

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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Contents

THE FALL AND RISING UP (2)

A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

THE FALL AND RISING UP (2)

Luke 10: 25-35

A.C.C. The Lord appears in glory and, as was said before, that was interrupted and there is a long period before it will be resumed.

There will be His kingdom in glory in a day to come. The transfiguration was interrupted by Peter but it will be resumed. But in the period in which the interruption runs on God is working out His great thoughts, that there might be a suitable companion for Christ.

"It is not good that Man should be alone", Gen. 2: 18. He was alone on the mount - God had to intervene and bring that about, to bring in adjustment - but it is not good for the Man to be alone. So in this long period between the interruption and the resumption in the world to come, God is securing a counterpart for Christ. We have had already the matter of how the blessed Spirit comes into that period in setting up things under him who is specially taken up, the Lord's elect vessel. We have seen how there were certain things set up and established.

This scripture would be like the period of church history where the fall takes place as depicted in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. But what comes out is the wonderful grace of Christ in recovery; then too the great opening up of what is here in the Spirit in view of a full recovery to the divine thoughts. "A certain man descended from Jerusalem". We have spoken of "a man in Jerusalem", but now here the man goes down. The question is, is there sufficient to recover him? There is not in the old dispensation, the old economy; there is no recovery there, but God has come in in sovereignty - that would be the Samaritan. God has intervened in sovereignty, taken up the man and brought him to the inn. I would like to concentrate on the inn because that is where the whole process of recovery to what was original is to take place. The man has been in Jerusalem but he is there no more and will never be taken back. He is not to be taken back to Jerusalem, but he has been there and knows all that belongs to Jerusalem. What goes on in the local meeting is in view of divine care and divine teaching; these two things are going on in the inn.

Then you get the woman in Mary; she is the counterpart to Anna. The word on the mount was "hear him", Luke 9: 35. So Mary sits at His feet to lose nothing of what He is saying; she will catch every word. I think Mary might yield something for us, beloved brethren, and what is available for us today, to catch every word that comes from Christ. You mentioned something this morning about this.

J.St. I was saying that we have two inns in Luke. This one is the place where we can be brought, where there is room for everything that is of Christ. There was no room in the first inn.

A.C.C. There is plenty in this one, but he is just staying overnight, as a traveller; he is on his way to heaven. That means he has a place for the night. Are we all going to heaven? Is that what we are heading for? Sometimes we do not look like that, do we?

B.D.F. The Samaritan is a contrast to the lawyer whose mind is operating without any affection; the good Samaritan moved in love and grace over against the mind that would be legal and bound up.

A.C.C. He wants to know about eternal life - and who does not? - and how is he going to get it? You can imagine the people that would come to him to make out their will. Over and over again this would take place, but nobody ever suggested to him the matter of bequeathing eternal life, that never came up! Every Jew would prize eternal life and the blessing of it. Well, where is it to be known, enjoyed? Not in Jerusalem; in the inn.

J.N.G. Would that emphasise that today everything is on unofficial lines? The Lord's answer to the lawyer was connected with love, was it not? And that is where love would be enjoyed.

A.C.C. Very good, that is just the thing - unofficial, not legal. Our minds seem to run in the direction of what is legal and official, but the Samaritan does not represent that. The priest and the Levite may, but not the Samaritan. It is totally divine sovereignty, God's grace seen in Christ; He has come in to recover. Do you not think it is interesting that this man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho?

What has he gone there for? He went down. A man in Jerusalem, now he is going down.

B.D.F. Does it link with the lawyer who wanted to justify himself?

A.C.C. Yes, that is a constant thing which you get over and over again, excuses and "he, desirous of justifying himself".

J.N.G. If we go down from Jerusalem and give up the truth and the heavenly level of Paul's ministry, have we fallen into the hands of robbers?

A.C.C. That is just where you land, into the hands of robbers.

J.C.F. The Samaritan was journeying; he had a purpose in mind. The Lord has had a purpose in mind, to secure us and bring us into a sphere of salvation which is in the assembly.

A.C.C. Do you think that the recovery is on the line of purpose? Was it only an accident?

J.C.F. There is no accident about anything the Lord does.

A.C.C. Yes, it was the direct line of purpose.

L.C.P. There is a glory about recovery. The younger son in Luke 15 was clothed in the best robe; he never had that before. It was the light of sonship and the glory of it.

