

GOD AND MAN
By Cornelius R. Stam

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Call it madness, call it blasphemy, call it arrogance, call it ignorance—whatever you call it, call it *wrong, dreadfully wrong*, for man ever to even be tempted to think that he is “*but little lower than God Most High,*” and call it *doubly wrong* for him to alter the Scriptures and *then call God Himself* to witness, and contend that *the Bible* says that man is “*but little lower than God Most High!*”

Say that it was a nice man, or good Christian man, or a very scholarly man who said it; it is still *wrong* and blasphemous for man ever to claim near-equality with God.

Marshal your list of translators and scholarly authorities to prove your point and you will only compound the wrong, for what sincere believer, with no axe to grind, no institution or reputation to uphold; what sincere believer, knowing what the Bible says about a holy God and sinful man, would *want* to prove that man is “*but little lower than God Most High*”?

FOREWORD

It would be enjoyable indeed if we could write and publish only such studies in the Word as delight the hearts of God’s children. This is an evil day, however, and under the present circumstances this is impossible. It would be morally irresponsible of us to stand passively by while grievous apostasy is being propagated right in our midst by the leaders of educational institution in which many of us had placed such great confidence.

To those who exhort us to “just leave it with the Lord,” we reply that God will hold us—and *them*—accountable if we fail to speak up when our young people are being led astray and serious heresies, bit by bit, are being injected into periodicals sent into the homes of those who sincerely desire to be true to “God and the Word of His graces.”

Let us not be disheartened over the present controversy. Let us rather join in prayer that this booklet may be used of God to rescue many unwary saints who might otherwise have drifted with the tide.

The contents of this booklet are taken from a series of articles previously appearing in the *Berean Searchlight* under the title “*God and the gods.*”

GOD AND MAN

By Cornelius R. Stam

1. Christian education must, to be true to its name, honor the intellect of man. It must honor his reason, it must honor his critical powers, it must honor his ability to gain amazing insights and explore the frontiers of human knowledge and experience,...
2. ...it must honor his ability to subdue the creation and have dominion over it—so far that he can control the forces of the universe to allow a journey to the moon and return safely. Man is, in Eric Sauer's language, "The King of the Earth." But if Christian education is to be *Christian* it can only in the end view man's intellect, memory, judgment, and insight as the lowly slave of Jesus Christ who is its glorious creator, its eternal redeemer, and its rightful Sovereign and Lord.
3. David in Psalm 8 saw the glory of man. In answer to his query "What is man that thou are mindful of him," he answered,
4. Thou hast made him but little lower than God Most High! And crownest him with glory and honor. Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, Yea, and the beasts of the field; The birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, Whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

God and Man

NEARLY EQUAL?

If I should say to you that man is *but little lower than God Most High*, how would you respond?

Would you agree that this is so? Would you respond that there is *some* truth in the statement?

Or, would you label it rank blasphemy?

If you are part of the so-called "grace movement," your answer is particularly important, for this doctrine, that man is "*but little lower than God Most High*," is being propagated at *Grace Bible College*, Wyoming, Michigan, and this is but "the tip of the iceberg."

Above, we have reproduced the opening words of an address by Professor Dale S. DeWitt of *Grace Bible College*, delivered on February 24, 1969, and then published in September issue of GBC's COMMENT. We have numbered and underlined these opening paragraphs above so as to facilitate *our* comments about them.

THE INTELLECT OF MAN

Says Professor DeWitt (See No. 1, above): "Christian education must, to be true to its name, honor the intellect of man." *Christian* education must honor *the intellect of man* to be true to its name?! What, then, is this we read in the Word of God about unregenerate man and his intellect?

“...when they knew God, THEY GLORIFIED HIM NOT AS GOD, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, AND THEIR FOOLISH HEART WAS DARKENED.

“PROFESSING THEMSELVES TO BE WISE, THEY BECAME FOOLS” (Rom. 1:21, 22).

“...the god of this world [age] hath BLINDED THE MINDS of them which believe not...” (II Cor. 4:4)

“...walk not as other Gentiles walk, in THE VANITY OF THEIR MIND,

“HAVING THE UNDERSTANDING DARKENED, being alienated from the life of God through THE IGNORANCE THAT IS IN THEM, because of THE BLINDNESS OF THEIR HEART” (Eph. 4:17, 18).

We realize, of course, that only man of all God’s creatures, can utter spoken words, write books, plan projects. Only man has the capacity for compassion, love and hope. This is because he was created in the image of God, and this image has never been effaced—but it *has* been *defaced* and degraded. With the fall man’s body, heart and mind became corrupted and depraved. This is what many “intellectuals” find it impossible to concede.

MAN’S “CONTROL” OVER THE UNIVERSE

Professor DeWitt goes on to say (See No. 2) that Christian education “must honor his [man’s] ability to subdue the creation and have dominion over it—so far that he can control the forces of the universe to allow a journey to the moon and return safely.”

“He can control the forces of the universe!” Think of it!

Years ago this writer found himself stranded on the only train going north in the midst of a frightening Mississippi River flood. Barns, silos, garages and even homes went drifting by. Besides such floating objects there was only a vast expanse of water surrounding us on all sides. The hearts of all aboard were filled with fear. A few days later, in St. Louis, newspapers carried headlines reading: *“FLOOD TAMED!”* Tamed, indeed! Just because God had not permitted the rains to continue falling still longer, just because He had not permitted the mighty river to overflow *more* of its embankments, just because *some* of the sandbags had held and the water was finally receding, man had now “tamed” the flood! Such is the conceit of the human heart.

But is it any less presumptuous of man to boast that *he* can “control the forces of the universe” to allow a journey to the moon and a safe return? It is sobering to contemplate how many things might easily have gone wrong in our astronauts’ journeys to the moon had not God, for His own sovereign reasons, permitted their success. But apart from this, shall man boast if, by God’s grace, his brain functions well enough to permit him to plan difficult technical exploits? Could man construct a brain, much less create a mind? Should he not, then, humbly thank God, and acknowledge Him as his gracious Benefactor in every step that he takes?

Technology can become perplexingly involved, but even so it is one of the more superficial aspects of human knowledge. A man may be “intellectual” enough to work out the most difficult mathematical equations, yet not know how to get along with others. He may plan journeys to the moon, preparing carefully for all eventualities, yet fail to recognize the uncertainty of life or the grave necessity of considering what will eventually become of him.

Intellectualism is by no means to be equated with common sense, much less with spiritual insight. The ancient Egyptians were learned men (See Acts 7:22). They built the amazing pyramids, demonstrating their advanced knowledge of both engineering and astronomy. They also held secrets about embalming that we, after 3500 years, have not been able to penetrate. Yet they were blind, superstitious heathen, without God and without hope.

