

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 16 December 2024

Greetings.

I cannot let pass that last Thursday marked the anniversary of the date in 1936 when the former King Edward VIII left England, having just renounced the throne.

It was two days before, on 10th December 1936, that Edward VIII signed an Instrument of Abdication. The following day, Parliament approved the Abdication Instrument, and Edward VIII's short reign of less than eleven months came to an end.

Edward had chosen this course that he might marry an American divorcée, Mrs Wallis Simpson. The former King was subsequently made a royal duke ('the Duke of Windsor') by his younger brother, Albert ('Bertie'), when Albert succeeded to the throne as King George VI.

The reason I have given you this particular short history lesson is that (*as on page 4 of the 'Musings' of twelve months ago*) I want to draw your attention to the more-or-less closing words of the Duke of Windsor's published memoirs, '*A King's Story*':

'And so it came to pass that at two o'clock on the morning of December 12 1936, H.M.S. Fury slid silently and unescorted out of Portsmouth harbour. Watching the shore of England recede, I was swept by many emotions ... it had been hard to give up the throne ... But of one thing I was certain: so far as I was concerned love had triumphed'.

I do not doubt that, as he said, '*it had been hard*' for King Edward VIII '*to give up the throne*'.

But you and I know Someone who, out of far greater love—both for His Father (John 14. 31) and for you and me (Eph. 5. 2, 25)—gave up a far grander throne, exchanging the lofty throne of heaven (Isa. 6. 1) for an animal's rough feeding trough (Luke 2. 7).

Yes, 'you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor' (2 Cor. 8. 9).

I set out below this week's 'Musings'.

Happy reading.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

(i) Scripture.

He must needs go through Samaria.

Then cometh He to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, 'Give me to drink'. For His disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat ...

In the mean while, His disciples prayed him, saying, 'Master, eat'. But He said unto them, 'I have meat to eat that ye know not of'.

Therefore said the disciples one to another, 'Hath any man brought Him ought to eat?' Jesus saith unto them, 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work'.

(ii) Food for thought.

'Jesus ... wearied'.

'He was weary betimes, and hungry, and thirsting. This is seen in John 4, as again in Mark 4. But there is this difference in the two cases: He finds sleep for His relief and restoration in Mark 4 but He is independent of it in John 4. And why was this?

'In Mark 4, He had gone through a day of toil, and, in the evening, He was weary, as nature will be after labour. "Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening" (Psa. 104. 23); sleep is then provided for him, to restore him to his service when morning returns. Jesus proved all this. He was asleep on the pillow in the boat (Mark 4. 38).

'In John 4, He is weary again, hungry and thirsty too He sits at the well, like a tired traveller, waiting till the disciples came from the neighbouring village with food (John 4. 6, 8). But when they come, they find Him feasted and rested, and that too without food, or drink, or sleep. His weariness had had another refreshment than what sleep would have brought Him ("I have food to eat that you do not know about ... "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work", John 4. 32, 34). He had been made happy by fruit for His labour in the soul of a poor sinner. The woman had been sent away in the liberty of the salvation of God.

'But there had been no woman of Samaria in Mark 4, and He has therefore to use the pillow in His weariness (Mark 4. 38)'.
(J. G. Bellett, *'The Moral Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ'*, pages 34-35.)

'Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way' (Matt. 15. 32).

'The Lord is concerned that, in their enthusiasm for His company, they should become weary and "faint in the way".

'How good to see that He understands human limitations. Was He not "wearied with His journey?" (John 4. 6). Such human experience qualifies Him to be ... our sympathetic great high priest'.

(J. Hunter, *'Day by day: Moments with the Master'*, page 190.)

The atheist's prison.

'If you have a compassionate heart, you pity the atheists when you consider what a prison they are in. They can't believe there is a God and are obliged to think that this universe comes of blind matter, produced and worked upon by mindless, purposeless forces.

'A little virus—visible only with the aid of a powerful electronic microscope—will one day do its dastardly work, and the irony of it is that it won't know it has done it. Even a first-class scientist with his giant of a brain, full of intelligence and purpose, is torn to pieces by a mindless bit of stuff.

'This poor man is in a prison, whose walls gradually contract upon him. One day they will crush him and mindlessly destroy his brain, and finally destroy him.

'Thank God, we have discovered through our blessed Lord Jesus that there is a God behind this created universe, who holds it in His hand'.

(David Gooding, *'Changing Us for Glory: Daily Readings on God's Transforming Power'*, page 65.)

'Mary ... laid Him in a manger ... a multitude of the heavenly host praising God' (Luke 2. 7, 13).

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing ...
See Him in a manger laid,
Whom the choirs of angels praise.

(The carol, *'Angels we have heard on high'*, translated from French by James Chadwick.)

'The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy ... I lay down my life for the sheep' (John 10. 10, 15).

'When the thief and the robber come (and come they do), the faithful shepherd has often to put his life in his hand to defend his flock. I have known more than one case in which he had literally to lay it down in the contest.

'A poor faithful fellow last spring, between Tiberias and Tabor, instead of fleeing, actually fought three Bedouin robbers until he was hacked to pieces with their khanjars ('daggers'), and died among the sheep he was defending'.

