Clarion Review

Religion

We Are the Angels
Leroy Whitfield
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Three Stars (out of Five)

A man claiming divine inspiration uses scripture to promote the idea that human beings are actually angels, that some people are predestined to be saved, and that God Himself created evil so that humans might come to know true goodness.

Whitfield concedes early on that his theories are controversial, acknowledging that his ideas have repeatedly been rejected by mainstream Christian institutions and that writing *We Are the Angels* is the result of an order he received from God to share his ideas with the world. Certainly, Whitfield's interpretations of scripture do not agree with widely accepted Christian doctrine. According to Whitfield, God created angels without a soul, which resulted in the angels lacking the ability to freely choose to love God in the way that God desires. To solve this problem, Whitfield says God created human beings with a body and a soul, but without a spirit. When a man is born, God fills the body and soul with the spirit of an angel, and it becomes part of a grand evolutionary process for the combined angel/man to experience the trials and tribulations which will bring both to a state of perfection where they know and love God as Christ Himself knew and loved the heavenly father.

It's complicated, to say the least, but Whitfield does his best to lend credence to his theories by quoting extensively from the Bible. The difficulty with Whitfield's evidence, however, is that his interpretations of scripture are highly idiosyncratic and frequently prompt more questions than they provide answers. Whitfield is not a Biblical scholar; his reading of sacred text is not based on a thorough background in ancient languages or the historical context in which both the Old and New Testaments were written. The result is that accepting Whitfield's analyses becomes an act of faith in and of itself. For example, when Whitfield quotes chapter and verse from the book of Matthew 19:11-13 and announces that *eunuchs* are "spiritual virgins … who have never been corrupted by this world (p. 26)," he offers no explanation as to why a

more literal, traditional interpretation of this passage is wrong. One simply has to accept him at his word, on this point and countless others as well. Whitfield's theories may very well prove valid, but the effect of his polemic is to drown one in scripture attached to esoteric interpretations about which one struggles to make an informed assessment.

Where Whitfield's aims are more pragmatic, his ideas become infinitely more accessible and easier to accept. The chapter he devotes to thumbnail sketches of how various rankings of Christian believers respond to ordinary daily events could be used by almost anyone wanting to keep track of his/her Christian behavior. When confronted with failure, does one respond more like a free son, the highest ranking, or an unbelieving son, the lowest ranking? The lengthy section that comprises Whitfield's dictionary of symbolic words could prove useful, as well.

A radical departure from mainstream Christianity, *We Are the Angels* will puzzle most readers and provide scant spiritual support for those who stick with it.

Diane Taylor