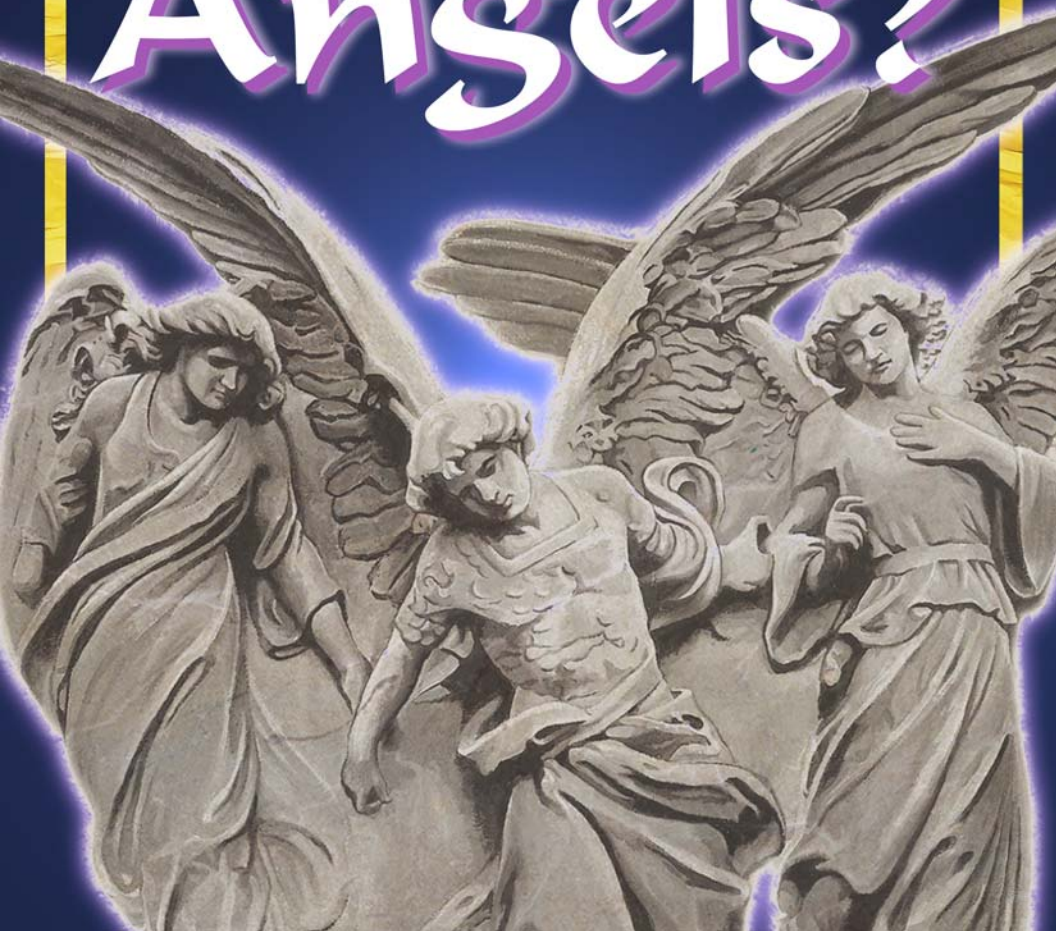


They are here, but ...

Who are the Angels?



Encounters of an Angelic Kind

After reading our cover story on the rising fascination with angels [RELIGION, Dec.27], readers wrote about their own meetings with heavenly messengers. Some related how angels assuaged fear in wartime.

Warren N. Saunders of Cedar Grove, New Jersey, tells of his experience as an anxious 19-year-old infantryman on his first patrol against the Japanese in the jungles of Bougainville during World War II. Writes Saunders: "When I stepped out upon the trail, I heard the unmistakable sound of choirs of voices singing. Somehow I knew that they were angels, and I felt a great peace." Saunders returned unscathed from three years of bitter fighting.

In tune with nature, John M. Perkins of Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, finds that "angels are especially prevalent among people who honor the earth. It is no coincidence that angels are returning now that we are again aware of the divine powers in the air, land and water around us."

And then there are unexplained appearances that leave one baffled but believing. Joanne Piezonki of Lawrence, Kansas, reports an incident on a Baltimore, Maryland, bus. She stood near the driver awaiting her stop when she saw a "huge archangel in the rearview mirror. The bus driver asked, 'Who was that standing in back of you?' I turned to look and nothing was there. To this day, I believe in angels."

—*Time*, January 17, 1994

ARE THERE ALIENS AMONG US?

Media moguls and marketing geniuses have discovered angels. Angels are everywhere! Angel sightings and angel sayings have ignited a spiritual and commercial craze—but *just who or what are angels?*



Less than a decade ago the subject of angels would have been a matter of conversation at religious gatherings or a title on sale at your local Christian bookstore. Not so today....

But have you noticed? Angel encounters always seem positive. Whether in the movies, on television, in countless books and magazine articles, or as described by *one who has seen*, angels are always depicted as “good,” beneficent and protective. But is this true? What are we to make of thousands of purported alien abductions and spirit confrontations worldwide, leaving frightened victims with lingering physical and psychological pain? Could these be “angelic” encounters as well?

According to virtually every holy book in existence, supernatural beings, good and evil, have played an active role in the affairs of men. For millennia people have feared and worshipped apparitions. In the Bible, angels have appeared as shining beings, or at other times, dressed as men. They have acted as guides to travelers and opened prison doors. Heavenly angels have restrained calamities and prolonged the tranquillity of multitudes. Human eyes have looked upon them; human ears have listened to their appeals; human lips have opposed their suggestions and ridiculed their counsels; human hands have met them with insult and abuse.

But in the Bible, evil or wicked angels have played a large role in human history as well. They have defeated righteous purposes, greatly retarded the work of righteousness and caused untold suffering. According to the Bible, evil angels often pose as angels of light and good will, even working miracles! If this is true, then how can one know if they have encountered a “lying spirit” or a “heavenly sentinel?”

Apparently angels are here and not so elusive as in the past. The purpose of this brief publication is to emphasize the Scripture record concerning angels—good and evil. By lifting the curtain on the supernatural, we believe the reader will be better able to decide which “natives are friendly.”

-THE PUBLISHERS

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This publication contains excerpts from the best-selling classic *America in Prophecy* by E. G. White, originally published 100 years ago under the title *The Great Controversy*.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture used in this work is taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

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WHO ARE THE ANGELS?

Before the creation of man, angels were in existence; for when the foundations of the earth were laid, “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” Job 38:7. After the fall of man, angels were sent to guard the tree of life, this before a human being had died. Angels are in nature superior to men. For the psalmist says that man was made “a little lower than the angels.” Psalm 8:5.

