



Bow to the King

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Table of Contents

Preface.....	3
Introduction.....	5
1 Pictures of Jesus.....	7
2 Sovereign.....	10
4 My Brother.....	15
5 Is He Reigning Now?.....	18
6 Patience.....	20
7 The Husband waits.....	22
8 Working by the Light of the Throne.....	24

Preface

The Christian Healing Ministry is full to the brim with awkward questions like 'why hasn't God healed so-and-so?' In fact, the whole methodology and theology of western Christian healing prayer and ministry is based on one fundamental thought, 'how can we best get God to do something for us?' As we severally begin to come up with different ideas on this vexed question, so the church develops various styles of approach, from the purely liturgical to counselling to the sacramental to deliverance based ministry and so on.

For some years, though, the Order of Jacob's Well has set out to take us back to the Bible on such issues, so that ordinary Christians can view all that happens in a light more focused on what is going on in the heavenly realms. And it has been a question of refocusing on life from a Bible viewpoint. And that's very different!

Recently I went crab fishing with my son and my seven year old grandson. The trip was highly successful and we were determined to carry on with it the following morning. But the tide was out; no tide, no crabs!

His father tried to explain the concept of 'tide' by telling a disappointed young man that the water had all gone back into the sea. He thought about it a while and replied, "No, Daddy, you're wrong. The water hasn't gone away, but the beach has just got a lot bigger!"

Sweet though his response might have been, it lightly serves to illustrate our need to rethink things outside the box, from the bottom up, from the biblical evidence.

Much study, meditation and prayer has led us to the firmest of understandings that we do not have to persuade God to do anything at all in the way of healing the sick and the injured. If we look at him while focusing on our own needs, as western Christianity tends to do, we often see what looks like failure in prayer. If, however, we become God-focused, and view his healing work from a completely different perspective than our own needs, in other words through the aspect of the cross, then we begin again to lead a life lost in wonder, love and praise.

So I hope it will be of some help to refocus us on the King and what he's up to up there, as well as down here! To do this I am writing some short pieces I've called 'Bow to the King' which I hope will serve you. The title given to each

section is:

Preface (which you've just read)

Introduction

1 Pictures of Jesus

2 Sovereign

3 His Name

4 My Brother

5 Is He Reigning Now?

6 Patience

7 The Husband waits

8 Working by the Light of the Throne

I hope and pray these notes will give you much to ponder on, much to wonder at and a great help to set your prayers in the context of God and his purposes for us all.

Every blessing

Mike

Introduction

It's many years ago now that I first met up with Jamie, the younger brother of a school friend of mine. Jamie was very young, then, just entering his teens. And he was quite taken with the idea of becoming a medical doctor when he 'grew up'.

In those days he had been feeding this ambition himself, avidly reading every book he could find on the exploits of medics through all those twentieth century scrapes and trouble spots that plague the world. He studied every television and film show that approached the subject, every radio and television show from comedy to high drama.

And, in the doing, he picked up bits and pieces of medical knowledge which he felt, as we do at that tender age with every new piece of learning, should be given away to anyone and everyone to the point of their smiling exasperation!

But for every ten people he met with a medical condition, only one ever took his advice seriously and improved. There was never any evidence to show that the other nine were improving as a direct result of his amateur attempts at medical advice, his burgeoning ministry. In other words, his medical work, such as it was, was very unrewarding for his patients!

I remember being a guest for afternoon tea at their family home one Saturday. We discussed Jamie's progress and listened to him, yet again, intensely telling us how important this work was and his worries about it all. His medical life, he felt, was rapidly approaching decision time.

His failure rate was abysmal, he freely and honestly acknowledged, and the question was this; what should he do about it?

Two options came immediately to mind. Either he could stop wasting time with an ineffectual way of helping or he could set out to get the necessary school exam passes and offer himself to Medical School for professional training.

Unsurprisingly he opted for the latter course and, many years later, I found him in General Practice in the community, dispensing years of experience to the local sufferers. Of course his success rate was something far in excess of anything it would ever have been as an amateur schoolboy. But was he able

to solve every problem?

“No,” he told me, “in fact our graveyards are full of people disappointed by the medical profession! But what I had to do was obvious now, in hindsight. Either I had to focus on what I can or can’t do, or I could refocus on what I could learn.”

