

The 1858 Great Controversy Chapters 22-24.

Chapter 22. William Miller.

I saw that God sent his angel to move upon the heart of a farmer who had not believed the Bible, and led him to search the prophecies. Angels of God repeatedly visited that chosen one, and guided his mind, and opened his understanding to prophecies which had ever been dark to God's people. The commencement of the chain of truth was given him, and he was led on to search for link after link, until he looked with wonder and admiration upon the word of God. He saw there a perfect chain of truth. That Word which he had regarded as uninspired, now opened before his vision with beauty and glory. He saw that one portion of scripture explained another, and when one portion was closed to his understanding, he found in another portion of the Word that which explained it. He regarded the sacred word of God with joy, and with the deepest respect and awe.

As he followed down the prophecies, he saw that the inhabitants of earth were living in the closing scenes of this world's history, and they knew it not. He looked at the corruptions of the churches, and saw that their love was taken from Jesus, and placed on the world, and that they were seeking for worldly honor instead of that honor which cometh from above; ambitious for worldly riches, instead of laying up their treasure in heaven. Hypocrisy, darkness and death he could see every where. His spirit was stirred within him. God called him to leave his farm, as Elisha was called to leave his oxen and the field of his labor to follow Elijah. With trembling, William Miller began to unfold the mysteries of the kingdom of God to the people. He gained strength with every effort. He carried the people down through the prophecies to the second advent of Christ. As John the Baptist heralded the first advent of Jesus, and prepared the way for his coming, so also, Wm. Miller and those who joined him, proclaimed the second advent of the Son of God.

I was carried back to the days of the disciples, and was shown the beloved John, that God had a special work for him to accomplish. Satan was determined to hinder this work, and he led on his servants to destroy John. But God sent his angel and wonderfully preserved him. All who witnessed the great power of God manifested in the deliverance of John, were astonished, and many were convinced that God was with him, and that the testimony which he bore concerning Jesus was correct. Those who sought to destroy him were afraid to again attempt to take his life, and he was permitted to suffer on for Jesus. He was falsely accused by his enemies, and was shortly banished to a lonely island, where the Lord sent his angel to reveal to him things which were to take place upon the earth, and the state of the church down through to the end; her backslidings, and the position the church should occupy if she would please God, and finally overcome. The angel from heaven came to John in majesty. His countenance beamed with the excellent glory of heaven. He revealed to John scenes of deep and thrilling interest concerning the church of God, and brought before him the perilous conflicts they were to endure. John saw them pass through fiery trials, and made white and tried, and, finally, victorious overcomers, gloriously saved in the kingdom of God.

The countenance of the angel grew radiant with joy, and was exceeding glorious, as he showed to John the final triumph of the church of God. John was enraptured as he beheld the final deliverance of the church, and as he was carried away with the glory of the scene, with deep reverence and awe he fell at the feet of the angel to worship him. The angel instantly raised him up, and gently reproved him,

saying, See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus; worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. The angel then showed John the heavenly city with all its splendor and dazzling glory. John was enraptured and overwhelmed with the glory of the city. He did not bear in mind his former reproof from the angel, but again fell to worship before the feet of the angel, who again gave the gentle reproof, See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them that keep the sayings of this book; worship God.

Preachers and people have looked upon the book of Revelation as mysterious, and of less importance than other portions of the sacred Scriptures. But I saw that this book is indeed a revelation given for the especial benefit of those who should live in the last days, to guide them in ascertaining their true position, and their duty. God led the mind of Wm. Miller into the prophecies, and gave him great light upon the book of Revelation.

If Daniel's visions had been understood, the people could better have understood the visions of John. But at the right time, God moved upon his chosen servant, who with clearness and in the power of the Holy Spirit, opened the prophecies, and showed the harmony of the visions of Daniel and John, and other portions of the Bible, and pressed home upon the hearts of the people the sacred, fearful warnings of the Word, to prepare for the coming of the Son of man. Deep and solemn convictions rested upon the minds of those who heard him, and ministers and people, sinners and infidels, turned to the Lord, to seek a preparation to stand in the judgment.

Angels of God accompanied Wm. Miller in his mission. He was firm and undaunted. He fearlessly proclaimed the message committed to his trust. A world lying in wickedness, and a cold, worldly church were enough to call into action his energy, and lead him to willingly endure toil, privation and suffering. Although opposed by professed christians and the world, and buffeted by Satan and his angels, he ceased not to preach the everlasting gospel to crowds wherever he was invited, and sound the cry, Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come.

Chapter 23. The First Angel's Message.

