

# Reflections by the Pond

THE WRITINGS OF DAVID S LAMPEL

# The One in Charge

"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?  
Tell Me, if you have understanding,  
Who set its measurements?  
Since you know,  
Or who stretched the line on it?  
On what were its bases sunk?  
Or who laid its cornerstone,  
When the morning stars sang together  
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

*Job 38:4-7*

Come now, you who say,  
“Today or tomorrow we will go to  
such and such a city, and spend  
a year there and engage in busi-  
ness and make a profit.” Yet you  
do not know what your life will be  
like tomorrow. You are just a va-  
por that appears for a little while  
and then vanishes away.

*James 4:13-14*

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the glory and  
praise of Christ  
our Lord.



# The Highest Form of Life

WE WERE STILL WITHIN THE SHORES of the placid harbor, and the ship was moving so slowly that I imagined it might take days for us just to clear the final buoy. Yet already my stomach was rolling about and the bones in my legs were turning to gelatin. Suddenly this huge ship—a bulwark of steel seemingly as immovable as the pier to which it had been secured—was bobbing and swaying beneath my feet, offering little support for my quivering constitution.

This was the very, very beginning of my six months in the vicinity of Vietnam, and the small-town, heretofore landlocked boy from Iowa was getting his first taste of the sea. The first quaking moments notwithstanding, after about a week's time, I had gained my "sea legs" and was moving about the ship with the unfaltering step of the old salt I was fast becoming.

Then the *real* waves hit.

One night I dreamed I was clinging to the very tip of the mast. As the ship (in my dream) would roll to one side, I would reach down and touch the water on that side of the ship, then, as the ship would roll back, I would reach down and touch the water on the other. I awoke to the sounds of unsecured furniture sliding across the floor and crashing into bulkheads. Suddenly everything in my world was being tossed about like furnishings in an upended dollhouse. I awoke to the disturbing truth that my dream had been based on the reality of my surroundings—and that old, familiar quivering began again in my belly.

Years later, while living in California, I was at work at my desk when, from out of the east, I felt the earth rumbling toward me. This was not like the vibration caused by a passing truck, or even the pounding iron wheels of a diesel locomotive. No, this was the earth itself rolling as if it were a subterranean steamroller, huffing and puffing toward me. The rolling approached from out of the distance—the earth quivered and shook like a huge carpet that someone had grasped from the other end and given a good snap. The rolling wave passed beneath my feet and the cement foundation of our house, then rolled on into the opposite distance.



Every so often we are reminded that we are not in charge. Every so often the earth will not just roll past, beneath our feet, but will give a mighty heave like something released from confinement, like a huge beast rousing to claim its freedom. Every so often fire will refuse to be extinguished, but will take on a life of its own, consuming trees and homes and any life left standing helplessly in its path. Every so often the waves and wind will mount up and come crashing through everything in their path, leaving behind ruin, and filth, and angry despair.

At such times the seemingly substantial trappings of civilization become laughably insubstantial. Fires and explosions, heaving and



buckling roadways, collapsing buildings, inundation of biblical proportions—all are consumed as if made from little more than papier-mache, making a joke of man’s impertinence.

At such times we are reminded of an important biblical concept: dust.

The earth has once again given us notice. In spite of all our efforts, there remain powers far beyond our control. To believe in the supremacy of man over the elements is to indulge in self-delusion. Disastrous earthquakes show just what a puny position man occupies. We are the servant and not the master; we can attempt to understand Nature, but we can never hope to conquer it.

*Karan Singh, in Time magazine, referring to an earthquake in Killari, India.*

Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

“By the sweat of your face  
You will eat bread,  
Till you return to the ground,  
Because from it you were taken;  
For you are dust,  
And to dust you shall return.”

*Genesis 2:7,3:19*

As I write this the Florida peninsula is once again bracing for an approaching hurricane, one of immense size and strength. Once again, mere man can do nothing—*nothing*—to stop it, and once again we are reminded that we are but dust. Flooding will occur, buildings will crumble and fall, people may die. Even man’s calculated defenses seem trivial and inept against such an awful strength.



Just as a father has compassion on his children,  
So the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.  
For He Himself knows our frame;  
He is mindful that we are but dust.

