

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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RESURRECTION

THE FEELINGS OF JESUS

THE CHILDREN'S DECISION

A series of readings with Mr Stoney was held in Croydon, England in 1894. They cover ground similar to that covered in The Closing Testimony (J.B.S. Volume 1) but that series consists of addresses. The first reading is reprinted below from The Christian Friend 1894.

RESURRECTION

John 20: 1-20

The subject before us is the resurrection, and I think it would be a help, to open out the subject, if we divided it into sections. (1) What the resurrection is to God; (2) what the resurrection is to the Lord Jesus Himself; (3) what it is from God to man, to the sinner; (4) what it is for the sinner turned to God; (5) what it is to the power of evil; (6) what it is to all things. We will take them in order, but our subject is the resurrection.

The first is, what the resurrection is to God. It is very interesting for us to understand what it is to God, because it *has changed* everything. Perhaps there is no subject that we are more practically unacquainted with than the consequences of the resurrection. Nothing can be simpler when you come to look at it.

Up to the resurrection God was dealing with man as he was; it was *from man to God*. Now, from the resurrection, God has a Man to His own satisfaction. That Man is raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; and now God is acting downward from Him to man.

You said, I think, that before the resurrection God was acting with man according to what man was.

Yes, but now He has a Man to His pleasure. He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. God is working downward now, from that Man. He is not working from man upward.

Do I understand that Christ in resurrection is the beginning of the creation of God?

Exactly. It is the first day of the week. In the Old Testament the seventh day was the day of rest; now it is the first day. The first

great thing (and it will have a great effect upon every soul that really understands it) is, what the resurrection is to God.

Would you just develop it a little?

Instead of dealing with man, or having him under trial, He has a Man to His entire satisfaction at His right hand, so that He can work from that Man down.

Would you connect that with the cross?

Of course. You see the first man was under the judgment of God.

God had him under trial. Then comes the Lord Jesus Christ, born of a woman. He takes man's place, He bore the judgment that was upon man; but not only that, He glorified God in doing it.

Would John 13: 31, 32, come in there?

Exactly. "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him". As another has said, God was indebted to a Man for glory.

But that Man was His own Son! Still, it was a *Man*, because man could suffer for men. "Forasmuch children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same".

Does not that help us to understand what the resurrection is to God?

It does. As we read, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again". He was glorified in raising Lazarus, but He was glorified again in being raised Himself. That is the first consequence of the resurrection and what all our blessings date from. What a wonderful alteration it makes! Infidelity springs from trying to work from man up to God. Evolution works that way.

So that, from God's side, we understand that the resurrection is a new start altogether.

Quite so. In Matthew 27, the moment Christ died the veil was rent.

God got the answer to the golden box - the ark. He rent the veil because He had a Man on the earth who answered to the golden box. He had the antitype to the ark. People talk of going into the holiest as if they were going to a place. They are going into the

presence of Christ, because He is the antitype to the golden box. God has all He wanted.

Can we say that God will have all He wants because the first-fruits are before Him?

He has got it.

But He will have more when the end comes. How?

"Afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

Oh I see, that is the body raised. Nothing is complete till Christ comes back.

Can we say all is made sure because Christ is there? No doubt of it. The thief goes into paradise because Christ is there, though he had lost his body. You see, resurrection alters everything. If I look at current thoughts, resurrection is frequently called a receipt. Quite true; but that is not all, and there is nothing that so hinders truth as a limitation of truth. God has got a Man to His own pleasure at His right hand. The other is part of the truth; but the danger is, you put a part for the whole, and do great damage.

God has satisfied His love as well as His righteousness.

Quite so. The parable of the prodigal son illustrates it.

The elder brother says to his father, in terms, 'Your conduct is most incongruous. I never transgressed your commandment, and yet you never even gave me a kid; you never showed me such consideration, yet here is a scapegrace who has been a scandal to your house, and you kill for him the fatted calf'. Now solve that incongruity.

What you have stated before is the secret. God has found a Man that suits Him.

Exactly. It is on the ground of that Man that He receives him. He is accepted in the Beloved. It was the Shepherd that brought him back, and it was on the ground of the Man who brought him back that the Father receives him. He is bringing many sons to glory. If

Adam had never done anything wrong he never could be in the same position as one brought to God by Christ.

The second section is what the resurrection is to Christ. The first great thing is that He has opened a way for God's heart to reach man. Therefore He says, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of".

