

4 sources of death (1, 2, 3, 4) ...

that is not well washed, he washes it again himself, instead of asking me to." In spite of her deafness the old lady was able to hear Jim's singing. He knew hundreds of hymns by heart, and was quite uninhibited about breaking forth at any moment in his hearty, unmodulated baritone.

He went sledging and ice skating with my teen-age brother and sister, and shoveled snow for my father. I don't recall his doing very much for me except keeping me awake talking, long after the rest of the family had retired. We discussed a broad range of topics—his views on the war question (when my mother had innocently asked if he had been in the service, he said "No, ma'am" with such vehemence she was taken aback), New Testament principles of the conduct of the Church, women, poetry, and many other subjects on which his views were, I thought, out of the ordinary. I enjoyed these sessions partly because at that time I disagreed with him on so many things. At any rate, I decided Jim Elliot was a "character," and I liked him.

When we got back to Wheaton, Jim found that I always did my Thucydides assignment at a certain table in the hall of East Blanchard. He started joining me there quite regularly. There were moments when I was a little suspicious that I was doing most of the work, but I was totally unaware of motives other than the purely utilitarian on his part. We found it an efficient way to get through pages of the Greek classic.

When, months later, he told me that his interest in me had begun before Christmas vacation, I was surprised. I learned that his personal feelings had been held in check by a principle of which he once wrote to his parents:

"No one warns young people to follow Adam's example. He waited till God saw his need. Then God made Adam sleep, prepared for his mate, and brought her to him. We need more of this 'being asleep' in the will of God. Then we can receive what He brings us in His own time, if at all. Instead we are set as bloodhounds after a partner, considering everyone we see until our minds are so concerned with the sex problem that we can talk of nothing else when bulk-session time comes around. It is true that a fellow cannot ignore women—but he can think of them as he ought—as sisters, not as sparring partners."

As is often the case, despite a heavier schedule than ever before, Jim found that his time alone with his Bible was even more vital than necessary. He began spending an hour before breakfast in the New Testament, a few minutes at noon in the Psalms, and evenings in a notebook what he was learning.

"What is written in these pages I suppose will someday be read by others than myself. For this reason I cannot hope to be absolutely honest in what is herein recorded, for the hypocrisy of this shamming heart will ever be putting on a front and dares not write what is actually found in its abysmal depths. Yet, I pray Lord, that you will make these notations to be as nearly true to fact as is possible, that I may know my own heart and be able to definitely pray regarding my gross, though often unrecognized, inconsistencies. I do this because I have been aware that my quiet time with God is not what it should be. These remarks are to be written from fresh, daily thoughts given from God, in meditation on His Word.

"Genesis 23—Abraham calls himself a stranger and sojourner in a land he believed God was going to give to him. This is the first time he shows any real inclination to make a home on earth, and how slight it is—only a field, some trees, and a cave in which he can bury his dead. Lord, show me that I must be a stranger, unconcerned and unconnected with affairs below, as Abraham looked for a city. It was when he owned his strangerhood that the sons of Heth called him a 'prince of God' among them. Abraham made no attempt to be a prince of men, as had Lot, and they all recognized his character and inheritance (qualities of a prince) as being not of men but of God. Oh to be known as Israel, a prince with God; no longer as Jacob of the carnal mind!

"Help me, Lord, not to mourn and weep for those things, once precious, which you teach me are but dead (whether desires, pleasures, or whatever may be precious to my soul now), but give me a willingness to put them away out of my sight (verse 14). Burying places are empty, but I would own a Machpelah where corpses (dead things in my life) can be put away."

Such commentaries on his daily reading filled many pages of notebooks, which he called, "museums of pressed flowers, picked with Him, where He is leading me to 'feed among the lilies.'"

It was during this year that Jim discontinued his practice of making notes in his Bible, or underlining verses. He bought himself a new pen, and, though it was thoroughly thumbled and dog-eared within a year, it was without any markings. This practice, he felt, tended to keep him seeking new truth and allowed the Spirit of God, rather than a red pencil, to emphasize the particular words that he noted.