THE “GLORY” OF MAN

But in pressing his claim for “the glory of man,” Professor DeWitt not only mistranslates and misinterprets Psalm 8; he enters the sphere of blasphemy when he declares (nos. 3, 4) that “David in Psalm 8 saw the glory of man,” and then makes Verse 5 to read: “Thou has made him *but little lower than God Most High!*” (Our italics). This perversion of the text is even worse than the infamous RSV rendering:¹ “*Yet thou hast made him little less than God.*”

Our *Authorized Version*, of course, reads: “For Thou hast made him a little² lower *than the angels.*” This makes sense and is unquestionably correct, but DeWitt adopts the completely unacceptable rendering that man is “*but little lower than God Most High.*” That this rendering is incorrect as well as blasphemous is proven by abundant evidence.

BUT LITTLE LOWER THAN GOD MOST HIGH?

First, just stop and *think*. Contemplate the wonders of this vast universe and then ask yourself if it is not sheer nonsense as well as consummate pride for man to boast that he is “but little lower than God Most High.”

Second, if man is “but little lower than God Most High,” why should we worship Him? Does one prostrate himself in worship before one who is but little greater than he? Why should I be His “lowly slave,” as DeWitt suggests, if I am “but little lower” than He?

But we have further evidence from Scriptures themselves that there is no basis whatever for this alternation of Psalm 8:5 by DeWitt, inserted into his article without explanation. It will be argued, of course, that the word for “angels” in Psalm 8:5 is *elohim*, the same word translated God in so many Old Testament passages. True, but this word is used to emphasize the *plurality* of His being, since God is a Trinity. The word *elohim* is also used of the angels, as God’s *agents* or *representatives*. In the Psalms alone the angels are called *elohim*, or gods, at least 11 times.

¹ See the writer’s work: *The Revised Standard Version—Can we Trust It?*

² I.e., “for a little while.”

In Psalm 82:6, 7 God says of the fallen angels: “*I have said, Ye are gods [elohim]; and all of you are children of the Most High, but ye shall die like men....*”

That the word *elohim*, in Psalm 8:5, refers to angels and *not* to “God Most High,” is clearly established by the Holy Spirit’s own quotation from the Psalm in Hebrews 2. Heb. 2:5 makes it clear that Psalm 2 does not, as DeWitt indicates, *proclaim* the *present* glory of *man*, but *predicts* the *future* glory of *redeemed* man. Read the passage carefully:

“For unto the angels hath He not put into subjection the world TO COME, whereof WE speak.”

It is because of sin that man has been made for a little while “lower than the angels” (Heb. 2:7), and it is because of sin that Christ was made for a little while “lower than the angels,” that by His death He might redeem those who would believe.

It should be carefully observed that in the quotation by Paul here in Hebrews 2, the original word is *angellos*, angels, indicating beyond the shadow of a doubt that the word *elohim*, in Psalm 8, refers *not* to “God Most High,” but to the angels.

In making man in his present fallen condition “king of the earth,” DeWitt overlooks the fact that God in His grace will one day place a company of redeemed sinners, with Christ as their head, not only over the earth, but over the heavens too, so as to still “the enemy and the avenger,” who once boasted, “I will be like the most High” (Heb. 2:8; cf. Isa. 14:12-14).

That Psalm 8 is a *prophecy* of the *future* rule of *redeemed* men over God’s creation, rather than a declaration of *man’s present* rulership, is further emphasized in Heb. 2:8, 9, where the apostle, commenting on this very Psalm, says:

“...but now we see NOT YET all things put under him.

“BUT WE SEE JESUS, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOR, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

How unscriptural and wrong, then, to proclaim “the glory of man” and to contend that he is now “king of the earth” and that he can “control the forces of the universe,” except in the most limited way by the permission and help of God Himself!

“*The glory of man!*” The phrase brings to mind what this very same Psalmist, David, says by divine inspiration about man’s present “glory”:

**“As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth, for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone...”
(Psa. 103:15, 16).**

The Apostle Peter, also by divine inspiration, quotes and interprets this passage simply, thus:

“For all flesh is as grass, and ALL THE GLORY OF MAN AS THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERETH, AND THE FLOWER THEREOF FALLETH AWAY” (Pet. 1:24).

Finally, even a simple reading of Psalm 8 itself will reveal that Jehovah’s name “excels”³ “*in all the earth*” and that *His glory* is set “*above the heavens*” (Ver. 1). What is this talk, then, about “*the glory of man*” and about man’s being “*but little lower than God Most High*”?

**SECULAR EDUCATION
AND
“THE HISTORY BEHIND THE BIBLE”**

We have not extracted some isolated passage from the article in COMMENT. Throughout Professor DeWitt expresses this exaggerated regard for the intellect of unregenerate man. Below are some other passages from this article:

“This stretching, this growth, this expansion, this enlargement of the mind is *education*. It is gained, as Newman observes, only by pursuing the widest range of subjects and fields of knowledge....”

“Yet it is precisely his [man’s] *mind* that needs *enlargement* through a wide and broad study of the arts and sciences in order to enable him to completely engage in his profession.”

“But the Christian thinker, to honor the Lordship of Christ, must at some junction turn to the Scriptures for the Divine contribution to knowledge....”

Note carefully the phrases “at some junction” and “Divine contribution,” in this last quotation. Do not Proverbs 9:10 and a hundred other Scripture passages indicate that the Word of God is the very *foundation* of the believer’s knowledge and understanding?

How can such phrases as “the lowly slave of Jesus Christ” and “the Lordship of Christ,” in the article, have much weight or meaning when man is thus exalted to a position “but little lower than God Most High”? Have not apostates long been known to sprinkle their heresies with humble phraseology? And what is the significance of an emphasis on dispensational distinctions when God Himself is thus belittled?

³ “How excellent,” lit., “How it excels!”

Professor DeWitt's thinking as expressed in the COMMENT article is by no means some small mistake that has crept in. It is an expression of his general viewpoint on the subject of God and man. In an article on "Dispensational Truth," in the August-September, 1969, issue of TRUTH, he states:

"For example, one cannot understand the Pharisees, the Synagogue, the Rabbis of Judaism, the Politarchs of Thessalonica, the town meeting of Ephesus, the centurion of Galilee, etc., etc., unless something of *the history behind the Bible* is known." (Our italics.)

