

## Malcolm's Monday Musings : 17 January 2022.

Greetings.

Tomorrow marks the anniversary of the death of Amy Carmichael.

Amy Carmichael died on 18 January 1951 (not long after her 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday) in Dohnavur, Tamil Nādu, India.

Born and educated in the United Kingdom, her call to missionary work came through contacts at Keswick Conventions.

In brief, her initial application for the China Inland Mission was rejected on health grounds and, having spent very short periods in Japan and Ceylon, she went to South India at the age of 27 and served there for over 50 years, without furlough, until her home-call.

Amy Carmichael's most notable work was to rescue and to nurture Indian girls and young women who had earlier been dedicated to Hindu gods by their parents or guardians, who had become 'Temple children', and who lived in great moral and spiritual danger.

Last week's Monday Musings focused on the so-called 'Five Ecuador Martyrs' and, especially, on the legacy left by Jim Elliot. I had occasion, in those Musings, to make reference to two of the writings of Elisabeth Elliot, Jim's widow ('Shadow of the Almighty' and 'The Journals of Jim Elliot').

Through her example and writings, Elisabeth Elliot herself has been a great inspiration to many over the years. But not all know that, under God, it was Amy Carmichael who was largely responsible for making Elisabeth Elliot into the person she was.

In the preface to her biography of Amy Carmichael, Elisabeth Elliot penned the following tribute to the impact of Amy Carmichael's life on her own:

'To Amy Carmichael I owe ... as great a debt as one can owe another. ... Amy Carmichael became for me what some now call a role model. She was far more than that. She was my first spiritual mother. She showed me the shape of godliness ... I offer the testament of one whose loyal answering of her Lord's 'Come follow' has made an incalculable difference to me'.

(Source: Elisabeth Elliot, *'A Chance to Die: The Life and Legacy of Amy Carmichael'* (Revell, 1987), Preface, pages 15-17.)

Like Elisabeth Elliot after her, Amy Carmichael wrote many books (some 35 in all). This is a small sample of memorable quotations from her many writings for you to mull over today:

(i) 'We profess to be strangers and pilgrims, seeking after a country of our own, yet we settle down in the most un-stranger-like fashion, exactly as if we were quite at home and meant to stay as long as we could'.

(ii) 'Satan is so much more in earnest than we are—he buys up the opportunity while we are wondering how much it will cost'.

(iii) 'Because missionary reports generally included more about successes than about failures, Amy tried to shift the weight to the other side: "It is more important that you should know about the reverses than about the successes of the war. We shall have all eternity to celebrate the victories. but we have only a few hours before sunset in which to win them"'.  
(Source of (i) to (iii): Elisabeth Elliot, *'A Chance to Die: The Life and Legacy of Amy Carmichael'*, page 85 and pages 161-162.)

(iv) 'There have been times of late when I have had to hold on to one text with all my might: "It is required in stewards that a man may be found *faithful*." Praise God, it does not say "*successful*".'  
(Source: Amy Carmichael, *'Things as they are – Mission Work in Southern India'*, page 47.)

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Among her many books, Amy Carmichael penned a lengthy biography of 'Walker of Tinnevely'. (Tinnevely – now Tirunelveli – is a district in Tamil Nādu, India, where, for some time, she and Mr Walker laboured together.)

In that biography, she quoted with approval many of the things which her spiritual 'comrade', teacher and mentor either said or wrote. The following is one such quotation – reproduced by Amy Carmichael from a booklet which Mr Walker published on the subject of prayer (\*):

'Is it not worth our while to call a halt and ask the question, Are we so busy with our multiform labours of philanthropy and love that we have no time to stop and think? India can show, and it is second to no other mission field in this, a missionary army of hard-working men and women. Go where you will throughout this land, you will find the Christian workers incessantly busy at their work. And the cry is

heard from every quarter: "Over-work. Too much to do". No charge of idleness can be truly laid against us, as a whole.

'But how is it that so much of our busy energy appears to be expended all in vain? Holy Scripture, personal experience, the voice of conscience, all these alike suggest at least one answer—we have neglected largely the means which God Himself has ordained for true anointing from on High.

