

**From the Realms of Glory:
Contours of the Angelic World**

**by
Abraham Kuyper**

Translator and Editor: Dr. Jan H. Boer

Co-Editor: Frances A. Boer-Prins

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The original contains chapters on good angels and on fallen angels. These have been separated into two shorter volumes—one on the good and one on the fallen. This volume is about the good angels; the other and shorter one, about satan and his cohorts of devils and demons, under the title:

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Dedication

This translation is dedicated to two persons

(1)

Abraham Kuyper, the original author
A man who never hesitated to challenge
the status quo
Who liberated the Dutch peasants
From their liberal oppressors
In the Name of Christ
A century after his death he continues
To inspire and model Christian social engagement
in many countries around the globe

(2)

Frances Ann Prins-Boer, Co-editor
Several of my books have been dedicated to her
For she has always been ready to share her talents,
Time and our common resources
The perfect encourager and administrator
Without her, none of these publications
Would have seen the light of day.

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Preliminary Questions

You're facing a unique, challenging and interesting book about angels. Here are some questions you may never even have thought about, let alone ask. Try to form an answer *before* reading this book and its companion volume and then answer the questions again *after* reading it all and see how you have grown or changed in your perceptions. Have fun!

1. What happens to TIME at the End of Days?
2. Who or what is the Angel of the Lord?
3. Who are the Sons of God in Genesis 6?
4. Are angels created in God's image like us humans?
5. Who is closer to God: angels or humans?
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17. Have you ever met satan or one of his henchmen or experienced one? Describe the experience.
18. If your answers to numbers 15 and 16 are negative, why do you think that is so?

Translator's Chat

Like many of Kuyper's books, this is a collection of weekly essays Kuyper most likely wrote on Sunday mornings for publication in one of his papers in lieu of attending church. I refer you to other items on this same website page that talk about his writing life and style, especially to the Introduction to my translation of Kuyper's *The Ascent of the Son--The Descent of the Spirit* [XX \(INSERT ITS URL HERE\)](#) and on this same website page, to get it directly from the horse's mouth, even more especially the article "The history and nature of Kuyper's Meditations" [XX \(INSERT ITS URL HERE\)](#) .

The shape of the original Dutch-language version of this book is a collection of thirty-six chapters on angels, both good and fallen, most chapters having seven to eight pages. I have divided this book into two volumes, this one dealing with the good angels; the other, with satan¹ and his cohort of fallen angels. So, this volume on the good angels translates the original chapters 1-25 and 33-35 into my chapters 1-28, while the original chapters 26-32 and 36 make up the 8 chapters of the companion volume.

As to titles, I have borrowed a leaf from Billy Graham, who titled his memoirs with a famous line of a famous song: "Just as I am."² I think you will recognize the songs from which I borrow. This book is entitled *From the Realms of Glory: Contours of the Angelic World*, while the other goes by *For Still Our Ancient Foe: Contours of Satan's World*.

Among Kuyper's admirers are some who criticize him for his attitude towards women. I had hoped to use inclusive language in this translation by, among others, the use of feminine pronouns for angels. However, as I proceeded, I discovered that the use of feminine pronouns for angels in our current cultural situation would skew this book into the direction of either feminism or lesbianism. Hence, I stuck

¹ Throughout this book I do not "upper-case" or capitalize the word "satan," except where grammatical demands intervene, for he simply does not deserve this honour. All references to God, including Jesus, on the other hand, are "upper-cased" or capitalized. I reject the democratization process that has flattened references to the Divine by "lower-casing" them.

² I may well be the first Reformational writer to borrow approvingly from Graham. He has also been given coverage on the GUEST ARTICLES page in a lengthy number of bibliographical references covering his death and his life in his capacity as a "Fellow Traveler," probably also a "oncer " in the body of Reformational literature.

to the masculine references for angels. Sorry, sisters. If it now is skewed in the direction of masculinity, well, that is the spirit in which it was originally written; it was the spirit of the day and Kuyper did not free himself from it in this respect. I could not think of an alternative acceptable to all. In compensation, I am quite sure most women readers might not have appreciated my referring to fallen angels, satan and his henchmen—or should it be henchwomen?—in the feminine. At least, I have never heard a feminist demand such a reference. Any explanation, anyone? It must of course be admitted that in the Bible pronouns referring to all angels, good and bad, are in the masculine, but that can be explained as a cultural preference for men that is common to almost all cultures and writings in the past as well as the present, including my own. Apart from those pronouns, the Bible nowhere stipulates angelic gender, though I have not read of any female angelic appearances; they all appear as males.

You, reader, will need to muster all your intellectual prowess to follow the sometimes circuitous route that Kuyper follows to make his points. That is not always easy. As a translator I had to struggle hard and go through several edits to make it all as clear as possible, hopefully more than mud! Imagine sentences so long that one became ten in the translation! I deeply admire and appreciate Frances Anne, my wife, for her involvement, patience and encouragement in this process.

