

THE MESSENGERS OF GOD IN "THE LAST DAYS"

"He shall give His angels [messengers] a charge concerning thee, to guard thee in all thy ways." – Psalm 91:11.

IN THE MIDST of the "perilous times" of this "evil day," and of the warning voices of the Holy Prophets and Apostles pointing out snares and pestilences and subtle dangers on every hand – and in the midst, too, of a realizing sense of the actual existence of such evil besetments and perils – how precious to the saints are the assurances of Divine protection and care and personal love!

Evidently the person referred to in our text as giving a charge, or message, is Jehovah, the Heavenly Father. The Prophet David is prophesying in respect to some person, then future. That person was primarily, we believe, the Lord Jesus Christ; and secondarily, all those whom He has accepted as members of His Body throughout this Gospel Age – the Messiah class, Head and members. The words imply a special care of God over this class. All through the Scriptures they are referred to as those whom God specially loves and specially cares for. Our Lord Jesus is the Only Begotten, the Well-beloved Son, and all those who are His members are peculiarly loved. Jesus said to some of His faithful disciples, "The Father Himself loveth you."

The charge given to the angels we would understand to have a very broad application. The Apostle Paul assures us that the angels of God are ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto and to serve those who shall be heirs of salvation, the saved ones of this Gospel Age. Yes, all of these, because believers in Christ, because at heart faithful, because fully consecrated to the Lord and begotten of His Spirit, are the special and happy objects of His grace, ministered to and served by the invisible messengers. Our Lord Jesus sets forth practically the same thought in His declaration, "Their angels do

always behold [have access to] the face of My Father." The Master's words seem to imply that one or more of these angels have charge over the consecrated ones, the Very Elect.

Our Lord uses a different figure of speech from that of the Apostle, as though He would assure us that these messengers would not be delayed in caring for our interests. They would not be hindered by more important Heavenly business, but would at once have direct access to the Divine presence and attention, so that our interests would have all needed consideration. Our Lord would have us realize that we are of the House of Sons, under Himself the chief Son, hence no time is lost in bringing our interests to the Father. Our interests have first place, our angels have *always* access to the Father. Before we speak, He knows our minds. Before we realize our own necessities, He has made provision for them. A wonderful watch-care has been arranged. It is hard for us to understand how the Almighty God can give such particular care and attention to our needs. Instead of being puffed up that God has manifested such loving consideration towards us, it should make us feel how little we are, how unworthy of such blessings.

Although the Father makes such use of Heavenly messengers, this by no means invalidates the thought that the Lord's earthly children are frequently used of Him as ministers, servants, the one of another. Indeed, we may be assured that the invisible messengers are required generally to act through human instrumentalities. Of this we have illustrations in the Harvest work, supervised by our present Lord and His Heavenly hosts, yet in the main carried on by members of His Body in the flesh.

The Apostle Paul has stated that the Lord makes His **[R5257 : page 183]** ministers, or servants, a flaming fire, and intimates to us that any and every agency and power that Divine providence uses is a part of that care over His people. (Heb. 1:7.) In other words, every agency used of God – whether it be fire or electricity or man, or

whatever – would be a messenger of God. And whatever would not be to His praise and work out what He chooses, He is able to restrain – as He tells us. – Psalm 76:10.

OVERCOMERS DEVELOPED BY TRIAL

These angels are to "keep thee in all thy ways" – not only in all the affairs of the Church, both individually and collectively, but also in all times; it was kept during the Dark Ages as well as at other times. But this care will not keep us from temptation. None can be of this elect Church unless they have trials. In order to have the overcoming qualities of heart they must have the tests. But the Lord's promised grace is to be with them for their assistance – not to overcome for them, but to sustain them. His grace is sufficient for us. He does not make up for a poor will; but He does make up for imperfect bodies. If the will is poor, He does not want such in His elect Church. He wants His people to be strong in will – nothing doubting – overcomers.

The next verse of the Psalm from which our text is taken proceeds to say that these messengers which have a charge over the affairs of the Church, Head and Body, will keep the feet from stumbling. In a general way we might apply the term *feet* to some members of the Body all down, in all times of the Age; as we might say, for instance, one member is a hand, and one a foot, etc. The Church, resting on those feet members all the way down, throughout the Gospel Age, will be guided aright; they will not be allowed to stumble; for, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my pathway." Thus they would be enabled to surmount the difficulties in their path.

