

## Malcolm's Monday Musings : 13 September 2021.

Greetings.

This is my 'Monday Musings' email.

Yesterday marked the anniversary of the home-call of Ian Paisley (full name: Ian Richard Kyle Paisley) on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2014. In his day, Mr Paisley was a very well-known Protestant, preacher and politician in Northern Ireland.

Here are three quotations worth pondering:

1. 'Do you remember Mr Fearing in The Pilgrim's Progress? He worried about death all his days. And then when he came to cross the river, the river was at its lowest possible ebb and he crossed over almost dry shod.

You needn't worry about death, believer. Jesus will take care of it. It is only the gateway to heaven ...

There is no ringing of the death bells in heaven. There no funeral processions ever wend their way down the streets paved with gold. There not one of the saints ever puts on the black garments of mourning, for the people of God are dressed eternally in shining white'.

(Ian Paisley, '*Heaven's Blessed City*', sermon preached on 13 November 1970: transcript accessed at ...  
<https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/6777.pdf>.)

2. The cross 'was rooted in the heart of God long before it was planted on Golgotha's hill crag. It was set on the hills of glory long before it was set up by the hand of man on Calvary. The cross was an outward public demonstration of what took place in the heart of God in eternity'.

(Ian Paisley, '*Christian Foundations*', page 50.)

3. 'A friend of mine, who is a minister in Canada, told me that a Jehovah Witness came to his door one day, and when the pastor came out he said to him: "You're a preacher aren't you?" He replied, "I am".

He said: "Explain the Trinity". He replied: "If I could do that it would be a quartet".

(Ian Paisley, '*Precious and glorious views of Christ*' in 'Expository Sermons', page 134.)

Ian Paisley's elder brother, Harold (full name: Harold Spurgeon Paisley), went to be with Christ a little over a year later – on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

The first item in the 'Food for thought' section below comprises a quotation from Harold Paisley's commentary on Mark's Gospel.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

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### (i) Scripture.

It came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel ... But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice.

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, 'Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations'.

But the thing displeased Samuel ... So Samuel prayed to the Lord.

And the Lord said to Samuel, 'Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behaviour of the king who will reign over them'.

1 Samuel 8. 1-9 (*The New King James Version*)

## (ii) Food for thought.

### **'A contrast between Eden and Gethsemane'.**

'The Lord Jesus is greater than Adam, who was a figure of Christ (Rom. 5. 14). Eden was a garden of delight, but Gethsemane was a garden of distress. Adam sinned and fell in Eden, but Jesus suffered and triumphed in Gethsemane. Adam received fruit from Eve's hand in disobedience to God's will, but Jesus accepted the cup from the Father's hand in obedience to God's will. God sought Adam in the garden of Eden but the Son sought His God in Gethsemane.

A sword was drawn at Eden, but a sword was sheathed in Gethsemane. Adam was driven out of the garden, but the Lord was led away from Gethsemane. Adam faced his own guilt and its consequences in Eden, but the Lord Jesus faced the sin and guilt of others, and the consequences in Gethsemane. In the garden as in all else He is pre-eminent and excels all others'.

(H. S. Paisley, 'Mark', in 'What the Bible Teaches: Matthew and Mark', page 567.)

### **God 'walking' with and among His people.**

(i) 'I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people' (Lev. 26. 12).

(ii) 'The Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you' (Deut. 23. 14).

(iii) 'I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel, spoke I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, "Why build ye not me an house of cedar?"' (2 Sam. 7. 6-7).

### **'O Lord, make me know ... what is the measure of my days ... how fleeting I am!' (Psa. 39. 4 ESV).**

When as a child I laughed and wept,  
Time *crept*.

When as a youth I waxed more bold,  
Time *strolled*.

When I became a full-grown man,  
Time *ran*.

When older still I daily grew,  
Time *flew*.

Soon I shall find, in passing on,  
Time *gone*.

O Christ! wilt Thou have saved me then?  
Amen.

