

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 16 November 2020

Greetings.

This is your weekly 'Musings' email from me.

It is exactly 165 years ago today that the pioneer medical missionary and explorer David Livingstone discovered Victoria Falls (which he later named as such in honour of his Queen).

When he first viewed the Falls on 16th November 1855, Dr Livingstone described that which he saw as '*the most wonderful sight* I had witnessed in Africa' (quoted from his 'Missionary Travels and Researches in Southern Africa', published 1857, chapter 26).

The first 'Food for thought' item below reproduces words penned by David Livingstone several years later concerning a far more '*wonderful sight*'.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

(i) Scripture.

How lovely are your dwellings (*), O Lord of hosts!

My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young—even your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.

Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they will still be praising you.

(*) *The marginal rendering.*

Psalm 84. 1-4 (New King James Version)

(ii) Food for thought.

The care of the Lord Jesus for 'each of His people'.

'The Gospels reveal Jesus, the manifestation of the blessed God over all as minute in His care of all. He exercises a vigilance more constant, complete, and comprehensive, every hour and every minute, over each of His people than their utmost self-love could ever attain. His tender love is more exquisite than a mother's heart can feel'.

(David Livingstone, '*The Last Journals of David Livingstone, in Central Africa, from 1865 to His Death*', page 454.)

The Lord Jesus: His manhood.

'He became flesh, possessing full and perfect manhood, body, soul and spirit. These three constitute the totality of all that is essential to manhood ...

Christ Himself speaks of His body and of His soul, and of His spirit.

Of the emblematic significance of the loaf in the Lord's Supper, He said, "This is my body" [Matt. 26. 26].

In the dark hour of Gethsemane He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful" [Matt. 26. 38].

And on the cross, "Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit" [Luke 23. 46].

(W. E. Vine, '*The First and the Last*', page 20.)

Twelve times when the Lord Jesus used the expression 'as ... so' in the Gospel of John.

(i) 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up' (John 3. 14).

(ii) 'As the Father raises up the dead, and quickens them; so the Son quickens whom He will' (John 5. 21).

(iii) 'As the Father has life in Himself; so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself' (John 5. 26).

(iv) 'As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eats me shall live by me' (John 6. 57).

(v) 'As the Father knows me, so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep' (John 10. 15).

(vi) 'As the Father said unto me, so I speak' (John 12. 50).

(vii) 'As I said to the Jews, "Where I go, you cannot come"; so now I say to you' (John 13. 33).

(viii) 'As the Father gave me commandment, so I do' (John 14. 31).

(ix) 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you' (John 15. 9).

(x) 'As you have sent me into the world, so have I also sent them into the world' (John 17. 18).

(xi) 'As my Father has sent me, so send I you' (John 20. 21).

The humility and humiliation of Christ.

- (i) He descended from the zenith of celestial honour to the zero of cruel humiliation.
 - (ii) He left the loftiest pinnacle in glory for the lowest pit in gloom.
 - (iii) The Maker who decreed that it was not good for man to be alone (Gen. 2. 18), and who pledged to man He would never leave nor forsake him (Deut. 31. 6, 8), is Himself totally deserted, and is described as a sparrow alone upon the housetop (Psa. 102. 7).
- (C. J. Rolls, *'His Glorious Name'*, Kindle Edition, Location 3241.)

Jesus: acknowledged to be guiltless in His passion.

- (i) By the betrayed: 'I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood' (Matt. 27. 4).
- (ii) By the governor: 'I find no fault in Him' (John 18. 38; 19. 4, 6).
- (iii) By the executioner: 'Certainly this was a righteous man' (Luke 23. 47).

The Lord Jesus our example.

- (i) In loving: 'as I have loved you, you also are to love one another' (John 13. 34).
- (ii) In receiving: 'receive one another, as Christ also received us' (Rom. 15. 7).
- (iii) In forgiving: 'forgiving one another ... as Christ has forgiven you' (Col. 3. 13).

God's 'handiwork' and God's 'workmanship'.

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament ('the expanse', the sky, the atmosphere) proclaims His handiwork (Psa. 19. 1). But 'we are His workmanship ('work of art', 'masterpiece'), created in Christ Jesus' (Eph. 2. 10).

God and our circumstances.

