

Vignette #1:

## **Great is Thy Faithfulness**

An old hymn popular for many years, the words are beautiful.  
To hear it sung look it up on You-tube. There are many different versions.

Words by Thomas O. Chisholm  
Music by William M. Runyan

**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 will be.**

*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.**

*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!*

**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!**

*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!*

Vignette #2:

## The Man and the Birds

Now the man to whom I'm going to introduce you was not a scrooge—he was a kind, decent, mostly good man. Generous to his family, upright in his dealings with other men. But he just didn't believe all that incarnation stuff which the churches proclaim at Christmas Time. It just didn't make sense and he was too honest to pretend otherwise. He just couldn't swallow the Jesus Story, about God coming to Earth as a man. "I'm truly sorry to distress you," he told his wife, "but I'm not going with you to church this Christmas Eve." He said he'd feel like a hypocrite. That he'd much rather just stay at home, but that he would wait up for them. And so he stayed and they went to the midnight service.

Shortly after the family drove away in the car, snow began to fall. He went to the window to watch the flurries getting heavier and heavier and then went back to his fireside chair and began to read his newspaper. Minutes later he was startled by a thudding sound. Then another, and then another. Sort of a thump or a thud. At first he thought someone must be throwing snowballs against his living room window. But when he went to the front door to investigate he found a flock of birds huddled miserably in the snow. They'd been caught in the storm and, in a desperate search for shelter, had tried to fly through his large landscape window.

Well, he couldn't let the poor creatures lie there and freeze, so he remembered the barn where his children stabled their pony. That would provide a warm shelter, if he could direct the birds to it. Quickly he put on a coat, galoshes, tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the doors wide and turned on a light, but the birds did not come in. He figured food would entice them in. So he

hurried back to the house, fetched breadcrumbs, sprinkled them on the snow, making a trail to the yellow-lighted wide open doorway of the stable. But to his dismay, the birds ignored the breadcrumbs, and continued to flap around helplessly in the snow. He tried catching them. He tried shooing them into the barn by walking around them waving his arms. Instead, they scattered in every direction, except into the warm, lighted barn.

And then, he realized, that they were afraid of him. To them, he reasoned, I am a strange and terrifying creature. If only I could think of some way to let them know that they can trust me. That I am not trying to hurt them, but to help them. But how? Because any move he made tended to frighten them, confuse them. They just would not follow. They would not be led or shooed because they feared him. "If only I could be a bird," he thought to himself, "and mingle with them and speak their language. Then I could tell them not to be afraid. Then I could show them the way to safety ... to the safe warm barn. But I would have to be one of them so they could see, and hear and understand."

At that moment the church bells began to ring. The sound reached his ears above the sounds of the wind. And he stood there listening to the bells - Adeste Fidelis - listening to the bells pealing the glad tidings of Christmas. And he sank to his knees in the snow.

-- Author Unknown --

(Shared by Paul Harvey on his radio show)

My seminary teacher read this story to our class when I was in high school. It is interesting to think of the Children of Israel huddling in fear at the foot of Mt. Sinai, telling Moses to go talk to God so they would not have to listen to the terrifying voice any longer. How were they like the fearful birds, afraid of the man who was trying to help them. See D&C 84:23-28