(Henry Twells, 'Hymns and Other Stray Verses', Number XIX, page 34.)

### **'Thou ... art to be feared: and who may stand in Thy sight when once Thou art angry?' (Psa. 76. 7).**

'Amiable agnostics will talk cheerfully about man's search for God. For me, they might as well talk about the mouse's search for a cat'.

C. S. Lewis, 'Surprised by Joy', chapter 14, page 22.

### **'A talebearer reveals secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit conceals the matter' (Prov. 11. 13).**

#### **1. A quotation from Archie Naismith.**

"Can you guess who I am?" was the query at the head of a magazine article. Then followed the description that provided the clue and answer:

"I have no respect for justice and no mercy for defenceless humanity. I ruin without killing: I tear down homes: I break hearts and wreck lives. You will find me in the pews of the pious as well as in the haunts of the unholy. I gather strength with age. I have made my way where greed, distrust and dishonour are unknown; yet my victims are as numerous as the sands of the sea, and often as innocent. My name is Gossip".

(A. Naismith, '1200 More Notes, Quotes, and Anecdotes for Sermons', number 418.)

#### **2. The example of Augustine of Hippo.**

'At the table (Augustine) loved reading and discussion rather than eating and drinking, and against that pest of human custom he had this inscription on his table:

*"Who injures the name of an absent friend  
May not at this table as guest attend"*.

Thus he warned every guest to refrain from unnecessary and harmful tales. And when some of his most intimate fellow-bishops forgot that inscription and spoke without heeding it, Augustine on one occasion became exasperated and so sternly rebuked them as to declare that either those verses would have to be removed from the table or he would leave in the midst of the meal and retire to his chamber. Both I and the others who were at the table witnessed this'.

(Possidius {a 5<sup>th</sup>-century African bishop}, 'Life of St. Augustine' {translated by H. T. Weiskotten}, chapter 22.)

**God never acts rashly but He sometimes acts 'suddenly'.**

(i) Sudden summons to appear before God: 'The Lord spoke suddenly to Moses, and to Aaron, and to Miriam, "Come out you three to the tabernacle of the congregation"' (Num. 12. 4).

(ii) Sudden fulfilment of divine predictions: 'I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass' (Isa. 48. 3).

(iii) Sudden angelic visitation at the Saviour's first advent: 'And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God (Luke 2. 13).

(iv) Sudden coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost: 'And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting' (Acts 2. 2).

(v) Sudden appearance of the Lord to arrest and convert Saul of Tarsus: 'As he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him' (Acts 9. 3).

(vi) Sudden earthquake to liberate Paul and Silas from 'the stocks and bonds' (!) of Philippi: 'And suddenly there was a great earthquake ... and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were loosed' (Acts 16. 26).

(vii) Sudden coming of Christ at His second advent: 'Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple' (Mal. 3. 1).

**The anointing of Saul as king.**

'In one sense, Saul was the man whom God "chose" to be the Israel's first king (1 Sam. 10. 24), but, in another sense, he was the king whom the people had "chosen" (1 Sam. 12. 13).

Israel had specified very clearly the kind of king they wanted, and the Lord had therefore selected a man who complied with their idea of what a king should be. They had wanted their king to lead them out to war and to fight their battles (1 Sam. 8. 20) and there was no doubt that Saul fitted the bill. For Saul was not only handsome {"goodly", the same word as is used later to describe David, God's proper choice for Israel's king (1 Sam. 16. 12)} but he was also physically impressive, towering above his fellows, a feature sufficiently noteworthy to be mentioned again when Samuel presented him to the people (1 Sam. 10. 23).