And so it was that, as he learned, as he studied, as he grew in experience, as he ‘grew up’, so it was that increasing numbers of sufferers were able to receive the benefits of his ministry as a doctor.

“So when it doesn’t work,” I asked him, “when somebody dies, do you feel like giving it all up, because you don’t understand what happened, what might have gone wrong? So many ministers want me to tell them what to say when it goes wrong!”

“Good heavens, no!” he exclaimed. “Where would all the others be if I did that? No, I just have to go back to the books, and maybe talk to people who know more than I do, and go on learning. I never want to give up, I just want to learn more whenever I need to.”

This continuous act of refocus is vital to kingdom ministry, too. Satan’s most successful battle in Eden was to persuade Adam and Eve to become self-focused, as distinct from being God-focused which is how they had started out in life. Church and world today are crammed full of the self-focused. The church’s healing ministry is full of the self-focused, both ministers and supplicants. Supplicants, by and large, have little burning desire to listen to a teacher proclaiming the glories of the kingdom and of the King. They just want him or her to get on with the praying.

It’s my experience today that the mass of supplicants seem to see God as if he is some sort of free health service, a one-armed Bandit in a Las Vegas gambling hotel. Find the right teacher they believe, the one who knows how to pull the lever most successfully, and go for it! This is self-focused.

My experience then tells me that most practitioners in healing ministry are much the same, learning techniques, be they counselling or liturgical, and concerning themselves with what they perceive as being the two major problems, what to say to the supplicant who doesn’t receive any healing and justifying lack of results with pseudo spiritual second guessing.

To watch an effective ministry grow and grow over time, we need to refocus. Whether we are ministers or supplicants, we need to refocus away from

ourselves and onto God much more.
We need to see the King. Let's go find him!

1 Pictures of Jesus

I have been reading mark 9 again on the question of prayer.

"After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer." (NIV)

Some other translations have 'prayer and fasting'.

I am not for one moment suggesting that all sick folk are demonised, heaven forbid! But there is a general point here worth making about effective kingdom healing. The last word here, 'prayer', is most interesting.

There are a number of words for 'Prayer' in the Greek and this is a very particular one. The Greek word used here comes from a putting together of two other Greek words: The second one is the word for prayer which is normally understood by Christians, that is something like, "Oh God, please.....Amen" and its derivatives. There's nothing wrong with that.

But the first part of the Greek word here is a very strong word for closeness. It means to haul in tight to you.

The two words are then put together and are used here in a way we have not been properly explaining to each other, out of our own ignorance. They are a very strong hauling close of the kingdom, or of the king, in order to achieve a kingdom work.

How do I do that? The answer is not in the words used, it lies in worship and thanksgiving and meditation.

What picture should we meditate on? I enjoy the scene at the beginning of Revelation where the Jesus of today appears to John. The emphasis of the picture painted is that this is of the Jesus of today. This is how he is, now. Worth reading again!

It shows him with fire, like the sun, Jesus always being seen throughout the whole Bible in conjunction with fire. It shows him standing quietly among the

lamp stands holding the spirits of the church in his hand. The lamp stands are the churches around us today.

Two things always strike me: these are lamp stands, not lamps, which are not lit. They are out. They do not serve him as they are not alight. But he holds in his hand the spirits of the churches so he could light them if he wanted to.

But he himself is the light. The scene is a great one of patience. As he waits for us.

I like to meditate on the fact that this is Jesus today.

Secondly, he did not appear to John because John knew some trick to invite him to the island. He was there all the time. What has happened is that, through thanksgiving and worship and meditation, John has opened himself up to seeing something which was right up close behind him all along.

And it is thus with the kingdom of God. It is here right alongside us and right alongside the lady who longs to be healed. We must strongly indulge in 'prayer' as the Greek word has it in Mark 9 above. When we give thanks and worship and meditate on the king and his kingdom and the cross and all the rest that we do, we should meditate on his nearness, knowing all that we do about his true character, and hold a picture of him in our minds of how he is today.