This of course, was the argument of the so-called "higher criticism," the handmaid of modernism, years ago. When the higher critics got through examining the Bible in light of "the latest historical research," they "discovered" that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, that Daniel did not write the prophecy attributed to him, and that much of the Bible was not to be trusted. Soon they learned that Christ was not born of a virgin, that He made many mistakes, wrought no miracles, was not raised from the dead, etc. It was then that able men of God like Sir Robert Anderson of Scotland Yard wrote "*Daniel in the Critics' Den*," "*The Bible and Modern Criticism*" and "*Pseudocriticism*," and Bettex and other spiritual and intellectual giants also rose to expose the folly of higher critics.

But one does not need to be an Anderson or a Bettex to see the blunders that lie at the very foundation of DeWitt's views as stated above.

1. Ancient secular historians, in writing about the Pharisees, the synagogues, the rabbis, etc., were as naturally prejudiced and as liable to err as later American and British historians in writing about the Revolutionary times. Hence secular history, whether ancient or modern cannot be implicitly trusted. It is tainted, as are all human endeavors, with failure.
2. The argument that to understand the Bible we must first become familiar with "the history behind the Bible," negates the very quality of the Bible as the written Word of God, *the truth*, through which sinners may be saved and saints may find needed light to guide their way. In this case finite, failing man no longer has an authoritative Voice to turn to in his need.
3. We will never in this life know *all* about the Pharisees, the synagogue, etc. Thus, while secular history relating to Bible times may indeed prove interesting, the Bible tells us *all we need to know* about them: "*That the man of God may be perfect (Lit., complete), thoroughly furnished unto all good works*" (II Tim. 3:17).

Our Lord did not say to the *believers* of His day: "Ye do err, not knowing *the historical background* of the Scriptures." Rather He said to the *unbelievers*, the apostate religious leaders: "Ye do err, *not knowing THE SCRIPTURES*, nor the power of God" (Matt. 22:29).

Sir Robert Anderson made an important observation regarding the higher critics' policy of interpreting the Bible in the light of "modern research," when he said:

"People are led to suppose that the Higher Criticism is the outcome of an honest inquiry after truth. But the history of the movement as written by the critics themselves explodes such a delusion. Of Eichhorn, 'the founder of modern Old Testament criticism,' Professor Cheyne⁴ writes that 'it was his hope to contribute to the winning back of the educated classes to religion,'" ⁵ Is not this exactly what the neo-evangelicals are attempting to do by their over-emphasis on secular knowledge?⁶

Do not suppose that DeWitt's views are not shared by other leaders at *Grace Bible College*. Dr. John T. Dean, president of GBC at this writing, has already had much to say about "academic freedom," about "the importance of *all* knowledge," and about "God's *two* revelations, nature and the Bible," thus robbing the Bible of its unique quality as the Word of God to man and unwittingly giving the impression that the study of science might be almost as important as the study of the Scriptures. Indeed, in the July-August, 1964, issue of TRUTH, he quoted Bernard Ramm with approval as to Bible study:

"A student who has by-passed the liberal arts, and who therefore has by-passed *a real education* (our italics), simply does not have the intellectual lung power to drive in very deeply."

Thus "wisdom of this world" is exalted and "the wisdom that is from above" dethroned. Thus the power of the Spirit of God to lead into all *truth* is discounted. Certainly this philosophy denies the scriptural fact that "the deep things of God" *cannot* be understood by "the natural man," but *ONLY* by those who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, since these things are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:9, 10, 11, 14).

Further, this exaltation of the human intellect contradicts our Lord's words of thanksgiving:

"I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast *HID* these things from the wise and prudent and has revealed them unto babes" (Luke 10:21).

Certainly it fails to take into consideration *the reason why* the vast majority of the world's scholars *do not* understand the deep things of God; that "God hath *chosen* the foolish things of the world to confound the wise...*that no flesh should glory [boast] in His presence*" (I Cor. 1:27-29).

It fails, too, to accept the wise counsel of God: "*Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become [take the place of] a fool, that he may be wise*" (I Cor. 3:18).

⁴ Another higher critic.

⁵ *The Bible and Modern Criticism*, P. 39.

⁶ See the writer's book, *The Present Peril*, Pp. 27, 64-66.

If this be construed to mean that we are “opposed to education,” so be it. Our contention is simply that “the fear of the Lord is the *beginning* of wisdom.”

In the same book from which Dr. Dean quotes the above, Dr. Ramm compares the “authority” of science with that of the Bible. “True,” he says, “we may believe *some* of the Bible ‘in spite of’ science, but certainly the situation would change if we believed *all* of the Bible in spite of science.”⁷ According to this statement, the authority of the Bible is not final and absolute.

In the light of the above it is not strange that Dr. Dean should teach, as he does in the May, 1969, issue of COMMENT, that “the Christian college...must recognize the importance of *all* knowledge”⁸ and that “the truth of God” may be found even in the heart of a pagan.

Evidently Dr. Dean forgot that a disillusioned Solomon after searching for *all* knowledge, in all its varied realms, cried “Vanity!” and came to this important conclusion:

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Eccl. 12:13, 14).

With the revelation committed to Paul, of course, we enter into more glorious truths and come to a more glorious conclusion: truths about the believer’s position and blessings in Christ and the conclusion that these are what we should appropriate and enjoy. Thus the apostle earnestly prays for the saints:

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him:

“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

“And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power” (Eph. 1:17-10).

The leaders of *Grace Bible College* do not deny all this, but they neutralize it by their emphasis on human intellectualism, and this emphasis has already led them far afield even where the majesty of God and the authority of the Holy Scriptures are concerned. DeWitt’s article in COMMENT is opened with an affront to Almighty God by the exaltation of man to a level only a little lower than God Himself, and the rest of the article continues further with this illegitimate exaltation of man and his intellect.

⁷ *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, P. 29.

⁸ Presumably including that contained in the vile sex novels of our day, which GBC leaders believe should be assigned to college young people to prepare them for what lies ahead.

HOW FAR DO YOU WANT THEM TO GO?

To all those who truly love the Word of God and the message of grace, but continue to defend *Grace Bible College* and its leaders because of personal involvements or because “this is the only school we have,” or in the hope that there will still be a change, we ask: How far do you want them to go? How far will you accompany them down this apostate road to liberalism? Must they deny all the fundamentals of the Christian faith before you say, “This is enough”? Are their teachings the kind you want our younger generation to receive? Is this what you want to support with your finances?

Granted, some of the spiritually stronger students may *survive*, but these teachings surely will not help them, and then, some will *not* survive—maybe *your* children. Do you want our young people to be ruined spiritually by intellectual pride, infatuated with man’s achievements and believing that man is “but little lower than God Most High”? Is it not rather your desire to see them develop strong in grace and grateful for a God-given insight into His truth, His plans and purposes?