I saw that God was in the proclamation of the time in 1843. It was his design to arouse the people, and bring them to a testing point where they should decide. Ministers were convicted and convinced of the correctness of the positions taken on the prophetic periods, and they left their pride, their salaries, and their churches, to go forth from place to place and proclaim the message. But as the message from heaven could find a place in the hearts of but a very few of the professed ministers of Christ, the work was laid upon many who were not preachers. Some left their fields to sound the message, while others were called from their shops and their merchandise. And even some professional men were compelled to leave their professions to engage in the unpopular work of giving the first angel's message. Ministers laid aside their sectarian views and feelings, and united in proclaiming the coming of Jesus. The people were moved everywhere the message reached them. Sinners repented, wept and prayed for forgiveness, and those whose lives had been marked with dishonesty, were anxious to make restitution.

Parents felt the deepest solicitude for their children. Those who received the message, labored with their unconverted friends and relatives, and with their souls bowed with the weight of the solemn message, warned and entreated them to prepare for the coming of the Son of man. Those cases were the most hardened that would not yield to such a weight of evidence set home by heart-felt warnings.

This soul-purifying work led the affections away from worldly things, to a consecration never before experienced. Thousands were led to embrace the truth preached by Wm. Miller, and servants of God were raised up in the spirit and power of Elijah to proclaim the message. Those who preached this solemn message, like John the forerunner of Jesus, felt compelled to lay the axe at the root of the tree, and call upon men to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Their testimony was calculated to arouse and powerfully affect the churches, and manifest their real character. And as they raised the solemn warning to flee from the wrath to come, many who were united with the churches received the healing message; they saw their backslidings, and, with bitter tears of repentance, and deep agony of soul, humbled themselves before God. And as the Spirit of God rested upon them, they helped to sound the cry, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come.

The preaching of definite time called forth great opposition from all classes, from the minister in the pulpit, down to the most reckless, heaven-daring sinner. No man knoweth the day and the hour, was heard from the hypocritical minister and the bold scoffer. Neither would be instructed and corrected on the use made of the text by those who were pointing to the year when they believed the prophetic periods would run out, and to the signs which showed Christ near, even at the doors. Many shepherds of the flock, who professed to love Jesus, said they had no opposition to the preaching of Christ's coming; but they objected to the definite time. God's all-seeing eye read their hearts. They did not love Jesus near. They knew that their unchristian lives would not stand the test; for they were not walking in the humble path laid out by him.

These false shepherds stood in the way of the work of God. The truth spoken in its convincing power to the people aroused them, and like the jailer, they began to inquire, What must I do to be saved. But these shepherds stepped between the truth and the people, and preached smooth things to lead them from the truth. They united with Satan and his angels, and cried, Peace, peace, when there was no peace. I saw that angels of God had marked it all, and the garments of those unconsecrated shepherds were covered with the blood of souls. Those who loved their ease, and were content with their distance from God, would not be aroused from their carnal security.

Many ministers would not accept this saving message themselves, and those who would receive it, they hindered. The blood of souls is upon them. Preachers and people joined to oppose this message from heaven. They persecuted Wm. Miller, and those who united with him in the work. Falsehoods were circulated to injure his influence, and at different times after he had plainly declared the counsel of God, applying cutting truths to the hearts of his hearers, great rage was kindled against him, and as he left the place of meeting, some way-laid him in order to take his life. But angels of God were sent to preserve his life, and they led him safely away from the angry mob. His work was not yet finished.

The most devoted gladly received the message. They knew it was from God, and that it was delivered at the right time. Angels were watching with the deepest interest the result of the heavenly message, and when the churches turned from and rejected it, they in sadness consulted with Jesus. He turned his face from the churches, and bid his angels to faithfully watch over the precious ones who did not reject the testimony, for another light was yet to shine upon them.

I saw that if professed Christians had loved their Saviour's appearing, if their affections were placed on him, if they felt that there was none upon earth to be compared with him, they would have hailed with joy the first intimation of his coming. But the dislike they manifested, as they heard of their Lord's coming, was a decided proof that they did not love him. Satan and his angels triumphed, and cast it in

the face of Jesus Christ and his holy angels, that his professed people had so little love for Jesus that they did not desire his second appearing.

I saw the people of God, joyful in expectation, looking for their Lord. But God designed to prove them. His hand covered a mistake in the reckoning of the prophetic periods. Those who were looking for their Lord did not discover it, and the most learned men who opposed the time also failed to see the mistake. God designed that his people should meet with a disappointment. The time passed, and those who had looked with joyful expectation for their Saviour were sad and disheartened, while those who had not loved the appearing of Jesus, but embraced the message through fear, were pleased that he did not come at the time of expectation. Their profession had not affected their hearts, and purified their lives. The passing of the time was well calculated to reveal such hearts. They were the first to turn and ridicule the sorrowful, disappointed ones, who really loved the appearing of their Saviour. I saw the wisdom of God in proving his people, and giving them a searching test to discover those who would shrink and turn back in the hour of trial.

Jesus and all the heavenly host looked with sympathy and love upon those who had with sweet expectation longed to see him whom their souls loved. Angels were hovering around them, to sustain them in the hour of their trial. Those who had neglected to receive the heavenly message were left in darkness, and God's anger was kindled against them, because they would not receive the light he had sent them from heaven. Those faithful, disappointed ones, who could not understand why their Lord did not come, were not left in darkness. Again they were led to their Bibles to search the prophetic periods. The hand of the Lord was removed from the figures, and the mistake was explained.