We often use, in teaching kingdom dynamics, the analogy of the car aerial and its effect. When a supplicant's aerial of faith expectancy rises it has exactly the same effect as opening a door in that person to allow the kingdom into whatever part needs it. I am suggesting that mediation and worship and thanksgiving should put in the minister's mind a picture of Christ today, the only reliable one I know being the one in Revelation. And here it is:

"I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea." I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In

his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

"Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches."

Revelation 1:9 – 20 (NIV)

Our sovereign waits patiently for us among the churches. Is he truly filled with power and authority?

2 Sovereign

Some of the countries we live in are actively ruled by Kings and Queens, some by Presidents, some find such people to be active forces in our lives and some of us find these titles to be mere words with a degree of irrelevance to everyday government. I don't mean what I say now in any vague or far-fetched meaning, but, in the plain common-sense use of the word, Christ is Sovereign.

Being sovereign, in our context, is not only to be in a position where there is complete power, but being in a place, as well, to exercise that power fully and at will.

And when our crucified Lord Jesus ascended that day from the Mount of Olives on the cloud rising into the sightless sky,, right in front of the astonished disciples, , He was received in that other world by the Father. There he was lifted up into the place of highest honour and greatest power. He sat down at the right hand of the Father.

He had known very well that his enthronement was going to happen. On the night of his trial, breathing in air that was bitter thick with hate, he had quietly told the Jewish rulers that this would happen, which statement in itself brought this weight of hate down on his head. But enthronement was bound to happen; and now his unwavering trust in his Father had its sweet reward, for him and for all of us.

The Holy Spirit poured out on the day of Pentecost, the birthday of the Church, was the gift of the enthroned King Jesus. The rushing sound of wind that filled the house; the plainly seen tongues of fire; the boldness with which the disciples talked to the crowds of foreign Jews about God's mighty power; the most extraordinary witnessing that they did about the crucified Jesus in the very same city that hounded him to death; all those completely convinced crowds freely announcing their belief in the despised Jesus and putting their own lives in jeopardy in the doing; that rather rare unselfishness being displayed even in money matters; and the grace of spirit that marked, not only the inner circle, but these greatly increased crowds; this is all saying one signal thing of staggering moment, Christ is crowned King!

The coming of the Holy Spirit was the act of the enthroned King. And what's more, every touch of the Holy Spirit's presence in our hearts, the quiet assurance, the sweet peace, the drawing of our souls away to prayer, our

hunger for God's Word, our longing for inner purity, our passion to please this amazing God of ours, our desire to see other people saved, Everyone of these give-away marks of the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives, all tell us in unmistakable language, that Christ is on the throne.

That's because this marvellous Spirit within is the gift of the crowned Christ. When Jesus went up from the earth, holding prisoner the prison of suffering and death to which he had yielded with such great strength, he received gifts, coronation gifts. The Father gave him the disposal and control of everything.

But who, when I think about it, was the real recipient of these gifts? Christ has received these gifts with his great out-reaching love on behalf of all of us, his blood brothers and sisters. They are ours, too.

He soon gave to those of us who are his trusting disciples, the all-inclusive gift from this treasure, the Holy Spirit. And so it was that God came again to dwell with us as originally planned in Eden

and so it is that this wonderful Presence inside tells me, merely by being there, that Christ
Is King.

This musical and heavenly chord is made into a celebration chorus by the writers of the New Testament. Luke's simple narrative sounds the chord four times. Paul's writings swells it out with a joyful fullness that seems to be growing in volume and depth as his increasing imprisonment shuts out more and more of the everyday, and centres his gaze on Jesus, "far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named," with "all things in subjection under His feet."

Peter, John's special friend and working partner, makes this note blend with the minor chord of suffering for Christ's sake. The Christian Hebrew who wrote so wonderfully to his fellow-countrymen about the immense superiority of Jesus, and yet so modestly withheld his own name, strikes this note no less than five times with a very clear and a strong hand. He tells us that while the whole plan has not yet fully worked itself out as it will do one day, yet we can see the Jesus who tasted death for all of us, crowned with glory and honour as part of the plan which he carried out by going himself through the extreme suffering of death.