What unbelief does, is to compare ... *our own strength* with circumstances. What faith does, is to compare *God* with circumstances.

Take the case of the spies. (Numbers 13 and 14) ... What said Caleb and Joshua? ... "They are as bread to us; their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us, fear them not". [Num. 14. 9] That is, they compared these sons of Anak with God. What matter, then, whether they were *giants or grasshoppers*.

They [Caleb and Joshua] spoke the language of faith. It was no reasoning about circumstances; it was just simply saying, "Greater is He that is for us, than all that can be against us". God was there'.

(Anonymous, *'The Passage of the Red Sea'*, The Christian Friend: 1875, page 170.)

Five things from which to 'flee'.

- (i) The wrath to come (Matt. 3. 7).
- (ii) Sexual immorality (1 Cor. 6. 18; cf. Gen. 39. 12).
- (iii) Idolatry (1 Cor. 10. 14).
- (iv) The love of money and its attendant evils (1 Tim. 6. 10-11).
- (v) Youthful passions (2 Tim. 2. 22).

Righteousness.

- (i) In the present age, righteousness suffers (1 Pet. 3. 14).
- (ii) In the millennial kingdom, righteousness will reign (Isa. 32. 1; Heb. 1. 8).
- (iii) In eternity, righteousness will dwell (2 Pet. 3. 13).

Ready.

- (i) 'Ready to perish' (Deut. 26. 5).
- (ii) 'Ready to pardon' (Neh. 9. 17).
- (iii) 'Ready to preach' (Rom. 1. 15).

'Blessed be the Lord, who ...', Psalm 68. 19.

There are at least three legitimate (and equally precious) translations of the Hebrew text.

- (i) 'Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits' (King James Version).
- (ii) 'Blessed be the Lord, who daily beareth our burden', (Revised Version).
- (iii) 'Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up' (English Standard Version).

In each case, the translation 'daily' renders the double use of the Hebrew word for 'day'. Many translations therefore adopt the rendering 'day by day', thereby giving us: (i) 'day by day He loads us with blessings', (ii) 'day by day He carries our burdens for us', or (iii) 'day by day He bears us up'.

Speaking personally, I am happy to go along with Professor W. T. Davison's comment in the Century Bible: '*To (i) load with benefits is gracious; to (ii) bear another's burdens implies closer sympathy; but to (iii) bear and carry the heavy-laden ... themselves is Divine!*'

If we adopt the translation, 'Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up', we might well compare with this the words of Isaiah, 'Hearken unto me ... all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne [the same word as in Psa. 68. 19] by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb. And even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear' (Isa. 46. 3-4).

The prophet's withering sarcasm and scorn was directed at the marked contrast between the so-called 'gods' which pagan peoples needed to bear up and to carry (vv. 1, 7) and the only true God who deigned to bear up and to carry His people.

Rejoice today in the truth of all three statements, that: (i) day by day the Lord loads us with blessings, (ii) day by day the Lord bears our burdens for us and (iii) day by day the Lord bears us up.

A three-fold 'blessedness' in Psalm 84.

(i) 'Blessed are those who dwell in your house' (v. 4).

(ii) 'Blessed is the man whose strength is in you' (v. 5).

(iii) 'Blessed is the man who trusts in you' (v. 12).

(Further details can be found in the attached document.)

Detailed notes. [See the attached Word document, 'Psalm 84 - an Old Testament 'Pilgrim's Progress'.](#)

(iii) Go on, smile.

Food, drink and related matters.

1. At a dinner party, a surgeon was observing as his host carved the meat. The pompous host kept up a running commentary. At one point, he called out, 'Well, what do you think of that, doc? Don't you think that I'd make a pretty good surgeon?' When he had finished, and the slices of meat lay neatly on the serving platter, the surgeon finally commented: 'Not bad, I guess, but *now let's see you put them back together again*'.

2. A couple walked into a rather cheap-looking café. As they were about to sit down they noticed there were crumbs on the chairs. After cleaning the chairs and wiping the table they sat down. A waitress eventually came over to take their order, 'I'll just have a milky coffee', said the man. 'The same for me', the lady said, adding, 'but make sure the cup is clean'. Sometime later, the waitress returned with their drinks. 'Remind me', she muttered, '*which one of you asked for the clean cup*'.

3. Have you ever wondered what people in China call their best crockery?