

Bring Forth The Royal Diadem

When I was little, and something happened which was demanding or painful, I remember being told, *Another jewel in your crown*. I think this was a great improvement on *Another feather in your cap*. A lot of people wear caps these days, but a crown is something else. For a crown you need a kingdom: for whose coming we pray three times a day, in obedience to Christ our King.

The making of crowns is a laborious process, with big implications. Jesus talked of *a treasure hidden in a field*; and a field is above all else a place of labour, hard and sustained, in all weathers: perhaps sometimes a rocky, difficult terrain, but all the more a place for ideals. Crowns are not often buried in such places, but gold is, and jewels are, even if they are in the form of dust and stones. These need to be found, and identified, and refined, and cut and polished, and assembled into that intricate, precious and ceremonious piece of jewellery which symbolises the honour of inheriting the earth.

Who will wear the crown, when it is finished? The poor. To the poor in spirit the kingdom of heaven belongs; and I think the joy of this feast belongs to those who can see the gold amid the dust, the jewels hidden in the dull stone. God picked up dust in the beginning, and breathed into it the breath of life. We are to imitate this creating act, by which we inherited life, and to seek for the materials which by the work of grace become royal insignia.

There is little in all this of the luxury of a court. You will see the refining and polishing going on at humble tables and stoves, at bedsides and ironing-boards, at lonely desks and computers in the early hours. You will see the composing and assembling of precious components in the fidelity of friends and relations, husbands and wives, servants and ministers. You will catch sight of the kingdom wherever promises are made and kept, wherever people cling to hope, wherever love is delivered in its infinite power. Today we remind ourselves, amid the grime and dirt of the field, of our royal destiny. May we never lose the insight we need to recognize, with joy, the coming of the Kingdom in the lives of God's holy people.