

## Thou God Seest Me

*"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them"—Psa. 34:7*

WE are living in, and working out our salvation in very difficult times. Paul's advice to the Philippians to "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" could hardly apply more strongly to conditions more perilous than those we face today, both in the world and in the brotherhood of Christadelphians.

There seems to be a lack of "fear and trembling" on the part of many who term themselves Christadelphians. There seems rather an attitude among many that being called a brother or sister of Christ is in some way going to assure them of a place in Christ's Kingdom. They seem not to realize that we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ and there be rewarded according to our works.

Dear brethren, NOW is the time to "fear" God. At Christ's judgment seat it will be too late. We sometimes sing—

*"Oh! then, what tearfulness shall seize  
Those virgins who have lived at ease,  
Nor thought the Bridegroom near!"*

We trust our reflections upon "THOU GOD SEEST ME" may indicate a way which will encourage us to a development of an attitude of fear as we endeavor to continue in "the narrow way that leads to life." God's Word tells us that Our Whole duty is to—

*"Fear God and keep His commandments" (Ecc. 12:13).*

This fear means more than holding God, His Name, and His Word in great reverence, and being awed by His great power and mighty works. Unless we include in the fear of God the literal element of being afraid, we will miss much of the instruction and benefit that should come from many Scriptures where fear is associated with the Name of God. Did not Christ tell his disciples to—

*"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"?*

Keeping this thought of literal fear in mind, listen to a few familiar statements of Scripture in which the fear of God is mentioned—

*"It shall be WELL with them that fear God."*

*"BLESSED is the man that feareth the Lord."*

*"Ought ye not to WALK in the fear of God?"*

*"The Lord's MERCY is on them that fear Him."*

*"The Lord taketh PLEASURE in them that fear Him."*

*"The fear of the Lord tendeth to LIFE."*

*"The fear of the Lord, that is WISDOM."*

We should ever be fearful of displeasing God, of not doing what He would have us do. We cannot please Him and do what He wants us to do in our complicated everyday conflict with all worldly things around us unless we are well informed upon what the will of God is. We must study His Word and meditate upon it. Meditation is a most important part of one's education in the Truth, and in today's nervous, excited, rush, rush world many do not find or take the time to meditate as much as they should.

Speaking of the fear of God, David says—

*"The eye of the Lord is on them that fear Him."*

The fear of God is the key to His mercy and grace and makes meaningful our subject, "THOU GOD SEEST ME." A little meditation upon the implication of this thought should help us in "perfecting holiness in the fear of God," as Paul said to the Corinthians. We hope that when we have concluded our remarks that each of us will have a keener appreciation of what Paul meant when he wrote to the Hebrews—

*"All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do."*

As we go about our everyday activities, our minds often engrossed deeply in the things of the present physical world, we tend to become dissociated from the spiritual world of which we should be endeavoring to become part. Our present life of probation is a period of transition from carnal to spiritual. As we grow in grace and in the knowledge of God and His ways, we should find an ever-increasing awareness of the fruitlessness of all temporal pursuits, and the incalculable value of things spiritual.

As a brother reminded us in our discussion of Heb. 12:1, concerning the cloud of witnesses by which we are encompassed, we are a part of the cloud, we are in the midst of the cloud; we are in the midst of real beings and should be affected by their experiences. They should be a part of our spiritual world, for finally they are to be a part of the things that will remain when all present things pass away. We need constantly to remind ourselves:

*"The things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal."*

Among the things not seen are: The Father, His Son, and the angels. As often as we can, we should think of their part in our everyday world. Paul said:

*"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."*

We want to reflect upon a few of the things written, particularly to do with the angels, who are God's ministering spirits who work His will, and of whom David said in Ps. 34—

*"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."*

This is a most important fact that we should never forget relative to the spiritual world toward which we should constantly be striving. In a sense we are living in two worlds if we are spiritually minded—that which is seen and that which is not seen except by the eye of faith. The oftener we exercise our minds on that distinction the more real will become the spiritual world.

As we review a few of the incidents of Scripture involving the angels, keep in mind that the work of God going on in the world today is just as real and as positive as it was in Bible times, and the only real difference is that we now are not permitted to see with our eyes any outward evidence of that activity.

