

## Malcolm's Monday Musings : 14 July 2025.

Greetings.

Today marks the anniversary of the birth of Lilius Trotter on 14 July 1853. As a young woman, Lilius Trotter sacrificed a most promising career in the world of art so that she might serve God in North Africa for 40 years.

The following is an extract from one of Lilius Trotter's thirty-three published writings, a short booklet entitled, '*Focussed: A Story and a Song*':

***'Turn full your soul's vision to Jesus, and look and look at Him,  
and a strange dimness will come over all  
that is apart from Him'.***

It was that extract which inspired Helen Lemmel to write the lyrics and the music of the widely known hymn, '*Turn your eyes upon Jesus*'.

This is the opening verse of that hymn, together with its beautiful refrain:

O soul, are you weary and troubled?  
No light in the darkness you see?  
There's light for a look at the Saviour,  
And life more abundant and free.

***Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.***

At the close of today's Musings' document below, I have reproduced (with minor editing), from a previous 'Musings' document in 2020, a brief biographical sketch of Lilius Trotter's remarkable life

(If you make the time to read there about her exceptional artistic ability, you may detect that my use of the word '*sketch*' is intended as something of a deliberate pun.)

Separately, I have another [simple Bible quiz question](#) for you:

***Name the five people in Scripture who  
(i) spoke concerning or (ii) addressed  
the Lord Jesus as  
'my lord'.***

*(A clue: there are three men and two women.)*

God willing, the answer will be in next Monday's 'Musings'.

Happy reading.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

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## (i) Scripture.

On the way to Jerusalem, He was passing along between Samaria and Galilee.

And as He entered a village, He was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us'.

When He saw them, He said to them, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests'.

And, as they went, they were cleansed.

Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving Him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan.

Then Jesus answered, 'Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?'

And He said to him, 'Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well'.

Luke 17. 11-19 (*English Standard Version*)

## (ii) Food for thought.

**'When He saw them, He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests"' (Luke 17. 14).**

'Most instructive is it to observe the differences in our Lord's dealing with the different sufferers and mourners brought in contact with Him; the manifold wisdom of the great Physician, varying his treatment according to the varying needs of his patients:

(i) how He seems to *resist a strong faith*, that He may make it stronger yet (Matt. 15. 23-26); how He goes to *meet a weak faith*, lest it should prove altogether too weak in the trial (Mark 5. 36);

(ii) how one He *forgives first, and heals after* (Matt. 9. 2, 6); (iv) and another, whose heart could only be reached through an earthly benefit, He *first heals, and only then forgives* (John 5. 8, 14).

'There are here, too, no doubt reasons why (a) *these ten are dismissed as yet uncleansed, and bidden to show themselves to the priests*; whilst (b) *that other, whose healing was before recorded* (Matt. 8. 2-4), *is first cleansed, and not till afterwards bidden to present himself in the temple*.

'These reasons I think we can perceive.

'1. There was here, in the first place, *a keener trial of faith*. With no signs of restoration as yet upon them, they were bidden to do that which implied that they were perfectly restored—to undertake a journey, which would prove ridiculous, a labour altogether in vain, unless Christ's word and promise proved true. In their prompt obedience, they declared plainly that some weak beginnings of faith were working in them ... So much they declared, for they must have known very well that they were not sent to the priests for these to heal them. That was no part of the priest's office; who did not cure, but only pronounce cured; who cleansed, yet not as ridding the leper of his disease, but only as authoritatively proclaiming that this had disappeared, and restoring him, through certain ceremonial observances, to the fellowship of the congregation (Lev. 14. 2-20).

'2. Then, too, as there was a keener trial of faith than that to which the leper of Matt. 8. 2 was exposed, so also there was here *a stronger temptation to ingratitude*. "It came to pass, that as they went, they were cleansed". When these poor men first felt the benefit of their healing, it is little likely that they were still in the immediate presence of their benefactor; more probably, already out of His sight, and some way upon their journey. It was not therefore an easy and costless effort to return and render thanks to Him. At all events it was an effort greater than the most of them cared to make'.

(R. C. Trench, '*Notes on the Miracles*', pages 357-358.)

### ***The necessity of the death of Christ for the forgiveness of sins.***

'In the New Testament the cancellation of guilt is uniformly associated with Jesus, and commonly with His death: "It is through Him that forgiveness of sins is proclaimed" (Acts 13. 38); "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not entering its sins in the record book" (2 Cor. 5. 19). God's vindicating of His righteousness is effective through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3. 22), and through union with Him all offences are forgiven (Col. 2. 13; cf. Eph. 4. 32) ... His blood was shed "for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26. 28), and the New Covenant, as Jeremiah predicted, is founded on that remission (Heb. 10. 18).