Think this through well, for it is of the gravest importance. Think it through prayerfully and in the light of the infallible Word of God, for He will surely hold us responsible for the position we take as to the apostasy that is so rapidly engulfing our Christian institutions of learning.

GOD AND THE GODS

Objective discussion, even debate, over the Word of God is wholesome and profitable. When, in the course of this discussion, therefore, we mention individual names for purposes of identification, we trust that no one will conclude that we hold ill-will toward anyone or intend any personal offense. The same holds in cases where we may state a conclusion with more emphasis than some readers may feel warranted. In such cases please stop and consider *the validity of the statement*, but do not assume that we are showing “an unkind spirit” toward anyone. We are just trying to “tell it like it is.”

We have taken GBC’s Prof. Dale DeWitt to task for statements made in an article in the Sept., 1969, issue of COMMENT, especially in its opening paragraphs.

We have seen that while stating that Christian education must “in the end view man’s intellect, memory, judgment, and insight as the lowly slave of Jesus Christ,” Prof. DeWitt seriously neutralized this statement by inordinate exaltation of man and his intellect in the very same passage.

We believe that Prof. DeWitt’s estimate of man’s greatness and glory can be taken apart piece by piece, and we intend to show how Scripturally bankrupt his notions are here, but what is, in our judgment, his most serious departure from fundamental truth is his effort to use the Word of God in Psa. 8:5 to confirm his opinion of man’s greatness.

Stating that “David in Psalm 8 saw the glory of man,” DeWitt has rendered Verse 5 thus: “Thou hast made him but little lower than God Most High!”

We will presently deal further with DeWitt's rendering *as a translation*, but here it is our purpose to get just one basic point across.

If man is "but little lower than God," should he not fall only *barely* short of God's attributes; His righteousness, holiness, love, power, etc.? Yet here all is *contrast* rather than comparison. And if man is "but little lower than God," does it now follow that *God* is but *little greater* than *man*? And why, then, should we fall down before Him in worship? Horrible thought! Thus it always follows that when men glorify themselves they dishonor and belittle God.

You say that Prof. DeWitt was referring to man newly created, or to redeemed men of a future day? Then we reply that man never was, nor will he ever be "but little lower than God." But read DeWitt's statement again, in its context as quoted above, and there can be no mistaking the fact that he refers to man *now*, whether regenerate or unregenerate.

We could write a pleasant article, giving the impression that the issue here is merely a matter of translation, but make no mistake, this is not a minor matter. The issue is the exaltation of man and his intellect at *Grace Bible College* as in so many of our modern institutions of learning.

In the light of all the Scriptures and of all our observations it would be the greatest impropriety for *any* man *ever* to declare that "man is but little lower than God Most High."

Argue that the person who made this claim *also* pointed out how benighted and wicked man's heart *can be*,⁹ but this does not justify a declaration, and indeed an argument, from the pen of a mortal man, that man is "but little lower than God Most High."

Intellectually,¹⁰ as well as morally and spiritually, man is so far *below* God that there is little comparison; it is almost all *contrast*.

You ask: But what if Psa. 8:5 actually *does* say *in the original* that man is "but little lower than God"? Well, it doesn't, but for now just use your God-given intellect, even with all its limitations, and especially use your "renewed mind," and ask yourself whether it is not a grave error to hold that man is only a little lower than God.

Both Scripturally and logically, we hold that Prof. DeWitt is in serious error in proclaiming man's near-equality with God, and it is our sincere prayer that the dear young people at *Grace Bible College* and the readers of GBC publications may not be led into Satan's snare: the exaltation of man and its inherent dishonor to God,¹¹ who says: "*I am the Lord...My glory will I not give to another*" (Isa. 42:8).

⁹ This inconsistency is characteristic of many neo-evangelical and liberal scholars.

¹⁰ This was the area of DeWitt's article.

¹¹ See here, Isa. 14:14, 15, cf., I Tim. 3:6; Jas. 4:6.

THE BASIC ISSUE

In order that our readers may get a clear picture of the basic issue involved in the present controversy over “God and the gods” (and so over *Grace Bible College*), we quote Psa. 8:5 here (1) as found in the *Authorized Version* and (2) as rendered by GBC’s Prof. Dale DeWitt in the Sept., 1969, issue of the school’s periodical, COMMENT:

THE AUTHORIZED VERSION

“For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels....”

PROF. DEWITT’S RENDERING

“Thou hast made him but little lower that God Most High!...”

From the above it may be seen at a glance that whereas the A.V. states that man has been made “a little [whether as to degree or time] lower than THE ANGELS,” Prof. DeWitt makes the passage declare that he is “*but little* lower than GOD MOST HIGH!”

WHERE WE AGREE

There appears to be no disagreement as to the identity of “him,” in this passage. Prof. DeWitt and this writer agree that *man* is referred to. In the light of Heb. 2:5-9, some have supposed that Psa. 8:5 refers to Christ, but this cannot be. The eternal Son of God could never be classed with “*babes and sucklings*” (Psa. 8:2), and surely the Psalm would not ask, “*What is Christ, that Thou art mindful of Him?*” Clearly, the passage refers to man and the offspring of man, *mankind*.

This, of course, does not alter the fact that Christ is the *key* to Psalm 8. In His love for us He *became* Man, and was also made “lower than the angels” that He might “taste death for every man,” and so “bring many sons to glory” (Heb. 2:9, 10). Thus “*now we see not yet all things put under him [man], BUT WE SEE JESUS...crowned with glory and honor,*” as the One who will bring many to glory.

WHERE WE DISAGREE

It should be carefully noted that in his article in COMMENT, Prof. DeWitt translates, or rather *mistranslates*, Psa. 8:5 to confirm his estimate of the greatness and glory of man. He makes the passage read: “Thou hast made him but little lower than God Most High!”

It is true that Prof. DeWitt can cite some “authorities” for changing “angels” to “God” in this passage, but where he got his authority for adding the words “Most High,” plus an exclamation mark, we have no idea. None of the translations we have here go to this length in translating the word *elohim*.¹²

Why do we bring this all up now? Because GBC’s position has not changed on this matter—and the professor who wrote the article and the president who published it *are still there*.

Prof. DeWitt used his rendering of Psa. 8:5 to gain support for his view of man’s greatness and glory, indeed to prove that “Christian education must, to be true to its name, honor the intellect of man...his reason...his critical powers...his ability to subdue the creation and have dominion over it—so far that he can control the forces of the universe to allow a journey to the moon and return safely.”

It may be appropriate to remark here that in 1970 *Someone* chose *not* to “allow a journey to the moon,” and that *Someone* was *God*, not man. Moreover, the anguish and widespread apprehension caused by the experience should go far to convince us humans that we are *not* “but little lower than God Most High!”

