

A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical And Southern Studies

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Great God, How Infinite art Thou!
What Worthless worms are We!
Let the Whole race of creatures bow,
And pay their praise to Thee.

Thy Throne eternal ages stood,
Ere Seas or Stars Were Made:
Thou art the ever living God,
Were all the nations dead.

Nature and time quite naked lie
To thine immense survey,
From the formation of the sky
To the great burning day.

Eternity, with all its years,
Stands present in Thy view;
To Thee there's nothing old appears;
Great God! There's nothing new.

Our lives through various scenes are drawn,
And vexed with trifling cares;
While thine eternal thought moves on
Thine undisturbed affairs.

Great God, How infinite art Thou!
What worthless worms are we!
Let the whole race of creatures bow,
And pay their praise to Thee.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

God is Great

“Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.”

Job 36:26

Oh, what a glorious God is our God for He is great in His being, great in His incomprehensibility, and great in His eternity. So, the text begins with a requirement. “Behold” is a way of drawing attention to what is about to be said. It is a literary device to draw the mind to a consideration of God’s greatness. The distinct object here is God’s greatness.

God is great in His being—“God is great.” This is who He is! His entire divine being is great because He is God and there is none other because He is exclusive. His greatness is evident as He is the first and best of beings. God is unsearchable in His greatness (Ps. 145:3). There could not be any other kind of greatness in God because He is infinite. “The immensity of His nature is His greatness” [John Owen]. How immense or vast is God? “The heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee” (1 Kings 8:27). The imagination of the human mind cannot fathom His greatness because of the vast nature of His person and the fallen finite nature of man. When we try to consider greatness, we begin to pile up adjectives and attributes, but this fails at expressing immensity. He is present with His creation as Creator, but He is in no way confined to creation for He fills heaven and earth (Jer. 23:24). If God should create a thousand heavens and earths He would be as present with it and distinct from it as now for it cannot contain Him because He is immense. God is always completely present in His entire being everywhere and at all times or He would not be God. So, how can the finite comprehend the infinite? Since God is great then He should be revered, He should be loved, He should be worshipped, He should be obeyed, and He should be trusted.

“How are all the nations of the world as the ‘drop of a bucket,’ as the ‘dust of the balance,’ as ‘vanity,’ as ‘nothing’ before Him! What is a little dust to an immensity of being? to that whose greatness we cannot measure, whose nature we cannot comprehend, whose glory we can only stand afar off and adore? What is a poor worm unto Him who is everywhere, and who is everywhere filled with His own excellencies and blessedness? The issue of all our thoughts on this property of God’s nature is admiration and holy astonishment. And whence is it that He should take thought of us, or set His heart upon us? And this greatness of God doth he set forth, by showing what a mean thing the whole creation which we behold is unto Him...” [John Owen].

God is great in His incomprehensibility—“and we know him not.” Man being finite cannot understand comprehensively He who is infinite. God alone can know Himself comprehensively. God infinitely overwhelms our understanding of who He is—“Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection” (Job 11:7)? The answer required in this Hebrew context is NO you cannot investigate or discern God unto perfection! God is unsearchable or past finding out (Rom. 11:33). Even the gospel of grace preached is classified as “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. 3:8).

Thanks be to God that by grace God can be known through His Son whom to know aright is life eternal.

God is great in His eternality—“neither can the number of his years be searched out.” Literally, we would never be able by searching to come to the bottom of God’s years. Why? “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God” (Ps. 90:2). God was eternal before creation, and He is eternal after creation, and He is eternal apart from creation. God’s eternality is without beginning and without ending. He is the first mover, but He is unmoved. He is without succession as the One who is! Everything is always present with God who inhabits eternity and whose name is holy. He is the Lord of time, but is not subject to time.

Thy nature is the mystery
In which all thoughts are lost;
Archangels wonder at Thee
Through heaven’s unnumbered host.
Unbounded is Thine essence,
All space is full of Thee,
And ’tis Thy blessed presence
That suns immensity.

“Great and small are terms which have not the same meaning with God as with man. How can anything be great to Him but Himself? He regulates the ripples on the sea of human life, caused by trivial circumstances, as well as the lifting up of the floods, when the angry waves threaten us with shipwreck. God is great, and He is so great that He is gentle; there are no hands so strong, and none so tender” [H. J. Bevis].

Thomas Le Blanc wrote, “God is so great, that till Christ revealed the Father, Deity was lost in its own infinity to the perception of men. He who attempts to navigate an infinite ocean must come back to his starting point, never being able to cross. So, the ancient philosophes, disputing as to the Divine Nature, were baffled by their own ingenuity, they had to confess that they comprehended nothing of God except that He was incomprehensible. Without Christ, men can only find out about God that they can never find Him.”