

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 9 May 2022.

(i) Scripture.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried ('moved', literally) into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof ...

The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered his voice, the earth melted. Selah.

There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.

Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire.

Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

Psalm 46. 1-11 (*King James Version*)

(ii) Food for thought.

Martin Luther's favourite Psalm.

'It was a favourite Psalm with Luther; for whenever Melancthon, who was of a melancholy turn, or any other of his friends, told him some sad news, he used to say, "Come, come, let us sing the 46th Psalm"; and when he had sung that, his heart was quiet'.

(George Whitefield, '*Christ the Believer's Refuge*', reproduced in '*Memoirs of Rev. George Whitefield*', pages 484-485.)

'A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing'.

(Martin Luther: the hymn, '*A Mighty Fortress is Our God*', 1529, translated by F. H. Hedge.
Luther's German version is a metrical paraphrase of Psalm 46.)

(i) 'God is our refuge and strength, a help in distresses, very readily found' (Psa. 46. 1 J. N. D.).

'In the troubles of life, in times of affliction and adversity, His saints have always found a refuge, a shelter, in God. A New Testament writer concurs when he speaks of "Grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4. 16). He is always at hand with seasonable help for His people'.

(J. M. Flanigan, '*Psalms (What the Bible Teaches)*', page 209).

(ii) 'Though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea' (Psa. 46. 2).

'Secure in the stronghold of God, those within it have no cause for fear though the earth be overturned by a mighty convulsion of nature and the mountains disappear in the sea. *A Hebraic way of saying: whatever may happen*'.

(A. Cohen, '*The Psalms*', page 144.)

(iii) 'Not be moved' (Psa. 46. 5).

'Though the mountains be moved' (Psa. 46. 2 {literal translation: *Hebrew* כִּוֹת}); 'though the kingdoms were moved' (Psa. 46. 6 {*Hebrew* כִּוֹת}); 'the city of God ... shall **not** be moved' (Psa. 46. 6 {*Hebrew* כִּוֹת}).

'More stable than the solid mountains (Psa. 46. 2): more secure than the kingdoms of the earth (Psa. 46. 6)'.

(A. F. Kirkpatrick, '*The Book of Psalms (The Cambridge Bible)*', Volume 2, page 257.)

'There is commotion everywhere, yet a focus of stability persists, "the city of God" with God in its midst ... God is the permanent refuge. Even though the whole universe may quake, the faithful rest secure ... Even though the earth quakes, mountains fall into the ocean, unruly chaos rages, God's presence is a guarantee against disaster. There is no need to fear'.

(Konrad Schaefer, 'Psalms (Berit Olam)', page 116.)

(iv) 'He maketh wars to cease' (Psa. 46. 9).

'The psalm holds out the promise that there is coming a time when there will be no more wars and devastations, for the Lord will reign over all the earth with righteousness and power. But in the meantime, people must put their trust in Him who alone can give them the sense of security and safety for which they long. It is a message of great encouragement for believers, that the God who will bring everlasting peace is able to give peace to the troubled heart today'.

(Allen P. Ross, 'A Commentary on the Psalms', Volume 2, page 84.)

'Peace' in the Bible.

'The word "peace", in the language of the Scriptures, has a shade of meaning not commonly attached to it in ordinary use. With most persons, it signifies a cessation of hostilities, harmonious agreement, tranquillity, the absence of disturbance.

'But in the Scriptures it means more. Its predominant import there is *prosperity, welfare, joy, happiness*'.

(J. A. Seiss, 'The Gospel in Leviticus', page 64.)

'The life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life' (Lev. 17. 11).

The passage does not ascribe magical powers to blood. After all, the life is not in the blood apart from the rest of the body, and the strong prohibition against eating blood could never be perfectly carried out (since no matter how carefully you drain the blood from an animal there is always a little left). The point is that there is no life in the body where there is no blood; it is the obvious physical element for symbolizing the life itself.

'To teach the people how only the sacrifice of life could atone for sin—since the punishment of sin is death—it is difficult to imagine a more effective prohibition'.

(D. A. Carson, 'For the Love of God, Volume 1', devotional for 13 April.)

'Without shedding of blood there is no remission' (Heb. 9. 22).

'Were it not great love for a king's son to pay a great sum of money to redeem a captive? But that he should be content to be a prisoner in his stead, and die for his ransom; this were matter of wonder. Jesus Christ has done all this; He has written His love in characters of blood.

'It had been much for Christ to speak a good word to His Father for us, but He knew that was not enough to redeem us. Though a word speaking made a world, yet it would not redeem a sinner'.

(Thomas Watson, 'A Body of Divinity', page 212.)

The wrath of God.

'God's wrath is neither an impersonal process of cause and effect (as some scholars have tried to argue), nor a passionate, arbitrary or vindictive outburst of temper, but His holy and uncompromising antagonism to evil, with which He refuses to negotiate'.

(John Stott, 'The Message of 1 and 2 Thessalonians', page 42.)

'The word of our God shall stand for ever' (Isa. 40. 8).

'A thousand times over, the death knell of the Bible has been sounded, a funeral procession formed, the inscription cut on the tombstone, and committal read. But somehow the corpse never stays put'.

(Bernard Ramm, 'Protestant Christian Evidences', page 232.)

Seven things of God which 'endure for ever'.

(i) His **name**: 'His name shall endure for ever' (Psa. 72. 17).

(ii) His **glory**: 'The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever' (Psa. 104. 31).