*Psalm 103:13-14*

I unapologetically love my country. I am a patriot. When anger and unhinged hatred for the

United States is spewed from the lips of those without (and, sadly, from many within), I take it personally. I am wounded by their ignorance-based vitriol. I love my country.

But I love God more, and God says that He rules over everything that is—even wealthy, powerful nations such as mine.

For the kingdom is the Lord’s  
And He rules over the nations.  
All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship,  
All those who go down to the dust will bow before Him,  
Even he who cannot keep his soul alive.  
Posterity will serve Him;  
It will be told of the Lord to the coming generation.  
They will come and will declare His righteousness  
To a people who will be born, that He has performed it.

*Psalm 22:28-31*

Man has grown comfortable with the thought of himself as the highest form of life. We imagine we are masters of our universe—masters of everything we see. We can do what we want, build where we want, take what we want; we answer to no one and apologize for nothing. The present mindset eliminates the need, or desire, to answer to an all-powerful God. But in our arrogance we have forgotten that we are “but dust.”

On the surface of this globe we are little more than ants, and to God in His heaven we are little more than dust motes. That is not to say that we are unimportant to Him; God has set us higher even than the angels, granted us dominion over the beasts of the field, granted us the privilege to become brothers and sisters, fellow heirs with Christ. But none of these benefits set us higher than Him. Man creates his own sorrow when he forgets that he is not the one in charge. God will rule. He is the one in charge.

Even while we are rescuing the perishing, and housing those who will soon be without home; while we drain away the unwelcome waters; while we remove the miles of debris and ruin and begin the long and expensive task of rebuilding the lives and businesses of those who have been displaced—even while we address the physical needs, we must address the spiritual. We must pause in our flurry of ac-

tivity to ask, “What is God telling me in this? What does my sovereign Master want me to learn from this experience?”

The answers may be different for each person, but the answers—and lessons—are there. For the Lord does not waste such trials. They are as much a part of His will as the life-bring-

ing spring rains that water the fields of grain. He is as much their author as He is the author of the breeze that gently cools the fevered brow of the worker.

He is God.

He is in charge. ♦

## *Falling From the Sky*

“...that He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil.”

*Deuteronomy 11:14*

**H**ERE IN THIS PLACE OUR more sophisticated brethren dismissively refer to as “fly-over country,” no matter the season, something is usually falling to earth from some place overhead.

I was born and raised in these parts, and the rhythms and ways of this land were ingrained in me from the beginning. In the winter months snow, rain, even ice would fall from the sky—if not with clockwork dependability, it was at least sufficiently reliable to remove winter coats from the basement and to wax the runners of my Radio Flyer sled in anticipation.

In the spring, rain would reliably fall from the sky, reawakening life from the frozen soil. Rivers of runoff would flow down the gutters on either side of our hill on my walks to and from grade school—dressed, of course, in my yellow slicker with detachable hood and my buckle boots. In the summer, rain would continue to fall, if less frequently, keeping our backyard garden green and growing.

As summer dwindled down to the faded, drier days of autumn, soon a different form of precipitation would fall: colorful, drying leaves. As if prefiguring in dry form the approaching snowfall, the leaves would fill the air, drifting down to collect upon the browning lawns of the neighborhood.



When Linda and I lived on the west coast, the natives there declared the weather “perfect.” To us, however, the weather seemed unnatural, artificial. There wasn’t that comfortable seasonal rhythm in which our bodies and minds had been born and raised. Winter snow was nonexistent, replaced by infrequent rain. Summer



photo by Jeremy Michael

rain was virtually unheard of. The musky, melancholy grace of autumn never occurred, since most trees in the area never shed their leaves. And temperatures (at least to our senses) were maddeningly constant.

For two decades we yearned to return to where something more natural than smog fell from the sky.

Now we live in the same climate in which we were raised—where the same seasonal rhythm is played out, with only minor variation, year after year. I may no longer go sledding down the nearest hill after a winter snowfall; I may no longer heave my considerable bulk into the nearest pile of fallen autumn leaves—but those same bits of precipitation and drying foliage still come down from the skies at their appointed times.



Along with being reared where there was weather, I was born and raised to believe in God. As a child I was taught that God lived in heaven and, in practical terms, heaven was located somewhere over my head, somewhere far above the trees, the clouds—above even the breathable air. Heaven was out there beyond the stars, beyond the cosmos, beyond anything known by man.

In any case, no matter where I might be, God was up.

