

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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Contents

RELATIONSHIPS

WHAT GOD HAS DONE

THE CHILDREN WARNED

RELATIONSHIPS

D.J.Willetts

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The fellowship, beloved brethren, is made up of older brothers, young brothers, older sisters and young sisters. The fellowship is here for several things. One aspect of it is that it is for our protection; another aspect is that it is for our enjoyment. I wanted to say a brief word as to the relationships between us which exist in it. None of us can elect ourselves out of these four categories. I just want to be simple in pointing out in this passage in Genesis, not its profound application to the death of Christ, but rather the detail of the simplicity of relationships which existed between Abraham and Isaac.

This chapter is one in which Abraham was tested to the limit. You may feel in the present circumstances in which you are, beloved older brother, that the circumstances are testing you to the limit. One thing that comes out here is the reserves of affection that existed. One thing that is to mark us, beloved brethren, in the fellowship, is love for one another. We cannot have too much of that. Love is the thing that will take us through every crisis; not our intelligence exactly, but our affection. We certainly need affection Godward, but our affection Godward is manifested as John tells us in our affection for one another. (See 1 John 4: 20,21).

So in this section Abraham is a diligent man: he is prepared to go through deep exercise. Beloved brethren, if there is one thing the older ones of us need to do, it is to take on the responsibilities of the testimony. The world has a special attraction for the young people and I think we need to take on the burden of things so that God can work. So it says, "And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son". He was a man of influence. It says of him in the New Testament that he "dwelt in tents with Isaac and Jacob" (Heb 11: 9) -

and we read how many trained servants he had (Gen 14: 14), so I suspect there were a good few tents. Abraham sets forward with his young men and Isaac; then Abraham "lifted up his eyes". That is another feature the elder brethren need, they need to be able to lift up their eyes and see further than some of us younger ones can see. Beloved brethren, it is necessary because sometimes we get bogged down in detail. Abraham could see afar, he "lifted up his eyes"; it was a deliberate act. There is a need in these days not to just drift along but to be deliberate. In type, I think, he saw what God's purpose was for the saints. He knew where he was at that time, journeying on that way, but he lifted up his eyes and he could see further than his feet were, and if we are going to be held in the pathway of the will of God it is essential that our eyes can see further than our feet have reached. "And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it on Isaac his son". What a picture, beloved brethren. Was there any resentfulness on Isaac's part? If I could speak to the young people - if the elder brethren lay certain things on us, is there resentment? They are trying to draw us into the testimony. Are you ready for it? Isaac comes forward here as one who is ready to share some of the burden. God will see to it that we are able to carry it. Isaac goes forward; he is a man of energy. That is what John says to the young men, "I have written to you, young men, because ye are strong" (1 John 2: 4), and how do you find your strength? You do not find your strength by drifting along, you find your strength by taking on the burdens in the power of the Spirit. "And Abraham took the wood ... and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and the knife, and they went both of them together". That is a beautiful scene, beloved brethren. There is nothing more beautiful, I believe, than to see in a locality the old and young going on together. It says, "and they went both of them together"; not just that "they went both of them" but that "they went both of them together". We are all moving to the same objective, we are all moving on to the great prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus - a wonderful thing that - and yet on the way there is this great test. "And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father, and said, My father!" There was deep mutual respect there and that feature

will help the working out of things locally. You can always respect the work of God because it is true and it is perfect. We all know about the flesh and it is easy to see that, but Isaac says in the midst of these circumstances, "My father! And he said, Here am I, my son". May I ask beloved brethren, Are we ready for the question? "And he said, Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the sheep for a burnt offering?". There are plenty of questions at the present time at this point in the history of the testimony. Hebrews tells us that he went in faith counting on God to raise Isaac from the dead (see chap 11: 19). How does Abraham answer? He says, "My son, God will provide himself with the sheep for a burnt offering". What a thing to be able to pass on to the young people, a sense of confidence, a reliance in faith in the God whom we have proved. Well, it may be that even Abraham did not know the way that God was going to work in detail, but he laid hold in faith that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead. May I say to the young people, it may be that even the older brethren cannot fully answer all your questions, but go on, go on together, go on in affection, in respect: as it says, "and they went both of them together". The questions did not break that bond, they did not break that unity between Abraham as an older man and Isaac as a younger man in the testimony.