Before we deal with the meaning of the word *elohim*, then, let us understand the issue clearly. Prof. DeWitt has altered Psa. 8:5 to make it teach man’s near-equality with God.

THE MEANING OF ELOHIM

After we took Prof. DeWitt to task for making Psa. 8:5 teach that man is but little lower than God, there were some who wrote or said to us: “But that’s what it says in the original language.” So? What does it say in the original language? It says *elohim*, and *elohim* is *not* God’s name. It is merely *one* title given to Him to denote majesty, plural majesty. More than 200 times in the Old Testament Scriptures, this title is also given to the false gods of the heathen. The opening definition in *Schaff-Herzogg*, under *elohim*, reads: “The most common designation for God in the Old Testament, applied both to the heathen gods and to the one true God, whose proper name is Jehovah.” Sometimes it is also used for *all* angels.

Now we know from Scripture that the heathen did not—and do not—merely worship objects of wood and silver and gold. Behind these objects are evil spirits, the principalities in the heavenlies who, by God’s permission, still influence “the course of this world.” (See Deut. 32:16, 17; I Cor. 10:20; Eph. 2:2; 6:12.)

¹² In a letter dated Feb. 9, 1970, Prof. DeWitt has acknowledged that he merely *added* the words “Most High” because God *is* most high. However, it must be observed that the addition of these words *in the quotation of this passage* makes it *appear* more certain that *God is* referred to. Thus these words were in effect added to substantiate an erroneous translation. DeWitt had no authority to add to the Word of God in this way.

Therefore, simply on the basis of common sense, knowing what the Bible as a whole says about God and angels and men, we would have to conclude that the A.V. translators were correct in rendering *elohim* “angels” in Psa. 8:5.

But we have stronger proof than this.

Paul, in Heb. 2:7, did not quote Psa. 8:5 in a casual or incidental way. In the preceding context (Vers. 5, 6) he compares *the angels* with *man*, and it is to confirm his argument that he quotes Psa. 8:4-6, declaring that man has been made “lower than *the angels*.” Thus God *inspired* Paul to write “angels,” angellous. Does this not prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that the *Authorized* rendering of Psa. 8:5 is correct, and DeWitt’s incorrect? Surely Paul would not have used an Old Testament passage which says that man is *but little lower* than *God* to prove that man is lower than *the angels*, for the angels themselves are *far below* God in every way. But he *would* quote Psa. 8:5 as in A. V. to prove that man¹³ is “lower than the angels.”

It should be observed here that where the *English* rendering of Heb. 2:7 is concerned there can be no question. The use of the word “angels” here has been called a “translation,” but it is not a translation; it is taken straight from the Greek *angellos*, angel, and could not possibly be rendered any other way. This is significant, for it means that Paul, who knew Hebrew and the Hebrew Scriptures well, declared that the word *elohim* in Psa. 8:5 refers to *the angels*, and not to God, and indicated this by using a word which can only be rendered “Angels.”

Heb. 2:7 is not the only passage where the Apostle Paul indicates that the gods whom the heathen worshipped were (fallen) angels. We have a parallel situation in Psa. 97:7 and Heb. 1:6. In the former passage, God says: “*Worship Him all ye gods,*” and in the latter Paul renders this: “*And let all the angels of God worship Him.*” There is still more to prove the validity of the above, which we will discuss later, when we deal with Psa. 82.

ARE WE GROWING CALLOUSED?

It is a testimony to the condition of the Church that a professor at a *Bible* college can get up and declare that man is “but little lower than God Most High,” and almost nobody is shocked. We must confess that this statement made us shudder. Like one correspondent, we trembled as we read.

Why did we tremble? Because we immediately recalled two important passages of Scripture on the subject. We recalled Isaiah 14, where in prophetic prediction God says to Satan:

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!” (Ver. 12).

¹³ Redeemed men, of course, have a heavenly *position* and *prospect* in Christ, but in their present experience even they are for the present “lower than the angels.”

We recalled the five “I wills” that had so aroused God’s righteous anger:

“For thou hast said in thine heart, I WILL ascend into heaven. I WILL exalt my throne above the stars of God: I WILL sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

“I WILL ascend above the heights of the clouds; I WILL BE LIKE THE MOST HIGH” (Vers. 13, 14).

And we recalled God’s response to Satan’s proud ambition to be “like the most High”:

“YET THOU SHALT BE BROUGHT DOWN TO HELL....” (Ver. 15).

We also recalled the passage in II Thes. 2, about the “*man of sin,*” the “*son of perdition*”:

“Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (Ver. 4).

And we recalled what God says about his end:

“...whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming” (Ver. 8).

Does some reader object that Satan aspired to be “*like God,*” and that the man of sin will actually pose in the temple “*as God*”? We reply that this is not a great step from declaring *and arguing* that man is “*but little lower than God Most High.*”

This writer cannot bring himself to believe that Prof. DeWitt actually feels himself or his fellowmen to be “*but little lower than God Most High.*” We believe that DeWitt said and wrote this during a period when he was carried away with the “*greatness*” of man. But—and this is serious—*this is what they have been teaching,* and what *some* are believing, including some GBC students. As incomprehensible as this attitude is to us, we have nevertheless heard from some who, for whatever reasons, have agreed with DeWitt that man is “*but little lower than God Most High.*”

This is why, for the present, we must give their arguments further consideration.

IS MAN “KING OF THE EARTH”?

In discussing the “*greatness*” and “*glory*” of man, DeWitt’s article states: “Man is, in Eric Sauer’s language, ‘The King of the Earth,’” and to support this contention he cites Gen. 1:28, where we are told that God instructed Adam and Eve “to subdue the creation and have dominion over it.” DeWitt declares that we should honor man’s present “*ability*” to accomplish this.

To be “King of the earth,” or “King on earth,” man would not, of course, need to be nearly as great as God. To rule over this small grain of sand in God’s vast universe, he would doubtless still be far, far lower than God. But we do not believe that man is even king of earth. The Bible teaches that he is rather the pathetic victim¹⁴ of a curse which he himself has brought upon this world. True, in his aspirations and endeavors we still see something of “the image and glory of God” in which he was created, but these aspirations and endeavors are almost always perverted, and always end in failure.

The Scripture passage which DeWitt cites to support his statement that man is “King of the Earth,” states:

“...Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”

But these words were spoken *before*, not after, the fall of man. Before the fall sinless man was indeed “King of the earth,” but since that time he has been the victim of the curse pronounced upon it—and upon *him*.

