

## How Spirit dissipated the storm

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IN thinking about the weather, I often go back to what a friend once said to me about snakes. She said, "God made the snake but not the poison." I took this to mean that what God made is good, but He didn't make His creation harmful or destructive. God's creation is entirely spiritual, not material. God couldn't have made anything destructive, because God is only good. God certainly doesn't create destructive weather. So, whether we're praying about a disaster in our own community or about a national disaster, our prayers need to include the spiritual facts concerning the weather.

In the book of Isaiah the Bible promises, "There shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain" (4:6). Mary Baker Eddy says in her *Miscellaneous Writings*, "We all must find shelter from the storm and tempest in the tabernacle of Spirit" (p. 362).

Finding shelter from the storm doesn't just mean finding a physical place where we'll be safe. Rather, it can also mean seeking shelter in the consciousness of Spirit, God, in a deep understanding that God is all good.

The tabernacle of Spirit is the spiritual understanding that man dwells in God only. It is the conscious conviction that no matter what appears to be surrounding us, even if it is threatening or fearful, man, God's child, always dwells safely in Spirit. In this tabernacle, or spiritual consciousness, evil is absent, and good, ever

present; evil is seen to be unreal, and good to be the only reality. Thus we have the authority to refute and destroy all that appears unlike God, all that is unlike the tabernacle that man forever inhabits.

How do we seek shelter in the tabernacle of Spirit? Mary Baker Eddy points the way when she writes: "Christian Science reveals God and His idea as the All and Only. It declares that evil is the absence of good; whereas, good is God ever-present, and therefore evil is unreal and good is all that is real. Christian Science saith to the wave and storm, 'Be still,' and there is a great calm" (*Retrospection and Introspection*, p. 60). Staying in the tabernacle of Spirit, God, means keeping mentally in the "now" of things, seeing God's creation as perfect now, as under His control now.

Recently a friend of mine, faced with heavy rains and flooding, asked a Christian Science practitioner to help her through prayer. It had been raining constantly for many days, and the street in front of her house had flooded up the driveway to her front door. At first the practitioner prayed for the rain to stop. But it continued. Each hour the patient would call and say, "If it continues like this for another hour, the house will be flooded." But an hour later, even with the continuous rain, the house hadn't flooded.

As each hour passed, the conversation was the same. Halfway through the afternoon the practitioner realized that she didn't need to pray to stop the rain. Rather, she needed to understand spiritually that God is in control and that He can only bless. By the end of the day the patient called and said, "Well, the rain hasn't stopped, but the water is receding from my front door!"

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Besides being excessive sometimes, the effect of weather is often considered to be random. Tornadoes are thought of this way. Yet, in reality, God is always in control of His universe and all

### Governor Won't Sign an 'Acts of God' Bill

The Arkansas Legislature scrambled today to rewrite a bill intended to protect storm victims after Governor Mike Huckabee, a Baptist minister, objected to language describing such natural phenomena as tornadoes and floods as "acts of God."

Mr. Huckabee said that signing the legislation "would be violating my own conscience" inasmuch as it described "a destructive and deadly force as being 'an act of God.'"

Governor Huckabee explained his objections in a letter to the bill's authors, saying: "I feel that I have indeed witnessed many 'acts of God,' but I see His actions in the miraculous sparing of life, the sacrifice and selfless spirit in which so many responded to the pain of others."

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its aspects, or ideas. The belief that Love could allow or send something destructive is a mistake. Such things are not "acts of God." God does not bring destructive storms; and man, God's child, can bear witness only to good.

This last point is a key element. We see what we believe. When we believe that destructive, excessive conditions are God-ordained, we tend to be subject to them. When we understand that man—and that includes all of us—dwells in God and is under His care, we experience more fully that care and calm. Excessive weather doesn't need to take its toll. The harm can be alleviated when we understand and yield to God's law and neither consent to nor continue to fear the belief that there could be a law opposed to God.

There's nothing wrong with a natural, gentle rain. A heavy snowfall at the right time and in the right place can be useful. Plenty of sunshine is needed for vegetation and crops. Yet any of these things *in excess* ceases

to bless. That's when we need to hold fast to God's government of His creation.

An experience I had shows what sheltering in God's tabernacle does for us and our community. A few months after we had moved into a new neighborhood, I had been praying to see how Principle, a name for God, was expressed in orderliness and unfoldment. I had come to the realization that God's directing was unerring and hence beneficial to all. I kept these ideas close to my heart that day. Later that afternoon, I noticed that it got very quiet and dark outside. I wasn't fearful, because already established in my thought was confidence in God's all-power, His government. Later that afternoon my husband called and asked if anything unusual had happened. I replied, "Not that I know of."

Then he explained that a tornado had hit about a tenth of a mile to the west of our house, jumped our neighborhood, and landed again a tenth of a mile to the north. There was some property damage, but no one was hurt. I read the next day that the second time the tornado hit was at a schoolyard. The tornado had blown out the windows, but no one was hurt there either because the school principal, without knowing about the tornado, had ordered a tornado drill at that exact time. God's protection was seen for His little ones.

Our prayers, whether for the local farmers or for a country on the other side of the globe, are beneficial when we remember that we're not controlling the weather—God is. It's our job to witness to His power, to demonstrate His laws of goodness. In the tabernacle of Spirit, God—the consciousness of His great power and goodness—we find peace, calm, and safety. ■