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The angels and their
ministrations

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THE ANGELS

AND

THEIR MINISTRATIONS

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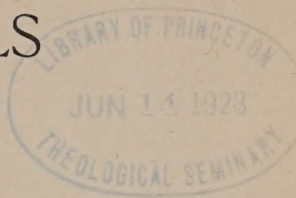
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PHILADELPHIA
THE WESTMINSTER PRESS

1900



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PREFACE

WHY A VOLUME ON THE ANGELS?

1. BECAUSE the Bible is full of them. They are so woven into the texture of the holy Book that "to reject them is to reject it," and to understand little about them is to be ignorant of a great part of it. No scriptural teaching that professes to approach any degree of thoroughness can ignore them. Baxter, the immortal author of *The Saint's Rest*, says that he counted three hundred places in the Bible in which they are mentioned. Nor do they occupy any mean or insignificant position. They flash forth some of the most brilliant rays of light that illumine the heaven of revelation.

2. Because they are specially occupied with us and our affairs, and it is but meet that we should understand all we can about them. They are not beings with whom we have no concern. They are not far away from us. Heaven, it is true, is their home; but as ministering spirits they are continually hovering between heaven and earth. Our life "is watched by pure and gracious beings who bear their help to us at God's bidding and in their own love; who come straight from the Father of

spirits; who work with unseen ministry like the secret powers of nature, the dew and the frost and the fitful wind, but whom one moment's revelation might make visible. Christ, as he taught, might have hung the air with clouds of listening angels; we, as we journey, might as haply see the path lined with horses and chariots of fire." Great instruction, comfort, consolation, may be drawn from them. Next to Christ they are the best friends we have. Why should we not learn all we can about them? With good old Baxter we may well wonder why the Church pays so little heed to them.¹

3. Because they are to be the everlasting associates of the redeemed. In Heb. 12:22 the apostle enumerates them among the glorious inhabitants of the new Jerusalem: "innumerable hosts of angels." While lost men shall suffer forever with reprobate angels, redeemed men shall dwell forever with those who fell not from their first estate. We see them not now; but at death

¹ Baxter opens "A Psalm of Praise," of nine stanzas, which is not much known and so far as I have seen is not in any of the hymn books, with the following:—

Ye holy angels bright,
 Who stand before God's throne,
 And dwell in glorious light,
 Praise ye the Lord, each one.
 You there, so nigh
 Are much more meet
 Than we, the feet,
 For things so high.

we shall mingle among them. "It is a great incongruity we should have strange, uncouth, shy, frightful, or infrequent thoughts of them in the meantime." We would be far more desirous to gain all the information we could in reference to one who was to be our associate for life, than in reference to another with whom we should spend but an hour. It is really far more important to understand God's teaching concerning the angels, our eternal companions, than to know about any of the tribes of the earth whom we may never meet.

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THE ANGELS

CHAPTER I

WHO ARE THE ANGELS?

THE word Angel designates not primarily the race, or the nature, of the persons to whom it is applied, but the office or occupation in which they are engaged. It simply means a messenger—one who is employed by another to carry some message or execute some commission, or in his name or by his authority to discharge the duties of some office. It specially belongs to a host of heavenly beings who are largely sent forth by God as his messengers to execute his purposes in reference to men. But in a very few instances the word is also applied to certain earthly persons who occupy important positions in the Church of God; in which cases, however, it will be noticed that the duties pertaining to their position are the same in kind with those which are discharged by the heavenly beings.

Some even think that in a figurative way the word is applied to inanimate objects which are represented as executing the will of God.

The prophets of the Lord in the Old Testament are so designated because they were commissioned by him to deliver messages to his chosen people. This is the word which is used in the prophecy that the Lord by Malachi utters in regard to the coming of John the Baptist (3 : 1): "Behold I send my messenger [angel], and he shall prepare the way before me." The same prophet (2 : 7) also applies it to priests, because they, too, were "God's delegated ministry for making known the things pertaining to his will and worship": "for the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger [angel] of the Lord of hosts." Mal. 2 : 7.

This will explain an expression in Eccles. 5 : 6. The writer is there enforcing the duty of paying vows which have been made; and, in condemning the making of excuses for the breach of them, he says: "Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?" The meaning of this will be perceived on remembering that vows were a part of the Jewish religious worship. They had a connection with the temple and were to be paid there, oftentimes in the form of sacrifices which were to be offered to God by the priest on the part of the person making the vow. The priest is here called "the angel": and the writer thus pre-

sents in a very striking manner the greatness of the sin of which those were guilty, who, having made a vow, instead of taking the sacrifice to the temple in fulfillment of it, went to the holy place and basely presented to the representative of God an unworthy excuse for its breach. They might say that an easy confession of having done wrong in making the vow would relieve them from it; but in truth it called down the anger of God upon them.

In the book of The Revelation again, for a similar reason, the messengers of the churches in Asia to the Apostle John are styled the angels of those churches.

But the name is more eminently and distinctively applied to certain spiritual beings or heavenly messengers, who are employed by God as the ministers of his will, and are usually distinguished as "the angels of God," or "the angels of heaven." Such a distinct and most real order of creatures there is, above men and below God, used by God even now in conducting the affairs of the world and in guiding his redeemed saints home to glory. It is important to bring out clearly their existence, true nature, and position, to guard against two extremes of errorists.

On the one hand, our age is very materializing in its tendency. Many scientific men confine themselves to physical phenomena. Their senses measure the extent of their knowledge and belief.

Things which they can see, and hear, and smell, and taste, and touch, they receive ; in regard to all that is beyond, they are skeptical. What the senses cannot find out now and here, never existed at any other time, or in any other place. The whole region of the supermaterial is to them a blank. They say in their heart, "There is no God"; the forces of material nature are their gods; their minds are shut to the vast world of the invisible. God and the universe of spirits are not tangible, and are therefore ignored. We do not see angels now; none have visibly appeared since the days of the apostles; therefore, as, in the days of the Saviour, the Sadducees believed there was neither angel nor spirit, so in our days many try to believe the same thing; and more think but little about the spirit world and are but slightly influenced by it.

On the other hand, there are some who have perverted views of the spirit world. They have a vaguely formed idea that angels are disembodied spirits of men. Inasmuch as the Bible undoubtedly teaches that angels have ministered and do yet minister to human beings on earth, the transition is very easy to the idea that the spirits of departed friends may now communicate with the living.

The redeemed when they die go to the place where the angels are; but they do not become angels. On the contrary, the Bible teaches that they are advanced to a higher position than the angels. Jesus "took not on him the nature of

angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2:16): there is the distinction sharply drawn between the two races. Let it be remembered, then, that the angels are an entirely different order of creatures from man. They never were men. The disembodied spirits of men do not become angels.

In regard to the beginning of the existence of the angels, it does not come within the scope of the Bible explicitly to speak. All that we know is that they were created before man; for when our world, in response to the command of God, took its place in the universe and was pronounced very good, the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy (Job 38:7). How long before that they were called into existence, we cannot tell; and it is needless to speculate.

They were created by God, and hence in their nature and in their intellectual and moral characteristics they exhibit the likeness of God, though of course at an infinite remove. The title which is applied to them, "the sons of God," indicates this. That implies likeness of nature and of origin. Adam was called the son of God, because God created him "after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures." Regenerate souls are again specially called the children of God, because the Holy Spirit has wrought in them a new creation by which they are to be restored to a position of per-

fect likeness to their heavenly Father. Angels, too, whatever distinctions existed among them, originally agreed in this. They have not all, however, retained that likeness.

At some period to us not clearly revealed, but before man was created, a rebellion against the authority of God took place among the heavenly host, in consequence of which a large number were cast out of his presence; for we are told, in 2 Peter 2:4, that "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment"; and in Jude 6: "the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." But these we dismiss without further notice. We confine our attention to those that fell not, to whom the title "angel" is more properly applied, and who are also called "the elect" and "the holy" angels—the others being called "angels of darkness," "angels of Satan," having ceased to be angels of God.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF THE ANGELS

As to their nature, the apostle says the angels are *spirits*. Heb. I : 14.

Pure spirits have not flesh and blood. We are composed of soul and body. Have the angels, then, any organized form such as we have?

We cannot decidedly answer the question. The Scriptures nowhere describe such a form. True, just before Stephen began his defense in the council, all that sat there, "looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel" (Acts 6 : 15). But that comparison may merely suggest the thought of something super-human, celestial, without conveying any definite idea of the actual appearance. Yet, though we know neither how an angel looks, nor whether all angels look alike, it seems probable that they do possess some material form.

We do not suppose it is a body like our present body. There are indeed cases mentioned in which they appear as men; but doubtless God for wise purposes directed them to assume, in a miraculous way, the human form temporarily.

We cannot suppose that they have a corporeal

organization anything like that which we possess in this state of existence. That would interfere with their freedom and rapidity of motion, and would be inconsistent with the scriptural teachings as to their present ministrations among men.

Yet we may find that after our resurrection they and we shall have bodies somewhat alike. This may be included in the assertion of our blessed Lord, that they who are accounted worthy to obtain the heavenly world and the resurrection from the dead, can die no more: "for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20: 36). In reference to the resurrection, the apostle speaks of a celestial body and a terrestrial body.

The bodies which we are to have, after the resurrection, while being in an important sense the same that we have now, will yet be very different in appearance—the difference as great perhaps as that which exists between a sunbeam and a clod of earth: and the form which the angels wear may bear some analogy to that which we shall have in heaven.

But whatever it may be, from the character of the missions on which they are employed by God, it must be such as to permit great rapidity of motion; as the poet represents one

Gliding through the heaven
On a sunbeam, swift as a shooting star
In autumn thwart the night.

Light travels at the rate of 192,000 miles a second; without transgressing any of the rules of sound thinking, we may imagine the angels to be possessed of a material form which may move, under the behests of God, with even greater quickness. But this is a matter of mere speculation which must go for what it is worth. The Scriptures do not speak expressly on the point; though we see nothing against the supposition.¹

¹ The following paragraph is suggestive:—

“They are termed ‘spirits’ (as *e. g.* in Heb. 1:14), although this word is applied more commonly not so much to themselves as to their power dwelling in man (*e. g.* 1 Sam. 18:10; Matt. 8:16, etc., etc.). The word is the same as that used of the soul of man, when separate from the body (*e. g.* Matt. 14:26; Luke 24:37, 39; 1 Pet. 3:19); but, since it properly expresses only that supersensuous and rational element of man’s nature, which is in him the image of God (see John 4:24) and by which he has communion with God (Rom. 8:16); and since also we are told that there is a ‘spiritual body,’ as well as a ‘natural body’ (1 Cor. 15:44), it does not assert that the angelic nature is incorporeal. The contrary seems expressly implied by the words, in which our Lord declares that, *after the resurrection*, men shall be like the angels (Luke 20:36); because, as is elsewhere said (Phil. 3:21), their bodies as well as their spirits shall have been made entirely like his. It may also be noticed that the glorious appearance, ascribed to the angels in Scripture (as in Dan. 10:6) is the same as that which shone out in our Lord’s transfiguration, and in which John saw him clothed in heaven (Rev. 1:14–16); and moreover that, whenever angels have been made manifest to man, it has always been in human form (as *e. g.* in Gen. chs. 18, 19; Luke 24:4; Acts 1:10, etc., etc.). The very fact that the titles ‘sons of God’ (Job 1:6; 38:7; Dan. 3:25 comp. with 28) and ‘gods’ (Ps. 8:5; 97:7) applied to them, are also given to men (see Luke 3:38; Ps.

One error in regard to the form of the angels should be carefully guarded against. It is very common to find them represented as having wings. Perhaps both children and older people generally have this notion about them. A little boy who had a great dislike to feathers, once repeating the words of the hymn, "I want to be an angel," remarked to his mother that he did not want to be an angel. She asked him, why? His reply was that he did not want to have wings. Even Milton, his mind full of angel-learning gathered from all quarters, preserves this representation of them in his immortal poem. But this is altogether unscriptural. Doubtless, it owes its origin to the representation in Daniel 9:21 of Gabriel flying swiftly, and to the description which the Bible gives of the cherubim, in which wings have a prominent position. The cherubim, however, are not intended to represent angels. This idea of the angels having wings should be banished from the mind.¹

82:6, and compare our Lord's application of this last passage in John 10:34-37), points in the same way to a difference only of degree, and an identity of kind, between the human and the angelic nature." Art. "Angels" in *Smith's Dictionary*.

¹ The cherubim "were ideal creatures, intended to represent the perfections of Godhead, as exhibited in the highest forms of animated being and with more completeness than any creature then existing possessed them. They were symbolical of the highest properties of creature life, and of these as out-goings and manifestations of the divine life; but they were typical of redeemed and glorified manhood, or prophetically representative of it, as that in which these properties were to be combined and exhibited."

There is no distinction of sex among the angels. This is implied in the answer which was given by our Saviour to the question that the Sadducees put to him in regard to the future relation of a woman who was supposed in this world to marry in succession seven brothers: "When they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven." Mark 12:25.