And then our Lord Jesus Himself, talking to Patmos John, the man who was his bosom companion on earth, keeps as His last gentle plea to us the need

to live the overcoming life. “To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”

So we can define just what being a King really means. Jesus was received in the upper world, exalted, glorified, made to sit down at the Father's right hand, put far above all rule and authority, with a name greater in the wholeness of its power than any other name, and with everything put in absolute subjection under His feet.

What an amazing thought it has been to me to contrast the two faces of that glory cloud into which he ascended from the mount of Olives. What could have been seen from the surface looking down, and what could we have seen lying on our backs on the top of that cloud looking up!

Looking down we would have been watching a cross, a Man hanging there with a breaking body and a breaking heart, pouting priests, deserting disciples, jeering crowds, sneering soldiers, weeping women, heart-broken friends, a cave tomb sealed up by Rome, and the blackest of nights settling down over all of it.

But lying on our backs and spiritually looking upwards we would have seen a great sunburst of the upper glory, countless angels singing songs of worship, the wonderful winged cherubim, the redeemed hosts from Eden days onwards, everyone reverently bowing and exultantly singing, the green-rainbow-circled throne, the Father's face, once hidden but never again, the _shared_ seat on the Father's throne,--what a contrast between the two!

And here is our King! Crucified below –crowned above. Crucified on our earth, one of the universe's smaller planets, and then found on the throne of an entire universe full of planets! From the deepest depth to the highest height; from hate at its worst to Love at its best; from self-emptying love poured out for us on the cross to love enthroned for the same men and women; love triumphant all the way from cross to throne. What a contrast! What a special coronation! What a welcome home to a throne!

3 His Name.

I love to remember, of course, that everything we are thinking about so far revolves around the word Christ and that this word means 'the Crowned One'. We sometimes get so used to a word, especially in religious things, that it's easy to forget what it really means. We have been using the word Christ so generally for so many centuries, as if it were someone's name, that we forget that originally it was a title, and not a name at all! To this day it remains a title although the word is still used chiefly as a name.

I sense that someday the 'title' meaning will take over the 'name' meaning again. We may never stop thinking of it as a name, but I believe from my reading of Revelation that events will soon make the 'title' meaning so big that it'll completely overshadow how we think of it.

It helps me in this to remember the other distinctive words we use for him, the One who walked among us and was one of us. Jesus is his name. The name belongs to the God man.

There's a rarefied three chorded musical sweetness in that five-letter name. Firstly I take hold of the meaning of the very old word lying within the name itself, before it became a name, victory, victor, saviour victor, Jehovah victor. I can hear the swing and rhythm of music, glad music, in its very beginnings as a commonly used word.

Secondly, I hear another chord as well, a particular type of personality, the gentle, engaging, strong character of the Man of Bethlehem and Nazareth, and of those crowded and busy days of service. Every memory of His personality in those New Testament tales enriches the notes the old word rings in my heart.

And thirdly I can get the best notes of all by pressing into it his experiences, His life,. The sympathy, the suffering, the wilderness, the Cross, the Resurrection, all the experiences He went through, these give to this victory-word, Jesus, a meaning unknown before. I now hold onto the name Jesus actually above every sort of experience of the world's conflicts and sickness and injury and the sweeping victory which it stands for.

Lord is a title, of course. It was used around various societies of one who was a proprietor, an owner, or a master. It was commonly used as a title of honour, In New Testament days, for someone in a superior position as a leader or as a teacher. When we speak of Jesus we couple it with the title Christ as an

interchangeable word, as well as being an additional title. Especially today it is the personal title we give to Jesus after we have accepted him as our own personal Master, while still retaining its broader meaning.

But 'Christ' is reserved as Jesus' official title. There is only one Christ. Lord is used of anyone in a position to be awarded that title. It's also used to describe both the Father and the Holy Spirit, as well as Jesus. But the name Christ is only used in connection with one person, and can mean only that one. There can be only one Christ.

We can find the word or its equivalent occasionally being used in the Old Testament, in a narrower sense, to describe the coming King of Israel, who is sometimes spoken of reverently as "the Lord's anointed," that is, God's Messiah or Christ.]

But the one common line of thought about these things among the Hebrew people, which seems to me to grow ever more intense as the Old Testament period merges into the New, was that there was someone on the way, _the_ Messiah, _the_ Christ, God's chosen, the one anointed and empowered, to be our Deliverer.