A.C.C. It is the same here: Luke 10 has its own glory in recovery. The Samaritan journeyed. What comes in in the old thing, the old covenant, is by the way. That is what Galatians brings out. It does not set aside the great fact of divine purpose set out in Abraham and his seed; God holds to His purpose. Things might come in by the way, like the law, and the priest and the Levite who are representatives of the law. But they are only serving a certain end here to bring out their incapability of meeting the situation. It is not that they do not want to; the fact is that they cannot.

J.C.F. Is it not interesting that he is brought to the inn? That is the great point. The Lord gets us where He wants us; He has one standard only.

A.C.C. He has not two minds about His people; He has only one thing in mind for His people, that is the light of the assembly wrought out in the inn.

A.M.D. "Do thou likewise": would that imply that there was a system of help in mind, where everybody is helping each other?

A.C.C. That is what goes on really, the system continues and we are all at it, I hope. But what about this man going down and falling into the hands of robbers?

A.M.D. He was declining, going from Jerusalem to Jericho.

A.C.C. When you go forward to give thanks for the loaf in the morning, where are your feelings in regard to the breakdown, in regard of the loss? Think of the loss that has come in. It is not only that the Lord has lost Israel - that should affect us also in giving thanks - but think of the loss at the present time, the breakdown.

The man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho; our feelings ought to be touched.

A.M.D. When contemplating the loaf and appropriating each other are we thinking of those who are lost in that regard?

A.C.C. I think so; think of the loss to Christ! Can you make it up to Him without any pretension? One of the most difficult things in my mind is to sit down around those emblems and not to compete with anybody. Suppose there were twenty other groups in the city, can I sit there without any sense of competition in my mind and break bread?

A.M.D. We are thinking the best of each other, are we not?

A.C.C. Oh, always, yes.

J.St. The Lord went down; it is remarkable that it says that the Samaritan "came up to him". The Lord has gone down lower, has He not?

A.C.C. Yes. I think we ought to dwell a bit on the ruin but we are not to be occupied with it; there is the fall and rise; that is what we pointed out in the first meeting, the fall and the rise of many in Israel.

We are going to speak about the rising: but there is this matter of the ruin and we got away from it in our minds.

L.C.P. Nehemiah looked at the ruins in the night and it was a private matter; it was as though he would not project himself publicly in the matter (see Neh 2: 12-16).

A.C.C. And by night would mean that to get a proper survey he would have to come into close touch with it; he could not stand at a distance and view it, it being night. That is very good what you point out. We ought to feel the matter and feel it according to God.

A.M.D. The priest and the Levite were not feeling the matter, they passed by on the other side, left things and left the man to it.

A.C.C. Yes, but the fact is they could not help the man: "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh", Rom 8: 3. The man was half dead: what can the law do for a half dead man?

A.M.D. The law cannot do anything, only read out where persons have failed and quote the ten commandments and things like that.

A.C.C. Bring the legal man along there, the lawyer, what can he do? No, we should come to it beloved brethren that there is only one neighbour; Moses could not be a neighbour. The neighbour is the one who comes close, takes up the cause. David was a neighbour.

"Jehovah has rent the kingdom of Israel from thee today, and has given it to thy neighbour, who is better than thou", 1 Sam 15: 28.

There is nobody like Christ; He is the One who can show grace. We want to get alongside Him in connection with the ruin, the tremendous ruin, and assess things according to God. That is what a priest does and this is a priestly gospel. If a thing might only be a speck, a priest can assess its full result. A priest can tell what it will result in fully while as yet it is only a speck. You want to be able to assess things according to God.

A.V.M. In John 4 the Lord spoke of giving the woman living water; we may be able to point someone to that.

A.C.C. Well, that is something else too - He is the communicator of living water. Then in John 7: 38: "out of his belly shall flow rivers of

living water". That is more the thing flowing out to others.

G.R.W. You mentioned Revelation 2 & 3 where we have the Lord's own assessment of things. Is that a very precious thing to us at the present moment?

A.C.C. Yes, I think what you bring up as to the Lord's assessment is good and His saying "I know" seven times over. He knows, He knows the thorough extent of it, He knows the pressure, He knows all that is coming.

A.M.D. I think we ought to sit down like Mary and listen to His word.

A.C.C. Yes, that is something to be emulated. I hope we will get a touch of that before we finish.

B.D.F. Do you think we have perhaps got things back to front sometimes? We have thought about the good Samaritan but have not assessed the fact that this man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho; we have thought more about the Samaritan rather than the side of what the Lord felt as going up to where he was.

