

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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Contents

SONSHIP

MAKING ROOM

SONSHIP

Galatians 2: 23-29; 4: 1-7; Romans 8: 12-15; 2 Samuel 9: 6-8; 19: 24, 30

R.T. I suggested these scriptures that they might afford a spirit of liberty to speak to us as to sonship, a matter as to its term with which we would all be very familiar. I believe there is scope for the Spirit to enlarge us in our thoughts as to the practical expression of it. I thought in the passage in Galatians, we have the light of sonship – a very wonderful thing to come into - “for ye are all God’s sons by faith in Christ Jesus”. In Romans, I thought we would see something of the power of it to be in expression, “led by the Spirit of God”. In Mephibosheth, I thought there was perhaps an example of someone who lived in the joy of it in testing surroundings, in the sense that his true place, eating at David’s table as one of the king’s sons, nourished him in view of being loyal in the testimony.

Perhaps first we could speak of how sonship has come into expression in our time as never before. It has come into expression in Christ. It is remarkable how much He is referred to as the Son. What came into view in that pathway, in His circumstances here, as John says, was “a glory as of an only-begotten with a father”, John 1: 14. In His movements here you saw a Man who was in relationship with His Father. What results flowed from that relationship! Speaking too that has come into our dispensation, God speaking, but He is speaking in Son. The whole dispensation, you may say, is dominated by the light of sonship and the One in whom it has come into expression, all to the end that we might be attracted into it, that there may be the features of sonship continued in us today. So it says, “but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son”. That was how it was going to be expressed, not in law or in prophets or in angels, or even in Israel, although they would perhaps know something about it in some limited sense, but God in this day and dispensation has brought this relationship on to view in Christ. As we follow His footsteps, what we see is a Son with a Father. What power that gave to all that He did! It displayed itself in many

ways, but what was seen was a Son with a Father. May our hearts be attracted into that relationship and to see that it is our portion!

R.J.C. Does sonship bring us into liberty and wealth over against the law of which the apostle treats here?

R.T. I think that is what the apostle has in mind here, that the light of it may dawn on our souls to bring us into a great realm of liberty and affection, and into joy. The apostle here is correcting bondage. He does not correct it by dealing with the state exactly but by bringing in the light: "for ye are all God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus". Paul does the same in Corinth. While he takes up matters, he tells them "Do ye not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God?" 1 Cor 6: 19. Do you not recognise yourselves? I believe the Spirit would encourage us to help us to recognise ourselves, to see what we really have been brought into. We do not work up to sonship; we do not reach sonship through state, but state is coloured from sonship. I think that is what Paul would say: that is our light. When the light of it dawns in our souls, it frees us from looking to ourselves for things, but we see that God's thought about every believer in Christ Jesus is that they are a son. And so in that light He would instruct us that we might come into the affections and the liberty that is suited to the great Name that has been named upon us.

C.K.R. "So that the law has been our tutor up to Christ", but this is something entirely new and the blessed source is in God Himself. Has that come into operation?

R.T. Yes, so we are in a different time. We are in a time when the whole matter has come into display in the Son in all its blessed attractiveness and what liberty He had with the Father in those movements. It says He was in His "Father's business", Luke 2: 49. And He speaks about His "Father's house", John 14: 2. His whole life was towards the Father and the Father being pleased. What liberty He had as being in the joy of that relationships!

G.C.McK. In Romans you have the Spirit of adoption, but here the Spirit of His Son. Does that show the level of things that God has in

mind, that what is set out so blessedly in Christ is in some way to be in our hearts, in our experience?

R.T. It is absolutely beautiful. God has no lesser thought. Mr. Darby says:

And is it so, we shall be like Thy Son?
Is this the grace, which He for us has won?

(Hymn 247)

It will require another body for its fulness, but if we could just get some sense in all our souls that God's thought for us, whenever we come to know the Lord Jesus, is that we are a son!

R.G. It is no afterthought. We are "marked ... out beforehand for adoption through Jesus Christ to himself", Eph 1: 5.

R.T. There is a time - and now is the time – that that has come into display.

R.G. I was thinking what a stabilising influence it is when you realise that God has had this in His mind before time was, and we have been in His mind, "marked ... out beforehand for adoption".

R.T. And now the time of the law has passed and the time is for receiving sonship. It says, "That we might receive sonship". God is dispensing it in all the wealth of His love, and it is now the time for receiving it. I think the sense of receiving it puts a dignity upon us and a power within us in the Spirit that we no longer are debtors to the flesh, but we are able to live here in the power and in the joy of a known, undisturbed relationship.

R.J.C. Has the Spirit been given that we might enjoy sonship? "For ye are all God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus". As you say, that applies to every believer, but the Spirit would give us the full enjoyment of the relationships that God has brought us into.

R.T. So that God does not only give us the title: He gives us the power to enjoy all that the title conveys. It is a very remarkable section of scripture. "But because ye are sons, God has sent out the Spirit ...". From this point of view, you are a son even before you

have the Spirit in the conscious sense of it. God is thinking of us so bountifully and so richly that now He would bless us with all the resources that are needed to be in the joy and the liberty of being His sons.

W.L. Paul in chapter 1 in his reference to “his Son” speaks about “was pleased to reveal his Son in me, that I may announce him as glad tidings among the nations” (v 16). That seemed to colour Paul’s ministry.

R.T. Very remarkably, and you can see sonship coming into expression in Paul, perhaps next to the Lord. There he is in Galatia, in Corinth with all the troubles; there is a son in liberty! The enjoyment of that relationships coming into his circumstances, I think, answers a thousand questions. We have a sense that we are brought into this position of favour and given the resources to be maintained in the height of all that that favour has conferred upon us.

D.A.S. The Lord Jesus did not take very long to introduce the truth and joy of sonship to the man in John 9. He saw he was ready for it, do you think? “Thou, does thou believe on the Son of God?” (v 35).

R.T. Yes, it is very beautiful how quickly he came into it. He came into the joy by being in liberty outside the system. His life had been dependent on the Jewish system before, but I think a son of God is not dependent on any system for his joy and happiness. As a son of God, you are brought into another atmosphere and order of things altogether where everything is sustaining the joy of these relationships that we are called into. I recall an address in this city some years ago by Stanley McCallum. He said, we often speak of laying hold of sonship, but, he said, my exercise is that sonship might lay hold of us. I think that is a very exercising remark. None of us here but knows something of sonship, perhaps on Lord’s Day morning. We know in these hymns that we sing, something of our place of acceptance. But sonship laying hold of us is something far deeper than that. It means wherever I go and whatever I do, is marked by someone who has a relationship with the Father. That coming into our practical exercises, dear brethren, is something very

pleasurable to heaven and very powerful too. The enjoyment of sonship we will see from Mephibosheth. He was a different man from all that was around: he was in the joy of having his part at the king's table, eating bread as one of the king's sons.

G.C.McK. Paul could say in chapter 4: "Be as I am, for I also am as ye, brethren", (v 12). The thing was expressed in him. That is your exercise, that we should be so in the enjoyment of it that it is expressed in us. Do we become influential in that way?

R.T. I think so, and I feel the importance of the light of it laying hold of us. As I said, it is not setting aside state, but sonship is to affect state rather than the other way round. When we are younger we perhaps think that sonship is something older brethren reach. We think it is something we will reach as we get through the exercises of the flesh, but sonship is God's thought about us as we come to have faith in Christ Jesus. I think that is delivering for us so that we then seek help and prove the Spirit's grace that it is not only a term, but the joy of it and liberty of it are proved in our daily lives.