'We have ... toiled much, but we have prayed little ... We all know the importance of prayer and can preach discourses on its efficacy; but do we practise what we preach ourselves? ... Better, far better, do less work, if need be, that we may pray more; because work done by the rushing torrent of human energy will not save a single soul: whereas work done in vital and unbroken contact with the living God will tell for all eternity'.

(Source: Amy Wilson Carmichael, '*Walker of Tinnevelly*' {Marshall and Scott, 1916}, page 197.)

Ouch! Our consciences bear witness that Mr Walker's words are as relevant to us today as they were to India in 1897.

The remainder of this week's Musings is below.

Happy reading.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

(\* *This quotation is often wrongly attributed to Amy Carmichael herself.*

*Following her father's death when she was eighteen, she lived with the family of Robert Wilson for several years. Although never officially adopted, she used the hyphenated name 'Amy Wilson-Carmichael' in many of her publications, including her biography of 'Walker of Tinnevelly'.*

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### **(i) Scripture.**

This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practise the truth.

But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

1 John 1. 5-10 (*English Standard Version*)

### **(ii) Food for thought.**

#### **God's two thrones.**

*'Thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity ... I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit' (Isa. 57. 15).*

'God has two thrones, one in the highest heavens, the other in the lowliest heart'.

(D. L. Moody, '*Notes from my Bible*', page 228.)

#### **'A double eclipse'.**

*'There was darkness ... until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried ... 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Mark 15. 33-34)*

'Christ suffered a double eclipse upon the cross, an eclipse of the sun, and an eclipse of the light of God's countenance'.

(Thomas Watson, 'A Body of Divinity', page 173.)

### **Forsaken.**

'Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "... my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"' (Matt. 27. 46); 'He has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you"' (Heb. 13. 5).

The Lord Jesus prayed the first concerning Himself, that He might say the other concerning us.

### **Evidences of the Risen Lord in John 20.**

The Risen Lord made Himself known by (i) the sound of His voice (John 20. 16) and (ii) by the sight of His hands and side (John 20. 20).

The walls and door of the tomb were unable to shut Him in (John 20. 1-2), and the walls and door of the room were unable to shut Him out (John 20. 19). The former could shut in Lazarus (John 11. 38) but not the Lord, and the latter could shut out the Jews (John 20. 19) but not the Lord.

The evidences of His resurrection in the first were the folded grave-clothes and face-cloth – which led an apostle, John, to believe (John 20. 6-8). The evidences in the second were the marks in His hands and side – which led an apostle, Thomas, to believe (John 20. 27-28).

### **Descending and ascending.**

#### **(a) 'I come'.**

(i) 'Lo, I come ...' (Psa. 40. 7; cf. Heb. 10. 7) ... descending from heaven.

(ii) 'I come to you, Holy Father' (John 17. 11) ... ascending to heaven.

(iii) 'I come quickly' (Rev. 22. 7, 12, 20) ... descending from heaven.

#### **(b) 'What if'.**

'Jesus ... said to them, "Does this offend you? What if you see the Son of man ascend to where He was before?"' (John 6. 61-62)

'They had already found it hard to accept His claim to have come down from heaven (John 6. 42). If they were scandalised by that, what would they make of the ascension when He would bodily ascend to where He was before?'

(J. C. Lennox, 'Determined to Believe', page 182.)

#### **(c) 'No man ... except'.**

'How can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No man has ascended up into heaven except He who came down from heaven' (John 3. 12-13).

'Enoch had "ascended up into heaven"; in that Enoch "was not; for God took him", for he "was translated that he should not see death" (Gen. 5. 24; Heb. 11. 5). But Enoch had not subsequently descended so as to tell of anything he had seen, heard or learnt.

'Many years later, Elijah also would ascend into heaven (2 Kings 2. 11), but no whirlwind and accompanying fiery chariot would bring him back to earth.

'Yes, some 900 years after Elijah's translation, the apostle Paul could speak of himself as "a man" who had been "caught up to" heaven, from whence he did, of course, come down again (2 Cor. 12. 2-3). But the apostle made it clear that he was not in a position to reveal anything of the "unspeakable words" he had heard while in "the third heaven" (2 Cor. 12. 4).

'And so, as our Lord told Nicodemus, no man has ever ascended to heaven, so as to come down again and to speak authoritatively of heavenly things. Ah, but the One who had ever been in heaven did not need first to mount up to heaven, as any ordinary man would. Rather, as having always enjoyed the fullness of heavenly knowledge, He had come down from heaven ... and was therefore perfectly equipped to testify of the things of heaven and of the Father' (John 3. 13; cf. John 1. 18).

