

If Ye Kenned (Knew) How I Love Him

This is a true story from Scotland. The Scottish words and phrases have been retained because they give a certain quaintness and warmth to the narrative. The English equivalents, however, have been supplied within brackets.

A poor young man, somewhat mentally impaired, who was supported by his church in the Highlands of Scotland, passed most of his time wandering from house to house. He was rather reserved and quiet; and he won the pity of all kind hearts in the parish. He did not have great ability to converse with his neighbours and friends, but he was often in loving communion with the Lord his God who, although the High and Holy One, is pleased to condescend to men of low estate. Yeddie, as he was called, was in

the habit of whispering to him-self as he trudged along the highway or performed the simple tasks which neighbours some times asked him to perform. Once, when a foolish teenage boy heard him pleading earnestly in prayer, he asked, "What ghost or goblin are you begging favours of now, Yeddie?" "Neither the one nor the tither (other), laddie," he replied; "I was just having a few words with Him that neither yoursel' (yourself) nor I can see, and yet with Him that sees the baith (both) of us!"

One day Yeddie presented himself, in his coarse dress and hob-nailed boots, before the minister, and, making a bow, much like that of a wooden toy when pulled by a string, he said, "Please, minister, let poor Yeddie eat Supper on the coming day with

the Lord Jesus." The minister was preparing for the administration of the Lord's Supper, which was observed quarterly in that thinly settled region; and then by several churches together, so that the concourse of people made it necessary to hold the services in the open air. The minister felt too busy to be disturbed by this simple youth, and so tried to put him off as gently as possible. But Yeddie pleaded, "Oh, minister, if ye but kenned (knew) how I love Him, ye wud (would) let me go where He's to sit at table." This so touched the minister's heart that permission was given for Yeddie to take his place with the other communicants.

The service took place and, as it proceeded, tears flowed freely from the eyes of the poor young man and at the name of Jesus he would shake his head mourn-fully, and whisper, "But I dinna (do not) see Him." At length, however, after partaking of the bread and wine, he raised his head, wiped away the traces of his tears, and, looking in the minister's face, nodded and smiled. Then he covered his face with his hands, and buried it between his knees, and remained in that posture till the parting blessing was given and the people began to depart. Yeddie then rose, and, with a face lighted with joy, yet marked with solemnity, he followed the rest. One and another from his own parish spoke to him, but he made no reply until pressed by some other youths. Then he said, "Ah, lads, dinna (do not) bid Yeddie talk to-day! He's seen the face of the Lord

Jesus among His ain (own) ones. He got a smile frae (from) His eye and a word frae (from) his tongue; and he's afeared (afraid) to speak lest he lose memory o't (of it), for it's but a bad memory he has at the best. Ah! lads, lads! I ha' (have) seen Him this day that I never seed (have seen) before. I ha' (have) seen wi' (with) these dull eyes yon (that) lovely Man. Dinna (Do not) ye speak, but just leave poor Yeddie to His company."

When Yeddie reached the poor cot (cottage) he called "home", he dared not speak to the "granny" who sheltered him, lest he might, as he said, "lose the bonny face". He left his "parritch (porridge) and treacle" untasted; and, after smiling on and patting the wrinkled cheek of the old woman, to show her that he was not out of sorts, he climbed the ladder to the poor loft where his pallet of straw was, to get another look and another word "frae (from) yon (that) lovely Man." And his voice was heard below, in low tones: "Ay, Lord, it's just poor me that has been sae (so) long seek-ing Ye; and now we'll bide thegither (together) and never part more! Oh, ay! but this is a bonny (beautiful) loft, all gold and precious stones! The Hall o' (of) the Castle is a poor place compared to my loft this bonny (beautiful) night!" And then his voice grew softer and softer till it died away.

Granny sat over the smouldering peat below, with her elbows on her knees, relating in loud whispers to a neighbour

the stories of the boys who had met Yeddie after the service, and also his own strange appearance and words. "And, beside a' (all) this," she said in a whisper, "he refused to taste his supper – a thing he has never done before, such a fearfu' (fearful) appetite he has! But to-night, when he cam' (came) in, faint wi' (with) the long road he had come, he cried, "Nae (No) meat for me, granny; I ha' (have) had a feast which I will feel within me while I live; I supped with the Lord Jesus, and noo (now) I must e'en (even) gang (go) up the loft and sleep wi' (with) Him!"

When the morrow's sun arose, "granny," unwilling to disturb the weary Yeddie, left her poor pillow in order to perform her usual tasks. She brought peat from the stack and water from the spring. She spread her humble table, and made the "parritch" (porridge); and then, remembering that Yeddie went supperless to bed, she called him from the foot of the ladder. There was no reply. She called

again and again, but there was no sound above, except the wind whistling through the openings in the thatch. She had not ascended the rickety ladder for years, but anxiety gave strength to her limbs, and she soon stood in the poor garret which had long sheltered the poor simple boy.

Before a rude stool, half-sitting, half-kneeling, with his head resting on his folded arms, she found Yeddie. She laid her hand upon his head, but instantly recoiled. While she had been sleeping, the heavy iron crown Yeddie had to wear had been replaced with the crown of the ransomed, which fadeth not away.

Yeddie had caught a glimpse of Jesus, and could not live apart from Him. As he had supped, so had he slept – with Him!