

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 9 March 2026

Greetings.

Tomorrow marks the anniversary of the death of George Müller, aged 92, on 10 March 1898.

Mr Müller is well known, of course, (i) for the orphanages which he established in Ashley Down, Bristol, (ii) for his practice of living by faith (never drawing a salary and never asking for money) and, perhaps most famously, (iii) for his fervent, believing and expectant prayer life.

Here are several gems from Mr Müller's pen and/or lips:

1. Anxiety.

(i) 'I met at a brother's house with several believers, when a sister said that she had often thought about the care and burden I must have on my mind, as it regards obtaining the necessary supplies for so many persons. As this may not be a solitary instance, I would state that, by the grace of God, this is no cause of anxiety to me. The children I have years ago cast upon the Lord. The whole work is His, and it becomes me to be without carefulness. In whatever points I am lacking, in this point I am able by the grace of God, to roll the burden upon my heavenly Father'.

(*'A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller'*, Second Part, item for 15 July 1839.)

(ii) 'Where anxiety begins, faith ends;

And where faith begins, anxiety ends'.

(Quoted from Mr Müller by A. T. Pierson, *'In Christ Jesus or the Sphere of the Believer's Life'*, 1898, page 133.)

2. The natural mind versus the exercise of faith.

'The natural mind is ever prone to reason, when we ought to believe; to be at work, when we ought to be quiet; to go our own way, when we ought steadily to walk on in God's ways, however trying to nature'.

(*'A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller'*, Fourth Part, page 299.)

3. Chastisement.

'The Lord never lays more on us, in the way of chastisement, than our state of heart makes needful; so that whilst He smites with the one hand, He supports with the other'.

(*'A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller'*, First Part, page 91.)

4. Consecration.

'What I would especially advise my fellow-believers in the Lord Jesus to aim after is to seek more and more to enter into the grace and love of God, in giving His only-begotten Son, and into the grace and love of the Lord Jesus, in giving Himself in our room, in order that, constrained by love and gratitude, they may be increasingly led, to surrender their bodily and mental strength, their time, gifts, talents, property, position in life, rank, and all they have and are to the Lord'.

(Quoted from Mr Müller by F. G. Warne, *'George Müller, the Modern Apostle of Faith'*, 1898, page 228.)

5. The first day of the week.

'That the disciples of Jesus should meet together on the first day of the week for the breaking of bread, and that that should be their principal meeting, and that those, whether one or several, who are truly gifted by the Holy Spirit for service, be it for exhortation, or teaching, or rule, etc., are responsible to the Lord for the exercise of their gifts—these are to me no matters of uncertainty, but points on which my soul, by grace, is established, through the revealed will of God'.

(*'A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller'*, First Part, page 80.)

I set out below today's 'Musings'.

Happy reading.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

(i) Scripture.

Now He was casting out a demon that was mute. When the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke, and the people marvelled. But some of them said, 'He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons', while others, to test Him, kept seeking from Him a sign from heaven.

But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls. And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand?

'For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.

'But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

'When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe; but when one stronger than he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armour in which he trusted and divides his spoil.

'Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

'When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finding none it says, "I will return to my house from which I came".

'And when it comes, it finds the house swept and put in order. Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that person is worse than the first'.

Luke 11. 14-26 (English Standard Version)

(ii) Food for thought.

'When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person ... the last state of that person is worse than the first' (Luke 11. 24-26).

'Evil cannot simply be opposed—that is, it is never enough simply to fight evil, to cast out a demon. Evil must be replaced by good—the evil spirit by the Holy Spirit. We must "overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12. 21).

'For instance:

(i) it is difficult to overcome bitterness against someone by simply resolving to stop being bitter; one must replace bitterness by genuine forgiveness and love for that person;

(ii) it is difficult to overcome greed by simply resolving not to be quite so materialistic; one must fasten one's affections on better treasure and learn to be wonderfully and self-sacrificially generous'.

(D. A. Carson, *'For the Love of God'*, Volume 1, comment for 25 February.)

'I call to remembrance my song in the night' (Psa. 77. 6).

Horatio Spafford's book of poems, *'Waiting for the Morning'*, which includes the following verses, was copyrighted in 1878. This is but a few years (i) after Mr Spafford lost almost all his possessions in the Great Fire of Chicago and (ii) after all four of his daughters (aged from 12 years to eighteen months) drowned, when the steamship Ville du Havre, the ship on which they were crossing the Atlantic with their mother, was struck by an iron sailing vessel. With this background, we can understand a little of Mr Spafford's depth of feeling as he penned the following words,

A Song in the Night.