He had come to remove everything so that God's heart could come forth in all its mighty volume and meet the returning sinner here on earth. So that the prodigal finds he is received with love. Goodness brought him, and love meets him. But that is not all. He has also found a company for Himself. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit". He has opened a way for God's heart to flow out, and He has found a company for Himself.

The rent veil would signify the first, and here (John 20) we get the second: "my Father and your Father". Yes, and you get it in Hebrews: "both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one". People try to make Adam love Christ. No such thing. What is Christianity? It is that we belong to another race altogether.

Thomas a Kempis proceeded on those lines.

Yes, Thomas a Kempis and all those did. What was the only thing the steward was sworn to in seeking a wife for Isaac?

She must be of his kindred.

That is the difficulty with souls. They have not got hold of the fact that they are Christ's kindred. How can you be His companions if you are not of His kindred?

Would John 12: 24 illustrate it? Exactly.

Does not that difficulty spring from souls not seeing the new kind of man?

Altogether.

Would you say a little, please, as to the new kind of man, as the Christian is now, as the fruit of Christ, so to speak.

Well, that properly will be our subject tomorrow evening - Christ formed in you. The great thing is now that the resurrection has opened the way for it. If He had not died He would have been alone, but if He die He brings forth many grains of His own order. Christ lives in you. Most people think they get eternal life. Quite true; but they do not know that Christ personally lives in them. What has happened to the old "I"? Crucified. "I am crucified with Christ ". Well, if that man is gone, what sort of person are you now? "*Christ liveth in me*". That is, Christ formed in you.

You spoke of trying to make Adam love Christ. Is it impossible?

Do not draw me out on that subject, I might shock you. The finest quality in your nature dislikes Christ. Do you understand that now? Do you like it? The most amiable trait in your character does not like Christ. Christ and Adam cannot go together. I know Romans 7, but Galatians 4 is far deeper experience to me than Romans 7. Christ has brethren of His own order.

The first was a natural man, of the earth, earthy; the second Man is out of heaven.

I think we might go on to the third section now.

Before we proceed, might I ask if, when we speak of this new company, we can apply the words "out of heaven"?

That is what it is. I am not saying how far your heavenly origin comes out, because that is as you grow. Therefore the great effect of ministry is "till we all come... unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ". Some people get out of it very easily by saying it in future.

Is it not rather the object of the ministry? Yes.

Here on earth?

No man can say he has finished his work.

Quite so; but it is not a question as to whether you have reached it.

Certainly not. If you had reached it you might go home.

Now, the third section is how God is to the returning sinner because of resurrection. You see it well described in Saul's conversion. The light shines from God. God begins the work. Many think man begins and God goes on. A light out of heaven met Saul of Tarsus. God has a Man at His own right hand, and He works from that Man. God begins from the finish. We think He ought to begin at the beginning, but He begins at the finish. The light comes first. It comes down from a glorified Christ.

Is that conveyed by the preaching of the word now?

I believe it is the great power of the evangelist – the light to open their eyes. Look at the woman who searched for the silver piece. She sweeps diligently; but if she had not had a very bright light she would not have found it.

Is it light as to His love?

God's nature is light. Fear is always the first result of the light. Fear is the beginning of wisdom. You see it in the thief on the cross. He says "we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss". You see grace there. Light shows us the good as well as the bad.

Is conscience the only doorway for the light? God works on it.

I suppose we learn the love in the light.

Yes. Look at the woman of Samaria. She does not say a word about the love. She says, He told me all that ever I did. He is a purchaser with notice. Do you understand that? You purchase an article knowing that there is a flaw in it. He knows all about you.

Does God always act as light before He reveals Himself as love?

He must do so. It is His nature. Look at Saul. When the light shone on him he fell to the ground because the light exposed him. He had thought he was a perfect man.

Is the conscience always reached first? I think it is.

You are speaking of an unconverted person?

Not only. The great thing with the most advanced Christian is, he is distressed that he is not according to the light.

But is not the saint drawn through the heart?

Well, he gets drawn to the Lord, but his senses are exercised. It is remarkable that the word there is a very strong one - it means gymnastics.

What would you call the drawing of the Father?

It is His work to do it. And John uses heart for conscience. "If our heart condemn us". Peter's conscience (John 21) was clear, but his heart was not. There is the affection connected with the conscience.

But, with the woman, she had conscience.