So it was only natural that I would come to associate the stuff falling from the sky with God. After all, the rain and snow seemed to fall from nothing more than thin air. Even after I learned that they actually fell from clouds, it still seemed more poetic to someone born

a dreamer that they emanated from nothing more material than the Almighty's hand. Only later did I learn that God's word confirms my youthful suppositions.

"It shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, that He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil. He will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied."

*Deuteronomy 11:13-15*



The meteorologist knows that there is a specific, natural explanation for every drop of rain and every flake of snow that falls from the sky. The naturalist can expound at length about the climatic and seasonal influences upon deciduous trees that cause them to drop their leaves every year.

But the poet knows that above science is heaven—and the hand of God. The believer knows that even before He created man, God created (and thus controls) science. Science may have its rules, but God created the rules; clouds may form according to natural laws, but God created those laws.

So it is right and true to see God in the rain, the snow, even the cascading leaves of autumn. It is a righteous supposition to see His purposeful hand in all the stuff falling from the sky, for He is sovereign over it all. ◆

Then Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!" And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion." But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!"

*Exodus 33:18-20*



# GOD

**T**HE VERY EXISTENCE OF THE TRINITY illustrates our own inability to grasp the full panoply of God's personality. The necessary atonement of Jesus aside, were man able to intellectually comprehend the totality of God, the three distinct members of the Trinity would not be necessary. God is already spirit; He is able to be and do everything of the Holy Spirit. God is already everything of the Son; He already possesses all the compassion, empathy, servanthood, and self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Man, however, is not able to comprehend the totality of God. Indeed, we have sufficient struggles with each member of the Godhead. So the Trinity's fullness is displayed and demonstrated for feeble humans in its component parts: the Father, the Spirit, the Son. Given that, what is the role of God the Father?



God the Father is the root of all that is holy. He is not just holy; He is holiness. If we could only say, "God is holy," and no more, then that would permit the interpretation that God is in part what someone else is in whole—that He is what someone else has defined. When we say "God is holy," we speak the truth, but it may be inferred from that that someone else has set the standard for God's holiness—that His holiness is only a subset of the whole. Which, of course, is not remotely true.

Holy is the way God is. To be holy He does not conform to a standard. He is that standard. He is absolutely holy with an infinite, incomprehensible fullness of purity that is incapable of being other than it is. Because He is holy, His attributes are holy; that is, whatever we think of as belonging to God must be thought of as holy.

A. W. Tozer



It is not enough to say that God is holy. We must quickly follow on with the fuller truth that God is *holiness*. Once we have grasped the difference,

we are then left with the troublesome problem of defining that level of holiness. If God sets the standard for holiness, just how holy is that?

We cannot grasp the true meaning of holiness by thinking of someone or something very pure and then raising the concept to the highest degree we are capable of. God's holiness is not simply the best we know infinitely bettered. We know nothing like the divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible and unattainable.

Tozer

If we consider every attribute of God the Father in the same way that we have His holiness, we realize that God is the source—the irreducible and irreproducible standard—for every quality ascribed to Him.

For this reason man in flesh cannot look upon the face of God. The experience would be too intense, too destructive to beings as fragile as ourselves. To look upon the face of God and survive would be the same as to plunge one's face into burning, liquefied iron and withdraw it whole. The physical laws of God's creation say that this would be impossible; the flesh would be destroyed in an instant. Just so, the physical and spiritual laws created by Him dictate that sinful flesh cannot survive looking upon the face of the living God.

For the Godhead to have a relationship with man, the Father is as necessary as the Son and the Spirit. Because of his sinful bent, were man to have only the Son and Spirit, he would soon forget the utter, untouchable holiness of God. His disciples lived with Jesus day after day for three years; they soon forgot—even though they used the right words—that He was more than just flesh, but very God. Man too easily forgets the inconvenient truth.

We need God the Father to remind us of God's sovereignty, His unimaginable power, His holiness. ◆

# Like Standing Inside a Portrait of God

Now above the expanse that was over their heads there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, was a figure with the appearance of a man. Then I noticed from the appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire; and there was a radiance around Him. As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking.

