

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

1st Series

No. 67

October 1978

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AFFECTIONATE FEELINGS

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I seek help, dear brethren, to say a word as to the need for the development of right feelings among the saints. I am concerned that we should not be formally in Christianity but there as persons with affections that are developed, persons with soul. I read from Psalm 23 because it links with what we have already had as to the leadership of Christ. David who wrote the Psalm says "Jehovah is my shepherd"; then he says "he leadeth me beside still waters. He restoreth my soul". I wonder if perhaps there may be need for restoration of soul with us; that perhaps there may have been a decline in feelings, in sensitive feelings, perhaps a diversion in the affection that would keep us right in our relation to God and to Christ, and in the place which we have in God's testimony. We have of course, as in all things, to come to the Lord Jesus Himself to get the perfection of developed feeling in a man. I read these passages in Matthew 26 and Acts 1, both of which you will notice refer to the mount of Olives, to show how the disciples became caught up in that great area of feeling and affection which the Lord had known in the time when He had been among them. You will recall that on several occasions it says that Jesus went to the mount of Olives. When all was unresponsive around, the Lord felt an unresponsive condition; He says "We have piped to you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wailed", Matt 11: 17. We are in a day that is marked by unresponsiveness publicly to the divine claim, and the Lord feels that. What He is looking for is for persons who will be sympathetic with Him in relation to His current operations. It was so at the beginning; it says, when the foundations of the earth were laid, the sons of God shouted for joy (see Job 38: 7); not simply because they saw what had been done as an act of power but because they were stirred in relation to the greatness of divine operations. I believe there is need for persons who are sensitive

enough to be stirred in relation to what God is doing, and ready to be developed in their feelings as to how things may affect God and His testimony. That is how Jesus was here, a Man under God's eye, referred to in the prophet Isaiah as a tender sapling (see chap 53: 2). There was nothing insensitive about Christ. He was here growing up, as that passage tells us, out of an arid soil, a root out of dry ground; the scene afforded nothing to Christ, neither did the scene harden Him. I believe the scene through which we pass has the tendency to harden us so that we become unfeeling as to what the saints may be going through. Think of the pressures that are on the brethren at this time! - extraordinary pressures, pressures of bodily sickness, pressures of circumstances, some in isolation knowing what the burdens of the testimony are, pressures testimonially on the spirits of the saints as we see what Satan would seek to do. What is it all for, dear brethren? I believe the Lord is allowing these things so that there may be in the saints a development of feelings akin to His own which He Himself can support.

So you get this reference in the gospels to Jesus as going Himself to the mount of Olives. The disciples were not always sympathetic with Him, and if we look back on our history that would have to be said of us all; they were not always sympathetic but the Lord always had an outlet, a realm, we may say the realm of the Spirit, a region related to heaven that was the resort of Christ as Man when He was here. When we come to the end of that public history, the Lord furnishes for His own this great occasion of the Supper.

How the Lord's feelings enter into the inauguration of the Supper! Matthew stresses the intensity of the suffering, the Lord Jesus as the Man of sorrows. At the end of the time the Lord is gathered with His own and what He is doing is furnishing something that will nourish their affections, something that will nourish the affections of those who should follow, for the Lord was thinking of us in the inauguration of the Supper. I trust that we are increasingly finding that the Supper is an occasion for the expression of feeling, not a formal time, not a time exactly governed by commandments or the assertion of control but a time when the feelings responsively of the saints can be freed

and come into expression. In Luke's gospel the Lord says "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer", chap 22: 15. What intense feeling was in that! "With desire I have desired" - the Lord's affections active. We spoke of the integrity of His heart; He said "I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer". He does not partake of the Supper but He furnishes them with the Supper in order that their affections should be nourished and that the quality of feeling so evident in Himself at that time should be carried forward in persons who were with Him at a time of such intense pressure. So at this point in Matthew's account it says "And having sung a hymn, they went out to the mount of Olives". It is not now the Lord Jesus going alone - it says *they* "went out to the mount of Olives". It is not the assertion here exactly of His leadership; it is as though they were caught up in the current in which He was moving. It is an upward movement: *they* "went out to the mount of Olives", as though they were caught up feelingly in what Christ Himself was going on with at this particular time, and their outlet was in the region of the Spirit where the glory of what was proper to Christianity was rightly sustained.