A.C.C. Yes, that is very good - came where he was, as was said. The priest and the Levite are going down the same way as the man; everybody is going the same way except Christ. He is going in the opposite direction. "A certain Samaritan journeying": that is divine purpose. God has set out to bring about recovery: Hezekiah says "Jehovah was purposed to save me", Isa 38: 20. Think of that! Think of the Samaritan and his purpose to save him! He is journeying: where is he journeying to? He is going to Jerusalem.

J.N.G. That would be a bit like Paul when the lad fell down from the third story, he went down and embraced him (see Acts 20: 9,10).

A.C.C. Yes, "enfolding him in his arms". He came to where he was. "Fell from the third story down to the bottom", it says, Paul was able to make that descent; he did not fall down, he went down - "descending fell upon him".

G.R.W. As to the neighbour and the relationships that should be there, I am thinking of Deuteronomy 15, the preciousness of brotherly relationships set out there for the children of Israel. They

were totally incapable of keeping them, but it is all reinstated now, is it not?

A.C.C. Very good, it all comes out in Christ, the One who has come in in grace and made a full reinstatement of everything. That is the principle to take them up on, not on a legal principle, not on the line of the law, as the lawyer would have said, but these are extended to us in grace. Let us enjoy them. But now the neighbour: that is a very challenging thing. Can we be neighbours? Is that the kind of thing that is proceeding? Now we know where it is not proceeding, where the idea of the neighbour is totally denied, the idea of grace is totally denied; the lawyer has continued and it is a discredit to the testimony that such a condition is in progress.

G.R.W. "*He* ... has broken down the middle wall of enclosure", Eph 2: 14. Christ has done it.

A.V.W. Would the Lord, in setting about the recovery of this man, have in mind the words He had already said in verse 20; "rejoice that your names are written in the heavens"? Would He bring him back to that?

A.C.C. That is very good; I think it really is from that elevation that the Samaritan moves - their names written in the heavens. How great that is! What a blessing to know that! It must be on the line of purpose.

A.M.D. The Lord, John records, "must needs pass through Samaria" (John 4: 4) and He saw a place where the fields were white unto harvest (v 35).

A.C.C. Yes, and what were the disciples doing?

A.M.D. They were leaving it to the Lord; He was the one who found this poor woman.

A.C.C. Well, they all went off shopping, every one of them: not even John said, I will stay with you.

A.M.D. The woman went to the men afterwards and they could say, as a result, "we believe, for we have heard him ourselves" (v 42).

A.C.C. She was the means of their going out to Him; they were able to say that afterwards, that she was the means. Twelve men went in and there they went from window to window, from shop to shop, and not a dog moved its tongue, nobody ever looked at them, most uninteresting. Ah! but in a moment one woman goes in, and they shut up their shops and out they go to see Him! One woman goes in; what is the difference? She had the living water!

B.D.F. It really should stir us up because, as our brother has said, our names are written in the heavens. Is that the good Samaritan come up to where we were? How burdened can we be in the present testimony? Are we sowing to the Spirit to start with? Can our hearts be led towards Christ as our living object?

A.C.C. Very good: there should be some shine about us, something vital about us like that woman, something we have taken on through the administration of divine grace to us. What is the recovery to be to an individual? My own personal part in it do I appreciate that? Do I appreciate the Neighbour and does my heart go out to Him? These are vital questions.

B.D.F. Say some more about the Neighbour.

A.C.C. I think that is what the Lord is. As I said, the legal side cannot be a neighbour; it must be the side of grace and mercy. These are the things that touch you and move you and bring about recovery. The man is half dead; there is nothing there for the law to appeal to. The law requires a whole man. There is only one whole Man and that was the Neighbour himself. He answered the law He magnified the law and made it honourable. He did not keep it for us: He removed it in His death. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to those that believe.

L.C.P. Is being "moved with compassion" something that is going to help us to be the neighbour?

A.C.C. That is verily true. You are affected yourself by the grace that has reached you in your utter need. But then transfer all this now to the breakdown - that is what we want to do, because it seems to me to be a picture of church history, the man going down falls into

the hands of robbers. Think of where the robbers are - great big churches and steeples: the spoils of the robbery are all seen there.

Then come the priest and the Levite, they are representatives; then the Samaritan - like Martin Luther, appeared on the horizon and others with him. It was God intervening in grace. Do you ever thank God for the Reformation and for the martyrs and those who laid down their lives, even for the truth of the Lord's supper? People have died for the truth of the Lord's supper.

L.C.P. Luther had certain light and he stood for that. He said I cannot commit my faith either to a Pope or to a Council. It is the principle of those two things, is it not?