Man does not *now* “have dominion over the fish of the sea.” The best he can do is to *catch* a few! And as to “the fowl of the air,” the birds soar above and ignore him, and if he approaches too close to them they fly *away!* And as to “every living thing that moveth upon the earth,”¹⁵ man’s “dominion” over the vast majority of these consists of stalking them stealthily with shotgun or rifle to kill them, or cooping them up in cages in zoos so that those interested may observe them without getting hurt!

True, after the Flood, when God gave man permission to eat meat, He said: “*And the fear of you, and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth...*,” and this fear of man has been upon the animal creation ever since. But is it not also true that the fear and dread of *them* is likewise upon *us*, with the exception of those animals which have been specifically tamed and trained? Only the very few thus tamed and trained can man even call to his side. Rather the hunter must be careful lest that wild animal or serpent sees him first and attacks. Man, king of the animal creation? *Some king!*

And what shall we say of the vegetable creation?

¹⁴ Except in the case of redeemed believers.

¹⁵ Evidently referring mainly to quadrupeds and reptiles (See Ver. 26).

Man wages a constant battle to keep even part of the world's vegetation under control. He must fight on relentlessly to keep weeds from choking his crops, insects from infecting them, birds and animals from feeding on them, and the weather from destroying them altogether. In the vast uninhabited areas of the world the vegetation grows wild under the curse, with man unable to do anything about it.¹⁶ Man has never been able to subdue the vegetable creation. King of the earth? *Some king!*

As to the rest of the earth and its atmosphere, how often we have seen man all but helpless—sometimes totally helpless—in the face of tornadoes, cyclones, hurricanes, floods, droughts, earthquakes and other natural disasters! Rather than having subdued the elements, he is constantly distraught by their fitful ways. King of the earth? *Some king!*

Man does not even have dominion over *himself*. He keeps forever yielding to those sinful passions and committing those sinful deeds which, in the end, kill him. Only by the grace of God can he find deliverance, and only after acknowledging his own utter helplessness and depravity.

True, some men have gained dominion over large segments of their fellowmen, but this has generally been accomplished by war and bloodshed, and such conquests have always been *temporary* to say the least. Nebuchadnezzar ruled over the great Babylonian empire, but in his pride he was stricken with a mental disorder so severe that “*he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds claws*” (Dan. 4:33). God in His grace finally restored Nebuchadnezzar personally, but it was not long before his kingdom fell to the Medes and Persians. A whole long line of other great world rulers could be listed, whose dominion likewise ended in disgrace: Belshazzar, Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great, Napoleon Bonaparte—and in later years: Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler and others. Indeed, the rise and fall of empires have but represented the rise and fall of their ruler—all ending in failure. Man, king of the earth? *Some King!*

WHO IS KING OF THE EARTH?

But who *is* king of the earth? Who, under God, controls it?

The answer to this question is not hard to find as we search the Scriptures with open heart and mind.

¹⁶ It is an interesting fact that, at least from distances, even this cursed earth is more beautiful when man leaves it alone! Fallen man corrupts everything he touches.

From Dan. 4:17 and many other passages of Scripture it is evident that “God Most High” *overrules* (though He does not *rule directly*) in all that transpires here on earth. Moreover, He does this, for the present at least, in the Person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Of Him we read in Eph. 1:20-22:

“[God] set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places,

“FAR ABOVE all principality, and power, and might, and dominion....

“And hath put all things under his feet....”

And in Col. 2:10 our Lord is called:

“...the head of all principality and power.”

As we have said, however, our Lord does not yet rule *directly*. In the sovereign wisdom of God, this prerogative has for the present time been left in the hands of Satan, to whom man abdicated in the Garden of Eden. This explains the malice, the intrigue, the confusion that now prevails on earth, and gives the Christian believer assurance that this condition is only temporary.

But Satan *is* this world’s ruler now, controlling “the course of this world,” behind the scenes (Eph. 2:2). In Luke 4:6, 7 we find Satan showing our Lord “all the kingdoms of the world,” and challenging Him:

“All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

“If Thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be Thine.”

The Lord did not, of course, bow before Satan, but neither did He contradict Satan’s claim that the rulership of the world had been committed to him.

Thrice, while on earth, our Lord called Satan “the prince [Lit., ruler] of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), to be “cast out” at Calvary only in the sense that he would there be stripped of his *rights*. (See Col. 2:15).

We know that in early Acts the Apostle Peter offered the return of the risen Christ and His reign (2:29, 30; 3:19-21), but this offer was refused. The world, represented by Israel, followed Satan, the deceiver, rather than Christ, and Satan remained for the present, “*the prince of this world,*” indeed, “*the prince of the power [authority, government] of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience*” (Eph. 2:2).

We must not forget, however, that Satan is *a usurper*, allowed by God to rule temporarily only because unregenerate man worships him and eagerly follows his ways. He, the deceiver, the usurper, is “*the god of this age*” (II Cor. 4:4), “*blinding the minds of them that believe not.*” Therefore we, believers in Christ, are instructed to “*stand against*” him and “*the rulers of the darkness of this age*” (Eph. 6:11, 12), as faithful ambassadors and soldiers of the rightful King.

WILL MAN EVER BE KING OF THE EARTH?

Yes, but “not yet.”

In Hebrews 2:5 the Apostle Paul distinctly declares:

“For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.”

Does this not indicate that the *subject* of Psalm 8 is *man*, though indeed the *secret* of the Psalm, the *key* to its fulfillment, is *Christ*.

As David acknowledges the infinity glory of God, he is further inspired to declare in Verse 2 that God has “ordained strength” (i.e., authority) “*out of the mouths of babes and sucklings*” (i.e., those who know nothing about government). Why should He choose these for so high a place of authority? The answer is found in the same verse: “*because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.*”

But who are these “babes and sucklings” whom God will place in authority to silence Satan and his hosts? “Surely,” exclaims the Psalmist, “You are not considering *man!*”

“When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained;

“What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that Thou visitest [Gr., to look over, to consider] him? (Psa. 8:3, 4).

Ah, but the next verses make it crystal clear that God *does* have a race of *men* in His plan for just this honor:

“For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

“Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet” (Vers. 5, 6).

FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS

Prof. DeWitt has made the phrase “a little lower than God Most High!” We have already demonstrated from Scripture the fallacy of this rendering. The Scriptures would not and *do not* say that man is “but little lower than God.”

But DeWitt failed to take note of a much-discussed fact regarding the word “little” [Heb. *m'ghat*]. Our friend Robert L. Farrier, Sr., has sent us a considerable list of Scripture passages where this word could only mean “*little while*.” In fact, in four cases *m'ghat*, standing by itself, is rendered “*little while*” in the A. V.

