

Beloved of the Lord:

"HIS CHEEKS ARE AS A BED OF SPICES, AS SWEET FLOWERS" - or "RAISED BEDS OF TENDER PLANTS" (JNDTrans) - S.ofS. 5:13. The Hebrew word "cheeks" signifies the softness and beauty of the face. The face, as well as the head, was anointed with fragrant oil to make the face shine (Psa.104:15). The face of the Beloved in its beauty, is like the loveliest flowers, excelling in fragrance all others, to a spiritual heart. Let us consider the face of Jesus:

1 - HIS FACE SHINES WITH THE GLORY OF GOD - "God...shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" - 2 Cor.4:6. God revealed Christ to our sinful hearts, dispelling the darkness. Now, with unveiled face we "behold the Lord of glory" and are transformed into His likeness - see 2 Cor.3:13-16.

2 - HIS FACE IS THE BEAUTY OF THE FATHER - "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" - John 14:9. The divine glory of the Father shines through the Incarnate life of Jesus. No other face compares with His. In comparison others are not beautiful. In our unbelief we saw no beauty in Him (Isa.53:2) - but now we not only see His beauty, we also see the Father Himself revealed to us - John 1:14 and 18.

3 - HIS FACE WAS THE OBJECT OF HUMAN INSULTS - (a) - The betrayer "came to Jesus, and... kissed Him" - Matt.26:49. (b) - He was smitten on the cheek, one of the greatest human indignities- (Micah 5:1;Matt.26:67;Lu.22:64). Yet He gave the other cheek! (c) Servants of the High Priest and the Roman soldiers SPIT in His blessed face and smote Him on the head - (Matt.26:27;27:30). The Lord of all Creation being insulted by His creatures reveals in some measure the depths of His humiliation He experienced to save US!

4 - HIS SUBMISSION TO ALL THESE INSULTS - The prophetic Word was fulfilled saying - "I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I HID NOT MY FACE FROM SHAME AND SPITTING" - Isaiah 50:6. He lightly esteemed it because of the joy before Him, even of saving you and me! (Heb.12:2). "Who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not"etc. - 1 Pet.2:23. What an example for us today!

5 - THE FRAGRANCE OF THOSE SMITTEN CHEEKS - Now to His Bride those cheeks are the fragrant "bed of spices" and the "sweetest flowers". Now, when we look on Him Whom our sins have pierced, remembering our insults we sadly must confess; now, HIS BEAUTY is increased in our hearts. Though "we hid as it were our faces from Him" (Isa.53:3,4) - yet we have found that our own smitings have but drawn forth from Him fragrance and His cheeks are to us like aromatic plants and the fairest of flowers! We say from humble and sincere hearts that "WE LOVE HIM, BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US" - 1 John 4:19.

6 - HIS FACE IS NOW ONE OF GLORY - His is now a face of HEAVENLY GLORY - "We see Jesus... crowned with glory and honor" - Heb.2:9. It is a face of KINGDOM GLORY - pre-figured on the Mount of Transfiguration when "His face did shine as the sun"etc. - Matt.17:2. His face, though once smitten more than the sons of men, will radiate with ETERNAL GLORY! - "And they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads" - Rev.22:4. Oh! the wonder of it all! that face of eternal glory will be reflected in ours for ever! "We shall be like HIM" - 1 John 3:2etc. Oh! that we would reflect it even now as we ought!

"I've seen the face of Jesus; He smiled in love on me.
It filled my heart with rapture, My soul with ecstasy.
The scars of deepest anguish; were lost in glory bright;
I've seen the face of Jesus. It was a wondrous sight.

Oh! glorious face of beauty;
Oh! gentle touch of care.
If here it is so blessed - -
WHAT WILL IT BE UP THERE?"

Faithfully yours in Christ,

W. B. Cranhall