Jim was not always successful, however, in gleanings something "fresh" from the Word. One morning not long after he began recording, he wrote:

"Yesterday though I had plenty of time for study and read the chapter faithfully, and earnestly sought truth that would be fresh, I cannot say that I found any. Perhaps I sought too hard. Perhaps I strove with the Spirit and frightened the Heavenly Dove in my eagerness. Teach me, Lord, how to listen and not always to seek to squeeze truth out of Scriptures which Thou dost not yet choose to open. My study and prayer time is not yet what I would have it."

After reading, digesting, and recording, Jim set himself to praying. He had lists of people to pray for, a list for each day of the week, and if time alone in his room was limited, he prayed as he walked up to breakfast on campus, or as he stood in line at the dining hall. An odd moment here and there in the day was given to prayer for those names, or to memorization of Bible verses which he carried, written on small cards, in his pocket. These cards were kept till they were ragged, and occasionally were the cause of his being called antisocial, for there were times when they or the prayer-list notebook took precedence over small talk.

The sessions in the Psalms were sometimes shared with another. "Happy time in Psalm 119 and in prayer with Dave at noon today," he wrote, "Oh what love God has led me into for them—Bob, Bill, and now Dave. What times we shall have, now and in His presence beyond, where looms no shade of terror! Fear dissolved in blood! But still He waits, well knowing the Spirit's cry, and the Bride's and creation's groan."

It was Marcus Aurelius who said, "A man's thoughts dye his soul." Constant dwelling in the words of the Lord dyed Jim's soul, and its color was not hidden from fellow students. "His life had an impact on me," wrote his roommate. "I remember the times he spent in prayer, and I remember with conviction, for he was walking closer to his Lord than his roommate."

To those accustomed to the shibboleths of "Fundamentalism" Jim's ideas sometimes seemed startling. Often in dining hall bull sessions someone would say, "Where in the world did you get an idea like that, Elliot?" The answer is found in his notebook:

"II Timothy 2:9 says, 'The word of God is not bound.' Systematic theology—be careful how you tie down the Word to fit your set and final creeds, systems, dogmas, and organized theistic philosophies! The Word of God is not bound! It's free to say what it will to the individual and no one can outline it into dispensations which cannot be broken. Don't get it down 'cold,' but let it live—fresh, warm, and vibrant—so that the world is not binding ponderous books about it, but rather is shacking you for having allowed it to have free

course in your life. That's the apostolic pattern. . . . And those who are arguing about foreknowledge, election, and such: read those verses 14-26, and then look how the apostle is willing to leave it a paradox. 'God gives repentance,' and 'they recover themselves.' Yes, yes, I'm naive, and glad to be so in such a case."

Jim studied the Word for himself, and if what he understood it to mean was not in conformity with what is commonly understood, his standard did not shift.

"The pattern of my behavior is not set in the activities of those about me," he wrote. "Don't follow the example of those you left in the world, nor those you find in the church. Rather, the law of God, found in His Word, shall be my standard, and as I see it, there are few examples of this sort of living anywhere."

About a month after the Christmas holiday interrupted his college studies he wrote in his journal: "Genesis 28: God's promise to Abraham was that his seed should be as the dust of the earth and as the stars of heaven. Stars suggest those children of Abraham which are so by faith, a heavenly people with a heavenly purpose and with heavenly promises. 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called.' Jacob—later Israel—gives his name to the earthly people whose promises, purposes, and character were earthly. The differences of these destinations mark peoples so entirely different that to argue similarities in law, warfare or inheritance is to be careless in the reading of the Scripture."

Thus Jim's views on warfare and law, theology and philosophy, while regarded as iconoclastic by some, had their basis in his simple, literal interpretation of Scripture and application of it to daily life. Even his birthday greetings were not run-of-the-mill, as this to his brother Bert illustrates:

"For you, brother, I pray that the Lord might crown this year with His goodness and in the coming one give you a hallowed dare-devil spirit in lifting the biting sword of Truth, consuming you with a passion that is called by the cultured citizen of Christendom 'fanaticism,' but known to God as that saintly madness that led His Son through bloody sweat and hot tears to agony on a rude Cross—and Glory!"