There was one important question that set everyone's heart a-fluttering about the seemingly primitive John of the deserts was this: "Is he the Christ?" The word 'the' is not in that question for nothing, they knew there was only one to whom the title belonged.

And it is. Christ is the official title of _the One_ Chosen and anointed by God to be ruler over his Hebrew people, and over all the race, and the earth, and the universe,--God's King, to reign until all of us have been brought into full allegiance to our amazingly loving Father.

The Christ is the Crowned One, God's Crowned One. The very word Christ tells us that Christ is crowned.

4 My Brother.

There's now quite an absorbing question pushing its way into my mind; why was Christ made King?

We might say straightaway, of course, that this was only his entitlement. He was given something that should have anyway belonged to him by right. He was only being reinstated in His original position, with all the glory and power that were his in the first place, before his errand to the earth.

We could also say that this was the inevitable proof of justification, after the shameful treatment down here on earth. In front of the very eyes of all worlds, loyal and disloyal, this man we hounded so shamelessly is now completely justified; he is set into his rightful place by the Father.[]

But there is more, and this bit more concerns me very much, and sets my heart beating a bit faster. This making him King was part of a much bigger plan, a plan which has our world at its centre. It was the Great Part Two of an amazing strategy of which the sick and the suffering and the dying were the Great Part One. Both parts were planned and implemented for our sake and for the sake of our earthly home, and the 'lower' creation.

There is a piece of Hebrews 2 worth taking joy in at this moment: God didn't put angels in charge of this business of salvation that we're dealing with here. It says in Scripture,

What is man and woman that you bother with them;
why take a second look their way?
You made them not quite as high as angels,
bright with Eden's dawn light;
Then you put them in charge
of your entire handcrafted world.

When God put them in charge of everything, nothing was excluded. But we don't see it yet, don't see everything under human jurisdiction. What we do see is Jesus, made "not quite as high as angels," and then, through the experience of death, crowned so much higher than any angel, with a glory "bright with Eden's dawn light." In that death, by God's grace, he fully experienced death in every person's place.

It makes good sense that the God who got everything started and keeps everything going now completes the work by making the Salvation Pioneer perfect through suffering as he leads all these people to glory. Since the One

who saves and those who are saved have a common origin, Jesus doesn't hesitate to treat them as family, saying,

I'll tell my good friends, my brothers and sisters, all I know about you; I'll join them in worship and praise to you.

Again, he puts himself in the same family circle when he says, "Even I live by placing my trust in God". And yet again, "I'm here with the children God gave me".

14-15 Since the children are made of flesh and blood, it's logical that the Saviour took on flesh and blood in order to rescue them by his death. By embracing death, taking it into himself, he destroyed the Devil's hold on death and freed all who cower through life, scared to death of death.

16-18 It's obvious, of course, that he didn't go to all this trouble for angels. It was for people like us, children of Abraham. That's why he had to enter into every detail of human life. Then, when he came before God as high priest to get rid of the people's sins, he would have already experienced it all himself—all the pain, all the testing—and would be able to help where help was needed.

(The Message)

And so he became our brother, yours and mine, with the same flesh and blood, tempted just like we are, perfected in his human character by the experiences he went through and then, standing in for us, tasted to the end the death that rightfully belongs to our sin. And Following that, he was crowned King with glory and honour.

And so, as it was originally planned for mankind in ~Eden, he rises up into the place of mastery over all that belongs to perfect man. He is now in a place to bring the whole of creation under his own authority, life, death and the sickness and suffering in between, which will be its naturally happy state. It's for our sake that Christ has been made King.

We kingdom people may well think more about the personal meaning to ourselves of his having died and risen again. But please remember, too, this broader meaning. The dying and rising secures our salvation personally. The crowning and the reigning will work out the redemption of all nature and this in turn will mean a great deal for those of us living on the earth in the kingdom time, and for the race as a whole.

But, here we go again! This thought should lead us immediately to another question. What is the

domain of the King Jesus? If we take his coronation in the common meaning of that term, it means that there must be some domain that Christ rules over. What is it?