In the same conversation, our Saviour declares their immortality. The angels never die. Although they grow old in years—already thousands of years have passed over them—they never show the weakening effects of years blighted by sin. Most beautifully is this suggested by the appearance of the angel who descended from heaven to the tomb of our Lord; whose countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow; and who, having for a time assumed the human form, is represented in one of the descriptions of him as a young man. (Mark 16:5.) Sinless creatures as they are, perpetual youth and vigor belong to them. Sickness, weakness, toil, and weariness, never touch them to draw them gradually down to the grave. How delightful to think that those

Fairbairn on the *Typology of the Scriptures*, Part II., Sec. 3. Whatever the seraphim, which are described in Isaiah 6:2-6 (and only there), were, they "were manifestly quite different from the cherubim, for the latter had four wings and four faces; and from the angels, who have no wings." The Schaff-Herzog *Cyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*: art. "Seraphim."

of us who hold fast to our faith and with patience run our toilsome race here, shall be like them, throughout eternity strong and vigorous, young in feelings, and immortal in existence.

They are forever established in holiness.¹ The title especially assigned to them, "that of *the holy ones*, is precisely the one which is given to those men who are renewed in Christ's image, but which belongs to them in actuality and in perfection only hereafter. Its use evidently implies that the angelic probation is over and their crown of glory won."² They had their probationary period, as man had; and now "they are revealed to us as beings such as man might be and will be when the power of sin and death is removed, partaking in their measure of the attributes of God—Truth, Purity, and Love—because always beholding his face and therefore being made like him. This, of course,

¹ "While some of the angels in their pride and impiety rebelled against God, and were cast down from their heavenly abode into the lowest darkness, the remaining number dwelt with God in eternal and unchangeable purity and happiness. For all were not sprung from one angel who had fallen and been condemned, so that they were not all, like men, involved by one original sin in the bonds of an inherited guilt, and so made subject to the penalty which one had incurred; but when he, who afterwards became the devil, was with his associates in crime exalted in pride, and by that very exaltation was with them cast down, the rest remained steadfast in piety and obedience to their Lord, and obtained, what before they had not enjoyed, a sure and certain knowledge of their eternal safety, and freedom from the possibility of falling." Augustine, *Enchiridion*, ch. xxviii.

² *Smith's Dictionary*, art. "Angels."

implies finiteness, and therefore, in the strict sense, imperfection of nature and constant progress, both moral and intellectual, through all eternity. . . . And it is this which emphatically points them out to us as creatures, fellow-servants of man, and therefore incapable of usurping the place of gods," and of being worshiped.

Their perceptions of right and wrong are perfect; and they continually keep the commandments of God. When King David seemed to be yearning after his banished son Absalom, Joab put forward a woman of Tekoa to influence him in his favor by the utterance of a parable which would be sure to touch the heart of the mourning king. One expression that she used implied that in matters of understanding a greater compliment could not be paid to him than to compare him to an angel: "As an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad." (2 Sam. 14:17.) Their knowledge, however, though great, is not infinite. This is implied in what Christ says in regard to the judgment day: "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, but my Father only." (Matt. 24:36.) Their knowledge is very extensive, but that event is kept so secret that they have not been informed of it; and the discovery of it transcends even their great faculties. They only know what God has been pleased to reveal to them; and though that is far above our knowledge, it has its limitations. They now desire

to look into things which are reported by those who preach the gospel. God even charges his angels with folly.

Their appearance is very glorious. "Their countenance is radiant, terrible, like lightning. Before his martyrdom, Stephen's face shone as the face of an angel. Their very garments are dazzling; of old they illuminated the sky at night and the gloom of a prison cell." John, in his Revelation (10:1), saw a "mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire." This is vague—the vagueness of overwhelming splendor, of conditions of life unknown to us; the vagueness of a tropic forest to an Eskimo: and we can only cry humbly and patiently, "Behind the veil, behind the veil!"

Their voice is compared to thunder. In answer to our Redeemer's prayer, "Father, glorify thy name," a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, . . . said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him." And John declares again of the angel which he saw, that he cried with a loud voice as when a lion roareth; and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voice.

They excel in strength. Once (in 2 Thes. 1:7) they are called Christ's "mighty angels," or "the

angels of his power." (R. V.) And so swiftly do they move that in the twinkling of an eye they may come at the call of prayer.

"Proofs of the power with which these exalted beings are endowed, and of the amplest kind, are in several instances recorded in the Scriptures. An angel destroyed in three days threescore and ten thousand persons out of Judah and Israel in consequence of the sin of David in numbering the people. An angel destroyed in one night of the army of Sennacherib an hundred fourscore and five thousand men. Angels also are exhibited in The Revelation of St. John as holding the four winds of heaven; and as executing in a long succession the judgments of God upon this evil world, with a series of efforts demanding power utterly incomprehensible by us. In the twentieth chapter of this book, particularly, one of them is exhibited as binding that fierce and strong spirit, the Prince of the power of the air, who has so extensively and dreadfully distressed this unhappy world; as casting him into the bottomless pit; and as setting a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years should be fulfilled. In all these instances angels are exhibited as endowed with might to which other intelligent creatures can make no pretensions, and of which men cannot even form any adequate conception."¹

In position they were originally higher than man,

¹ Dwight's *Theology*, I: 294.

for he was made a little lower than they. (Ps. 8:5; Heb. 2:7, 9).¹ But in Christ redeemed men are raised above them, so that the apostle, expostulating with Christians for going to law with each

¹ The R. V. has Psalm 8:5: "For thou hast made him but little lower than God": in the margin: "or, the angels. Heb. Elohim." In the quotation of that in Heb. 2:7, the R. V. retains the Authorized: "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels." Dr. J. Addison Alexander, in his commentary on the psalm, says: "The Hebrew noun is the common one for God, but being plural in its form is sometimes used in a more vague and abstract sense, for all conditions of existence higher than our own. 1 Sam. 28:13; Zech. 9:7. Hence it is sometimes rendered *angels* in the Septuagint, which version, though inexact, is retained in the New Testament (Heb. 2:7) because it sufficiently expresses the idea which was essential to the writer's argument" . . . "Hebrew 'Elohim,' the abstract idea of Godhead; not God himself, for Scripture always puts an infinite distance between man and God; but the superhuman, the heavenly, such as are angels. Cf. Zech. 12:8, 'The house of David shall be as *Elohim*, as the *angel* of the Lord'; 1 Sam. 28:13: 'I saw gods (*Elohim*) ascending out of the earth,' where *Elohim* is supernatural beings. Hengstenberg translates, 'Thou makest him to *want little of a divine standing*.' He objects to the translation 'angels.' 'How could man in respect to the sovereignty over the earth be compared with angels, who possess no such sovereignty'! But Paul, in Heb. 2:7, translates it 'angels'; and the argument is, man, through God's favor, originally made but a little lower than angels, who have heavenly thrones assigned to them near God, has a universal dominion ultimately awaiting him in Christ, even far above that of angels. See the whole chapter, Heb. 2, and cf. 1:4, etc. *Elohim* is applied to judges or rulers, Ps. 82:6 as quoted by Christ (John 10:34, 35). They are called so, as being representatives of God, administering the power delegated to them by him. Angels are called *Elohim* similarly as exercising power under God, and ministering to man benefits from him." Rev. A. R. Fauset, *Commentary on Psalms*,

other before unbelievers, says: "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. 6:3.) Though they have great power here in the execution of God's will, and exercise an important influence upon us, they assume a subordinate position in the future world: "for unto the angels hath he [God] not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak." (Heb. 2:5.) They are made subject to Christ, whom they also worship: for he has "gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." 1 Pet. 3:22.

A special honor was placed upon our nature by the Son of God consenting to tabernacle in it for a while here, and then taking it up with him to the throne of the universe. He found us below the heavenly messengers of God's will: he takes the redeemed away above them all. What a destiny is this! Let us gaze upon it with rapture; and as we further have our views enlarged in the contemplation of the greatness of the angels and their work, let us find in the fact that, if saved, we are to occupy a grander and nobler position, a higher stimulus to holy living and acting for God.

A position higher than the angels and nearer to God! The great masters of painting picture these heavenly beings "singing, with uplifted hands, sometimes in harmony, before a scroll of music floating loosely over their hands; sometimes in unison, countless faces radiant with blissful wor-

ship, until, gazing on the canvas, you wonder that the whole air does not break into audible song."

In this they attempt to catch and shadow forth the gorgeous descriptions of the inspired word. "I saw the Lord on his throne," says one of the old prophets, "and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left." (1 Kings 22 : 19.) In the Apocalypse redeemed men appear among them ; for John, in vision, "heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders ; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands ; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing." (Rev. 5 : 11, 12.) The worship of heaven is angelic and human united.

We, if saved, are to mingle among the angels. In patriarchal times "their ministry hallowed domestic life, in its trials and blessings alike, and was closer, more familiar, less awful, than in after times." In heaven it shall be closer still, for together we shall worship God. But we shall be more favored even than they : for a song belongs to us that they cannot sing : "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood" ; and that takes us nearer to the throne, and gives us a deeper and more touching interest in Him who sits upon it. The fourth and fifth chapters of the book of The Rev-

elation are in this an interesting study; and in the light of them we can say:—

Now let us join with hearts and tongues,
And emulate the angels' songs;
Yea, sinners may address their King
In songs that angels cannot sing.

They praise the Lamb who once was slain;
But we can add a higher strain;
Not only say, he suffered thus,
But that he suffered all for us.

Jesus, who passed the angels by,
Assumed our flesh to bleed and die;
And still he makes it his abode;
As man he fills the throne of God.

Our next of kin, our Brother now,
Is he to whom the angels bow;
They join with us to praise his name,
And we the nearest interest claim.

But ah, how faint our praises rise!
Sure 'tis the wonder of the skies,
That we, who share his richest love,
So cold and unconcerned should prove.

O glorious hour! it comes with speed,
When we, from sin and darkness freed,
Shall see the God who died for man,
And praise him more than angels can.

But let it be remembered that if we hope to sing that song in heaven while the angels are our companions, we must begin to sing it here while they act as God's ministering servants to us. If, there-

fore, there be anything alluring in the prospect of having the everlasting companionship of those unfallen holy beings who have lived so long, who are so wise and glorious and mighty, let us see to it that by a holy life here we make our calling and election sure to that precious blood-bought enjoyment. Above, is the great white throne with Jesus seated upon it. Round about it are the angels, and in a nearer circle still the already glorified redeemed, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odors. Listen! We can almost hear their music. Heaven is full of it; and it seeks to draw earth up to heaven. Let us yield to its influence, and press on eagerly to the mark for the prize of our high calling. Let us be stimulated to duty by the glorious prospect, and be comforted in trouble as well. As we go through duty and through trial, sing:—

I want to put on my attire
Washed white in the blood of the Lamb;
I want to be one of your choir,
And tune my sweet harp to his name.

I want, oh! I want to be there,
Where sorrow and sin bid adieu,
Your joy and your friendship to share,
To wonder and worship with you.

CHAPTER III

THEIR NUMBER AND RANKS

THE first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews begins a splendid argument with which the writer designed to confirm Jewish converts against apostasy from the faith, by the assertion and proof of the superiority of Christ to angels. That superiority is proved by a threefold argument: first, he is called the Son of God in a sense in which the title is never given to them; secondly, they are commanded to worship him; thirdly, they are the servants of God, like the winds and the lightning. He is God, on an eternal throne and swaying a scepter of righteousness. He created the universe and shall remain the same when his works have grown old and changed. He occupies a position to which the angels are never advanced; they are the ministering servants whom he sends forth to minister to the heirs of salvation.¹

¹ Charnock quaintly says, in his *Discourses upon the Existence and Attributes of God* (p. 348): "It is supposed by some that the devil was the chief angel in heaven, the head of all the rest; and that he falling, the angels were left as a body without a head; and after he had politically beheaded the angels, he endeavored to destroy man and rout him out of paradise; but God takes the opportunity to set up his Son, as the head of angels and men.

Our Lord is risen from the dead ;
 Our Jesus is gone up on high ;
 The powers of hell are captive led,—
 Dragged to the portals of the sky :
 There his triumphant chariot waits,
 And angels chant the solemn lay ;—
 Lift up your heads, ye heavenly gates ;
 Ye everlasting doors, give way !

Loose all your bars of massy light,
 And wide unfold the ethereal scene ;
 He claims these mansions as his right ;
 Receive the King of glory in !
 Who is the King of glory ? Who ?
 The Lord that all our foes o'ercame ;—
 The world, sin, death, and hell o'erthrew ;—
 And Jesus is the Conqueror's name.

Lo ! his triumphant chariot waits,
 And angels chant the solemn lay ;
 Lift up your heads, ye heavenly gates ;
 Ye everlasting doors, give way !
 Who is the King of glory ? Who ?
 The Lord, of glorious power possessed ;—
 The King of saints and angels, too ;—
 God over all, forever blest !

The angels who are thus commanded to worship our adorable Redeemer, we have seen, are a

And thus while the devil endeavored to spoil the corporation of angels, and make them a body contrary to God, God makes angels and men one body, under one Head, for his service. The angels, in losing a defectible head, attained a more excellent and glorious Head in another nature, which they had not before ; though of a lower nature in his humanity, yet of a more glorious nature in his divinity, from whence many suppose they derive their confirming grace, and the stability of their standing."

high order of spiritual intelligences different from man, and created by God before this world was made. They are pure spirits; whether possessed of bodily organization the Bible does not say, but perhaps a very refined material organization they do wear. They are immortal: they never die.