(W. M. Thomson, *'The Land and the Book'*, 1874, page 302.)

Jesus speaks 'with the same 'intimacy of familiar conversation' to His disciples as to Moses and Elijah.

'Luke 9 (verses 28-36) is, we know, a picture, a momentary manifestation of the glory of the kingdom.

Moses and Elias are in the same glory with Christ. They are with Him in all the intimacy of familiar conversation talking with Him. They are talking of what necessarily most interests Christ Himself, and man too ... His death at Jerusalem ("Who ... spake of His decease which He should accomplish at *Jerusalem*", Luke 9. 31).

'Remark here, that Christ speaks of the same things with the same familiarity to *His disciples* on the earth ("Behold, we go up to *Jerusalem*, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished", Luke 18. 31).

(J. N. Darby, 'The Hope of the Christian', Collected Writings, Volume 16, page 231.)

Six rebukes administered by the Lord Jesus in the Gospel of Luke.

(i) 'Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent and come out of him!"' (Luke 4. 35).

(ii) 'He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her' (Luke 4. 39).

(iii) Demons also came out of many, crying, "You are the Son of God!" But He rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that He was the Christ' (Luke 4. 41).

(iv) 'He awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm' (Luke 8. 24).

(v) 'Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father' (Luke 9. 42).

(vi) 'He turned and rebuked them' (Luke 9. 55).

'When we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world' (1 Cor. 11. 32).

'The Jews did not believe that suffering was purposeless. Nor did they believe that it came simply by the will of men ... 'The (following) Second Maccabees passage refers to the terrible and agonising sufferings which came on the Jewish nation in the days when Antiochus Epiphanes attempted to obliterate Judaism completely:

"Now I urge those who read this book not to be depressed by such calamities, but to recognize that these punishments were designed not to destroy but to discipline our people ... For in the case of the other nations the Lord waits patiently to punish them until they have reached the full measure of their sins; but He does not deal in this way with us, in order that he may not take vengeance on us afterward when our sins have reached their height.

Therefore, He never withdraws His mercy from us. Though He disciplines us with calamities, He does not forsake His own people".

'An agonising situation may well be the sign of the mercy of God'.

(William Barclay, 'Jesus as They Saw Him', pages 226-227.)

'O death, where is your victory?' (1 Cor. 15. 55).

'The baby we celebrate during Advent would grow to be a man who gets His heel bruised. But in that very conflict, He crushes the head of His enemy—our enemy! The head-crusher defeats death.

'Christmas points us far beyond the manger to a battle. Those who identify with that baby also benefit from His victory. Rejoice at the wonder of His birth. Bask in the triumph of His death'.

(B. Doggett, 'Eve's Offspring Will Crush the Serpent', accessed at <https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/resources/the-first-messianic-prophecy-eves-offspring-will-crush-the-serpent/>.)

'The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself ... you wear your robes"' (2 Chron. 18. 29).

'*Jehoshaphat*, good king that he is, has already run several red lights.

(i) 'There's the awful decision to go along with marrying his son to Ahab's daughter, Athaliah, a step that would prove almost terminally fatal to the Messianic line. (ii) There is his ill-advised trip north to visit with the Israelite monarch, and agreeing at dinner to go to war in league with a demon-worshipping ally. (iii) There is the fiasco with the false prophets, and the revelation that this raid on Ramoth Gilead was arranged in heaven to bring God's judgment on Ahab ...

'Ignoring all the warnings, "the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead" (verse 28). But Ahab has an idea. "Say, Jehoshaphat, how would you like to be king-for-a-day

of all twelve tribes, like the glory days of David? I'll wear common garb, and you wear a bullseye—I mean, your royal robes".

'And so naively Jehoshaphat accepts the role of the one chess piece that the enemy wanted to capture.

'Lord, save us from our own stupidity!'

(J. B. Nicholson Jr, 'Don't Be Naive', Taste and See, Uplook Ministries, 10 December 2024).

Eight 'if any man' sayings of the Lord Jesus in the Gospel of John.

(i) 'I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever' (John 6. 51).

(ii) 'If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself' (John 7. 17).

(iii) 'In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink' (John 7. 37).

(iv) 'I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture' (John 10. 9).

(v) 'Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world' (John 11. 9).

(vi) 'If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be' (John 12. 26a).

(vii) 'If any man serve me, him will my Father honour' (John 12. 26b).

(viii) 'If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world' (John 12. 47).

(iii) Go on, smile.

Following many years of close friendship, Freda, an 84-year-old widow, married Norman, a 90-year-old widower,

It was a joyful occasion and they invited their families and few-surviving friends to the ceremony and reception.

Norman's eldest son, David, wanted to give the happy couple some "space" so he didn't call his father for a few days after they drove off on their travelling honeymoon.

'Well, Dad, how was the honeymoon?' David asked when he called.

'Oh, it went quite well', Norman answered.

'What did you do?' David enquired.

'To tell you the truth', Norman responded, 'we spent most of the honeymoon struggling to get out of the car'.