I refer now, beloved brethren, to Philippians because here Paul as a spiritual father is speaking to the Philippians about his spiritual son. You may have thought it was only what was natural in Genesis, and it may be, in the way that God has worked in the present testimony, that it is natural families that make up a local assembly, but the point is to work out what is spiritual together. Can we do that? Timothy, as we know, came to light in a crisis. He, like most of us, can speak of a believing mother and a believing grandmother. Some of us have had great assets like that, we have had believing grandfathers and believing fathers. Thank God for them. Persons who have come down unobtrusively, maybe, in the line of the testimony but who have stood for God's rights, and have demonstrated to us the will of God, demonstrated to us the purpose of God. Timothy's mother would not find things easy, his father

being a Greek. Beloved brethren, that is what marks the present testimony, things are not easy, and no doubt his mother would not find things too easy. But was that any hindrance? He had known from his early years the sacred letters. May I say to the young people, Read the Scriptures, pray, have your own dealings with God, and then, maybe, you will find your place in the testimony like Timothy did, when the crisis comes. You may wonder why it is that good men have fallen out of the testimony? Well, beloved brethren, it is a sobering thought, that spiritual men have fallen by the wayside, but when that happens the point is, Can God take you up? Are you ready? Of Timothy it says, "For I have no one like-minded who will care with genuine feeling how ye get on". He was a man of feeling, and that kind of person can refresh the older brethren. Did you ever think of that, young sister, young brother? The fact that you could refresh the older brethren. It is a wonderful thing that we can look around our localities and see the work of God in the young people and it is refreshing, it is God's own handiwork. Then it says, "But ye know the proof of him, that, as a child a father, he has served with me in the work of the glad tidings". We can work together in the work of the glad tidings. What a scope there is in the glad tidings; we can work together in it, those that are older and those that are still young. Paul was able to demonstrate things, and what he demonstrated came out into expression in a younger man. So, beloved older brethren, do you realise that the pattern you set in the local assembly is the pattern that the young people follow? Is it not so, that a son usually follows in the footsteps of his father? He takes on his character. It is a challenge as to what is coming to light in our localities, and it takes its character I believe not only from the sovereign work of God, but from the way He would use older persons by way of an example to the saints. So we are looking, beloved brethren, to the older ones for an example. I believe we can see them if we look around this room. We can see persons of deep experience. Look at some of the older brethren, persons who have come through two world wars; what problems that would bring; the bringing up of a family on your own, maybe the father was away year in and year out, others who have come through the difficult years of

a depression when brethren did not even know what to put on the table. I believe, young brethren, you can take account of what God has built into the souls of the older saints as a result of what He has passed them through. Just touch it, you will find that there is something refreshing about the way God has worked. How many men spend years researching the war, but what a thing to research in the older brethren what God had done in their hearts by way of His work through those sorrowful years.

I read the other sections because I did not want to leave the sisters out. Previously Naomi had not been a very good example. Beloved young brethren, just because some of our older brethren have failed, do not write them off. The call had come, the glad tidings had reached Moab, and she begins to return in the spirit of self-judgment. She who had known intense sorrow is set in movement in the testimony and she was an influential woman. "And she arose, she and her daughters-in-law and returned from the fields of Moab; for she had heard in the fields of Moab how Jehovah had visited his people to give them bread". Notice that, the way that "Jehovah had visited his people". If there is one thing that marks the present time it is that Jehovah visits His people. I do not say that by way of faith only; I say that by way of practical experience, that Jehovah is visiting His people and He is giving them bread. Here is a woman who had returned from the fields of Moab where she probably thought things would be easier for her, but it turned out that things were more difficult, in fact, she lost her husband and her two sons. What a tragic thing! Look round the saints here, and there are brethren whose families have been lost to the testimony. How persons like that must feel it. Lay hold of the fact that God can work, and when one woman moves forward she is influential. Perhaps she had not much power with her sons, but she had power with her daughters-in-law. Beloved sister, what moral influence have you amongst the younger sisters? The influence she had I believe was because she laid hold of the fact that God had visited His people - a wonderful thing to give an impression in your life that you are moving because God has moved. She says the same to Orpah and Ruth

