

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 25 September 2023

(i) Scripture.

God, willing to shew more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, intervened by an oath, that by two unchangeable things, in which it was impossible that God should lie, we might have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us, which we have as anchor of the soul, both secure and firm, and entering into that within the veil, where Jesus is entered as forerunner for us, become for ever a high priest according to the order of Melchisedec.

Hebrews 6. 18-20 (J. N. Darby's New Translation)

(ii) Food for thought.

'He who believes on me has everlasting life' (John 6. 47).

'How may I be sure that I have the right kind of faith? There can be but one answer to that question: "Have you confidence in the right person?" ... It is not a question of the amount of your faith but the trustworthiness of the person you repose your confidence in.

'One man takes hold of Christ, as it were, with a drowning man's grip; another but touches the hem of His garment; but the sinner who does the former is not a bit safer than the one who does the latter. They have both made the same discovery, viz. that while all of self is totally untrustworthy, they may safely confide in Christ, calmly rely on His word, and confidently rest in the eternal efficacy of His finished work. That is what is meant by believing on Him'.

(George Cutting, '*Safety, Certainty and Enjoyment*', pages 21-22.)

Three ways of living.

'As Christians, we can live on one of three levels.

'We can return evil for good, which is the satanic level. We can return good for good and evil for evil, which is the human level. Or, we can return good for evil, which is the divine level ...

'We can decide to endure life and make it a burden, escape life as though we were running from a battle, or enjoy life because we know God is in control'.

(Warren W. Wiersbe, '*Be Hopeful*', pages 80-81.)

'Entered ... for us' in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The entrance of our Lord Jesus into the heavenly '*Holiest of all*' (Heb. 9. 3, 8) has in view:

(i) **our past:** 'Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us' (Heb. 9. 12);

(ii) **our present:** 'Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us' (Heb. 9. 24); and

(iii) **our future:** 'Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is entered for us, even Jesus' (Heb. 6. 19-20).

'That they may behold my glory' (John 17. 24).

'Christ himself, in His own person, with all His glory, shall be continually with us, before us ...

We shall no longer have an image, a representation of Him ... We shall see the Lord Christ in His glory; and not as Moses, who had only a transient sight of some parts of the glory of God, when He caused it to pass by him ...

'And all the glories of the person of Christ which we have before weakly and faintly inquired into, will be in our sight for evermore'.

(John Owen, '*Meditations on the Glory of Christ*', The Works of John Owen, 1862, Volume 1, pages 378-379.)

'I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God' (Rom. 12. 1).

'The most compelling motivation for faithful, obedient living should not be the threat of discipline or loss of reward but overflowing and unceasing gratitude for the marvellous mercies of God'.

(J. MacArthur Jr, '*Romans (New Testament Commentary)*', comment on Rom. 12. 1a.)

'Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours' (Mark 11. 24).

"If we are to have real faith, we must study the Word of God and find out what is promised, then simply believe the promises of God. Faith must have a warrant. Trying to believe something that you want to believe is not faith. Believing what God says in His word is faith. If I am to have faith when I pray, I must find some promise in the Word of God on which to rest my faith."

(R. A. Torrey, 'How to Pray', 1900, page 62.)

Gleanings from Gurnall

(Extracts from William Gurnall, 'The Christian in Complete Armour', published 1862).

(i) 'Affliction, which is but for a moment' (2 Cor. 4. 17).

'The skirmish may be sharp, but it cannot be long ... The cloud, while it drops, is rolling over thy head, and then comes fair weather, and eternal sunshine of glory', page 104.

(ii) 'Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart' (Matt. 11. 29).

'The gate into Christ's school is low, and these cannot stoop: the Master Himself is so humble and lowly that He will not teach a proud scholar', page 120.

(iii) 'The pride of your heart has deceived you' (Obad. 1. 3).

'A man may be very zealous in prayer and painstaking in preaching, and all the while pride is the master whom he serves ... It is hard starving this sin; there is nothing almost but it can live on; nothing so base that a proud heart will not be lifted up with, and nothing so sacred but it will profane', page 136.

(iv) 'There was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle. And the Canaanite and the Perizzite lived then in the land' (Gen. 13. 7).

'The unreasonableness of the strife betwixt Abraham's herdsmen and Lot's is aggravated by the near neighbourhood of the heathen to them ... O Christians, shall Herod and Pilate put you to shame?', page 398.

(v) 'Peter came to the house where many had gathered together to pray. And Peter knocked at the door' (Acts 12. 12-13).

'Peter knocked at their gate, who were assembled to seek God for him, almost as soon as their prayer knocked at heaven's gate in his behalf', page 406.

(vi) 'When he had learned that the document was signed, Daniel ... kneeled on his knees three times a day and prayed, and gave thanks before his God', Dan 6. 10.

'Daniel, when in the very shadow of death, the plot being laid to take away his life, prayed three times a day, and gave thanks before his God. To have heard him pray in that great strait would not have afforded so much matter for wonder; but to have his heart in tune for giving thanks in such a sad hour was admirable', page 493.

(vii) 'Your word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against you' (Psa. 119. 11).

'It was not the Bible in his hand to read it, not the word on his tongue to speak of it, nor in his head to get a notional knowledge of it; but the hiding it in his heart, that he found effectual against sin', page 611.

(viii) 'Let there be no strife between you and me ... for we are brethren' (Gen. 13. 8).

'In our divided times, wherein there is so much difference of judgment, had there been *less wrangling among ourselves and more wrestling with God*, we had been in a fairer way to find the door of truth', page 704.

The Lord Jesus and Satan.

'Satan was not with Him in the way of direct temptation during the course of His ministry.