*Ezekiel 1:26-28*

**T**HE QUALITIES OF GOD ARE ON DISPLAY all around us. In the face of a child is His simple, direct, accepting love for individuals. In the mystical bond between husband and wife is His faithful love, in Christ, for the church. In the tender ministrations of the volunteer worker, the nurse or doctor, the medical missionary, is His compassion. In the evangelist, as well as the motivated layman, is His salvation. In the preacher and Sunday School teacher is His wisdom. In the consolation of the pastor we see the arms of the Great Shepherd. Even in government and the courts are His laws of equity and justice translated for man.

But where is His awesome glory revealed? Where is His majesty proclaimed? In nature, for only in something not made by man can God's glorious portrait be eloquently painted.



So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently. When

the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder.

*Exodus 19:16-19*

Off the west side of our house, the lawn slopes gently down toward the surrounding field of grass and scrub trees. The field continues down toward the gravel road, and the distant valley. On the other side of the small valley that is so often shrouded in low-lying fog on mornings, the land slopes gently upward into the rise—not nearly a mountain, or even a hill; just a “rise”—of trees.

No heart can measure, no tongue can utter, the half of the greatness of Jehovah. The whole creation is full of his glory and radiant with the excellency of his power; his goodness and his wisdom are manifested on every hand. The countless myriads of terrestrial beings, from man the head, to the creeping worm at the foot, are all supported and nourished by the Divine bounty. The solid fabric of the universe leans upon his eternal arm. Universally is he present, and everywhere is his name excellent. God worketh ever and everywhere. There is no place where God is not.

*Charles Haddon Spurgeon*

The landscape here in the middle of mid-America is not terribly grand. There are no towering mountain peaks, no statuesque redwoods,



no crashing ocean waves. Our land-locked, undulating terrain was carved and shaped by ancient sheets of ice oozing down from the north during the Wisconsin glaciation. While those of us born and bred in these parts may be warmly inspired by the sight of rolling prairie, or vast fields of corn, there is little here to inspire awe for the casual visitor. So God, taking pity on us poor deprived Midwesterners, has written the grandeur across the skies.

*His grandeur.*

On a summer's eve unclouded by smog or pollution, when the cicadas are singing in the trees and the crickets chirp in chorus from the grass, God paints His own grandeur across the canopy arching over our humble land. The orange ball easing down behind the opposite rise paints the lingering clouds with shifting colors, and, suddenly, the small man standing on the humble loam of earth is in the presence of almighty God.

On just such a summer's eve, a few days ago, I stood in awe as He revealed Himself in the glory painted in the sky. Standing on the open, downward slope of the west lawn, with the lower valley spread below and the painter's concave palette curving overhead, it felt as if I were part of the painting—more than mere spectator, but actually a participant in the pageantry of God's throne room.



But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

*John 1:12-13*

There are places in this world where God is hard to find, places where the sucking gravity of the soil makes it nigh impossible to pry our gaze from the oft-depressing squalor in which we dwell. And our habitation is squalor indeed, when compared to the pristine majesty of God, and the glory of His habitation. For the believer, it is his home as well. For the one who calls God "Father," and Jesus Christ "Lord," heaven's glory is something tangible and real. More than that, it is something promised.

Thus it is not presumption that places the believer in the portrait of God. The majesty of a holy God does not repel, but *draws* the one who holds Him in his heart, who bears the likeness and rights of Christ through adoption. As

any child is drawn toward a loving, affectionate parent, so too are we, as believers, drawn to our loving, affectionate, heavenly Father. Even in His supernatural glory, our hearts are possessed not by fear, but by our deep longing to be with Him.

And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. Then I said,

"Woe is me, for I am ruined!

Because I am a man of unclean lips,  
And I live among a people of unclean lips;  
For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

*Isaiah 6:4-5*

Like Isaiah, we may feel shattered, and profoundly unholy in God's presence, but in the blood of Christ we may attend. And the sense of smallness we experience when standing before the wonder and beauty of God's creation actually elevates our soul. This is the genius and daring of His plan. Instead of God's creative grandeur withering us into paltry, humiliated insignificance, it, instead, raises us into the breathless glory of His presence.

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,

The moon and the stars, which You have ordained;

What is man that You take thought of him,  
And the son of man that You care for him?  
Yet You have made him a little lower than God,

And You crown him with glory and majesty!

*Psalms 8:3-5*

God exalts *us*, His greatest creation, through His glory embedded in the rest of His creation. Contrast this to the alternate view of man held by some of those in the "Deep Ecology" movement.