And the answer is so sweeping and so overall encompassing that it seems to be something far away and dreamy to us who live on this sin-hurt earth. The real answer is that he is the crowned Ruler of the whole universe and all intelligent beings living in it. He has been placed over absolutely every "rule and authority and power and dominion, and not only in this present age but in the coming age."

There are no boundaries to this kingdom, there is simply no limit in extent to His domain. Everything has been placed in subjection to him and, as difficult as I might think this is sometimes, is now subject to his word, and to his alone.

There is a forceful piece in Philippians that fits right in here. In writing about the exaltation of Jesus Christ, Paul is careful to particularly explain that every knee would bow, _in the "heavens", and on the "earth", and under the earth or in the "world below".

This division of the universe into three sections is very striking. I can understand the heaven things at once, and things of the earth. But there is a third world to be taken into account here, that strange and eerie world of evil spirit beings who are rebelling against God's authority.

This nasty world is often described as principalities and powers, telling me that they have numbers and some sort of organization and power. But all of this has been included under my brother Christ's authority.

5 Is He Reigning Now?

But I still have another question that's impatiently pushing up from underneath. And it's a practical one, too.

It's this:

Does all this sovereignty mean that Christ is actually ruling now over this domain of his? How about the affairs here on earth? Is everything here really subject to him? Is this honestly the way he wants things to work? Some of us think the evil spirits seem pretty free to run around and have their own way.

This present order of things that we are living in the thick of, is this the reign of the Crowned King? Some of us feel the stresses of life so much that we find it too difficult to even wait for a thoughtful answer to our questions.

Well, there are plenty of good earnest people who tell me that Christ has come, and is constantly coming, more and more, into our world community.

The evidence given encompasses:

Higher ideals that are crowding our discussions, looking for expression

Our continuous efforts toward better civilization

Our increased spiritual awareness

the increased recognition of human rights

the improving of the conditions of the poor and less fortunate

the increasing effort worldwide to correct evils through legislation

the loosening of women's bonds, and the safeguarding of young womanhood and children

even those attempts to humanize and civilize warfare which in itself is stupidly savage and utterly inhuman

Are all these things marks of a coming of Christ and of the Christ-spirit into our common world life? I believe there is only one answer to questions like that, and it's "yes." But there's a "but", and it proves a blessed but; this list is only a handful of crumbs falling off a loaded table. And if I judge Christ and his work only by these crumbs, wholesome as they may be, then I will have a very skimpy conception of Christ.

All the sorts of influences on my list above have come along very slowly. They have had

to fight every step of the way. Their coming has been opposed stubbornly, maliciously, viciously, every inch of the road, as only those know who are in

the thick of the struggle for these reforms.

I would so encourage you not to be disappointed when the kingdom doesn't appear to win out, but to rejoice every time it does! It's as though a few whiffs of wholesome life-giving fresh clean air have breathed in through the cracks and crevices of the fortress walls of evil in which all human life and experience seems to be entrenched. But the fortifications are still there in place.

If this clean sweet and wholesome breathing in through cracks and crannies has bought with it such blessings, then what would it be like for us if the forces of evil were swept clean away from the scene, and Christ's spirit became the whole concentrated atmosphere, being freely breathed in without restraint, with no cold wintery draughts, and no contrary wind currents for it to guard and fight against?

It's not easy to put your finger on a single spot of the world-map that is not being torn up by unrest in one shape or another. Either actual war, or constant preparation for war, actually never seems to stop.

Then there's the continuous unrest in the industrial world; the organised protests against social and political conditions; the feverish greed for money, for land and position; the frighteningly fast pace of all our modern lives; the abandonment of family and family ideals; the terrific attack against our young womanhood.

It would seem like a very strange sort of kingdom if this is a sample of it. No wonder so many of us have less heart than we used to in repeating one particular petition of the old daily prayer, 'Thy kingdom come'. Jesus would seem to have completely changed His character if this is a result of His coming.

So is he reigning or not?

6 Patience.

And, as far as I can see it, the great simple truth is this, the thing that we easily lose sight of in this great mix-up of life is this: King Jesus has not yet taken over the rule of all his domain; some of it still remains to be taken over.

"What we do see is not yet all things subjected to Him." We are living in the "not-yet" interval between his coronation and his actual reigning. We are living on the "not-yet" possessed part of his domain. Happily, through new Testament training in Healing Ministry and knowing better how to work with the Holy spirit, we are far more successful in bringing the kingdom nearer but it still isn't all there yet.

