

***S. D. GORDON***



***QUIET TALKS  
ON THE CROWNED  
CHRIST OF REVELATION***

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# **Quiet Talks on the Crowned Christ of Revelation**

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# PREFACE

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Crowning the Christ is an intensely practical thing, whether taken in the *personal* sense or the *world* sense. He has been crowned in the upper world. With wondrous patience and graciousness He pleads for the personal crowning in our lives. Some day—no one knows just when—He will begin to *act* as the crowned Christ *in all the affairs of our earth*.

The initiative of all action to-day on the earth is in man's hands. Some day the initiative of *governing* action on the earth will be in the hands of the crowned Christ, even while the personal initiative of each man's life will still be in his own hands.

God is intensely practical. Jesus was never concerned about speculation nor mere discussion; He was too intent on helping people. The Bible is wholly a practical book. It is concerned only with helping us. It does not tell us all the truth there is; we shall be constantly learning more in the future life. But it does tell us all we need to know now. And its purpose in telling us what it does is wholly practical,—to urge us to right choice, and to lives that square with the choice. This is the purpose that decided just what truth should be told in the Book.

There is one book of the sixty-six devoted wholly to this subject of the crowned Christ,—"The Revelation of John." Every one of these books touches Him at some angle, and finds its deepest meaning in what He was to do and did do, and yields up its secrets only under the touch of His hand.

But this book, the closing and climax of all, the knot in the end of the inspired thread, this deals wholly with the action of the crowned Christ.

No book of the sixty-six has seemed so much like a riddle and set so many a-guessing. And without doubt much of its meaning will be clear only as events work themselves out. Events will prove the only expositor of much. But it is with the deep conviction that this is wholly a *practical book*, written wholly from a practical point of view, and concerned wholly with our practical daily lives, that I have ventured to take it up in this series of simple, wholly practical, Quiet Talks. And it is only this side of its teachings that will be dealt with here. The Book is a street leading into the true overcoming life the Master would woo us to.

It is only after many years' study of this Book of the Revelation, and a special study the past three years and a little more, that I have ventured to put these talks together. And now they are sent out with the earnest humble prayer that others may find some little practical help in prayerfully reading, as I have found much in prayerfully studying, under the Master's gracious faithful touch.

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## **I.—THE CHRIST CROWNED, THE FACT**

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"When God sought a King for His people of old,  
He went to the fields to find him;  
A shepherd was he, with his crook and his lute  
And a following flock behind him.

"O love of the sheep, O joy of the lute,  
And the sling and the stone for battle;  
A shepherd was King, the giant was naught,  
And the enemy driven like cattle.

"When God looked to tell of His good will to men,  
And the Shepherd-King's son whom He gave them;  
To shepherds, made meek a-caring for sheep,  
He told of a Christ sent to save them.

"O love of the sheep, O watch in the night,  
And the glory, the message, the choir;  
'Twas shepherds who saw their King in the straw,  
And returned with their hearts all on fire.

"When Christ thought to tell of His love to the  
world  
He said to the throng before him,  
'The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep—'  
And away to the cross they bore Him.

"O love of the sheep, O blood sweat of prayer,  
O man on the cross, God-forsaken;  
A shepherd has gone to defend all alone  
The sheepfold by death overtaken.

"When God sought a King for His people, for aye,  
He went to the grave to find him;  
And a shepherd came back, Death dead in His grasp,  
And a following flock behind Him.

"O love of the sheep, O life from the dead,  
O strength of the faint and the fearing;  
[1] *Joseph Addison Richards.*

A shepherd is King, and His Kingdom will come.  
And the day of His coming is nearing."[1]

## Coronation Gift.

Christ is crowned. Not in any vague far-fetched meaning, but in the plain common-sense meaning of the word, He is *crowned*.

For crowned means put in the place of highest power, with full right to exercise that power at will. And when the crucified Jesus went up that Olivet day, before the astonished eyes of the disciples, into the sightless blue, on the cloud, He was received in the upper world by the Father. And He was lifted up into the place of highest honour and greatest power. He sat down at the right hand of the Father.[2]

He had said it would be so. Breathing the air thick with bitter hate on the night of His trial, He had quietly said to the Jewish rulers that even so it would be, bringing at once about His person the bursting of the storm of hate.[3] Now His unfaltering trust in His Father has its sweet reward.

