

A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical And Southern Studies

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1. Great is thy faithfulness, O God, my Father;
There is no shadow of turning with thee.
Thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
As thou hast been, thou forever wilt be. [Refrain]
2. Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. [Refrain]
3. Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine and ten thousand beside. [Refrain]

Refrain:

Great is thy faithfulness,
Great is thy faithfulness,
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed thy hand hast provided;
Great is thy faithfulness,
Lord unto me.

Thomas O. Chisholm (1866-1960)

Our God Is Majestic in His Faithfulness

"Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds."

Psalm 36:5

The Psalms often take us by the hand, as it were, and leads us to the very person of God by describing the glorious attributes that make up His person. So often the Lord by the Holy Spirit guides the writers of sacred Scripture in describing Himself in profound ways. Here in Psalm 36, we find such a case in verses 5 to 6. Oh, how frequently the Creator's creation is used by Him to express truths about Himself as it were to show us Himself though we deserve His wrath. Jehovah's mercy is in the heavens, or it is heavenly, His faithfulness is unto the clouds, His righteousness is likened unto great mountains, and His judgments are like the great deep. Jehovah's mercy is His love and longsuffering

showing compassion. Oh, the immensity of Jehovah's righteousness is compared to great mountains which are pictures of great and massive stability. Think of the Alps of His righteousness which soars above human understanding and verbalizing. Jehovah's judgments are like the great deep because they are unfathomable to our human finiteness. His judgments are past finding out. The heavens and the earth declare the glory of God. God's Word is settled in heaven!

"Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds." The heavens declare His glory, and the clouds preach His faithfulness to the sons of men. His redeemed who are unfaithful are provided with assurance of One who is the very source of faithfulness. Thanks be to God that our being unfaithful children of His does not, yea, cannot alter His faithfulness to us which is a very part of who He is. Those clouds speak of the veracity of God. "He abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself" (2 Tim. 2:13). Thomas Goodwin noted, "Faithfulness, you know, is the performance of a trust committed to one by some other that relies upon him, or the discharge of some obligation that ariseth thence."

Earthly clouds may portend many things such as the expectation of rain or the canopy of shade. They may prophecy of coming storms with violent content. They may preach the mercy of God or as in our text declare His great faithfulness. God in His sovereign acts may use clouds as false messengers as "clouds without water." He may use clouds as in our text to represent His great faithfulness to His children. He was with His children: when He led them in the wilderness, when He walked before them giving them light and warmth in the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. Then His children could look up and see that pillar of cloud which spoke of His unerring faithfulness; this spoke of the presence of God. Yes, it said God is here, He is on guard, and the clouds are His promissory note. Yes, the pillar of cloud was a monument to God's faithfulness, a sign of His presence, and a manifestation of His care for His own.

When you were brought to Christ it was by the God who is faithful and you could say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." The ground of the apostle's statement is based on the faithfulness of God whom he knew was faithful and persuaded him based on the regenerating work of God the Holy Spirit. "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." "I understand part of its meaning to be this, that Jesus Christ was, by covenant made to Him by His Father, to have fellows or companions, partakers of the same grace and glory with Himself. The man God's fellow was not to be in heaven alone, John 12, but to have fellow-copartners, ... and to mediate and procure this was the end of His dying, as in John 12:23, 24, 'The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit;'

and unto that end it was He died.... We are then co-apprehended by Jesus Christ, Phil. 3:12, and have all blessings in Christ estated upon us for ever, to be given forth as need is, and as the time appointed by the Father comes to give them forth unto eternity; and therefore God, that hath done this in *faithfulness*, after so long a time since His covenant with Christ, will perform it to the end. For '*faithful is he,*' etc., and Christ lives and sees to it to see this done, and calls upon Him for it" [Goodwin].

God's faithfulness is historically displayed and should be a source of encouragement to us today as well as our children. "One generation shall praise thy works to another" (Ps. 145:4). The prophet propounded, "Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation" (Joel 1:2-3). The Psalmist reminded, "I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known *thy faithfulness* to all generations.... O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto thee? or to *thy faithfulness* round about thee" (Ps. 89:1, 8)? Why should we remind the following generations? "That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments" (Ps. 78:7).

Arthur W. Pink penned, "What a word in Psalm 36:5, 'Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and Thy faithfulness unto the clouds.' Far above all finite comprehension is the unchanging faithfulness of God. Everything about God is great, vast, incomparable. He never forgets, never fails, never falters, never forfeits His word. To every declaration of promise or prophecy the Lord has exactly adhered; every engagement of covenant or threatening He will make good, for 'God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?' (Num. 23:19). Therefore, does the believer exclaim, 'His compassions fail not, they are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness' (Lam. 3:22-23)."