To his fifteen-year-old sister Jane, Jim wrote, "Fix your eyes on the rising Morning Star. Don't be disappointed at anything or over-elated, either. Live every day as if the Son of Man were at the door, and gear your thinking to the fleeting moment. Just how can it be redeemed? Walk as if the next step would carry you across the threshold of Heaven. Pray. That saint who advances on his knees never retreats."

Jim was doing a great deal of praying in these days concerning the mission field.

"Some have not the knowledge of God—I speak this to your shame," he wrote, quoting Paul. "And they must hear. The Lord is bearing hard upon me the need of the unreached millions in Central Asia. Why does not the church awake? What a high calling is offered any who will pray, 'Send me.'"

"Our young men are going into the professional fields because they don't 'feel called' to the mission field. We don't need a call; we need a kick in the pants. We must begin thinking in terms of 'going out,' and stop our weeping because 'they won't come in.' Who wants to step into an igloo? The tombs themselves are not colder than the churches. May God send us forth."

He was a member of the Student Foreign Missions Fellowship, and attended its prayer meetings in the early morning. He often worked late at night, making up packages for relief in Europe. But his vision of world need included those at his own doorstep as well, and Sunday afternoons found him traveling into Chicago to talk of Christ to those waiting for trains in the large railroad stations.

"No fruit yet," he wrote. "Why is it I'm so unproductive? I cannot recall leading more than one or two into the kingdom. Surely this is not the manifestation of the power of the Resurrection. I feel as Rachel, 'Give me children, or else I die.'"

Love for God, Jim believed, must be manifested in love, not only for those who do not know Him, but also for those who call themselves by His name. "If anyone says, 'I love God,'" wrote John in his First Epistle, "and hates his brother, he is a liar." There was a small group of Christians in a nearby town, who met regularly on simple New Testament lines. Jim joined them, with the hope of being of some help. His diary shows that he felt something of the same discouragement there that he felt in the railroad-station effort in Chicago:

"The rod of the man I shall choose shall bud.' If Thou hast chosen me, Father, then I should be budding, blossoming, bearing fruit for Thee."

His desire does not seem to have been visibly fulfilled, but the exercise of soul that it cost Jim did something at least to preserve him from what, for the average college student, is often a life of unmitigated selfishness.

He sought the help of older Christians in learning to live for God, and there were occasions when he asked them to pray with him. Of one of these he wrote, "Had fellowship in prayer with brother Harper,

and discussion of the things of God. A happy experience. God, I pray Thee, light these idle sticks of my life and may I burn up for Thee. Consume my life, my God, for it is Thine. I seek not a long life but a full one, like you, Lord Jesus."

Further excerpts from the notebook of that junior year show his relentless pursuit of God:

February 3. "O God, save me from a life of barrenness, following a formal pattern of ethics, and give instead that vital contact of soul with Thy divine life that fruit may be produced, and Life—abundant living—may be known again as the final proof for Christ's message and work."

March 10. "Savior, I know Thou hast allowed me absolute liberty, to serve Thee, or to go my own way. I would serve Thee forever, for I love my Master. I will not go out free. Mark my ear, Lord, that it might respond only to Thy voice."

April 16. "O Lamb of God, what a Sacrifice Thou art! Whose blood could avail like Thine? Goat's blood could not cleanse, for animals are amoral. My own would not avail for I am immoral. Only Thou art perfectly moral, and only Thy blood could be of any effect."

It was on this day that Jim and several other students were traveling as a gospel team. As they crossed a railroad track, the car stalled, and was wrecked by an oncoming freight only a few seconds after they leaped to safety. Jim sent a clipping from the newspaper to his parents with the following comment:

"The details are fairly accurate, but newspapermen know nothing about the ministering spirits sent by the Ruler of the Universe to be ministers for them who are to be heirs of salvation. It sobered me considerably to think that the Lord kept me from harm in this. Certainly He has a work that He wants me in somewhere. Oh that I might apprehend that for which also I am apprehended."