So I referred to Acts 1 when at the time of His ascension, after Jesus had been taken up into heaven it refers to their return being from the mount called the mount of Olives. If the realm of the Spirit - and the Spirit is to have increasing place with us - was the area into which they found they were led under the touch of Christ, that realm is the realm that is going to afford supply for the sustenance of God's testimony in an adverse scene. They were returning to Jerusalem, the place where their Lord had been crucified. That is the character of the world. The men in white clothing say, "Men of Galilee, why do ye stand looking into heaven?". They do not say, Men of Jerusalem. These were men who were publicly identified with the reproach of Christ. "Men of Galilee, why do ye stand looking into heaven? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, shall thus come in the manner in which ye have beheld him going into heaven. Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called the mount of Olives" - as if they discerned that, if they

were to be in the scene of the testimony, they were to be there sustained with the kind of feelings that they had seen expressed in quality, in perfection, in the Lord Jesus Himself on that occasion when He furnished the Supper for them. I believe it indicates that the testimony is to be carried forward in a way that is feeling, and a way that is consciously related to the greatness of the service of God.

I go on to 2 Samuel because in this book we get very varied experiences with David. David is not always a type of Christ, and perhaps in this book as in none other he is seen as a failing believer, one who had diverted, one who needed to be restored in his soul.

Earlier in this book he diverts because of the tendency to lack diligence. I wonder if perhaps that might be a word for us. At a time when kings go forth, when David should have been rightly engaged in God's testimony, he was marked by a degree of idleness. Of the woman of worth in Proverbs 31 it says, she "eateth not the bread of idleness" (v 27), as if one of the characteristics that should mark a person rightly in God's testimony is diligence. Dear sister, dear brother, there is a right occupation for you in view of your being feelingly in the testimony of God. If God has brought you into this testimony He has done it for a purpose and He is able to sustain you in that testimony. But at that moment, when this feature of diligence was absent with him, David's affection diverted. How many sorrows come in this book because of misplaced affections! Dear brethren, let us see that our affections are guarded. Satan is active, he would divert us, he would introduce an alternative to Christ, he would cause our affections to be misplaced. David's failure in the early chapters of this book came through his affections being misplaced. Does God turn away from David? How gracious God is with His servant! How gracious you will find that God is with you! You will find that the Lord is not only the One who leads you but that He is the One who restores the soul. So God gave David a wonderful opportunity, How gracious He was! In chapter 12 of this sorrowful book we get the introduction of Solomon, a type of Christ, a babe born and a prophet sent, God sending by the hand of the prophet and calling his name

Jedidiah, for Jehovah's sake. What does that name mean? It means that Jehovah loved him. What a touch that is over against the diverting affection of a David! On to the scene comes the object of divine affection, Solomon the babe, as yet only a babe, and yet the word is that Jehovah loved him. What an opportunity for David that his affections should be rightly adjusted now and that he should go forward in God's testimony having the assurance of divine objectives and the divine viewpoint rightly before him! What do we find? We find that David is diverted still, by the subtlety of Satan's attempts in regard of the bringing back of Absalom. It says that Absalom "stole the hearts of the men of Israel", (chap 15: 6) - stole them. There was a certain degree of subtlety and deception about it, and yet to the natural man there was an attractiveness that apparently could not be resisted. O, dear brethren, I refer again to the words of Solomon, which impress me as to their importance just at this time; "Keep thy heart more than anything that is guarded; for out of it are the issues of life, Prov 4: 23. David's affection is again diverted, and in spite of God giving him such a wonderful opportunity in the introduction of Jedidiah we find David mourning for Absalom; he says "O Absalom, my son, my son!", chap 18: 33. How quickly we divert if not maintained sensitive to the way in which God is helping us to move!

When we come to chapter 15 there is again a point of recovery in the history of David, a point when he is no longer assuming great things but is prepared to take a low place. How humiliating that God's anointed should be fleeing the city of Jerusalem! And yet the circumstances of the testimony demanded it, and David here evidences the spirit of Christ in that he leaves the situation in Jerusalem. He is prepared to go into obscurity. A person with whom God is working is prepared for that, he is prepared for a situation testimonially that is insignificant, not on public view. This is the evidence that David's soul is being restored. David again is getting God's objectives on his vie, and he comes back to what is fixed and what is permanent in regard of God's testimony. He says to Zadok "Carry back the ark of God into the city. If I shall find favour in the

