



GIVE ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. 2 My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: (Deut 32:1-2)

THEY also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens: thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice. 9 Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it. 10 Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof. 11 Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness. 12 They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side. 13 The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing. (Psalms 65:8-13)

The art of God is not only so profoundly and overwhelmingly displayed in the natural world of heavenly wonders, rivers, mountains, glens, and seas; but also in the beauty of His very Words. The Deep of God's Mind reaches into the deep of one's soul and finds a pleasurable echo there. *DEEP calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.* (Psalm 42:7-8) The stranger in the Court of His Majesty, the Lord Jesus Christ, cannot see this beauty. It is a sorrow to know that many are blind and may NEVER see the beauty of the Lord in His Sanctuary. *O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* (Psalm 63:1-2)

Pure art and undefiled is that which best emulates the beauty of God. In order to accomplish even an approach to that beauty, the artist must use contrast to achieve a vivid impression – a contrast of light, of colors, and of backgrounds and perspective. How would we ever have an appreciation of the warmth and beauty of light if there were no darkness? How could we appreciate the sunny day if there were no rainy days?

When I was a very young boy in the latter 1940s, my parents would visit my Granny Mae's (grandmother) farm in the country and spend a few days there. Electric service was not available in that rural region, so, candles and kerosene lamps were used at evening. We would gather around the table and partake of a delicious fare of home-grown vegetables, freshly caught fish, and endearing conversation. Those memories are part of the treasure trove that I will take with me to the grave. I especially remember my fifth birthday at Granny Mae's (1948) when my cake had five candles that were miniature compared to those on the table. I do believe that such moments in life are the fabric of our lives – not the days, weeks, months, or years, but those special moments that are indelibly graven in our memory banks – moments shared with friends and family.

In those days, the air seemed more pristine than that of today, and it probably was. When a summer shower came, the heat would dispel and everything seemed fresh and clean following. The birds chirped with greater vigor, and the shafts of sunlight breaking through the clouds presented a mystical aura on the fields and trees. If the skies were always clear, I believe we might die of boredom, but the refreshing rains bring a happy break that cleans the earth. They also cause the fields to regain their vibrant Irish green, all of nature seems happy, and the crops are rejuvenated.

The alternating patterns of rain and sunshine are evidence of God's grace in providing both even to those who do not love Him, and are an example to us of how we should deal fairly with all men. *45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? 48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.* (Matt 5:45-48)

But God also uses inordinate rain to bring judgment against a wicked generation sometimes destroying all in its path, for the waters of a flood have tremendous power and force. The first judgment against an entire world was accomplished by persistent rains as well as the fountains of the deep being broken up.

The wicked city of Nineveh was destroyed by a flood which desolved its walls and laid bare the breast of the city to the invader. *1 The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite. 2 God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. 3 The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. . . . 8 But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies.* (Nahum 1:1-3,8)

For any who have traveled to the ruins of Nineveh in Iraq, it is difficult to imagine a flood of waters in that dry and barren plateau, but God uses the most startling of means to bring about His judgments. Sometimes those means are only intended as warnings such as the whirlwind of hurricanes that have bombarded the gambling casinos and fleshpots of New Orleans and Biloxi a few years back; but sometimes, if warnings are unheeded, He brings a total destruction in condemnation of the wickedness whose iniquities are judged to be perfect.

God speaks in the thunder of hail and thunderstorms to remind us that we must humble ourselves before Him. The hail is formed at the higher levels of the atmosphere and released by the hand of God. His thunder is to remind us not to take His might and power lightly. *1 At this also my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place. 2 Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth. 3 He directeth it under the whole*

heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth. 4 After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard. 5 God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend. (Job 37:1-5)

Rain is the fulfillment of God's promises to sustain the earth until it's fiery end. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth. (Hosea 6:3) He provides the early Spring rains for planting, and the latter rains of the ending summer for the harvest of ripened fruit. So it is with the cycle of man's life under the sun.

Rain is liquid precipitation, but there are other forms which God may choose to enrich the lives of the people whom He has scattered at diverse places on the globe. Rain is for the tropical rainforest and her inhabitants, and snow for the dwellers of the north regions. Snow is a symbol of cleansing and purity. It has a white consistency that exceeds any other white known to man. Yet it is not as pure as it appears. One of my favorite verses of Psalms reads, *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be WHITER than snow.* (Psalms 51:7) Before I studied meteorology as a military pilot, this verse was beautiful, but not as full of meaning as I later came to know. Hyssop is an ancient, and modern, purgative used to cleanse the alimentary canal. God does not do as the Pharisees. Here is a clue to us of the meaning of the first part of this verse from Psalms, *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the OUTSIDE of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse FIRST that which is WITHIN the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.* (Matt 23:25-26) God cleanses our inner soul first, and then our outward man is made whiter than snow in purity.

But why is snow not perfectly pure? As water droplets form in the upper atmosphere, and when the temperature is freezing or below, the droplets form tiny ice crystals that coalesce around tiny particles of dust or smoke. These are formed into snowflakes each of which is different from another in some small detail, and they fall to the earth. So, at the center of every snowflake is a tiny impurity such as exists in the heart of every man. But God promises to wash us CLEANER than snow. In Christ, we are accounted wholly righteous without any shadow of sin. Moreover, like Christ, snow comes down to us from exceedingly high places, and covers our dirty world with a white robe or mantle.

One last precipitation would be fog and dew. Dew forms silently and unseen by the eye of man. He sees and feels its moisture on the rose and the green leaf, but regardless of his vigilance, he cannot detect its distillation from the air to form visible moisture on the morning flower. It comes stealthily in the dark night just as a seed germinates in the darkness of the earth ere breaking through the surface into effulgent light. That dew symbolizes to me the work of the Holy Ghost in the heart of man, working unseen. You did not see Him coming, but you are certain that He has made His abode in your redeemed heart. So it is with all the elect of God.