As an illustration we might refer to 2 Kings 6:15. Elisha's servant, observing that the city was surrounded by the army of the king of Syria, said to Elisha, "Alas, my master; how shall we do?" And he answered—

*"Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see."*

*"And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw: and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."*

We have another hint of "things not seen" in what Christ said to his disciples in the garden of Gethsemane, when he told them—

*"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than 12 legions of angels?"*

We were told in a recent talk that a Roman legion indicates a group of soldiers of about 6000. So Christ here was saying that he could have called upon his Father and he would have had an army of 72,000 angels to protect him.

What would we see around us today if our eyes were opened? What has been written is for our learning. Let us look further at what has been written. In Dan. 10 we find a very definite and valuable indication of what is happening, unseen by us. Daniel had seen a great vision of "a certain man clothed in linen," and at v. 9 we read—

*"Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.*

*"And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and the palms of my hands. And he said unto me,*

*"O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright, for unto thee am I now sent.*

*"And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.*

*"Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand and to chasten thyself before God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.*

*"But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me 21 days: but lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia."*

Several things come to our notice in this account. Daniel's prayer and his chastening of himself had been observed in heaven, and this angel was delegated to go to him with a message. The angel had been busy influencing affairs in Persia in the development of God's purpose. The angel said the prince of the kingdom of Persia had withstood, or resisted, him 21 days, the same length of time that Daniel had been chastening himself—"3 full weeks"—as we read in v. 2. This incident makes plain that angels are occupied in the affairs of the rulers of nations when their decisions affect events relative to the purpose of God.

Can we not visualize with the eye of faith, angels overseeing activities at Washington, Moscow, Cairo, Tel Aviv or Paris, or any other area where their influence might be required? Can we not imagine an angel having a difficult time at Moscow, perhaps, in an effort to influence a critical decision so that the proper events will ensue, and perhaps having to call upon a Michael or a Gabriel to help him? A full appreciation of this fact makes current events very fascinating and encouraging in the knowledge that no matter how things may appear to us to be going, they are always at any given time going in the right direction because the angels are directing them.

With regard to the "three full weeks" from the time Daniel's plea was first heard until the angel appeared to him, we should always remember that when we seek help from God we are not the ones to say when or in what manner our prayers must be answered, nor what is best for us. Having made known our desires, we must exercise our own intelligence and initiative (in accord with God's commandments) toward working out our own problems. If we do so within the framework of God's commandments and exercise patience and faith, we shall have all the help we need from the angels, if and when God deems it necessary.

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LET us consider the incident in Gen. 16 from whence our subject was taken: "THOU GOD SEEST ME. "How typical this incident is of situations in which we at times find ourselves, with what appear to be unresolvable problems! Imagine Hagar's anxiety and distress. Being with child and being sorely tried by Sarah's ill-treatment of her, she fled. What must her feelings have been as an angel found her and spoke to her and told her of the son she was to bear, and told her to call him Ishmael (God Hears). The angel also advised her to return to her mistress and submit herself under her hands.

What relief must have pervaded Hagar's soul as she said, "Thou God seest me"! With this conviction and the confidence born of it she returned to face her mistress and her mistreatment.

Do we ever feel as Hagar must have felt when she said, "Thou God seest me"! God's Word gives us every assurance that we should, if we fear Him and are keeping His commandments. If we cast our cares upon Him, His angels have the power to do for us whatever the Father's will shall decree.

It was some 14 years or so after this, when Sarah had born Isaac and weaned him, that Hagar was again forced to flee with her son Ishmael, as we find in Gen. 21. As she and Ishmael wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba their water supply ran out, and as Ishmael became weak for lack of water Hagar left him under a bush and moved a ways off that she might not see her son die; and there she lifted up her voice and wept.

But it was not in the purpose of God that Ishmael should die. He was a son of Abraham and the Lord had prophesied a future for him, Gen. 21:17-19—

*"And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her,*

*"What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation.*

*"And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink."*

There is great comfort in the thought, "Thou God seest me," if we are doing all that we can to walk in His way. If we are among God's called-out ones with whom God has a definite purpose, there can be no threat to our lives unless God's purpose in us is complete.

If we order our lives in the framework of this one thought, "Thou God seest me," we should not knowingly or willingly place ourselves in any circumstances in which we would not want to be found should we suddenly be accosted by an angel of the Lord.

Always remember that the angels are near though we see them not. Our deeds, be they good or evil, are being recorded, but if our efforts are being exerted in the direction of doing God's will His angels will help us if God's purpose requires it. This work of the angels is illustrated by numerous incidents in the Bible.