In the case of Psalm 8:5 the weight of evidence certainly favors this rendering. In the light of the immediate context it would appear that this verse refers to man, not at his creation, but in his present condition. Certainly DeWitt concurs in this, for he has declared that man *is* “but little lower than God Most High,” and that we should recognize his glory.

But is man only “a *little* lower than the *angels*”? No, he is *far* below even them. Again and again in Scripture we see human beings, even men of God, falling prostrate before angels.¹⁷ Thus it becomes evident that the word *m'ghat*, in Psa. 8:5, does not refer to *distance* but to *time*: “Thou has made him for a little,” or “for a little while, lower than the angels.”

To this writer, to say that man is “but little lower than God Most High,” is preposterous, not to say blasphemous. But to say that man has been made “for a little while lower than the angels,” makes sense and agrees with both the immediate context and with the scriptures as a whole.

SHALL WE “LEAVE THE OUTCOME WITH THE LORD”?

GBC, its board of directors, the members of its faculty, many of its students, and most of those somehow related to the school would doubtless like us to “leave this matter with the Lord.” Many wish that we would only “hush up.” But would this be right and honoring to God? Or would it be the course of unbelief and irresponsibility?

Think this through: When we preach the gospel we do not merely deliver one message and then “leave the outcome with the Lord.” We know that it takes time before some are convicted. They must often be told again and again, and in various ways, what the eternal issues are, before they are sufficiently convicted by the Holy Spirit to turn to Christ. It is no different where departure from the truth is concerned. Many sincere believers need to be warned clearly and repeatedly lest they follow erring leaders down wrong paths and thus forfeit for themselves the blessing of God. When the Asian believers were in peril from false teachers, the Apostle Paul did not merely warn them once and then “leave the outcome with the Lord.” Rather, reminding the Ephesian elders of false teachings that would invade the flock, he said:

¹⁷ This being so, how grievous a departure from God’s Word to declare that man is “but little lower than God Most High!”

“Therefore watch, and remember, that BY THE SPACE OF THREE YEARS I CEASED NOT TO WARN EVERY ONE NIGHT AND DAY WITH TEARS” (Acts 20:31).

MAN’S ONE HOPE—CHRIST

How, then, will man attain to the rulership of this world? Hebrews 2 explains—so beautifully—as it presents Christ as the whole, satisfying answer to the problem of man’s present subjection to Satan. Hear the Apostle’s Spirit—inspired words:

“For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak” (Ver. 5).

But who are the “we”? Is not the Apostle addressing *Hebrew* believers? Yes, but he addresses them now as “partakers of the *heavenly* calling,” and urges them throughout to appropriate the heavenly position and the spiritual blessings (the better things) that are now theirs in Christ.

True, those associated with the kingdom gospel will reign with Christ on earth, but members of Christ’s Body will reign with Him *over* the earth, much as the heavenly principalities and powers do now. (See I Cor. 6:2; II Tim. 2:12; 4:18).

For the present, while God’s King remains a royal Exile, the earthly establishment of the kingdom is held in abeyance. The kingdom is now vested in the Person of Christ, its exiled, though rightful Ruler. Meanwhile we, the members of the Body, are “*translated into* the kingdom of His [God’s] dear Son” (Col. 1:13) and represent Him here on earth as *ambassadors* on enemy territory. But when Christ “appears,” “*then shall we also appear with Him in glory*” (Col. 3:4), and those who have “suffered” for Him shall “reign with Him” (II Tim. 2:12).

Very clearly, this last has not yet taken place, though some may exalt man and call him “The King of the Earth,” “but little lower than God Most High!”

But let us continue with God’s Word on the subject in Heb. 2:5-8:

“For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

“But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?

“Thou madest him a little [while] lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands:

“Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. BUT NOW WE SEE NOT YET ALL THINGS PUT UNDER HIM.”

How true! God's plan to govern this world (if not all creation) by man is clear, "but *now* we see not yet all things put under him." Instead we see the world filled with strife and misery and woe, with prisons and hospitals and mental institutions. Man is *now* anything *but* king.

Ah, but go on:

"BUT WE SEE JESUS..." (Ver. 9)

Where and how do we see Him? We see Him in heaven, "*crowned with glory and honor,*" and more: We see Him thus crowned that He might now be recognized as the One who went to Calvary "*that He by grace of God should taste death for every man.*" He became man, Himself "*made a little [while] lower than the angels for the suffering of death,*" that, as "*the captain of their salvation*" He might "*bring many sons to glory*" (Vers. 9, 10).

How Wonderful! And how much more satisfying than to view man in his present wretched state as "King of the Earth," "but little lower than God Most High!"

PSALM EIGHTY-TWO

We must delay no longer to fulfill our promise to deal with Psalm 82.

To whom does the Psalmist refer when he says: "I have said, Ye are gods"? So that we may answer this question clearly we quote here the entire eighty-second Psalm. *Please read it thoughtfully.*

"God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; He judgeth among the gods.

"How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.

"Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.

"Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.

"They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.

"I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.

"But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the¹⁸ princes.

"Arise, O God, judge the earth: for Thou shalt inherit all nations."

¹⁸ I.e., *their*.

Our Lord divided the angelic hosts into *two* categories: the “*holy angels*,” and “*the devil and his angels*” (Matt. 25:31, 41). Over these God has placed *two* princes, *Michael and Satan*. This is clear from Rev. 12:7, where we read of “*Michael and his angels*” and “*the dragon and his angels*,” the “dragon” referring to “*that old serpent, called the devil and Satan*” (Ver. 9).

Somewhat like the political arrangement here in the United States, not only does each of these two parties have its own head, *but* one of the two has been appointed head over *all* the angelic hosts, just as either a Democrat or a Republican becomes president over *all* Americans at each presidential election, except that the angelic rulers have been appointed by God rather than elected. Indeed, Satan as the “Son of the Morning” was appointed the chief angelic prince, even before he drew away followers in his rebellion.

That Satan, after his fall, still retained his position as head over all the angels, including even Michael the Archangel, is clear from Jude 9, where we are told that a dispute over Moses’ body, Michael did not dare to bring against him “a railing accusation” but, with due respect for God-given authority, said: “*The Lord rebuke thee.*”

That the angelic hosts were appointed by God to rule, behind the scenes, over the kingdoms of this world, is evident from the fact that our Lord thrice called Satan “the prince of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). Thus when the devil boasted to Christ that “all the kingdoms of the world” had been “delivered” to him, the Lord did *not* dispute his claim (Luke 4:5, 6). It is only as we too recognize the legitimacy of this claim that we can understand Michael’s deference to Satan in the dispute about Moses’ body.