And the question that comes hot and quick is this: "Why doesn't he just grab possession, and untangle all the snarl-ups, right the wrongs, and bring in the rational order of things?"

Actually, funnily enough, the answer to our impatient question shows us all the greatness of the love of our King. That's because his greatness is shown most in his patience.

But patience is one of the things we people on this earth aren't very good at. It's one of those unknown quantities. It can be known and grown only by knowing God. Patience is love at its best. I should like to write that patience is God at His best, but there are those who would chastise me for that, saying God is always at his best! . His is the patience that sees everything, and feels it all with the tender heart that broke once under the load, and still he waits, waiting bit by bit through our lives, and then waiting just a bit longer.

But in exercising such patience he runs the risk of being terribly misunderstood. We, in our stupidity, constantly mistake unyielding patience for indifference or weakness or a lack of direction. And God is badly misunderstood in this, even by his trusting children.

But, even so, what is to be gained is so great, and so near his heart, that he goes on waiting with a degree of patience way beyond our comprehension; and then waits just a bit more, always just a bit more.

There are two parts to the answer I am looking for in this. Jesus the King is giving me and you the fullest opportunity. He never interferes with our right of free choice. We are absolutely free to do as we choose. Every possible means is being used to influence us to choose to do the right thing, but the choice itself is always left to us. The present day and the present moment is our opportunity. The initiative on the earth is wholly in our own hands. All of God's power is at our disposal; but we have to reach out and use it. This long waiting time is for our own sake, that we can have the fullest opportunity.

When eventually this time of opportunity comes to its end it will only be because things have got into such a terrible state, that at last for our safety's sake the King will step in with some direct action. He will take the leadership of earth away from us and back into his own hands, even while still leaving each of us free in our own choice. The first part of the answer to the question of this waiting is that we may have the fullest opportunity.

If our first answer is 'patience' then our second answer is 'hunger'. The King has a huge hunger for willing hearts.

I couldn't explain the depth of his longing for a free, glad, joyful surrender to his rule. He could so easily put an end to all this present conflict, but he is waiting for us to bring him the allegiance of our lives. He was a volunteer Saviour and he is longing for the love which bubbles out of a free, full heart. The best love is only given freely without any compulsion of any kind. He wants what he gives, the best. And so He's waiting, patiently waiting just a bit longer. This is the second part of the answer. The long delay we are all experiencing speaks of his hunger as well as his patience. The divine Husbandman is patiently waiting, and sending warm sun and soft rains and fragrant dews while waiting.

7 The Husband waits

But hold it a moment! There's another wonderful "but" to put in here. But, while waiting "he puts all his limitless power at our disposal". If God would only set fire to that simple sentence, its deepest meaning might burn itself into our hearts. When Paul piled up phrase after phrase in his eager literary efforts to help his Asiatic friends living in and around Ephesus to take on board the limitless power of the ascended King, he added the significant words, "to the Church." All that power is for the use of, and at the disposal of, the Church. Wow!

So just exactly what was the church meant to be? She was meant to be a unit-in-spirit in loyalty to her soon-coming-back Lord, living under the dominating touch of the Holy Spirit, not only in her official religious actions and rituals, but in the lives of the individual members. Just imagine if she were like that today, our imaginations wouldn't be able to take in the quite startling power, subtly, softly, but resistless, flowing down from the crowned King, among grateful disciples.

But we are not being quite such a unit, so it isn't 'easy' for that power to be as fluent in its manifestations as was originally planned and meant to be. No individual or group in kingdom action can ever take the place of the whole unified body of believers, acting as a channel for the power of King Jesus. We have been taught that the most fruitful expectancy is corporate? That power will doubtless be realized on the earth only when the Church is Spirit-unified, and at work, under the authority of the reigning King, from the new headquarters up in heaven.

But, meanwhile, all that power is _at the disposal of any disciple of Christ who will be prepared to live in full-faced touch with Christ, and who will make use of that power as the need arises, and as the sovereign Holy Spirit leads.