eyes of Jehovah, he will bring me again, and show me it, and its habitation", as if David is saying, the testimony of God does not simply relate to me, it is something greater, the place that Christ has in the divine mind is far greater than the place that I as an individual could ever have. Thank God there is a place for Christ! We need to come back to that in regard of all our localities, that there is a place for Christ. "And the king said to Zadok the priest, Thou art the seer; return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you". There is a certain suggestion here of how a local assembly is furnished. Thank God for the place that the seer has, one who can discern what is consistent and proper to stand related to God's testimony in a situation where publicly everything has gone to pieces! "And your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. See, I will stop in the plains of the desert, until there come word from you to inform me. And Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem; and they abode there". You see how David is moving; he gets a view of Christ related to God's testimony standing in relation to the position of the city, and then positively he moves. In verse 30 he goes up the ascent of the Olives and weeps as he goes up. His soul is being restored, he sees that Christ is to have His place in the testimony in the ark, he sees that there are to be those related to Christ, and he finds an outlet in this realm of the Spirit where right feelings according to God are again reached and where this upward movement, finding its outlet responsively to the God whom he knew, can gain form part of his experience.

I feel these impressions are feeble and I am aware of a certain incapacity in expressing them, but I feel their importance because if Jesus was here feelingly, if He was here in a sensitive way, surely it is only thus that we can be here rightly. In the presence of all that would harden and divert us, in the presence of all that would bid for the affections of the saints, God would say, I will not only lead you but I will restore your soul. So we should be here not simply formally in the testimony but vitally. I think of Eutychus in Acts 20: Paul's word after he had gone down and embraced the boy and carried him up to the third story was "his life is in him"; the note says his 'soul' is

in him. O that we should be aware of this in our localities so that we are together feelingly in relation to what is vital, conscious that God is going on in relation to Christ - Jedidiah, Jehovah loved him - aware that although our affections have diverted He is calling us back to that, and aware that the realm of the Olives and the ascent related to it is available. As David reaches the summit he worships God. O that the supremacy of God may be reached in some sense in our own experience! It is one thing to acknowledge the truth mentally; it is only formative as we come to it by way of experience. May God help us for His Name's sake.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

14 January 1978

IN THE TESTIMONY

J.D.Gray

Acts 12: 12; 13: 4,5,13; 15: 36-41; Mark 1: 1-3; 14: 50-52; 16: 2-7

I would like to raise the question, dear friends, as to how you are in the testimony and I am particularly concerned about our younger ones but it applies to all of us. I have selected Mark just to trace briefly his history, the influences that came into his life, and how finally God worked out His thoughts with him. I suppose He was present in Acts 12 and apparently he was brought up in an environment of a Christian household; his mother it would seem was a Christian who had a house and made it available to the brethren as they required it for a prayer meeting. Mark maybe entered into that prayer because it was quite a time of crisis. Peter had been in prison and his life was at stake; James had been beheaded by Herod just a day or two previous. Mark was in such an environment,

but how much was Mark attached to Christ? That is the question I want to go through this preaching. How much are you attached to Christ? It is good to be present at the meetings, and we all go to the prayer meeting, but how am I there? I could be there in a casual way as Mark might have been, though it seems in some way as though there was a measure of sincerity with him, but in any case he comes into a little bit of usefulness initially in the testimony. Paul, as going out in relation to God's testimony, and Barnabas whom we find out later was Mark's uncle, go out together and take John Mark with them. What a privilege to be in the testimony with Paul and Barnabas! But how is he is it? How is he fundamentally in relation to his links with the Lord Jesus? You could be in a position of privilege with a certain amount of prominence and, like John Mark, taken on a journey. Other young men might have said that Mark was privileged going out with Paul and Barnabas, seeing the great work the Lord was doing in the various cities, but how is Mark in his soul? That is the question I would like to raise with you all tonight. How are you in your soul? We can look at externals and see what is external, but how are you in your links with the Lord Jesus? How are you in your own soul? That is the root of the matter that becomes exposed in Mark's history (the circumstances that bring it out we may touch on) but he goes forward with them so far and then no further, and he turns back. It says "John separated from them and returned to Jerusalem". It may be that he did not go out of fellowship - it would not look like that - but he turned back. The Lord says in the gospel "No one having laid his hand on the plough and turning back is fit for the kingdom of God", Luke 9: 62. Have you ever seen a man ploughing? I do not know very much about the skills that are required these days with tractors and ploughs, but in the old days, if you had a pair of horse and a plough and were going down a field, the ploughman set his eye on a mark at the other end of the field and he kept looking at that mark and never looked behind. He will draw a straight furrow if he looks at the mark; if he looks behind he will be all over the place; that is the ploughman. Mark laid his hand to the plough and he looked back and he is not fit for the kingdom of God. He is not being cast off as a total wreck, the Lord is not casting you

off as a total wreck. He is not doing that; there is an opportunity for everyone to be recovered in relation to the greatest thoughts of God. It has been said that the coast is strewn with wrecks of better men than ourselves. Mark need not be a wreck on the coast; he can be recovered and I will show you how he is recovered. God has recovery in mind for every man. Mark goes back to Jerusalem and influences come into his life that do not help him.