The planet's ecosystem is a collective living organism and operates very much like the human body... Humans are presently acting upon this body in the same manner as an invasive virus with the result that we are eroding the ecological immune system. A virus kills its host and that is exactly what we are doing with our planet's support system... Curing a body of cancer requires radical and

invasive therapy, and therefore, curing the biosphere of the human virus will also require a radical and invasive approach.

*Paul Watson, Captain of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society*

So to some, man is an invasive cancer or virus, an evil disease that should be eradicated from the face of the supposedly once-pristine planet, while to the One who created it in the first place, man is the “guest of honor” on that planet.

God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

*Genesis 1:27-28*

The Spirit moving in the believer betrays the error in the skewed philosophy of the radical ecologist, all the while confirming the truth of

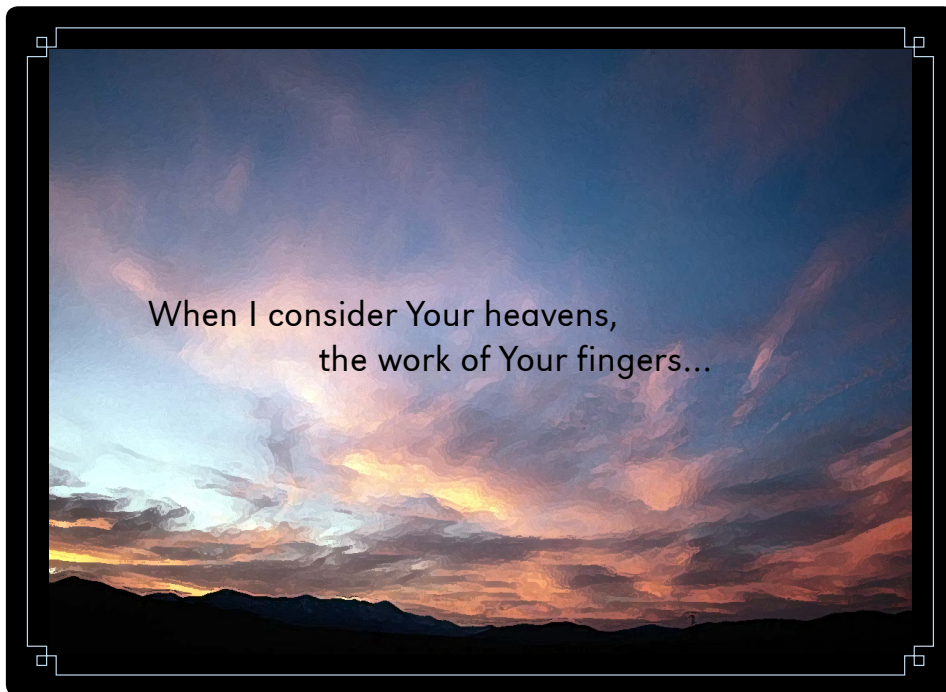
God’s written word. When the believer stands before the glory of God, in whatever form it may be manifested, he is at once humbled by His Majesty and reinvigorated by the trust his God has placed in him.

You make him to rule over the works of Your hands;  
You have put all things under his feet,  
All sheep and oxen,  
And also the beasts of the field,  
The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea,  
Whatever passes through the paths of the seas.  
O Lord, our Lord,  
How majestic is Your name in all the earth!

*Psalms 8:6-9*

And when His majesty is broadcast across the sky, we may embrace the power and other-worldly glory declared there. As much as we are His, He is ours.

We can be at home in His presence. ♦



# *Kings over a Kingdom That Does Not Exist*

**T**HE LORD HAS GENEROUSLY GIFTED US with minds so imaginative and inventive that we suppose ourselves to be brilliant. We always think we are the smartest ones in the room. He also has built into us the capacity to imagine ourselves kings over a kingdom that does not exist. There is only one kingdom, however, and it is His.

John the Baptist understood. He was a powerful, charismatic (if eccentric) servant of God in the days of Christ on the earth. He drew crowds, won the attention of the politicians and religious leaders, and was dramatically influential for God at a time of great upheaval and cynicism. His was a singular voice of piercing, melodic clarity in a chorus of drab monotones. His was a perfect situation for self-imagined—and self-generated—grandeur. Today he would have his own cable show.