(iii) His **righteousness**: 'His righteousness endures for ever' (Psa. 111. 3).

(iv) His **truth**: 'The truth of the Lord endures for ever' (Psa. 117. 2).

(v) His **mercy**: 'His mercy endures for ever' (Psa. 118. 1).

(vi) His **work**: 'Whatever God does endures for ever' (Eccles 3. 14).

(vii) His **word**: 'The word of the Lord endures for ever' (1 Pet. 1. 25).

Simon the Pharisee and Levi the publican.

'Simon the Pharisee objected that a sinner should enter his house and approach the Lord Jesus (Luke 7. 39); Levi the publican provided such as these to be the fellow-guests of the Lord Jesus (Luke 5. 29-30) ...

'The Lord in one house acts as a reprover, in the other, discloses Himself in the rich grace of a Saviour'.

(J. G. Bellett, 'The Moral Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ', page 15.)

'You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can' (Matt. 27. 65).

'They gave it their best shot—in vain ...

They can't keep Him buried ...

'It's not hard to figure out: He can break out because He wasn't forced in ... "I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again" (John 10. 17–18).

'No one can keep Him down because no one ever knocked Him down. He lay down when He was ready ... "God raised Him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it" (Acts 2. 24). ...

'Trust Him and go with Him, no matter what. You cannot lose in the end'.

(John Piper, 'They Gave It Their Best Shot—In Vain', accessed at www.desiringgod.org/articles/they-gave-it-their-best-shot-in-vain.)

Christ: rejected in the world but seated at God's right hand.

'Sin has reached its climax. And it is not only that God has turned man out of the garden of Eden, but that when God came into this world man turned Him out ...

'If I come to the cross, knowing that my sins brought Christ there, shall I find Him? No; when I get to the cross, I find He is not there, and where does my faith know that He is? I know that my sins brought Him there, but my faith sees Him at the right hand of God ... for He is entered into it for me.

'He is there now sitting at the right hand of God; but He has not got my sins upon Him now. No, He is sitting there because all my sins are clean gone for ever'.

(J. N. Darby, 'The Gospel of the Glory', The Christian's Friend, 1878, pages 91, 93).

'How much more'.

(i) 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? (Matt. 7. 11).

(ii) 'If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?' (Luke 12. 28).

(iii) 'Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?' (1 Cor. 6. 3).

(iv) 'If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' (Heb. 9. 13-14).

'Whatever you do' (1 Cor. 10. 31).

'In the film Chariots of Fire there is a memorable scene involving Eric Liddell and his sister, Jenny. She is chiding him for what she regards as his divided loyalty between his athletics and his commitment to Christ.

She reminds him that God made him for Himself. He replies: "Aye, Jenny, I know, but He also made me fast, and when I run, I feel His pleasure".

For us, this may not be athletics. It may be accounting or selling or teaching or nursing or mothering. In the latter case, this would allow a mother to declare with conviction: "And when I make the lunches, I feel His pleasure".

(Alistair Begg, 'Made For His Pleasure', page 19.)

'If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue ... this man's religion is worthless' (James 1. 26).

'An out-of-control tongue suggests bogus religion, no matter how well one's devotion is carried out. The true test of a man's spirituality is not his ability to speak, as we are apt to think, but rather his ability to bridle his tongue'.

(R. Kent Hughes, 'Disciplines of a Godly Man', page 142.)

'Whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world' (Rev. 13. 8 KJV); 'whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world' (Rev. 17. 8).

'It is very common to take [Rev. 13. 8] as though it spoke of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world", and to argue from it that atonement is no afterthought, that redemption belongs to the very

being of God and the nature of things. But though these are expressions upon which a Christian meaning can be put, they find no support in this passage.

'The words "from the foundation of the world" are not to be construed with "slain" but with "written" as [Rev. 17. 8] proves. It is the names of the redeemed that stand from eternity in the Lamb's book of life, not the death or sacrifice of the Lamb'.

(James Denney, 'The Death of Christ', pages 137-138.)

(iii) Go on, smile.

'Tell me ...'

1. Tuesday morning, a lady telephoned the main switchboard at Spire Private Hospital. Rather timidly, she asked, 'Is it possible, please, to speak to someone who can tell me how a patient is doing?'

'I'll be glad to help, dear', the operator replied. 'What is the name and room number?'

In her weak voice, the lady quietly said, 'Sally Collings in room 53'.

'Hold on, dear', the operator said, 'I will check for you'.

Three minutes later, the operator spoke again. 'Great news. Sally's records show that she is doing very well. Her two scans were clear, her blood pressure and temperature are fine and her blood sample came back normal. Her physician, Dr Russell, has scheduled her to be discharged on Thursday'.

'Thank you', the lady answered. 'That is wonderful! I am very grateful for the good news. I was so worried!'

'You're welcome', the operator said. 'So I can let Sally know who called, tell me, what is your name? Are you her mother?'

'Oh no', the lady replied. 'I am Sally Collings in room 53. Dr Russell doesn't tell me anything!'

2. The Richards family were eating their Sunday lunch after the head of the home, Daniel Richards, had preached the morning sermon at the local church.

Little Emily suddenly asked her father, 'Daddy, what is the highest number you have ever counted?'

'I am sure I don't know', Mr Richards replied. 'How about you?'

'That's easy', Emily promptly answered, '5,473'.

'That is very good', her father responded. 'But, tell me, why did you stop there?'

'I had to', Emily explained, '*You finished your sermon*'.