We are informed in Scripture as to the number, and the power and glory, of the heavenly beings, of their connection with the government of God, and also of their relation to the work of redemption. “The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom ruleth over all.” And, says the prophet, “I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne.” In the presence chamber of the King of kings they wait—“ye his angels that excel in strength,” “ministers of His, that do His pleasure,” “hearkening unto the voice of His word.” Psalm 103:19-21; Revelation 5:11. Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, were the heavenly messengers beheld by the prophet Daniel. The apostle Paul declared them “an innumerable company.” Daniel 7:10; Hebrews 12:22. As God’s messengers they go forth, like “the appearance of a flash of lightning” (Ezekiel 1:14), so dazzling their glory, and so swift their flight.



*Angels were in
existence...when
the foundations
of the earth were laid.*

The angel that appeared at the Saviour's tomb, his countenance "like lightning, and his raiment white as snow," caused the keepers for fear of him to quake, and they "became as dead men." Matthew 28:3, 4. When Sennacherib, the haughty Assyrian, reproached and blasphemed God, and threatened Israel with destruction, "it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand." There were "cut off all the mighty men of valor, and the leaders and captains," from the army of Sennacherib. "So he returned with shame of face to his own land." 2 Kings 19:35; 2 Chronicles 32:21.

Angels are sent on missions of mercy to the children of God. To Abraham, with promises of blessing; to the gates of Sodom, to rescue righteous Lot from its fiery doom; to Elijah, as he was about to perish from weariness and hunger in the desert; to Elisha, with chariots and horses of fire surrounding the little town where he was shut in by his foes; to Daniel, while seeking divine wisdom in the court of a heathen king, or abandoned to become the lions' prey; to Peter, doomed to death in Herod's dungeon; to the prisoners at Philippi; to Paul and his companions in the night of tempest on the sea; to open the mind of Cornelius to receive the gospel; to dispatch Peter, with the message of salvation to the Gentile stranger—thus holy angels have, in all ages, ministered to God's people.

BUT THERE ARE EVIL ANGELS AS WELL

Evil spirits, in the beginning created sinless, were equal in nature, power, and glory with the holy beings that are now God's messengers. But fallen through sin, they are leagued together for the dishonor of God and the destruction of men. United with Satan in his rebellion, and with him cast out from heaven, they have, through all succeeding ages, cooperated with him in his warfare against the divine authority. We are told in Scripture of their confederacy and government, of their various orders, of their intelligence and subtlety, and of their malicious designs against the peace and happiness of men.

Old Testament history presents occasional mention of their existence and agency; but it was during the time when Christ was upon the earth that evil spirits manifested their power in the most striking manner. Christ had come to enter upon the plan devised for man's redemption, and Satan determined to assert his right to control the world. He had succeeded in establishing idolatry in every part of the earth except the land of Palestine. To the only land that had not fully yielded to the tempter's sway, Christ came to shed upon the people the light of Heaven. Here two rival powers claimed supremacy. Jesus was stretching out His arms of love, inviting all who would to find pardon and peace in Him. The hosts of darkness saw that they did not possess unlimited control, and they understood that if Christ's mission should be successful, their rule was soon

to end. Satan raged like a chained lion, and defiantly exhibited his power over the bodies as well as the souls of men.

The fact that men have been possessed with demons, is clearly stated in the New Testament. The persons thus afflicted were not merely suffering with disease from natural causes. Christ had perfect understanding of that with which He was dealing, and He recognized the direct presence and agency of evil spirits.

A striking example of their number, power, malignity, and also of the power and mercy of Christ, is given in the Scripture account of the healing of the demoniacs at Gadara. Those wretched maniacs, spurning all restraint, writhing, foaming, raging, were filling the air with their cries, doing violence to themselves, and endangering all who should approach them. Their bleeding and disfigured bodies and distracted minds presented a spectacle well-pleasing to the prince of darkness. One of the demons controlling the sufferers declared, "My name is Legion, for we are many." Mark 5:9. In the Roman army a legion consisted of from three to five thousand men. Satan's hosts also are marshaled in companies, and the single company to which these demons belonged numbered no less than a legion. At the command of Jesus, the evil spirits departed from their victims, leaving them calmly sitting at the Saviour's feet, subdued, intelligent, and gentle.

Other instances of a similar nature are recorded in the Scriptures. The daughter of the Syrophenician woman was grievously vexed with a devil, whom Jesus cast out by His word. Mark 7:26-30. One "possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb," (Matthew 12:22); a youth who had a dumb spirit, that oftentimes "cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him," (Mark 9:17-27); the maniac, who, tormented by "a spirit of an unclean devil," (Luke 4:33-36) disturbed the Sabbath quiet of the synagogue at Capernaum—all were healed by the compassionate Saviour. In nearly every instance, Christ addressed the demon as an intelligent entity, commanding him to come out of his victim and to torment him no more. The worshipers at Capernaum, beholding His mighty power, "were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, 'What a word is this! for with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out!'" Luke 4:36.

**It was during the time when Christ
was upon the earth that evil spirits manifested
their power in the most striking manner.**

ANGELIC PROTECTORS

The power and malice of Satan and his host might justly alarm us, were it not that we may find shelter and deliverance in the superior power of our Redeemer. We carefully secure our houses with bolts and locks to protect our property and our lives from evil men; but we seldom think of the evil angels who are constantly seeking access to us, and against whose attacks we have, in our own strength, no method of defense. If permitted, they can distract our minds, disorder, torment our bodies, destroy our possessions and our lives. Their only delight is in misery and destruction. Fearful is the condition of those who resist the divine claims, and yield to Satan's temptations, until God gives them up to the control of evil spirits.

The agency by which God protects His people is presented in the words of the psalmist, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." Psalms 34:7. Thus God's people, exposed to the deceptive power and unsleeping malice of the prince of darkness, and in conflict with all the forces of evil, are assured of the unceasing guardianship of heavenly angels. Nor is such assurance given without need. If God has granted to His children promise of grace and protection, it is because there are mighty agencies of evil to be met—agencies numerous, determined, and untiring, of whose malignity and power none can safely be ignorant or unheeding.

GRAVE DANGER IN IGNORANCE OF SUPERNATURAL

None are in greater danger from the influence of evil spirits than those who, notwithstanding the direct and ample testimony of the Scriptures, deny the existence and agency of the devil and his angels. So long as we are ignorant of their wiles, they have almost inconceivable advantage; many give heed to their suggestions while they suppose themselves to be following the dictates of their own wisdom. This is why, as we approach the close of time, when Satan is to work with greatest power to deceive and destroy, he spreads everywhere the belief that he does not exist. It is his policy to conceal himself and his manner of working.

There is nothing that the great deceiver fears so much as that we shall become acquainted with his devices. The better to disguise his real character and purposes, he has caused himself to be so represented as to excite no stronger emotion than ridicule or contempt. He is well pleased to be painted as a ludicrous or loathsome object, misshapen, half animal and half human. He is pleased to hear his name used in sport and mockery by those who think themselves intelligent and well informed.