*'There's darkness all round in my earthly affairs,
Wave following wave, tribulation and cares;
My way is shut up on the left and the right—
And, yet, I've a mind for a song in the night.
A song in the night—a song in the night,
My heart, canst thou give Him a song in the night?*

*'No incense which rises to God on our part,
So grateful as songs from a pain-stricken heart.
So, sorrow itself shall be clad with delight.
For sorrow alone can give songs in the night.
A song in the night—a song in the night,
Let all that is in me, give songs in the night'.*

(Horatio Spafford, *'Waiting for the Morning'*, pages 30-31.)

Blessing, honour, glory and power in Revelation 4 and 5.

(i) In *Revelation 4*, heaven's praise is directed to 'Him who sits on the throne', on the ground of His unique creatorial achievement.

(ii) In *Revelation 5. 1-12*, heaven's praise is directed to 'the Lamb', on the ground of His unique sacrificial work.

(iii) In *Revelation 5. 13-14*, therefore, 'every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them' combine to direct their praise jointly to 'Him who sits on the throne' and to 'the Lamb'.

'Do and teach': Jesus' preaching and example.

(i) 'Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5. 19).

(ii) 'The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach', (Acts 1. 1).

The Messianic Psalms.

'I think it a great mistake to suppose, because an expression is applicable to Christ or used by Him, that the whole psalm is so applicable ... Where an expression served to give utterance to His own perfect piety and sorrow, He could use it, though the whole psalm could by no means be assigned to Him ...

'Psalm 40, though mainly of Him, is not absolutely so (see 'mine iniquities', verse 12) ... Psalm 69 speaks also chiefly but not exclusively of Him (see 'my foolishness ... my sins', verse 5)'.
(J. N. Darby, '*The Sufferings of Christ*', Collected Writings, Volume 7, pages 224 and 198—slightly adapted.)

The Beatitudes: 'Blessed are ...' (Matt. 5. 2-12).

'The following list illustrates the kind of Old Testament themes and texts that undergird the Beatitudes.

(i) Poor in spirit: Matt. 5. 3—see Psa. 34. 18; Isa. 57. 15; 61. 1.

(ii) Comfort for mourners: Matt. 5. 4—see Isa. 61. 2-3.

(iii) Meek inherit the earth: Matt. 5. 5—see Psa. 37. 11 (cf. Deut. 4. 38).

(iv) Satisfaction for the hungry and thirsty: Matt. 5. 6—see Psa. 107. 5, 9.

(v) Blessing for the generous and merciful: Matt. 5. 7—see Prov. 14. 21.

(vi) Pure in heart will see God: Matt. 5. 8—see Psa. 24. 3-4; 73. 1 (cf. Gen. 20. 5) ...

'At the outset of Jesus' sermon, He draws up not only the parameters for the blessed life but also the blueprint for His own life and ministry. As the rest of Matthew's Gospel shows, He lived out the Beatitudes perfectly.

'For instance:

(i) in calling us to meekness, He himself was meek and lowly (Matt 11. 29; 21. 5);

(ii) in urging us to hunger and thirst for righteousness, He Himself hungered more for God's word than for bread (Matt. 4. 1-4);

(iii) He followed the invitation to show mercy by showing mercy consistently throughout His ministry (Matt. 9. 27; 15. 22; 17. 15; 20. 30-31);

(iv) unlike the Pharisees, Jesus exhibited a genuine concern for purity of heart (Matt. 15. 17-20; 23. 25-28);

(v) as God's Son, He was the peacemaker par excellence in His saving work; and

(vi) more than any of us, He was persecuted for the sake of righteousness'.

(J. Greever, '*Blessed Are the Empty*', accessed at <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/blessed-are-the-empty>.)

'You ask and receive not, because you ask amiss' (James 4. 3).

'Prayer is not an invitation to bring God a catalogue of our self-oriented desires, as if he were little more than a cosmic delivery system for whatever cravings consume us at the moment.

'No, the heart of prayer is worshipful submission to Him, which produces gratitude, humility, vision, and willingness in us.

'Without adoration and submission, prayer is reduced to a set of demands that make it look as if we are gods, and God's job is to submit His almighty power to our lordship. It is shocking to consider that

what appears to be our most conscious Godward act can actually be evidence of our ongoing idolatry ...

'To pray, we need rescuing grace that will free us from the dominion of our own selfish hearts. To get our hearts to that counterintuitive place of adoration and submission, we need the help of the One to whom we pray (Luke 11. 1).'

(P. D. Tripp, *'One of the sweetest gifts He gives'*, accessed at <https://mailchi.mp/crossway/one-of-the-sweetest-gifts-he-gives>.)