They are established in holiness. Their knowledge is great, though not infinite—depending upon the will of God for such revelations as he chooses to make them. They are glorious in appearance, mighty in strength, swift in motion, powerful in voice. Originally they were higher than man; but, in Christ, redeemed men are exalted far above them.

Without giving any precise figures, the Bible represents the number of these angels to be very great. If there be any passages which in this might seem to contain a poetical exaggeration, there are others which show it to be literally true. The simple didactic statements of the historical books, and the logical arguments of the epistles, throw back a clear light upon, and strongly confirm, the pictorial imagery of the psalms and the prophets.

The Sixty-eighth Psalm is a triumphal song, written by David on the occasion of some signal victory which he had achieved. After indicating the enmity which the kings of the earth had to Zion because God had made it in a peculiar manner his dwelling place, he shows the protection with which

it was clothed by bursting forth into the declaration of the 17th verse: "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands upon thousands: the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place."

In the magnificent vision which Daniel had of the coming of Christ, and the progress of his throne to judgment to destroy the antichristian powers, and to render his own kingdom universal upon earth, thousand thousands were seen ministering unto him and ten thousand times ten thousand standing before him. Dan. 7: 10.

The air around Bethlehem on that eventful night when the Redeemer of men was born into the world was filled with a multitude of the heavenly host who had attended the Lord of glory in his descent from heaven, and then as they went back to wait for the day when he was, as God-man, to ascend to his throne again, caused their voices to be heard in the thrilling anthem: "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men."

Had Jesus so willed it, he declared (Matt. 26: 53), he could have had in the garden of temptation more than twelve legions of angels to guard him. And finally, the Apostle Paul, presenting in three verses a striking description of the inhabitants of the heavenly world (Heb. 12: 22), includes an innumerable company, or myriads, of angels, or as the poet has it:—

a host

Innumerable as the stars of night,
Or stars of morning, dewdrops which the sun
Impearls on every leaf and every flower.

Hence one of the glorious titles of God is the Lord of hosts. And this is no unimportant matter. When we come to consider the offices in which the angels are employed, we shall see the necessity for it.¹

The innumerable multitude of angels seem to be divided into different ranks.

“In all departments of nature there is a regular gradation from the lower to the higher forms of life; from the almost invisible vegetable fungus to the cedar of Lebanon; from the minutest animalcule to the gigantic mammoth. In man we meet with the first, and to all appearances the lowest, of rational creatures. That he should be the only creature of his order is, *a priori*, as improbable as

¹ There is a saying that “so many angels as fell from heaven, so many souls shall ascend to heaven”: that the number of the redeemed will make up in heaven for the fallen angels. Augustine long ago gave expression to that thought. In his *Enchiridion*, cxxix, he says that “the restored part of humanity will fill up the gap which the rebellion and fall of the devils had left in the company of the angels. For this is the promise to the saints, that at the resurrection they shall be equal to the angels of God (Luke 20:36). And thus the Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us all, the city of God, shall not be spoiled of any of the number of her citizens, shall perhaps reign over even a more abundant population.” This, though pleasing, is speculative and perhaps even below the truth.

that insects should be the only class of irrational animals. There is every reason to presume that the scale of being among rational creatures is as extensive as that in the animal world. The modern philosophy which deifies man leaves no room for any order of beings above him. But if the distance between God and man be infinite, all analogy would prove that the orders of rational creatures between us and God must be inconceivably numerous. As this is in itself probable, it is clearly revealed in the Bible to be true.”¹

In Eph. 1 : 21 Paul declares that Jesus is raised far above all principalities and powers and might and dominion and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. Lest it should be thought that this was only as a reward for some work performed by him as a man, and not his true position in virtue of his eternal being and power, in Col. 1 : 16 he says : “ By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers.” A careful examination will show that these various terms, “ thrones,” “ dominions,” “ principalities,” “ powers,” refer to angels. For in the context angels are specially mentioned : they are said to be in heaven ; they are opposed to flesh and blood, that is, to man, as a different order of beings. The origin of the application of these

¹ Hodge's *Systematic Theology*, 1 : 636.

terms to angels cannot be historically traced. The names themselves suggest the reason of their use. The angels are called thrones, principalities, powers, dominions, either because of their exalted nature, or because through them God exercises his power and dominion, or because of their relation to each other.

The object of the apostle in these passages is to give his readers elevated views of Christ. There have been errorists who held that the angels were created by another power than the divine; and others again who held that Jesus himself was only a created being, though the highest of all creatures. But here "he is shown to be the Creator not simply of the lower modes of being, but the higher essences of the universe." He is not an angel; he is not a created being, for all creation without exception is his work. Even those angelic beings, so lustrous as to be seated on "thrones," so noble as to be styled "dominions," so elevated as to be greeted with the title of "principalities," and so mighty as to merit the appellation of "powers": these, so like God as to be called gods themselves, bow to the Son of God, as the one Author of their existence, position, and prerogative. As no atom is too minute, so no creature is too gigantic, for his plastic hand.

What a view of the greatness of our Redeemer, of the comparative meanness of our present position, and of the future glory of the redeemed is

afforded us by a thoughtful examination of the universe of matter and of spirit, in the light of this truth!

“The nearest fixed star is twenty-one billions of miles from us, so that between it and us there is room in one straight line for twelve thousand solar systems each as large as our own. From the seraph that burns nearest the throne, through the innumerable suns and planets which are so thickly strewn in the firmament and outward to the unseen orbs which sentinel the verge of space, all is the result of Christ’s omnipotence and love.” How high, then, that throne of his which watches over them all! Between us and that throne, which is far away from the earth, yet near enough to bring every spot within his immediate vision, and every heart that beats upon it open in all its workings to his all-seeing eye,—between us and that throne there may exist rank upon rank of celestial beings, some of them perhaps inhabiting those worlds, rank upon rank in almost infinite gradation, and forming circle after circle from the throne down to us. And how low does this make us appear! How far off from that place where God immediately manifests his presence!

And yet since the Occupant of the heavenly throne was pleased to make this earth his dwelling place, and to put special honor upon our nature, and then, clothed in it, to go back to his everlasting abode, at one spring the redeemed of our sinful

race mount away above them and are nearest the throne,—more noble than those dominions, more elevated than those principalities, mightier than those powers, ruling over, judging, the whole angelic multitude. Let us, as Christians, expand our mind with the contemplation of our high calling; be ashamed to cling too much to earth and to the base things of earth; bear in mind that we are living unworthy of it if our life is not a constant preparation for it.

The Scriptures thus seem to intimate that there is a gradation of rank among the angels. But further they do not go. They afford not the slightest hint by which we can determine how many ranks there are, and their relations to each other. Men have not failed, however, to do, in this respect, what the apostle describes as intruding into things they have not seen, vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind.

One Jewish book speaks of “seven holy angels which present the prayers of saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One.” Another mentions “four great archangels, Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, and Uriel, who perpetually bring reports to the Creator of the corrupt state of the world, and receive from him their respective commissions.” The rabbinical writers descend into still further details: specify the exact position of those superior angels in the presence of God; tell how Gabriel attended at the nuptials of Adam and

Eve; how he taught Joseph the seventy languages of the world, etc. Some held to seven heavens, each with its own order of angels.

Such were the fanciful vagaries into which the Jewish angelology ran. Christian writers have also been guilty of excesses in this matter.

Romanists divide angels into three great classes, and with some minuteness draw out a scheme of their government and subordination to each other, in order thereupon to build their superstructure of the government in the Church. Milton, in his *Paradise Lost*, uses his poetical license in this as in other respects, and, drawing upon his immense stores of rabbinical and scholastic learning, speaks of seven archangels,

Who in God's presence, nearest to his throne,
Stand ready at command and are his eyes
That run through all the heavens, or down to earth
Bare his swift errands, over moist and dry,
O'er sea and land.

But all these speculations may safely be put aside. There is nothing in the Bible which affords them a sure footing; and it is enough for us to be content with what is revealed.

One angel, however, is specially mentioned in the Bible, and we may add, as bearing upon the worship of our Lord, in a peculiarly intimate relation to him. When Zacharias asked for a sign of the truth of the announcement that a son should

be born to him, the angel who brought it replied, "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God." It was the same angel that announced to Mary the birth of Jesus.

In the gorgeous visions which the prophet Daniel had had nearly five hundred years before, and in which the history of the world's great empires was exhibited in connection with the kingdom of Christ, Gabriel appeared also speaking to the prophet and explaining the visions.

But this is all we know in regard to him. His name is very suggestive. It means "the mighty one of God," or "God is my strength." And the missions on which he was sent related to matters which could be accomplished by nothing short of the direct interposition of the divine power. The birth of John the Baptist, which he announced, lay across a natural impossibility. The incarnation of the Son of God, through his birth of the Virgin Mary, was altogether above the sphere of human possibility, and called for the mysterious operation of the Holy Ghost. The name Gabriel as bringing this message gave great assurance that it would undoubtedly be fulfilled. Representing in a peculiar manner the strength of God, he just preceded the miraculous exercise of that strength in the accomplishment of the heavenly purpose.

If, then, there be ranks among the angels, if some are admitted to special nearness to God, perhaps Gabriel is the highest and the nearest.

It was eminently fitting that the most exalted of God's created beings should come down from his heavenly abode and be the first to announce the interposition of his Creator as the Redeemer.

It was proper that the highest of the heavenly hosts, who had always worshiped the eternal Son of God, should precede his arrival on the earth in his wonderful mission of salvation for his fallen creatures.

It was eminently in keeping with his office that he should come forth from the innermost circle of the heavenly inhabitants, and, surrounded by the glory of the Lord, light up the plains of Bethlehem as he announced to the shepherds: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord"; and then lead the whole heavenly host in the rapturous doxology: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

What more suggestive than that of the fact that the Babe in Bethlehem was not merely a babe, not merely a created being, but in a mysterious form the awful One before whom the angels ever since their creation had bowed with deep reverence! When on bringing the First-begotten into the world the Father said, "Let all the angels of God worship him," he commanded them to do on earth what they had long been doing on the glorious plains of heaven.

CHAPTER IV

THE ARCHANGEL

THE relation of the angels to our Redeemer is such that he is styled their ruler.

It has been said that Gabriel is the only angel who is specially named in the Bible. Another name, however, may occur to some as appearing to contradict this assertion. Both in the visions of Daniel and in the Apocalypse of John, a remarkable character appears, occupying a very prominent position at the head of the heavenly host and in contest with the enemies of the church, and he is styled Michael.

Those Jewish writers who say that there are four archangels make Michael one of these, and claim that to him was committed by God in a special manner the care of their nation, with a superiority not only to the lower ranks of angels, but even to the other three archangels. A careful examination of the various passages, however, has convinced the leading commentators, from Luther and Calvin down, that this is really a name applied, in prophetic vision, to the Son of God himself.

The chief reasons for this are:—

1. The name is composed of three words which mean “who like God”—who is like God. To

no created being can that name in its fullness of signification be applied.

2. The description which Daniel gives of his person in 10 : 5, 6, is very much the same as that which is given by John of the Son of God in Rev. 1 : 13-17 ; 2 : 18. That in Daniel is : " I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz : his body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude." John's is : " One like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow ; and his eyes were as a flame of fire ; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace ; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars : and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword : and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

3. He is represented as, by his power, casting down the great adversary of God and man : Rev. 12 : 7-9 : " 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 ser-

pent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world."

And in Dan. 12:1-3 Michael is prophesied of as the deliverer of God's people from a great tribulation which had come upon them, and as causing the resurrection: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

But these are God's peculiar works. Whose voice is it that is to ring through the avenues of the dead and transfuse life again into the bodies that have long moldered into dust, but the voice of the eternal Son of God? The hour is coming in which all who are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. John 5:28, 29.

True, the apostle, in 1 Thes. 4:16, referring to the resurrection, says: "The Lord himself shall

descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." There the term archangel seems to be applied to Christ himself, as indicating the way in which he is to come, accompanied by the angel hosts whose Head and Leader he is. He is to come from heaven with a shout, and that shout is to be his voice at once as God and as the ruler of the heavenly beings. That seems to be the meaning of the word archangel; and in this it is equivalent to the title employed by Daniel—"the great prince" and "one of the chief princes," or as it should rather be translated, "the first of the chief princes," "the head of the angel chiefs." This undoubtedly Christ is; for he is head over all. And the whole heavenly host are to accompany him when he comes to raise the dead. He is the Archangel, the head over, the ruler of, angels. The Bible nowhere speaks of archangels. The word is only used twice, and then it is in the singular, archangel. Only one archangel is mentioned, and he is probably the Son of God, not as being himself an angel, but the one to whom the angels all are subject.

It is not a strange thing that the second Person in the Godhead should be thus represented with the angelic title. As we read the Old Testament we frequently meet with an extraordinary person who is called emphatically "the angel of the Lord," sometimes also "the angel in whom the Lord's

name is," "the angel of his presence," "the angel of the covenant." The titles bestowed upon him would raise the supposition that he is not a created being. Divine names are applied to and claimed by him, and divine works performed by him. Look at the touching incident of Hagar. Under the cruelty of Sarah she had been cast out of Abraham's home. But when mercy seemed to be banished from earth, it came from heaven. "The angel of the Lord" found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness. Who was he? a created being? One of his assertions indicated the exercise of the divine prerogative: "I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude." And in response, Hagar "called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me." Gen. 16: 10-13.