It is because he has masked himself with consummate skill that the question is so widely asked, "Does such a being really exist?" It is an evidence of his



Satan is well pleased to be painted as a ludicrous or loathsome object, misshapen, half animal and half human. He is pleased to hear his name used in sport and mockery by those who think themselves intelligent and well informed.

success that theories giving the lie to the plainest testimony of the Scriptures are so generally received in the religious world. And it is because Satan can most readily control the minds of those who are unconscious of his influence that the word of God gives us so many examples of his malignant work, unveiling before us his secret forces, and thus placing us on our guard against his assaults.

Many endeavor to account for spiritual manifestations by attributing them wholly to fraud and sleight of hand on the part of the medium. But while it is true that the results of trickery have often been palmed off as genuine manifestations, there have been, also, marked exhibitions of supernatural power. The mysterious rapping with which modern spiritualism began was not the result of human trickery or cunning, but was the direct work of evil angels, who thus introduced one of the most successful of soul-destroying delusions. Many will be ensnared through the belief that spiritualism is a merely human imposture; when brought face to face with manifestations which they cannot but regard as supernatural, they will be deceived, and will be led to accept them as the great power of God.

These persons overlook the testimony of the Scriptures concerning the wonders wrought by Satan and his agents. It was by satanic aid that Pharaoh's magicians were enabled to counterfeit the work of God. Paul testifies that before the second advent of Christ there will be similar manifestations of satanic power. The coming of the Lord is to be preceded by "the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10. And the apostle John, describing the miracle working power that will be manifested in the last days, declares: "He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do." Revelation 13:13, 14. No mere impostures are here foretold. Men are deceived by the miracles which Satan's agents have power to do, not which they pretend to do.

MODERN ERRORS CONCERNING ANGELS

The ministration of holy angels, as presented in the Scriptures, is a truth most comforting and precious to every follower of Christ. But the Bible teaching upon this point has been obscured and perverted by the errors of popular theology. The doctrine of natural immortality, first borrowed from the pagan philosophy, and in the darkness of the great apostasy incorporated into the Christian faith, has supplanted the truth, so plainly taught in Scripture, that “the dead know not anything.” Ecclesiastes 9:5.

Multitudes have come to believe that it is the spirits of the dead who are the “ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.” And this notwithstanding the testimony of Scripture to the existence of heavenly angels, and their connection with the history of man, before the death of a human being.

The doctrine of man’s consciousness in death, especially the belief that the spirits of the dead return to minister to the living, has prepared the way for modern spiritualism. While professing to bring the living into communication with the dead, the prince of evil exercises his bewitching influence upon their minds. He has power to

bring before men the appearance of their departed friends. The counterfeit is perfect; the familiar look, the words, the tone, are reproduced with marvelous distinctness. Many are comforted with the assurance that their loved ones are enjoying the bliss of heaven; and without suspicion of danger, they give ear to “seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.”

When they have been led to believe that the dead actually return to communicate with them, Satan causes those to appear who went into the grave unprepared. They claim to be happy in heaven, and even to occupy exalted positions there; and thus the error is widely taught, that no difference is made between the righteous and the wicked. The pretended visitants from the world of spirits sometimes utter cautions and warnings which prove to be correct. Then, as confidence is gained, they present doctrines that directly undermine

“They’re trying to contact the dead”

They’re trying to contact the dead. “The spirits are here. I see them,” says Ruth Berger, a self-described “intuitive counselor.” Psychic, if you insist. Channeler, if you want to be trendy. “They have some wonderful messages for us. They want to talk to us as much as we want to talk to them.”

On this crisp, clear, fall night in the library of St. Peter Catholic church in Skokie, Ill., Berger is leading 35 members of the North Shore Chapter of Naim, a non-denominational support group for Christian widows and widowers, through what amounts to a class in basic ghost-calling....

This is how it goes in the 1990s: A smiling and exceedingly normal-looking woman arrives at a church, meeting hall, private home or apartment and, in a very matter-of-fact fashion, summons into the room what she advertises as the spirits of the dead.

—*The Morning News Tribune*, November 14, 1990

faith in the Scriptures. With an appearance of deep interest in the well-being of their friends on earth, they insinuate the most dangerous errors. The fact that they state some truths, and are able at times to foretell future events, gives to their statements an appearance of reliability; and their false teachings are accepted by the multitudes as readily, and believed as implicitly, as if they were the most sacred truths of the Bible. The law of God is set aside, the Spirit of grace despised, the blood of the covenant counted an unholy thing. The spirits deny the divinity of Christ, and place even the Creator on a level with themselves. Thus under a new disguise the great rebel still carries forward his warfare against God, begun in heaven, and for nearly six thousand years continued upon the earth.

“NEW AGE” DECEPTIONS

The prince of darkness, who has so long bent the powers of his master-mind to the work of deception, skillfully adapts his temptations to men of all classes and conditions. To persons of culture and refinement he presents spiritualism in its more refined and intellectual aspects, and thus succeeds in drawing many into his snare. The wisdom which spiritualism imparts is that described by the apostle James, which “descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.” James 3:15.

Spiritualism teaches “that man is the creature of progression; that it is his destiny from his birth to progress, even to eternity, toward the Godhead.”

And again: “Each mind will judge itself and not another.” “The judgment will

be right, because it is the judgment of self... The throne is within you.” Satan has substituted the sinful, erring nature of man himself, as the only object of adoration, the only rule of judgment, or standard of character. This is progress, not upward, but downward.

To the self-indulgent, the pleasure-loving, the sensual, spiritualism presents itself under a less subtle disguise than to the more refined and intellectual; in its grosser forms they find that which is in harmony with their inclinations. Satan studies every indication of the frailty of human nature, he marks the sins which each individual is inclined to commit, and then he takes care that opportunities shall not be wanting to gratify the tendency to evil.

In the New Age, belief in reincarnation is on the rise

Other planks in the New Age platform include channeling, in which spirits, or “entities,” use a human being to transmit messages; out-of-body experiences, in which one’s soul takes a journey, leaving the body behind; and extrasensory perception, which enables one to demonstrate psychic feats.

—*The News Tribune*, Tacoma, Washington
Monday, July 13, 1987



Satan studies every indication of the frailty of human nature, he marks the sins which each individual is inclined to commit, and then he takes care that opportunities shall not be wanting to gratify the tendency to evil.

He tempts men to excess in that which is in itself lawful, causing them, through intemperance, to weaken physical, mental, and moral power. He has destroyed and is destroying thousands through the indulgence of the passions, thus brutalizing the entire nature of man. And to complete his work, he declares, through the spirits, that “true knowledge places man above all law;” that “whatsoever is, is right;” that “God doth not condemn;” and that “all sins which are committed are innocent.” When the people are thus led to believe that desire is the highest law, that liberty is license, and that man is accountable only to himself, who can wonder that corruption and depravity teem on every hand? Multitudes eagerly accept teachings that leave them at liberty to obey the prompting of the carnal heart. The reins of self-control are laid upon the neck of lust, the powers of mind and soul are made subject to the animal propensities, and Satan exultingly sweeps into his net thousands who profess to be followers of Christ.