R.J.C. "For ye are all God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus" – yet sonship had not laid hold of these persons, so it is a question of seeing what God has bestowed on us, the dignity of the relationship that He has brought us into so that this might, as you say, lay hold of us and we enjoy it.

R.T. It is the effect of the gospel. The gospel is not only a gospel of relief but it is that God has delivered us. He says, "Let my son go, that he may serve me", Exod 4: 23. The gospel is to take us from the circumstances of bondage and bring us into the liberty of being one of the sons of God. That does not happen in one preaching exactly. But the light of it needs to be known among us that it is God's thought about us. It says, "God conducts himself towards you as towards sons", Heb 12: 7. Even if God has to bring discipline into our lives, He does not forget that that is what you are in His sight. He would encourage us to have a conscious sense that this is what we really are, one of God's sons.

W.G. Is it important that not only are we sons but He has “sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts”? You might adopt a child, but you cannot put the right spirit into him, but God has done that, so we have the right feelings towards the Father.

R.T. Well, it says, “because ye are sons ...” He thinks so much of us that He regards us in that light and in that relationship, that He has now given us the feelings and the power that are suited to the relationship so that we need not fall back on other principles. We do not fall back on the world for support, for our entertainment, or for joys or for anything. God has given the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. He has given us the resources to enjoy the fulness and sweetness of the relationship.

J.M. Is it a relationship of love?

R.T. Yes it is. It is the Father, God, who only could have proposed such a thing. Again as Mr Darby says, ‘And, is it so?’ Think of a love that would have us in the house in such dignity and in such liberty.

J.M. I feel impressed with the greatness of the liberty that we are brought into, but being more conscious of the love of the Father would increase our liberty.

R.T. I think it would and also preserve us from falling back on formality. The conscious sense of the relationship would give us to be in the joy of the house and give increased wealth in the response.

D.B.R. Why do you think it is contrasted to children in this section? In verse 3 it says, “So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage ... but when the fulness of the time was come”.

R.T. Do you think it is that God would have us to be in full maturity? It is something that we could do with developing so that in the circumstances and the environment we may be in, we are helped to get beyond any element of bondage, to be in the full liberty and joy of the house. What is your impression?

D.B.R. Would that idea of maturity be involved in the term here, “but when the fulness of the time was come” as if this was really what

God has been operating in view of during the whole period of time?

R.T. Yes, you get some impression that God has been waiting for this and that was so at the incoming of Christ. It says, He “sent forth his Son”. Think of Him sending Him out into those circumstances and all the opposition that was there: “God sent forth his Son”, into that realm of criticism and opposition to display something of what His thoughts were for men.

J.S. Would it especially bear on the light given to Paul? It is clear that the other disciples had a certain knowledge of Him – Peter had, but he did not actually minister it. I am just trying to get into my mind that, laying hold of in our souls the light of Christ where He is, would bring us into the liberty of it.

R.T. I think Paul is dealing primarily with the reproduction of that Man above in the circumstances of the local assembly where the enemy is so active to bring in bondage and to hold the saints short of their calling. So Paul says, He “was pleased to reveal his Son in me”, Gal 1: 16. Think of Paul, as we have said already, in these circumstances in the local company in Galatia, the divisions there were in Corinth, bringing in heavenly light among them.

J.D.G. It is remarkable that we are sons before we receive the Spirit – we need to grasp hold of that; “by faith in Christ Jesus” is in relation to that Man, then God gives us the Spirit. Is that for us to enjoy our sonship?

R.T. It is a very remarkable thing and not something that perhaps we have thought much about. What would you say about it?

J.D.G. I am just impressed by what you have brought before us that, through faith in Christ Jesus, I can look on myself as a son of God, but then He sees the need to give us the Spirit of His Son in our hearts. It must be to bring us into the enjoyment of it.

R.T. It is to open the doors of the house, to be there in full liberty, but I think what you have called attention to is needful for us all to realise, that God’s thought about us is that we are sons.

J.D.G. That changes your outlook on life. It brings you into dignity. You belong to the royal family, you might say.

R.T. It changes too the liberty you have, that you are one of God's sons. Well, has that really laid hold of me? Would I go into circumstances that may bring me into bondage?

R.G. Is what has been referred to borne out by the fact that it is "by faith in Christ Jesus"; it is not 'in Jesus Christ'. We have come to recognise, through the gospel in our initial stages, the glory and wonder of what Jesus Christ has done for us - that Man - but do you think the next step is here in Galatia where it is *Christ Jesus*, the anointed Man, the glorious Man who is filling God's universe, you might say, and as we are taken up in the dignity of that, we might understand something of sonship?

R.T. And He is the Man who is the centre of all God's promises. "By faith in Christ Jesus": It takes you beyond the scene of time. It connects your affections with a Man in another set of circumstances and that faith God honours, and says, you are one of My sons.

D.B.R. "God sent forth": has that a very wide bearing in that way? It is over against perhaps the Jewish system, which was restricted. I wondered if God sending out would be in correspondence to the position Christ has taken in His presence.

R.T. These are two cardinal features of the time we are in: "ye are all God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus" and then "God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts". They need to lay hold of us, that whatever else there is in the dispensation, these two things show the way that God has operated to reach His end in men, how He has dignified them in bringing them into this family and has also given them the feelings and the affections and the liberty that are suited to the relationship. He has sent it out. How liberal God has been! What resources have come into operation that the glory and beauty of sonship may be laid hold of by us?

C.K.R. Help us to see the value of the truth of redemption and reconciliation. You are bringing forward a very exalted but very

wealthy line of things, but underpinning it all must be these truths as well.

R.T. I think it is like the boards of the tabernacle standing in two sockets of silver. It is like persons in the gain of faith in Christ Jesus and in the gain of redemption. What dignity and glory was on these boards! I think that is some type of the persons who are in the gain of all that has been introduced. God has come in in redemption to meet all liabilities that were there and all the things that may lay claim upon us, that we may have the full joy of the light of this dispensation.

C.K.R. Would the fervency of the cry of “Abba Father” in the power of the Spirit bring out the good and gain of these things in the soul of the believer?

R.T. I think so. So there is a great issue from realising that we have been brought into this realm of sonship, as you say, going out to the One who has been the blessed source of it all.

G.C.McK. I was thinking of what has been referred to, “God sent forth his Son ... that he might redeem those under law”. Every claim has been met. Even the law itself, which had a claim, that is removed. You can see how it paves the way for complete liberty and the new view of things.

R.T. It is very beautiful. As we said earlier, God purposed this before time began, but think of the way that He has done it: “Out of Egypt have I called my son”, Matt 2: 15. There they were, slaves in Egypt, and there is a great attempt by the devil today, dear brethren, to bring the saints into bondage through many things. The enemy would be active to bring us under slavery and tribute, but God has operated in redemption in the power of His love, and in the gift of the Spirit, that this feature of sonship may not be negated or the function of it wane, but the joy and the power of it may be known in present circumstances.

J.S. In John 10 the Shepherd led them out by virtue of His own attractiveness. Would that be somewhat akin to this? The leading them out, redeeming those from under law. The fold was like that –

it was restrictive – but the attractiveness of Christ lays hold of us. It leads us out. We go in and out and find pasture.

