

THEATER OF GRACE

WE ARE BEING WATCHED FROM AFAR

Moment by moment, day by day, year by year, every individual human life and all of human history as a whole has been, and is, under focused observation by the inhabited universe. Heavenly populations of unfallen, non-human beings are literally watching us from afar. While our eyes cannot penetrate their realm, their vision can and does penetrate our. They are not watching human affairs for entertainment, but as observing spiritual scientists, so to speak, who are eager to witness the outworking of the full ramifications of God's grace upon human hearts. They long to see us come to the place where we love like God loves, for only then are they assured that we are safe to inhabit the eternal kingdom of self-giving love they call home. As they watch, God is working out in us His eternal purpose to create a world that completely free of all evil and suffering. The church is His chosen agency for the accomplishment of this grand objective.

1 Corinthians 4:9, NIV—We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men.

Isaiah 1:2—Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me."

Revelation 12:12—Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them!

Daniel 4:17—This decision [the send King Nebuchadnezzar the graze insane in a field for seven years] is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones.

Ephesians 3:10-11, NIV—10 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, 11 according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Isaiah 11:9—They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Ephesians 1:3-10—3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in

love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, 9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

NOTE: Verse 10, The Amplified Bible— [He planned] for the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages to unify all things and head them up and consummate them in Christ, [both] things in heaven and things on the earth.

Ephesians 2:7-10— 4 God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Amazing Grace, p. 235— The grace of Christ must mold our entire being, and its triumph will not be complete until the heavenly universe shall witness habitual tenderness of feeling, Christ-like love and holy deeds in the department of the children of God.

Special Testimonies To Battle Creek Church, pp. 18-19—The church of Christ, enfeebled, defective as she may appear, is the one object on earth upon which He bestows, in a special sense, His love and His regard. The church is the theater of His grace, in which He delights to effect transformations so wonderful that the angels look upon them with astonishment and joy. Heaven is full of rejoicing when the members of the human family are seen to be full of compassion for one another, loving one another as Christ has loved them.

Acts of the Apostles, p. 9—From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to "the principalities and powers in heavenly places," the final and full display of the love of God.

"Behold Your God"—Isaiah 40:9