

Minister's Message – August 2014

I Know

Our knowledge of the planet on which we live, and the vast universe in which we are suspended, is astounding – astronomical we might say! Our knowledge about the human body is amazing with new medicines and methods of surgery being developed all the time. Previous generations would stand in awe at the vastness of knowledge we enjoy today, and how readily we can access this knowledge in this computer age.

Yet for all this increase in knowledge there seems to be a corresponding decrease in knowledge in certain matters. Knowledge about life and death seems to be on the decrease in our secular society. A well-known TV presenter, now with long grey hair, decided to look at death and the funeral business. He visited Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Buddhist places of cremation and burial. He had people explain what they believed about death and the afterlife. At the end the presenter was asked what he believed about death and life after death. His answer was 'I don't know'!

'One thing I know, once I was blind but now I see'! These are the words of a man born blind but after leaving home received his sight one day. How did this happen? A man called Jesus made clay and put it in his eyes and told him to go and wash in the pool (John 9:25, 11). The educated men of the day would not believe his story. They thought he was an imposter. They kept asking him how he was healed. He kept telling them that Jesus healed him and that he must have done so by the power of God.

Many said, and still say, it is impossible for a man born blind to suddenly start to see without some medical intervention. They also say it impossible for a man to rise from the dead, even with medical intervention. But Jesus died and was buried and rose from the dead. He was seen by hundreds of people speaking and eating after he had died. The experts in the law were confounded by the people who saw and believed; 'What shall we do to these men?' (Acts 4:16).

'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day'. This is what Martha said about her brother Lazarus, four days after he died. She believed in a general way that there will be a resurrection of the dead. She had been taught this but did not really understand. She was a sincere woman who loved her brother. She was not a sceptic like Thomas who said, 'Unless I see I will not believe'. Thomas did see and believe saying 'My Lord and my God' (John 20:29).

Martha was soon expressing a personal belief. Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die' (John 11:25, 26). Jesus spoke of a bodily resurrection and a spiritual resurrection that comes even today when a person is born again of the Spirit of God. With personal faith Martha said, 'Yes Lord, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of God'. She was left in no doubt about life in this world and in the world to come.

'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed to him until that Day' (II Timothy 1:12). These are the words of Paul of Tarsus, a

highly educated man of his day. His education did not prevent him from believing the facts of Jesus death, burial and resurrection. More than this, he knew the significance of these events for his own life. He knew that the resurrection of Jesus meant he would also be resurrected. He knew that Jesus died bearing his sin, and that he was a new person in Christ Jesus. He knew his life was in the hands of Jesus, and that 'nothing could separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Romans 8:39).

'Such knowledge is too wonderful for me' wrote King David (Psalm 139:6). It is indeed wonderful. A sincere and humble search will make this knowledge yours. Facts of history, and a general belief, can become a personal faith in Jesus Christ.

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