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IN Gen. 22 we have the incident of God's testing of Abraham's faith. Abraham was told by God to offer up his son Isaac as a sacrifice, but at the crucial moment when Abraham was about to fulfill God's command we read:

*"And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here am I.*

*"And He said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me. "*  
(v.11)

Note again the reference to "fear of God."

An angel appeared to Elijah in the wilderness where he had fled after Jezebel threatened his life. The angel provided food and water for him and encouraged him to eat so that he would have strength for a 40 days and 40 night's journey to Mount Horeb. We have also the notable experiences of Daniel and his 3 friends in which the angels figured so prominently. These illustrations should make it clear what is meant when we read that—

*"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."*

We must develop a consciousness of the reality of this fact and take advantage of it by a complete trust and confidence in our Father's readiness to provide whatever help is needed in order that we might overcome our difficulties as we fight the fight of faith.

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IN the New Testament we have recorded some similar occurrences. In connection with our Savior's ministry we have two occasions mentioned in which angels figured. After his temptation in the wilderness, we are told that angels came and ministered unto him; and in the Garden of Gethsemane during the torment which his soul endured before his crucifixion, we read:

*"There appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him."*

In the Acts of the Apostles we have recorded that on one occasion where some of the apostles were put in the common prison—

*"The angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, and brought them forth."*

On another occasion, when Herod the king had put Peter in prison, we are told in Acts 12:7—

*"And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands."*

*"And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me."*

*"And he went out and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision."*

In Acts 10 we read of Cornelius who was "a devout man, and one that feared God." He was a Gentile and not of the Jews, but his prayers and his alms-giving had ascended as a memorial before God, and God sent an angel to him directing him to search out Peter who would explain to him the Way of Salvation.

In Acts 27 we have recorded the experience of the Apostle Paul on the stormy seas, which resulted in the wrecking of the ship on which he was a passenger and a prisoner. Before the shipwreck, an angel of the Lord stood by him one night and said to him—

*"Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."*

*"Wherefore, sirs (said Paul), be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me."*

Paul believed God that it would be even as he had been told. Should not we also believe as we have been told? Listen to the Word of God: Solomon said—

*"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."*

Job said—

*"Doth not He see my ways and count all my steps?"*

Hanani the seer told King Asa—

*"The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect (or wholeheartedly) toward Him."*

This work is the responsibility of the angels, and the more that we can live in the atmosphere of the reality of this truth, the greater the benefit we will derive in comfort, encouragement and strength in periods of trial.

We pray, "Our Father, which art in Heaven," and we present our petitions to Him, but God's throne is in the highest heaven of the heavens and at times may seem very, very distant to us who are on earth, but His messenger is very close and our petitions will be heard if we meet the qualifications God revealed to Isaiah—

*"To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and TREMBLETH at My Word."*

In Matt. 18:10 we have the following statement of Christ—

*"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."*

The "little ones" Christ had reference to were not to literal children like the child he had set in the midst of his disciples, but as he explained in v. 3—

*"Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter the Kingdom of heaven."*

So Christ here tells us that those who humble themselves and believe in him become little ones, and they have angels in heaven. These must be the angels which encamp round about those that fear God. The examples we have been considering illustrate the import of Christ's words.

In Luke 1, before the birth of John and of Christ, an angel appeared to Zecharias and to Mary. We read at v.19 that the angel spake to Zecharias:

*"I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God."*

And in verse 26 we read—

*"The angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee named Nazareth to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary."*

So Gabriel, we are told, stood in the presence of God, and was sent to Zacharias and to Mary, and in this instance he was their angel from God's presence. This great privilege is also ours if we are in God's way. Our efforts to walk in His way will be greatly strengthened if we will remember these assurances concerning the relationship which the angels bear to God's called-out ones.

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IN Gen. 24 we have an incident recorded involving an angel in which the angel does not make an appearance. In all the other cases we have referred to there were actual appearances of angels, but this case in Gen. 24 would be more parallel to our experiences in which we do not see the angels who may be responsible for our care. Abraham had instructed his servant to go to the land of his kindred and bring back a wife for his son, Isaac. Abraham said to his servant—

*"The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land—He shall send His angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence."*

Now after the servant arrived in Mesopotamia at the city of Nahor, he offered up a prayer, saying—

*"O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray Thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham."*

*"Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water."*

*"And let it come to pass that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also:*

*"Let the same be she that Thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master."*

Abraham's servant knew that many maidens would be coming out to draw water. How was he going to know which one might be the proper one? He believed Abraham's promise that God's angel would go before him and select a wife for Isaac, but how was he to know which one it was? He quite obviously was not expecting the angel to show himself, or he would not have arranged for the conditions by which he would be able to tell when he had found the right one. We read that before he had done speaking in his prayer to God, behold Rebekah came out and he asked her—

