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## Having Our Eyes Opened

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*"But their eyes were holden that they should not know him" (Luke 24:16).*

*"And their eyes were opened, and they knew him" (Luke 24:31).*

This is a negative and a positive side. On the negative side there is a word of very solemn warning to us all. Because "their eyes were holden" it was possible for the Risen Lord, the Lord of life and of glory, to be present with them and they did not know it. It is possible for the Risen Lord, with all that that means, to be present with His own disciples and they not know it. And it is possible that He will be present here, speaking from all the Scriptures, and we shall not understand. It is true that the disciples said: *"Was not our heart burning within us, while he spake?"* We may have strong feelings and emotions while the word is being given. No doubt these two men were saying in their hearts: 'Isn't this wonderful? Why, we never heard it like that before! We never saw the Bible handled in that way.' All that is possible, and no difference be made in us. Really, if these two men had understood, they would not have reached Emmaus, and would not have waited until after dark to go back to Jerusalem. They would have turned back on the road and rushed straight back to their fellow disciples. But *they just continued in the way that they were going before*. Strong feelings, yes; a sense of wonder, yes; but no real revolution in their lives that turned them another way.

Now I expect you dear friends are saying: 'Well, is such a thing possible?' Perhaps you would say: 'That is not possible with us!', but let me speak to you out of long experience. There are many of the dear people of God who have had a great deal of teaching and have said afterwards: 'Well, it was all very wonderful. "Our hearts were burning within us while he spake"', but so many of them are not changed by the word. They just go on the same way as they went before, and that is possible with

us, and is why the Lord is just saying this word to us. If it is to mean a change in our life, something has to happen inside.

I do not know how many of you are fond of music. If you are, you will sometimes read a critique in the paper about someone who has been giving a performance on the piano. The writer describes how wonderfully the pianist played, speaks of his wonderful hands and says: 'He rendered the Rondo and the crescendo like a master', etc. That may have been true of the pianist, but what about the piano? Supposing some of the strings of the piano were broken? Supposing an enterprising little mouse had got into the piano and eaten all the dampers away? Well, even Rubinstein or Mendelssohn could not make that piano do what he wanted it to do. The great pianist may be all right. There is no question about him, but if there is something wrong in the instrument, he cannot do as he would.

"Their eyes were holden" - and that was the trouble. Something had to be done in the instrument.

That is the negative side - and it is just possible that that would be true of us.

But there is a positive side: "And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him".

Some people have said that when He took the loaf, gave thanks and gave it to them, they recognized something that they had seen before - it was just the way that Jesus did it in the upper room. Well, you may think that that is the explanation, but I do not, for the whole New Testament stands behind this. Paul said: "*The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: ...he cannot know them*" (1 Corinthians 2:14). Their eyes being holden was an act of God, and their eyes being opened was an act of God.

Paul prayed for the Ephesians: "*That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; having the eyes of your heart enlightened*" (Ephesians 1:17,18). If all those Ephesian believers, who had had all Paul's teaching, needed a spirit of revelation, surely we do! It is an act of God whenever we really do see the Lord Jesus.

But, again, it was an act of grace. These men had forsaken the Lord Jesus in the hour of His trial, and they were men who were of an unbelieving heart. Jesus said to them: "*O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!*", but grace overcame all their failure and all their sin. Their eyes were opened by the grace of God. We do not have to be perfect Christians in order to see the Lord.

If it was an act of God and an act of grace, it was also an act of Divine power - and that act makes all the difference. The fire was burning very low before He opened their eyes, but when they were opened, the fire was rekindled. They had said to Him: 'Come in and abide, for the day is far spent and it is dangerous to be on the road.' When their eyes were opened, the night was turned into day. It is no longer dangerous to be on the road when you have your eyes opened! It is a wonderful thing to have our spiritual eyes opened.

Let us all pray every day that we shall not only hear the Scriptures expounded, but that a great act of God shall be done in us whereby our spiritual eyes are opened to see and know the Lord.