A.C.C. And when he nailed those theses to the church door, what did he say? I can do no other and here I stand. What a committal! He was a man who appreciated the sovereignty of God's intervention. That is what the Samaritan represented - divine intervention - and we belong to that period. The dark ages are past and we belong to the period of light; we had not a great amount to begin with, but still a great deal in justification by faith - that was something!

L.C.P. Faith as a grain of mustard seed would remove a mountain (see Matt 17: 20).

A.C.C. Yes. Now the priest and the Levite have had their day, that is the idea; they should not be allowed to continue.

J.C.F. They were on the line of demand but the Samaritan brings in supply.

A.C.C. Yes, He has everything with Him.

J.St. I was thinking of that. You mentioned Titus where persons are exhorted to "adorn the teaching ... For the grace of God which carries with it salvation for all men has appeared, teaching us that, having denied impiety and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and justly, and piously in the present course of things, awaiting the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ," chap 2: 10-13.

A.C.C. He is coming again; that is what the Samaritan said: "I will render to thee on my coming back". The transfiguration is going to be resumed; that is what that passage in Titus leads up to. It will be wonderful when Christ will come out. He will not be alone; "It is not good that Man should be alone", Gen 2: 18. On the mount of transfiguration the Father intervened; He took away Moses and Elias and pronounced Christ. That is the beginning of everything; all must start with Christ. It was as if God would say, We will start over again. For two thousand years the intervention has continued, but He is going to resume the transfiguration, and when it is resumed we shall be with Him.

J.N.G. At that point it says "Jesus alone with themselves". They were looking for the assembly.

A.C.C. That is true: "with themselves".

A.V.W. The section in Titus goes on to say: "who gave himself for us, that he might purify to himself a peculiar people". Is that the end in view? The peculiarity is heavenly in character.

A.C.C. Yes, quite so.

T.O'C. You have mentioned the word 'purpose' several times and I was thinking of the purpose of God: "I will have mercy", Matt 9: 13. That is what the Samaritan was shewing here, and should we not take it on?

A.C.C. Very good. Where are we in respect of the representation of the recovery? We know what proceeds and what has proceeded, and what we all have put our hands to at some time or another.

Well, how are we now in respect of the mercy and the grace of which we ourselves have been the recipients? How is it in expression?

T.O'C. I believe it is something that we should be thanking God for every day, the mercy shown to us and how we experience it.

A.C.C. I think, if we are anything, we should be expressive of what has come to us ourselves initially, and as we are in respect of the recovery in which we are. It has been a divine intervention. To think

that I should have part in that, and too that it should be brought up to date!

J.N.G. As to written ministry, as it comes into our hands, do you think we distribute that enough or do we hold on to it ourselves and forget our brethren around us?

A.C.C. "Go, and do thou likewise" - disseminate it as much as possible. What the Lord gives He gives for all; there is not one person on the earth who belongs to Him to whom He has not in mind to give the ministry - everybody.

R.F. Would this neighbour be like a shepherd? He helped this person, he was moved with compassion.

A.V.W. We, and many, have failed in the expression of "our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep", Heb 13: 20.

A.C.C. Yes. He is the great Shepherd. What feelings He has! What compassions He can show! Think of the assets, all liquid: do not have your assets frozen. Are your assets all frozen?

J.N.G. I think that is fine, to get away from the rigid side of things in the lawyer so that you are ready for emergencies. There is no limit to the resources in the Spirit, is there?

A.C.C. The lawyer keeps everything on the file, all the records, all the convictions. Think of the Samaritan, liquid assets - oil and wine, his own beast, the power that carried him. Now it carries the man. Where did he take him? To the inn. I think we have been too much formed by the legal principle; it has caught hold of us more than we realise.

J.N.G. Thinking over it generally, the legal principle would make much of yourself instead of Christ.

A.C.C. It gives me a certain standing but not before God. Even Martin Luther understood that.

B.D.F. With a questionable motive the lawyer "stood up", but could we stand up in a positive way in relation to the glad tidings, being expanded in our speakings to men of Christ and affected by the spirit

of the Samaritan in our feelings to men and even children in the world?

K.L.C. Mercy has been referred to; do you think that every movement on this downward line would be because I have lost a sense of mercy? Every movement towards the world would indicate a loss of this in my soul?

A.C.C. We ought to be sustained and kept in a sense of His mercy towards us. I think all the time we will head towards the local meeting. Oil and wine!

B.D.F. We should have plenty of that in our local meeting.

A.C.C. I am wondering if it is on the way to the local meeting, because what you find in the local meeting is "Take care of him".

J.C.F. The Samaritan has already used this, he has had it with him personally; so we need to be well supplied with it also.