And so, having instructed Samuel to "make them a king" (1 Sam. 8. 22), the Lord proceeded to overrule a whole chain of events to bring about a meeting between these two men. There were at least seven links to this chain of divine providence:

(i) the wandering off of Kish's valuable she-asses (1 Sam. 9. 3a);

(ii) the decision by Kish to dispatch his son, along with an un-named but key servant, in quest of the missing animals (1 Sam. 9. 3b);

(iii) the failure of the two men to find the asses in any of the likely locations where they sought them (1 Sam. 9. 4; note the threefold 'not');

(iv) the arrival of the two men at some point in "the land of Zuph", which turned out to be near the very city where Samuel was shortly to preside over a sacrificial meal (1 Sam. 9. 5);

(v) the knowledge (apparently not shared by his master) of Saul's servant that Samuel happened to be in the city at that time (1 Sam. 9. 6);

(vi) the willingness of Saul's servant to part with a quarter of a shekel, sufficient to overcome Saul's objection that they had no gift to offer Samuel (1 Sam. 9. 7-10); and

(vii) the "chance" meeting with certain young women coming down from the city, who supplied the essential advice that the men needed to hurry if they were to catch up with the newly-arrived Samuel (1 Sam. 9. 11-13).

So it was that "when they were come ... behold, Samuel came out" (1 Sam. 9. 14).

Ponder how each of these seven seemingly casual and common-place happenings were caught up in the outworking of the purpose of God, and rejoice that the same God has *your* days and ways in His hand'.

('Living in the Promised Land', Precious Seed Publications, page 113.)

**'Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division' (Luke 12. 51).**

People were divided over:

(i) Jesus' identity: 'Many of the people ... said, "Of a truth this is the Prophet". Others said, "This is the Christ" ... so there was a division among the people because of Him' (John 7. 40-43; cf. Matt. 16. 13-14).

(ii) Jesus' works: 'Therefore said some of the Pharisees, "This man is not of God, because he keeps not the sabbath day". Others said, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" And there was a division among them' (John 9. 16).

(iii) Jesus' words: "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment

have I received of my Father". There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings' (John 10. 17-19).

**'We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses' (Heb. 4. 15).**

'He knows our sorrows, not merely as He knows all things, but as one who has been in our situation, and who, though without sin Himself, endured when upon earth inexpressibly more for us than He will ever lay upon us'.

(John Newton, *'The works of the Rev. John Newton'*, volume 1, page 450.)

**The Lord Jesus 'on'.**

- (i) Glorifying God 'on the earth' (John 17. 4).
- (ii) Tempted by Satan 'on a pinnacle of the temple' (Matt. 4. 5).
- (iii) Sitting 'on the well' of Sychar (John 4. 6).
- (iv) Walking 'on the sea' of Galilee (John 6. 19).
- (v) Writing 'on the ground' (John 8. 6).
- (vi) Riding 'on an ass's colt' (John 12. 15).
- (vii) Bearing our sins 'on the tree' (1 Pet. 2. 24).
- (viii) Exalted 'on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens' (Heb. 8. 1).

**'He hath made us accepted in the beloved' (Eph. 1. 6).**

'I was the guest of friends who were sheep-raisers. It was lambing time and every morning we went out to see the lambs - hundreds of them - playing about on the green. One morning I was startled to see an old ewe go loping across the road, followed by the strangest looking lamb I had ever beheld.

It apparently had six legs, and the last two were hanging helplessly as though paralyzed, and the skin seemed to be partially torn from its body in a way that made me feel the poor little creature must be suffering terribly. But when one of the herders caught the lamb and brought it over to me, the mystery was explained.

That lamb did not really belong originally to that ewe. She had a lamb which was bitten by a rattlesnake and died. This lamb that I saw was an orphan and needed a mother's care. But at first the bereft ewe refused to have anything to do with it. She sniffed at it when it was brought to her, then pushed it away, saying as plainly as a sheep could say it, "That is not our family odour!"

So the herders skinned the lamb that had died and very carefully drew the fleece over the living lamb. This left the hind-leg coverings dragging loose. Thus covered, the lamb was brought again to the ewe. She smelled it once more and this time seemed thoroughly satisfied and adopted it as her own.