The angel of the Lord spake unto Jacob in a dream, and his declaration was, "I am the God of Bethel."

The angel of the Lord appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush; and yet it is immediately added, on Moses' turning aside to look attentively: "When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush." (Ex. 3: 2, 4.) This is all very mysterious: an angel and yet God.

But as we proceed through the sacred volume (finding that this wonderful Being appears always in circumstances of peculiar importance) the diffi-

culty clears away, and at last in Mal. 3:1 he is identified with our Redeemer: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger [angel] of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts": a prophecy which the New Testament explains by declaring that the messenger who was to come to prepare the way was John the Baptist; and the Lord, the Angel of the Covenant, was Christ.

Now, all is clear. The explanation of these repeated appearances is to be found in the doctrine of the Trinity, and the relation of the three divine Persons to each other in the work of redemption. Salvation is the work of the one undivided Jehovah: but the three Persons are specially engaged in the carrying forward of the various parts of it. As the second Person of the ever blessed Godhead came into the world in the fulfillment of a covenant made in the divine counsels from all eternity, he was a Messenger, or an Angel, in the strict meaning of the word, sent by God, yet coming of his own will, and himself God. And as, when the fullness of time had come, he appeared in the flesh for the purpose of suffering and thereby securing redemption, so before that time he exercised a watchful care over his Church, and ever and anon miraculously assuming for a time a human form, such as he afterwards took into permanent union with him-

self, he appeared to his people to deliver them from dangers, or bestow peculiar blessings upon them.¹

¹ The following appeared in *The Independent* of January 11, 1900. It is appended here as of interest, though it does not overturn the explanation given in the text above. On the contrary, some of its statements indirectly sustain that :—

“ At the meeting of the Society for Biblical Literature and Exegesis, held at Columbia University, December 28th and 29th, Professor N. Schmidt, of Cornell University, read a paper on ‘ The Son of Man in the Book of Daniel,’ in which he proposed a new interpretation of this much discussed figure. Until recent times the ‘son of man’ coming with the clouds of heaven in Daniel 7 : 13 has been understood as referring to the Messiah, some scholars still holding this view. Following the lead of Ibn Ezra, however, Hoffmann, Hitzig, and an ever increasing number of modern exegetes, have abandoned the Messianic interpretation and regarded the man-like being as a mere symbol of Israel, an emblem of the humane *régime* of the new world-power. Professor Schmidt finds the former view impossible, because it fails to explain the sudden and absolute disappearance from the stage of the Messiah, who is neither referred to in the explanation of the vision nor in the carrying out of the author’s eschatological programme. Against the second view he urges that it savors of modern humanitarian sentiments and vague symbolism rather than of the concrete ideas of the celestial world and the notions concerning empire that characterized antiquity. He proposes to see in the ‘being like a man’ an angel, and more particularly the guardian angel of Israel, Michael. He points out that the phrase, ‘like a human being,’ everywhere else in the book refers to an angel; that angels are always in the Bible represented as having the appearance of men; that other nations, such as Persia and Greece, are represented by their celestial ‘princes,’ or angels; that Michael is distinctly said to be the angel of Israel, and that as such he fights for the world-empire with the other angels until he finally stands in the last scene triumphant. On this hypothesis it is natural that only ‘the people of the Most High’ appears in the explanation of the vision. For Michael’s

Thus as we gaze with wonder and admiration upon the angel hosts, we behold the Redeemer in his glory and in his saving work; for they all cluster round him and bow before him in worship: so true is it that everything in revelation properly considered leads us right up to Christ, and finds its center in the cross of Calvary. As the mystery of the cross is an object of intense study to the angels, so let it be the theme of our undying meditation, an object especially dear to us because the Son of man hung there, bleeding, dying, for us. The angels look on as spectators—we as interested parties. He passed by them that he might take on him the seed of Abraham. He made no provision for their lost number: he provides a salvation sufficient for all of us. He no longer appears at intervals as the angel of the Lord clothed in a human body: for his body he has taken up into the everlasting possession of heaven and of earth.

place is not on earth on the throne of David, as would be the Messiah's. He only 'stands for Israel,' represents it, in the celestial court. On the basis of 4 Ezra 13:1, where the man-like being rises from the heart of the sea, and the Apocalypse of Elijah 14:20, 15:1, ed. Steindorff, where the waves of the sea in Amente rise unto the clouds, Professor Schmidt conjectures that in Daniel also the angelic being comes from the sea, having overthrown the beast whose slaying, violation, and burning, described in verse 12, precede the session of the heavenly court. The conception of a conflict between Michael and the Dragon is ultimately connected with the Marduk-Tiamat myth. But it is not likely that any such connection was known by the Jewish writers of Daniel 7 and Revelation 12."

On the throne it awaits the appearance of our glorified spirits and bodies. But that removes him not from us now in the exercise of his loving power. He is near to us always, seeking to draw us up to that blissful abode. Who can hesitate to own and worship as Lord the wonderful Being whom the angels worship? Who will be ashamed to pray to him round whom the heavenly beings cluster in admiring wonder? Let us behold him again and again. Let us cease not to look upon him and for him, think of him, love him, obey him; and as we do so, grow more and more like him, beholding as in a glass ourselves changing from glory to glory in his image.

An old hymn,¹ now but little known, thus portrays the angels and the Redeemer, and the winning influence on us that their devotion to him should have:—

Beyond the glittering starry globe,
Far as the eternal hills,
There, in the boundless worlds of light,
Our great Redeemer dwells.

Immortal angels, bright and fair,
In countless armies shine,
At his right hand, with golden harps,
To offer songs divine.

“Hail! Prince,” they cry, “forever hail!
Whose unexampled love
Moved thee to quit these glorious realms
And royalties above!”

¹ By James French and Daniel Turner (1791).

While thou didst condescend on earth
To suffer rude disdain,
They cast their honors at thy feet,
And waited on thy train.

Blest angels, who adoring wait
Around the Saviour's throne,
Oh ! tell us, for your eyes have seen,
The wonders he has done.

Ye saw him when the heavens and earth
A chaos first he made,
And night involved the formless deep
In her tremendous shade.

And when, amidst the darksome void,
He bade the light arise,
And kindled up those shining orbs
That now adorn the skies,

Ye saw ;—and in melodious song
Your powerful voices raise,
While all the newborn worlds resound
Their great Creator's praise.

And when on earth he deigned to dwell,
In mortal flesh arrayed,
Ye wondering saw the Holy Child
In Bethlehem's stable laid.

While in the lowly crib reposed,
His mother's tender care,
Ye stood around his homely bed
And watched his slumbers there.

When fasting in the desert long
His spotless soul was tried,
Ye saw him there the tempter foil
And soon his wants supplied.

Ye heard what gracious words he spoke,
The hearts of men to win ;
And saw well pleased the listening crowd
Drink the sweet doctrine in ;

Beheld diseases, tempests, death,
His sovereign word obey,
And how on dark benighted minds
He poured eternal day.

Saw him, from busy scenes retired
To spend the midnight hours,
While pure devotion filled his soul
With all her rapturous powers.

When on the sacred mount he shone,
In his own light arrayed,
Ye saw and owned your Sovereign there,
And your just homage paid ;

Saw, when o'er Salem's fearful doom
He shed the tender tear ;
And how to all his gracious calls
She turned the deafened ear.

In all his toils, and dangers too,
Ye did his steps attend ;
Oft paused, and wondered, how at last
This scene of love would end.

And when the powers of hell combined
To fill his cup of woe,
Your pitying eyes beheld his tears
In bloody anguish flow.

As on the torturing cross he hung
And darkness veiled the sky,
Ye saw aghast that awful sight,—
The Lord of Glory die.

Astonished, here ye search and learn
High Heaven's mysterious ways,
That thus to guilty, dying man
Immortal life conveys.

Anon he burst the gates of death,
Subdues the tyrant's power :
Ye saw th' illustrious Conqueror's rise
And hailed the blissful hour,

Tended his chariot up the sky,
And bore him to his throne ;
Then swept your golden harps, and cried,
"The glorious work is done !"

My soul the joyful triumph feels,
And thinks the moments long
Ere she her Saviour's glory sees,
And joins your rapturous song.

CHAPTER V

MINISTRATIONS TO INDIVIDUALS.

JACOB was an exile from his father's house. Under the instigation of his mother, he had committed a sin in palming a falsehood upon his father and thereby receiving a blessing which, though it belonged to him, Isaac, prejudiced by his partiality for Esau, did not intend to give. The aged patriarch did wrong in so far yielding, for a time, to his personal preference as to endeavor to thwart what God had declared before the birth of the children was his sovereign purpose. Rebecca and Jacob were wrong in the mode which they adopted to secure the boon to which the latter had a right: for the Bible does not teach that the end justifies the means. But the web of human action and intention is not beyond God's control; and in the exercise of his sovereign prerogative, which overrules even the sinful schemes of men to the accomplishment of his purpose, he unravels the tangled meshes and brings to light the working out of his own plan.

Jacob secured the blessing; but it was at the expense of a brother's indignation. And now he is on his way, for a temporary sojourn and refuge,

to the house of his mother's brother. He is a lonely man. Wild beasts are roaming round him. Tribes of lawless men are in the neighborhood. Present dangers threaten. If he escapes them, one that is perhaps more certain impends over him: for the anger of Esau waits only his father's death to wreak his vengeance upon his brother's head. More than all, conscience, which, when it condemns, increases the fear of danger from without and adds its own, troubles him. But Jacob belongs to the chosen race from whom the Messiah is to come, and to whom the great covenant promise has been made. Therefore God, who is rich in mercy, protects him and favors him with a dream from heaven.

He sleeps, and behold mountain upon mountain rises up from the earth, with broken sides and ledges of rocks by which one may ascend; (the Jews called such mountains or hills "ladders");¹ and, while from above God speaks and

¹ "Some writers are of opinion that it was not a literal ladder that is meant, as it is impossible to conceive any imagery stranger and more unnatural than that of a ladder whose base was on earth, while its top reached heaven, without having anything on which to rest its upper extremity. They suppose that the little heap of stones, on which his head reclined for a pillow, being the miniature model of the object that appealed to his imagination, the ladder was a gigantic mountain pile, whose sides, indented in the rock, gave it the appearance of a scaling ladder. There can be no doubt that this use of the original term was common among the early Hebrews; as Josephus, describing the town of Ptolemais (Acre), says it was bounded by a mountain which from its pro-

renews the promise which had been made to Abraham and Isaac, and to it adds the assurance of Jacob's personal safety, there further appear the angels of God, by whom he protects his servants, and who, evermore ascending and descending, showed to the patriarch that their ministration was unceasing and perpetual, ready for all exigencies and certain to accomplish God's commands.

Doubtless this dream was in the mind of Christ when he said to Nathanael, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." (John 1:51.) It is through Christ that this communication is made. His mediatorial work brings heaven and earth together: for in his person he is united to both. Through him the ministration had always been carried on; and the time was coming when it should appear more clearly than it had done in the past. God has in many instances drawn aside the veil which separates the spirit world from us, and permitted us to look upon some of the ways in

jecting sides was called 'the ladder'; and the stairs that led down to the city are, in the Septuagint, termed a ladder (Neh. 3:15), though they were only a flight of steps cut in the side of the rock. But whether the image presented to the mental eye of Jacob was a common ladder, or such a mountain pile as has been described, the design of this vision was to afford comfort, encouragement, and confidence to the lonely fugitive, both in his present circumstances and as to his future prospects." Jamieson in *Critical and Experimental Commentary*—on Gen. 28:12.

which the heavenly messengers exercise their offices; while he has also left us general declarations as to the modes in which they still act as ministering spirits. The consideration of some of the former will invest the latter with greater interest.

Angels have been employed by God to deliver his people from judgments which were impending over the heads of the wicked.

Lot was to be delivered from Sodom. Two angels were sent to the degraded and besotted city; and, both in the blindness which they inflicted upon the lewd men who would have violated the rights of hospitality, and in the kindness and urgency with which they led Lot and his daughters out of the place, they showed the interest which they took in human affairs, and the power with which they were clothed under God to protect the good and punish the bad. Gen. 19.

They have been employed to deliver the people of God from the rage of wild beasts. An angel preceded Daniel into the den of lions and shut their mouths, so that they hurt him not. Dan. 6:22.

At the touch of an angel, too, the barred doors of a prison flew open, and the chains fell from the hands of Peter at the feet of the soldiers between whom he was bound; and he was delivered from his confinement and sent to carry on his work of preaching the gospel. Acts 12:7-9.

At an earlier stage in the history of the apostolic Church, when the rulers of the Jews had laid their hands on Peter and John and put them in the common prison, an angel "by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." (Acts 5 : 19, 20.) And so quietly was this done that the keepers standing without before the doors knew it not.