R.T. Very good, so that in Bethany they made Him a supper. There were persons there who were brought into the dignity and the joy and the liberty of being at table with Christ. This is where sonship is leading us, with power to meet responsibilities in sonship. We do not just meet them as getting through the exercises. I think the dignity and the power of sonship come into our exercises so that they are met righteously and fully and so persons are in true liberty to be in the joy of the Father's love.

W.L. It was mentioned earlier about children. Say something about the difference between children of God and sons of God. It might not have been too well understood.

R.T. I think children refers to the place we have in the family as proving the Father's care. The Father's feelings go out to the children and He takes account of our needs: children have to be fed, and clothed. But there are other aspects of course. John has children who come on to the border of sonship, you may say, when he uses that term. But in Galatians the idea of children is that we are not yet in the full liberty, not grown up. There is still something to learn. But I think in sonship God has given us the full run of the house and the dignity to be there for His own pleasure and joy.

W.L. It is quite a test to realise what you say, that we are always sons no matter in what circumstances we are. That might not be fully realised with us and would bear very much on our conduct and be a basis for acting as sons in the service of God, do you think?

R.T. I think the two things go together. I feel myself – I am not speaking critically – but we are far more familiar with the *term* of sonship than with the *practice* of sonship and we need them both. We “are all God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus” and we enjoy what it is to sing those hymns and to take our place in sonship, but it does not just last for a Lord's Day. We are sons of God on Monday. Think of sons praying in the prayer meeting, sons speaking in the temple, sons at their work who have a conscious sense that there are sons

of God'. Your work will be different from that of those around you. Would you go on strike? A son of God would not be bound by those things that come into the workplace. Would you be in an association? It is far below our dignity to be enslaved by the things that men bring in and the ordinances that pervade society. A son of God is able to meet these things righteously but he meets them in the glory and the dignity and the enjoyment of being in the love of God.

D.B.R. I was wondering if sonship practically would be conveyed in the proverb. It says, "A wise son maketh a glad father", Prov 10: 1. We would like to make our Father's heart glad in everything we do. Would that be a practical application?

R.T. How beautifully that was seen in Jesus: "my Father". And there He is as He comes into the temple: "my Father's house", John 2: 16. Think of the way He was activated as seeing what was brought into that temple: "my Father's house"! I think it gives us some sense of seeking to please Him. If we enjoy the favour that has been conferred upon us – we will see that in Mephibosheth – we would seek in the circumstances of daily life to hold things at the level of our relationship. We would not want anything to disturb the enjoyment of that relationship. The relationship cannot be broken but we may allow something to disturb the enjoyment of it.

J.A.B. Romans and Galatians speak of crying or saying "Abba Father". The only reference to the Lord Jesus using these words is in pressure in the garden in the night in which He was delivered up. Would you comment on that, please?

R.T. I do not know that I could say much about it, but in the very pressure of circumstances that were so testing, think of Him saying these words, 'Abba Father'. It shows what was in His heart, so that testings and circumstances bring out whether we are a son and whether we are in the enjoyment of sonship or else they turn us to beggarly principles. That is what happened in Galatia. Pressures came into their lives and they turned to beggarly principles. So in our practical circumstances God tests His own work. What is our

recourse? Do we remember that we are a son of God, therefore we count on the resources that He has given us in His Spirit to fulfil matters so that we are in full liberty to say, 'Father, Father'.

J.M. The young man in Luke 15 says, "I am no longer worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants" (v 19), but the Father says, "Bring out the best robe and clothe him in it" (v 22).

R.T. That is the importance of what I was saying as to the light of sonship. We can never fall back to being a hired servant although we may take that ground at times. Difficult circumstances come into our pathway and we say, 'Well, my sins are forgiven. I am saved and I will go to heaven'. But persons in the light of sonship will never speak in those terms. The light of sonship coming into our souls is that we want to please the Father, and in doing that we are proving the Spirit of God's Son in our hearts.

R.J.C. I was thinking of Luke 15. Do you get the contrast there between a son enjoying the divine presence and the elder son outside?

R.T. Well, he had never grown up.

R.J.C. The father did not call the elder son a son: "Child, *thou* art ever with me" (v 31).

R.T. He did not know his father and perhaps in our experience it has needed exercises like the prodigal to bring us back to see what the Father's thoughts about us were. That robe was there when he was in the far country. He still regarded him as a son, and, in the exercises of the way, God never changes His thoughts about us, but He would encourage us, I think, to see that He has given the power and the resources, the wherewithal, that we may be in the consciousness of the enjoyment of the relationship. It just tests our hearts: how much is the relationship enjoyed by us during the week and in the circumstances of daily life. Do we resort to living like ordinary people who are living in the flesh and being carried about by various circumstances that test us, or are we consciously in the sense that we have been brought into the full liberty and joy of the

dispensation as a son of God and given the Spirit of His Son in our hearts?

D.B.R. Someone referred to changing your outlook; I think it would also change our taste. If we were really in the enjoyment of sonship, it would change our taste. You were speaking about things that are testing, but it might be things that are pleasing that we give way to, what is pleasing to the flesh. I wonder if that is really Romans 8; “but if, by the Spirit, ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live”, (v 13). Would that be the life of sonship?

R.T. I think so and the Lord’s words, “I do always the things that are pleasing to him”, John 8: 29. As you say, there are many things that may please us, places that we may be drawn into and things that may attract us, but is it the way that a son of God would behave? But he says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, *these* are sons of God”. I think the leading of the Spirit of God is forward, leading to the land. That section in Romans 8 is the antitype to Numbers 21 where they come, through the brazen serpent, to a springing well and from that moment they journey forward into the land. I think that is what is happening here: “for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, *these* are sons of God”. So it is not only that you are a son of God as that name having been named upon you, but you are led: “*these* are sons of God”, persons who are walking in a different path, walking under divine direction and leadership of the Spirit.

W.L. This does not contradict Galatians – “ye are all God’s sons by faith ...”, but is this something further, “*these* are sons of God”?

R.T. I think this supports Galatians. In Galatians we get the light of it and we need the light of it. I think it liberates our younger brethren, and it needs to come into the gospel. The light of the present day is not only that our sins are forgiven, but we are called to sonship, and now how is that going to be worked out? Well, it brings us into another relationship; it brings us into being led by the Spirit of God.

W.L. “*These* are sons of God”, would that be characteristic?

R.T. So they are identifiable. You can see them. As has been said, they are not drawn by their own desires, but they are led by the Spirit. Now, where is the Spirit of God moving? Well, He is moving among the people of God. It brings us into an area of protection and of forward movement through this world. It says, "*these*". As our brother read it, he emphasised that, "*these* are sons of God". So they are seen to be sons of God.

D.S-I. In chapter 7 you despair, "O wretched man that I am!" (v 24), but in chapter 8, you come through to saying, I am a son of God. Mr Darby wrote his hymn in the singular:

"And is it so, I shall be like Thy Son?"

R.T. I think the fact of it laying hold of us draws us into this realm and casts us on the Spirit. How are these features of my high calling going to be displayed? Well, it says, "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, *these* are sons of God". The substantiality of what we were reading of in Galatians is seen in these persons who are moving forward to the land. I think a son of God does not walk aimlessly. He has an objective and that objective is pleasing the Father, but it is leading on to the land, the area of divine blessing where the thoughts of God are enjoyed, and, I think, it leads among the saints.