"Return"; she gave them both the opportunity to go back. They both had said we will certainly return with thee. Are you going to be an Orpah? See the distinctiveness of God working maybe, and still turn back. Thank God for the Ruths, persons who are prepared to make a committal, a committal unto death, that where Naomi went she was going to go. You may think, There is not much in my locality I can commit myself to; but that is the Naomi side of things, sorrow and discipline. The Lord is absent, in a sense leaving a widow character of things, but commit yourself to it. What did she see in Naomi? I believe she saw something of the work of God. Will you, beloved young sister, commit yourself to that in your locality? Further she says, "Do not intreat me to leave thee, to return from following after thee". What is our conversation about? Between Abraham and Isaac, what was the subject of their conversation? It was about the burnt-offering. What a level of things to converse about! Older sisters, younger sisters, What is the level of your conversation? The level of their conversation was about committal, committal to the Lord's interests. Ruth says, "Do not intreat me". You say, it is not fair for these older sisters to keep exhorting me like this. Bear the exhortation, beloved sister. What it will bring out is that the work of God is equal to the test. She says, "Do not intreat me to leave thee, to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried". There is a fulness about that. What the Lord is looking for, beloved young sister, is a fulness of committal. You say 'There are not many things I can do; I am not a brother, I cannot take an active part in what is administrative in the local assembly'; but there is, beloved young sister, a lot you can do for the Lord in the local assembly. Commit yourself to this widow position, and you will find what the Lord wants you to do. As this book opens up Naomi does not just leave her to her own devices with that committal. You say, That is a safe young sister: she is committed to the Lord's interests. Beloved older sister, do not just leave her to her own devices if you see that. Naomi says later on, Shall I not seek rest for thee? (chap 3: 1). Who art thou? (chap 3: 9). She was not satisfied until Ruth

came into the fulness of things. Do not give up asking the questions, beloved older sister; to the younger sisters, in order that you might further the work of God. The Lord is about to close the testimony. Is He going to find you committed like Ruth to the Lord's interests in your locality?

I read from Titus, because it is a beautiful exhortation. It calls for reliability in the older men and the older sisters. It says, "that the elder men be sober, grave, discreet, sound in faith, in love, in patience". Well, let those words just have their own challenge, beloved older brother. Can you say, I am grave, discreet, sound in faith, in love, in patience. Let the penetration of those statements affect you; it will be worthwhile, because there is need of examples in our localities. Then it says, "that the elder women in like manner"; so the older women can take on their own charge. I feel the edge of the word myself. The Lord would challenge us as to just what we are displaying by way of an example amongst the saints. The elder women it says, "be in deportment as becoming those who have to say to sacred things". It involves a certain sobriety. You can see that in the older saints; they do not follow the fashions of the world and the thoughts of the world, and the latest novelties that the enemy would bring in to occupy our time, but they are going on with God in secret. Then it continues "teachers of what is right". Beloved sister, there is an area in which you can teach; the home setting for instance involves a beautiful opportunity for a sister to teach in the family. In fact, it is probable that the children take more of their character from their mothers than they do from their fathers; they spend more time with them. O, what an influence for good a sister can be who is sound in faith, who is able to teach her family! Timothy was one who was taught by his mother and his grandmother; taught to have a love for the Scriptures. These are simple things, but it is the simple things that go together to make up what leads to depth amongst the saints. If we neglect the foundations, beloved brethren, sooner or later the building will collapse (Matt 7: 26).