The Holy Spirit poured out on Pentecost, the birthday of the Church, was the gift of the *crowned* Christ. The rushing sound as of a mighty wind that filled all the house, the tongues of flame plainly seen, the bold talking to the crowds of foreign Jews of God's mighty power, the faithful witnessing about the crucified Jesus in the city that hounded Him to death, the convinced crowds openly declaring at the peril of their lives their belief



in the despised Jesus, the strangely rare unselfishness even in money matters, and the winsome graciousness of spirit that marked, not only the inner circle, but these greatly increased crowds,—all this said one thing in clear unanswerable tones of unmistakable power, *Christ is crowned*.<sup>[4]</sup> For the sending down of the Holy Spirit was the act of the crowned Christ.

And every touch of the Holy Spirit's presence within trusting hearts,—the sweet peace, the quiet assurance, the longing for purity, the drawing away to prayer, the hunger for God's Word, the intense desire to have others saved, the passion to please this wondrous God of ours,—all these simple marks of the Holy Spirit's presence in our hearts, all tell us, and each tells us, in unmistakable tones, that Christ is crowned. For this wondrous Spirit within is the gift of the crowned Christ.

When Jesus went up from the earth, holding as His sure captive the captivity of suffering and death to which He had with such great strength yielded, He received gifts, coronation gifts. The Father gave Him all. He gave Him the disposal and control of all. This was the crowning.

And in His great out-reaching love <sup>[5]</sup> *Psalm* Christ received these gifts *on behalf of* *lxviii.* *18;* *men*, His blood brothers. And at once He *Ephesians iv. 8;* gave to men, to His trusting disciples, the *Acts ii. 33.* all-inclusive gift, the Holy Spirit, His coronation gift.<sup>[5]</sup> So God came anew to dwell with men as originally planned.

This blessed Presence within tells me, by His mere presence, that Christ is crowned.

The writers of the New Testament make a chorus of sweet music on this chord, ringing out in clear tones the full notes of delight and joy. Luke's simple narrative sounds the note four times. Paul swells it out with a joyous fulness that grows in volume and intensity as his narrowing prison walls shut out more and more the lower lights, and centres his upward gaze upon 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." [6] John's special companion and working partner, Peter, makes this note blend with and dominate the minor chord of suffering for Christ's sake. [7]

[6] *Romans* viii. 34;  
*Ephesians* i. 20-22; *Philippians* ii. 9-11;  
*Colossians* iii. 1.  
 [7] *I Peter* iii. 22.

The Christian Hebrew who wrote so eloquently to his fellow-countrymen of the immense superiority of Jesus and so modestly withheld his own name, strikes this note five times with strong, clear touch. [8] He quotes that Eighth Psalm, which so wonderfully gives God's own ideal for man's mastery over all creation. And then he tells us that in Jesus the ideal will yet be fully realized. And that while the whole plan has not yet fully worked out as it will, yet *even now* we see the Jesus who tasted death for every one, crowned with glory and honour as part of the plan which He carried out in suffering the extreme suffering of death.

[8] *Hebrews* i. 3; ii. 8-9; viii. 1; x. 12; xii. 2.

And our Lord Jesus Himself, talking out of the glory to the man who was His

[9] *Revelation* iii.

bosom companion on earth, reserves as 21.

His last tender plea to us to live the overcoming life this—"he that overcometh I will give him to sit down with me in my throne as I also overcame and *sat down with my Father on His throne.*"[9]

And so we find out just what this word crowned 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 sweep of its power than any other, and with all things put in absolute subjection under His feet. This is the simple, direct meaning of the sentence—Christ is crowned.

What a contrast the two faces of that glory cloud saw! The face looking down, and the face looking up! The one—the downward face—looked upon a cross, a Man hanging there with a mocking crown of thorns without and a breaking heart within, scowling priests, jeering crowds, deserting disciples, sneering soldiers, weeping women, heart-broken friends, a horror of darkness, a cave-tomb under imperial seal, and blackest night settling down over all.

The other—the upward face—looked upon a great burst of the upper glory, the countless angels singing swelling songs of worship, the wondrous winged cherubim, the redeemed hosts from Eden days on reverently bowing and exultantly singing, the exquisitely soft-green-rainbow-circled throne, the Father's face, once hidden, but to be hidden now never again, the *shared* seat on the Father's throne,—what a contrast!

Here crucified—there crowned. Crucified on earth, one of the smaller globes of the universe. On the throne of the whole universe of globes—crowned! From the lowest depth to the one extreme height. From hate's worst to Love's best. From love poured out for men to love enthroned for those same men; love triumphant each time, on cross and on throne. What a contrast! What a coronation! What a welcome home to a throne!

