

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 9 October 2023

(i) Scripture.

The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but He holds His priesthood permanently, because He continues forever.

Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them ...

He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for His own sins and then for those of the people, since He did this once for all when He offered up Himself.

Hebrews 7. 23-27 (*English Standard Translation*)

(ii) Food for thought.

'Christ pleased not Himself' (Rom. 15. 3).

'He might have built a palace at a word,
Who sometimes had not where to lay His head:
Time was, and He who nourished crowds with bread,
Would not one meal unto Himself afford:

'Twelve legions girded with angelic sword
Were at His beck, the scorned and buffeted:
He healed another's scratch; His own side bled,
Side, feet, and hands, with cruel piercings gored.

'Oh wonderful the wonders left undone!
And scarce less wonderful than those He wrought;
Oh self-restraint, passing human thought,
To have all power, and be as having none;

'Oh self-denying love, which felt alone
For needs of others, never for its own'.

(R. C. Trench, '*Sabbation, Honor Neale, and other Poems*', Sonnet XV, page 172.)

'He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them' (Heb. 7. 25).

'Because our High Priest never has to hand over His priesthood to someone else, He is able Himself to save us "to the uttermost"—whether "completely" in terms of degree or "for all time" in terms of duration.

(i) 'He who is "able to succour", Heb. 2. 18, and able to "sympathize", Heb. 4. 15 (lit), is "able also to save".

(ii) 'He who loved His own "to the end", John 13.1, saves them "to the uttermost"'

(iii) 'How "great" a salvation is ours, Heb. 2. 3. In one sense, we have been saved by His finished work—for He "once" died, Heb. 7. 27. In another sense, we are being saved by His unfinished work—for He "always" lives, Heb. 7. 25 (lit).

(iv) 'He who once died to "make propitiation" for our sins, Heb. 2. 17 (lit), now lives to "make intercession" for us, Heb. 7. 25'.

(*'Day by Day in Prayer' (Precious Seed Publications)*, page 355.)

The love of Christ.

'His heart of love must have suffered greatly from the unbelief of unhappy man, and from His rejection by the people.

'We read of His sighing in opening the deaf ears and loosing the tied tongue (Mark 7. 34); and on the Pharisees asking a sign (Mark 8. 12), of His sighing deeply in spirit. So, indeed, at the tomb of Lazarus, He wept and groaned within Himself at seeing the power of death over the spirits of men, and their incapacity to deliver themselves (John 11. 35, 38); and as He wept also over Jerusalem, when He saw the beloved city just going to reject Him in the day of its visitation (Luke 19. 41-44).

'All this was the suffering of perfect love, moving through a scene of ruin, in which self-will and heartlessness shut every avenue against this love which was so earnestly working in its midst'.

(J. N. Darby, '*The Sufferings of Christ*', Collected Writings, Volume 7, page 168.)

'After my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you (the elders of the Ephesian church)' (Acts 20. 29).

Worse by far than a wolf in *sheep's clothing* is a wolf in *shepherd's clothing!*

'I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail' (Luke 22. 32).

'It is a consoling thought that Christ is praying for us, even when we are negligent in our prayer life; that He is presenting to the Father those spiritual needs which were not present to our minds and which we often neglect to include in our prayers; and that He prays for our protection against the dangers of which we are not even conscious, and against the enemies which threaten us, though we do not notice it.

'He is praying that our faith may not cease, and that we may come out victoriously in the end'.

(Louis Berkhoff, 'Systematic Theology', page 403.)

'There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents' (Luke 15. 10).

'As benevolent beings, the angels rejoice in those discoveries of the Divine character which are fitted to impart peace to the disquieted, and gladness to the despairing heart. They know what the Gospel can do; they have repeatedly witnessed what it has done ...

'They delight to contemplate the softening, soothing, sanctifying effects of that Divine remedy which has operated, as a heavenly balm of Gilead, upon so many diseased and miserable victims of satanic power'.

(Henry Craik, 'Angelic Interest in the Disclosures of the Gospel', accessed at ...

<https://www.brethrenarchive.org/people/henry-craik/articles/angelic-interest-in-the-disclosures-of-the-gospel/>.)

The Christian's 'CV' ('Curriculum Vitae', a Latin phrase meaning 'course of life').

(i) generation by God;

(ii) degeneration through sin;

(iii) regeneration in Christ.