Christ begins with the way He could set her up in Samaria. When she did not take in the spiritual meaning of His word He touched her conscience. She could not have got it without. She thought it was spring-water. It is the same word in the original. What a wonderful thing, that God can come out and take the prodigal in His arms! He can say, It is because I am glorified by a Man, and I work from that Man downwards. What Christians find out after perhaps twenty years God begins with. It may be a very long day before you find it out; still, God begins there.

I suppose really we learn the truth in the reverse order to which God works.

We have to learn it from our own side. I think that, as a rule, you are thinking of how the sinner feels instead of how God feels. But the prodigal says, It is my father I have offended, and I want to see how he stands with me. I count upon his goodness. And he comes, having made up a speech (make me as one of thy hired servants), but he finds his father is full of affection, and he does not venture to propose it. Not a word of it. I once said to a brother, Do you know how God feels about you? I never was asked that question in my life, he said.

So that the true gospel is that God works down to the sinner.

Yes. In the Old Testament you brought an offering to Him; and as you had faith, your offering was accepted. But there was no resurrection. Now God has removed the man that offended Him, and however you may try to bring him back into favour you never will. That is what people are trying to do. The prodigal felt that he was not fit; but we are looking at the resurrection - how God can take the prodigal in His arms, and let out all His love, because He works from the Man who has glorified Him, and therefore "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound". It is not only that He has forgiven all your offences, but He has transferred you to new ground. You are changed from Adam to Christ, and now "they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ". And therefore the chapter winds up with "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord".

Can we find all the prodigal's blessings in Romans?

I think so. I think he has got as far as the fifth. He is accepted, but he does not enjoy it.

Is not he in the Father's house?

It is the joys of the Father's house, the Holy Ghost. The great supper is the present enjoyment, when "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water".

Could you put it in other words, so as to let us all be clear? You say at the end of Romans 5 you have a man changed from Adam to Christ.

Yes; the first eleven verses are the terms upon which God can be with you.

Now we turn to what the resurrection is to the believer himself. I can explain it better by the type than anything else. In Exodus 12 Christ is the perfect sacrifice. I may say, every Christian upon the face of the earth knows that. But what is the state of that Christian? He is occupied with Pharaoh, that is Satan; and the Egyptians, that is the

flesh. He is not out of Egypt. Next he learns another thing. Not only was Christ "delivered for our offences" but He "was raised again for our justification". Now that is what the Red Sea is. Moses has to make a way through the Red Sea, and they are to walk it. I believe that in walking it you appropriate the death of Christ, and then you are out of it.

Then deliverance will be connected with that? Deliverance must come after. I am speaking of how you stand with God. You are through the Red Sea, what Paul learnt in those three days when he appropriated the death of Christ as the only way out of himself. You are then free with God.

I refer to the type. You are out of Egypt and clear of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. That is the Red Sea. But I do not believe a person is there unless he has gone through it experimentally. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you".

You make walking then appropriation?

Yes. I use the type to make it plain. You are passed out of death into life, not, from death. It is a great help to see that if I am out of it I must have been in it. Every man on the face of the earth is in death. John 5: 24 is "passed out of death into life".

John 6 is not the Lord's supper then?

Oh! no. That is where Romanism comes in.

A Christian in the present day may say, I am very happy; all my sins are gone. The next day he is very depressed. He does not know resurrection as it is with God.

Do you mean that the resurrection is the demonstration of the putting away of sins?

It is the putting away of all that is not of God. There must be death or there could not be resurrection. If you accept resurrection you must accept death. The comfort of the saint is that he knows that the old man is gone from the eye of God to His infinite glory. It is gone from Him whom I have offended. I knew it was gone from the

eye of God for years before I saw it was gone from myself - because I was trying to improve myself. The first great thing is to understand acceptance. There are two great steps: first acceptance, then liberty. Acceptance is that God can accept me without a cloud.

Then liberty can only follow upon the experimental acceptance of resurrection.

Quite so, and if the acceptance is not full, the liberty will never be so.

I think we might go on now to the next section. The power of evil is destroyed. He entered into death that "he might destroy him that had the power of death". The more you study it the more you see how it affects everything you have to do with.

Would you explain in what way He destroyed him that had the power of death?

He let him expend all his power, and came out of it. He annulled it.

Set aside his claims.

Yes, abolished death. Pharaoh is gone. That character of power is over.

What power did Satan exercise over man?

You get the thought all along the line with Israel - Pharaoh, Amalek, Balaam, and the seven nations. Pharaoh is over for the Christian.