Though I have tried to update the language and style somewhat, I confess that it still bears the mark of a century-old treatment of what has become an arcane subject for the current generations alive. References to foreign authors, publications and movements long forgotten are replete. I have tried to identify many in footnotes, but some required more time and effort to dig up than I had available.

The Relevance of Kuyper

Kuyper has written tome upon tome and many of them have been translated, some decades ago, others more recently. Most of these translations have been published in print, but a few are published as ebooks as on this KUYPERIANA page as well as on < www.lulu.com >, and on Christian Classics Ethereal Library of Calvin University-- < www.ethereallibrary.com >. This ebook will hopefully become available at all three places.

It is clear that the community of in-print translators centred in Grand Rapids MI, and the publisher in Bellingham WA, all consider these century-old books worthy of translation and republishing. Time and again writers and readers affirm that these old books—and articles—are relevant even today. Kuyper was a prophet; he understood the currents of his own time and foresaw their relevance and effect far ahead of his day. Today, this very day, I received an article about Kuyper from a scholar / author in which he affirms the relevance of Kuyper's insights for our own day, an affirmation that is found in almost all the republications and contemporary discussions about them. Dr. Clinton Stockwell of the Chicago Metropolitan Center wrote, "Although Kuyper wrote a full century ago, his convictions, analyses, and solutions...are relevant today."³ I come across many such comments repeatedly. Again, I refer you to the KUYPERIANA page. Evangelicals and many African scholars who have discovered Kuyper, repeatedly testify to the liberation they experienced from their narrow theological confines inherited from many missionaries and most of their organizations.⁴

I confess to a long-standing hesitation about this translation. While many of Kuyper's publications are quoted left and right, I have hardly ever seen a reference to this book.⁵ It does not seem to have captivated other writers or the reading public. I believe this to be due to the fact that most Reformational or Kuyperian writers are more interested in social, cultural, political, economic, scientific and other subjects than more spiritual ones like this one. In addition, though Reformational scholars heavily criticize the Enlightenment, they may be more influenced by that movement than they are aware, possibly another reason for the scarcity of writings among them on a subject so prominent in Scripture.

However, if you check out the subject of angels on the GUEST ARTICLES page of this website, you will find a number of non-Reformational publications on the

³ Clinton Stockwell, "Abraham Kuyper and welfare reform: A Reformed political perspective." *Pro Rege* of Dordt University, September 1998.

⁴ For a more detailed discussion go to Jan H. Boer, *Christians and Muslims: Parameters for living together*. Vol. 8-2 in the series *Studies in Christian-Muslim Relations*. Belleville ON: Essence Publishing, 2009 AND Bukuru, Plateau State, Nigeria: ACTS, pp. 54ff. See also the ISLAMICA page on this website.

⁵ Coincidentally (?) enough, the very week I wrote this sentence I came across several references to Kuyper's book in A. De Bondt, *De Satan*. Baarn, the Netherlands: Bosch & Keuning, n.d., but probably around 1945 or 1946. The latest endnote in De Bondt's book is dated 1945. Since then, I have been alerted to Rob van Houwelingen's *Hemelse reisbegeleiding*, a recent Dutch book that refers to Kuyper's but does not quote or summarize from him. It is presented as a partial Dutch preview under "Angels" on the GUEST ARTICLES page of this website.

subject and quite a number more on the internet. So, if Kuyperian writers have shown no interest, others have. This book is being translated partially for their benefit, while it also seeks to encourage Kuyperians to develop an interest. I see signs that Kuyperians are beginning to regret their one-sided interest in Kuyper and are turning to his “spiritual” side as well.

One feature of this book I appreciate is Kuyper’s abundant use of the *phenomena of Scripture*, an approach that safeguards him from the fundamentalist cum evangelical emphasis on “proof texting.” The term has different meanings in Biblical studies, but as I use it, it refers to extracting secondary meanings from a passage that concentrates on another more central point, but that is used to support another issue. If you want to know the difference between “proof texting” and using the phenomena, well, just read your way through these two “angel books” and you will get the drift of this comment. I recently read a popular book by Sally Gary-- *Affirming: A Memoir of Faith, Sexuality, and Staying in the Church*,⁶ -- in which she traces her very detailed journey from an extreme fundamentalist proof-texting reading of Scripture to a more wholistic one. It gives a more complete picture of the distinction than I can offer you in this chat.

One feature that may require a bit of patience from Protestant readers is that in the first few chapters Kuyper is pre-occupied with Roman Catholic traditional views on angels, but that’s the historian in him that always forces itself to the Kuyperian surface. These chapters *do* contain issues and insights that I, the translator, have found interesting. But don’t worry, after a few chapters, the Catholic tradition recedes to the background and various versions of “modernism” take centre stage as the unorthodox and even anti-God culprits.