'We read in Luke, "And when the devil had ended all the temptation, *he departed from Him for a season*". But at the close of His life He could say, "Henceforth I will not talk much with you, for *the prince of this world cometh* and hath nothing in me" (John 14. 30). Here a distinct change takes place again as to the position of the Lord in respect of the presence of Satan.

'Hence, He could say to those who came from the chief priests afterwards, "But *this is your hour and the power of darkness*" (Luke 22. 53). Previously He had sat daily with them in the temple, and they had laid no hands on Him; but this (terrible word for these unhappy men!) was their hour and the power of darkness'.

(J. N. Darby, 'The Sufferings of Christ', Collected Writings, Volume 7, page 182.)

'Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord' (Prov. 16. 5).

'How you handle loss says one thing; how you handle success says more. According to legend, a triumphant general entering Rome paid an attendant to walk alongside and whisper in his ear, "You are but mortal" ... when suffering from delusions of grandeur, apply this statement and repeat as often as needed: "There is a God, and it's not me"'.
(Mark DeMoss, 'The Little Red Book of Wisdom', pages 135-136.)

'The land of Moriah ... one of the mountains' (Gen. 22. 2); 'Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in mount Moriah ... in the place that David had prepared in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite' (2 Chron. 3. 1).

1. 'Mount Moriah is the Temple Mount ...

'It is possible to find a basis for the identification of the place in the way in which the name Moriah is employed in Genesis 22 ... Scripture linked it, in accordance with the technique utilized in the exposition of names, to the stem ראה ['saw'], which occurs a number of times in the section in succession. In verse 4, it is stated: 'Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw [ראַה] the place afar off'; in verse 8: 'And Abraham said, ... God will provide [רָאָה]; literally, 'see' Himself the lamb'; in verse 13: 'And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked [רָאָה], and behold a ram'; in verse 14: 'And Abraham called the name of that place, "The Lord will provide [רָאָה]" ...

'Of particular importance in these repetitions is verse 14, which connects the name by which Abraham called the place with the saying that was apparently widely current among the Israelites when the section was written; "as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided'".

This can be understood only if we posit that *the mountain on which Abraham bound his son Isaac*—that is, one of the mountains of the land of Moriah—was actually the mountain that was subsequently named "the Mount of the Lord". Now "the Mount of the Lord", as is clearly to be seen from verses like Isa. 2. 3; 30. 29; Mic. 4. 2; Psa. 24. 3, and others, *is the Temple Mount at Jerusalem* ... the distance from Beer-sheba accords with this identification. If one walks from Beer-sheba to Jerusalem, he is able, after a journey of two days, to see on the morning of the third day the mountains of Jerusalem from afar'.

(U. Cassuto, 'Jerusalem in the Pentateuch', Biblical and oriental Studies: Volume 1, pages 74-76.)

2. 'It was there on Ornan's threshing floor "on Mount Moriah", that David built his "altar to the Lord" (1 Chron. 21. 26) and that Solomon later built the 'house of the Lord' – the Temple.

'And what great thoughts these simple facts suggest:

(i) 'The angel of the Lord's sword was held aloft, never to fall (1 Chron. 21. 15), in the vicinity of that very spot where, *one thousand years' before*, a knife had likewise been suspended (then over Abraham's son) never to fall!

(ii) 'Even more significant for us, given that the Jerusalem Temple was later erected on that very spot, both the patriarch's knife and the angel's sword were held high in the vicinity of that very spot where, *one thousand years after*, a cross was raised. But at that time no voice from heaven called for any knife to be put away or any sword to be sheathed. Indeed, in stark contrast, it was then that the very sword of Jehovah was bidden to 'awake' and to 'smite' God's shepherd, our Lord Jesus (Zech. 13. 7; cf. Mark 14. 26-27)'.
(Adapted slightly from '2 Samuel 24', Monday Musings, 2 November 2020, page 8.)

'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who ... has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead' (1 Pet. 1. 3).

'Only a few months and the Neronian persecution will have burst upon the church in Rome, where the apostle is writing, and have cost it many martyrs —among them the Apostle himself.

'Already the storm-clouds are gathering ... the Christians in Asia Minor, to whom this letter is addressed, are seriously alarmed ... *How does (the letter) begin? Not by offering sympathy, not by trying to convince them that what they fear will never happen, nor yet with a rehearsal of the writer's own troubles, but with an ascription of praise and thanks to God—"Blessed be" ...*

'The most striking characteristic that distinguished the early Christians from their pagan neighbours was their hope ... by the resurrection of Christ, the king of terrors (Job 18. 14) had been dethroned ... unlike their pagan neighbours the early Christians were *men of hope, who could look steadily into the future without fear, not with mere resignation, but with eager anticipation*. A new dimension had been given to their lives—the dimension of the future, of eternal life'.

(C. E. B. Cranfield, 'The First Epistle of Peter', 1950, pages 20, 23.)

(iii) Go on, smile.

'Oops'—three examples of 'typo-graphy' (no relation of 'typology').

1. 'Seeing that these things are so, what manner of *parsons* ought ye to be ...'.

(C. E. B. Cranfield, 'The First Epistle of Peter', 1950, page 107.)

2. The text of scripture says, 'Athaliah *rent* her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason' (2 Kings 11. 14; cf. 2 Chron. 23. 13). Almost 30 years ago, when checking through the printer's proofs for a well-known Christian magazine, I almost cried with laughter when I saw that the printer had set up the type to say, 'Athaliah *sent* her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason'.

3. Speaking of printers ...

The text of scripture says, '*Princes* have persecuted me without a cause' (Psa. 119. 161a). Amusingly, a 1612 edition of the King James Version was *printed* with that section of the verse rendered, '*Printers* have persecuted me without a cause'.
(Source: <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/religionprof/2015/04/bible-typos.html>.)