('Bible Questions', Precious Seed Publications, page 125.)

### **The choice of Matthias to apostleship.**

'The election of an apostle [by men] is confined to an act which took place between the Lord's presence and the Holy Ghost's presence, when neither was there, and never happened before or after: never when the Lord was there, never when the Holy Ghost was there; on the contrary, it is negated in both cases by the history.

'None was chosen to replace James; and Paul, we all know, was directly called of God and utterly rejected such a principle'.

(J. N. Darby, 'Presbyterianism', Collected Writings Volume 14, page 337.)

### **'Stand ... in' and the Holy Trinity.**

- (i) 'That you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God' (Col. 4. 12).
- (ii) 'Stand fast therefore in the freedom by which Christ has made us free' (Gal. 5. 1).
- (iii) 'That you stand fast in one Spirit, with one soul striving together for the faith of the gospel' (Phil. 1. 27).

### **The Lord's return: the time unknown to man.**

(i) 'Attempts have again and again been made to supply this lack of revelation by calculations based upon biblical and other data, astronomical phenomena and what not, or by deductions drawn from analogies assumed to be discernible therein. That such attempts are vain is abundantly evident from the failure that has invariably attended them. The only fruit they have had has been to discredit prophecy and to bring its study into disrepute.

'These attempts, moreover, are not merely vain; they are wrong, inasmuch as they are forbidden in the Scriptures which themselves provide the material on which such calculations are supposed to be based.

'The principle underlying all communications of the divine will was thus enunciated by Moses, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children" (Deut. 29. 29).

'The Lord Jesus said to His disciples, "Of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only" (Matt. 24. 36). The words "day" and "hour" here seem to be equivalent to "time" in its wider, as well as in its narrower, sense. That is, the time was unknown, whether the year or the month, the day or the hour. Nor was it ever afterward revealed.

'Indeed, the words used by the Lord after His Resurrection and recorded in Acts 1. 7, "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority," seem to be intended to declare that the withholding from His children of this knowledge is designed and for a purpose, and is intended to remain in force until the event takes place. The prohibition is plain enough; to attempt that which He has thus forbidden is disobedience, neither less nor more, however speciously it may be disguised or excused'.

(W. E. Vine, '*The Coming of the Lord*', pages 145-146.)

(ii) 'Every such prediction since the time of Christ has had an 100% failure rate! That should have put a stop to theological weather forecasting, but alas, pious curiosity knows no bounds ...

'You shouldn't listen to any preacher who says he knows more than Jesus. Here is what Jesus said about His own return: "Of that day or hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, not even the Son, only the Father" (Mark 13. 32)'.

(Ben Witherington III; accessed at <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/bibleandculture/2011/05/18/why-you-shouldnt-go-camping-on-may-21rst-2/>.)

### **Personal appropriation.**

- (i) 'A' – 'a lamb' (Exod. 12. 3) ... 'a Saviour' (Luke 2. 11).
- (ii) 'The' – 'the lamb' (Exod. 12. 4) ... 'the Saviour' (John 4. 42).
- (iii) 'Your' or 'My' – 'your lamb' (Exod. 12. 5) ... 'my Saviour' (Luke 1. 47).

### **Distinguishing things that differ.**

(i) "*Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's*".

'The remnant in the day of captivity, a like day of confusion, carried themselves beautifully, distinguishing things that differed ... Daniel would advise the king, but not eat his meat: Nehemiah would serve in the palace, but not suffer the Moabite or the Ammonite in the house of the Lord: Mordecai would guard the king's life, but would not bow to the Amalekite: Ezra and Zerubbabel would accept favours from the Persian, but not Samaritan help nor Gentile marriages: and the captives would pray for the peace of Babylon, but would not sing Zion's songs there'.

(J. G. Bellett, '*The Moral Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ*', page 36.)

(ii) We should **love** people as they are and **pray** for them to be what they should be.

### **Thoughts on the believer's forgiveness.**

'*The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin ... If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*' (1 John 1. 7, 9).

John assures us that confession leads to forgiveness.