In Chapter 10 of Daniel’s prophecy we learn something of these unseen rulers who have so long influenced the governments of this world. Evidently a “cold war” is being waged between them as between Michael and Satan in the case referred to above. The “prince of the kingdom of Persia” withstands Gabriel, and Michael, Israel’s prince, comes to Gabriel’s aid (Dan. 10:12, 13). Before it is over “the prince of Grecia” gets into the fray (Ver. 20). Ezek. 28:12-19 refers also to “the king of Tyrus,” but of all these angelic princes Gabriel and Michael alone are faithful to God (Dan. 10:21).

At Calvary Satan, “the prince of this world,” was “judged” and “cast out” as far as his *rights* were concerned (John 12:31; 16:11), and our Lord was raised from the dead and exalted “*far above all*” (Eph. 1:20-22).

Col. 2:15 sheds wonderful light on this. The cross was Satan’s masterpiece of iniquity, yet by it he stripped *himself and his hosts* of all right to further occupy their heavenly position. If the resurrection of our Lord was a shocking set-back to Satan and his plans, think how appalling to him must have been Paul’s glorious message, proclaiming the cross as the very secret of God’s “eternal purpose!” Thus in the devil’s long history of deception, the greatest, grimmest joke of all was that which he played upon himself when he deceived himself into supposing that the crucifixion of Christ would spell our Lord’s defeat. Actually it spelled *his own* defeat and our Lord’s glorious victory, for as Col. 2:15 declares with regard to our Lord’s contest with the host of evil: “*He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them IN IT!*”

Yet in the providence of God, Satan and his hosts are, for the present, permitted to retain their exalted position. They still, by His sufferance, exert their influence over the governments of this world because Satan is “the god of this age” and “hath blinded the minds of them that believe not” (II Cor. 4:4).

In this capacity Satan and his angels also seek to confuse and divide the members of Christ’s Body, whose rightful position is now “in the heavenlies in Christ” (Eph. 1:3; 2:4-6). They seek to distract them from prayer and the Word and godly living; to make them “dull of hearing” and “slow of heart to believe,” so that they will not respond as God calls them “upward” to their blood-bought place at His right hand.

We believers are therefore challenged to “take the whole armor of God,” including “the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God,” and to wage war against this usurper and his wicked hosts so as to *occupy* our rightful position and *appropriate* its blessings experientially. (See Eph. 6:10-20).

Alas, too few believers are sufficiently aware of Satan’s objective to enter into conflict with him. As he is “transformed into an angel of light” they fail to recognize him. “Ignorant of his devices” and his “wiles,” they readily “depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons” (See II Cor. 11:14; 2:11; Eph. 6:11; I Tim. 4:1). The Spirit has “*spoken expressly*” that this *would* take place, yet when it strikes their own institutions and affects their relationships they are too spiritually insensitive to recognize it.

BACK TO PSALM EIGHTY-TWO

In the light of all this evidence from Scripture, we believe that the “gods” (*elohim*) of Psa. 82:6, like the *elohim* of Psa. 8:5, are angels. Why insist that the Psalm refers to the judges of Israel, as some have done?

“I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.

**“BUT YE SHALL DIE LIKE MEN, and fall like one of the [i.e., their] princes”
(Psa. 82:6, 7).**

Why would God say: “Ye shall die like men” if they *were* men? Evidently the persons addressed are fallen angels who shall die *like men*.

This is not the only place in Scripture where we have God judging “among the gods,” the [created] children of the most High.”

In Job 1:6-8 we are told that *“the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.”* And even the subject involved here is basically the same as in Psa. 82: Satan’s interest in men on earth.¹⁹

Again, in connection with the fall of Ahab, the prophet Micaiah said:

“I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left” (I Kings 22:19).

And it is most important to note that one member of these heavenly hosts proposed: *“I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his [Ahab’s] prophets,”* and that God bade him go and do this (Ver. 22).

Further, in I Chron. 21:1, we read that *“Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel,”* influencing even this godly king to the detriment of the nation.

Thus it is not strange that in Psa. 82 we find God *“judging among the gods”* and reproving them for the corruption in their government over the world. That this government is invisible and unrecognized by men is seen in Ver. 5, where the Psalmist says:

“They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.”

But soon enough the issue will be resolved. The hosts of darkness will be cast down from their high position. Rev. 12:7-9 describes the scene:

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

“And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

“And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

This is, of course, what will bring about the horrors of the “great tribulation” (Matt. 24:21; cf. Dan. 12:1) toward which the world is even now headed. Angered at losing the power he has so fearfully abused, and *“knowing that he hath but a short time,”* the adversary will vent his *“great wrath”* upon those he has himself deceived.

¹⁹ In this scene Satan accuses Job of serving God for gain, and in Rev. 12:10 he is called *“the accuser of the brethren...which accused them before our God day and night.”* From all the Scriptures involved it appears evident that Satan uses the intelligence gathered by his subordinates to accuse the saints before God.

At the close of the “great tribulation,” when our Lord returns to earth, He will judge two companies of rulers, the then-deposed “world-rulers” of the heavenlies, and the wicked rulers on earth at the time. Isaiah predicted this:

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth” (Isa. 24:21).

Then will be fulfilled the closing verse of Psa. 82:

“Arise, O God, judge the earth: for Thou shalt inherit all nations.”

Little wonder that at the casting down of Satan a loud voice is heard from heaven:

“NOW IS COME SALVATION, AND STRENGTH, AND THE KINGDOM OF OUR GOD, AND THE POWER OF HIS CHRIST!” (Rev. 12:10).

In that day, who would possibly dare to say that man, or even the highest archangel, is “but little lower than God Most High”?

Pember has stated the truth of the matter so well that in closing we quote two passages on the subject from his *Earth’s Earliest Ages*. Referring to Satan’s consignment to the abyss, Pember says:

“Then will he at length both feel and exhibit in his own person to the whole universe the ineffable distance between the loftiest, wisest and fairest of created beings and the great and ever blessed Creator, Who alone is worthy to receive glory and honor and power” (P. 63).

“Let us not...fail to learn one lesson from the wondrous things we have been contemplating. Rebellion is ruin, no matter how noble, or wise, or fair, its leader may be. For even Lucifer, the bright son of the morning, the loftiest of the angels of God, has fallen low from his high estate, and ere long, shorn of all his wisdom, and might, and beauty, will be plunged into the perpetual night of the abyss. There is but one attitude natural or possible for a created being, and that is entire submission and unreserved obedience to the will of Him Who created and sustains him” (P. 77).

God help us to take this lesson to heart *“lest, being lifted up with pride, we fall into the condemnation of the devil”* (I Tim. 3:6).