But none need be deceived by the lying claims of spiritualism. God has given the world sufficient light to enable them to discover the snare. As already shown, the theory which forms the very foundation of spiritualism is at war with the plainest statements of Scripture. The Bible declares that the dead know not anything, that their thoughts have perished; they have no part in anything that is done under the sun; they know nothing of the joys or sorrows of those who were dearest to them on earth.

MODERN WITCHCRAFT

Furthermore, God has expressly forbidden all pretended communication with departed spirits. In the days of the Hebrews there was a class of people who claimed, as do the spiritualists of today, to hold communication with the dead. But the “familiar spirits,” as these visitants from other worlds were called, are declared by the Bible to be the “spirits of devils.” (Compare Numbers 25:1-3; Psalm 106:28; 1 Corinthians 10:20; Revelation 16:14.) The work of dealing with familiar spirits was pronounced an abomination to the Lord, and was solemnly forbidden under penalty of death. Leviticus 19:31; 20:27. The very name of witchcraft is now held in contempt. The claim that men can hold communion with evil spirits is regarded as a fable of the Dark Ages. But spiritualism, which numbers its converts by hundreds of thousands, yea, by millions, which has made its way into scientific circles, which has invaded churches, and has found favor in legislative bodies, and even in the courts of kings—this mammoth deception is but a revival, in a new disguise, of the witchcraft condemned and prohibited of old.

If there were no other evidence of the real character of spiritualism, it should be enough for the Christian that the spirits make no difference between righteousness and sin, between the noblest and purest of the apostles of Christ and the most corrupt of the servants of Satan. The apostles, as personated by these lying spirits, are made to contradict what they wrote at the dictation of the Holy Spirit when on earth. They deny the divine origin of the Bible, and thus tear away the foundation of the Christian’s hope, and put out the light that reveals the way to heaven. Satan is making the world believe that the Bible is a mere fiction, or at least a book suited to the infancy of the race, but now to be lightly regarded, or cast aside as obsolete. And to take the place of the word of God he holds out spiritual manifestations. Here is a channel wholly under his control; by this means he can make the world believe what he will. The Book that is to judge him and his followers he puts in the shade, just where he wants it; the Saviour of the world he makes to be no more than a common man.

**“The living know that they shall die;
but the dead know not anything.”**

**“There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge,
nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”**

—King Solomon, Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10

It is true that spiritualism is now changing its form, and, veiling some of its more objectionable features, is assuming a Christian guise. While it formerly denounced Christ and the Bible, it now professes to accept both. But its utterances from the platform and the press have been before the public for many years, and in these its real character stands revealed. These teachings cannot be denied or hidden.

I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel...

Then saith he unto me, "See thou do it not:

for I am thy fellow servant,

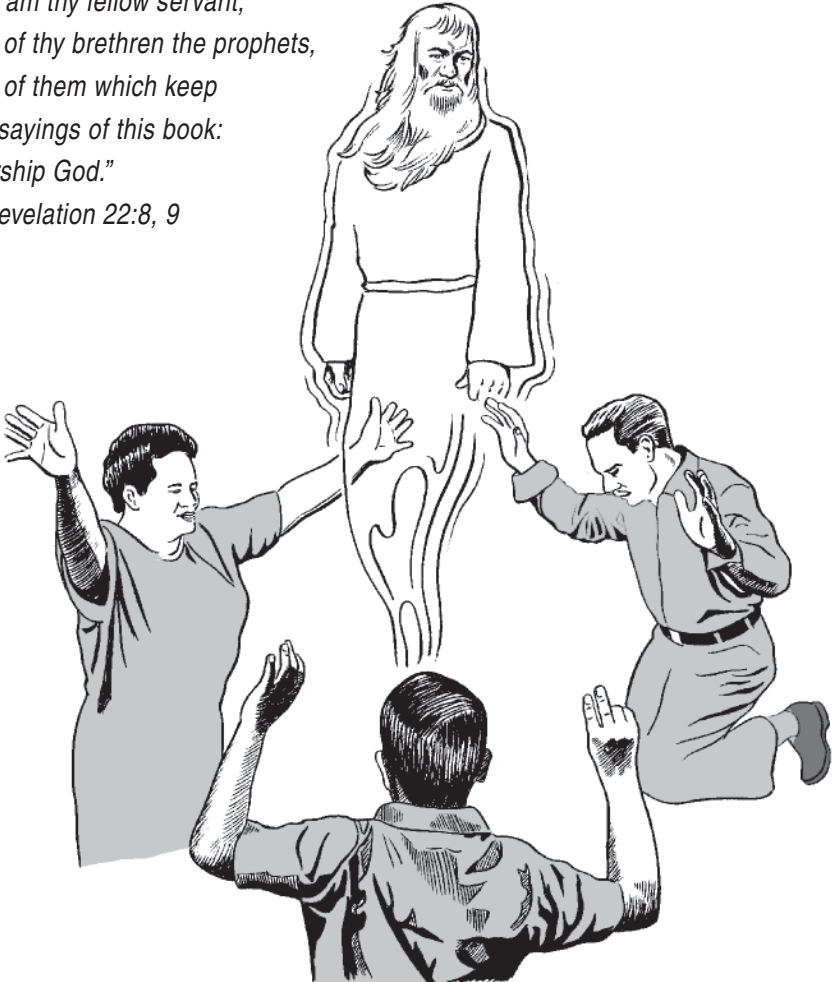
and of thy brethren the prophets,

and of them which keep

the sayings of this book:

Worship God."

—Revelation 22:8, 9



WICKED ANGELS WORK MIRACLES, TOO

As spiritualism more closely imitates the nominal Christianity of the day, it has greater power to deceive and ensnare. Satan himself is converted, after the modern order of things. He will appear in the character of an angel of light. Through the agency of spiritualism, miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and many undeniable wonders will be performed. And as the spirits will profess faith in the Bible, and manifest respect for the institutions of the church, their work will be accepted as a manifestation of divine power.

**The coming of the Lord is to be preceded by
“the working of Satan with all power
and signs and lying wonders, and with all
deceivableness of unrighteousness.”**

2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10

FORBIDDEN GROUND

There are few who have any just conception of the deceptive power of spiritualism and the danger of coming under its influence. Many tamper with it, merely to gratify their curiosity. They have no real faith in it, and would be filled with horror at the thought of yielding themselves to the spirits' control. But they venture upon the forbidden ground, and the mighty destroyer exercises his power upon them against their will. Let them once be induced to submit their minds to his direction, and he holds them captive. It is impossible, in their own strength, to break away from the bewitching, alluring spell. Nothing but the power of God, granted in answer to the earnest prayer of faith, can deliver these ensnared souls.

Marvelous beyond expression is the blindness of the people of this generation. Thousands reject the word of God as unworthy of belief, and with eager confidence receive the deceptions of Satan. Nothing can arouse their fears. So fully have they yielded to the tempter, so closely are they united with him, and so thoroughly imbued with his spirit, that they have no power and no inclination to break away from his snare.