*"Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher."*

And then as she complied and went on to fulfill all the guidelines he had outlined in his prayer, we read at v. 21—

*"And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not."*

At this moment he still did not know who she was or what family she was from. Then when he learned who she was, we read (v. 27)—

*"And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, Who hath not left destitute my master of His mercy and His truth. I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren."*

In this instance as in some of the others we have referred to, we see the relationship between prayers to God and the carrying out of God's will by His angels. It would almost appear from this example that we as God's called-out ones should be able to do as Abraham's servant did when we are uncertain and doubtful about major decisions in our life by asking for signs.

However, on reflection we realize that such should not be the case in these days because these are days of FAITH. We cannot, nor should we, expect any direct indication that under any specific circumstances we should have direct evidence that our petitions have been heard.

We do believe though if our minds are alert to the spirit, and our minds "stayed upon God," and we have an awareness that, "Thou God seest me," and that our angel is in His Presence, we have every right to expect that we shall find some indication in the ever-changing circumstances of our lives which will guide our thoughts to right answers to our particular difficulties. We need patience and trust and faith.

Our meditations upon the work of the angels indicate to us that the angels will play a very active part in our lives if we are among God's called-out ones. Encamping round about us (if we fear God), they are aware of every detail of our activities from day to day.

Should not our active consciousness of this fact instill in us a certain amount of fear lest our ways displease our Father? Our natural thoughts tend to place God at a great distance from us and it is easy to feel that we are insignificant in the sight of Him to whom even the mighty nations are but as the small dust of the balance. But if we recognize and remember the close proximity of His angels, it will do a great deal to counteract our natural thinking.

Earlier in our remarks we mentioned among the things not seen are the Father, the Son and the angels. We have spoken of the Father and the angels. We would like just to add a few words about the Son as related to the work of the angels. Before Christ ascended into heaven he told his disciples—

*"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."*

And Peter tells us that Christ is now at the right hand of God—

*"Angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."*

From this we know Christ now has much to do with the ministrations of the angels in the working out of God's purpose.

As our Advocate and High Priest who has been touched with a feeling of our infirmities, would he not in our periods of trial remember his own experiences in Gethsemane and his temptation in the wilderness, and how the angels strengthened him? And would he not have compassion on us and see to it that we receive some of the same help? We think he does—if we have sufficient faith. Did not Christ tell his disciples—

*"All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, BELIEVING, ye shall receive."*

James elaborates on this for us when he says—

*"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it SHALL be given him."*

*"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not THAT man think he shall receive anything of the Lord."*

This is what God's Word tells us, and dare we not believe what has been told us?

*"Faith is the substance (or an assurance) of things hoped for, the evidence (or conviction) of things not seen."*

—and our faith will be greatly strengthened if we consciously live as much as we can in the reality of the spiritual world to which we are related: which, though seen only by faith, is just as real—and far more important—than the world we see around us by sight.

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May we add a concluding comforting thought. Christ's tempter in the wilderness quoted from Psa. 91 when he said to Christ, after telling him to cast himself down from a pinnacle of the Temple—

*"For it is written, He shall give His angels charge over thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."*

We should not allow the tempter's application of David's words to Christ to take from us the comforting and valuable teaching in this Psalm. The language of the Psalm makes clear to whom it should apply. Let us read Ps. 91 in closing—

*"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."*

And who is it that "dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High?" We will let David explain if we turn back to Ps. 31:19-20. David says of God—

*"Oh how great is Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee: which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men!"*

*"Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man: Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues."*

We have this highly figurative language indicating the overshadowing and protecting care of the Father for His children—those who fear Him and trust in Him. Going back to Psa. 91:2, David says of God—

*"He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust."*

He then speaks to those who put their trust in God and fear Him—

*"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 by 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."*

*"Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet."*

Then the person changes, and most surely what David says applies to the Master, as we so often do in referring to these passages. However, if we qualify, we can take them unto ourselves as well—



*"Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known My Name.*

*"He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation."*

May all these promises and assurances comfort and encourage us as we "press toward the mark for the prize" of our high calling in Christ Jesus, remembering that wherever we may be, or whatever circumstances surround us, we have the assurance—

*"THOU GOD SEEST ME."*

*"FEAR GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS!"*

—W.S. Taken from July 1971 Berean

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