

## Malcolm's Monday Musings : 23 February 2026.

Greetings.

I set out below this week's 'Monday Musings'.

Last Monday marked the anniversary of the death (on 16 February 1921) of Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield at the age of 69.

There can be little dispute that Mr Warfield ranked as one of the greatest Christian theologians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Throughout that period, a steady stream of books, articles, reviews, lectures, collections of sermons, and monographs flowed from his pen.

As an acknowledgement of the personal benefit which I derived over 50 years ago from many of Mr Warfield's writings, I have commenced the 'Food for thought' section of this week's 'Musings' with three quotations from these.

Happy reading.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

### PS

For those interested, a comprehensive listing of Mr Warfield's primary writings can be accessed at <https://www.logcollegepress.com/benjamin-breckinridge-warfield-18511921>—from which website those writings can be freely downloaded (all being now out of copyright).

I would particularly recommend: *'The Lord of Glory'* (1907), *'On the Emotional Life of Our Lord'* (1912), *'Inspiration'* (1915), *'Person of Christ'* (1915), *'Revelation'* (1915), *'Trinity'* (1915), and *'Counterfeit Miracles'* (1918).

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### (i) Scripture.

Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God', for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempts no one.

But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

James 1. 13-17 (*English Standard Version*)

### (ii) Food for thought.

#### **'He made no account of Himself' (Phil. 2. 7).**

'Let us not fail to grasp the apostle's chief message to us here—that *Christ Jesus*, though He was God, yet *cared less for His equality with God, cared less for Himself and His own things, than He did for us*, and therefore gave Himself for us'.

(B. B. Warfield, *'The Example of the Incarnation'*, 'The Gospel of the Incarnation', 1893, page 46.)

#### **God—never the author of sin.**

'Throughout the whole Old Testament, *there is never the least doubt expressed of the freedom or moral responsibility of man* ...

'How God governs the acts of free agents in the pursuance of His plan there is little in the Old Testament to inform us; but that He governs them in even their most intimate thoughts and feelings and impulses is its unvarying assumption ...

*'We are never permitted to imagine that God is the author of sin*, either in the world at large or in any individual soul—that He is in any way implicated in the sinfulness of the acts performed by the perverse misuse of creaturely freedom.

'In all God's working He shows Himself pre-eminently the Holy One, and prosecutes His holy will, His righteous way, His all-wise plan. The blame for all sinful deeds rests exclusively on the creaturely actors, who recognize their own guilt, and who receive its punishment'.

(B. B. Warfield, 'Predestination', Biblical Doctrines, 1929, pages 19-20.)

### **The power to work miracles.**

'The power of working miracles was not extended beyond the disciples upon whom the Apostles conferred it by the imposition of their hands. As the number of these disciples gradually diminished, the instances of the exercise of miraculous powers became continually less frequent, and ceased entirely at the death of the last individual on whom the hands of the Apostles had been laid.

'That event would, in the natural course of things, take place before the middle of the second century ...

'Miracles do not appear on the page of Scripture randomly—here, there, and elsewhere indifferently—without assignable reason. They belong to revelation periods, and appear only when God is speaking to His people through accredited messengers, declaring His gracious purposes.

'Their abundant display in the Apostolic Church is the mark of the richness of the Apostolic age in revelation; and when this revelation period closed, the period of miracle-working had passed by also, as a mere matter of course'.

(B. B. Warfield, 'Counterfeit Miracles', 1918, pages 23-26. See further the two-part article titled, 'Miracles and the Revelation of God' in the Precious Seed magazine, 2015 Volume 70 Issues 1 and 2.)

### **'We are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells' (2 Pet. 3. 13).**

'We await a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Heb. 12. 27-28). We await a King who will not compromise.

'That future is not escapism; it is fuel for the fight. It gives us courage. It puts steel in our spine.

'If this world is all there is, then compromise makes sense. If this world is passing away, then compromise is foolish.

'The early Christians believed Christ would raise them. And He will. The world shifts. Christ does not. Therefore, let us stand firm in shifting times'.

(M. Judge, 'Standing Firm When the World Shifts Under Your Feet' accessed at ... <https://learn.ligonier.org/articles/standing-firm-when-the-world-shifts>.)

### **The Books of Samuel: bursting at the 'seems'.**

(i) 'Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems best to you" (1 Sam. 1. 23).

(ii) 'Eli said, "It is the Lord. Let Him do what seems good to Him" (1 Sam. 3. 18).

(iii) 'The men of Jabesh said, "... you may do to us whatever seems good to you" (1 Sam. 11. 10).

(iv) 'The people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you" (1 Sam. 14. 40).

(v) 'Achish called David and said, "... it seems right that you should march out and in with me" (1 Sam. 29. 6).

(vi) 'Joab said, "... may the Lord do what seems good to Him" (2 Sam. 10. 12).

(vii) 'David said, "Let Him do to me what seems good to Him" (2 Sam. 15. 26; cf. 2 Sam. 18. 4; 19. 38).

