



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. (Nahum 1:3)

When yet very young, and still young enough to believe in visual miracles, I used to lie down among the sage brush in a field adjoining my home and watch the snowy clouds gradually change and drift across the heavens. I could imagine every sort of creature depicted in those clouds and believed that through some wondrous and mysterious power those images were actually real and alive for the brief moments of their forming. There were wolves, and bears, and Indian warriors, and fairies, and great kings, and, I believe, the only real face I saw was that of God Himself. It is good that we grasp all of the miracles we can see as children ere the boredom of adulthood blinds our eyes to the miraculous. But I do believe those miracles still exist by the favor of God.

In my innocence, I imagined those same clouds I was beholding from that sage field were the same being seen at that very moment in India, China, Japan, England, and Persia. That may have been my only misconception, for what I saw was as real as a wild honey-suckle that could be felt, and whose fragrance could be sensed.

If we shed our doubts and skepticism just for a moment, we may again be able to see such marvelous mysteries in the clouds. Though some may be part imagination, not all are such. For example, we see great mountains in the clouds on a day when storms are brewing. The white puffy clouds of autumn begin to grow together and mount on high

to form cumulous clouds of great height – especially if they form cumulo-nimbus clouds reaching several thousands of feet into heaven. We may see the plains of Nebraska when viewing stratus clouds that may form horizontal lines on the horizon. We also may observe artwork far superior to Raphael or Michelangelo for vibrant colors and distinctive definition at the morning sunrise.

Throughout mankind's history, clouds have often been misidentified as bearers of depression or sorrow, and sometimes they are; however, without clouds, we could grow no crops. There would be no rain for the harvest. Clouds are essential to life. So when the clouds build on the horizon, we should know that God sends blessings to us in the form of rain. And when the stormy winds beat upon the windows, they are doing so to clean them so that we can look out, by and by, and see the silver lining that has formed from a previous storm cloud. It is the promise that joy always follows in the wake of sorrow. *weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.* (Psalm 30:5) When the stormy blasts increase, remember, too, that God is in the midst of the storm: *And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.* (Psalm 18:10)

As the storm subsides and the rain gradually ceases, we look toward the heavens to see God's Word firmly displayed there in the form of a beautifully colored rainbow. It is a symbol of God's covenant that the rains and floods will not continue forever. There will always be an end of the storm before life is destroyed upon the earth. *I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.* (Gen 9:13-16)

Remember that it was a Pillar of Cloud by Day and a Pillar of Fire by Night that protected the Children of Israel from Pharaoh's army. It both led, and followed the Children across the Red Sea; and continued to lead in the Wilderness. That Pillar of Cloud dwelt upon the Tabernacle of the Lord, and was evidence of His Presence with the people. *And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.* (Ex 16:10)

Though the clear blue sky and sunny day may evidence His grace and mercy, the clouds symbolize His great power: *Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds.* (Psalm 68:34)

His grace is as the cloud giving dew which distills silently and imperceptibly: *By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.* (Prov 3:20)

The testimony of the Lord is shouted from the cloud. Remember on the Mount of Transfiguration when a cloud descended over the three witnesses – the Lord, Moses, and Elias (for all truth is established in the mouth of three witnesses). *While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.* (Matt 17:5)

Clouds sometime hide our understanding of reality. There are spiritual clouds that blind our eyes to truth. But those clouds of God mentioned above REVEAL truth to our understanding through the agency of the Holy Ghost. It is not wise to delve into clouds of uncertainty when studying God's Word. Those things that are clearly seen therein are plenty sufficient for us to know. As we grow in knowledge and understanding, God may clear those clouds from our vision that we might see clearly. A babe in Christ needs to be fed the milk of God's Word by an elder Christian well-learned in handling the Word of God. The time will come when meat replaces the milk with understanding and wisdom.

An airplane pilot dares not fly into a cloud unaided by advice of radar technicians on the ground, or airborne radar on his instrument panel. We need help to see things that are cloudy of God's Word, too. That is the purpose of the Holy Ghost – not to reveal new truth, but to open our eyes to ancient truth of God's Word.

The glory of the Cloud is well illustrated in my concluding reference to this devotion – the Cloud which received Christ at His Ascension. *It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.* And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts 1:7-11)

Here is one lingering and glorious thought for you to feast your hearts upon. When Christ returns, He will likewise return in a cloud: *And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.* (Mark 13:26)

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. (Rev 1:7)