'These early Christians never asked, as their modern counterparts sometimes do, why God could not simply forgive—why pardon had to be tied to the life and death of Jesus. *To forgive sin by fiat would be to ignore it, to treat it as though it did not exist; like cancelling traffic offences by abolishing the rules of the road*'.

(G. B. Caird, '*New Testament Theology*', page 146.)

### **'Our sins'.**

1. 'Confession': "If we confess *our sins*" (1 John 1. 9).
2. 'Propitiation': "He is the propitiation for *our sins*" (1 John 2. 2).
3. 'Substitution': "Who His own self bore *our sins*" (1 Pet. 2. 24).
4. 'Cancellation': "He was manifested to take away *our sins*" (1 John 3. 5).
5. 'Emancipation': "Who gave Himself for *our sins*, that He might deliver us" (Gal. 1. 4).
6. 'Supplication': "Purge away *our sins*, for Thy name's sake" (Psa. 79. 9).
7. 'Absolution': (release from guilt or punishment): "Washed us from *our sins* in His own blood" (Rev. 1. 5).

(F. E. Marsh, '*One Thousand New Bible Readings*', page 283, number 602.)

### **'Let not sin ... reign in your mortal body' (Rom. 6. 12).**

'Soon after one's conversion, the desires of the flesh (our old fallen nature) will try to assert themselves. Although the term "flesh" is commonly associated with sexual desires, it actually takes many forms. These are often connected to sinful beliefs, behaviours, and patterns that became engrained in our "old self" before we come to Christ. These desires do not evaporate at conversion, never to be seen again. Although their power to control us is decisively broken, and we are liberated to obey God, more is necessary.

'As the apostle Paul explained to the believers in Rome, "We know that our old self was crucified with Him [Christ] in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin" (Rom. 6. 6). However—and this is crucial to understand—we do not experience this new freedom automatically. We must choose to obey.

'This is why Paul went on to say, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness" (Rom. 6. 12–13).

'Similarly, Paul instructs the believers in Ephesus "to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph. 4. 22–24). Clearly, to experience freedom in Christ and victory over sin, we must choose to reject sinful desires, resist temptation, and obey God'.

(T. A. Tarrant, '*The Transformation of our Heart's Desires*', accessed at ...

[https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/resources/the-transformation-of-our-hearts-desires/.](https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/resources/the-transformation-of-our-hearts-desires/))

### **'The Problem of Suffering'.**

'The believer knows five facts:

1. God didn't make the world like this; its present ruin is the result of sin.
2. God may intervene whenever He chooses, but has given humanity a range of choices, with their consequences.
3. Although God has not caused suffering, He's found ways to use it for our good.
4. He isn't indifferent to our suffering, but became the Man of Sorrows to aid us in our struggles.
5. He intends to replace this world with one where every tear is wiped away.

'Does this answer all our questions? No, there is still much we do not know'.

(J. B. Nicholson Jr, '*The Problem Of Suffering*', Taste and See, Uplook Ministries, 2 July 2025.)

### ***Better to be drawn than driven.***

**1.** 'It is much better to be drawn by the joys of heaven, than driven by the sorrows of earth. The believer should not wait to be shaken out of present things.

'He should not wait for the world to give him up, before he gives up the world: he should give it up in the power of communion with heavenly things. There is no difficulty in giving up the world when we have, by faith, laid hold of Christ; the difficulty would then be to hold it'.

(C. H. Mackintosh, '*Notes on the Book of Genesis*', G. Morrish, page 183.)

**2.**

'This world is a wilderness wide ...  
Tis the treasure I've found in His love  
That has made me a pilgrim below'.

(J. N. Darby, '*This World is a Wilderness Wide*', a spiritual song composed in 1849.)

### ***Presented.***

The One who, as a young child, was presented '*to the Lord*' (Luke 2. 22) will, one day, present His glorious church '*to Himself*' (Eph. 5. 27).

**The apostle Paul's tears collected in God's bottle (Psa. 56. 8).**

- (i) 'Serving the Lord with all humility and with tears' (Acts 20. 19).
- (ii) 'For three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears' (Acts 20. 31).
- (iii) 'I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears' (2 Cor. 2. 4).
- (iv) 'Of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears' (Phil. 3. 18).

**'When John heard in prison about the works of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to Him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"' (Matt. 11. 2-3).**

John the Baptist is discouraged because Jesus is failing to meet his expectations.