In chapter 15 Paul and Barnabas are going again to visit the brethren to see how they are getting on and Barnabas proposes to take John Mark but Paul thought otherwise since he had abandoned them previously. God in His word does not miss the mark with any one of us; He brings home the truth to us that we might face up to it. "But Paul thought it not well to take with them him who had abandoned them, going back from Pamphylia". You see how strong that word is, and if Barnabas had agreed with what Paul had said, he might have helped Mark at this point but, sad to say, he does not and is influenced by the natural relationship; and not only is he out of the pathway actively for himself but he takes his nephew with him and goes away to Cyprus. Is Mark to be left at Cyprus with Barnabas or what is going to happen? Scripture is now silent about Mark until we come to 2 Timothy, which I intended to read, where Paul says "Take Mark, and bring him with thyself, for he is serviceable to me for ministry", chap 4: 11. What brought it about, dear young friend? What brought about the change in Mark's soul? It is brought out in his gospel. You get an insight into the man's soul history in his gospel. He tells you about himself and the exercises he went through until he became serviceable to the Master.

Now that is what I want to engage you with for a few moments, how Mark was recovered. "Beginning of the glad tidings of Jesus Christ, Son of God". That is the day when things begin to change for you and me when the Son of God comes on to our view. Mark had been in a company with a man called Paul, formerly called Saul of Tarsus, who had met the Lord on the Damascus road and it changed his entire outlook in this world, and he begins to preach. What did he preach? "Jesus that *he* is the Son of God", Acts 9: 20. Mark

comes to Him, "Beginning of the glad tidings of Jesus Christ, Son of God". No doubt he had ruminated over what Paul had preached in those times he had been with him, that Jesus is the Son of God.

What does the Son of God mean? It means that Christ is the sun and centre of another world. You say, is there another world? I can only see the world of temporal and material things. Dear friend, there is another world, there is a spiritual world of which Christ is the sun and centre. Mark went back to the material side of things in Jerusalem, an easier line than what the testimony required, but then he comes through to the beginning of the glad tidings. Where did that begin? It began in his soul.

I will tell you of an incident in this gospel (see chap 14: 51). A certain young man was there, when the Lord was being apprehended, who had a linen cloth cast about his naked body, and it says "the young men seize him; but he, leaving the linen cloth behind him, fled from them naked". Mark would say, That was like me, I was exposed because I was casually attached to Christ; publicly I was there, I was at all the meetings but I did not have an appreciation fully of what the Lord was going to go through. Mark's gospel brings out more than any other gospel the depths of the sufferings of Jesus. "Him who knew not sin he has made sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in him", 2 Cor 5: 21.

What does it mean? It means that He took upon Himself the state and the sins that attached to me and bore them in His body on the tree. That is what Mark came to, and he would say, I have to come to an end of the man after the flesh, the man that sinned, and Jesus took my stead there and settled the whole question of sin on the cross in those three hours of darkness. Think of the awful cry that came forth displaying something of the feelings of Jesus on the cross when He said "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?". Mark was changed through the consideration of the sufferings of Christ on the cross. Dear friend, are you only casually attached to the Saviour? Are you only casually attached to the people of God? Or does Jesus really mean something to you - do you understand what it was that He bore? Do you understand what it was that drew

out that cry? Do you understand what it was when the darkness came over the whole land from the sixth to the ninth hour - why the Spirit of God leaves those words untranslated, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?", Mark 15: 34. Do you understand that in the state in which you are you cannot draw near to God in complacency? Man in this world seeks to enter into the praise of God without having resolved the question of his sins; that is Cain's world and Cain's worship and it is all around us. We do not want to be critical of persons but that is what is all around us. Nevertheless if the word of God is read it can reach the conscience of anyone. God intends that your conscience should be reached so that you are no longer casually attached but wholeheartedly attached to Jesus, and that is what comes about in Mark. He tells us of another experience.