This is, of course, in perfect accord with:

- (i) the experience of David, 'I acknowledged my sin to you, and my iniquity I have not covered. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord", and you forgave the iniquity of my sin' (Psa. 32. 5), and
- (ii) the teaching of Solomon, 'He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy' (Prov. 28. 13).

But we can hardly miss the striking contrast between Solomon's closing expression 'whoever confesses and forsakes [his sins] will have *mercy* (a Hebrew word signifying 'tender compassion') and the words of John, 'If we confess our sins, He is *faithful and just* to forgive us our sins'.

Knowing the God we do, we could hardly have expected John to have said that God would 'forgive us our sins' because He is indulgent and lenient!

But I suspect that many of us may have half-expected John to have said something along the lines, 'If we confess our sins, He is *loving and gracious* (or, perhaps, 'He is *merciful and kind*') to forgive us our sins'.

Instead of which, the apostle traces our forgiveness to God's faithfulness and righteousness.

He traces our forgiveness to God's *faithfulness*, I suggest, because, in part at least, in forgiving the penitent believer, God is faithful, not only to His own nature, but to the promises contained in His word.

We might think, for example, of:

- (i) the expression of one prophet's faith, 'You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea' (Micah 7. 19), and
- (ii) one of the terms of the New Covenant, 'I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more' (Jer. 31. 34).

We should note that our forgiveness is reckoned, not only to God's faithfulness, but to His *righteousness*. Nor, on reflection, is this difficult to understand.

Indeed, in a context which attributes our cleansing to 'the blood of Jesus His Son' (1 John 1. 7) and which speaks of the 'righteous' Lord Jesus as 'the propitiation for our sins' (1 John 2. 2), it is well-nigh impossible to miss the point that (and I say it reverently), because the Saviour has paid the penalty for our sins in full, *God cannot but forgive us*. His very righteousness demands it.

What is this? A just judge acquitting the guilty! Yes, indeed (Rom. 4. 5). For, in the death of the Lord Jesus, God has exhibited and vindicated His righteousness in justifying the believer (Rom. 3. 25-26)

Upon the ground of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus, then, the righteousness of God is the very guarantee to the believer of his or her forgiveness and cleansing.

Thank God that, although *we* are not righteous, *He* is! And, because of Golgotha, the Righteous One cleanses the unrighteous ones from 'all' their unrighteousness.

But, let us be clear, each of us also needs continual forgiveness if we are to live in *the conscious enjoyment of fellowship* 'with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ' (1 John 1. 3).

As I understand it:

- (i) Viewing God *as Judge*, you and I were forgiven all our sins at the moment of our conversion (whether those sins were then past, present or future). We need, therefore, never fear that any of those sins will be remembered against us in the day of judgement.

We can, therefore, sing confidently with Samuel Gandy:

*I hear the accuser roar  
Of ills that I have done;  
I know them well, and thousands more;  
Jehovah findeth none.*

- (ii) Viewing God *as Father*, you and I need to maintain ongoing fellowship with Him by confession of all known sins. Then only can we live in the enjoyment of unbroken fellowship with Him.

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

1. Herbert Higgins had been out of work for a whole year. He wasn't sure whether it was his limited education or his poor interview skills that were preventing him from obtaining a position.

When he was invited for a job interview with a national company, Herbert was very excited.

Early in the interview, the manager, wanting to find out something about Herbert's personality, asked, 'Mr Higgins, tell me, if you could have a conversation with anyone – living or dead – who would it be?'

Herbert thought for a few moments and then responded, '*The living one*'.

2. Conan Pascoe from St Ives in Cornwall, England, always considered himself to be hard done by. He was, therefore, beside himself with joy when, one day, he stumbled upon a genie – a real live genie.

The genie offered to grant Conan just one wish.

'Well', said Conan, 'I've always wanted to go to New York but plane tickets are so expensive, and ships are so slow. I want you to build a bridge from St Ives to New York'.

'I'm very sorry, Mr Pascoe', the genie replied, 'but that is not possible. It would need about 3,150 miles of bridge, as well as which, you'll need fuel stations and motels along the way. I'm sorry, but you're just going to have to ask for something else'.

'Pity about the bridge', Conan sighed, 'but, as a second best, grant me the ability to understand the thinking process of a woman'.

Clearing his throat, the genie asked: '*How many lanes did you say you wanted on your bridge?*'