

## Malcolm's Monday Musings : 12 April 2021

Greetings.



This is my 'Monday Musings' email.

This week's attached document focuses on the conversion of Cornelius, the centurion of Caesarea. It follows on, therefore, from the earlier documents attached to the Musings of 15 and 22 February, which detailed the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, together with the sequel to that conversion.

On account of the length of this week's document, I have decided to do as I have done on a few occasions in the past and to spare you a further document next Monday. You should find that, together with the numerous 'Notes', 'The conversion of Cornelius' will suffice you for two weeks.

Commenting on Acts 10. 5-6, Note 168 reads:

'One expositor ventures the comment, "Given that Simon was a tanner, *odour might have also aided their quest*" ... A case, perhaps, of being "*led by the nose*"?'

You will gather from this Note that I retain my sense of humour even when engaged in detailed exposition.

(It is often reported that Martin Luther once said, 'If you are not allowed to laugh in heaven, I don't want to go there'. Personally, having failed to trace that sentence in any of his writings, I have grave doubts that the great Reformer did say it. But, even if he did, I would not wish to go *that far*.)

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

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### (i) Scripture.

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (He is Lord of all:) that word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him.

And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead.

And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

Acts 10. 34-44 (*King James Version*)

### (ii) Food for thought.

#### **God knows.**

- (i) 'He knows the way that I take; when He has tried me, I shall come out as gold' (Job 23. 10).
- (ii) 'He knows the secrets of the heart' (Psa. 44. 21).
- (iii) 'He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust' (Psa. 103. 14).
- (iv) 'He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him' (Dan 2. 22).
- (v) 'He knows them that put their trust in Him' (Nahum 1. 7).

(vi) 'Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him' (Matt. 6. 8).

(vii) 'The Lord knows those who are His' (2 Tim. 2. 19).

(viii) 'The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of trial' (2 Pet. 2. 9).

**'Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him' (Matt. 6. 8).**

God knows our needs but He responds to our prayers.

**'The Word was God' (John 1. 1).**

'The Word is not merely a Divine Being, but He is in the absolute sense God'.

(Henry Parry Liddon, 'The Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ', page 229.)

The Pont d'Avignon ('The bridge of Avignon') was a beautiful example of Middle Ages architecture. But its remaining four arches fail to span the river Rhône. (See the attached 'Pont d'Avignon' picture.)

It has been well said: 'A Saviour not quite God is a bridge broken at the farther end'.

(Handley C. G. Moule {Bishop of Durham}, quoted by Robert Anderson, 'The Lord from Heaven', page 8.)

**The first recorded words of the Lord Jesus.**

1. The first recorded words of our Lord when **in the world**:

(i) were spoken to a Mary who wrongly 'supposed' something (Luke 2. 44), and

(ii) drew attention to His Father: 'Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business? (possibly, 'in my Father's house?')', Luke 2. 49.

2. The first recorded words of our Lord **in resurrection**:

(i) were spoken to a Mary who wrongly 'supposed' something (John 20. 15), and

(ii) drew attention to His Father: 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God' (John 20. 17).

**Only men at their best.**

The apostle Paul 'would no more allow the Christians at Corinth to be putting man (even though it were himself and Apollos) in a wrong place (1 Cor. 3. 4), than he would accept for himself and Barnabas, at Lystra, garlands and sacrifices from the priest of Jupiter (Acts 14. 11-13).

To these, he said, "Sirs, why do ye these things? we also are men of like passions with you" (Acts 14. 15).

To those, he wrote, "Let no man glory in men" (1 Cor. 3. 21) and "These things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of man above that which is written (1 Cor. 4. 6)"".

(Anon., 'Josiah and his Days', The Christian's Friend (1875), pages 276-277.)

**'Submitting yourselves one to another' (Eph. 5. 21).**

'The words "submit to one another" should not be taken in a mutually reciprocal way, as if exhorting all Christians to submit to one another reciprocally. For:

(a) the verb "to submit" in Greek always refers to submission in some sort of ordered array, never to mutual deference;

(b) the idea is then picked up in the following "household table" of duties: wives submit to husbands, children to parents, and slaves to masters (Eph. 5. 22-6. 4);

(c) the same vision of submission is repeated in the New Testament (Col. 3. 18-19; Titus 2. 4-5; 1 Pet. 3. 1-6);

(d) the Greek pronoun rendered "one another" is often not reciprocal (e.g., Rev. 6. 4)'.  
(D. A. Carson, 'For the Love of God, Volume 2', 25 March.)

**The 'faith, love and hope' sandwich of 1 Thessalonians.**

Paul **opens** his first letter to the Thessalonians with the triad of faith, love and hope: 'your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope' (1 Thess. 1. 3). He **closes** his letter with the same triad: 'putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation' (1 Thess. 5. 8).

**'Others which have no hope', 1 Thess. 4. 13.**

'The contrast between the gloomy despair of the heathen and the triumphant hope of the Christian mourner is nowhere more forcibly brought out than by their monumental inscriptions. The contrast of the tombs, for instance, in the Appian Way, above and below ground, has often been dwelt upon. On the one hand, there is the dreary wail of despair, the effect of which is only heightened by the pomp of outward splendour from which it issues. On the other, the exulting psalm of hope, shining the more brightly in all ill-written, ill-spelt records amidst the darkness of subterranean caverns [the Catacombs]'.

