

A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical And Southern Studies

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Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
upon the Savior's brow;
His head with radiant glories crowned,
His lips with grace o'erflow,
His lips with grace o'erflow.

No mortal can with Him compare,
among the sons of men;
fairer is He than all the fair
who fill the heav'nly train,
who fill the heav'nly train.

Samuel Stennett (1727-1795)

Our God is Terribly Majestic

"with God is terrible Majesty."

Job 37:22

Our text is one of those declarations seeking to pronounce the greatness and incomprehensible being of God. Even the frost was pictured as the breath of God (v. 10). Elihu suggested to Job that he stand still and contemplate the wonderful works of God (v. 14). He seeks to instruct his harried friend Job. Then he declared, "Fair weather cometh out of the north" (v. 22a). Why the north? Because the north wind clears away the clouds and reveals the sudden explicit brightness of the sun—"And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds: but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them" (v. 21). So, the bright light of the sun breaks through when the clouds have been whisked away by the wind. The picture here is one wherein the heavens were covered with darkness as a great storm when suddenly the clouds blow away revealing the dazzling appearance of the sun before the approach of the Creator-Redeemer God. This all leads to the grand doxology of the majestic appearance of God, for "with God is terrible majesty." Yes, give doxological praise, "To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude 25). "Majesty" as used in Jude speaks of the greatness of our God and Saviour which comprises His all wise, all knowing, holiness and all that constitutes what is great and magnificent in Him. "By this we are to understand that admirable highness and greatness, amplitude, splendor, dignity of Christ as God, which

appears principally in His works and word thereby making Himself wonderful” [Wm. Jenkyn]. All the persons of the Godhead are “terrible in majesty.”

Elihu is finishing his discourse to his friend Job relative to the person and work of God. Afterward Jehovah speaks not to Elihu but to His servant Job out of the whirlwind (38:1). We are considering the terrible majesty of God. We shall consider the very essence of our Triune God! The Bible tells us that He is the God of infinite majesty and as such we must know Him. Psalm 93:1 says that Jehovah is “clothed with majesty,” this is His garment. Psalm 96:6 reveals that “honour and majesty are before him,” Honour and Majesty are personified in God. In Psalm 145:5 the psalmist exclaims, “I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty.” This is a promise of praise to the majestic God being held in honor. Peter under the guidance of the Holy Spirit wrote, “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Pet. 1:16). Then in Hebrews 1:3 we read that Christ, after He ascended, “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Christ the King in His majesty sat down victoriously at the right hand of His majestic Father. Also, our “high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” (Heb. 8:1). Isaiah speaks of “the glory of his majesty” (Isa. 2:10) for His majesty is radiated. His majesty is glorious.

The English word “majesty” comes from the Latin *maiestas* which is from the root of *magnus* meaning greatness, grandeur, dignity. So, “majesty” equates with “greatness.” Thus *majesty* is the awe-inspiring greatness, particularly seen as an attribute of God’s divinity or sovereign power. “Majesty belongs eminently unto God” [J. Caryl]. *God’s majesty refers to the greatness of His being as the only One who embodies this kind of greatness:* “For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible...” (Deut. 10:17). The Hebrew employed in “God of gods and Lord of lords” is a superlative, the sense is: He is “the supreme God and the absolute Lord.” God is beyond the comprehension of man who is to worship God in awe. “Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable” (Ps. 145:3), consider its connection with v. 5, “I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty.”

The majesty of God also speaks of His dignity, His stateliness, His honor. When we think humanly of majesty, we think of kings and queens, of high rulers and dignitaries. The new king of England is referred to as “His Majesty.” This country refers to judges as “Your Honor.” But God bears these names *supremely* because He is the great King and Judge of all the world. Psalm 93:1 and Psalm 145:1 describe God in His majesty because the Psalmist saw God as majestic King.

“The word ‘majesty,’ when applied to God, is always a declaration of His greatness and an invitation to worship. The same is true when the Bible speaks of God as being ‘on high’ and ‘in heaven;’ the thought here is not that God is far distant from us in space, but that He is far above us in greatness, and therefore is to be adored. ‘Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised’ (Ps. 48:1). ‘The LORD is a great God, and a great King ... O come, let us worship and bow down’ (Ps. 95:3, 6). The Christian’s instincts of trust and worship are stimulated very powerfully by knowledge of the greatness of God” [J. I. Packer].

In conjunction with what has been said Henry Melvill (1798-1871 an English minister) noted, “If any one of you be witness to the progress of a storm, as it sweeps along in its fury, your sensations as the winds howl, and the torrents descend, and the thunders roll, and the waves toss, are sensations of dread and alarm; and if in the midst of this turmoil of elements your thoughts turn upwards to God, who hath His way in the whirlwind, and at whose feet the clouds are the dust, you are disposed to regard Him with unmingled fear—to shrink from Him as manifesting, in and through this tremendous emblazonry, the heavenly attributes at war with such creatures as yourselves. And then if there come the hushing of the tempest, and the darkened firmament be suddenly cleared, and the landscape which just before had been desolated and drenched, be beautifully lit up with the golden rays of a summer sun, oh, then it is that there will be awakened within you grateful and adoring emotions, and that God whose terrible majesty you had been ready to acknowledge as the Voice of His thunders was heard, will appear to you a bountiful and beneficent Being, whom even the sinful may approach, and by whom the unworthy may be shielded. But you will observe that it was just the reverse with Elihu. It is the fair weather from the north which would make you exclaim, ‘How good, how gracious is God;’ but it was the fair weather from the north which made Elihu exclaim, ‘How terrible is God.’ And there is the theology of revelation in this, if there be not the theology of nature. It is not so much the storm, it is rather the calm, which should lead me to think on the tremendousness of God.”