A.C.C. Yes. I think that is the effect of the glad tidings, God in grace approaching us in Christ; the oil and the wine comes in. There is ministration towards us to meet the wounds; there is far more than that, but first of all the wounds have to be bound up. Always have plenty of bandages with you; there are a lot of wounds, dear brethren, hearts torn asunder in various ways; a lot of wounds! Keep plenty of bandages, plenty of balm in Gilead.

J.N.G. One of the names of the Holy Spirit is the Comforter. There is great need of comfort amongst the saints at the present time.

A.C.C. I am glad you mention that. It is a service He renders to which we have not sufficiently paid attention. We might go immediately to what the Lord said: "another Comforter ... the Spirit of truth" (John 14: 16) and we fasten on the Spirit of truth; but he is another Comforter. We want to have some series of meetings on the Comforter the Spirit.

J.N.G. That would help us to bind up the wounds, bring us nearer to one another, would it not?

A.C.C. "The assemblies ... were increased through the comfort of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9: 31); the comfort of the Spirit, He is a Comforter, He is bringing in comfort.

A.M.D. Would the oil and the wine bring in what would soothe and stimulate?

A.C.C. Yes, that is what I think, but it also involves the service of the Spirit the gift of the Spirit.

A.V.W. The Samaritan leaves the man in charge of the innkeeper, giving him money, and instructs him to take care of him. It is a very protected place, and activity going on all the time for the man's help and healing.

A.C.C. That is true. He took care of him he spent the night with the man. Do we prove that dear brethren? Do we prove that in the assembly? Do we prove the presence of Christ spending the night and taking care of us? He did not rush away, he did not throw the man in the inn and go off immediately; he spent the night with him.

Now in this night of testimony do we know the Lord's presence as taking care of us personally in the night?

J.St.. Could something more be said about the oil and the wine?

A.C.C. Yes, it is peace and joy in believing, Rom 15: 13. That comes by the power of the Holy Spirit. Now these things are ministered to us; they come by way of the glad tidings, they have been given to us in God's grace by the word of the glad tidings.

J.St. So as getting the gain of our wounds being bound up it leads on to what it says in one place: "making his face shine with oil" Ps 14: 15. As you said, it is not just in the meeting, but on the way to the meeting. Is there something of a testimony? There is also "wine which gladdeneth the heart of man".

A.C.C. I think that is the way we have been apprehended and what we have been taken up for, not only relieved, and not only blessed by way of the glad tidings; there is more than that. But first of all there must be all that comes in in the way of grace towards us and mercy. Then there is the beast, his own beast, that is wonderful,

what grace! Look at that sight, the man lifted up and tenderly put on the beast, and there is the Samaritan walking on the road. The same power that supported Christ here is brought in for our support, the power of the Holy Spirit, the oil and the wine, the bandages and the beast: it all speaks of the Holy Spirit. Then we come to this matter of "take care of him"; we have the Lord's personal care. We could say a few things about that before we go on to the divine teaching which really was what one had in mind in reading this passage, that is, to get at this matter of the two denarii.

J.N.G. I was hoping you would come to that, but before you do, "his own beast" is a lovely expression, a very personal expression. Then you referred to the Lord's personal care in the inn. But this expression "his own" comes in in connection with the Lord as to certain things - His own blood and His own Son, but "his own beast" is very affecting.

A.C.C. Very, very touching, "his own beast". It is what supported Him here, is it not! The same power that supported Him is available to support us. He will carry you to one place only. Those camels that set out from Mesopotamia, where did they head for? Mamre. That was a wonderful journey from Mesopotamia to Mamre; it is like Hebrews - the 'race' in Hebrews is from earth to heaven. You do not stop till you land in heaven. So those camels went from Mesopotamia to Mamre. This beast goes only to the local meeting, it does not go to the seminar, no, nowhere like that.

A.V.W. We have no wish to be over-occupied with the negative, but do we see enough how we may get into this state? The robbers: can we be over-occupied with our circumstances and the material side of things and diverted from "peace and joy in believing" - this equipped condition, whereby we can help ourselves and one another?