'You always have the poor with you' (Matt. 26. 11; cf. Mark 14. 7; John 12. 8).

'One of the striking features of many passages in Deuteronomy that describe what life should be like once the people enter the Promised Land is a tension between what is held out as the ideal and what will in fact prove the reality.

'Thus, on the one hand, the people are told that "there should be no poor among you, for in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, he will richly bless you, if only you fully obey the Lord your God and are careful to follow all these commands I am giving you today" (Deut. 15. 4-5).

'On the other hand, the same chapter frankly acknowledges, "There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land" (Deut. 15. 11).

(D A Carson, 'For the Love of God', Volume 1, meditation for 10 June.)

'Of that day and that hour knows no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father' (Mark 13. 32).

1. From a Jewish source:

'Rabbis throughout history have argued about whether it is permissible to calculate the date of the coming of Messiah. The predominant view is that it is forbidden to calculate the date.

'Rabbi Pinchas Winston explains why. First of all, if one projects a specific date for Messiah's coming, then one will not expect Him on all the days prior to that date. The Talmudic sages, however, established that Messiah should be expected imminently.

'Additionally, those who project a specific date for Messiah's coming may be so deflated if He does not come that day that they will despair of His coming at all'.

(S. Y. Rigler, 'Covid-19 and the Messiah', accessed at ... <https://aish.com/covid-19-and-the-messiah/>.)

2. From a Christian source:

'You can ignore all those false prophets and teachers out there who think they can co-ordinate this pandemic with particular Biblical prophecies, and thereby calculate where we are in the eschatological time table.

'Every such attempt in the past 2,000 plus years has had a 100 per cent failure rate'.

(Ben Witherington III, 'Questions a Pandemic Raises for Believers', accessed at ...

<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/bibleandculture/2020/04/08/questions-a-pandemic-raises-for-believers/>.)

'Singing in the reign' (in the manifested kingdom of Christ).

'Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion ... the King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion ... the Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness; He will rest in His love; He will exult over you with singing' (Zeph. 3. 14-17).

'God is love. In this was the love of God manifested toward us, that God hath sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him' (1 John 4. 8-9).

'Among the Romans the despotic power was so terrible, that if a slave had attempted to take the life of his master, all the rest had been crucified with the guilty person. But our gracious Master died for His slaves who had conspired against Him. He shed His blood for those who spilt it. He was willing to be crucified, that we might be glorified ...

'It was excellently said by Pherecydes [born circa 550 BC] that God transformed Himself into love *when He made the world*. But with greater reason it is said by the apostle, "God is love", when He redeemed it'.

(J. Garner, 'The Student's Handbook to Scripture Doctrines', page 428.)

Passing the buck.

(i) Adam and Eve. 'The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate". Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate" (Gen. 3. 12-13).

(ii) King Saul. "Saul went out to meet Samuel and greet him. Samuel said, 'What have you done?'" (1 Sam 13. 10-11).

'Saul's explanation? It was the people's fault: "the people were scattered from me". And it was your fault, too, Samuel: "you did not come within the days appointed". And of course, it was the enemy's fault, too: "the Philistines gathered together at Michmash" ... I wasn't acting in self-will; everyone else forced me into it'.

(J. B. Nicholson Jr, 'The Blame Game', Taste and See, Uplook Ministries, 6 October 2023.)

(iii) Go on, smile.

'Backhanded'

1. A backhanded apology.

The editor of a small local newspaper, furious over several byelaws that had recently been passed in his area, printed a scathing editorial with an enormous headline: 'Half of the Members of our Council are idle and incompetent'.

Many of the Council members were outraged and exerted pressure on the editor to print a retraction. He finally gave in to the pressure and ran his grudging apology with the headline: '*Half of the Members of our Council are not idle and incompetent*'.

2. A backhanded promise.

'An English Singer, named Gordon, once found fault with Handel's method of accompanying.

'High words ensued; and Gordon finished by saying, that, if Handel persisted in accompanying him in that manner, he would jump upon his harpsichord and smash it to pieces.

"Oh!" replied Handel, "let me know when you will do that and *I will advertise it; for I am sure more people will come to see you jump, than to hear you sing*".

(Quoted from W. S. Rockstro, 'The Life of George Frederick Handel', pages 393-394.)