I just thought of this scripture "young women to be attached to their husbands ... chaste, diligent in home work, good, subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be evil spoken of". The testimony is in view. We are being watched, beloved brethren, be sure of this, that what we are speaks louder than what we say. What is coming into expression? Is it those who are subject, those who make a practice of the will of God, those who live a life of piety? It says, "The younger men in like manner exhort to be discreet; in all things affording thyself as a pattern of good works". How much more effective it is, beloved brethren, amongst the saints when we are an example of what we teach. This section is very full, but I would just like to re-inforce what I said earlier, be prepared for these exhortations; it is for your good. Maybe we can look back, and at the time, we resented the exhortation from another brother or sister, but then you proved it was for your good. Well, I have said all that I want to say, beloved brethren, I trust that it is not in the spirit of criticism but rather exhortation, that the older brethren and the younger brethren might go on together and that we might help one another. That the older brethren might be refreshed by what they see in the younger people; and that the work of God in the younger people might be furthered because of the example of the older brethren. May it be so for His Name's sake.

LONDON

18 October 1986

WHAT GOD HAS DONE

R.Taylor

Matthew 22: 1-14

We are reminded in the glad tidings of what God has done. It is a very fine thing to open our hearts to what God has done. We are reminded all around us of what man has done. The glad tidings is something that man has had no hand in, no hand at all; it is God, in spite of the indifference that there has been in the creature, proclaiming something of what He has done. O how slow we are to open our hearts to what God is doing. Yet in spite of that indifference, as this chapter shows, God's invitation still goes out. How often it has been refused; indifference as to God seems built-in to the human heart. At the outset Adam sought to hide himself; sought a corner where he could be away from God, make his own arrangements. It may have suited Adam to find his own way away from God, but think of the feelings of God about Adam! He raised the question, "Where art thou?", Gen 3: 10. How many hiding places men may have sought out for themselves; yet God in the appeal of His grace would seek to call us, call us from our hiding place to come to see what He has done.

In this chapter it speaks of "a king who made a wedding feast for his son". The great theme of the glad tidings, beloved, is Christ, Christ. The glad tidings is all about Him, it is not about you or about me, the glad tidings is all about Christ. You and I come into it indeed; the invitation goes out to us to, Come. The great centre of all that God has, the great centre of our eternal blessing, is in Christ, the Man, Christ Jesus. It says, "The kingdom of the heavens has become like a king who made a wedding feast for his son". What great hopes, expectations, and joy, are centred in a wedding feast, and the whole centre of it here is the son "made a wedding feast for his son". What delight God has found in Christ! What delight God has found in the finished work of Christ; as having settled the question of our sins, and broken for ever the power of death over

man - "made a wedding feast for his son" is the great answer to that pathway of shame; the answer to the down-stooping movements of Jesus, is not only that God has highly exalted Him, but as it says here it has become like a time when He has made a wedding feast for His Son. He would like you to come and share His thoughts about Christ. The gospel has in view that Christ, and Christ alone, may be magnified. All your need and mine must be met if that is to be so. Think of God having a great end in view that Christ is to be honoured - "made a wedding feast for his son". What joy enters into this dispensation. This dispensation comes in in this parable when God is sending out to the highways and byways. Think of how Christ has been spurned by the Jews. Think of Christ, in all His beauty and in all His attractiveness and excellence, and yet they cried "Not this man", John 18: 40. That was not said at the beginning of His pathway, that was said in Pilate's judgment hall. As Pilate spoke about Him, there were witnesses all around among them of what Christ had done. There would be some there that had seen dead raised, maybe in that crowd lepers who had been cleansed, and the voice goes up, Not this Man. What a time it was, we might say ripe for judgment. The refusal of God's approach to man in Christ.