**All whose faith is not firmly established upon the
word of God will be deceived and overcome.**

EVIL SPIRITS OFTEN IMPERSONATE DECEASED FRIENDS AND RELATIVES

Many will be confronted by the spirits of devils personating beloved relatives or friends, and declaring the most dangerous heresies. These visitants will appeal to our tenderest sympathies, and will work miracles to sustain their pretensions. We must be prepared to withstand them with the Bible truth that the dead know not anything, and that they who thus appear are the spirits of devils.

Says the prophet Isaiah: "When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:19, 20. If men had been willing to receive the truth so plainly stated in the Scriptures, concerning the nature of man and the state of the dead, they would see in the claims and manifestations of spiritualism the working

of Satan with power and signs and lying wonders. But rather than yield the liberty so agreeable to the carnal heart, and renounce the sins which they love, multitudes close their eyes to the light, and walk straight on, regardless of warnings, while Satan weaves his snares about them, and they become his prey. "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," therefore "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." 2 Thessalonians 2:10, 11.

Just before us is the "hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Revelation 3:10. All whose faith is not firmly established upon the word of God will be deceived and overcome.

"There shall not be found among you any one... that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord."

—Deuteronomy 18:10-12

LAWLESSNESS, A SIGN OF THE TIMES

The Bible declares that before the coming of the Lord there will exist a state of religious declension similar to that in the first centuries. “In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Already the doctrine that men are released from obedience to God’s requirements has weakened the force of moral obligation, and opened the floodgates of iniquity upon the world. Lawlessness, dissipation, and corruption are sweeping in upon us like an overwhelming tide. In the family, Satan is at work. His banner waves, even in professedly Christian households. There is envy, evil surmising, hypocrisy, estrangement, emulation, strife, betrayal of sacred trust, indulgence of lust. The whole system of religious principles and doctrines, which should form the foundation and frame work of social life, seems to be a tottering mass, ready to fall to ruin.

The vilest of criminals, when thrown into prison for their offenses, are often made the recipients of gifts and attentions, as if they had attained an enviable distinction. Great publicity is given to their character and crimes. The press publishes the revolting details of vice, thus initiating others into the practice of fraud, robbery, and murder.

The Tortuous Tale of a Serial Killer

John Wayne Gacy, now a pudgy 52 and still the undisputed champion among American serial killers, has been there 14 years—writing letters, playing cards, dabbling at painting and consistently protesting his innocence against the proven charges that he murdered 33 young men and boys between 1972 and 1978....

Like any celebrity, Gacy now has a 900 number all his own. For \$2 a minute, callers are treated to a 12-minute tape on which Gacy describes himself as “the 34th victim” of the real killer or killers....

His oil paintings, which have been exhibited in a gallery in Los Angeles and a nightclub in New York, are priced at \$500 to \$20,000 apiece. In addition to his portraits of Christ, Hitler, Elvis Presley and fellow serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer, Gacy is famous for his clown paintings. As any student of mass murder knows, Gacy entertained children—and allegedly recruited some of his victims—by dressing up as “Pogo the Clown” during his homicidal period.

It seems likely that his oil paintings and 900 number are making money for Gacy.

—*Newsweek*, April 25, 1994

The infatuation of vice, the wanton taking of life, the terrible increase of intemperance and iniquity of every order and degree, should arouse all who fear God, to inquire what can be done to stay the tide of evil.

Satan's policy in this final conflict with God's people is the same that he employed in the opening of the great controversy in heaven. He professed to be seeking to promote the stability of the divine government, while secretly bending every effort to secure its overthrow. And the very work which he was thus endeavoring to accomplish, he charged upon the loyal angels. So it will be now. While Satan seeks to destroy those who honor God's law he will cause them to be accused as law-breakers, as men who are dishonoring God, and bringing judgments upon the world.

While appearing to the children of men as a great physician who can heal all their maladies, he will bring disease and disaster, until populous cities are reduced to ruin and desolation. Even now he is at work. In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hail storms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power.

He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous. Destruction will be upon both man and beast.

And then the great deceiver will persuade men that those who serve God are causing these evils. The class that has provoked the displeasure of Heaven will charge all their troubles upon those whose obedience to God's commandments is a perpetual reproof to transgressors. It will be declared that men are offending God by the violation of the Sunday-sabbath, that this sin has brought calamities which will not cease until Sunday observance shall be strictly enforced, and that those who present the claims of the fourth commandment, thus destroying reverence for Sunday, are troublers of the people, preventing their restoration to divine favor and temporal prosperity.

The miracle working power manifested through spiritualism will exert its influence against those who choose to obey God rather than men. Communications from the spirits will declare that God has sent them to convince the rejecters of Sunday of their error, affirming that the laws of the land should be obeyed as the law of God. They will lament the great wickedness in the world, and second the testimony of religious teachers, that the degraded state of morals is caused by the desecration of Sunday. Great will be the indignation excited against all who refuse to accept their testimony.

THREE MIGHTY ANGELS ANNOUNCE THE END OF TIME

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Revelation 14:6-12

The truths, as presented in Revelation 14, in connection with the “everlasting gospel,” will distinguish the church of Christ at the time of His appearing. For as the result of the threefold message it is announced, “Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” And this message is the last to be given before the coming of the Lord. Immediately following its proclamation, the Son of man is seen by the prophet, coming in glory to reap the harvest of the earth.

In Revelation 14, men are called upon to worship the Creator, and the prophecy brings to view a class that, as the result of the threefold message, are keeping the commandments of God. One of these commandments points directly to God as the Creator. It follows that the message which commands men to worship God and keep His commandments, will especially call upon them to keep the fourth commandment. The fourth precept declares: “The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. . . . For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” Exodus 20:10, 11. The true ground of divine worship, not of that on the seventh day merely, but of all worship, is found in the distinction between the Creator and His creatures.

A FEARFUL WARNING

The most fearful threatening ever addressed to mortals is contained in the third angel's message. That must be a terrible sin which calls down the wrath of God unmingled with mercy. Men are not to be left in darkness concerning this important matter; the warning against this sin is to be given to the world before the visitation of God's judgments, that all may know why they are to be inflicted, and have opportunity to escape them. Prophecy declares that the first angel would make his announcement to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." The warning of the third angel, which forms a part of the same threefold message, is to be no less widespread. It is represented in the prophecy as proclaimed with a loud voice, by an angel flying in the midst of heaven; and it will command the attention of the world.

In the issue of the contest, all Christendom will be divided into two great classes—those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark. Although church and state will unite their power to compel "all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond," to receive "the mark of the beast" (Revelation 13:16), yet the people of God will not receive it. The prophet of Patmos beholds "them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God," and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Revelation 15:2, 3.

*When the third angel's message closes, mercy no longer pleads
for the guilty inhabitants of the earth.*

The people of God have accomplished their work. They have received "the latter rain," "the refreshing from the presence of the Lord," and they are prepared for the trying hour before them. . . . All who have proved themselves loyal to the divine precepts have received "the seal of the living God." Then Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above. When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. God's long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old.