## **The Music of a Name.**

It is most intensely interesting to recall that, of course, this is just what the very word Christ means,—the Crowned One. We sometimes get so used to a word that it is easy to forget its real meaning. The word Christ has been used so generally for so many centuries as a *name* that we forget that originally it was a title, and not a name.

And it still is a title, though used chiefly as a name. Some day the title-meaning will overlap the name-meaning. We may never cease thinking of it as a name, but there is a time coming when events will make the title-meaning so big as to clear over-shadow our thought and use of it as a name.

It helps to recall the distinctive meaning of the words we use for Him who walked amongst, and was one of us. Jesus is His *name*. It belongs to the *man*. It belongs peculiarly to the thirty-three years and a bit more that He was here, even though not exclusively used in that way in the Book.

There's a rare threefold sweetness of meaning in that five-lettered name. There is the meaning of the old word lying within the name, before it became a name, victory,

victor, saviour-victor, Jehovah-victor. There is the swing and rhythm and murmur of music, glad joyous music, in its very beginnings as a common word.

Then it has come to stand wholly for a *personality*, the rarely gentle, winsome, strong personality of the Man of Bethlehem and Nazareth, and of those crowded service-days. And every memory of His personality sweetens and enriches the music in the old word.

And then the deepest significance, the richest rhythm, the sweetest melody, come from the meaning His experiences, His life, pressed into it. 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. They put the name Jesus actually above every name in the experiences of tense conflict and sweeping victory it stands for. This threefold chording makes music never to be broken nor forgotten.

"There is no name so sweet on earth,  
No name so sweet in heaven,  
The name before His wondrous birth,  
To Christ the Saviour given."

Lord is a title, of course. It was used of one who was a proprietor, an owner, or a master. It was commonly used as a title of honour for one in superior position, as a leader or teacher. In speaking of Jesus it is coupled with the title Christ as an interchangeable word,[10] as well as an additional title. But peculiarly it is the *personal title* given Jesus by one who takes Him as his own personal Master,[11] while it still retains its broader meaning.

[10] Acts ii.

36.

[11] Romans

x. 9.

But *Christ* is peculiarly *the official title* of Jesus. There is only one Christ. Lord is used of men. It is used of both the Father and the Holy Spirit, as well as of Jesus. But the name Christ is used of only one person, and can mean only that one. There could be only one Christ.

The word or its equivalent was used occasionally in the Old Testament in a narrowed sense for the King of Israel, who is reverently spoken of as "the Lord's anointed," that is, God's Messiah or Christ. [12]

[12] I Samuel xvi. 6; xxiv. 6, 10; II Samuel i. 14-16; xix. 21, and elsewhere;

But the one common thought of it among the Hebrew people, growing ever intenser as the Old

[13] John i. 20, 25; Luke iii. 15. Psalm xviii. 50, and frequently in Psalms.

Testament period merges into the time of the New, was that there was one coming, *the Messiah, the Christ*, God's chosen, the one anointed and empowered, to be their Deliverer. The one question that sets all hearts a-flutter about the rugged John of the deserts was this: "Is he *the Christ*?"[13] In their thought there was only one to whom the title belonged.

And even so 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 have been brought into full allegiance to the great loving Father.[14] The Christ is the Crowned One,

[14] Philippians ii. 10; I Corinthians xv. 24-26.

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

## Our Great Kinsman.

There is an intensely interesting question that crowds its way in here, and it proves an immensely practical question, too. *Why* was Christ crowned? We can say at once that this was His due. He was given that which belonged to Him in good right. He was reinstated in His former position, with all the power and glory that were His before His errand to the earth.[15]

Then too this was His vindication after the shameful treatment of earth. Before the eyes of all the upper world, both loyal and disloyal eyes, this man whom earth hounded so shamelessly is vindicated; He is set right by the Father.[16]

But there is yet more than this. It is a more of a sort that concerns *us* very closely, and it sets one's heart a-beating a bit faster. This crowning was part of a plan, a plan of which our earth is the centre. It was the second great part of a plan of which the suffering and dying were the first great part. Both were for the sake of us men and our earth-home, and the lower creation.