In some of these parables in the gospels the Lord almost excuses the fact that they had turned away the prophets; it says they beat one and killed another, but think of them refusing the Son. It says, "And at last he sent to them his son, saying, They will have respect for my son" Matt 21: 37. O, what a display of divine grace among men in the Person of Jesus - wonder of the universe indeed. The Lord said Himself, "If I had not done among them the works which no other one has done, they had not had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father" (John 15: 24); there is no excuse. The Jew was left with no excuse, for there had been among them the Messiah whom Isaiah had spoken of and long proclaimed; Moses spoke about Him; all the prophets spoke about Him, and there He was in Person among them - refused, rejected by those He came to call.

O, beloved, that is man's side, and as I said, we do not want to speak about what man has done, but I only say that to show the background to what God has done. And into that black background God has come to invite you and me to a wedding feast - "made a wedding feast for his son". O, the delight God has found in Him! They said, Not this man. Peter said in his preaching, "whom heaven indeed must receive" Acts 3: 21. On earth rejected, by man despised, but received up in glory. O, what a Person! What an answer to His downstooping! What an answer to that time in the grave, three days and three nights in the heart of the earth; the answer to that is that He has been received up in glory, and given a name above every name. Peter's heart must have been full as he preached of what God had done. He says, "God has made him, this Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2: 36) - this same Jesus "whom ye have crucified" - that is what you have done, that very Jesus whom you put on the cross God has made Him both Lord and Christ. That makes way for the wedding feast. God has made Him both Lord and Christ, and in spite of our histories - never mind for a moment what the Jews have done - in spite of our histories, what we have done, God is inviting us to the wedding feast. He does not say you are to bring anything, He does not say you are too bad to come. I believe the enemy is active in every gospel preaching to remind souls of how bad they are. God does not say anything about that. He knew what the Jews had done to Jesus, and it is to them that Peter was preaching - this Jesus, he says, whom ye have crucified, God hath made Him both Lord and Christ. Think of those guilty souls being invited to the wedding feast. Such is the grace of God, beloved, such the kindness and God's love to man. What a Saviour God that the very persecutors of His Son were being invited to the wedding feast. Did He not know how bad they were? Yes, He did. Did He not know that judgment lay upon that nation? Surely He did, but the answer to it is God's appreciation of Christ and what He has done. Though man refused Him He went to the cross of His own accord; He went that way, making His soul an offering for sin of His own accord, more precious to God perhaps at that moment than at any other time in His

pathway. It says, "who by the eternal Spirit offered himself spotless to God" Heb 9: 14. O what God saw in that, the offering of Christ, offering Himself. He felt those taunts of the Jews; He felt the refusal of man; even as He came in there was no room for Him, still less as He healed them and blessed them; there was still no room for Jesus, and yet, and yet, in spite of that He offered Himself to God an offering and a sacrifice. He offered Himself to make way for this invitation to go out. There was hardly the fulness of God coming out with an invitation for all men to come in in the Old Testament; it awaited the work of Jesus. That is why the invitation goes on; the parable the Lord speaks brings out man's indifference, it brings out man's hatred and yet the invitation goes on. God's invitation is based on God's valuation and appreciation of the finished work of Christ. Had that invitation depended upon anything else, it could not have continued, but in spite of men saying that they would not come, God's invitation goes out the wider, because of the delight that the King has in His Son. He invites us to enjoy the best, as I said, He knew their state. He knows how bad you and I may be, but he says, 'Come'. That invitation does not go out to any special strata of society, it goes out in the highways to as many as can be found, both evil and good. There is power in that finished work of Jesus; there is atoning power in that blood that has been shed to make us all fitted, suited, to enjoy the wedding feast. How attractive the king makes it; it says, "Behold, I have prepared". He does not tell them to prepare and get things ready, he says, Come, I have prepared. How rich these things would be if we understood them! - "my dinner; my oxen and my fatted beasts". As we come into this wedding feast, we find, I believe, how God is feeding on Christ - "my dinner". O, what God has for Himself that He would share with us. It says, "I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatted beasts are killed". What rich references to Christ, and what He has done; what He is as a Man who has satisfied God about the sins of the universe. This king is very propitious towards the subjects. There has never been a king like this. The invitation and all that is in the heart of the king is not affected in any way by what it finds. There is nothing judicial about the king's attitude in this early part; it is all the outgoings of his heart