As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when He permits.



A single angel destroyed all the first-born of the Egyptians, and filled the land with mourning. When David offended against God by numbering the people, one angel caused that terrible destruction by which his sin was punished. The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when He permits. There are forces now ready, and only waiting the divine permission, to spread desolation everywhere.

The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger—a faith that will not faint, though severely tried. Those who exercise but little faith now, are in the greatest danger of falling under the power of satanic delusions and the decree to compel the conscience. And even if they endure the test, they will be plunged into deeper distress and anguish in the time of trouble, because they have never made it a habit to trust in God. The lessons of faith which they have neglected, they will be forced to learn under a terrible pressure of discouragement.

THE ANTICHRIST WILL COME!

Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle-working demons. Satan has long been preparing for his final effort to deceive the world. The foundation of his work was laid by the assurance given to Eve in Eden, "Ye shall not surely die." "In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:4, 5. Little by little he has prepared the way for his master-piece of deception in the development of spiritualism. He has not yet reached the full accomplishment of his designs; but it will be reached in the last remnant of time. Says the prophet: "I saw three unclean spirits like frogs... they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Revelation 16:13, 14. Except those who are kept by the power of God, through faith in His word, the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion. The people are fast being lulled to a fatal security, to be awakened only by the outpouring of the wrath of God.

As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Saviour's advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. Revelation 1:13-15. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air, "Christ has come! Christ has come!" The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands, and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered; he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed.



He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion. Like the Samaritans who were deceived by Simon Magus, the multitudes, from the least to the greatest, give heed to these sorceries, saying: This is “the great power of God.” Acts 8:10.

The people of God will not be misled. The teachings of this false christ are not in accordance with the Scriptures. His blessing is pronounced upon the worshipers of the beast and his image, the very class upon whom the Bible declares that God’s unmingled wrath shall be poured out.

Satan is not permitted to counterfeit the manner of Christ’s advent. The Saviour has warned His people against deception upon this point, and has clearly foretold the manner of His second coming. This coming, there is no possibility of counterfeiting. It will be universally known—witnessed by the whole world.

There shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. . . . Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Matthew 24:24-27, 31; 25:31;

Revelation 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17

A GREAT TIME OF TROUBLE AHEAD

“At that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” Daniel 12:1.

When Christ ceases His intercession in the sanctuary, the unmingled wrath threatened against those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark (Revelation 14:9, 10), will be poured out. The plagues upon Egypt when God was about to deliver Israel, were similar in character to those more terrible and extensive judgments which are to fall upon the world just before the final deliverance of God’s people.



Says the revelator, in describing these terrific scourges, “There fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshiped his image.” The sea “became as the blood of a dead man, and every living soul died in the sea.” And “the rivers and fountains of waters became blood.” Terrible as these inflictions are, God’s justice stands fully vindicated. The angel of God declares, “Thou art righteous, O Lord,... because Thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.” Revelation 16:2-6. By condemning the people of God to death they have as truly incurred the guilt of their blood, as if it had been shed by their hands.

In the plague that follows, power is given to the sun “to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat.” Revelation 16:8, 9. The prophets thus describe the condition of the earth at this fearful time: “The land mourneth;... the harvest of the field is perished.... all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.” “The seed is rotten under their clods.... How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture.... the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.” “And the songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God: there shall be many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast them forth with silence.” Joel 1:10-12, 17-20; Amos 8:3.



These plagues are not universal, or the inhabitants of the earth would be wholly cut off. Yet they will be the most awful scourges that have ever been known to mortals. All the judgments upon men, prior to the close of probation, have been mingled with mercy. The pleading blood of Christ has shielded the sinner from receiving the full measure of his guilt; but in the final judgment, wrath is poured out unmixed with mercy.

It is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but this is not true of the crisis before us.

The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal.

Will the Lord forget His people in this trying hour? Did He forget faithful Noah when judgments were visited upon the antediluvian world? Did He forget Lot when the fire came down from heaven to consume the cities of the plain? Did He forget Joseph surrounded by idolaters in Egypt? Did He forget Elijah when the oath of Jezebel threatened him with the fate of the prophets of Baal? Did He forget Jeremiah in the dark and dismal pit of his prison-house? Did He forget the three worthies in the fiery furnace? or Daniel in the den of lions?

The people of God will not be free from suffering; but while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation, and suffer for want of food, they will not be left to perish. That God who cared for Elijah will not pass by one of His self-sacrificing children. He who numbers the hairs of their head will care for them, and in time of famine they shall be satisfied.



While the wicked are dying from hunger and pestilence, angels will shield the righteous, and supply their wants.

To him that “walketh righteously” is the promise, “Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.” “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.” Isaiah 33:15, 16; 41:17.

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Psalms 91:1-12

HEAVENLY SENTINELS

Could men see with heavenly vision, they would behold companies of angels that excel in strength stationed about those who have kept the word of Christ’s patience. With sympathizing tenderness, angels have witnessed their distress, and have heard their prayers. They are waiting the word of their Commander to snatch them from their peril. But they must wait yet a little longer. The people of God must drink of the cup, and be baptized with the baptism. The very delay, so painful to them, is the best answer to their petitions. As they endeavor to wait trustingly for the Lord to work, they are led to exercise faith, hope, and patience, which have been too little exercised during their religious experience. Yet for the elect’s sake, the time of trouble will be shortened. “Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and

night unto him? ... I tell you that He will avenge them speedily." Luke 18:7, 8. The end will come more quickly than men expect. The wheat will be gathered and bound in sheaves for the garner of God; the tares will be bound as fagots for the fires of destruction.

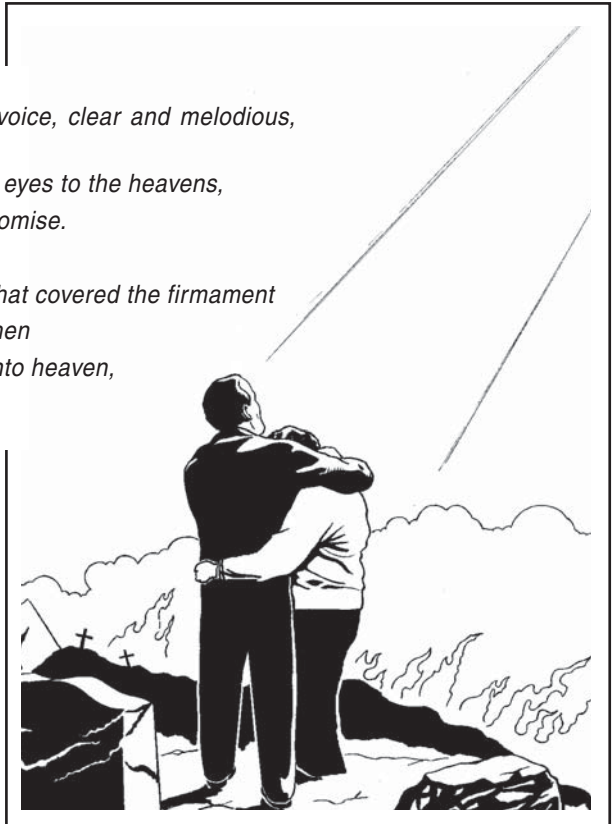
The heavenly sentinels, faithful to their trust, continue their watch. Though a general decree has fixed the time when commandment-keepers may be put to death, their enemies will in some cases anticipate the decree, and, before the time specified, will endeavor to take their lives. But none can pass the mighty guardians stationed about every faithful soul. Some are assailed in their flight from the cities and villages; but the swords raised against them break and fall as powerless as a straw. Others are defended by angels in the form of men of war.