Three merely-human impossibilities in Mark 5.

In order:

(i) 'A man with an unclean spirit ... no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain ... no one had the strength to subdue him' (Mark 5. 3-4).

(ii) 'There was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse' (Mark 5. 25-26).

(iii) 'There came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead"' (Mark 5. 35).

But then, on each occasion, Jesus steps in and demonstrates His superiority (i) to demons, (ii) to disease and defilement and (iii) to death.

Here on display is His superiority, we might say, not in  but in **4D**.

Travelling on my knees: 'Helping ... by prayer' (2 Cor. 1. 11).

'Last night I took a journey
To a land across the seas.
I didn't go by ship or plane—
I travelled on my knees.

'I saw so many people there
In bondage to their sin,
And Jesus told me I should go,
Some of these souls to win.

'But I said, "Lord, I cannot go
To lands across the seas".
He answered quickly, "Yes you can,
By travelling on your knees".

'And so I did. I knelt in prayer.
Gave up some hours of ease,
And with the Saviour by my side,
I travelled on my knees.'

Author unknown

Fruit bearing (John 15. 1-14).

'God, the vinedresser, does two things to maximize the fruit production of the branches (Jesus' followers).

'First, he prunes them so they can be more fruitful (John 15. 2). This pruning involves cutting away anything—interests, activities, habits—that hinder growth and effectiveness (fruit bearing). Historically, this was seen in the original disciples, who grew in spiritual maturity and became more effective in their mission for God.

'Second, the vinedresser removes and burns fruitless branches (John 15. 2, 6). This was the case with Judas Iscariot, who was removed from among Jesus's followers and became the object of God's judgment.

'Today and every day until Jesus's return, true followers of Jesus abide in Him and bear much fruit by continuing in a daily, personal relationship with their Lord and Master. This relationship is characterized and nurtured by adhering to Jesus' words (John 15. 7) and by obeying His commandments, particularly the command to love one another (John 15. 10–14). Those who remain in Christ have confidence in prayer and know that God will hear and answer their requests because they desire what Christ desires and pray accordingly, in keeping with His will (John 15. 7).

'Finally, one (if not the) primary point of the vine and branch illustration is the believer's complete dependence on Jesus: apart from remaining in a daily relationship with Him, His followers can do nothing of eternal value (John 15:–5). Not that it is impossible for anyone to do anything good on their own, but anything of true, lasting significance must be done by God through us. Believers will never outgrow their daily need to abide in Christ'.

(A. J. Köstenberger and J. Taylor, 'The Final Days of Jesus: The Most Important Week of the Most Important Person Who Ever Lived', pages 78-79.)

Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

"In one Spirit were we all baptized into one body ... and were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12: 12-13 RV). The process began historically with the advent of the Spirit at Pentecost. Remember the Lord's promise before He left: 'Ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence' (Acts 1: 5). The Risen Lord was the Baptizer; the Spirit was the element in whom they were baptized.

'All the believers became part of the "one body" of which the Head was Christ. And, as believers in these early days were added in thousands, and as to-day they are added one by one, all become part of the mystical body of Christ, and all have been once-for-all baptized in the Holy Spirit.

'The current idea of a 'fresh baptism of the Spirit' is quite unknown to Scripture. There may be many "fillings with the Spirit" but there can only be one "baptism in the Spirit".

(J. Ritchie, 'The Holy Spirit', 'in 'The Faith: A Symposium', edited by F. A. Tatford, pages 112-113. See further the Appendix below, 'Baptism in the Spirit'.)

(iii) Go on, smile.

The joys of getting older.

(Acknowledgement: the following 'smiles' are reproduced from 'Haynes Explains Pensioners: Owners' Workshop Manual', pages 23, 27, 28, 34.)

1. 'If you're worried about your ability to drive, visit your doctor. On your visit, if you can't see him clearly, your eyesight's probably not good enough to drive. If you can't read his writing, that's nothing to do with your eyesight. It's because he's a doctor and he writes in hieroglyphics rather than in letters.'

2. 'A pensioner with a mild cold and Google can convince themselves they have a medical history-making-combination of cancer and tropical diseases in three minutes flat.

3. 'Memory, or more precisely its deterioration, is one of the banes of getting older. They don't call them the "Wonder Years" for nothing—wonder what day it is, wonder where your keys are, wonder where you left your glasses. It's all to do with your left brain/right brain balance. There's nothing right on your left brain and there's nothing left on your right brain.'

4. Fault diagnosis.

(i) **Fault:** You can't find your dentures and you have a pain in your backside.