J.S. Is that why he uses the pronoun, "we". In the previous chapter it is "I", but here it is the collective thought. What would you say about that?

R.T. I think it is very good to call attention to that. It is very much enjoyed collectively. The resources of it are proved individually, but think of a company of the sons of God being together! What an occasion it would be! This scripture brings in the power of the relationship seen in persons, "*these* are sons of God". So what we had in Galatians is not a picture on the wall, not an abstract idea, but the light of it is something that becomes concrete in the soul, that "*these* are sons of God".

R.G. Mr Darby's hymn was in the singular as was said, and there is that individual exercise that brings us into the knowledge of our place

in sonship, but immediately then the Spirit brings us into communion with others so we enjoy what sonship brings us into together.

R.T. So that they moved into the land together?

R.G. That is what I wondered, that it is not an individual exercise then. The individual exercise is something that is basic, you might say, as light dawns in your soul, but then immediately the Spirit comes in and fills you with an appreciation that there are others who have had the same exercise and are now enjoying the same blessed place that God has prepared for them.

R.T. I think it is very fine to have some experience of that. They are led by the Spirit of God. It means He is made room for. That was Numbers 21. They were sons of God in Egypt – “Let my son go, that he may serve me” – a long time in coming to it, but in coming to that springing well, they were unified and they began to sing. Above all things they made a forward movement towards divine purpose. I think there would be a definitiveness about the sons of God so that they are not just believers – they *are* that - but they are sons of God as led by the Spirit; they have an objective and there is a definiteness in their movements towards that objective.

R.J.C. What is collective comes out in their response too, “whereby we cry, Abba, Father”. There seems to be a suited state, formation in the believer in sonship, so together we can cry, “Abba, Father”.

R.T. That is a very beautiful expression of deep feeling and it is something which has been pent up in the son’s soul, you may say, and there comes a point when we cry, “Abba, Father”.

R.J.C. In Galatians it is the Spirit that cries, but here there seems to be some formation in sonship in the believer so that we can cry. We come into the full enjoyment of sonship in that relationship.

R.T. I think it brings up the close link there is with the Spirit. It is like, “the Spirit and the bride say, Come”, Rev 22: 17. The Spirit is crying, as you say, in Galatians but here there is a close link with the Spirit and we cry, “Abba, Father”. The expression is full of an admiring kind of spirit in the soul, “Abba, Father”.

R.G. This is the only company that uses the terms, “Abba, Father”, for all eternity.

R.T. You had better say more about that.

R.G. It is just what we have learned. There are other families in heaven and other families on earth, but none of them will be able to use the words, “Abba, Father”. It is only those that have understood the depth of feeling that was expressed in Christ as He came here and did what He accomplished, and then the Spirit coming and filling those that are sons in this relationship, that will be able to use these two words, “Abba, Father”.

R.T. I think what you say magnifies the dispensation. The assembly now knows sonship into which we have been brought in a fuller way than any other family. Angels know something about it, and Israel will know something about it. In fact, they had it first, “whose is the adoption”, Rom 9: 4. But here, what grace, what an expression of the Father’s heart of love, that we, outcasts and strangers like Mephibosheth, have been brought into this time of sonship and into the joy of it that exceeds what will be in any other family!

G.C.McK. Does it help to see that it is not a formal word for Father. It is a simple, intimate word. Is that touching to the heart?

R.T. Very good, so they are two different languages, are they not? You may say, in whatever language, they all have the same Father. They are brought into this – it is not translated – simple liberty and joy. It is an expression of deep devotion, is it not?

D.B.R. Say what your impression is as to how the Spirit would lead.

R.T. It is past Romans 7 here. I think the Spirit comes to a point where He does not need to contend for His place. That takes a long time in our lives, and it is never absent in a sense, but I think we come to a point where the Spirit is in the lead instead of the flesh, instead of, as you say, desires for some things that may not be spiritual. The Spirit has a greater sphere of influence in our hearts so that we are ready to follow into the realms of divine blessing.

D.B.R. That is helpful. Chapter 6 deals with the world and chapter 7 deals with ourselves. It involves the clearing of things inwardly, making way for this. Do you think it might be something like following the man with the pitcher of water? I wondered if ministry would be one way in which the Spirit would show His leading. There would be other others, no doubt, but do you think that would be right?

R.T. Yes, and he leads into a large upper room, furnished. So I think we need to be helped to afford the Spirit greater liberty. Does He need to be always contending for His place? It speaks about that earlier in the chapter, "For they that are according to flesh mind the things of the flesh; and they that are according to Spirit, the things of the Spirit", Rom 8: 5. There comes a time in our lives when we are giving Him greater place. He is not contending for it, but He is able to open up the treasures of His Master, to lead us into that heavenly land where we are brought in the spirit to liberty to cry, "Abba, Father".

W.L. I am just enquiring, but when we come to the service of God, it is not exactly the leadership of the Spirit, is it? It is a question of the Lord's headship and His leadership as Minister of the sanctuary, although the Spirit's service would complement that, do you think?

R.T. Well, would it not be the Spirit's leadership first, do you think? Go on, say what you mean.

W.L. Just that. He would lead us to the heavenly land where the Lord as Head can take over in the service of God.

R.T. Though, prior to the Supper, I think the Spirit has a great place with us. As we know, we say we break bread in the wilderness, so this is wilderness: "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God" would be wilderness exercises. But I think that makes room for attraction, makes way for the Lord to have His place and the Spirit's prominence would recede in that sense. It recedes as the Lord takes over, and the Son has His place, bringing us into the realms of the Father's love.

W.L. "If therefore the Son shall set you free, ye shall be really free", John 8: 36.

R.T. I think it is very affecting to have some sense in what we are saying that we are in the hands of divine Persons.

J.D.G. In Numbers 21 they moved from the springing well to the top of Pisgah. I was thinking how the Spirit brings you to that point where you can view the whole land. This gives you a view of that before you come into it.

R.T. As you say, it looks over the land, but verse 20 says it "looks over the surface of the waste". So you come to a point where you can look back and you do not see the murmurings but you look back and see the way God has led you.

J.D.G. In Numbers 21 it "looks over the surface of the waste", but in Deuteronomy, when Moses is taken up, he sees the whole land from that point.

R.T. I am glad you have brought that in because I think that is just what we are coming to in sonship. We are coming to Deuteronomy. And it has been said Moses wrote the book of Deuteronomy to teach them manners, and that is what sons are, they are mannerly. They have the manners of the house; they move in the dignity of the house. So think of Moses writing that book: he knew them well. He says, Ye are the sons of Jehovah, in that book. He tells them that is what they are. And he wrote the book so that they might be in the land in the full liberty and the joy of the Father's love.

J.D.G. Know how to live in that land.

R.T. Know how to live in it, know how to drink those streams, know how to live in a house that you did not build. I think that is what sonship brings us into. The way that Moses speaks of the land, I think, is most beautiful. He says you will drink of wells that you did not dig, you will live in houses that you did not build, you will eat of trees that you did not plant but there is sonship coming into the house. But the leadership of the Spirit makes us suitable, as you say, to have the manners of the house.

J.M. You referred to the wilderness. It says of the Lord Jesus that He was “led by the Spirit in the wilderness”, Luke 4: 2. That footnote is ‘in the power of’ it.