Angels have been used to supply the bodily wants of God's people. Elijah, affrighted by the threats of the idolatrous queen of Israel, and discouraged by the dearth of worshipers of the true God, though he had just come from the great triumph of Mount Carmel, prayed that he might be permitted to die ; but as he slept beneath the juniper tree, he received from an angel a miraculous supply of bread and water, in the strength of which he went forty days and forty nights unto the mount of God, where the Lord appeared to him, removed his doubts, and strengthened his faith. 1 Kings 19 : 5, 7.

Thus when no human power would have availed has God employed his angels to baffle the schemes of persecutors and to throw a shield of safety round his threatened people.

In dark contrast with these cases, the awful pestilence which in the days of David an angel brought upon the land of Judah as a divine judgment for sin (2 Sam. 24 : 16, 17), and the worms

which at the command of another consumed the body of the persecuting Herod, show that they have been the agents of God's wrath as well as the messengers of his mercy. Acts 12:23.

It was an erroneous opinion of the Jews that all the evil inflicted on mankind is brought on them by evil angels. The head of the fallen host did bring sin into our world. But when God has sent punishment upon men for transgressions, he has employed not the evil but the holy. It was the angel of the Lord who slew in the camp of the Assyrians in one night, as they were gathered together against the holy city, one hundred and eighty-five thousand men. (2 Kings 19:35; Is. 37:36.) "There are exterminating angels that fly, wrapped up in the curtains of immateriality and an uncommunicating nature, whom we cannot see, but we feel their force and sink under their sword."

At important junctures in the history of the Church, God has sent angels to particular persons to direct them what to do.

While the Ethiopian eunuch was on his way from Jerusalem to his own land, the evangelist Philip was directed by an angel to go on a particular journey in which it was providentially ordered that he should meet the returning proselyte, introduce him into the Christian Church and send him to Ethiopia as perhaps its first missionary of the cross. Acts 8:26.

Another angel appeared in vision to the devout

Cornelius, and directed him to send for Peter, by whom he and his household were baptized and an important advance was made in the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, to whom, as the apostle declared, God had also granted repentance unto life. Acts 10:3, 7.

Paul, the prisoner, was out upon the waters of a stormy sea. A tempestuous wind was driving the vessel before it. Neither sun nor stars were visible for days. The crew were hopeless; death stared them in the face. Everything that could be spared, even to the tackling of the ship, was thrown overboard in order to lighten the vessel. Still all hope was gone. But then an angel stood by the servant of the Lord at night, and said, "Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." Acts 27:23, 24.

Angels also were employed by God during the period of divine revelation to make known the near approach of particular events. In this respect the introduction of the gospel dispensation is all radiant with their ministrations.

As a multitude of the heavenly host came down from their glorious abode in the train of their eternal Lord, so to one in particular was committed the honored mission of announcing beforehand the approach of the Dayspring on earth. When the earth was to witness the incarnation of the Son of God, it was not enough that the lines

of different prophecies far apart in time and in space should all converge to Jesus in the manger of Bethlehem nineteen hundred years ago; it was not enough that Daniel in his minute prophecy should have indicated the precise time when it should occur; that Micah should have named Bethlehem as the theater of so transcendent an event; and that Isaiah should have pointed to the unexampled occurrence of a virgin giving birth to a child: such an event demanded a grander notice. To prepare for the birth of the forerunner in circumstances almost humanly impossible, the temple must be illuminated by the presence of a celestial ambassador; Mary must be prepared for the event at which the world might point the slow unmoving finger of scorn; Joseph must be prevented from obeying the natural impulse of his deeply wounded and sorrowful heart; the shepherds must be directed to the lowly birth: and, for all this, Gabriel must be sent on a special mission from the throne of the divine majesty. And when Daniel was favored with his visions of the future, the same mighty angel had been sent to make him "understand" them (Dan. 8: 16); and while the prophet was engaged in earnest prayer of confession and petition, he "instructed," or "made him understand" the revelation concerning the coming of the Messiah. Dan. 9: 22.

CHAPTER VI

AT THE GIVING OF THE LAW

BUT the angels appear on a broader and grander scene than that of simple annunciations to individuals.

When God came down upon Mount Sinai to give his chosen people the law which was to govern them, a great host of angels accompanied him from heaven. That mount presented an awful appearance when the Lord spake unto the children of Israel from it, and uttered in their ears the moral law under the form of the Ten Commandments: a thick cloud rested upon it; the lightnings flashed and the thunders roared round it. It was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. The angels who are spirits, and those ministers who are as a flame of fire, surrounded the mount in one grand encampment. When the eternal Lawgiver came down to announce his law to his chosen people, and through them to men in all ages, he appeared in state as a sovereign: the ministering servants of his wrath were present to show how fearful a thing it would be to

break the law and fall into the hands of the living God. Therefore, while within, the rich and beautiful glory of the Lord appeared unto Moses and the rulers of the people, when "they saw the God of Israel, and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness"; in the eyes of the multitude from below the mount, his glory was like the devouring fire on the top. The angels were around him as his ministering servants, through whom the law was spoken, and to whom the enforcement of its penalties is committed. Ex. 19.

What more striking representation of the piercing nature of God's moral law and the fiery infliction of its punishments could be given? "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints [or holy ones]; from his right hand went a fiery law for them." Deut. 33:2.

To this the Psalmist refers in one of the finest figures which he uses to indicate the protection with which Zion was encircled: "The chariots of God are twenty thousand [or myriads], even thousands upon thousands of angels: the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place." Ps. 68:17.

It is to this that Paul refers when he says, in Gal. 3:19, that the law was "ordained by [or

given through] angels in the hand of a mediator." It was this that enabled him in another place (Heb. 2:2) to speak of the law as preëminently "the word spoken by angels."

It was this, too, that gave to Stephen, in his address before the Jewish council, one of the most striking and cutting perorations with which any speech was ever closed.

That address is a recapitulation of the leading points in the history of the chosen people, from the calling of Abraham down to their impious rejection of the murdered Christ. Its object is to bring out prominently two things: God's design in regard to the people and their unfaithfulness toward him. In a strain of unsurpassed historical description, the protomartyr pictures the shifting organization and position of the Church under Abraham, under Joseph, under Moses, under David, and under Solomon, showing that its form all the time was only temporary and preparatory for the coming of the Messiah, so that the very things he was accused of uttering were designed by God and really interwoven with the whole dispensation. In connection with this, and remembering the unity of the nation and the consequent guilt which misconduct at any period in its history entails upon it in all ages, unless the national sins are atoned for, with single touches of darkest colors he paints their unfaithful conduct in the sale of Joseph and the rejection of Moses both in Egypt

and in the wilderness. Then, as summing up the whole and bringing clearly into the foreground their crowning act of unfaithfulness in the crucifixion of the Lord of glory, he bursts forth into the exclamation: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been the betrayers and murderers: who have received the law by the disposition of angels and have not kept it." Acts 7: 51-53.

They had betrayed the highest trust, and proved themselves unworthy of the greatest honor, ever granted to a people. Not merely had God chosen them when they were very small and despised, in order that they might preserve the true worship and keep open the line for the appearance of the Messiah; not only had he wonderfully interfered in their favor, and time and again delivered them from trouble; not only had he, at the laying of the foundation of their government, himself come down from heaven to Mount Sinai and spoken with them; but he came encircled by troops of angels to render the transaction the more striking and to show that all the inhabitants of heaven were interested in the spectacle; thousands upon thousands of them came in his train, and through them, as messengers or heralds, his communica-

tion to Moses and his followers was made. The law they had thus received through the disposition, or ministration, of angels; the heavenly inhabitants were witnesses of the favor conferred upon earth; but they were witnesses, too, of the ingratitude of men, for the law thus received they had not kept.

No wonder that the audience of Stephen gnashed upon him with their teeth. There was a terrible sting in his closing words, and its sting was its truth. They could not deny the charge. They were cut to the heart, and stopping their ears (types in this of many hearers of the truth still in regard to things not palatable to them) they rushed upon him, and, stoning him to death, added another drop to the heavy load of guilt which was bearing their nation to destruction.

Fearful was that guilt: terrible was their punishment. But if such was the case with them, bearing in mind that we have not only the word spoken by angels, but also the clearer, the more alluring, the sweeter, word spoken directly to men by the eternal Son of God, how much greater will be our guilt, if we neglect him or refuse to obey his commands! "If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?" Heb. 2:3.

CHAPTER VII

IN THE APOCALYPSE

As the angels assumed an important position at the giving of the law, so at the close of revelation, in the midst of the burning splendor with which the Sun of Righteousness bathes the scene, they reappear with increased activity. In the grand drama of the Apocalypse they are among the most prominent actors.

It was through an angel that Jesus showed to his disciple the glorious visions which that Revelation contains. Rev. 1:1.

When the book of prophecy was about to be unrolled, a strong angel proclaimed with a loud voice (Rev. 5:2), "Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof?" though no created being, neither man nor angel, was found worthy: the Son of God alone.

Four angels are seen standing on the four quarters of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree to do any hurt, until the servants of God had been sealed. Rev. 7:1-3.

Seven angels sound to the nations seven trum-

pets of warning, an announcement of coming destruction. Rev. 8-10.

Seven angels pour out the vials of God's wrath upon the earth. Rev. 16-18.

To one is given the commission to lay hold of Satan and cast him into the bottomless pit. Rev. 20.

Another takes John away in the spirit to see the Bride, the Lamb's wife, the New Jerusalem in its glory. Rev. 21 : 10.

Thus whether God is pouring out his judgments, or gently distilling his mercies, defending the saints, or destroying the great adversary, he employs his heavenly messengers.

Without undertaking to consider the precise reference of these revelations, under the general meaning which certainly attaches to the whole, they show us that, in the great development of God's purpose in his Church and in the world since the coming of Christ, the angels assume even a more obtrusive position than they did under the Old Testament. The figurative language of this most symbolical of all the books of the Bible certainly conveys to us the idea that, in the administration of God's providence and grace now, the angels are really evermore ascending and descending between heaven and earth in the execution of his commissions.

But the particular incidents which have been alluded to partake of the miraculous character.

The angels, if they did not in all cases visibly appear to men, are represented by the inspired pen as coming down within the range of nature's ordinary operations, and in an extraordinary manner inflicting punishment or averting danger. Have we any reason to believe that, in conformity with what are called, and what in a proper sense we may admit to be, the established laws of nature, there is room for the operation of angels now, so that they really do intervene in the affairs of men as they did during the period of revelation?

The answer to this question, and the exhibition of the mode in which angels do still minister, will form the matter of another chapter. That may be anticipated by a quotation which will closely bind together this and that.

The Ninety-first Psalm illustrates the security of those who put their trust in God, even with reference to temporal calamities. One part of it declares: "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet."

In the temptations with which Satan assailed our blessed Lord, he applied this to him. For when the great adversary took him up into the holy city and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, he said unto him: "If thou be the Son of God, cast thy-

self down, for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee : and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." (Matt. 4 : 6.) And they did wait on our divine Redeemer in a special manner during the days of his earthly residence.

They came before him and predicted and glorified his birth.

Scarcely had Satan's words died upon his ear before they ministered unto him in the wilderness of temptation.

Twelve legions of them would with joy have appeared for his deliverance from the traitorous designs of Judas, when he appeared at the head of the minions whom the priests had sent forth for Jesus' arrest.

When the hour for his resurrection approached, one descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door of the tomb and sat upon it, and, with his countenance like lightning and his raiment white as snow, caused the keepers to shake and become as dead men.

In that tomb, after he had left it, two angels appeared to Mary, one at the head, the other at the feet, where his body had lain. Who can doubt that they had been there watching him from the first, and after his resurrection continued to mark the sacred place?

Yes, the angels ministered to their Lord while he endured the fearful sufferings of his earthly

life. And in this they give assurance of what they still do for all his people.

The promise in the Ninety-first Psalm, while applying preëminently to Christ, does not belong to him exclusively. For it is written that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them." Ps. 34:7.

The Old Testament and the New are brilliant with them and their ministrations. And it cannot be that they cross our vision in glorious flight as we read the Bible, and vanish like dreams when we close the book.

"The past is full of them; they cannot have come to a sudden stop. They were never so active as when Christ came; and, if Christ the head is withdrawn, Christ the body remains in the Church; and they that ministered to the head, will they not minister to the members?" "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" There is enough to indicate what that ministry may be: that it will be one of sympathy and help to man; that angels' visits are not few and far between, but constant; signs of God's love and means of God's care; that

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep."

Heaven is not more distant than it was in Bible times; and even yet they continue to ascend and descend on God's missions. No longer can we

see them "speeding along the confines of the glowing sky." Their songs no more sweetly fall upon our ear during nature's solemn stillness. But they do still come forth from the realms of glory. Their last presence on earth was not known in Peter's prison. They have not forever departed within the veil. It is not true that

"Many a tear from human eye has started
Since angel touch has calmed a mortal brow."

In ways as real, though not altogether the same, as will be seen, the Bible declares they still minister on earth. And those who have a good hope in God through Jesus Christ our Lord may lie down upon their beds with the utterance of these sweet words :—

"Thy ministering spirits descend
To watch while thy saints are asleep;
By day and by night they attend
The heirs of salvation to keep.

"Bright seraphs dispatched from the throne,
Repair to their stations assigned;
And angels elect are sent down
To guard the elect of mankind.

"Their worship no interval knows;
Their fervor is still on the wing;
And while they protect my repose
They chant to the praise of my King.