It is this, this 'making use of', that Paul is writing about when he says: "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to _the power that worketh in us."

marker

The great bother in Paul's day and ever since, and now, is to get people to _take_. The power is fairly a-tremble in the air at our very finger-tips. And we go limping, bodily and mentally crutching along in our skeletal spiritual leanness.

That marvellous expression of Jesus, "because I go unto the Father," together with the whole passage in which they occur, must be read in the light shining from the throne. This is the only way they can be understood. But

then they begin to grip us, and grip us pretty firmly, as we begin to see what he really means.

When we develop towards having that warm, child-like touch of heart for others, with Jesus, it is then that we can do the same works as Jesus did, same sort of things and to the same degree, and then go on to do even bigger things than Jesus ever did. Why? Because it is the glorified King Christ who is now doing them through one of his children, who is simple-hearted enough to let him be in full control of what's going on.

And the means by which he does these things is simple, child-like, trusting, humble prayer. The servant child using the power is on his or her knees. The lower down I get the more and more freely the power flows down and out.

As I go on learning to keep in touch with the crowned Christ, slowly, stumblingly, with many a stupid mistake, and quite a number of quivers and trembles, I begin to find all the power of that Christ coming with a soft throb of life wherever needed.

We may all of us use all we can use. But the using of this power must be with one's very life. Merely earnestly repeating a creed in a Church service won't do the business here. I find that the repeating must be, syllable by syllable, with my feet and my will, with my hands and my life, along the daily kingdom path where every step is stubbornly contested by the incoming shell-fire of doubt.

This is a bit of real truth for you and me in the waiting time. This is the hymn sheet to be singing from in this present "not-yet" interval. And the song will help cut down the length of that "not-yet," until the friction of our lived faith shall wear off the "not" and wipe out the "yet," and we shall find the crowned Jesus a reigning king Christ.

One day soon this patient waiting crowned Man will rise up from His seat at the Father's right hand. He will step directly into the action down here once more. You and me and all mankind will have had our fullest opportunity stretched out to the last possible notch. Then we shall see the King quietly stepping in, taking matters into his own hands, and acting in all our affairs as the Crowned King of it all. The Kingdom will have come, because the King will be reigning.

8 Working by the Light of the Throne.

But we are still in this "not-yet" interval. We see not yet all things subject to Him. This is still the waiting time. It is the pleading time for him. He pleads for the personal crowning of himself in our lives, that he can reign there, and him alone. This is our great opportunity; we shall never see anything like it again, or anywhere else.

This peculiar opportunity we have of crowning Christ while he's still despised and absent will be gone in the reigning time that's approaching. In the upper world they don't have such opportunities; there isn't any opposition up there. Now I for one have the most wonderful opportunity of putting this great waiting patient Man on the throne of my heart and my life, with my possessions and my ambitions and plans all placed by me under his feet. I'm sure a lot of us have heard of Brussels lace. This capital of Belgium has long been famous for its lace, and still is today. After a recent visit there I became interested in the conditions under which it used to be made. These are conditions carefully put together after long experience. In one of the famous lace factories in Brussels there are a number of small rooms devoted to the making of some of the most delicate patterns.

Each of these rooms is just large enough for a single lace worker and is quite dark, except for a single narrow window. The worker sits in such a position that the stream of light falls from the window above directly onto the threads, while the worker sits in the darkness. The darkness actually helps the workman's eyes to see better, and to work more finely in the narrow line of clear light centred on his delicate and exquisite work. He weaves his lace in the flow of light intensified by the gloom.

It's just like that with us and our kingdom efforts. There is a clear shaft of light shining down from a throne into the darkness in which we move and have our being. It shines from the face of a crowned Man. We can see clearly enough in the light of that light to carry out a difficult bit of crowning work,--to crown the King in our lives and to keep Him crowned.

As our eyes follow up that shaft of light we may catch a glimpse of his wonderful Face up there in glory. That's how we remain steadied and cheered in the darkness as we stick to our crowning work. And each day we do crowning work, and each day we do kingdom work, we move the day forward on the calendar when that thin shaft of light will turn into a burst of glory light seen by everyone.

And this is what King Jesus is asking of us during this waiting time, this "not-yet" interval. He is counting on each of us being faithful to Him, our absent Lord.