R.T. And there in those circumstances, He was a son. “Man shall not live by bread alone”. Think of the circumstances! Think of sonship coming out in those temptations! Very beautiful! The devil says, you could call that stone to be bread. He says, “Man shall not live by bread alone”. Think of a Son there! How pleasing that must have been to heaven, tempted of the devil in those circumstances, but there is sonship shining in its fulness.

W.M.P. Can I ask about 2 Corinthians 3 where it is “transformed ... from glory to glory” (v 18)? There does not seem to be any discontinuity there. I wondered how the service of the Spirit might lead us into the knowledge of the headship of Christ. Can you help as to that passage?

R.T. I think that links on with what has been said as to Numbers 21. There is a chapter in Numbers (33) where it says they went from one place to another. It does not say anything about what happened in some of these places, some terrible things, but it says they went from one point to another point. They were led of the Spirit. As you look back on these things, how God led them forward, and as they come to Numbers 21, the pace is accentuated. They begin to run, not just walking:

On to Canaan’s rest still wending

(Hymn 76)

They get some sense of the power there is to traverse those circumstances quickly and come into a land where sonship can flourish.

C.K.R. Here again in Romans 8, “... ye have received a spirit of adoption”. It would imply an intelligence but also entails fulness of heart, the full result and known power of the indwelling Spirit therefore taking the believer forward.

R.T. That is very fine. It comes in in both Galatians and here, that ye might receive it. You receive sonship. God is imparting it in the wealth of His love and here too you are brought into this great realm of blessing: “for as many as are led by the Spirit of God”. God does not just give us the title, but He gives us the resources so that no power should hinder us from crying, “Abba, Father”.

C.K.R. When you on to chapter 15, you receive one another (v 7). That would all help us in our links together, do you think?

R.T. I think that is fine that the sons of God would gravitate to each other. So who are our companions? The sons of God? The company we keep, is it sonship? The company we keep has a great effect upon us and there is certain company we cannot avoid. Mephibosheth was in that. He was in a company he could not avoid, but he did not wash his hair or trim his beard. He kept himself apart from that company. He was there as a son of God. So I think we need to watch our company. “*These* are sons of God”, not just persons who may profess something, but persons who express that they are led by the power of the Spirit.

W.L. Would Rebecca help there? A feature of sonship, “I will go” (Gen 24: 58), and that leadership of the Spirit there in type, and she had too companions on the way leading to the heavenly man.

R.T. Well, Rebecca makes full use of the camels, divine provision that God has provided in His love. I think she must have wondered what they were there for to begin with, but she saw that there was a power there to transport her into the embrace of the heavenly man. “*These*”, persons that are led, “*these* are sons of God”.

Well, may we just speak of Mephibosheth for a moment? He allowed sonship to lay hold of him. The thoughts of David about him were more than he could ever have imagined. He as much as said, I will just lead my life quietly. I will not cause any trouble. We say our sins are forgiven, we have a sense of how feeble we are, and would just take a back seat as it were, but that is not David’s thought about him. He says, “thou shalt eat bread at my table continually”. He allowed the wealth of sonship to lay hold of him so

when the crisis comes, you see there a son, a son in adversity, a son displaying the features of sonship when all around were pleasing themselves.

J.T.B. I was just thinking of that scripture you referred to in Deuteronomy chapter 8 where it says, “thou shalt eat bread without scarceness” (v 9). That is really the wealth of sonship that Mephibosheth comes into in David’s house.

R.T. It is interesting what has come up as to the leadership of divine Persons and the Lord having His place and leading us to “eat bread at my table continually”. That is where we are nourished. It is where sonship is nourished. There is nothing to nourish Mephibosheth in those other circumstances, but he is prepared to leave them. Are we prepared to leave the circumstances? The Spirit leading us would bring us from one set of circumstances into the enjoyment of another. So it says, “And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?” But that did not hinder him from eating at the king’s table continually.

G.C.McK. Is it touching that David said, “for I will certainly shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father’s sake”? Really, it is for another’s sake that we come into all this. Does that assure it to our hearts, that really Christ has drawn this all out?

R.T. I have wondered about that.

G.C.McK. We had no claim for ourselves, but it is God’s thoughts as to Christ and His value for Christ that lie behind everything.

R.T. That is very fine so you can understand him saying, “What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?” But the wealth of David’s affection for him enables him to rise above the state of things though he felt it. Humility is always there, but he allowed the wealth of David’s thoughts to lay hold of him, and he ate bread at the king’s table.

D.B.R. Is it a complete transfer in that way? It says he dwelt at Lodebar, as you were saying. Is that really what God intends for the

believer that there is a complete transfer from one system into another system?

R.T. Yes, indeed, and to prove the resources of that system. Hannah says, He has taken us from the dung-hill and set us among nobles (1 Sam 2: 8), and she proved the resources of that system in the bringing in of a man-child. And so Mephibosheth proved the resources of that system. Even when all around are despising David, he would not make himself comfortable where his lord was not. I think that is what is conveyed in that expression, he “neither washed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed”. There is Mephibosheth in outward circumstances - his loyalty. This is another feature of sonship that they are loyal, loyal to the Father, and there is a man who was loyal to David. What pressures must have been put upon him! Mephibosheth, you can surely just do this! Very insidious the enemy’s efforts to bring us away from the ground of true sonship.

R.J.C. Was he settled in sonship? Thinking of what has been said I was going to refer to verse 13 of chapter 9, “So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem; for he did eat continually at the kings’ table”. We should come into that and be settled in sonship and that would govern our activities, as you have read later on.

R.T. It was the best place to be. It was where the thoughts of God’s love were to be enjoyed, so it would connect with the local meetings, the best place to be, whatever night of the week it is. It is where the sons would gravitate. It is where the Spirit of God is leading us to, but it is where the sons would gravitate and he would not make himself comfortable in other circumstances because he showed he was loyal. Whatever they were saying about David, he was displaying that he was loyal to the rejected king.

W.L. Does he show consistency too? Chapter 9 and then a long terrible history until chapter 19, and he is still loyal and consistent.

R.T. It is very fine to see a man like that. I think it has been remarked that he was one of the Ephesians of the Old Testament. The light had shone in his soul and wherever you put him, he is the

same. He is loyal to his lord. He is a son of God. What this must have meant to heaven! David did not appreciate it in the setting of things, but what it must have meant to heaven to see persons who are not making themselves comfortable or adjusting their circumstances or their thoughts or their conduct to what is around them, but they are in the joy of sonship within, loyal to a departed Lord and Saviour.

R.G. That expression, "Let him even take all" signifies there is an area outside every other thing here in this scene, and that is where sonship is enjoyed.

R.T. Well, one feature of sonship is that they are satisfied and they find no greater pleasure than pleasing the Father.

D.B.R. What has just been referred to really is typical of a man who has drunk of one Spirit, not only being led by the Spirit in the wilderness, but drinking of one Spirit. Would that be total satisfaction?

R.T. "Let him even take all": he had something better. We do not let things go unless we have something better. Well, the light of sonship has brought to us something better and the Spirit of God's Son in our hearts has given us the power to enjoy something better. Now, let us make room for that, that we may see that the world can confer nothing upon us and though there may be these exercises of maintaining loyalty, we have been brought into an area where we can be satisfied and live in divine favour.

