

SAUL ... who seemed to be hypnotized
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(I SAMUEL 19:

19-24)

Dear David,

It's strange that we are thinking of you, when we should be thinking of Saul ; but that's just the way of things. You two always seemed to be getting in each other's way, and whenever we read of King Saul, we expect you to appear on the page. No, no, do not misunderstand us; we are glad, very glad, for action was always to be expected when you and Saul came together. You are not too busy to answer a few questions? Good. You remember those troublesome days when Saul hunted you from pillar to post ; when life was a nightmare ; when death threatened to overtake you at ,any moment. Did you laugh when your wife put an image in your bed, covered it with a sheet, and then tucked in it as if she were caring for her husband? No wonder Saul was mad when he discovered what she had done.

How Inviting

We have often read, " So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt at Naioth " (I Sam. 19: 18). David, that verse appeals to us a great deal, for Samuel was the mouthpiece of God. Amid all the decadent conditions of his day, he stood for truth and goodness. To be near him was to stand in the Lord's presence. His home was a sanctuary ;his smile a benediction. You felt safe with him. God's man was your friend; he was a refuge in the storm. We know how you felt, for we have often acted similarly. When ugly circumstances followed us day after day, we fled for refuge to Another who was also God's Man.

How Irresistible

Were you just a little scared when the party of soldiers came to take you away? Did you tremble, and look expectantly toward your kind benefactor? Were you amazed when he quietly smiled ; when " The Spirit of God was upon them, and they prophesied." David, weren't you astonished when this procedure was twice repeated? Samuel, assured, dignified, stood at your side. His eyes were pools of inscrutable mystery ; the smile playing about his lips held just a trace of mockery and scorn. Who were these stupid men, that they should challenge the authority of the Most High? Yes, the messengers of Saul were swayed by eternal powers ; they spoke words of praise, and extolled the name of the Almighty. David, you knew a thing or two, didn't you, when you took shelter with Samuel?

How Invincible

And then king Saul arrived (v. 22). Wasn't he stupid! Yes, he would show Samuel that other people as well as he could act and speak with authority. " Men, seize the scoundrel David, and

SAUL ... who seemed to be hypnotized brook no interference!" And Samuel's eyes merely flickered. Imperceptibly the lines around his mouth deepened ; his beard twitched, as if suppressed mirth wanted to break forth. Gravely the prophet inclined his head, and behold, " . . . the Spirit of God was upon Saul also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?" And still Samuel watched him. David, do you know what the worldly wise people of our age would say about that event? They would declare that Samuel was a hypnotist ; that king Saul was impressionable and went under! Not that it matters, for if God desired, He could paralyze an army of kings!

How Inspiring

What happened after the demonstration ended? It must have been funny to see Saul waking up. Surely he was disconcerted when he discovered his need of clothing. Was he any wiser, or did he become morose and sullen? He was a strange man. But, David, we cannot understand why you fled from Samuel. You were very fearful when you found Jonathan and said, " What have I done? What is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?" (20: 1). Of course, we may be all wrong in our thinking, but it seems to us that since the presence of Samuel afforded glorious protection, you would have been well advised to remain with him. Were you afraid that he might die and leave you at the mercy of your enemy? What a pity you are so far away, David. You could tell us so much. Anyhow, we have a Saviour who will never die. We fled for refuge to Him, and felt so much at home in His presence, that we decided to stay for ever. What do you think of that, David?

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