John has announced someone who would not only baptize people with the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3. 11), but who would come in stern judgment, separating wheat and chaff and burning up the latter (Matt. 3. 12). Yet here is Jesus, preaching to vast crowds, training His own followers, performing miracles—but not obviously imposing judgment on the wicked. John the Baptist languishes in prison for the fiery way he denounced Herod's illicit marriage. Why hasn't Jesus denounced Herod and then, utilizing His astonishing power, imposed judgment?

Jesus answers (Matt. 11. 4–6) by describing His ministry in terms of two crucial passages from Isaiah (Isa. 35. 5-6 and Isa. 61. 1-2).

John certainly knew the Isaiah scroll very well. Elsewhere he himself quotes from it (Matt. 3. 3, quoting Isa. 40. 3). So, if Jesus is going to refer to these passages (John might well ask himself), why doesn't He also mention the judgment theme in the same contexts? After all, Isaiah 35 mentions not only the lame leaping and the like, but "divine retribution" as well. Isaiah 61 talks about preaching good news to the poor, but it also anticipates "the day of vengeance of our God". Why does Jesus mention the blessings without the judgments?

'It is as if Jesus is saying, in effect, "John, look closely: the promised blessings of the kingdom are dawning. What I am doing fulfils Scripture exactly. If the judgment has not yet dawned, it will come, but not yet. Right now, focus on the good that is being done, and let it confirm that I am who I say I am".

(D. A. Carson, 'For the Love of God', Volume 2, comment for 1 July.)

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

'What's in a name?'

**1.** Antonio, a recent Italian immigrant, took his pregnant wife to the maternity hospital.

During the delivery, he found out that she was giving birth to twins, a girl and a boy.

He passed out at the news and didn't come to for a few days. According to their family custom, his brother, Marco, was brought in to help name the children.

'Oh no!', Antonio exclaimed when he woke up. 'You let my brother name my children? Marco is almost illiterate and can speak hardly any English. Tell me, what did he name the baby girl?'

'He named her Denise', they told him.

'Denise? Well, that's not such a bad name', Antonio responded, 'I like it. And what did he call my little boy?'

He gasped when they answered,

*'De Nephew'.*

**2.** Howard Storehouse, the managing director at his company, felt strongly that he wasn't being given the respect he deserved by his employees.

One morning, he brought with him a small sign that read in bold red letters, 'I'm the Boss!'

He taped the sign to the centre of his office door.

When he returned from lunch later that day, he found a note stuck on the sign, which read,

'Your wife phoned. She said that ...

... she wants her sign back!'

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## Lilias Trotter

1853-1928<sup>1</sup>



Born to a wealthy upper-class family in London about three years after Mr Spurgeon's conversion,<sup>2</sup> Lilias showed an early aptitude for watercolour painting.

John Ruskin,<sup>3</sup> the leading English art critic of the Victorian era, once recorded, 'For a long time I used to say, in all my elementary books, that, except in a graceful and minor way, women could not paint or draw ... I am beginning lately', he added, 'to bow myself to the much more delightful conviction that no one else can'.

This change came about, he said:

'When I was at Venice in 1876 ... two English ladies, mother and daughter, were staying at the same hotel<sup>4</sup> ... One day the mother sent me a pretty little note asking if I would look at the young lady's drawings.

'With my somewhat sulky permission, a few were sent, in which I saw that there was extremely right-minded and careful work ... I sent back a request that the young lady might be allowed to come out sketching with me. ... She seemed to learn everything the instant she was shown it—and ever so much more than she was taught'.<sup>5</sup>

The drawings of the then 23-year-old Lilias, he said, made you feel 'that they are exactly what we should all like to be able to do'.

But some two years before, as Lilias herself expressed it, *her eyes had been 'opened to see the loveliness of the Son of God and His right to control her redeemed life'*.<sup>6</sup> She busied herself on the streets of London, helping to turn a nightclub into a refuge for working girls, and often canvassing the London streets alone at night in search of prostitutes whom she could help and pray with, ensuring that they not only had food and shelter, but also that they were trained in respectable and marketable skills.

Ruskin did not understand her Christian activities and challenged her to make a choice. He promised her a life of fame if she would devote herself entirely to her art, saying that *he would help her to become, in his words, 'the greatest living painter and do things that would be immortal'*.<sup>7</sup>

It did not take Lilias long to make up her mind.

'I see as clear as daylight now', she wrote, 'that I cannot give myself to painting in the way he means and continue still to "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness"'.<sup>8</sup>

Once decided, Lilias threw herself into her London work. But, after hearing a missionary<sup>8</sup> describe the needs among Algeria's Muslims, she was convinced that God was calling her to go.

Although she applied to two African missionary agencies,<sup>9</sup> she failed to pass the physical examination on account, it was said, of her chronically weak heart. And they turned her down.