"I too, at the season ordained,
Their chorus forever shall join;
And love and adore without end
Their faithful Creator and mine."

CHAPTER VIII

IN NATURE

As has already been said, the words which Jesus addressed to Nathanael, "Hereafter shall ye see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man," evidently refer to the vision in which Jacob beheld the angels of God ascending and descending on the ladder which reached to heaven. "That was an image of the incarnation and divinity of our Lord and of his mediatorial work which should engage the angels as ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation." It is through him and on his errands that the heavenly inhabitants go and come from the earth.

This reference by our Lord to the dream seems to teach that the ministration of angels, instead of ceasing with his coming, was continued and increased. That event made it the more prominent.

It remains to exhibit the various ways in which the Bible teaches that angels are still occupied in human affairs.

In the execution of God's purposes, the operations of nature seem to be under angelic guidance. Christ, the mediatorial King, uses them in the government of his kingdom of nature.

Three striking instances from the books of revelation indicate this :—

When David sinned against the Lord in the unwarranted numbering of the people, of the three evils which were submitted to him, famine, destruction by his enemies, and pestilence, he preferred to fall immediately into the judicial hand of God : “so the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from morning even to the time appointed : and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men. And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough : stay now thine hand.” 2 Sam. 24 : 16.

When King Herod, after making a speech which called forth the plaudits of the people, listened complacently to their ascription of divinity to him, “immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, and he was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost.” Acts 12 : 23.

During the lifetime of Christ there was in Jerusalem a pool into which “an angel went down at a certain season and troubled the water : whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.” (John 5 : 3, 4.) The Revised Version of the Bible, following the critics generally, rejects the quoted words as an interpolation. Profs. Milligan and Moulton, in their International Revision Com-

mentary on John, say: "The omission of the remaining words of v. 3 and of the whole of v. 4 is supported by a weight of authority which it is impossible to set aside. The addition belongs, however, to a very early date, for its contents are clearly referred to by Tertullian early in the third century. It is evidently an explanatory comment first written in the margin by those who saw that the words of v. 7 imply incidents or opinions of which the narrative as it stands gives no account. The well-intentioned gloss was not long in finding its way into the text; and once there it gave the weight of the apostle's sanction to a statement which really represents only the popular belief."

But, as Trench says in *Notes on the Miracles of our Lord*: "There is nothing in the statement itself which might not have found a place in St. John. It rests upon that religious view of nature, which in all nature sees something beyond nature; which does not believe that it has discovered causes, when, in fact, it has only traced the sequence of phenomena; and which in all recognizes a going forth of the immediate power of God, invisible agencies of his, whether personal or otherwise, accomplishing his will."

In these cases the effects produced were similar to what are often observed: a pestilence ravaging a certain district of country and cutting down people by scores and hundreds; a loathsome disease suddenly appearing in a man, after a life of

dissipation, and speedily running its course and prostrating him on the bed of an agonizing death ; the curative effects of a medicinal water : these were the things which appeared to the spectators. Neither in the case of Herod nor of the pool was the angel visible ; but the pen of inspiration carries us back of and beyond the beneficial operation of the waters, and the odious operation of the disease, and shows us that the results, happening in connection with the immediate working of natural causes, owed their origin to the instantaneous influence of a messenger sent from God. He gave the touch which set the lower agencies at work.

And what is there to prevent the supposition that nature in all her departments is still committed to angels who operate above the range of our vision ? Modern scientific skeptics insist much upon the immutability of nature, and contemptuously reject the idea of the God of creation having anything to do with the work of his own hands. Nay, they shut out the idea of any God of creation at all. With them nature exhibits only a series of consequents produced by an eternally working series of antecedents. We believe, too, that, within the range of our observation, God has impressed certain laws, if they may be so called, upon the works of his hands, so that with all reasonable certainty we look for the recurrence of certain effects when particular causes exist ; and when the effects are exhibited we naturally suppose that the

causes have existed. But we remember, too, that of the infinitude of God's universe it is but a small portion which comes within the scope of our vision, and that the connection between the spirit world and the world of matter is a mystery. The chain of causes and effects we can trace back but a little way. And when we can trace it no further we rejoice to know that it is in the hand of God, and that there he can still interpose and so influence these lower things that in an apparently natural manner, and yet as the immediate effect of his power, he can cast abroad his judgments and breathe over us his mercies.

There it is, in intensifying, or in some particular way directing, natural causes, that the angels carry out his commands. According to the rabbis there is nothing in the world without an angel, not so much as a blade of grass. "The world is not wound up like a clock, to run down when it is worn out. It is governed by a personal God through his personal and ever-present interposition. It is not regulated by laws only, but by a Lawgiver." And he who established and upholds those laws commits their administration to his servants. He has not left the wonderful mechanism of the world to itself: through his angels he guides it in its onward course.

The personifications of poetry and the legends of mythology are obscure witnesses of this truth, which, however, can rest only on the revelations

of Scripture. This angelic agency, like that of man, does not exclude the action of secondary, or what are called natural, causes, or interfere with the directness and universality of the providence of God.

Thus it is that in the breezes there are living spirits; and that God's angels guide the thunder-clouds. Thus it is that when the appalling pestilence sweeps the land, and gaunt famine stalks forth in his gloomy shroud, they are casting forth God's judgments: and when health resumes its sway and the fields bring forth plentifully, the earth is feeling the beneficial effects of their gentle zephyrs. Here it is, too, that we find the field of prayer's efficacy in nature, though there be no sudden jar in her proceedings.

CHAPTER IX

IN GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT

OUR mediatorial King Jesus employs the angels in his providential government over individuals and nations.¹

In 2 Peter 2:11 it seems to be intimated very clearly that they occupy a supervising position over the affairs of men and their governments. The apostle is contrasting them with men who were presumptuous, self-willed, not afraid to speak evil of dignities, "whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation

¹ Athenagoras in his *Plea for the Christians*, Ch. xxiv., says: "This is the office of the angels—to exercise providence for God over the things created and ordered by him; so that God may have the universal and general providence of the whole, while the particular parts are provided for by the angels appointed over them." On which it is commented: "Divine Providence does not exclude the ministry of angels by divine appointment." Another of the early writers thus expresses the same thought (Methodius, *From the Discourse on the Resurrection*, Part iii., 7): "According to the original constitution of angels, they were made by God in his providence, for the care of the universe; in order that while God exercises a perfect and general supervision over the whole, and keeps the supreme authority and power over all—for upon him their existence depends—the angels appointed for this purpose take charge of particulars." Yet God himself has charge of "particulars."

against them before the Lord." They bring their reports to God of the administration of affairs, but confine themselves to the statement of facts and rail not.

This idea of the angels watching the actions of men, and returning to God with their reports of the state of things on the earth, was not a novelty in New Testament times.

In the Book of Job we are told that there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord.

In 1 Kings 22 : 19 a prophet declared: "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: and the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab that he may go and fall at Ramoth Gilead?"

The prophecy of Zechariah has several references to this. In the first chapter he describes a vision of holy angels as ministers of providence, waiting on the Lord and ready to execute his commands. So, too, in 6 : 1-8, on which Thomas Scott comments:—

"It seems more obvious and satisfactory to explain the passage to be descriptive of the providential government of God, as conducted by the ministration of angels according to his eternal purposes; and this with special reference to the affairs of the Jews and surrounding nations at that time. Angels are called the Lord's chariots.

(Ps. 68 : 17.) By them he goes forth to execute his providential will on earth. Ezek. 1 : 5-25 ; 11 : 22-25.

“The ‘chariot with red horses’ may represent the execution of his vengeance, by raising up bloody conquerors to waste guilty nations ; that with ‘black horses,’ the dreadful judgments of famine and pestilence which often follow the desolations of war ; the ‘white horses’ may signify the removal of those judgments, by returning peace, health, and plenty ; and ‘the grisled and bay’ may denote dispensations mingled with wrath and mercy, or those lighter judgments which are more common in the world. Rev. 6 : 1-8.

“Accordingly, the angel interpreted the vision to signify ‘the four spirits of the heavens’ ; that is, celestial spirits, sent forth from God, to execute his purposes in the different parts of the earth. Zech. 4 : 8-10 ; 1 Kings 22 : 19-23 ; Job 1 : 6 ; Luke 1 : 18-20.

“The red had already gone forth and were executing their commission in the wars by which the Persian kings wasted the Chaldeans and other nations in those parts ; the black were about to follow them into the north country ; and then the white would go forth after them. But the grisled were about to go toward the south, into Egypt and other countries to the south of Judah ; yet the bay which were connected with them sought to go to and fro through the earth, and obtained per-

mission so to do. 'Those which were represented by the bay (not being designed to any particular place) went forth to pass to and fro throughout the earth, to take charge of the Church of God scattered in all parts of the world.' *Bp. Hall*.

"At length the prophet's divine instructor informed him that those which had gone 'toward the north country had quieted his spirit' respecting those regions: the judgments inflicted on those who had harassed the Jews having satisfied the justice of God, he was appeased and willing that peace should be restored. *Is. 1:21-24, v. 24; Ezek. 5:13; 16:35-43, v. 42.*"

The assertion of the Apostle Paul in *1 Cor. 4:9* implies that the angels are very careful observers of the world, and specially of the affairs of the Church: "I think that God hath set forth the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels and to men." The expression there is very strong. From actual facts and institutions in the world, the inspired writers felt at liberty to draw illustrations while they would not endorse the thing itself. The figure which Paul here uses is drawn from the ancient theater: we have become a spectacle, a theater, a show exhibited in a theater to the universe, as well to angels as to men. Such were the sufferings of the apostles that men and angels gazed on them with wonder as people gaze on a spectacle in a theater. This brings the angels

down into contact with us, not merely rejoicing over the conversion of a sinner, but anxiously looking on his progress and sympathizing with his sufferings, glorying in his successes, and aiding him in his efforts.

These passages which indicate that the angels are ever very near to us, gazing upon us and noting us, throw light upon two exhortations addressed by Paul—one to women and the other to Timothy: 1 Cor. 11:10, "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels"; 1 Tim. 5:21, "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that thou observe these things without preferring one before another."

In the line of this, too, is the first stanza of the consecration hymn:—

"Witness, ye men and angels now,
Before the Lord we speak;
To him we make our solemn vow,
A vow we dare not break."

President Timothy Dwight (in his *Theology*, 1:312) goes further in the ministrations he attributes to the angels.

"Generally," he says, "the Scriptures inform us, especially in the visions of Ezekiel, Daniel, and John, that they are employed in executing various, great, and wonderful purposes of divine Providence. Here we behold them controlling evil spirits; wielding the elements of this world; producing,

directing, and terminating, the great convulsions of time ; conveying the souls of the just to the Paradise of God ; severing the wicked from the good at the Day of Judgment, and performing the duties of other dignified and glorious missions."

Then he adds :—

"Nor can we rationally doubt that they visit every other habitable world, with messages and designs of the same sublime import ; execute the great purposes of God in all parts of his kingdom ; and thus become, in an extensive sense, illustrious benefactors of the intelligent creation."

CHAPTER X

IN GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE

THUS present in nature as God's servants, and by his command operating upon it and through it upon men, and overlooking individuals and nations and reporting to God, it is especially as ministering spirits to God's chosen people that the angels are exhibited in the New Testament: and for this work they are prepared because of their ministrations in nature and in providence, which are subordinate to their work for the saved.

The apostle puts this in the strongest form: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Heb. i : 14.

They have nothing to do directly with the implanting and preserving of the divine life in the soul. That is altogether the work of the Holy Spirit. "As regards the ordinary history of the Church and the common experience of believers, they have to do with the averting of the evils which might too seriously affect the interests of righteousness, or the bringing about of results and

operations in the world which are fitted to promote them."

They do not reveal any new truth.¹ On the contrary, there are matters in the gospel which exercise their powers and form the subject of their intense study: for, says the apostle, speaking of the old prophets, "unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them which have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which things the angels desire to look into." But it is not with them merely an intellectual study. 1 Pet. 1:12.

As they announced the coming of Jesus, and ministered unto him while he was securing salvation through his sacrificial obedience and death, so they deeply sympathize with every step in the application of redemption to individual souls. Wherever the gospel is preached, every time that a minister of Christ stands up to proclaim the truth and beseech men to be reconciled to God, the angels hover over the place and look with anxiety for a favorable response of souls to the blessed invitation. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:7, 10);

¹ Chrysostom has this note on the angel directing Philip to go to meet the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8): "See angels assisting the preaching and not themselves preaching, but calling these to the work."

joy in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in which the angels share.¹

“The angels that walk up and down the earth, that are present in the congregations of the faithful, offended at aught unseemly among them (1 Cor. 11 : 10), joying to behold their order, but most of all joying when a sinner is converted,—there shall be joy before them, when the Church of the redeemed, quickened by the Holy Spirit, summons them to join with it in consenting hymns of thanksgiving to God for the recovery of a lost soul. For, indeed, if the ‘sons of God’ shouted for joy and sang together at the first creation (Job 38 : 7), how much more when a new creation has found place, at the birth of a soul into everlasting life (Eph. 3 : 10; 1 Pet. 1 : 12); for, according to that exquisite word of St. Bernard’s, the tears of penitence are the wine of angels, and their conversion, as Luther says, causes *Te Deums* among the heavenly host.”²

¹“Note carefully the language here employed : it is not ‘joy among,’ or ‘on the part of,’ but ‘joy before’ [*ενωπιον*] or ‘in the presence of the angels of God.’ True to the idea of the parables, it is the great Shepherd, the great Owner himself, *whose properly the joy is over his own recovered property*; but so vast and exuberant is it (Zeph. 3 : 17) that, as if he could not keep it to himself, he ‘calletth his friends and neighbors together’—his whole celestial family—‘saying, Rejoice WITH ME, for I have found MY sheep, I have found MY property which was lost.’ In this sublime sense it is ‘joy’ before or ‘in the presence of the angels’ : they only ‘catch the flying joy,’ sharing it *with him*”—(Dr. David Brown, in *Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical, in loc.*)

² Trench, on *The Parables*, p. 315.