about his son. So he puts this in the invitation, "I have prepared my dinner" - what an enticement to come - "my dinner". Think of making light of all that God has, and all that He would provide, as to what He has found in the Man Christ Jesus. What poor comparison! It says, "and went, one to his own land, and another to his commerce". What poor comparisons with what the king proposes in "my dinner" and "my oxen" and "my fatted beasts are killed, and all things ready". What a feast has been set on, beloved. This dispensation brings out how full and how rich that feast is; it brings out the fulness of all that is to be enjoyed, and God is inviting you today, inviting men today; not to think of themselves but to come, to come in submission to His call of love - Come, for all things are ready - all things ready. O, beloved, whatever we need, and what needs we have. These persons hardly thought they had a need; they preferred their land, they preferred their commerce. They laid hold of the bondmen. O, what pride and arrogance is brought out in the human heart. The incoming of Christ has made the world thrice guilty, it not only refused a man, a prophet, but it has refused God's beloved Son. This second group of persons would be ourselves: that is where we would come in. From the refusal of the Jews as a nation, God has widened out and would have all men to be saved - Jews, Gentiles, rich, poor. It says they "went out into the highways, and brought together all as many as they found". Think of God's feelings! He says to His bondmen the feast is ready, who is going to come and share it? Who would come to enjoy His thoughts about Christ? "My dinner" - "my oxen" - Who is going to come today? How many we pray and trust will be coming today; coming to enjoy God's thoughts about Christ; coming to enjoy a scene of unparalleled blessing and happiness, but everything is founded on the finished precious work of Jesus.

O, the soul peace in knowing Christ glorified, a Christ who has met the whole question of our sins, so that through that blood which has been shed God is able and ready to forgive; He is able to pardon those who would come. We see in the passage we read some who would not come who fall into judgment, but in the second lot he

sends out he says everything is ready, whatever you need - and who would not but feel their need being invited to such an occasion, the need of forgiveness, the need of our sins being met, for that is what stood out between God and man. It was the question of our sins. I believe in that invitation God is saying that all things are ready, He is saying that the work has been done.

No need now to labour, the work has been done,
To be in God's favour, believe on the Son.

O, beloved, the work has been done. That is all conveyed in the invitation. The sin question and all that kept us at a distance, God has settled it all. The invitation is, Come. Those invited were not worthy, but it says, "as many as ye shall find invite to the wedding feast". God is no respecter of persons; He is not looking for any special persons, it says, all as many as ye shall find invite to the wedding feast. That is what goes on today for the whole world, they are all invited. Very few may respond but they are all invited. O, what a God He is! Man's invitations are very limited, necessarily so because he cannot meet all the needs that may arise, but God, beloved, has provided for everything, all are invited - invite as many as ye shall find, "invite to the wedding feast". That is how the gospel goes out today. There is no soul who is outside the reach of the invitation to Come, Come to the wedding feast. It says, "And those bondmen went out into the highways, and brought together all as many as they found, both evil and good; and the wedding feast was furnished with guests". That is what is coming about in this dispensation, beloved; if there may be some refusing, the wedding feast is being furnished with guests. That is a very fine word - "the wedding feast was furnished with guests". It was not so at the beginning of this chapter, the feast was all there and God wanted to share. The Lord is saying the kingdom of the heavens has become like this today. This is the time when God is extolling Christ, exalting Him, and now the wedding feast is furnished; it does not say with sinners, it does not say it is furnished with lame or any of these kind of persons, it says it is "furnished with guests". They have added something to it, the feast could not go on without them. What a

wealth has been secured through the glad tidings being proclaimed - the wedding feast has been furnished with guests. It is not an empty place. The whole house may be there but unless it is furnished it is very empty, but here it is furnished, with guests, forgiven sinners. Persons who were once in the highways, persons who were once far away, lost and undone. We were speaking today of persons once being strangers and foreigners; well, they are not that here though they once were. The gospel found us in all our need, met our sins and all our liabilities, but now 'guests' as this passage shows, involves that the persons are dressed; it involves that they themselves have been clothed in all the worth of God's beloved Son. There is no disparity, may I say, between the Son and the guests, no disparity. It is a very odd thing if somebody comes in who is strikingly out of place. The wedding feast that was furnished with guests means there is something about them that is suited to the wedding feast, and to the King and to His Son.