So Jim escaped accidental death for at least the second time—the first having been the bullet through his hair—and he was led on, for a few more years, to a very different kind of death, which seemed strangely prophesied in his journal entry of the second day after the railroad accident:

"(Leviticus 17:10) He who consumes blood will ever have the face of God set against him. So with me. If I would save my life-blood, and forbear to pour it out as a sacrifice—thus opposing the example of my Lord—then must I know the frown of the face of God set against my purpose. Father, take my life, yea, my blood if Thou wilt, and consume it with Thine enveloping fire. I would not save it, for it is not mine to save. Have it, Lord, have it all. Pour out my

life as an oblation for the world. Blood is only of value as it flows before Thine altar."

The school year was nearly over when Jim stopped me in the hall one day between classes. He handed me a small black leather-bound book, which I took back to the dormitory and found to be a hymnal. In the style he had written, first in his distinctive, flowing hand, and then in small clear printing, a few words, a Scripture verse in Greek, and the notation "Hymn number 46." Turning quickly to the number, I found these words:

"Have I an object, Lord, below
Which would divide my heart with Thee?
Which would divert its even flow
In answer to Thy constancy?
O teach me quickly to return,
And cause my heart afresh to burn.

"Have I a hope, however dear,
Which would defer Thy coming, Lord—
Which would detain my spirit here
Where naught can lasting joy afford?
From it, my Savior, set me free
To look and long and wait for Thee.

"Be Thou the object bright and fair
To fill and satisfy the heart,
My hope to meet Thee in the air,
And nevermore from Thee to part;
That I may undistracted be
To follow, serve, and wait for Thee."

—C. W. FRAZER

It had only been in the last few weeks before he gave me this booklet that I had had any idea that Jim was interested in me. Had I, however, entertained any hopes, the choice was clear to both of us now. It had to be Christ—alone.

We took a walk one evening, discussing what seemed to us a strange path in which the Lord had led us. We had dated only once—a missionary meeting in Chicago a month before. We had spent much time in study and conversation together, but neither had acknowledged anything beyond a very worthwhile friendship. Now we faced the simple truth—we loved each other.

Hardly aware of our direction, we wandered into a gateway and

found ourselves in a cemetery. Seated on a stone slab, Jim told me that he had committed me to God, much as Abraham had done his son, Isaac. This came almost as a shock—for it was exactly the figure which had been in my mind for several days as I had pondered our relationship. We agreed that God was directing. Our lives belonged wholly to Him, and should He choose to accept the "sacrifice" and consume it, we determined not to lay a hand on it to retrieve it for ourselves. There was nothing more to be said.

We sat in silence. Suddenly we were aware that the moon, which had risen behind us, was casting the shadow of a great stone cross between us.

The date of that night is marked in Jim's hymnbook, beside the following lines:

"If Thou shouldst call me to resign
What most I prize, it ne'er was mine,
I only yield Thee what was Thine;
Thy will be done!"

—CHARLOTTE ELLIOTT

After my graduation Jim spent the first few days of the summer alone in his aunt's home in Glen Ellyn, a small town near Wheaton. During this time Jim thought over the decision God had brought him to. There was no question in his mind as to the rightness of it, but something of the conflict of his soul is revealed in the following journal entry:

June 18. "Joshua 5 and 6. 'Devoted things.' Here is something for my soul as regards Betty. As far as we both are concerned she was 'devoted'—not to destruction as was Jericho, but to God, as a burnt living sacrifice. Now I agreed to this with God, allowing that He should have her and me both, wholly His, devoted. But the subtle danger was in retaining hopes ('nice things,' gold and silver) that He would give her to me eventually, that our decision to go separately for God would be ultimately revoked by Him and on such fare I survived. But this was just as if I had never really 'devoted' her at all, for there was still a future claim on her. Now comes this word: '... keep yourselves from the devoted thing and become... troubled.' (vs. 18) Ah, how like again—hidden in the tent in secret were those secret longings for something I may not have, gloated over in lonely moments. But the Cross is final. There is no turning now, nor half-way stopping place. I must go on, asleep until God sees my need of Eve—if such need ever arises. Fix my heart wholly, Lord, to follow Thee, in no detail to touch what is not mine."