This is the thing being emphasized in the second great paragraph of the Hebrews.[17] Man was made the under-master of the earth and of the lower

[15] *John xvii. 5; i. 1-3; Colossians i. 15-17.*

[16] *Matthew xxvi. 64; Acts ii. 22-24, 32-36; Philippians ii. 9-11; Hebrews ii. 9.*

[17] *Hebrews ii. 5-18.*

creation, but lost, weakly surrendered, his place of mastery. The new Man came to recover for man what had been lost and to realize this original lost plan.

And so He became our brother, sharer of our flesh and blood, tempted like as we, perfected in His human character by the experiences He went through, then tasted to the bitter dregs the death that belongs to our sin. And then following that, He was crowned with glory and honour. And so He rises to the place of mastery over all that belongs to perfect man. So He brings all creation into the glad subjection which is its natural happy state. It is for earth's sake, for the race's sake, and for the sake of our faithful companions and servants, the whole lower creation, that Christ has been crowned.

We think more about the personal meaning to ourselves of His having died and risen again. We need to 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 of the lower creation,[18] and this in turn will mean much for men living on the earth in the Kingdom time, and for the race as a race.

[18] *Romans* vii. 19-22;  
*Jeremiah* ix. 10;  
xii. 4, 11; xxiii. 10;  
*Genesis* iii. 17-19; *Acts* iii. 21.

This leads at once to another question that presses in. What is the *domain* of the crowned Christ? If we take the crowning in the common meaning of that word, it means that there is some domain that Christ rules over. What is it that He is crowned over?



And the answer is so sweeping as to seem far-away and dreamy to us who are living on this sin-hurt earth. He is the crowned Ruler of the whole created universe and all intelligent beings 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." [19] There is simply no limit in extent to His domain. Everything has been placed in subjection to Him and is now subject to His word, and His alone.

There is a striking passage in Philippians that fits in here. [20] In speaking of the exaltation of Jesus Christ, Paul is careful to explain particularly that every knee would bow, *in the heavens*, and, *on the earth*, and *under the earth* or in the *world below*.

This threefold division is very striking. The heaven things are understood at once, and things of the earth sphere. But there is a third world to be taken into account, that strange uncanny world of evil spirit beings in rebellion against God's authority. It is spoken of repeatedly as principalities and powers, indicating numbers and organization, dignity, and power. [21] All of this is included in what has been placed under Christ's authority. [22]

[19]  
*Ephesians i. 20-22; Hebrews ii. 6-8.*

[20]  
*Philippians ii. 9-11.*

[21]  
*Ephesians vi. 12; Colossians ii. 15.*

[22]  
*Colossians ii. 10; Ephesians iii. 10; iv. 8-10; I Corinthians xv. 24.*

## **Is Christ Reigning Now?**

But there is still another question that has been impatiently pushing underneath for some time. And it also is an intensely practical one. Does this mean that Christ is actually ruling now over this domain of His? How about the affairs on the earth? Are all things here subject to Him? Is this the way He would have things go? And some of us think the evil spirits seem pretty free in their movements. This present order of things that we are living in the thick of, is this the reign of the crowned Christ? And some of us feel the stress of things so much that we can scarce keep patient for a thoughtful poised answer to our questions.

There are those, and good earnest folk they are, too, who tell us that Christ has come, and is constantly coming, more and more, into our common life. The higher ideals that are crowding for expression, the more spiritual conceptions of man and his brotherly relations, the constant striving toward better civilization, the bettering of the condition of the poor and less fortunate, the increased recognition of men's rights in the complex industrial world, the increasing effort to correct evils by legislation, the great moral reforms that are sweeping aside the awful liquor curse, and loosening women's bonds, and safeguarding young womanhood and children, the newer aggressiveness in the missionary propaganda and in much of the activity of the Church, even the attempt to humanize and civilize the warfare that in itself is stupidly savage and utterly inhuman,—is not all this a coming of Christ and of the Christ-spirit into our common life? many ask.

And there is only one answer to such questions, a strong emphatic "yes." It surely is the Christ-spirit that moves in all

of this. This is a coming of Christ; and a blessed coming, too. There was nothing of this sort before the Christ-spirit began to sweeten the world's life. And there is none of it to-day except in those parts of the world where the Christ-spirit influences life.

But—there's a "but"—it proves a blessed but; this is only a crumb or two falling from a loaded table. And he who judges Christ by these crumbs only, wholesome and toothsome as they are, will have a very skimpy conception of Christ.

All of this sort of thing that has come has come very slowly. It has had to fight through and in, every step of the way that it has come. Its 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, panting for breath sometimes.

