

GREATNESS

The great man is master of his own time. He uses it as he wishes. No one tells him what to do or when to do it.

He begins as the servant of all (like Jesus, Mark 10:44-5; John 13:1-17; and Paul, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23). In the course of time God raises him up (exalts, 1 Peter 5:6) so that he becomes lord of all he has served. For this he has to wait patiently, and indeed often painfully (as Jesus did, Philippians 2:6-11), until God's time. Hence greatness requires patience, humility, faith.

These qualities find their focus in contemplative prayer - waiting upon God - which slows down the pace of one's life, creating space, space in which to do what one personally wants without being driven by obligation. Prayer creates time.

To be master of one's own time - to have genuine leisure - is to fear none. Fear is what drives us. But fear is itself driven out by love (1 John 4:18). The great man who truly loves those in his charge is unafraid of what the world can do to him on account of any stance he may take, for he has God on his side - indeed, by his side (Romans 8:31-9; Psalm 56:4,11). And once master of his own time, he will seek to create time for others.

It is by no mere chance that the historic motto of the Prince of Wales is "Ich dien" - "I serve".

So God makes kings.

The imposter by contrast is not prepared to wait for God but exalts himself. He does not tread the path of servanthood and suffering. He is driven by the desire for personal reputation, the love of power and the fear of losing it. Compare John 10:11-3.

Upon which type of ruler will God bestow permanence, a kingdom which shall not be taken away? Jesus gives us the answer:

"The meek...shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5).

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To the above passage I envisage three main reactions:

Those who agree with it in essence.

Those who disagree with it in essence.

Those who miss the point altogether and object to my use of the masculine gender.

So be it.

MBM,
B/W 17.12.4, am.