DELIVERANCE AT LAST

With earnest longing, God's people await the tokens of their coming King. As the wrestling ones urge their petitions before God, the veil separating them from the unseen seems almost withdrawn. The heavens glow with the dawning

*By the people of God a voice, clear and melodious,
is heard, saying,
"Look up," and lifting their eyes to the heavens,
they behold the bow of promise.*

*The black, angry clouds that covered the firmament
are parted, and like Stephen
they look up steadfastly into heaven,
and see the glory of God.*



of eternal day, and, like the melody of angel songs, the words fall upon the ear, "Stand fast to your allegiance. Help is coming." Christ, the almighty Victor, holds out to His weary soldiers a crown of immortal glory; and His voice comes from the gates ajar: "Lo, I am with you. Be not afraid. I am acquainted with all your sorrows; I have borne your griefs. You are not warring against untried enemies. I have fought the battle in your behalf, and in My name you are more than conquerors."

The eye of God, looking down the ages, was fixed upon the crisis which His people are to meet, when earthly powers shall be arrayed against them. Like the captive exile, they will be in fear of death by starvation or by violence. But the Holy One who divided the Red Sea before Israel, will manifest His mighty power and turn their captivity. "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Malachi 3:17. If the blood of Christ's faithful witnessess were shed at this time, it would not, like the blood of the martyrs, be as seed sown to yield a harvest for God. Their fidelity would not be a testimony to convince others of the truth; for the obdurate heart has beaten back the waves of mercy until they return no more. If the righteous were now left to fall a prey to their enemies, it would be a triumph for the prince of darkness. Says the psalmist, "In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me." Psalm 27:5. Christ has spoken: "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity." Isaiah 26:20, 21. Glorious will be the deliverance of those who have patiently waited for His coming, and whose names are written in the book of life.

**The eye of God, looking down the ages,
was fixed upon the crisis which
His people are to meet.**

With shouts of triumph, jeering, and imprecation, throngs of evil men are about to rush upon their prey, when lo, a dense blackness, deeper than the darkness of the night, falls upon the earth. Then a rainbow, shining with the glory from the throne of God, spans the heavens, and seems to encircle each praying company. The angry multitudes are suddenly arrested.... mocking cries die away. The objects of their murderous rage are forgotten. With fearful forebodings they gaze upon the symbol of God's covenant, and long to be shielded from its overpowering brightness.

By the people of God a voice, clear and melodious, is heard, saying, "Look up," and lifting their eyes to the heavens, they behold the bow of promise. The black, angry clouds that covered the firmament are parted, and like Stephen they look up steadfastly into heaven, and see the glory of God, and the Son of man seated upon His throne. In His divine form they discern the marks of His humiliation; and from His lips they hear the request, presented before His Father and the holy angels, "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." John 17:24. Again a voice, musical and triumphant, is heard, saying, "They come! they come! holy, harmless, and undefiled. They have kept the word of My patience; they shall walk among the angels;" and the pale, quivering lips of those who have held fast their faith, utter a shout of victory.

It is at midnight that God manifests His power for the deliverance of His people. The sun appears, shining in its strength. Signs and wonders follow in quick succession. The wicked look with terror and amazement upon the scene, while the righteous behold with solemn joy the tokens of their deliverance. Everything in nature seems turned out of its course. The streams cease to flow. Dark, heavy clouds come up, and clash against each other. In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the voice of God like the sound of many waters, saying, "It is done." Revelation 16:17.

THE HEAVENS WILL SHAKE!

That voice shakes the heavens and the earth. There is a mighty earthquake, "such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great." Revelation 16:18. The firmament appears to open and shut. The glory from the throne of God seems flashing through. The mountains shake like a reed in the wind, and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. The sea is lashed into fury. There is heard the shriek of the hurricane, like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The seaports that have become like Sodom for wickedness, are swallowed up by the angry waters. Babylon the great has come in remembrance before God, "to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath." Revelation 16:19, 21. Great hailstones, every one "about the weight of a talent," are doing their work of destruction. The proudest cities of the earth are laid low. The lordly palaces, upon which the world's great men have lavished their wealth in order to glorify themselves, are crumbling to ruin before their eyes. Prison walls are rent asunder, and God's people, who have been held in bondage for their faith, are set free.

Said the prophets of old as they beheld in holy vision the day of God:

Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. *Isaiah 13:6*

Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon everyone that is proud and lofty, and upon everyone that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low. . . .

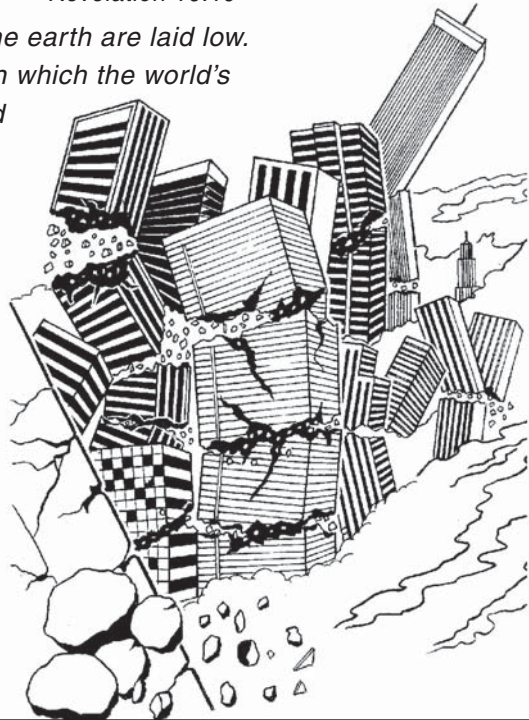
In that day a man shall cast the idols of his silver, and the idols of his gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

Isaiah 2:10-12, 20, 21, margin

“...and the cities of the nations fell...”

Revelation 16:19

The proudest cities of the earth are laid low. The lordly palaces, upon which the world's great men have lavished their wealth in order to glorify themselves, are crumbling to ruin before their eyes.