We may well believe that they continue to minister to those whose conversion gives them so much pleasure. They do for them what they did for our divine Redeemer.

Over him, from the beginning to the end of his earthly course, "all the spangled host kept watch in squadrons bright."

When his holy soul, annoyed and wearied by the baffled temptations of the evil one, was left alone, "angels came and ministered unto him." During his mysterious conflict they had withdrawn, that the honor of the triumph might be his alone; but now they appear with the food which he needed after his protracted fasting.

In the agony of Gethsemane, between the first and the second of those prayers which show so strongly the tremendous nature of the suffering which was coming upon him, an angel appeared from heaven, strengthening him, physically and mentally, for the final stage of the conflict.

May it not be thus still that in hours of peculiar trial and danger, and in answer to prayer, God strengthens his beloved ones?

Christian, has a flood of trouble ever been rolling in upon you, and, in answer to agonizing prayer, has a sweet peace been shed abroad in your mind and renewed strength been felt by you manfully to live for your God? Perhaps an angel has been at your side, sent by God, though invisible to you,

with a commission to uphold you in your life's struggle.

Has a black cloud of trouble ever appeared before you, and then as you approached it, weary and anxious, has it rolled away, leaving as its last appearance the beautiful rainbow of hope? Perhaps a good angel has been at work, smoothing your path and clearing your way up to the shining throne of heaven.

How beautifully Spenser expresses this in his *Faerie Queene* :—

And is there care in heaven? And is there love

In heavenly spirits to these creatures base

That may compassion of their evils move?

There is: else much more wretched were the case

Of men than beasts! But, oh! the exceeding grace

Of highest God that loves his creatures so,

And all his works with mercy doth embrace

That blessed angels he sends to and fro

To serve to wicked men, to serve his wicked foe.

How oft do they their silvery bowers leave

To come to succor us that succor want!

How oft do they with golden pinions cleave

The fleeting skies, like flying pursuivant,

Against foul fiends to aid us militant!

They for us fight, they watch, they duly ward,

And their bright squadrons round about us plant,

And all for love, and nothing for reward:

Oh, why should heavenly God to men have such regard!

Through life the heavenly messengers watch over and minister to the children of God. Nor does their ministration cease with life. Those

whose conversion they rejoice over, and around whose head they hover to protect and defend, when they die are carried by the angels to heaven. Christ teaches this in his parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, when he says that "Lazarus died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom."

The apocryphal "Revelation of Paul" has this description of the death of the righteous: "I looked and saw one of the sons of men falling near death. And the angel says to me: This is a righteous man, and behold all his works stand beside him in the hour of his necessity. And there were beside him good angels, and along with them also evil angels. And the evil angels indeed found no place in him, but the good took possession of the soul of the righteous man and said to it: Take note of the body whence thou art coming out; for it is necessary for thee again to return to it in the day of the resurrection, that thou mayst receive what God has promised to the righteous. And the good angels who had received the soul of the righteous man saluted it as being well known to them. And it went with them, and the Spirit came forth to meet them, saying: Come, soul, enter into the place of the resurrection, which God hath prepared for his righteous ones."

It was the cautious and didactic Charles Hodge who thus wrote:—

"The angels not only execute the will of God

in the natural world, but they also act on the minds of men. They have access to our minds and can influence them for good in accordance with the laws of our nature and in the use of appropriate means. They do not act by that direct operation which is the peculiar prerogative of God and his Spirit, but by the suggestion of truth and guidance of thought and feeling, such as one man may act upon another. If the angels may communicate with one another, there is no reason why they may not, in like manner, communicate with our spirits. In the Scriptures, therefore, the angels are represented as not only affording general guidance and protection, but also as giving inward strength and consolation. If an angel strengthened our Lord himself after his agony in the garden, his people also may experience the support of angels; and if evil angels tempt to sin, good angels may allure to holiness. Certain it is that a wide influence and operation are attributed to them in Scripture in furthering the welfare of the children of God, and in protecting them from evil and defending them from their enemies. The use which our Lord makes of the promise, 'He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands lest thou dash thy foot against a stone' (Ps. 91: 11, 12), shows that it is not to be taken as a mere poetic form of promising divine protection. They watch over infants (Matt. 18: 10); they aid those

of mature age (Ps. 34 : 7), and are present with the dying." ¹

Around the beds and through the chambers of the noble and great of earth, troops of friends and dependents gather, when the messenger death has entered the house. Hourly bulletins are sent out to keep the people informed of the progress of the disease, or the prospect of recovery. And when at length the spirit departs, deep throbs of anguish are heard in the death room. Expressions of condolence and sympathy are received from all quarters ; and a vast crowd is ready to follow the corpse to its last resting place.

But a nobler spectacle is exhibited at the death bed of a child of God, even though he may have no earthly friends by him ; even though a hovel or a prison may be his abode ; even though it may not be said of him,

"On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires :"

for though of earthly friends there may be none, and all solacing ministrations be wanting, the precious words are whispered in his ear :—

"Angels joyful to attend,
Hovering round thy pillow bend,
Wait to catch the signal given,
And escort thee quick to heaven."

¹ *Systematic Theology*, I : 642.

What prominence Toplady gives to the angels, in the experience and joyful assurance of Christians on their dying bed, as he expressed it in the hymn which, because of its length, some hymnals omit and others cut !

When languor and disease invade
This trembling house of clay,
'Tis sweet to look beyond the cage,
And long to fly away :

Sweet to look inward, and attend
The whispers of his love ;
Sweet to look upward to the place
Where Jesus pleads above :

Sweet to look back, and see my name
In life's fair book set down ;
Sweet to look forward, and behold
Eternal joys my own :

Sweet to reflect how Grace Divine
My sins on Jesus laid ;
Sweet to remember that his blood
My debt of sufferings paid :

Sweet on his righteousness to stand
Which saves from second death :
Sweet to experience day by day
His Spirit's quickening breath :

Sweet on his faithfulness to rest,
Whose love can never end ;
Sweet on his covenant of grace
For all things to depend :

Sweet in the confidence of faith
To trust his firm decrees ;
Sweet to lie passive in his hand
And know no will but his :

Sweet to rejoice in lively hope,
That when my change shall come,
Angels will hover round my bed
And waft my spirit home.

If such the views which grace unfolds,
Weak as it is below,
What raptures must the Church above
In Jesus' presence know !

If such the sweetness of the stream,
What must the fountain be,
Where saints and angels draw their bliss
Immediately from thee !

CHAPTER XI

GUARDIAN ANGELS

It has been a favorite notion with some that each person, first each child and then each believer, has a separate guardian angel. There is an old painting by one of the masters which exhibits a little child, with bright, simple face, walking trustingly by the precipice and the serpent and the thorn, while an angel walks beside with folded wings and eager watch and a guiding hand on the child's shoulder.¹

¹ "The belief in a realm of angelic spirits was universal in the Church" in the early ages. "They were the instruments of divine providence and the messengers of God. Not only were they guardians of nations, but each individual was held to have his guardian angel, fulfilling an office like that of the tutelar genius under the old religion." (Fisher's *History of the Christian Church*, p. 81.) Did Bishop Ken (1700) give expression to this view in his hymn, "All praise to thee, my God, this night," in the following stanzas which in its full form it contains?—

O may my guardian, while I sleep,
Close to my bed his vigils keep;
His love angelical instil;
Stop all the avenues of ill:

May he celestial joy rehearse,
And thought to thought with me converse;
Or in my stead all the night long,
Sing to my God a grateful song.

Some of the early Christian writers held further that there was a good and a bad angel to each.

A modification of this view is presented in the following verses, which are touching, though imaginative :—

Man hath two attendant angels
Ever waiting at his side,
With him whereso'er he wanders,
Whereso'er his feet abide.
One to warn him when he darkleth
And rebuke him if he stray ;
One to leave him to his nature
And so let him go his way.
Two recording spirits, reading
All his life's minutest part,
Looking in his soul, and listening
To the beatings of his heart.
Each, with pen of fire electric
Writes the good or evil wrought ;
Writes with truth that odds not, errs not,
Purpose, action, word, and thought.
One, the teacher and reprover,
Marks each heaven-deserving deed ;
Graves it with the lightning's vigor,
Seals it with the lightning's speed ;
For the good that man achieveth—
Good beyond an angel's doubt—
Such remains for aye and ever,
And can not be blotted out.
One (severe and silent watcher !)
Noteth every crime and guile,
Writes it with a holy duty,
Seals it not, but waits awhile ;
If the evil doer cry not—
" God, forgive me !" ere he sleeps,
Then the sad, stern spirit seals it,
And the gentler spirit weeps.

This, however, was the introduction in a new shape of a heathen error—the tutelary demon of the Greeks and the genius of the Romans.

There are two passages in Scripture which are specially referred to by those who believe that each person has his particular guardian angel.

When Peter was delivered from prison by an angel, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of Mark. On knocking, the maid who went to the gate, knowing his voice, opened it not for gladness, but ran in and told how Peter stood before the gate. The company declared she was mad: for they knew Peter had been securely locked in prison and guarded by soldiers. But the maid constantly affirmed that it was even as she had said. Then said they, "It is his angel." Acts 12:15.

But if it could be proved that this was the meaning of the words used, it must be observed that they were but the hasty utterance of Christians who were subject to error, just as we now are. The inspired pen does not declare that it was his angel. It simply states that some who were gathered in the house said so. So that this is not a word of God: it is one of the words of men, which the inspired history in its faithful portraiture of the early Church has given. Besides, a careful examination of the whole passage will show that neither Peter, nor Luke as the writer of the account, entertained this view.

The other passage is Matt. 18:10. Jesus has

a child before him. Taking advantage of this to impress upon the people the necessity for coming to him with the humble, trusting spirit which is one of the beautiful characteristics of children, he at the same time shows the dignity of those who thus become the spiritual children of God, when he says : " Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones : for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

This certainly does show that God's people " are objects of interest and care to the angels in heaven " : " the angels are theirs, ministering spirits to them, and always intent to execute the orders of the heavenly King." But in the words themselves, and without a prepossession in favor of the idea obtained from some other quarter, we cannot see anything of a particular guardian angel for each person.

There is an exceedingly interesting incident in Old Testament history which flashes forward great light on this subject. It is in the sixth chapter of the Second Book of Kings.

During the wars which were carried on between Syria and Israel, Elisha the prophet once and again discovered to the king of Israel the plans which had been formed by the king of Syria. The movements of the Syrian king, which were intended to take Israel by surprise, were thus anticipated and thwarted. Exasperated on learning that the

prophet was the cause of this, Ben-hadad sent an immense host to encompass the town where Elisha was, so that he could not escape. This was accomplished in one night, and in the morning the servant of the prophet was struck with amazement and fear at the sight of the host. But, at the prayer of his master, the Lord in some mysterious way opened the eyes of the servant and enabled him to pierce into the spirit world, and "behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." (2 Kings 6:17.) Not one angel only, but an immense host of angels were gathered in that one spot to defend a single servant of God.

It is not an unwarranted act of imagination to suppose that it is somewhat here as it is in the conduct of the wars of the world.

When two great armies are arrayed against each other, much depends on strategical movements and skillful handling of forces. If one has concentrated itself at a certain point, and erected along an extended line of country a chain of strong fortifications which it would be madness to attack in front, a master of strategy on the other side will gradually work his way into their rear. He will pierce the line in one important point, in the meanwhile concentrating his forces and so threatening those of the enemy that as a matter of self-preservation they must retreat from the whole line. If, in order to secure this result, one dangerous

fortification must be attacked boldly in the front, there will be a heavy concentration of force against that point. Then if, in defense, while the assault is proceeding, the enemy concentrate his main strength on the right of the attacking force and there compel it to give way, while heavy reinforcements are called to its assistance, a bold charge will be made upon the other comparatively exposed wing of the enemy, and a successful storming party will turn a temporary success into a ruinous loss.

In the universe of God there is a tremendous conflict going on. Long ago it began with the Satanic rebellion against the Lord of hosts. Now it has been transferred to earth. The prize for which the combatants contend is the human soul. On the one hand are the Messiah, the Prince of Peace, and his holy angels: on the other, Satan and his legions.