Undeterred, she and two friends went on their own! When they sailed from England in 1888,<sup>10</sup> Lilias was 35 years of age.<sup>11</sup>

'Three of us stood there, looking at our battle-field', Lilias wrote when they arrived in the Bay of Algiers, 'none of us fit to pass a doctor for any (mission) society, not knowing a soul in the place, or a

sentence of Arabic, or a clue for beginning work on untouched ground; we only knew we had to come.<sup>12</sup>

But she put her talents to good use and applied all the power of her art and pen to stories and scenes of North Africa in an effort to better convey the gospel message to all around her.

In spite of the many risks, she would often travel alone into the desert for weeks at a time to find outlying settlements and nomad camps where people needed to hear about the Lord Jesus.<sup>13</sup>

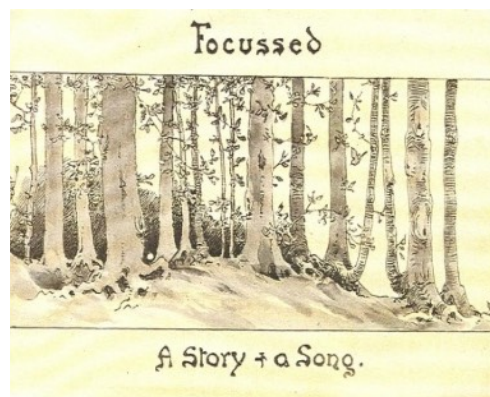
Though bedridden in her last years, she continued to write, sketch and paint to the end.

No, she never saw any of her artwork hang in any major gallery or museum. But she had seen many people led to the Lord—especially women, whom she reached by first befriending their children.<sup>14</sup>

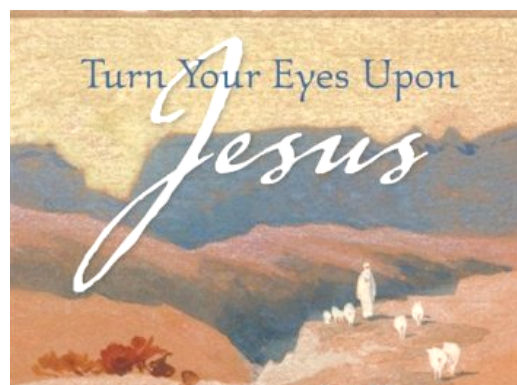
'At the time of her death in 1928, Lilius had established thirteen mission stations and had over thirty workers, under the name "Algiers Mission Band", united in her vision to bring "the light of the knowledge of God, in the face of Christ", to the people'.<sup>15</sup>

In one of Lilius's thirty-three published writings (a short booklet entitled, '*Focussed: A Story and a Song*'), she wrote:

**'Turn full your soul's vision to Jesus, and look and look at Him, and a strange dimness will come over all that is apart from Him'**.<sup>16</sup>



These words had a profound impact on Helen Lemmel, a gifted singer and brilliant musician.<sup>17</sup> A missionary friend gave Helen a copy of the booklet, and it was those words of Lilius Trotter which inspired her to write the lyrics and the music of a hymn now known by the first line of its refrain, "Turn your eyes upon Jesus".<sup>18</sup>



It seems at least possible that Helen Lemmel was blind when she wrote the hymn. When she wrote it in 1918, she was 55 years old.<sup>19</sup> Eleven years before, 'in 1907, at the age of 43, she went to Germany, for four years of intensive vocal training, where she met and married her husband. They moved back to the United States in 1911'. At some point, 'she developed an affliction that resulted in blindness. Her husband couldn't cope with the thought of a blind wife, so he abandoned the marriage'.<sup>20</sup>

In spite of considerable effort, I have been unable to pinpoint the year when Helen went blind, whether this was *before* or *after* she wrote the hymn. If it was before, her affliction would certainly add pathos to the words, 'Turn *your* eyes upon Jesus, *look* full in His wonderful face'.

These are the (now) well-known lyrics:

O soul, are you weary and troubled?  
No light in the darkness you see?  
There's light for a look at the Saviour,  
And life more abundant and free.

***Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.***

Through death into life everlasting  
He passed, and we follow Him there;  
O'er us sin no more hath dominion  
For more than conquerors we are!

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.*

His Word shall not fail you, He promised;  
Believe Him and all will be well;  
Then go to a world that is dying,  
His perfect salvation to tell!

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.*

**'Let us ... run with endurance the race that lies before us, looking steadfastly on Jesus'.**

Hebrews 12. 1-2 (J. N. Darby's 'New Translation').