It is as though a few whiffs of wholesome life-giving air have breathed through the cracks and crevices of the breastworks and fortifications of evil in which all our common life seems entrenched. But the fortifications are still there. If the sweet, wholesome breathing in through cracks and crannies has been so blest, what would it be if the forces of evil were clean removed from the scene, and the Christ-spirit became the whole atmosphere breathed fully and freely without restraint, with no bad draughts, and no counter currents to guard and fight against?

It would seem like a strange sort of a kingdom if the present is even a gradual coming in of the Kingdom. We would seem to be having a new, strange sort of a Christ if the present is a sample of His sort of reigning. For it may

well be thoughtfully doubted if ever there was such a condition of feverish unrest in all parts of the world as to-day.

It is most difficult to put your finger on a single spot of the world-map that is not being torn and uptorn by unrest in one shape or another. Either actual war, or constant studious preparation for war, actually never ceases. And it is difficult to say which is the worse of the two. The actual war reveals more terribly to our eyes and ears the awful cost in treasure and in precious human blood spilled without stint. The never-ceasing preparation for war seems actually to cost more. In the immense treasure involved, and in blood too, given out, not on an occasional battlefield, but in the continual battle of daily life to meet the terrible drain of taxation, it costs immensely more. There is less of the tragic for the news headings, but not a whit less, rather much more, in the slow suffering, the pinched lives, and the awful temptations to barter character for bread.

Then there is the continual seething unrest in the industrial world; the protests sometimes so strange and startling against social and political conditions; the feverish greed for gold, and land, and position; the intense pace of all our modern life; the abandonment of home and home ideals; the terrific attack against our young womanhood. The political pot which gathers into itself all these things, never quits boiling or boiling over, in some part of the world, now here, now there. And it seems like the greatest achievement of diplomacy when here and there it can be kept from boiling clean over, or at least made to boil over less.

It would seem indeed like a queer sort of kingdom if this is a sample. Some of us would have less heart in repeating one petition of the old daily prayer. And Christ would seem to have quite changed His spirit and character if this is a result of His coming.

## **The Greatness of Patience.**

And the great simple truth is this, the [23] truth that in the strange mix-up of life we *Hebrews ii. 8.* easily lose sight of is this: *Christ has not yet taken possession of all of His domain;* a part of it still remains to be possessed. "We see *not yet* all things subjected to Him." [23] We are living in the "not-yet" interval between the crowning and the actual reigning. We are living on the "not-yet" possessed part of His domain.

And the question that comes hot and quick from our lips, even though with an attempt at subdued reverence, is this: "Why does He not take possession, and untangle the snarl, and right the wrongs, and bring in the true rational order of things?" And all the long waiting, the soreness of hearts over the part that touches one's own life most closely, the shortness of breath in the tensivity of the struggle, underscore that word "why?"

And the answer to the impatient question reveals all afresh the greatness of the love of our Christ. His greatness is shown most in His *patience*. But patience is one of the things we men on this old earth don't know. It's one of the unknown quantities to us. It can be known only by knowing God. For patience is love at its best. Patience is God at His best. His is the patience that sees all, and feels all with the

tender heart that broke once under the load, and yet waits, steadily waits, and then waits just a bit longer.

In this He runs the risk of being misunderstood. Men in their stupidity constantly mistake strong patience for weakness or indifference or lack of a gripping purpose. And God is misunderstood in this, even by His trusting children. But, even so, the object to be gained is so great, and so near Christ's heart that He waits, strongly waits with a patience beyond our comprehension; waits just a bit longer, always just a bit longer.

There are two parts to the answer. Jesus the Christ is giving man the fullest opportunity. He never interferes with man's right of free choice. Man is free to do as he chooses. Every possible means is used to influence him to choose right, but the choice itself is always left to the man. The present is man's opportunity. The initiative of action on the earth is altogether in man's hand. All of God's power is at man's disposal; but man must *reach out* and *take*. This long stretched but waiting time is for man's sake, that he may have fullest opportunity. The longsuffering of God would woo men.[24]

[24] *II Peter*  
*iii. 8-9; Romans*  
*ii. 4; ix. 22;*  
*Revelation ii.*  
*21; I Peter iii.*  
*20; II Peter iii.*  
*15; Exodus*  
*xxxiv. 6-7.*

When at length opportunity comes to its end it will be only because things have gotten into such desperate shape, into such an awful fix, that at length *for man's sake* Christ will step into the direct action of the earth once again. He will take the leadership of earth into His own hands, even while still leaving each man free in his individual choice.