(viii) 'Mephibosheth said, "My lord the king ... do therefore what seems good to you" (2 Sam. 19. 27).

(ix) 'Barzillai said, "Here is your servant Chimham ... do for him whatever seems good to you" (2 Sam. 19. 37).

(x) 'Araunah said, "Let my lord the king take and offer up what seems good to him" (2 Sam. 24. 22).

### **Notable 'musts' in John 3.**

(i) The sinner's 'must'—'you must be born again' (John 3. 7).

(ii) The Saviour's 'must'—'as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up' (John 3. 14).

(iii) The servant's 'must'—'He must increase, but I must decrease' (John 3. 30).

### **'I lay down my life' (John 10. 15, 17).**

'Christ's death is not an incident of His life, it is the aim of it.

'The laying down of His life is not an accident in His career, it is His vocation; it is that in which the divine purpose of His life is revealed'.

(J. Denney, 'The Death of Christ', 1902, page 259.)

**'Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this He breathed His last' (Luke 23. 46).**

'When abused and suffering wrongfully, He had committed His cause to Him that judges righteously' (1 Pet. 2. 23).

'Now, the reviling and suffering forever past, He committed His spirit into the hands of His Father.

'Previously, Jesus had asserted His absolute confidence in the power of His Father's 'hand' (John 10. 29). All that were in His Father's hand were safe and secure. We are not surprised therefore to discover that the word 'commit' which He now used means properly 'entrust, deposit, place with somebody for safe keeping'.

'The One who had been 'delivered' into 'the hands of sinful men' (Luke 24. 7; cf. Luke 9. 44), now 'entrusted' Himself into the 'hands' of His Father. The 'sinful men' who killed the Author of life had every reason to fear falling into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10. 31); Jesus gladly and confidently deposited His spirit into those same hands ...

'In derision, the rulers had said, 'He trusted in God' (Matt. 27. 43)—thereby unwittingly fulfilling their own scriptures (Psa. 22. 8)—but God truly was the object of His trust (Heb. 2. 13). He 'rested in hope' (Acts 2. 26, 31).

('Day by Day: Moments with the Master', Precious Seed Publications, page 368—reproduced with kind permission.)

**'If Christ has not been raised ...' (1 Cor. 15. 14, 17).**

'If it be true that no living Christ ever issued from the tomb of Joseph, then that tomb became the grave not of a man, but of Christianity. If Christ did not rise, His death is no longer a sacrifice but the saddest of earth's tragedies, the very midnight gloom of failure, and hope is a word to mock us.

'But the flashing wonder is ... our Lord is alive in the perfection of His manhood'.

(J. R. Rollo, 'The Son of Man', in 'The Faith: A Symposium', page 61.)

**'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you' (John 21. 17).**

'Peter was at "the Lord's Breakfast", answering essentially the same question for the revealing third time. And he simply had to blurt out, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you'.

'But there were no superlatives about how much he loved Jesus. There were no pledges that even if all others forsook Jesus, Peter would stand as the lone faithful one (Mark 14. 29). That seems to have gotten knocked out of him'.

(D. R. Davis, '2 Kings', page 299.)

**Jesus our high priest—superior to the old covenant (Heb. 8. 1-10. 18).**

(i) 'Jesus offers better promises than the old covenant did' (Heb. 8. 1-13).

(ii) 'Jesus offers a better tabernacle than the old covenant did (Heb. 9. 1-14).

(iii) 'Jesus offers a better sacrifice than the old covenant did (Heb. 9. 15-10. 18)'.

(S. J. Cole, 'The Glory of Christ in Hebrews', accessed at <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-59-glory-christ-hebrews-hebrews-review>.)

**The opening salutation of the epistle to the Galatians (Gal. 1. 1-5).**

**1. 'Who'.**

'Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead ... grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins'.

Note that the apostle varies the order of the two divine persons, 'the Father' and 'our Lord Jesus Christ', so that, in both cases, he can then add a descriptive action to the second person named—'who raised Him from the dead' and 'who gave Himself for our sins'.

In God's great salvation program, the Father's distinctive role was to raise our Lord from the dead and our Lord's distinctive role was to give Himself for our sins. Here is the gospel in a nutshell. As the apostle summarised it elsewhere: 'the gospel I preached ... Christ died for our sins ...and was raised' (1 Cor. 15. 3-4).

**2. 'The present evil age' (Gal. 1. 4).**

'This is the present transitory world, elsewhere "the present age" (1 Tim. 6. 17), "the age of this world" (Eph. 2. 2), and most frequently "this age" (Rom. 12. 2), as opposed to the other world, the world of eternity, "that age" (Luke 20. 35), "the age to come" (Luke 18. 30), "the age about to be" (Heb. 6. 5), and often in the plural, "the ages to come" (Eph. 2. 7) ...

'This age, this world, is under a "god" (2 Cor. 4. 4), or "rulers" (1 Cor. 2. 6) of its own, who are opposed to the Eternal God, 'the King of the ages' (1 Tim. 1. 17) ...