Diagnosis: You're sitting on your dentures.

(ii) **Fault:** No one to whom you send letters ever receives them.

Diagnosis: You're posting them in the wrong bin, the one that's meant for bags of dog poo.



Baptism in the Spirit.

There are, in all, seven references to baptism in the Spirit in the New Testament. The four Gospels boast one reference each (all of which record John the Baptist's prediction that the Lord Jesus would, at some time, baptize people in the Spirit); the Book of Acts contains two references (the first where the Lord alerted the apostles to the imminence of the event (Acts 1. 5) and the second where Peter pointed back to the extended fulfilment of Pentecost as recorded in chapter 10 (Acts 11. 16); and Paul provides the final reference in 1 Cor. 12. 13, where he explains the doctrinal meaning and significance of the event.

The Bible distinguishes clearly between baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit; see, for example, the words of John the Baptist, 'I indeed baptize you in water ... but ... He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit' (Matt. 3. 11), and the words of the Lord Jesus Himself, 'John indeed baptized in water, but you shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit after not many days' (Acts 1. 5). That is, the Lord Jesus was the baptizer, and the Holy Spirit was the element in which believers were baptized.

'Into one body' (1 Cor. 12. 13) means 'so as to constitute one body'. Although it is true that baptism in the Spirit brought the disciples the power to witness (Luke 24. 48-49; Acts 1. 8), the main purpose of that baptism was to get believers into the body, the church—to incorporate them into the body of Christ. Baptism in the Spirit is all about the way in which the body, the church, came into existence. It has everything to do with placing men and women in that body. So that, to be immersed in the Spirit is at one and the same time to be incorporated into Christ.

It should be noted that, in Acts chapters 8, 10 and 19, Luke records three special extensions of the original Pentecost experience. Only Jews experienced the baptism in the Spirit at the beginning (Acts 2. 1-4). There was, therefore, no problem when other Jews were saved later. There was no reason for anyone to doubt that later Jewish converts were regarded by God as included representatively in the initial Pentecost event and that they formed part of the body, the church. But there were several other kinds of people about: (a) some were half-Jew and half-Gentile (the Samaritans, see 2 Kings 17); (b) some were fully-fledged Gentiles; and (c) some could be said to be half-Jew and half-Christian (the disciples of John the Baptist).

If groups from these various kinds of people were to be accepted into the public fellowship of the (originally Jewish) church, it was essential that both (i) those in each group, and (ii) the Jewish believers themselves should be given some public confirmation that the groups were in fact indwelt by the same Spirit, and had, 'in the Spirit', been baptized into the one body. Luke was at pains, therefore, to report how the baptism of the Spirit was extended to representative samples of each group in chapters 8, 10 and 19 respectively. These chapters record three unique and unrepeatable extensions of one unique and unrepeatable event.

With an eye to the claims made in some sections of the church today, we note that (a) on no occasion was the special experience sought, (b) in no case was the experience dependent on the spirituality of the recipients, and (c) in no case was it an individual experience; the experience was always shared collectively by the whole group.

What happened at Pentecost was a representative event, in the same way that what happened at Golgotha was a representative event. In God's eyes, when Jesus died, all believers were crucified with Him (Gal. 2. 20). When Jesus rose, all believers were seen by God as raised up together with Him. Similarly, when those present on the day of Pentecost were baptized in the Spirit, God saw all believers as baptized in the Spirit that day also. At my conversion, I came into the good of what happened almost 2,000 years ago—at the cross, in Jesus' resurrection, and on the day of Pentecost.

Scripture never contemplates baptism in the Spirit (still less 'baptism of the Spirit'—an altogether non-scriptural term) as some kind of special and higher experience for Christians. Indeed, the very church of which Paul said that they had 'all' been 'baptized in one Spirit' was a conspicuously 'carnal' church (1 Cor. 3. 1, 3). Again with an eye to the claims made in some sections of the church today, we note also that all the Corinthians are said to have been baptized in the Spirit, yet certainly all of them didn't speak in tongues (1 Cor. 12. 10, 30). It is by the baptism in the Spirit that the church (the body of Christ) came into existence, in which body there are no ethnic, cultural, or social (class/rank) distinctions (1 Cor. 12. 13).

In summary, the baptism in the Spirit is not an experience subsequent to conversion, enjoyed only by some—coming into the good of the baptism in the Spirit is an experience common to all Christians at their conversion. The apostle makes it clear that all those in the body of Christ have been baptized in the Spirit.

(Source: '*Studies in First Corinthians*', Precious Seed Publications, pages 156-158—reproduced with kind permission and with minimal editing.)