A.C.C. I think it is important that we should be buoyant. It is very effective to be buoyant and to know what it is to be somewhat in the power supporting us above our circumstances. That all comes into the matter of the beast, that you are supported above circumstances here by the power. But the Lord's care is not known anywhere else

except in the inn. As I said, the man left Jerusalem and went back there no more. Everything is held now in faith and by the Spirit, and that is where we prove the Lord's personal care. Think of Him in the night, how He would stay awake and look after the man: "Jehovah will sustain him upon the bed of languishing: thou turnest all his bed in his sickness", Ps 41: 3. Think of the divine care that is to be experienced, the personal care of Christ. It comes mediately, it comes through one and another, but it is His personal care. It is like the feet washing in John 13. We wash one another's feet but it is His own doing, He does it, but He uses one and another to do it. Now this is a charge to the innkeeper. He appears on the morrow; the Samaritan has gone away but the innkeeper appears.

Then there is the two denarii; this is where the divine teaching comes in. This is to bring the man back to full stature and full status as to what Jerusalem represents, "a man in Jerusalem". That position will not be recovered publicly but these two denarii are left in view of a full reinstatement through what is proper to faith regarding Paul's ministry. There is something else; the Samaritan left room for something else - "whatsoever thou shalt expend more". The two denarii are calculated to bring the man back to full reinstatement.

The end is not merely in the recuperation, but divine teaching. All this came up in Mr Taylor's ministry as to the system of local assemblies, and that had in view the establishing of the saints in the gain of Paul's ministry. Even though the breakdown has come in as we see here, that continues.

G.R.W. "Whatsoever thou shalt expend more": does that refer to the Holy Spirit's own personal care above what is demanded of Him?

A.C.C. I think the Spirit has a free hand. We need John as well as Paul. Room is left for John in these days when things are needing to be brought to life. For after all, while you may have Paul and the use of the two denarii to bring about a full recovery into the light that is proper to the position, you need the vital principle of life and John supplies that. I think "whatsoever thou shalt expend more" leaves room for John. You cannot do without John.

J.N.G. It seems to me that the denarii are the means the Lord has used in the recovery to bring, these things about; the excess thing in John's ministry is the life.

A.C.C. We spoke this week about the two things that were devoted in Leviticus 27; anything that was devoted was not to be ransomed, it had to be put to death. If a man devoted something he could not take it back, it had to go the full way of death. The Lord had two devoted things, they were his own - My body and My blood. They were His own were never under forfeit, and I think that comes out at the Lord's supper. That in itself forms a great asset in regard of divine teaching. You come and sit down; what is being done to you as you sit round those emblems and absorb something of the love of Christ that is expressed in them?

A.M.D. The next thing the wounded man would begin to see was that the Lord was bringing other people to the inn, even the ones that had maltreated him.

J.N.G. Here we are.

A.C.C. Yes, He went after them too. He said I am going to get the robbers. He got one at the cross. He overtook them at the cross. That is grace, whether robbed or robbers. He will get them all. That is divine grace. A robber was the last to get blessing. There were lepers, people with the palsy, and all sorts were healed in the life of Christ, but never a robber until you come to the cross. Now that means something.

K.L.C. So if a thief or a robber gets right with the Lord there is room in the inn for him.

A.C.C. Yes, and as our brother says; Here we are. We all have robbed God.

B.D.F. There is a touching reference in Malachi: "I Jehovah change not, and ye, sons of Jacob, are not consumed", chap 3: 6.

A.C.C. I have thought about the denarii too as to the two emblems but do you not think that to acquire a full recovery to what is proper to assembly status and function you need the ministry of the glad

tidings and the ministry of the mystery? Do you think that a person set up in the gain of Paul's glad tidings and somewhat in the gain of the mystery is back to "a man in Jerusalem"?

J.N.G. I have thought of that as to the ministry of the glad tidings and the ministry of the assembly. That is what is necessary really for a full recovery.

A.C.C. Do you not think there is great opportunity in our meetings for the bringing forward of these two great items and the distinct ministries in Colossians? All have a distinct place, and bringing that forward in the local meetings is bound to establish in the full light that belongs to the assembly.

J.N.G. So there is no lowering of the standard in any way, is there? Though we are at the end of the dispensation and things publicly are scattered, there is no lack because of the presence of the Spirit.

A.C.C. That is excellent. In the inn and on our way passing through, these most wonderful things are in progress, and such glorious things are available. We keep that before us and I think we get some feeling as to what is proper to the assembly,

J.C.F. Why is the light of the assembly, as we have been taught, the next sovereign act to new birth?

A.C.C. Explain that to me.

J.C.F. Not every believer has been granted the light of the assembly.

A.C.C. I think there must be some point of responsibility that they are failing in if they do not have it, because I cannot think of God giving light to some regarding the assembly and not to others, without there being some point where they have failed to apprehend God's mind.

J.C.F. This is one of the things that one of our leaders taught.