He begins with resurrection: "thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ". I do not say you are free of the others, but I say you are free of Pharaoh.

What are the seven nations?

When you come into it you will find out: the sixth of Ephesians - the combined forces of Satan. I think very few know what the sixth of Ephesians is. You must be on the ground before you can find out.

You must be over Jordan before you can fight the seven nations.

What is the good of armour to a man if he is not in battle? It is the man who is in battle who knows the good of it.

We cannot say that Satan is destroyed, can we?

His power of death is gone. It is taken out of his hands. A man has come out of it... Israel suffered eventually from the nations. I do not believe Satan is cast out of heaven till the church goes up. If you want to have an easy path here. do not touch heavenly things.

There is nothing that Satan hates more than a heavenly man. He will do all he can to oppose you, and he knows what will oppose you. He has only two barrels to his gun. The first is, he will allure you; and if that does not do, he will crush you - if he can. Look at the children of the captivity. The enemy says, If you will not eat the king's meat I will put you into the fire. Well, the same God that delivered from the one will deliver from the other. Nothing shows the terrible nature of Satan like his trying to tempt the Lord. First he tried to allure Him, and then he attempted to crush Him. In Gethsemane he brings death before Him.

I suppose every man who takes that ground has to meet Satan?

No doubt of it. If he found you were making advance he would use it. But you would find you have the power of the Lord with you. As an engineer would say if you ask him, Can you execute that work? Yes, if I have means. Ah! that will do.

You mean the more a man takes that ground, the more he has God with him.

He cannot take it unless he belongs to the heavenly Man. Some try to be heavenly men by themselves. By union with Him I am a heavenly man, but not otherwise. I am united to a Man in the glory.

Then in union I am on resurrection ground.

You are united to the Man in heaven. You never know union till you are brought to where the person is. Rebekah has to go all the way to Isaac. She has to encounter two things; first, family influence; and then she has to go through the wilderness, and every step she takes is a step further away from her family

Does she give up her family?

She gives up its influence. She has a higher influence.

Quite so. The more right a thing is the more dangerous it is.

What does Balaam mean?

Balaam is the worst influence that you can possibly be subjected to.

The lowest society you keep is that which colours you. Many a person, I have no doubt, gets into low society, and he is leavened and damaged before he knows where he is. The Corinthians suffered from Balaam, the Thessalonians from Amalek. Woe betide you when you get into Balaam's company. He invited them out. You get into society, you get under its influence. If you read Revelation 2 and 3 you will see it. A man or woman is spoilt by the company he or she keeps. I do not mean in business. There is no notion of company in business. That is not company. You are then on the *qui vive*. I mean social company, where you can unbutton your coat; do you understand? In business you keep your eyes open.

Do you mean unconverted people?

No. A Christian on low ground is worse than an unconverted person, he damages you more, because you say, Oh! he can do so-and-so.

But how can you keep company with a worldling if you have really the motives and tastes of Christ - how can you find any pleasure in his society? Duties and business are very different from society.

Look at the Corinthians, what they came to; they went into an idol's temple to eat.

Well, the last section is that in resurrection everything comes out new, and therefore Christ begins. It begins with a new day - the first day of the week. Everything comes out new. He says, "Behold, I make all things new". Our subject for tomorrow is "Christ formed in you".

THE FEELINGS OF JESUS

A.B.Parker

Revelation 3: 19-21

The earlier part of the word to the assembly in Laodicea speaks of a lukewarm condition, neither cold nor hot. We are in danger if we are in that condition. The two disciples on the way to Emmaus were in that condition - neither cold nor hot. The Lord saw to it that heat came in, and their hearts began to burn; fervency developed. The Lord would speak to us in view of getting out of a lukewarm state; He says "because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spue thee out of my mouth". We ought to pause for a moment and consider the Lord's feelings about those with whom He has to do - those who take His name upon their lips. It is not a word to heathendom, or to the world as such. This is a word to those who are known as the assembly which is in Laodicea. They have a standing religiously and we need to ascertain to what extent we have fitted into such a position. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and I am grown rich, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou are the wretched and the miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked". I never expected to see Laodicea enacted before our eyes. We have been brought up to regard Laodicea as the public profession around, but we see there was a state which was truly Laodicean amongst us. It meant there had been Philadelphian conditions because Laodicea is an offshoot from Philadelphia.