Yet when John came face to face with Jesus, in a moment he understood that he did not know tomorrow, and that he was not the one in charge.

“A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven. You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but, ‘I have been sent ahead of Him.’ He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. So this joy of mine has been made full. He must increase, but I must decrease.”

*John 3:27-30*

We all need to have a “John the Baptist” moment—preferably each morning upon rising. We all need a daily reminder—a declarative, soul searching, direction-altering epiphany—that God is in His heaven and we are not the ones on His throne. The Christian bows before a sovereign who knows precisely what He is doing at all times. He knows tomorrow, because for Him it has already occurred. His vantage point is from outside our time; He dwells at once in our yesterday, tomorrow, and today and enjoys complete control over all things. ♦

*Eternal Power, whose high abode  
Becomes the grandeur of a God:  
Infinite lengths beyond the bounds  
Where stars revolve their little rounds:*

*Thee while the first archangel sings,  
He hides his face behind his wings:  
And ranks of shining thrones around  
Fall worshipping, and spread the ground.*

*Lord, what shall earth and ashes do?  
We would adore our Maker too;  
From sin and dust to Thee we cry,  
The Great, the Holy, and the High.*

*Earth, from afar, hath heard Thy fame,  
And worms have learn'd to lisp Thy Name;  
But Oh! the glories of Thy mind  
Leave all our soaring thoughts behind.*

*God is in heaven, and men below:  
Be short our tunes; our words be few:  
A solemn reverence checks our songs,  
And praise sits silent on our tongues.*

Isaac Watts

# The Wonder and The Fury

The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness,  
The world and those who dwell therein.

For He has founded it upon the seas,  
And established it upon the waters.

*Psalms 24:1-2 NKJV*

**T**HE LONGER ONE BURROWS AND SCRAPES his fingers through the soil, the more one realizes how little control mere humans have over the earth and its elements. We may fancy ourselves as being relatively experienced—even experts—but the truth is that it takes very little to nullify our efforts.

Weeks of careful sculpting of the garden terrain can be destroyed in a moment when the deer hold their nocturnal dance amid the garden rows. In mere seconds strong winds or hail can demolish an entire stand of new corn. And all the studied expertise in the world won't help a hybrid crop if it never rains.

Like it or not, whether we choose to admit it or not, we are not the ones in charge. And the brutal truth is that we haven't all the answers. Every year it happens—every year “nature” reasserts its supremacy.

In March of 2011 a powerful earthquake and resulting tsunami overwhelmed the northeast portion of Honshu island in Japan. In the dramatic video footage we saw automobiles bobbing about like corks on the tide, boats and ships tossed about as if flimsy toys in a bathtub. On Sunday, May 22 of that same year, a massive tornado demolished a large portion of Joplin, Missouri. The devastation would not have been worse if the city had been a major theatre of operations in a world war. And then spring rains and snowmelt combined to overwhelm the Missouri River basin—a situation exacerbated by the futile efforts of the Army Corps of Engineers to “manage” the flood.

Engineers contrive elaborate systems for altering the path of rivers—but in a moment, after a little too much rain, “nature” reasserts its supremacy, reclaiming its stolen land. Strong, thick walls of cement block are constructed, seemingly permanent, and a whirlwind drops down from the clouds and sudden-

ly they are toppled like Tinker Toys. Mighty oceangoing ships are designed and built, declared “unsinkable,” and are rendered new fish habitat by a simple block of frozen water.

Yours is the day, Yours also is the night;  
You have prepared the light and the sun.  
You have established all the boundaries of  
the earth;  
You have made summer and winter.

*Psalms 74:16-17*

Arrogance is surely one of man's more egregious sins. When we hold things tightly—things such as land and possessions, knowledge and actions—the day will certainly come when God will pry them painfully from our grasp. When we imagine ourselves to be masters of our domain, able to out-build nature, the Lord will, inevitably, see fit to put us in our place.

But when we hold all things loosely, confessing happily that we haven't all the answers, opening our minds, instead, to the eternal truth of God; when we admit freely that we are not owners, but mere stewards of what we have; when our expectations are based not on our own efforts, but rather on a simple, undemanding reliance upon God—when we realize that He is in charge, and we are not, then God is free to work wonders and marvelous things in our lives. ♦



“...that you may know that I am the LORD.”

*Exodus 10:2b*

photo by Robert Campbell