(J. B. Lightfoot, 'Notes on the Epistles of St Paul from Unpublished Commentaries', page 63.)

**An outline of 1 Thessalonians 4. 16-17.**

(i) The Return: The Lord himself will come down from heaven (4. 16a)

(ii) The Resurrection: And the dead in Christ will rise first (4. 16b)

(iii) *The Rapture*: We who are still alive ... will be caught up together with them (4. 17a)

(iv) *The Reunion*: And so we will be with the Lord for ever (4. 17b)

(Extracted from John R. W. Stott, '*The Message of Thessalonians (The Bible Speaks Today)*', pages 102-104.)

**'Foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving' (1 Tim. 4. 3).**

In this, as in all else, our Lord Jesus has left us the perfect example.

(i) Although He knew that the five barley loaves He took into His hands had come directly from a young lad (John 6. 9), we are told twice (John 6. 11, 23) that *He gave thanks* to God for the bread before distributing it through His disciples to the multitude of 5,000 men, besides the women and children (Matt. 14. 21).

(ii) Although He knew that the seven loaves came directly from His own disciples (Matt. 15. 34), *He gave thanks* for the bread to God (Matt. 15. 36) before giving it back to His disciples for passing on to the multitude of '4,000 men, besides the women and children' (Matt. 15. 38).

(iii) Although He knew that the bread in the Upper Room had been provided by Peter and John as part of the preparation for the Passover meal (Luke 22. 8), *He gave thanks* for it to God before giving it to His disciples as a token of His body about to be given for them (Luke 22. 19).

(iv) Although He knew that the loaf in the village home at Emmaus had come from the store of the two disciples who lived there (Luke 24. 29), He gave thanks for the bread to God (Luke 24. 30) before breaking it and giving it to them.

In each case, although our Lord knew well *through whom* God had supplied the bread, He was careful to give God thanks for it, in glad recognition that it represented His Father's provision for Him or for others.

**'Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways' (Prov. 6. 6); 'not slothful' (Rom. 12. 11).**

'He slept beneath the moon.  
He basked beneath the sun.  
He lived a life of going-to-do;  
And died with nothing done'.

(James Alberty {1838-1889; an English dramatist}, the epitaph he wrote for himself.)

**An anecdote: you have to start somewhere!**

It was Easter 1937 when John Minder, the Dean of Florida Bible Institute (known today as Trinity College) invited young William to join him on a 140-mile excursion to Lake Swan.

While there, Mr Minder introduced his young student to one of his friends, Cecil Underwood, a pastor in the nearby city of Palatka.

During their conversation, Cecil asked Mr Minder to preach at his church (Bostwick Baptist Church) that evening. Rather surprisingly, John Minder declined the offer ... and volunteered *William's services* instead!

Stunned 18-year-old William immediately declined. His entire repertoire consisted of four sermons, which he had extracted from a book of sermons by the Baptist preacher, Lee Scarborough. Yes, William had practised repeating them, but he had never preached before.

But Mr Minder was insistent. 'You go ahead and preach', he said. 'When you run out, I'll take over'.

That evening, with great trepidation, William delivered his sermon in front of a congregation of 30 or so local people. It took him all of *eight* minutes!

When William sat down, John Minder stepped into the pulpit to tie up the loose ends and to call on the congregation to respond to the message.

Later, the pastor (Cecil Underwood) recalled, 'After the service was over with, one of the men at the church came up [to William] and told him, "Boy, you better go back to school and get a lot more education because *you're not gonna make it*".

And that is the story of William's first sermon.

Oh, perhaps I should have told you William's *full* name. It was William Franklin Graham—better known (then and now) as 'Billy'!

It is said of the evangelist that, later, (i) he 'preached to 215 million people in 185 countries in crusades, rallies, and live satellite feeds', that (ii) 'more than three million souls responded to his invitation to profess faith in Christ', and that (iii) 'he told one biographer that the subject and the words of his first sermon were "mercifully lost to memory"!

See the attached 'John Minder and Billy Graham, Easter Sunday 1937' picture.

(The anecdote is based on the following sources:

(a) <https://billygraham.org/story/the-story-behind-billy-grahams-first-sermon/>

(b) <https://decisionmagazine.com/young-billy-graham-in-a-word-i-was-spiritually-dead/>

(c) <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/august-web-only/billy-graham-learned-art-of-preaching.html>

(d) Robert J. Morgan, 'On This Day', 28 March.)

[See the attached 'The conversion of Cornelius' document.](#)

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

#### **Hawaii: here we come**

1. Liliias had felt 'under the weather' for a few weeks. So her husband Angus decided she should see a doctor.

Liliias made an appointment and, after a long session with the doctor, went back home to her husband 'Angus', she said, 'the doctor told me that I'm suffering from stress and depression. He advised that I should take a month's holiday and go to some peaceful and tranquil place like Hawaii or the South of France. Where shall we go?'

