

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 15 May 2023

(i) Scripture.

It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister..

Colossians 1. 19-23 (King James Version)

(ii) Food for thought.

'Grace' in the past, present and future.

'In the past, grace provided salvation (Titus 2. 11; Eph. 2. 5, 8).

'In the present, grace pledges sufficiency (2 Cor. 12. 9).

'In the future, grace promises satisfaction (Eph. 2. 7).'

(Bernard Osborne, 'Treasury of Bible Doctrine', Precious Seed Publications, page 288.)

'God sending His own Son' (Romans 8. 3).

'Popular religion tells us we can do something for God; sociology, that we can do something for others; and psychology, that we can do something for ourselves. But the gospel says that God has done something for us'.

(James M. Scott, 'Romans: New International Bible Commentary', page 201.)

'Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men' (Col. 3. 23).

1. 'Genesis 1 logs God's commitment to excellence when it says, "God saw all that He had made, and it was very good" (Gen. 1. 31). Christians should always do good work. Christians ought to be the best workers wherever they are. They ought to have the best attitude, the best integrity, and be the best in dependability'.

(R. Kent Hughes, 'Disciplines of a Godly Man', page 154.)

2. 'A Christian should never plead spirituality for being a sloven; if he be but a shoe-cleaner, he should be the best in the parish'.

(John Newton, 'The Life of John Newton: An Authentic Narrative, written by himself, to which some further particulars are added', 1854, page 114.)

'Into heaven itself, now to appear ... on our behalf' (Heb. 9. 24); 'you will be my witnesses' (Acts 1. 8).

'Christ has taken our nature into heaven to represent us; and has left us on earth with His nature to represent Him'.

(John Newton, *ibid.*, page 114.)

'Henceforth'.

From the very moment of the Christian's conversion, his way of life is to change. 'Henceforth' ('no longer') is he to live a life of:

(i) slavery to sin: 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him ... that henceforth we should not serve sin' (Rom. 6. 6);

(ii) similarity to the behaviour of the godless world around: 'I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk' (Eph. 4. 17);

(iii) selfishness and the pursuit of his own selfish interests: 'He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live for themselves, but for Him which died for them and rose again' (2 Cor. 5. 15).

A threefold divine manifestation in the Epistle to Titus.

(i) Of God's word: 'God ... has manifested in its own due season His word' (Tit. 1. 2-3).

(ii) Of God's grace: 'the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all' (Tit. 2. 11).

(iii) Of God's glory: the '*appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ*' (Tit. 2. 13).

Heaven, earth and under the earth.

'The scope of Christ's authority is unlimited, embracing "things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth" (Phil. 2. 10).

Reconciliation is confined to "things in earth" and "things in heaven" (Col. 1. 20), whilst evangelism is limited to those "under heaven" (Col. 1. 23)'.
(J. Marchant, '*Day by Day through the New Testament*', Precious Seed Publications, page 263.)

'You have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice' (John 16. 22).

'Jesus was just hours from the Cross. Still, He reassured His disciples that the time of their suffering would come to an end and would be replaced with joy. In every sense, Jesus was preparing these men for what was about to transpire. Although Jesus encouraged His disciples, He didn't sugar-coat what was about to happen. The disciples were about to enter a time of suffering (John 16. 20) ...

'Jesus compared what was coming to a woman giving birth. The pains of childbirth are agonizing but must be experienced. But after a woman gives birth to a child, she is so overjoyed with the baby that she quickly forgets the suffering caused by the labour (John 16. 21). In the same way, the disciples would experience intense grief, but when the reality of the risen Christ was manifested to them, their joy would be so intense their suffering would seem minimal ...

'For Christians, all suffering has an expiration date. No matter how dark our days may seem, the Bible teaches that all grief will come to an end and will be replaced with eternal peace and gladness'.

(*'10 Minutes in the Word: John'*, Zondervan, 2019, pages 137-138.)

'Seven golden lampstands' (Rev. 1. 12): 'seven lamps of fire before the throne' (Rev. 4. 5).

John saw:

(i) seven lampstands of gold on earth and

(ii) seven lamps of fire in heaven.

'He that sat upon the throne said ...' (Rev. 21. 5-6).

'His supreme declaration, "Behold I make all things new", leads to a special charge, "Write: for these words are true and faithful".

'Then follows a steadfast assurance, "It is done", supported by His sublime claim, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end"; and all this is accompanied by His splendid offer, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely".

(C. J. Rolls, '*I am Alpha and Omega*', Chapter 7.)

'Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead' (Rom. 1. 4).

'With regard to the expression, "the Spirit of holiness", I would notice that the Holy Spirit is, so to speak, the operative power in the resurrection, as in everything that God has created or done. Thus, Peter says, with regard to the Lord's resurrection, "Put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Pet. 3. 18); and of the believer it is said, "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8. 11) ...

'The power of the Holy Spirit was shown in the greatest and most perfect way in the Lord's resurrection. ...The Spirit, who in divine power had been energetic in His birth, and in His whole life, and by whom He at length offered Himself to God (Heb. 9. 14), manifested all His power in quickening Jesus from death. It is true indeed that He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father (Rom. 6. 4); also, that He Himself raised up His body, the temple of God (John 2. 19, 21); but the Holy Spirit was the immediate agent in His resurrection'.

(J. N. Darby, '*On the Epistle to the Romans*', Collected Writings, Volume 33, pages 314-316.)

'You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good' (Gen. 50. 20).

'We should notice that the alternatives to saying that God uses evil for His purposes, but that He never does evil and is not to be blamed for it, are not desirable ones.

'If we were to say that God Himself does evil, we would have to conclude that He is not a good and righteous God, and therefore that He is not really God at all.

'On the other hand, if we maintain that God does not use evil to fulfil His purposes, then we would have to admit that there is evil in the universe that God did not intend, is not under His control, and might not fulfil His purposes'.

(Wayne Grudem, 'Systematic Theology', pages 328-329.)

'He ... took a towel, and girded Himself' (John 13. 4).

'Girded to serve the Lord of Glory stands,
The basin and the towel in His hands;
Pours out the water, bondman-like, and then
He stoops to wash the feet of fallen men.

'The myriad hosts of heaven downward gaze
Upon the scene in reverend amaze
To see the One they served with veiled face
Girded to serve among a fallen race.

'O lovely lowliness! enabling grace
That *fills with heaven's best earth's lowest place!*
O but to hold to this, nor from it swerve,
Girded to serve, my soul, girded to serve'.

(I. Y. Ewan, 'The Caravanserai', page 195).

(iii) Go on, smile.

School days.

1. Mr Williams, a geometry teacher at a prestigious High School, started a lesson on triangles by reading a theorem: 'If an angle is an exterior angle of a triangle, then its measure is greater than the measure of either of its corresponding remote interior angles'.

Noticing that Gilbert wasn't taking notes, Mr Williams asked him why.

'Well, sir', Gilbert replied, 'I was just *waiting for you to start speaking English*'.

2. Luke Withers wasn't doing too well in school. His father was delighted, therefore, when Luke told him one day that he had scored 100% on his report card.

'That's marvellous, my boy', Mr Withers said. 'Tell me, in which subject did you achieve this?'

'Well, it's like this, dad', Luke replied, 'I got a *20% in maths, 30% in English and 50% in art*'.