



I*t is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)*

This is a hymn of great reverence and classic nature. It is a classic hymn, not for its age, but its construction and meaning. The author, Thomas Obadiah Chisholm of Franklin Kentucky, (1866-1960) wrote more than 1200 hymns and, in each case, with the intent to incorporate as much Scripture as possible to avoid flippant and sentimental themes. He was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. The tune is the composition of Mr. William Marion Runyan (b. Marion, NY, 1870; d. Pittsburg, KS, 1957) composed FAITHFULNESS for Chisholm's text in Baldwin, Kansas, in 1923. This hymn did not make the 'sophistication' cut of the 1940 Hymnal but that would be to the detriment of the editors and not the hymns itself.

Great is thy Faithfulness

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:

Great is thy faithfulness!

Great is thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see:

all I have needed thy hand hath provided--

Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

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]

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, with ten thousand beside!
[Refrain]

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. If there is ever a failure in faith between man and God, I can assure you – it will never be on the part of God for His faithfulness exceeds the limits of our comprehension. Faithful to the intent of the author to maintain a Scriptural basis for his hymns, the author makes reference to the steady and unchanging nature of our God: “17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” (James 1:17) Our Lord is not fickle or unpredictable. He is a friend that remains so in sunshine and shadow. “. . . but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.” (Psalm 15:4) In these lines are the re-enforcement of biblical doctrine as should be the case in every hymn (unlike the silly mantras in the modern church). “8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.” (Hebrews 13:8)

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. We have the covenant made with Noah that the Lord will never again destroy the world by flood of waters. “22 While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” The heavenly bodies will continue in their respective orbits so long as the earth remains. The terrors propagated by modern fiction and, unfortunately, many false prophets, of celestial calamities are just that – fiction. Of course, the day of judgment will bring a fiery finish to this sphere, but all will continue until God dissolves time, matter, and space. The natural Creation is witness to God’s mighty power, wisdom and love. There can be no excuse for the nay-sayers and pseudo-intellectuals who promote an accidental evolution of nature: “18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.” (Romans 1:18-20)

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, with ten thousand beside! Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth – yet another example of pure biblical doctrine beign drawn out in the lyrics: “7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7) Have you paused to count your blessings lately? Is it possible? Do you believe that even your often-lamented failures do not accrue to blessings for you in the end? Just as He walked with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, was the observer of Hagar at the Wilderness Fountain, and stood, unknown, before Mary Magdalene at the open tomb, He is with you even now as you contemplate His Word, His Love and His Mercy.

Refrain

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see: all I have needed thy hand hath provided -- Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me! Every dawning day is a gift of beauty from God. We have our clean scrolls of paper on which we scribble and disfigure during the troubles of the day, but during the long night, He cleanses those scrolls to begin the next day as the first day of the rest of our lives. What shall we record on those scrolls? Can we not record the many unmerited blessings He extends, the hours of light and beauty, the fond memories of days gone by? His mercies and blessings are renewed at every sunrise and serve to erase from our sorrowful hearts the tears of a dark and foreboding night. “ *weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*” (Psalm 30:5) Just as Holy Scripture teaches important truths through the process of repetition, so does this hymn repeat the important truth – “*Great is Thy Faithfulness!*” “*Morning by morning*” our souls are flooded with new, and often unacknowledged, blessings. In most cases, the blessings are so common, we take no note of them. We awake, we walk, we feast, we breathe, we see, we hear, we speak – what wonderful blessings are those which we may not notice until one or more of these gifts are interdicted.

There is another blessed gift which we seldom consider – the gift of TIME. We are given a scale of time here on earth to learn of our Lord Jesus Christ and to worship Him. Have we invested that time well, friend?