Through a rift in the clouds, there beams a star whose brilliancy is increased fourfold in contrast with the darkness. It speaks hope and joy to the faithful, but severity and wrath to the transgressors of God's law. Those who have sacrificed all for Christ are now secure, hidden as in the secret of the Lord's pavilion. They have been tested, and before the world and the despisers of truth they have evinced their fidelity to Him who died for them. A marvelous change has come over those who have held fast their integrity in the very face of death. They have been suddenly delivered from the dark and terrible tyranny of men transformed to demons. Their faces, so lately pale, anxious, and haggard, are now aglow with wonder, faith, and love. Their voices rise in triumphant song:

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

Psalm 46:1-3

“THE KING IS COMING!”

Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud, about half the size of a man's hand. It is the cloud which surrounds the Saviour, and which seems in the distance to be shrouded in darkness. The people of God know this to be the sign of the Son of man. In solemn silence they gaze upon it as it draws nearer the earth, becoming lighter and more glorious, until it is a great white cloud, its base a glory like consuming fire, and above it the rainbow of the covenant. Jesus rides forth as a mighty conqueror. Not now a “Man of Sorrows,” to drink the bitter cup of shame and woe, He comes, victor in heaven and earth, to judge the living and the dead. “Faithful and True, . . . in righteousness He doth judge and make war.” “And the armies . . . in heaven followed Him.” Revelation 19:11, 14. With anthems of celestial melody the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng, attend Him on His way. The firmament seems filled with radiant forms—“ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.” No human pen can portray the scene; no mortal mind is adequate to conceive its splendor. “His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise. And His brightness was as the light.” Habakkuk 3:3, 4. As the living cloud comes still nearer, every eye beholds the Prince of life. No crown of thorns now mars that sacred head, but a diadem of glory rests on His holy brow. His countenance outshines the dazzling brightness of the noonday sun. “And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords.” Revelation 19:16.

Before His presence, “all faces are turned into paleness;” upon the rejecters of God's mercy falls the terror of eternal despair. “The heart melteth, and the knees smite together,” “and the faces of them all gather blackness.”

Jeremiah 30:6; Nahum 2:10. The righteous cry with trembling, “Who shall be able to stand?” The angels’ song is hushed, and there is a period of awful silence. Then the voice of Jesus is heard, saying, “My grace is sufficient for you.” The faces of the righteous are lighted up, and joy fills every heart. And the angels strike a note higher, and sing again, as they draw still nearer to the earth.

The King of kings descends upon the cloud, wrapped in flaming fire. The heavens are rolled together as a scroll, the earth trembles before Him, and every mountain and island is moved out of its place. “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people.” Psalm 50:3, 4.

MIGHTY MEN WILL CRY

“And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” Revelation 6:15-17.



The derisive jests have ceased. Lying lips are hushed into silence. The clash of arms, the tumult of battle, “with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood” (Isaiah 9:5), is stilled. Naught now is heard but the voice of prayer and the sound of weeping and lamentation. The cry bursts forth from lips so lately scoffing, “The great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” The wicked pray to be buried beneath the rocks of the mountains, rather than meet the face of Him whom they have despised and rejected.

THE RESURRECTION

That voice which penetrates the ear of the dead, they know. How often have its plaintive, tender tones called them to repentance. How often has it been heard in the touching entreaties of a friend, a brother, a Redeemer. To the rejecters of His grace, no other could be so full of condemnation, so burdened with denunciation, as that voice which has so long pleaded, “Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?” Ezekiel 33:11. Oh that it were to them the voice of a stranger! Says Jesus: “I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded. But ye have set at naught all My counsel, and would none of My reproof.” Proverbs 1:24, 25. That voice awakens memories which they would fain blot out—warnings despised, invitations refused, privileges slighted.

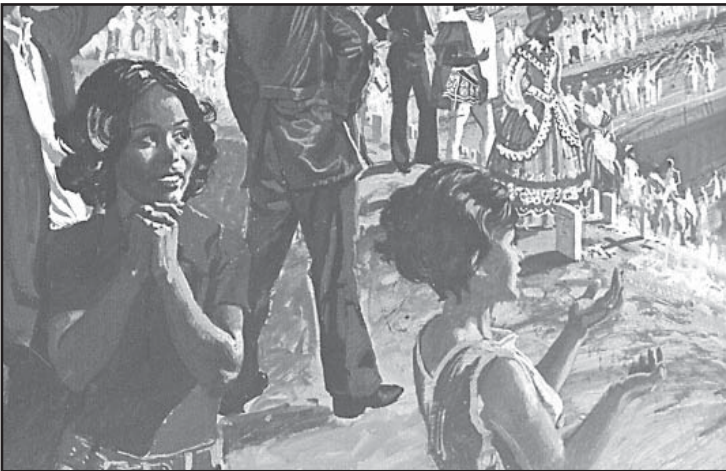
In the lives of all who reject truth, there are moments when conscience awakens, when memory presents the torturing recollection of a life of hypocrisy, and the soul is harassed with vain regrets. But what are these compared with the remorse of that day when “fear cometh as desolation,” when “destruction cometh as a whirlwind!” Proverbs 1:27. Those who would have destroyed Christ and His faithful people, now witness the glory which rests upon them. In the midst of their terror they hear the voices of the saints in joyful strains exclaiming, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us.” Isaiah 25:9.

Amid the reeling of the earth, the flash of lightning, and the roar of thunder, the voice of the Son of God calls forth the sleeping saints. He looks upon the graves of the righteous, then raising His hands to heaven He cries, “Awake, awake, awake, ye that sleep in the dust, and arise!” Throughout the length and breadth of the earth, the dead shall hear that voice; and they that hear shall live. And the whole earth shall ring with the tread of the exceeding great army of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. From the prison house of death they come, clothed with immortal glory, crying, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” 1 Corinthians 15:55. And the living righteous and the risen saints unite their voices in a long, glad shout of victory.

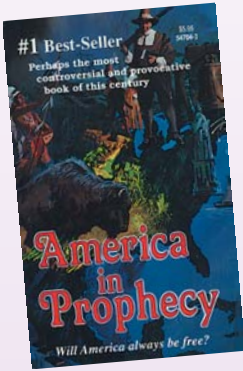
Then that voice, richer than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, is heard, saying, “Your conflict is ended.” “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Now is fulfilled the Saviour’s prayer for His disciples, “I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.”

**With anthems of celestial melody the holy angels,
a vast, unnumbered throng, attend Him on His way.
The firmament seems filled with radiant forms—
“ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands
of thousands.” No human pen can portray the scene;
no mortal mind is adequate to conceive its splendor.**

The living righteous are changed “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.” At the voice of God they were glorified; now they are made immortal, and with the risen saints are caught up to meet their Lord in the air. Angels “gather together the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Little children are borne by holy angels to their mother’s arms. Friends long separated by death are united, nevermore to part, and with songs of gladness ascend together to the City of God.

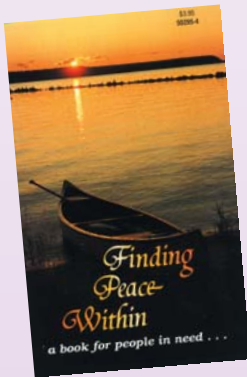


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