GLASGOW

28 August 1999

Key to Initials

J.A.Brown, Grangemouth; J.T.Brown, Grangemouth; R.J.Campbell, Glasgow; J.D.Gray, Edinburgh; R.Gardiner, Kirkcaldy; W.M.Grosse, Edinburgh; W.Lamont, Cumnock; G.C.McKay; Glasgow; J.Marshall, Edinburgh; W.M.Patterson, Glasgow; D.B.Robertson, Cumnock;

C.K.Robinson, Glasgow; D.A.Steven, Grangemouth, D.Scougal,
Edinburgh; J.Spinks, Grangemouth; R.Taylor, Kirkcaldy

MAKING ROOM

Robert Taylor

Malachi 3:15-18; Psalm 132; 1-8; Genesis 24: 15-25; Acts 16: 13-15

In reading these scriptures, it was on my heart to say something of how God, in His faithfulness, has made room for the testimony and the light of the assembly to grow and, on the other hand, the need on our side to be making room for God to work, that Christ may have a resting place, making room for the Spirit of God in Rebecca and, finally, for Paul.

There is a great need for appreciating how God has operated against forces of evil to make room for the light of the assembly. It is a wonderful thing to me that for nearly two thousand years the light of the assembly has shone amidst the powers of darkness that have been against it and is still shining, we may say, still shining in its lustre. We sang in our hymn that there is a vessel here, on this earth that is saying, 'Lord Jesus, come'. God has operated to see that through. The Lord says in the revelation that Peter had, "on this rock I will build my assembly, and hades' gates shall not prevail against it", Matt 16: 18. God has intervened Himself, dear brethren, to bring in this light - I should say, to bring in this formation, formed here in this dispensation, which is His own handiwork, and the building is going on today and it will go on until completion. God has made way for the assembly and assembly light. The powers that are against it are increasing. We hear these terms, 'other faiths', terrible expression. There is no other faith. There is one faith, and God has made that clear and He is making way for that in spite of these times of darkness. What an assurance to our hearts, what a privilege, dear brethren to be in the light and in the joy too of what God is seeing through and seeing through to completion! There is a need for our hearts in these darkening days to have a sense of that which God is seeing through. Look at the testimony in India, the powers of darkness and evil that are all around! Marvellous thing to think of the glad tidings being preached

amidst such idolatry, persons holding the ground amid such darkness, in loyalty to the name of Jesus! God is seeing the testimony through. What an encouragement to be identified with it, dear brethren! What an incentive to make room for it!

In the passage we read in Malachi, persons were saying, it does not really matter. The book is full of what men say and what God says. Men are saying it does not matter; there are other faiths, we can serve God as we please; and the wicked are prospering. That is the day we are in. It says, “we hold the proud for happy; yea they that work wickedness are built up”. Men would look at these things in an outward way, but amidst all that, there were persons who feared Jehovah. I would like to enlist us all increasingly to be more fully among them. Amidst the darkness the scripture is very beautiful: it says, “Then”, as if God interrupts what men are saying and doing and thinking. The Spirit of God intervenes. It says, “Then”, in the midst of such conditions, there were persons who feared Jehovah and they “spoke often one to another”. That is the day we are in, dear brethren. It is what we are doing this afternoon, but may it not just be in our meetings! Amidst the darkness the great preservative – may I say, the great upbuilding for faith? – is that there are persons who speak “often one to another”, no distance there! “They that feared Jehovah”: It is the great need of the time when men are pleasing themselves and raising these other matters that I have spoken of, that there are persons who fear Jehovah.

It is a remarkable word of a great man, Joseph, “I fear God”, Gen 42: 18. Did he need to, you may say? A man there who had the whole land of Egypt under his rule and dominion, and he says, “I fear God”. Dear brethren, let us be preserved in the fear of God! We try to say it is not a slavish fear, but, you know, it is the normal condition of a heart that knows Him, “I fear God”, not for what He will bring in judicially, not that there will be penalty if we do not do as He pleases. “I fear God” means you make room for Him. You make room for what God is saying and what God is doing and you make room for God’s word amidst all that man is saying and man is doing.

“Then they that feared Jehovah spoke often one to another; and Jehovah observed it, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them ...”. Did He really need that book, you may say? God had great pleasure in these persons that feared Him. Think of Him writing them down! Can I ask, my friend, are you conscious that your name is in that book? I do not speak fancifully, but I can think of God looking over the pages of that book in the darkening days that we are in and seeing one name, another name; and He comes to your name, sees something of persons there who walk in a different path who are governed by different principles, opportunities perhaps to do one thing or another. “I fear God”. That was Joseph. He had an opportunity to bring in retribution. How rightly he might have done it! How rightly he might have been vindictive against those brethren that so persecuted him. He says, No: “I fear God”.

A mark of a God-fearing man is that His confidence is in God. He does not need to try and justify himself. He does not need to take up the cudgels and to try and make a war against any that may be against him. He goes on quietly in confidence that God, the Judge of all the earth, will settle matters in His own way and His own time. In the meantime we are tested in our confidence in God. Think of the rising tide of things that are abroad today against the name of Christ, persons who wear the cloth, as we speak, with no fear of God in what they say. It should break our hearts as we hear these expressions against the Name of our Saviour and against the truth of Christianity that this country in some way used to respect. It should cause us grief to hear the things that are being said today, if we fear God. Would that these men feared God! Would that we were able to leave these matters, feeling them, but it says, “Then they that feared Jehovah spoke often”, holy conversation in the things of God. I believe it would increase as the darkness increases; in the pressure of circumstances, you can think of these dear brethren meeting one another – “spoke often one to another ... and a book of remembrance was written”. They were not speaking just about the public things although they felt them. It is like these sons

of God gathering together and speaking of the things of Christ and God writing this book of remembrance. It says it was “for them”. God has these books and, as I say, He looks them up. Maybe, dear brother and sister, you are passing through time, things that you can hardly understand and sorrows that you can hardly bear, and God looks at that book. He says, there are persons who fear me. He comes in in His mercy. As we fear Him and make room for Him, He comes in in His grace and in His love for these persons.

It says the book was written “for them that feared Jehovah, and that thought upon his name”. This is how the testimony has gone through, dear brethren. That is how the history has gone through in this city and this country. There are persons who have feared God and that book of remembrance has been written and we stand here today on the ground of the faithfulness of others who have gone before us. Let us, dear brethren, follow in those footsteps in a true way, in a committed way, in the fear of God, speaking often one to another! It makes room for divine blessing. Amidst the darkness, these persons made room for God to come in, made room for Him to come in with the resources of His love.

He says, “And they shall be unto me a peculiar treasure”. Oh what delight heaven has in the loyalty of the saints! No great exploits in this chapter. It is not David’s mighty men. It is you and I, insignificant persons in the world, of small account in the ways of men, but persons who fear God and speak often one to another and think upon His Name. Could anything be simpler, dear brethren? Could anything be more blessed? It is within the reach of the youngest heart in this room to have some sense of the fear of God in this way that we are speaking of it and to come into the blessings of His love. I say it is the way that things have continued to this day because there have been persons who have made room for God through their faithfulness, and He says, “And they shall be unto me a peculiar treasure”. Jehovah of hosts is speaking. This is a great stay to persons who fear Him, that God is over all. He is not limited to the limitations even of our faith. It is Jehovah of hosts.

He says, “and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son ...” It connects with what I said as to God coming in for you in the circumstances and in the sorrows. He says, “and I will spare them”. He does not spare these worldlings. He does not spare the workers of iniquity. Their end is sure judgment, but of those that fear Him, He says, “I will spare them as a man spareth his own son...”

Oh what affection is stirred in the heart of God from persons who fear Him and think upon His Name!