Mr Darby's footnote to the words 'looking steadfastly' says that the Greek word 'has the force of looking away from other things and fixing the eye exclusively on one'.)

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The biographical information has largely been obtained from:

<https://liliastrrotter.com/>

<https://liliastrrotter.wordpress.com/> (Home Page);

<https://liliastrrotter.wordpress.com/about/> (Biography)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lilias\\_Trotter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lilias_Trotter)

<http://www.kingsleypress.com/lilias-trotter-biography-sketch.html>

<sup>2</sup> In January 1850.

<sup>3</sup> 8 February 1819 – 20 January 1900.

<sup>4</sup> The Europa.

<sup>5</sup> *'The Art of England: Complete Works of John Ruskin'* (London: George Allen, 1908), 33: 280.

<sup>6</sup> 'When Lilias was twenty-one years of age, she and her mother attended a convention at "Broadlands", convened by Lord Mount-Temple, a Christian statesman. The speakers that year were Andrew Jukes, Theodore Monod, and the American Quakeress, Mrs. Pearsall Smith, author of *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*. The messages given were on the theme of consecration and God's gift of His Holy Spirit. Her eyes "were opened to see the loveliness of the Son of God and His right to control her redeemed life", source: <http://www.kingsleypress.com/lilias-trotter-biography-sketch.html>.

<sup>7</sup> M. H. Rockness, *'A Passion for the Impossible: The Life of Lilias Trotter'*, pages 83-84; it was a quotation from a letter which Lilias wrote to Blanche Pigott from Blantwood.

<sup>8</sup> Mr Glenny of the North Africa Mission, speaking in May 1887.

<sup>9</sup> The North African Mission and another missionary agency.

<sup>10</sup> On 5 March 1888. (A photo of Lilias about that time can be viewed at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lilias\\_Trotter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lilias_Trotter).) She sailed with, she wrote, 'a strange [but] glad feeling of being cast upon God'.

<sup>11</sup> See <https://liliastrrotter.wordpress.com/about/>.

<sup>12</sup> To which she added, *'Truly if God needed weakness, He had it!'* Quoted from *'Back-ground and Fore-ground'* by Lilias Trotter. See ... <http://www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/2002-01/2002-01-032-sinclair.pdf>, page 32.

<sup>13</sup> 'How did she manage financially? In the early years, with money she had inherited from her well-to-do family she largely funded her many years of service in Algiers. Expansion of the work called for external support, which was always forthcoming. At the end of her life, her funds were exhausted. Quite literally, her money ran out at the same time as did her work for the Lord – forty years and five months after she had obeyed God's call to leave her comfortable home in England'.

<sup>14</sup> It has been said that, 'According to her own writings, her final statement would be, "I was more alive and had more joy and more creativity and richness than if I had stayed in London"'. She 'was the founder of the Algiers Mission Band, making her the earliest Protestant woman to found and lead a mission society', Timothy Tennent, *'How God Saves the World'*, page 64—accessed at ...

<http://asburyseminary.edu/wp-content/themes/asburyseminary/books/How-God-Saves-the-World.pdf>.)

<sup>15</sup> M. H. Rockness, *'About Lilias'*, accessed at <https://liliastrrotter.wordpress.com/about/>..

<sup>16</sup> In context, Lilias wrote:

'What does this focussing mean? Study the matter and you will see that it means two things – gathering in all that can be gathered, and letting the rest drop ... Look at the window bars, and the beyond is only a shadow; look through at the distance, and it is the bars that turn into ghosts. You have to choose which you will fix your gaze upon and let the other go ... How do we bring things to a focus in the world of optics? Not by looking at the things to be dropped, but by looking at the one point that is to be brought out. Turn full your soul's vision to Jesus, and look and look at Him, and a strange dimness will come over all that is apart from Him, and the Divine "attrait" [*fascination, lure*] by which God's saints are made, even in this 20th century, will lay hold of you. For "He is worthy" to have all there is to be had in the heart that He has died to win'.

The full text of the *'Focussed'* booklet can be accessed at ... <https://liliastrrotter.wordpress.com/out-of-print-manuscripts/> and at <http://www.unveiling.org/lily/focussed.html>..

<sup>17</sup> Helen Howarth Lemmel was born in 1863 and died in 1961.



<sup>18</sup> See ... <https://ililiastrotter.wordpress.com/2012/10/26/turn-your-eyes-upon-jesus/>.

<sup>19</sup> Source: <http://chrisfieldblog.com/2008/11/14/blind-helen-howarth-lemmel-turns-our-eyes>.

<sup>20</sup> Source: <https://hymnsthatchurch.blogspot.com/2018/12/turn-your-eyes-upon-jesus.html>.