So all down through the Gospel Age the messengers of the Lord have helped His people over all of their trials. But this reference to the feet seems especially applicable to the last members of the Body of Christ. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace...that saith unto

Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isa. 52:7.) This would seem to apply to the last members of the Church. This could not have been said all the way down the Age. It is only for us who are living at the present time to say.

These various manifestations of progress that we see, are just beginning. The new regime is only opening. **[R5258 : page 183]** After our Lord shall have delivered and glorified the Church, then He will begin the work with the world. None had the right to say, "Thy God reigneth," in the past; but since 1878, we are making this proclamation.

CHRIST'S PRESENCE A STUMBLING-STONE

The text seems to imply that the feet members at this time would be in a position of special trial, and be as a stumbling-stone. And this calls to our remembrance that the Lord foretold this, saying, "He shall be...for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel." (Isa. 8:14.) This stone was stumbled over in the end of the Jewish Age. (I Peter 2:8.) The Scriptures set forth that Jesus is the Way. The Lord is a Stumbling-Stone in the pathway of many. These passages do not refer to the world. It was not the Gentile nations that stumbled over Jesus at His First Advent, but it was some of the true Israelites who were there stumbled. And the text implies the stumbling of some true Spiritual Israelites because of the coming of the Lord in a way totally different from what they had imagined. So we believe that there are very many good Christian people today who are stumbling over Christ's Presence. They thought so and so; they imagined so and so. And all is so different from what they had imagined and expected that it is just as it was in the end of the Jewish Age, when the rabbis stumbled.

The question is, why should not the angels have charge over all good people, so that they would not stumble? Is not this the promise? We answer that the promise is made to all who are of the elect class. But in order to remain members of this Body, they must all stand the

trial. It will be a test. Are they willing to have the assistance of the angels – messengers? Are they willing to surmount these difficulties and to remain in the way?

One class will be in a condition to receive the trials in the proper manner; another class will be so self-confident, so overcharged with the cares of this life, and so lacking in spiritual development, that they will not be ready to avail themselves of the services of the angels. This is because God uses as His messengers some whom the world will not be ready to receive.

PARALLELISM BETWEEN JEWISH AND GOSPEL AGES

In the Jewish Age the Lord used some whom the scribes, the doctors of the Law and the chief priests could not accept at all. If He wanted to use agents, or channels, or messengers, to teach the people, why did He not choose the learned scribes or the pompous Pharisees of that day? Why did the Lord use as His messengers men who had been fishermen, tax-gatherers – persons whom the learned would think entirely unfit as instructors, or teachers? We recall that in the end of the Jewish Age it was written of two of them (and perhaps of them all) that the people perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men. (Acts 4:13.) How could it be that God would pass by some of the most learned of that day? "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight." – Matt. 11:25,26.

So today the Lord is using channels, agencies, messengers, that are not acceptable to many whom they approach. And while these are making up their minds to believe, slow in this because overcharged with the cares of this life, the elect company will be made up. Then the others will say, "Lord, Lord, open unto us." But the Lord will declare that He cannot recognize them as members of His Body, the Elect. They will not have shown the spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience, love, necessary to give them a place

in this Body. So it will be only the Body members who will be lifted up by the messengers and carried safely through the trials and difficulties which will be permitted to test the love, loyalty and obedience to the will of God, of all who have made with Him a Covenant of Sacrifice – even unto death.

HOPE

"O Father, just to see Thee face to face,
E'er endless death
Should claim me for its own –
To hear Thy voice, behold Thy Throne!
And for one moment
Hear Thee call me Thine, and Thine alone!
Ah! that were worth
Long years of suffering and pain.

"But what, O God, must be the joy of this –
To see Thy face,
To feel Thy touch, and folded to Thy breast
To hear Thee say, "We ne'er shall part!"
Break not, O heart!
Though thou hast naught of worth,
Be this thy plea
God's own Almighty love, and Christ's sufficiency."

– *A Friend.*

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