They saw that the prophetic periods reached to 1844, and that the same evidence they had presented to show that the prophetic periods closed in 1843, proved that they would terminate in 1844. Light from the word of God shone upon their position, and they discovered a tarrying time.--If the vision tarry, wait for it.--In their love for Jesus' immediate coming, they had overlooked the tarrying of the vision, which was calculated to manifest the true waiting ones. Again they had a point of time. Yet I saw that many of them could not rise above their severe disappointment, to possess that degree of zeal and energy which had marked their faith in 1843.

Satan and his angels triumphed over them, and those who would not receive the message, congratulated themselves upon their far-seeing judgment and wisdom in not receiving the delusion, as they called it. They realized not that they were rejecting the counsel of God against themselves, and that they were working in union with Satan and his angels to perplex God's people, who were living out the heaven-born message.

The believers in this message were oppressed in the churches. Fear had held them for a time, so that they did not act out the sentiments of their heart, but the passing of the time revealed their true feelings. They wished to silence the testimony which the believers felt compelled to bear, that the prophetic periods extended to 1844. With clearness they explained their mistake, and gave their reasons why they expected their Lord in 1844. The opposers could not bring any arguments against the powerful reasons offered. The anger of the churches was kindled against them. They were determined not to listen to any evidence, and to shut their testimony out of the churches, so that others could not hear it. Those who dared not withhold from others the light God had given them, were shut out of the churches; but Jesus was with them, and they were joyful in the light of his countenance. They were prepared to receive the message of the second angel.

Chapter 23. The Second Angel's Message.

The churches would not receive the light of the first angel's message, and as they rejected the light from heaven they fell from the favor of God. They trusted in their own strength, and placed themselves by their opposition to the first message where they could not see the light of the second angel's message. But the beloved of God, who were oppressed, answered to the message, Babylon is fallen, and left the fallen churches.

Near the close of the second angel's message, I saw a great light from heaven shining upon the people of God. The rays of this light seemed bright as the sun. And I heard the voices of angels crying, Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him!

The midnight cry was given to give power to the second angel's message. Angels were sent from heaven to wake up the discouraged saints, and prepare them for the great work before them. The most talented men were not the first to receive this message. Angels were sent to the humble, devoted ones, and constrained them to raise the cry, Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him. Those entrusted with the cry made haste, and in the power of the Holy Spirit spread the cry, and aroused their discouraged brethren. This cry did not stand in the wisdom and learning of men, but in the power of God, and his saints who heard the cry could not resist it. The most spiritual received this message first, and those who had formerly led in the work were the last to receive and help swell the cry, Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.

In every part of the land, light was given upon the second angel's message, and the cry was melting down thousands. It went from city to city, and from village to village, until the waiting people of God were fully aroused. Many would not permit this message to enter the churches, and a large company who had the living testimony within them left the fallen churches. A mighty work was accomplished by the midnight cry. The message was heart-searching, and led the believers to seek a living experience for themselves. They knew that they could not lean upon one another.

The saints anxiously waited for their Lord with fasting, watching and almost constant prayer. Even some sinners looked forward to the time with terror, while the great mass seemed to be stirred against this message, and manifested the spirit of Satan. They mocked and scoffed, and everywhere was heard, No man knoweth the day and the hour. Evil angels exulted around them, urging them on to harden their hearts, and to reject every ray of light from heaven, that they might fasten them in the snare. Many professed to be looking for their Lord, who had neither part nor lot in the matter. The glory of God they had witnessed, the humility and deep devotion of the waiting ones, and the overwhelming weight of evidence, caused them to profess to receive the truth. But they were not converted. They were not ready. A spirit of solemn and earnest prayer was everywhere felt by the saints. A holy solemnity was resting upon them.

Angels with the deepest interest had watched the result, and were elevating those who received the heavenly message, and were drawing them from earthly things to obtain large supplies from salvation's fountain. God's people were then accepted with him. Jesus looked upon them with pleasure. His image was reflected in them. They had made a full sacrifice, an entire consecration, and expected to be changed to immortality. But they were destined to be again sadly disappointed. The time to which they looked, expecting deliverance, passed. They were still upon the earth, and the effects of the curse never seemed more visible. They had placed their affections on heaven, and in sweet anticipation, had tasted immortal deliverance; but their hopes were not realized.

The fear that had rested upon many of the people did not at once disappear. They did not immediately triumph over the disappointed ones. But as no visible wrath of God was felt by them, they recovered from the fear they had felt, and commenced their ridicule, their mocking, and scoffing. The people of God were again proved, and tested. The world laughed, and mocked, and reproached them; and those who had believed without a doubt that Jesus would then come and raise the dead, and change the living saints, and take the kingdom, and possess it forever, felt like the disciples of Christ.-- They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.