Angus thought about it for a few seconds and said, '*To find another doctor!*'

2. When Derek and his wife, Margaret, were getting ready to leave for their holiday, they ended up in a heated argument.

'I'm telling you', insisted Margaret loudly, 'It's "Hawaii"!'

'Give me air', shouted Derek back, 'I've never known anyone be so stubborn! It's pronounced "Havaii".'

The argument over pronunciation went on all the way through to their destination.

After they had left the plane and were making their way out of the Kona International Airport on Hawaii Island, Derek spotted an elderly gentleman standing alone.

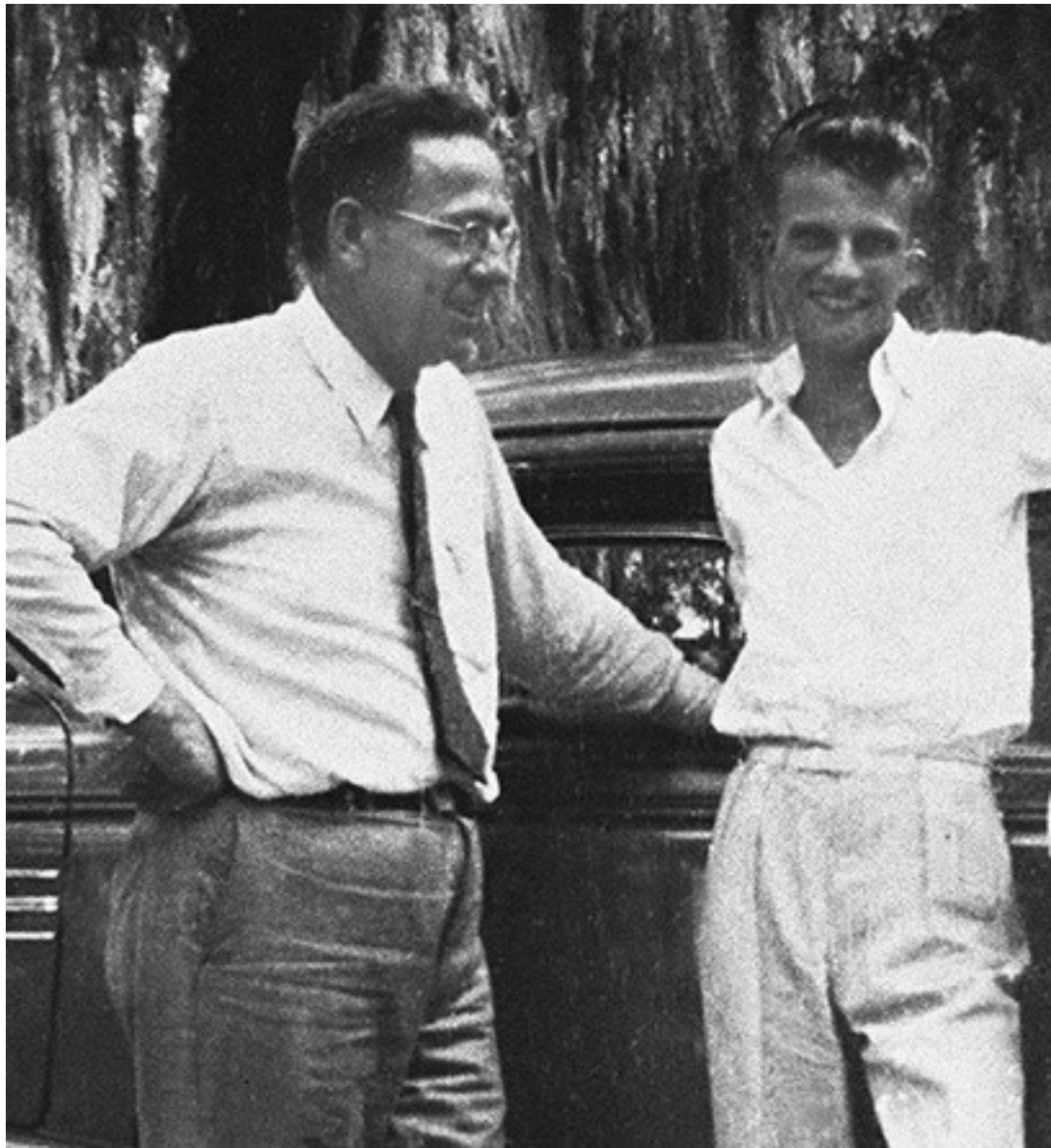
Stopping Margaret, he took her over to the man. 'Excuse us, sir', Derek said to him, 'but now that we are here, you can settle an argument between my wife and me. Is this "Hawaii" or "Havaii"?''

Smiling, the gentleman replied, 'This is Havaii'.

Continuing on their way, Derek gloated to Miriam, 'See, didn't I tell you!' And, turning around for a moment, he called out a hearty, 'Thank you, sir'.

'*You're welcome!*' Mr Cohen called back.

See the attached 'Hawaii' picture.







**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
HAWAII  
here WE come**