It is interesting to see those assemblies in their relation one to another. They are brought in chronologically - it is the history of the church publicly from Ephesus down to Laodicea, but as we know, the first three in their distinctive character have disappeared. The lamp stand was removed from Ephesus and the Ephesian position ceased to be. Smyrna and Pergamos relate to the time of the great pressure under Nero, the time of tremendous suffering and the day of the martyrs peculiarly at the beginning of Christianity. That era has passed, but now we have the last four running on concurrently. Not

that they originated concurrently, because they did not. Thyatira represents the system which has headed up in Papacy. Sardis is what we might speak of as Protestantism, which was an outcome or departure from the papal system. It had a name to live, and it did live under Luther and Zwingli and other men of God. There was life there, but that life ceased to be in evidence; it became a dead system. Out of that sprang the Philadelphian recovery. That recovery, in its pristine glory, meant much to the heart of Christ. But there has been a falling away from it, and that is Laodicea. We have seen, right in our very fellowship, in the circle of those with whom we moved, the features of Laodicea show themselves, and we need to overcome, dear brethren. Even Philadelphian conditions require that there be overcomers. So if we find ourselves struggling to get to shore, so to speak, after the shipwreck, we want to be sure that we overcome as the overcomer is called upon to do in Laodicea; also to overcome as the overcomer is called upon in Philadelphia. We do not want to stop short of anything. We want to get right into Philadelphian conditions, personally and collectively. The Lord is very tender, very gracious. When He was here He took account of persons and had compassion on them. It was not only the compassions of a Man, it was the compassions of God coming out through a Man. It is wonderful to see how near God has come to us, that in manhood conditions, understanding and knowing what weariness is, knowing the limitations of humanity, the Lord had compassion, and that compassion was the compassion of God.

And so, as the Lord sends this word through John, He looks right down the ages until the present time and says, I am going to take a fixed attitude in relation to Laodicean conditions, I am going to take a stand in regard to it: "Behold, I stand at the door". That word 'stand' is the same word as used in many places in Scripture, which means having taken a fixed position. Think of the Lord looking down through the dispensation to our day, and saying in regard of this particular day, I am going to take a fixed position to help the brethren. Wonderful encouragement! It is stimulating to think of the Lord thinking down to this moment in which we are, and He says, I

am going to take a fixed stand in relation to it; I am ready to help you, I am ready to express My feelings, My compassions, My considerations; I stand at the door and knock, and if any one hears My voice and opens to Me, I will come in and sup with him and he with Me. What favourable conditions in which to get right! Do you not think, dear brethren, that we are experiencing it? Do you not think that the Supper, as we have it, is a means of stimulating our hearts and letting us see that the Lord is with us? But we do not get the Supper until He has supped with us. There is a distinction here: "sup with him and he with me". I wonder if up to now, the Supper may have been His supping with us, or have we really reached the point of supping with Him?

The question has been raised, What proof do we have that the Lord is with us? Well, we want two proofs. We want the proof that He has come in from our side, to sit down and work out with us details of our need, to be strengthened in our faith, to be given confirmation and assurance that we are in the right position where the Spirit of God can support us; and then we want to get over to His side so that we are supplying with Him and entering into His thoughts about God and the things of God and His heavenly thoughts for us. It is a most wonderful example of the grace and manhood of Jesus come into expression to help and recover persons who have some judgment of things, who hear His voice, and open the door to Him. The Lord is finding that the door is shut in certain areas. He would say "my head is filled with dew, My locks with the drops of the night", Song of Sol 5: 2. Think of the Lord feeling His outside position! I trust He is not feeling an outside position with us individually or collectively. I can only speak of my experience; I have been with the brethren here at the Supper this morning and I think we have had the sense that the Lord has come to us. He was not left outside; He came in, and as coming in He would sup with us and we with Him - two distinct phases. One is to sit down with Him under the most favourable conditions and go into our matters and settle every problem we might have. If we have any questions, let the Lord come in, and let us know the blessedness of