Well, I speak of David only briefly, as a young man who began to think about Christ, and to make room for Him. The Psalm is very beautiful, as is David’s history, but it says here about the ark, which is typical of the Lord Jesus, that “we found it in the fields of the wood”. This is where David found it. Could he not just have left it there? It had been there a long time. The connection of the passage would seem to be with the house into which the ark was carried. The ark had been in the hands of the Philistines and there was a movement of recovery begun, but God had to speak against it, not entirely, but God had to bring in some corrective measures, and the ark was carried aside. It says it was there a long time. If you look at that passage of scripture the comment of the Spirit of God while the ark was there is that “the time was long”, 1 Sam 7: 2. Oh, how God has felt it, the place that the public position has given to Christ, the ark that had led them through the wilderness! God called them out of Egypt, but the ark led them through the wilderness into an inhabited land. Beautiful expression! The ark was there leading them until they came to a land where there was room for them and there it is, carried aside to a house where it was neglected, and that is where things are today, dear brethren: the ark, the Lord Jesus, is outside neglected.

And here is a young man who heard about it, a young man who heard that the ark was lying in the fields of the wood. It was neglected and he says, “I will not give sleep to mine eyes, slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for Jehovah, habitations for the Mighty One of Jacob ...” Oh that the Spirit of God would stir something in all our hearts today to find a place for the ark to have

rest! Is it in your heart? That is where it began, in David's heart, a young man as I say who might have said, Well, it is not my matter, a young man who might have left things as they were, but the Spirit of God so stirred him in his affections for Jesus. He says, I will not give rest until there is a settled place. It began in his heart and it ended in the glory of Jehovah filling the house of God in Solomon's day. May it stir in your heart to give a place to Jesus! In Laodicea it says He is knocking. He stands outside, knocking. Has that been your case? It has been in mine. It has been in most of our histories, I suppose but that knocking makes way. He says, "if any one hear my voice", Rev 3: 20. Have you heard His voice, wanting to come in? I trust you will not keep Him out any longer. Like that one in the Song of Songs, He could not get in at the door. He had to look through the window. Is that your only acquaintance with Christ? Is there something between you and your Saviour from your side? The door in Laodicea, somebody must have put it up. Has some barrier come into your life between you and Christ? He is knocking and, too, He is speaking. "If any one hear my voice": do you not recognise it? The one in the Song of Songs recognised it at first, until she comes to a point where there is something awakened in her affections through some appeal of the sufferings of Jesus, I think. There is something awakened in her affections and she rises and opens the door and she goes through certain exercises until she finds Him.

Well, David here, he says, "... we heard of it ..." and he says, I am not going to leave things like that. It may be we cannot alter it, but there is a young man here who says that his affections are so moved that he will do what he can and he prepares in his affection and he prepares in his affliction. His energies are bent on gathering up very small things, it may be, tested at every turn. The public position was so against him. You say, what can I do? A poor shepherd lad, a Saul on the throne who would be content to put things off and to discredit the testimony. There he is, room made in his heart, and in his life, and there he is gathering up, in these times of deep experience, substance, that the ark may have a resting place, not only in his heart, but a settled place. It is a very beautiful

touch that comes in in Solomon's time, based on this very activity of David. The ark has a settled place where the Lord does not need to knock to come in. He may come in as we sing the first hymn. I like to think of these sentiments expressed as the saints sing the hymns, as the Lord Jesus in His grace brings in touches of His love. As He hears the saints singing to Him, His footsteps are hastened to come among them and find there a settled place, somewhere where He can ungird Himself, where He can speak of His Father's love, where He can speak of all the things that have been secured and settled from His position at the right hand of God.

As I say David in his affection, simple young man, made room, made a resolve. It is right to make resolves. It is right to seek grace to keep them. And David, I am sure, at times departed from his resolve. He felt the pressures of the way, turning aside at times, but he comes back. His heart was set on finding a resting place. Let us not give up when the tests come! When the exercises are raised, may we not give up! May it cause us to be all the more diligent to find a settled place where the Lord can be at rest amidst the darkening days that are around us! Well, may we be encouraged to make room for Christ! The old hymn we often quote:

Room for business, room for pleasure,
But for Christ the crucified,
Not a place that He can enter
In the heart for which He died.

Solemn words, 'room for business, room for pleasure'. That would not be a son of God. There it is, a place made through David's exercises where He can enter. Oh the ark I suppose in those days was there in a room with a cloth over it, maybe referred to historically. I suppose there were some great stories told in that house about what the ark used to do, but they were all historical. A comment has been made that it may be we are more familiar with a historical Jesus than we are with a Saviour at the right hand of God. Very true! But David had living, fresh, daily links. He says in one of his Psalms, "One thing have I asked Jehovah, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my life, to

behold the beauty of Jehovah, and to inquire of him in his temple”, Ps 27: 4. There is the objective of a young man, “one thing”. If there is one thing the enemy is active in today – and partially successful – it is to bring in diversity of object. “One thing” – I commend it to the younger brethren. Great things pressing in on us, I know. We have been there too. But there is a young man, “one thing”. If you were asked what the “one thing” was, what would it be? Maybe tonight you should just answer that to the Lord. What is the “one thing” that you desire? Solomon was given the opportunity. Let us not think these things are fanciful! In your life God may give you the opportunity. What is the “one thing” you desire? He gave it to Solomon and He was pleased with it. How pleased He was with this young man, David: “One thing have I asked of Jehovah”.

Well, I hasten to speak of Rebecca as one who made room for the Spirit. One thing that came into our reading today, if I may make such an observation, was the need for making room for the Spirit of God. The whole testimony is secured in Christ in glory. “For whatever promises of God there are, in him is the yea, and in him the amen, for glory to God by us”, 2 Cor 1: 20. The promises will all be effectuated and fulfilled, but the enjoyment of them today is dependent on our relations with the Spirit. This is what comes out, in type, in Rebecca. I only call attention to certain things that the Spirit of God raises with her. There is one thing noticeable about her: she was in an area where the Spirit could find her.

It says she came to the well. The servant when he came in this chapter came to the well. It says he came outside the city. That is where the Spirit of God has come today. He has not come into the world to the religious circles of men. The Spirit of God today has taken a place outside the city. I wonder if you have found it. That is where these transactions took place because a young woman made it her business to go outside the city to draw water. She did not find her pleasures in what was going on in the city. You say, was that her job? She had a brother. Should he not have been away there doing that? There she was, a young woman and she went outside the city. Oh, dear brethren, may we be attracted into an area where the Spirit

can have liberty with us to raise certain questions, but to allure and draw our hearts into a place where we can enjoy Christ without distraction!

I said David's longings began as a young man and entered into the house of God in Solomon's day. And here is a young woman. The history begins by her going outside the city and it ends as she is in the embrace of Isaac – union with Christ through the exercise of a young sister. Well, she went outside the city and that is where she comes into contact with this personage, and she calls him, "my lord". He is impressed by what he sees in her. The Spirit of God is attracted as He sees a young woman, a young brother, or old ones too, making some room outside the city, showing some interest in the ministry, having an interest in the testimony and how it is going, and the power to walk here in loyalty to Christ. The Spirit of God has great interest if He sees persons who have some of these interests in their heart and He is ready to bring out great things to lead us onward, to lead us inward, as I say, into the embrace, in type, of Christ.

