure either for the office or for slumberland. Prayer is a telephone talk with God. The man who truly prays, not only talks-he listens. It is most beneficial to share our problems with God, and to ask for divine assistance; but the man who fails to listen never discovers the true power of prayer. Prayer performs miracles; but not the least of these is that which changes the man himself. Moses lingered long enough to tell his troubles to God, and also to receive instructions relating to future conduct. Experimentally, he had known fellowship with his Maker; a radiant glow had been left on his face. Listening to God was just as important as speaking to God.

The Redeeming Master

"And after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother . . . up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun. . . ." It is certainly thought-provoking that this was the only time when the phenomenon occurred. At no other time was it said, "His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." Surely some strange and wonderful thing was taking place. Temporarily the Lord had left the valley of need, and had climbed into the stillness of the mountain to enjoy fellowship with His Father. It was this which ministered to the indefinable needs of His inmost being; and as His cup of spiritual satisfaction filled to the brim, His joy overflowed. Soon, as did Moses centuries earlier, the Lord would be required to return to the crowds; soon He would be confronted by increasing temptation. It was His holy fellowship in the mount which prepared Him for the eventualities of the future. He had talked with God, and that was the secret of His strength-it could be mine, too!

The Radiant Martyr

Stephen was in great danger; his accusers were determined to slay him. False witnesses were ready to make outrageous charges, and the stone-throwers were anxious to proceed with their foul plans. The brave Christian was not unaware of

RADIANT FACES ... reflecting the glory of God their desires as he stood before the Sanhedrin. He was calm, unruffled, dignified: " And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Their eyes condemned their actions, for soon "they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." Amidst such vile treachery, it was miraculous that Stephen's face should suggest angelic beauty. Surely it would have been easier to understand had his countenance revealed frustration, fear, or even angry defiance. When love, grace, and forgiveness emanated from the martyr's soul, the onlookers were supplied with first-class evidence that Stephen was no ordinary man. It was said that he was full of the Holy Spirit-he had mastered the art of living with God, and the resultant communion completely transformed his countenance. His face shone. True loveliness is something of the soul. It is character glorified, actions sanctified; the constant fulfillment in human life of the purposes of God. This holy sun-tan is the result of constant gazing into the face of the Sun of Righteousness.

Her Face Shone

My Sunday morning services were always broadcast throughout the hospital, and each one terminated with an announcement. " Listeners, I must leave now, in order to return to my own church service. But before I go, may I make a suggestion? If any listeners have a problem or a question; if you desire to see me personally, please ten Sister, and she will tell Matron. When I receive your message, I will come to see you.

It was visiting day, and as I walked through the main entrance of Sully Hospital, near Penarth, South Wales, Matron came forward to meet me. " Mr. Powell, - wants to see you urgently. Would you please go and see what she wants? " I walked down the long corridor, and eventually reached her door. When I entered, my clerical collar immediately indicated that I was the minister. She had reddish hair, which perfectly matched her flushed complexion. Her eyes were spear-points of light; grim determination was stamped all over her face. Before I could say a word she said, " How are you, Father Powell? " I placed a chair near the foot of her bed, and calmly answered, "Just a minute; let's get one thing straight. I am not Father Powell! I am just a plain Baptist minister, and possibly I shall never be a father in my life! " She smiled and said, "Oh, that's all right with me, Father. I wanted to see you." I sighed and repeated my former statement; but I only wasted my breath, for she again said, " Don't worry, Father Powell, I wanted to see you urgently". I remained Father Powell until the day of her death.

She told me how she had " had a row " with Father and her chin seemed very pugnacious as she listed her grievances. She was a devout Roman Catholic, but in no uncertain fashion, so she informed me, she had told Father - he could keep his religion: she would change to Father Powell's. When I interrupted to confess that my religion was no good, she was utterly amazed, and listened as I tried to explain that religion was never very much good. What man needed was not a dead religion, but a real faith in the Lord Jesus; to know Him as a living Friend. She was so puzzled; I might have been talking Dutch. It took a long

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" Mr. Powell, you are wanted urgently. That woman is dying. She is asking for you continually." I hurried to the hospital, and one look was sufficient to tell me my little friend was nearing home. I sat by her side and gently took her hand into mine; and I shall never forget what followed. For fully two minutes she gazed silently into my face, and then as a great sigh escaped her she said, " I wanted to see you once more; now-go away." I answered, " No, I intend to stay with you for a little while." She interrupted to say with emphasis, " No. Please go away." My face betrayed disappointment, and her eyes were quick to see the shadows.

" Ah, Mr. Powell, do not misunderstand me. I love you. I haven't any relatives. I haven't any friends. I haven't anybody in all this world except you. You introduced me to my Saviour, and I shall always love you. But, Mr. Powell, He has come to fetch me-He is here now. Oh, sir, as long as you sit there, I want to look at you; I want to speak to you. But there is Another present, and I want you to go away so that I can look at Him, and talk to Him all the time. But, sir, I wanted to see you once more before He takes me home." She stopped; her effort had drained her strength. My voice was very shaky when I whispered, " I understand. I'll see you in the morning." Reaching the door I turned to see her for the last time, but already she had forgotten me. She was looking straight ahead, and "the skin of her face shone.- For a moment I was startled-I really was. Then I closed the door, and tip-toed down the corridor. Within a few hours I again passed her doorway, on my way to conduct the normal hospital service. I looked into the small room-and the bed was empty. I was left with my memories. As an ordinary window reflects the beauty of the setting sun until the glass seems to be made of gold, so her frail body reflected the indescribable glory of her Risen Lord.

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