His intimate dealings with us. If we spread out our matters before Him He will answer every question that we have. We may get it while we speak to Him we may get it in the ministry meeting, we may get it at the Supper, but He will see that we get it. He uses one means and another, and yet another, to speak to us and He will use these means. But are we prepared to spread out our problems before Him? Do I find the meetings tiresome? Do I wish they were over? Is there any element in any of us that is not fervent? Do we feel that we want to continue the meeting and go right up and in? Do we want to go right into heaven? If there is any lack of this we tend to be cold, or lukewarm; it is nauseous to Christ. The circumstances at the end of the dispensation are such that we must be one or the other. John's ministry brooks no intermediate condition. He says "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son that whosoever believes on him may not perish but have life eternal", John 3: 16. There is no intermediate point; we are either perishing or living - that is John's ministry. We are either cold or hot; an in-between position is nauseous to Christ. The hot position He will rapture to Himself; the cold position he will deal with in judgment and do it summarily. Any in-between position is nauseous and will be disposed of. The Lord has come in to make division - to remove the in-between condition and to bring about fervency, and to expose persons who are not right. He is ready to sit down and talk things over with you in the most favourable conditions. Just spread your matters out before Him. He will say, What are your problems? He will sit down with you and say, Spread out your problems. Hezekiah did it; he went into the presence of God; he took the letter from Sennacherib and spread it out before Jehovah. Did not God know what was in the letter? Of course He did. Does not God know our circumstances? Of course He does. But Hezekiah spread the letter out before God. The Lord wants us to spread out our problems before Him. You will find that, as you spread it out, the problem dissolves. The things we hold in the secret of our minds and hearts, these are the things that trouble us. When we spread them out and let the light shine on them we find that troubles dissolve. There is no

real trouble there that cannot be met by Christ; it is fear that the enemy has put in our hearts.

Then He says "He that overcomes, to him will I give to sit with me in my throne, as I also have overcome, and have sat down with my Father in his throne". That is a most marvellous stimulation and encouragement! Not only are we to have part in administration with Him, but notice the way He puts it. The Lord knows just how to say things to bring out the best that is in us. He says, If you overcome in these circumstances you will sit down in My throne as I also have overcome. Just think of the Lord comparing our overcoming in these conditions with the way He had overcome in dealing with the great matter of good and evil, the cross and the grave, and all that was involved in accomplishing redemption! He has overcome and the Father said "Sit at my right hand until I put thine enemies as footstool of thy feet", Heb 1: 13. It will be just like that; I will seat you on My throne and I will regard your overcoming in the circumstances in which you are in relation to My overcoming in the tremendous suffering and sorrow and depths to which I went. The attitude of Jesus is most magnanimous. He values any little devotion, any committal, any overcoming. He says, It is as I have overcome. That is marvellous! It cheers my heart, it stimulates my soul. My concern is to be able to impart something in the way of stimulation to my brethren. The Lord is available in all the feelings of His genuine Manhood, to come so near to us if we will only let Him in, and He will say, Just spread out every matter before Me and then when I have settled all your matters you are going to come in with Me and sup with Me and I will let you understand what the Supper really is. You will realise what the remembrance in the Supper really is, what it means to Me to gather up the feelings of My people and present them in the presence of My God as the Minister of the sanctuary.

Oh, to get into the current of the feelings of Jesus! May He help us to understand them better.

VICTORIA BC

28 February 1971

THE CHILDREN'S DECISION

The prophet Joel exclaimed "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!" It seems that in a coming day large numbers will witness and suffer God's wrath in judgment on His enemies and those of His earthly people. It will be God's "decision" against the sins of those who reject all His testimonies. A few verses later, however, the prophet spoke about a different valley, one of acacia trees and lovely surroundings. In His mercy God will there preserve in joyful conditions those of His people who will be faithful to Him. They will indeed also be sinners but will be saved by the atoning work of Christ.

Every scripture is for our instruction and we do not need to be at all old to learn from Joel's prophecy what is God's "decision" against sin and those responsible for it. He is always righteous in His judgments: He is equally righteous in His mercies in sparing those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ who died to bear the penalty for them. God's estimate of sin and of sins is fully seen at the cross of Jesus.

The love and goodness of God are shown in His purpose that those who believe on His Son should receive the Holy Spirit and enter into the blessings that He has provided. In the day about which Joel wrote there will be earthly blessings through Christ; now our blessings are in Christ and enjoyed by the presence of the Spirit. The "valley of Shittim" means valley of acacia trees and from this kind of wood much of the tabernacle was made. So it makes us think of God dwelling with His people and this is to be known now as a normal thing in our spirits.

As I write I have before me a paper headed 'Decision', signed and dated by a young boy whom I knew well. He is now with the Lord. In the statement he confessed that he was a sinner before God deserving judgment, but that he believed the Lord Jesus Christ

to be his Substitute who bore his sin and its penalty. He accepted Him as his personal Saviour and thanked Him for the forgiveness of his sins, adding that he trusted Him for grace to live a holy life. Is this your decision too?

J.C.Evershed