Continuing on the above matter, sometimes it seems Kuyper is flogging a horse to *near*-death, which is different from flogging a dead horse. That can sometimes lead to impatience on the part of the reader—and the translator!—, but then you stumble across precious nuggets in the midst of that flogging so that you end up grateful for having read the passage—and for someone for having translated it. So, read on and look for those nuggets. I will not define or describe them, for my precious nugget could be your worthless stone, but when you recognize one, enjoy, ponder and appreciate.

⁶ Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 2021.

In some ways Kuyper represents a classic traditional scholastic Reformed tradition that sees everything, literally everything as done by God. A couple of extreme examples: "...satan does nothing without God doing it through him." Or: "The head of the fallen angels appears as satan already in the Garden and it is he who was appointed by God to tempt the humans to make a decision against God's will."⁷

Some Calvinistic churches and their members still adhere to this rather rigid logic, but I confess to hesitancy with respect to such absolute claims. This is just one but by no means only example of how even Father Abraham needs to be read critically. So, give your critical instinct free rein by weighing all you read and come out the wiser.

The above paragraph is a demonstration of Kuyper's struggle between speculation and logic on the one hand and faithful reading of Scripture on the other, especially not going beyond Scripture where it is silent. These two books are full of warnings against speculation and encouraged to stay within the bounds of Scripture. In this context, he makes generous use of Scripture, including its so-called "phenomena." At the same time, the book or books are replete with terminology like "of course," "naturally," "it follows," all terms tasting of logic that not infrequently smell of speculation. The following is an example:

It is in the nature of things that the one through whom you are created is closer to you in your consciousness than the one out of whom you are created, the reason being simply that the one through whom you were created stands in between you and the one out of whom you came into being.

Here Kuyper posits a natural (or sociological?) "principle" on basis of which he describes the relationships that exist between the divine Trinity on the one hand and created angels and humans on the other. To me this smells of speculation. So, yes, there is this struggle you will become aware of as you proceed. I sometimes wonder whether Kuyper was conscious of this tension.

⁷ The reference here is to what James K. A. Smith calls "The scandal of sheer grace: When mercy offends." *Calvin Theological Journal*, November 2021, pp. 309-320. According to most Westerners, the thought that *God* appointed satan to tempt humans is deeply offensive, but Smith, no died-in-the-wool kind of Reformed philosopher, explains the meaning of this sentence and defends it.

If anything is typical of Kuyper, it is his comprehensive or wholistic approach to all of life. This is a book on angels, a topic that would be considered deeply spiritual by many readers. Well, it *is* deeply spiritual, but a spirituality with its feet on God's good earth. He spreads himself (thin?) all over. He shows his typical appreciation for the scientific developments of his day and draws upon them, but, of course, they are mostly outdated. After some struggle, I decided to translate these passages as they are, but with occasional more current insertions that are not found in the original. They are just kind of snuck in without alerting the reader. You may well recognize such comments.

Kuyper shows his typically wide grasp of philosophy and history, especially developments that emerged from the French Revolution, an event that repulsed Kuyper for its rejection of God and His revelation, while recognizing that there were many legitimate reasons for that and other revolutions. He is widely known for his anti-revolutionary approach, but that refers specifically to the godless nature of the French Revolution and its far-reaching fallouts, not to revolution in general. I believe the Kuyperian community in the Netherlands made a serious miscalculation when it enthroned the term "anti-revolutionary" in their political jargon, even turning it into the name of their political party. It left the general population with the impression of a deeply conservative worldview and, I suspect, even encouraged and imprinted a more general conservative attitude in the minds of its followers. Actually, the popular use of the term "conservative" is not even reflective of the more dynamic Reformational approach, especially as it is developing in North America..

Household Matters

1. The title of each chapter is marked by an asterisk (*) to make it easy for you to find it.
2. All the footnotes are mine, the translator. Sometimes they add supplementary information; sometimes, criticisms; sometimes, questions; sometimes they are chatty comments you do not often find in footnotes.
3. Except for demands of grammar, the names of satan and his henchmen are all in lower case, that is, not capitalized. This, in fact, marks this entire website on which this document was first published. Satan and his cohorts do not deserve the respect implied by initial capitals; they are too evil for

that. The opposite also holds true: All nouns, pronouns and other words referring to any member of the Trinity are capitalized as Peter J. Kreeft wrote—and practiced:

“Throughout this book I have insisted on capitalizing ... all pronouns referring to the deity, contrary to current convention. My justification (is) ... for clarity’s sake, as well as theologically, out of respect and adoration (which are also contrary to current convention!).”

Peter J. Kreeft, *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Heaven...but Never Dreamed of Asking*. New York: Harper & Row, 1982, copyright page.

With angelic greetings,

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