It seemed to me to be a beautiful picture of the grace of God to sinners. We are all outcasts and have no claim upon His love. But God's own Son, the "Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world," died for us and now we who believe are dressed up in the fleece of that Lamb who died. Thus, God has accepted us in Him, and "there is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus". We are as dear to the heart of the Father as His own holy, spotless Son'.

(Harry A. Ironside, *'Illustration of Bible Truth'*, the item 'Accepted'.)

So near, so very near to God,  
I cannot nearer be;  
For in the person of His Son  
I am as near as He.

So dear, so very dear to God,  
More dear I cannot be;  
The love wherewith He loves the Son;  
Such is His love to me!

(Horatius Bonar, *'A mind at perfect peace with God'*, stanzas 3 and 4.)

**Seven 'heavenly' features of the Christian.**

- (i) In character: 'as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly' (1 Cor. 15. 48).
- (ii) In calling: 'holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling' (Heb. 3. 1).
- (iii) In citizenship: 'our citizenship is in heaven' (Phil. 3. 20 RV).
- (iv) In blessings: 'blessed ... with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ' (Eph. 1. 3).
- (v) In position: 'raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus' (Eph. 2. 6).
- (vi) In warfare: 'our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but ... against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places' (Eph. 6. 12 RV).
- (vii) In destiny: 'the Lord ... will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom' (2 Tim. 4. 18; cf. 1 Cor. 15. 48; 2 Cor. 5. 1).

**Nine kinds of conscience.**

- (i) An evil conscience: 'having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience' (Heb. 10. 22).

- (ii) A defiled conscience: 'even their mind and conscience is defiled' (Tit. 1. 15).
- (iii) A seared conscience: 'having their conscience seared with a hot iron' (1 Tim. 4. 2).
- (iv) A weak conscience: 'when you sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ' (1 Cor. 8. 12).
- (v) A purged ('cleansed') conscience: 'how much more shall the blood of Christ ... purge your conscience from dead works' (Heb. 9. 14).
- (vi) A good conscience: 'I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day' (Acts 23. 1; cf. 1 Pet. 3. 16).
- (vii) A blameless conscience: 'I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men' (Acts 24. 16).
- (viii) A pure conscience: 'God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience' (2 Tim. 1. 3).
- (ix) An approving conscience: 'our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity' (2 Cor. 1. 12 ESV).

**Eleven 'good' things in 1 Timothy.**

- (i) 'Good conscience' (1 Tim. 1. 5, 19).
- (ii) 'Good warfare' (1 Tim. 1. 18).
- (iii) 'Good works' (1 Tim. 2. 10; 5. 10, 25).
- (iv) 'Good behaviour' (1 Tim. 3. 2).
- (v) 'Good report' (1 Tim. 3. 7).
- (vi) 'Good degree' ('standing') (1 Tim. 3. 13).
- (vii) 'Good minister' (1 Tim. 4. 6).
- (viii) 'Good doctrine' (1 Tim. 4. 6).
- (ix) 'Good fight' (1 Tim. 6. 12).
- (x) 'Good confession' (1 Tim. 6. 12-13).
- (xi) 'Good foundation' (1 Tim. 6. 19).

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

Three quick smiles for today:

1. Henry wanted a new car for Christmas; Emily wanted a fur coat. They compromised; they *bought the coat, but kept it in the garage.*
  2. While reading a newspaper, William came across an article about a beautiful actress and model who married a boxer who was noted for his low IQ. 'I'll never understand', he said to his wife, 'why the biggest dunderheads get the most attractive wives'. 'Why, thank you, dear', she replied.
  3. 'There is a graveyard in Ayrshire where once a stranger was buried, and it greatly distressed the folk in the parish; so much so that they had a notice put up to the effect that *'This graveyard is reserved exclusively for the dead who are living in this parish'*.
- (A. Lindsay Glegg in one of his Keswick addresses; quoted in S. M. Zwemer, 'The Glory of the Manger', pages 190-191.)