When the women went into the tomb they saw a young man clothed in a white robe and they were amazed and alarmed - a young man in the light of the fact that Jesus had been crucified. He says "Ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, the crucified one"; a young man who considered where the body of Jesus had lain, that it lay in the grave. Let it sink into your heart and soul dear young friend, that Christ lay there, lay in the grave, lay in the dust of death. And then he is a young man who says that He is not here: "He is risen, he is not here: behold the place where they had put him"; a young man who is now able to help others, who said "go, tell his disciples and Peter, he goes before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him". O to be such a young man or woman in this world who is no longer casually attached to Christ but with everything set right in your mind and heart, no longer bored but in the joy of Christianity, and the joy that Christ is risen. Praise the Lord! Christ is risen and is seated above. "He that descended is the same who has also ascended up above all the heavens, that he might fill all things", Eph 4: 10. He is my Saviour.

Thus Mark comes back serviceable to Paul for the ministry. Are you filling out the place in happiness that the Lord has given you to fill for Him in this world? You will only do it as you come to an appreciation of the death of Christ and the place that He has taken,

and the awfulness of the distance into which He went as forsaken of God. "God commends his love to us, in that, we being still sinners, Christ has died for us", Rom 5: 8. Paul says "no longer live, I, but Christ lives in me", Gal. 2: 20. That is what you come through to; that is what Mark arrived at, and he is prepared to be in the testimony at a time when Paul is awaiting martyrdom and there are reports of the people of God suffering.

Have you had to do with the Son of God, the One who imparts a quickening touch so that you live and live to God? That is what God has in mind, satisfaction in living to Him, fully satisfied, Christ everything and in all. The worldly man may say he has enough; the Christian can say he has everything because 'I have Christ, what want I more?' That is what Mark comes to, a full appreciation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus he is able to be a help to those around him. The Lord has in mind that you should be a help, and God has not only provided the forgiveness of sins but has provided the Holy Spirit as a gift so that we have that power to go through this world. It says in Peter's epistle "If ye are reproached in the name of Christ, blessed are ye; for the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God rests upon you", 1 Pet 4: 14. O to be in the gain of what we are speaking about, so attached to Christ that I am no longer casual! Peter was searched by the Lord in this very matter of attachment. He said to him "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" John 21: 15. How the Lord searched him until he is fully amended and then he is given some thing to do. The Lord gives every one of us something to do. I recall Mr McCallum saying many years ago, There is work to be done and who is going to do it? That is still true. What a challenge to younger men and women! There is work to be done and who is going to do it? Mark was going to do it because he was firmly attached to the Lord Jesus and in appreciation of "the deep that lieth under". May the Lord bless His word.

BARNET

10 July 1977

SIMPLICITY

E.M.Walkinshaw

2 Corinthians 11: 3; Romans 16: 19,20

Some one said, dear brethren, that to the simple all things are simple. Christianity is simple, though of course in it there are most profound depths. God has made it simple so that both the simple and the intellectual might be able to understand it. If He had made it suitable to man's intellect then only the intellectual could understand it, but He has made it simple so that everybody can understand. So Paul speaks of simplicity as to the Christ. I think that means that Christ is before the soul; that is simple, and of course it leads to submission to Him, and it leads to that already referred to which is unity. What I think that the Lord would help us to lay hold of is that Christianity is essentially simple. Mr Darby used to say that the cream is on the top of the milk - God does not put it at the bottom, nor has He caused in the creation that it should go there, but it is on the top. So it is in Scripture. As we read simply and in dependence upon the Holy Spirit we receive impressions of the Lord Jesus. One impression of Him is eternal, it is worth everything that man could teach you. I would suggest, dear brethren, that we look at Scripture simply and count upon the Holy Spirit to give us impressions of the One that is its theme. So Paul was fearful, as he says, "lest by any means" - any means - "as the serpent deceived Eve by his craft, so your thoughts should be corrupted from simplicity as to the Christ".