'The apostles speak of themselves and their generation as living on the frontier of two 'ages', the gospel transferring them as it were across the border'.

(J. B. Lightfoot, 'St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians', 1870, pages 217-218—substituting English translations for Bishop Lightfoot's original Greek quotations.)

**'Do not lie to one another' (Col. 3. 9): the ethics of telling a falsehood.**

'Is the Christian ever justified in communicating a falsehood? This question is serious since there are two famous biblical examples:

(i) 'Pharaoh's demand that the Hebrew midwives kill all new-born male babies (Exod. 1. 17–21). When asked by Pharaoh why they didn't obey his command, the midwives tell him it's because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before a midwife can arrive. God appears to issue his verdict on their behaviour: He "dealt well with the midwives" and "gave them families" (Exod. 1. 20–21). The midwives deliberately deceived Pharaoh—and God appears to reward them for it.

(ii) 'Rahab the prostitute, who tells a falsehood to protect the Israelite spies (Josh. 2. 1–7; cf. Heb. 11. 31). James 2. 25 appeals to Rahab as an illustration of how good works flow from genuine, saving faith: "And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?" Rahab communicated a falsehood to protect the spies—and is apparently applauded for it.

'It appears, then, that there are occasions when deception is ethically permissible.

'But note: not all falsehoods are lies. A lie is an intentional falsehood that violates someone's right to know the truth. But there are cases in which people forfeit their right to know the truth.

'So, the question is not whether it is ever morally permissible to lie, but "What is a lie?" A lie is the intentional declaration or communication of a falsehood designed to deceive someone who has a moral and legal right to know the truth. A lie is telling an untruth to someone to whom you are morally and legally obligated to speak the truth.

'There are, however, certain occasions in which you are not under obligation to tell someone the truth ...

'I am not suggesting that Christians should become lax or casual in their treatment of the truth ... Our goal should never be to wiggle our way around the truth or search for an ethical loophole'.

(S. Storms, 'Do Exodus 1 and Joshua 2 Permit Christians to Lie?' ... accessed at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/perplexing-passages-do-exodus-1-and-joshua-2-permit-christians-to-lie/>, adapted from Mr Storms's book, 'Tough Topics 2: Biblical Answers to 25 Challenging Questions', 2015).

**'I, Daniel, understood the number of the years by books, which came of the Word of Jehovah to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face toward the Lord God ... and I prayed' (Dan 9. 2-4).**

'When Daniel becomes aware from Scripture just when the close of the exile would take place, far from resting and waiting for the promises to come true, he prays for such fulfilment.

'The peculiar dynamic between God's sovereignty and human responsibility in the Bible never retreats to fatalism. The promises of God are incentives to intercession'.

(D. A. Carson, 'For the Love of God', Volume 2, meditation for 24 October.)

**'Not for filthy lucre' (1 Pet. 5. 2).**

'It has often been the case that money or property has led to conflict between those who had hitherto been able to live together in harmony.

'It is remarkable that this led to trouble when Israel entered the land under Joshua (Josh. 7. 1), when the remnant returned from Babylon (Neh. 5. 1-13), and it posed the first threat to the early church's testimony and unity (Acts 5. 3; 6. 1).

'Peter's shock at Judas's betrayal of Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, followed by his unhappy experiences in the incidents just quoted, evidently gave him a thorough distaste for what he called 'filthy lucre'.

'Of course, the trouble is not with money as such, but with the love of it which constrains some to get rich at all costs (1 Tim. 6. 10). God-given wealth can be used for God-glorifying purposes (1 Tim. 6. 18)'.

(J. H. Large, *'From Idolater to Friend of God'*, page 76.)

### **(iii) Go on, smile.**

#### Wives.

1. George and his fiancée, Vici, meet with the Marriage Registrar to sign some pre-wedding ceremony papers.

While filling out the form, George reads aloud a few questions.

The last question reads, 'Are you entering this marriage of your own will?'

George looks across at Vici.

*'Put down "Yes"', she says.*

2. Seven-year-old Mary is at her first wedding, gaping at the entire ceremony.

When it was over, she asks her mother, 'Why did the lady change her mind?'

'What do you mean?' her mother asks back.

'Well', Mary answers,

*'she went down the aisle with one man, and came back with somebody else'.*

3. A Sunday school teacher is trying to demonstrate the difference between right and wrong.

'All right children, let's take an example', she says. 'If I were to put my hand into a man's pocket and take his wallet with all his money, what would I be?'

A child in the back answers,

*'You'd be his wife'.*

4. 'There was a fellow that was on his way to a mountain resort, and a policeman stopped him and said, "Did you know you're driving without taillights?"

'The driver hopped out of the car. He was so badly shaken that the officer took pity on him and said, "Well, now, wait a minute. Calm down. It's not that serious an infraction".

'The fellow said, "It may not mean much to you, officer, but to me it means

*'I've lost my trailer, my wife, and four kids!'"*

[This story was told—with minor variations—by former-President Ronald Reagan several times.]