A.C.C. I do not know whom you might be quoting and I would not want to disagree with him, or you either, but I cannot think that even in the sovereignty of God He purposely hides light from anybody

regarding the assembly. His mind about the assembly is the same for every person that belongs to the assembly. I cannot think of Him withholding something from a person who belongs to the assembly.

In the progress of things the thing is there. Take the truth of the assembly as the body or the house, the thing was there before the light came out. A person having the Spirit belongs to the assembly; he may not have the light about it but it is God's mind for all believers. Do you agree with this?

J.N.G. I think the great challenge to us is, are we interested enough to follow up the truth and seek the understanding of God's mind.

A.C.C. If you find somebody and you have a feeling of affinity with them that they are the Lord's, give them some light regarding the assembly.

J.N.G. Do you not think that, if we are expressive of that light, persons will begin to enquire. They will say, You have something that I have not.

A.C.C. The truth of the assembly is God's mind for everyone who belongs to the assembly.

J.St. The Lord would not settle for anything less than the full thing you have been speaking of; likewise we do not want to settle for less. There is nothing inferior in what the Lord would provide for us.

A.C.C. He desires all men to be saved: that is God in His broad outlook. Then I think light regarding His mind would be the same to everybody who belongs to the assembly.

J.N.G. What you have quoted needs to be followed through. He would have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.

T.O'C. We need to give place to the Spirit: "he shall guide you into all the truth", John 16: 13. That is where the light comes from.

A.C.C. Yes, that would be true.

A.M.D. Would that agree with Gal 6: 1: "Brethren, if even a man be taken in some fault, ye who are spiritual restore (or mend) such a

one in a spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted"?

A.C.C. Yes, there is plenty to do in restoration. Well, I do not want to leave our brother with any feeling that I am trying to make him out wrong. This is a question of how light comes to us and what God has in His mind for everyone who belongs to the assembly. When the Reformation came, who was that intended for? When the truth of the assembly was brought out in 1830, who was that for?

L.C.P. For every believer.

A.C.C. For every believer, and God has nothing less in His mind than that. So it must be that if someone does not possess it at some point a person failed. I do not see that you can put the responsibility at God's door. Light is for everybody. "God spoke that out of darkness light should shine", 2 Cor 4: 6. That was not only for a few people on earth, that was for everybody.

L.C.P. Did everybody know it? That is the point; are we responsible for something we do not know? Did everybody know about the recovery? The responsibility is on me to tell others what the truth is.

A.C.C. Yes, that would be true, we are certainly responsible to make that known, but then anyone being the subject of divine work and who has also received the Spirit would have feeling and instincts reaching out to find others. John's epistle would show that.

BENDIGO

21 March 1987

KEY TO INITIALS

A.C.Craig, Airdrie; A.M.Davidson, Melbourne; K.L.Clark, Stawell;
B.D.Fooks, Melbourne; R.Fooks, Melbourne; J.C.French,
Melbourne; J.N.Grace, Melbourne; T.O'Connor, Melbourne;
L.C.Pittock, Ballarat; J.Stenhouse, Bathurst; A.V.Way, Melbourne;
G.R.Wellington, Melbourne

A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

J.S.Gray

2 Samuel 11: 9-11; 18: 6-13; 19: 24-30

I just had the impression, beloved brethren, as to whether these three persons, one nameless, might present to us features of the kingly priesthood, the royal priesthood, for our encouragement. This section of Scripture is a dark one so far as king David is concerned, the one in the place of responsibility; but in those circumstances these persons are shining. I speak to myself as well as to my brethren, but the Spirit of God would stimulate us as to whether we can shine when conditions are dark publicly. I think that the secret of it is whether Christ is in our hearts, whether He means more to us than other things or other persons, whether we determine things by where Christ is and what He is thought of. So David does not shine well here, but while David in responsibility is not doing as he should, these persons shine; they continue to shine. They are not influenced adversely when conditions go wrong with those in responsibility.

They continue because their hearts are right. If we apply it to our own time they are in principle governed by God's thoughts as to Christ, God's word.

I was thinking as to Urijah that he accepts self-sacrifice. Despite having permission from David to go to his house, he says, No, it is not the time for it; and he sacrifices self in view of committal to the conditions as they are in the testimony at the present moment. It is an attractive thing for us beloved to think about. Of course we know that he died for it. How humbling that David should be in this position! But the lesson that I thought might help us is to see how God has someone in reserve who will shine because he is faithful to the light that he has. And Urijah is very definite. That is one feature about these persons, that there is, you might say, a cutting definiteness about the things that they say, which shows that they are convinced about the ground they take. Urijah's presentation of the matter is as if to say, Why should you doubt that the thing I am

doing is right? He states what the facts are as to the public conditions, and then he says "shall I then go into my house, to eat and to drink" and so on, as if to say that he was convinced that no such thought should suggest itself to a rightminded person. And he stands by it despite the responsible person being not in accord with God's mind for the present moment. It seems to me that that is a feature of the royal priesthood as Peter speaks about it: "that ye might set forth the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness to his wonderful light", 1 Pet 2: 9.

