

A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical And Southern Studies

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454

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:

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.

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]

Thomas O. Chisholm (1866-1960)

Everlasting Consolation & Good Hope

“Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.”

2 Thessalonians 2:16

Consolation is the alleviation of misery or distress of mind; it is a refreshment of mind or spirit; it is a comprehensive degree of happiness in distress or misfortune which providentially presents itself. And hope does not disappoint. In chapter 2 there is a begging of the brethren to not be soon shaken in mind or troubled or deceived because the day of Christ was at hand, but there will be bright hope for tomorrow.

How do we obtain this everlasting consolation and good hope? “Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord

Jesus Christ” (vv. 13-14). The fact that we enjoy consolation, and hope is found in the divine initiative. God the Father chooses to salvation, God the Spirit sets apart unto salvation, and God the Son, who is the truth, atones. When did God make this choice? It was “from the beginning.” God the Father “has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). It was “according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Tim. 1:9). What was God’s purpose in this choice? We were chosen “to salvation.”

God the Holy Spirit set us apart unto salvation and the result was we were given everlasting consolation and good hope. It was “through sanctification of the Spirit” or the new birth or regeneration. God the Son, who is the Truth, is the object of faith unto salvation resulting in everlasting consolation and good hope. “Belief of the truth” yes, the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Not only were we chosen to salvation but were effectually called unto salvation, which results in everlasting consolation and good hope. “Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This usage of “called” in the New Testament has reference to the effectual call of grace. This work of the Holy Spirit is irresistible. The gospel Paul and his fellows preached was “to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus.” “Glory” here refers to the shekinah glory of Jesus. We learn here that God loved, chose, called, and transformed for the purpose of reflecting the glory of Jesus Christ (1 John 3:1-2; Rom. 8:29).

What is the effect of this eternal consolation and good hope? This mighty work of grace is a very stabilizing element in life. “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle” (v. 15). Thus, it was imperative that the brethren should “stand fast” or “persevere.” Thus, in the light of what the Lord has done by sovereign grace our eternal prospects are sure. Thus, the brethren should “hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.” “The traditions” here referred to are not bad but good traditions to be held. “Hold” means they should keep a powerful grip on them. These traditions came through apostolic authority that was oral or written. The value of the tradition is not in its form but in its source. Paul put it: “For I have received from the Lord what I also handed over unto you,” (1 Cor. 11:23).

Who gave us this eternal consolation and good hope? The origin of both is given in verse 16. “Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself” is part of the source of our great benefits. Our Saviour “himself” by His own design, power, grace, mercy, etc. is the insurance of the efficacy of the outcome. He establishes us in faith. “And God, even our Father” is seen as the source of our great spiritual benefits. Our Father is the nourisher, protector, upholder, and provider. “Our” again shows that believers have a redemptive relationship with God

the Father as well as with God the Son. Our spiritual birth is of God (John 1:12-14). Our triune God “loves us.” We are “chosen” or loved before time by election, loved in time by redemption, and loved after time in glorification. “Loved” is referring to the active divine self-sacrificing love demonstrated by the holy trinity.

As a result of being so loved we were given “everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.” We have present unending consolation and future good hope. “Everlasting consolation” is something believers have in this present evil world. Imagine those who were dead in trespasses and in sins being transformed into children of God by grace. Headed for hell but now comforted eternally in Christ. Yes, in a temporary world we may have eternal consolation. The greatness of consolation is that our eternity does not depend on our faithfulness but upon the finished work of Christ. What a consolation there is that all things work together for our good because we are called according to God’s purpose. What consolation there is in Christ who said, “Because I live, ye shall live also.” What consolation there is in Christ’s prayer, “I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am that they may behold my glory.” There is consolation in Christ’s intercession, “Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.” “Good hope through grace” is a future hope while we enjoy present consolation. “Hope” is a joyful and confident expectation resting on the promises of God. This hope is characterized as “good.” The consolation and hope are “through grace.” No, they do not come by human effort or merit for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. They come through the unmerited favor of God through Christ which is bestowed on one deserving hell. What is grace but the eternal and absolutely free favor of God unveiled in spiritual and eternal blessings on the guilty and unworthy.

C. H. Spurgeon noted, “‘Good hope,’ the hope when days and years are past, we all shall meet in heaven; the hope that whatever the future may be, it is full of bliss for us; the hope of immortality for our souls, and of resurrection for our bodies, for when Christ shall come, we also that sleep in Jesus shall come with him. The hope of reigning with Jesus Christ on earth in the days of his triumph, and reigning with him for ever and ever in endless felicity. This is our hope, a good hope, for it is based and founded on a good foundation.”