And so he is attracted to her. He says, "Let me ... sip a little water out of thy pitcher". Have you anything for Him? We want so much out of things. There is a great divine supply, but have you anything for the Spirit? A little sip is all He asks. Oh she had a great wealth for him! She says, "Drink, my lord!" You just envisage it, a young woman there and here this personage asks for a sip, and how ready she is to pour out some of her exercises, some of her joys, not what is going on in the city, but she is there outside the city ready to serve him some refreshment for his heart. It gives him great liberty. I ask you to read the chapter in the light of what we are saying to find the liberty the Spirit has to bring out, His thought of Christ glorified.

I only wanted to say this, that He raises certain questions with her. He says, "Whose daughter art thou?" When He raises these questions, can you tell Him you belong to the household of faith? "Whose daughter art thou?" What an answer he gets! He sees that she belongs to the great divine family. She has not got a history of what is going on in the city. She belongs to the family. He

raises two questions, “Whose daughter art thou?” “Is there room ... for us to lodge?” He is raising these two questions with us today, I am sure. Do you know whom you belong to? Are you conscious that you are a son of God, that God in His mercy, in His love, purposed as we remarked already, even before the world’s foundation. But in time He has operated in redemption and in His love and in His Son to bring us into the divine family. Do you know whom you belong to? She moved in the full light of being of the household of faith. What a joy the Spirit had when he heard who she was. The chapter in another part says he was “astonished”, he wondered; he worshipped God too, through one young woman coming out with a sip of water and telling Him whom she belonged to.

She says there is room, plenty of room. She had room to hear what he was saying. She was attracted by what he had brought out. What wonderful things he brings out in this chapter, things of gold, and things of silver, clothing, what beautiful things he brings out. Another old hymn we used to sing:

Oh worldly pomp and glory,
Your charms are spread in vain;
I’ve heard a sweeter story
I’ve found a truer gain.

There is Rebecca, all the appeals of the city, what were they to her in the presence of that gold and silver and these articles of clothing? She says, I have room for these kinds of things. Have you room, dear brother, dear sister, for what the Spirit of God is bringing out today of Christ in glory? She had not yet seen Him, as we have not seen Him, but there is the Spirit of God telling us of the place that Christ has above.

There is a wonderful touch to the overcomer in one of the assemblies. It says, “To him that overcomes, to him will I give of the hidden manna”, Rev. 2:17. Very fine food, the Father’s appreciation of the manhood of Jesus! I think the Spirit brought something of that typically to Rebecca. That is what he did. He said, my master has

an only son and he has given all that he had to Isaac. Think of the Spirit bringing that out to the heart of this young woman, telling her of the Father's delight in Jesus. Have you made room for it, dear brother, dear sister? Are you prepared tonight to make room for it, to give yourself to what the Spirit is unfolding? Oh, there are voices, you may say, voices that may be legitimate. Let us wait ten days. That seemed a reasonable request, did it not? You say, Well, I will put it off until I am a little bit older. I will do my own thing today, but I mean to make room for the Spirit. "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts", Heb 3: 7. The ten days would have been a hardening of heart, and the devil is doing that: "harden not your hearts". May those tender affections as displayed in this young woman find an expression. She says there is room. Then the question is raised, "Wilt thou go with this man?" And she said, "I will go" (v 58). Oh, I can see, I can hear the servant's exclamation, as she said those words. I can tell you, dear brother or sister, there is joy in heaven, not only over repenting sinners, but there is joy in heaven over persons that are committed to going with the Spirit in the journey to Isaac.

You say, it is a long journey. How will we go? Mr Darby was faced with certain persons who were exercised about the truth. They said, we assent to what you are saying and it is very beautiful, but we have our livelihood. We have this and we have that. How can we do it? You know what he said? He wrote a hymn to them:

Rise, my soul, thy God directs thee;
Stranger hands no more impede:
Pass thou on His hand protects thee
Strength that has the captive freed.

That would be for us all tonight, 'Rise, my soul ...' The difficulties? There are camels there to meet them. Oh, what divine provision she comes in for as she says, "I will go". It says, "And Rebecca arose ... and ... rode upon the camels" (v 61). Where are the difficulties for the camels? The journey long.

Though thy way be long and dreary,

Eagle strength He'll still renew;
Garments fresh and foot unwearied
Tell how God hath brought thee through.

That is the operation of the camels, to conduct her into the embrace of the heavenly Man. Dear brethren, may I appeal to myself and to us all to make room for the Holy Spirit of God and not in fleshly resolve, but in dependence, conscious of our weakness and dependence on Christ and the Spirit, to say tonight, "I will go". Three most precious words that are ringing in heaven as souls commit themselves to the Spirit of God.

I close in speaking of Lydia, another young woman. Again the similarities are very striking. She was outside the city, a young woman who up until then perhaps had thought she was a lost, helpless case, and yet the work of God was going on in her soul, and there she is: she was outside "where it was the custom for prayer to be". That is something that makes room for divine operations, prayer. The prayer meeting is a meeting where Lydia would be. She was among the brethren. She went outside the city I suppose. Speaking in our day, she would pass the cathedrals that might be nearer to her. She would pass other things that might have attracted her, but she went her way. She made her way past these things, outside the city by the river. She wanted something living, you see. She did not want just to trade on stories or what was historical. She wanted something living. And God sees her making her way to the prayer meeting. God sees her seeking to be in that company where there is exercise working and He hears such prayers. He hears them, more ready than we are to receive the answer.

It is a very telling incident a few chapters earlier. The brethren were praying for Peter and there he is knocking at the door and he could not get in. The Lord is very ready to answer our prayers, but it speaks about persevering in our prayer. That does not just mean repeating it, but it means being exercised as to how God comes in with the answer. I feel tested myself that what we pray for is often forgotten, but there were these persons praying for Peter, and God was operating very quickly. Before the prayer

meeting was finished, He was working and they were slow to receive the results. That is not Lydia. Here she is at the prayer meeting, and there is Paul coming in. It says, “and we sat down and spoke to the women who had assembled”. There is a certain dignity about the prayer meeting, a certain dignity about the saints making room, in faith, for the Spirit of God and for the Lord and for God to work, and it says, “whose heart the Lord opened to attend to the things spoken by Paul”.

There is a great need today to attend to the things spoken by Paul. The Lord opened her heart. She already had those feelings and those desires and the Lord touched that heart to make room for Paul, to make room for the light of a man in heaven, and that settles the questions that may have perplexed her, that the Man who was crucified, the Man who had been rejected here is gone into heaven. Very fine word the way Peter speaks about Him: “who is at the right hand of God, gone into heaven, angels and authorities and powers being subjected to him”, 1 Pet 3: 22. Paul brought that light into this woman’s heart. The Man, the Saviour who had been rejected, there He is crowned with glory and honour. Well, she made room for the things spoken by Paul. They are put aside today. May our hearts be open “to attend to the things spoken by Paul”!

If David’s desires issued in the house of God with Solomon, if Rebecca’s desires issued in being in the embrace of Isaac, here a woman’s desires issued in the local assembly in Philippi, a young sister exercised to make room for Paul; and it made a fine assembly, the assembly of God in Philippi, where Paul was able to unfold some of these precious jewels about Christ, able to speak about the Man Christ Jesus with such liberty. May it be, dear brethren, through making room for Paul, our local assemblies are enriched and we are sustained, as making room of these divine things in the joy of our heavenly calling, for Christ’s Name’s sake.

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