Now this man in chapter 18 is nameless. It is perhaps a little difficult to understand the detail of this whole section. I do not go into it all but there is the aspect that Absalom was usurper and ought to die; it has been pointed out that this particular part shows that God was dealing with the matter. God had in hand how Absalom was to be dealt with. David had given commandment which you might say was not exactly right, because Absalom deserved to die; but David had said something and this man was true to it. Joab had changed his ground; formerly he was wanting to bring Absalom back, but now he has changed his ground and he is all out to have Absalom slain, and to do it in his own way. But this man says "Though I should receive a thousand silver pieces in my hand, yet would I not put forth my hand against the king's son". And why was that? Because there was a word from the king and he stands by it. There are other aspects of this section, but it seems to me that that feature is a beautiful one that there is a man prepared to keep to the king's word. He stands in a public circumstance of confusion to a large degree, when the forest devoured more than the sword devoured - public conditions of extreme sorrow and loss of life. How we sorrow at the loss of those that are not enjoying the present blessing which the Lord is giving us! But the thing for us in conditions of extreme public sorrow, beloved, is to keep to the king's word, keep to what the Lord's commandment is, and His word. We should know it and keep to it. As I say, there are other things about this section, including the fact that Absalom must die, but God has the matter in hand; and this man shines, and remains nameless in shining, by standing firmly,

with conviction, by the king's word. He gives, along with his statement, a challenge to Joab, it seems to me, that this word that he is standing by was given in Joab's own presence - Why are you not standing by the king's word, Joab? You might justifiably say that the reason for that was that Joab was governed, not by the king's word, but by personal consideration, by his own ambition in order to be perhaps, might we say, the one that finally dealt with this usurper.

But what is the king's word, beloved? And here is an obscure man who is prepared to stand by it. Well, that in itself is a precious feature which I think should be attractive to us, that, whatever the difficulties may be, there are principles and there is the Lord's word.

Beloved, how important and precious and valuable it is that we should stand by that!

Here is another man, Mephibosheth, who, in all the time the king has been absent, has not considered for himself at all. He has considered that he ought to act in mourning because of the absence of David, and now here he comes amongst those who meet the king on his return in view of entering into Jerusalem, coming over the Jordan on his return. I think that we have been instructed that David is not fully right in his judgment of Mephibosheth in this section, but Mephibosheth shines by simply standing by what he is convicted is right. He is standing true to his convictions as to the conduct that is fitting in the absence of Christ typically. He does not defend himself in the final part where David suggests that he is speaking rather much about his matters: "Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land. And Mephibosheth said to the king, Let him even take all, since my lord the king is come again in peace to his own house". What a beautiful thing that is, that one should be prepared to give up anything, legitimate or otherwise, because his heart is governed the much more by the fact that the one he loves, the one he has been faithful to, is returning into his own place. As I say, we sorrow greatly at the fact that many brethren whom we have known and loved are missing practically the value of what in principle in this provisional time involves the return of the Lord Jesus into His own rights. We would

seek to make increasing room for the Lord Jesus personally amongst us. Mephibosheth shines, and is present, lame though he be, on the return of the absent king. One would desire that these precious features of committal and faithfulness to Christ, which I think these persons represent, faithfulness in the absence of the Lord Jesus in our case may mar us more. Although Mephibosheth was deceived, and slandered, as he I think rightly says that he had been, yet, though he brings these things forward, he shines in allowing the possessions to go; and whatever David's decision about them was, whether against him or not, he allows them to go on the ground that his heart is committed to the fact that David has returned to his true place.

May increasingly the free place of the Lord Jesus in the circle of His own be what governs us, beloved brethren. The public situation is one of sorrow, the sorrow of so many lost, and the shame of Christ rejected publicly, but may these things govern us increasingly so that we might come out in these features that are so beautiful to the eye of heaven in the present time.

LONDON

5 January 1988

I am very sorry that, on account of his recent illness, it has been necessary to suspend the articles which Mr.Evershed has contributed to this periodical for the past fifteen years.

E.C.B.