How crafty Satan is! setting snares for our feet, setting all kinds of things before our eyes, trying to appeal to our five senses, in order to turn us aside from simplicity as to Christ. Is Christ before you? That is a question I would ask my brethren, and ask myself of course as among them: is Christ before me? Are my thoughts for Him? Are my affections uncorrupted? This is, I think, what the Spirit would aim at, not a vast knowledge. It might be possible for me to have perhaps some knowledge of the whole scope of the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation but how would I know from where to draw in order to bring the mind of God to bear upon the brethren? I would not apart

from having Christ before me and the Holy Spirit operating within so that impressions of that Man reach the saints. That woman in Luke 7 loved Christ, she had Christ before her. If you had asked her what some of the scriptures meant she could not have told you, but she loved Christ. If you had said something to her about the assembly she would have been I suppose in complete ignorance, and yet she is a wonderful expression of the affection of the assembly for Christ. I suppose the same with the twelve - "we have believed and known that thou art the holy one of God", John 6: 69. If you had said to Peter, Do you mean the true Aaron? I suppose he might have said, Well that sounds right as doctrine but I am not concerned with doctrine, I am concerned with the Person who has words of life eternal. How simple they were! And how simple were those persons gathered together unto My Name! they had just one Person before them. Now I am not suggesting, dear brethren, that there are not profound depths in Christianity because there are, breadth and length and depth and height, but as another has said you would be lost in it if your soul was not anchored to One Man, that is to Christ who is the centre of it.

Now in the passage in Romans the apostle says, I would have you wise as to what is good and simple as to evil - "wise as to that which is good". Let us go in for what is good, let us think about what is good, let us pursue it. I suppose it must of necessity include righteousness, must of necessity include obedience. Then it says "simple as to evil". Do not try to unravel it. There are some persons who have gone into the various systems of men to discover, as they say, what is there which may be right, rather like a man who wants to go across the mountain, he avoids the signpost and tries every wrong route in an effort to find the right one; he will get lost, and that is what happens, dear brethren, to persons who go into the world to try to find what they think is the right path across the mountain. Be simple as to evil, do not go into it. Mr Darby said, I believe, that the Book of Proverbs helps us to go in this world, which is a labyrinth of evil, without going into it. It gives us a right guide so that we can be simple, not trying to find out what this is and what that is, not

handling things which are nothing to do with us really, but simple as to what is evil; let us avoid it and go on and be wise in what is good.

So I believe, dear brethren, that the Lord would encourage us, and I think all these things lead to unity, all these things lead to an environment of eternal life where the Lord commands the blessing.

You will notice that in Psalm 132 one of the things mentioned is righteousness - "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness" (v 9). Then there is salvation, and then in the next Psalm eternal life.

Those two Psalms should greatly encourage us. I believe what the Lord has indicated to us in this meeting is that He would reach unity among the brethren, but I think it is reached by simplicity as to the Christ, He Himself just before us, and as we are gathered together unto His Name there He can command the blessing. May it be so for His pleasure and glory.

GILLINGHAM

17 August 1976

THE CHILDREN'S SECRET

Every Christian believer has a secret knowledge of the Lord Jesus derived from the way in which light as to His work and Person has shone into the soul. It is a grace which we all receive and, whilst we are always glad to share with one another our appreciation of Christ, yet the gift is unique to each one.

The girl of twelve years old who, in the silence of seeming death, heard Jesus saying to her "Child arise" must have had such a secret. That cry would mean far more to her throughout her renewed life than to the other five persons who heard it, although the majesty of the voice would always ring in their ears too. She could afterwards tell them how she became aware that His mighty yet gentle hand had taken hold of her powerless one, but to them it would never be quite the same.

It is open to every child to hear the voice of the Saviour. To have the help of His hand may be proved in spirit by each one when we are only weak but without any strength at all. No one was to be told what had happened and this may seem strange, yet it does but stress the inward and private side of the knowledge of Jesus.

Perhaps too it was meant to keep the dear child from drawing attention to herself instead of to Him!

Previously to this incident and at a nearby place Jesus had restored a young man to life with the few words "Youth, I say to thee, Wake up". In this case the miracle became as widely known as the other was kept hidden. The testimony was such that God was glorified by it and Jesus magnified in the eyes of all the people. One great and joyful crowd going along with Jesus towards Nain met and mingled with another large but very sad crowd coming with a weeping widow out of the city. Then by obedience to the word of Jesus the youth, a moment before unresponsive, had made them all rejoice together. What a happy secret this must always have been in his heart!

Even lifeless things can hold a secret. I often wonder how many out of the millions of people who pass by Cleopatra's Needle on the Thames Embankment in London realise that a valuable treasure is hidden there. When the column was erected copies of the Bible in four languages were placed in the pedestal together with one very well-known verse in two hundred and fifteen languages! Learned men say that the obelisk, first built in Egypt, may have been there as far back as the time of Exodus. But God's purpose for the believer on His Son goes further back even than time itself. Can you think what that verse of Scripture is and recite it?

J.C.Evershed