That is what the gospel is about. There is power in the glad tidings, beloved, to meet our every condition, to meet all that we are as lost and undone as sons of Adam's race. What a transfer from these thoroughfares and highways, what a transfer to be taken from that to a wedding feast and to be one of the guests, not just an onlooker. The gospel does not leave you outside the house; the gospel brings you into the house - furnished with guests. The joy of the wedding feast may be heard afar off, but the guests are the persons who are participating in the glory and blessedness of the occasion. In the glad tidings that is what God is securing; He is furnishing the occasion with guests.

It says, And the king went in to see the guests. O, what a delight that must have been! You can think of the expectancy of the king. If you just speak simply of this parable - the expectancy of the king going in - it does not say to see his son, though that would be in his mind, but it says, "And the king, having gone in to see the guests". What would he see? He would see each one with some appreciation of Christ, it is somewhat like the inn we were speaking about, everybody in that inn would be telling of their own

appreciation of the Samaritan. So here all the guests would be speaking about the son, the Son. They would not be speaking about what they were wearing or what some one else may be wearing, but they would be speaking about his son. That is what God is looking for, the great effects of the glad tidings; that instead of men being engaged with themselves and with the world where Christ has been rejected, the gospel transfers us into a scene where persons are engaged with Christ. What an occupation! 'Having gone in to see the guests'. Think of the king's delight as he saw one and another, come from afar, come from great liabilities, those liabilities gone, and they are there clothed with a wedding garment - except one man, and the king says, "My friend". The king's attitude is still the same, friendly, the king's disposition is still there towards them even though they are there in indifference - "how earnest thou in here not having on a wedding garment?". It points to a man's indifference, how self-centred man is. I think this person was very self-centred, instead of taking on the spirit of the glad tidings - God's appreciation of Christ. Well, there is no room for that kind of man. God, in spite of all that is going on is sending out his bondmen that the wedding feast may be furnished with guests. May we enjoy, beloved, our place as a guest, a guest of the King, a guest to honour the Son. May our hearts be filled with something fresh of His beauty and His glory and His charm for His Name's sake.

CROYDON

23 November 1986

THE CHILDREN WARNED

It is to be noted that in God's early speaking to Adam in the 'garden' of Eden a warning was given to him not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, lest he should surely die. Then the end of the last chapter of the Bible also has a warning, lest anyone should add to or take from the words of the prophecy, and God should take away his part in the tree of life. God is faithful from first to last. It is a solemn thing for old and young that much of His teaching carries also a warning. Perhaps someone reading this may be in special need of this.

On an islet in one of the bays in Jersey is a ruin called Janvrin's Tower. It seems that, many years ago, a sea-captain of that name, returning from a long voyage, had to anchor and remain there with all hands because the plague had broken out among the crew. The captain himself took the disease and died just where the old tower now stands - and within sight of his own cottage-home a short way inland! It may be that he had become a believer on the Lord Jesus. The incident however is a warning to all, lest anyone should be very near to the blessing and to a 'home' for the soul and yet be lost. Captain Janvrin was not to blame for his sad loss, but each and all of us must answer for gospel appeals made to us in God's grace.

Timothy is a fine example for children and young people who, perhaps from their infancy, have heard the gospel many times. He was fully persuaded of the things that he had learned and had known the Scriptures, presumably without the benefit of the New Testament writings. "The sacred letters", wrote Paul, "... are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus". How wonderfully the words of Scripture are balanced! The power to bring salvation is in the word, but we have on our part to have faith in the One who is our salvation. Have you this faith?

J.C.Evershed