As in human wars there are places of more importance as military posts than others, so in this great spiritual war there are persons of far more value in the prosecution of Christ's work than others. Every soul has a value: every soul is eagerly fought for: all that hell can do is done to keep every soul from Christ, or, when it has returned to its allegiance to him, to allure it to indolence and ruin by temptations and fierce attacks. Upon every such soul the arms of the enemy are brought to bear. All along the line the conflict

is fierce. The missiles of danger fly round, and the heavenly angels are kept constantly active in warding them off and averting a successful attack.

But in the beginning of the Christian Church Paul was a more important man than others. Luther and Calvin and Knox occupied peculiarly prominent positions in Reformation times because of the work which was committed to them by God. Men of talent and ability united with heartfelt piety, placed in responsible positions, can still do more for Christ; while their fall, their departure from their sworn allegiance to heaven, would be a glorious triumph throughout the vastness of Pandemonium. Nor in this does God judge as man would do. There are humble Christians, unknown to the world, who in spirituality living close to God, and in that known to both worlds of angels, are the center of observation. And who can doubt that on such the rebel leader will concentrate his force, and against them direct his heavy artillery in order that he may effect a lodgment there and carry them under his odious flag? But there, too, the great Prince can throw his hosts to ward off the missiles, turn the flank of the enemy, and send him howling back farther and farther toward his everlasting abode. Believers may thus be subject to fearful attacks. Alone they cannot repel them with success:—

“For other arms and other weapons must
Be those that quell the might of hellish charms.”

But God gives his angels charge over them to keep them in all their ways. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them." Ps. 34 : 7.

CHAPTER XII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE

THIS chapter, which is a transcript of a part of the compact article on "Angels," in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, will in another form sum up what has been presented on their ministrations, and exhibit a development in those ministrations which is a striking history.

The angels are ministers of what is commonly called the "supernatural," or perhaps more correctly the "spiritual," providence of God; as agents in the great scheme of the spiritual redemption and sanctification of man, of which the Bible is the record. The representations of them are different in different books of Scripture, in the Old Testament and in the New; but the reasons of the difference are to be found in the differences of scope attributable to the books themselves. As different parts of God's providence are brought out, so also arise different views of his angelic ministers.

In the Book of Job, which deals with "Natural Religion," they are spoken of but vaguely, as surrounding God's throne above and rejoicing in the completion of his creative work. (Job 1:6; 2:1;

37:7.) No direct and visible appearance to man is even hinted at.

In the Book of Genesis, there is no notice of angelic appearance till after the call of Abraham. Then, as the book is the history of the *chosen family*, so the angels mingle with and watch over its family life, entertained by Abraham and by Lot (Gen. 18 and 19), guiding Abraham's servant to Padan-aram (24:7, 40), seen by the fugitive Jacob at Bethel (28:12), and welcoming his return at Mahanaim (32:1). Their ministry hallows domestic life, in its trials and its blessings alike, and is closer, more familiar, and less awful, than in after times. (Contrast Gen. 18 with Judges 6:21, 22; 13:16, 22.)

In the subsequent history, that of a *chosen nation*, the angels are represented more as ministers of wrath and mercy, messengers of a King, rather than common children of one Father. It is, moreover, to be observed, that the records of their appearance belong specially to two periods, that of the Judges and that of the captivity, which were transition periods in Israelitish history, the former one destitute of direct revelation or prophetic guidance, the latter one of special trial and unusual contact with heathenism. During the life of Joshua, there is no record of the appearance of created angels, and only obscure reference to angels at all. In the Book of Judges, angels appear at once to rebuke idolatry (2:1-4), to call Gideon

(6 : 11, etc.), and to consecrate Samson (13 : 3, etc.) to the work of deliverance.

The prophetic office begins with Samuel, and immediately angelic guidance is withheld, except when needed by the prophets themselves (1 Kings 19 : 5 ; 2 Kings 6 : 17). During the prophetic and kingly period, angels are spoken of only as ministers of God in the operations of nature. But in the captivity, when the Jews were in the presence of foreign nations, each claiming its tutelary deity, then to the prophets Daniel and Zechariah angels are revealed in a fresh light, as watching not only over Jerusalem, but also over heathen kingdoms, under the providence and to work out the designs of the Lord. (See Zech. *passim* and Dan. 4 : 13, 23 ; 10 : 10, 13, 20, 21, etc.) In the whole period, they, as truly as the prophets and kings themselves, are seen as God's ministers, watching over the *national life* of the subjects of the great King.

The *Incarnation* marks a new epoch of angelic ministration. "The angel of Jehovah," the Lord of all created beings, having now descended from heaven to earth, it was natural that his servants should continue to do him service there. Whether to predict and glorify his birth itself (Matt. 1 : 20 ; Luke 1 and 2), to minister to him after his temptation and agony (Matt. 4 : 11 ; Luke 23 : 43), or to declare his resurrection and triumphant ascension (Matt. 28 : 2 ; John 20 : 12 ; Acts 1 : 10, 11), they seem now to be indeed "ascending and descending

on the Son of man," almost as though transferring to earth the ministrations of heaven. It is clearly seen that whatever was done by them for men in earlier days was but typical of and flowing from their service to him. (See Ps. 91 : 11, comp. Matt. 4 : 6.)

The New Testament is the history of the *Church of Christ*, every member of which is united to him. Accordingly, the angels are revealed now as "ministering spirits" to each individual member of Christ for his spiritual guidance and aid (Heb. 1 : 14). The records of their visible appearance are but unfrequent (Acts 5 : 19 ; 8 : 26 ; 10 : 3 ; 12 : 7 ; 27 : 23) ; but their presence and their aid are referred to familiarly, almost as things of course, after the Incarnation. They are spoken of as watching over Christ's little ones (Matt. 18 : 10) ; as rejoicing over a penitent sinner (Luke 15 : 10) ; as present in the worship of Christians (1 Cor. 11 : 10), and (perhaps) bringing their prayers before God (Rev. 8 : 3, 4) ; and as bearing the souls of the redeemed into Paradise (Luke 16 : 22). In one word, they are Christ's ministers of grace now, as they shall be of judgment hereafter (Matt. 13 : 39, 41, 49 ; 16 : 27 ; 21 : 34, etc.). By what method they act we cannot know of ourselves, nor are we told, perhaps lest we should worship them instead of Him whose servants they are (see Col. 2 : 18 ; Rev. 22 : 9) ; but of course their agency, like that of human ministers, depends for its efficacy on the aid of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER XIII

PRACTICAL LESSONS

MANY practical bearings of the most interesting subject which is the theme of our little volume have been indicated in connection with the different topics as they have been presented. A few further reflections bearing on the whole subject will close the book.

1. As to the value of the revelations, concerning the angels, which the Bible contains: in them is found a partial satisfaction of that craving for the knowledge of creatures higher than ourselves and yet fellow-servants of God, which in its diseased form becomes polytheism. Its full satisfaction is to be found in the Incarnation alone, and it is to be noticed that after the revelation of God in the flesh the angelic ministrations recorded are indeed fewer, but the references to the angels are far more frequent—as though the danger of polytheistic idolatry had, comparatively speaking, passed away.¹

2. They pay a wonderful tribute to the inspired word of God, and the nature of the revelations which it makes concerning them have a reflex

¹ Dr. Alfred Barry, in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Angels."

influence in confirming its divine origin. Robert Hall in his magnificent style has portrayed this :—

“The historical Scriptures relate to us, without any error, the mysterious intervention of angels in the affairs of the world, in those of the Church, and those of heaven. These creatures, ardent and pure, humble and sublime, whose existence the Bible alone has revealed to us, do they not differ from men as much as the heavens differ from the earth? Was anything like unto angels ever conceived by the minds of any race of men, their poets, or their sages? No; their imaginations have not even come near them. People at all times have taken pleasure in painting those invisible beings, inhabitants of celestial regions, adorned with all those superior qualities that charm the heart of man. But how low, puerile, and vulgar are all their conceptions! Study the angels of the Scriptures; not only is everything there grand, holy, and worthy of God; not only is their character at once ardent and sublime, compassionate and majestic, constantly brought before us there by their names, their attributes, their employments, their habitations, their songs, their contemplation of the depths of redemption, and the joys of their love; but what must strike us more than all is the perfect harmony of the whole, that all these features agree and are maintained in their justest proportions. In a word, this doctrine, sustained from one end of Scripture to the other, bears the most

striking testimony to its inspiration from God. While all the mythologies tell us of the inhabitants of the moon and the planets, the Bible does not contain one word about them,—it tells us nothing of the second heaven; but it depicts the inhabitants of the third heaven, or the heaven of heavens. Descriptions of the angels are numerous, without wearying, and full of details. They are exhibited to us in every situation, in heaven and upon earth, before God and before men, ministers of mercy and sometimes executors of vengeance; standing before God, adoring him day and night; but also employed in the service of the humblest believer. We are defiled, they are perfect; we are selfish, they melt with charity; we are haughty, they are gentle; we are vain and proud in bodies that worms will consume, they are humble in glory and immortality; we are disturbed by passions, they are fervent in spirit,—neither can they die. This uniformity, this purity, comes not from man—it is from God.”

3. The strange infatuation which attaches to a modern error, that was once rampant but has now almost disappeared, may be simply noticed.

It is the plain teaching of the Bible, and it should receive more attention than is generally given to it, that there is communication between heaven and earth through the angels. They are constantly around us, executing God's commands and acting for us. Scriptures abound with illus-

trations of this. But there is in the revealed books no coming and going between heaven and earth of human spirits, for the purpose of making communications at least. There is not a single intimation of the departed spirits of men holding intercourse with the living: those who advocate it may make the most of the Witch of Endor. Well, now, can any one believe that if there were such a thing, the Bible, which is so full of notices of angel ministrations, which tells so much about men and their future state, would not have given the slightest hint of it? Strange, that when any were looking round for a system of communication with the spirit world, they should have taken the spirits of departed men instead of angels. But no, it is not strange: for there the decisive dictum of the apostle would have met them: "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Any revelation which does not agree with this is another gospel—a false gospel. If it contains nothing else, we do not want a spirit to tell it. If it has something inconsistent with this, it is not from heaven. It is true

"That millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen both when we wake and when we sleep."

But they are not the departed spirits of men. They are angels; and they do not reveal anything

new, or trifle with the most sacred feelings of our nature, by lowering the condition of heaven to the carnalities of earth.

4. What feelings in regard to the angels themselves does the whole subject call for?

Certainly, not those of worship. When John fell down to worship the angel who showed him the glorious things that he had seen, the angel replied to him: "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." (Rev. 22:8, 9.) And earlier still the Apostle Paul warned believers: "Let no man beguile you of your reward in voluntary humility and worshipping of angels." Col. 2:18.

5. But they may well be prominent *in* our prayers. "Every good man and sincere believer is under the constant care and inspection of these spiritual guardians. The very meanest, meekest, and most despicable of Christ's 'little ones,' who believe on him, are thought not unworthy the ever solicitous concern and never failing patronage of the highest and greatest of the angels. Let us then thank God for these bright guardians; let us hearten ourselves with their assistance against temptations; and not only pray, but endeavor daily, that the will of our Father may be done in us, upon earth, with the same cheerfulness and vigilance as it is by them in heaven. And let us beg of God that at last, when we shall leave the

earth, they may conduct us to the regions of immortal happiness, to the 'innumerable company of angels,' where we shall be ever with them and like unto them."

Origen has this pleasing paragraph: "When we have the favor of God, we have also the good will of all angels and spirits who are friends of God. For they know who are worthy of the divine approval, and they are not only well disposed to them, but they coöperate with them in their endeavors to please God; they seek his favor on their behalf; with their prayers they join their own prayers and intercessions for them. We may, indeed, boldly say that men who aspire after better things have, when they pray to God, tens of thousands of sacred powers upon their side."¹

6. Therefore, we should think of them and love them as dear friends who are now working for us and with us, and whom we shall, if faithful to them and to ourselves, see in the happy hereafter, though we cannot see them now. And their ministrations in our interest, and the knowledge that they behold our daily conduct, should be an added plea for us all to be Christians, and faithful Christians.

"They watch by the cradle of the newborn babe, and spread their celestial wings round the tottering steps of infancy. If the path of life be difficult and thorny, and evil spirits work us shame and woe, they sustain us; they bear the voice of

¹ *Against Celsus*, ch. 64.

our complaining, of our supplication, of our repentance, up to the foot of God's throne, and bring us back in return a pitying benediction to strengthen and to cheer. When passion and temptation strive for the mastery, they encourage us to resist; when we conquer, they crown us; when we falter and fail, they compassionate and grieve over us; when we are obstinate in polluting our own souls, and perverted not only in act but in will, they leave us: and woe to them that are so left! But the good angel does not quit his charge until his protection is despised, rejected, and utterly repudiated. Wonderful the fervor of their love, wonderful their meekness and patience, who endure from day to day the spectacle of the unveiled human heart with all its miserable weaknesses and vanities, its inordinate desires and selfish purposes."

How pure in heart and life, then, we should seek to be!

7. An anonymous writer finds in the contemplation of the angels an incitement to persistent activity in the divine life:—

How can I sleep while angels sing,
When all the saints on high
Cry "Glory" to the eternal King,
The Lamb that once did die:
When guardian angels fill the room
And, hovering round my bed,
Do clap their wings, in love to him
Who is my glorious Head.

Such joyful spirits never sleep,
Their love is ever new;
Then, O my soul, no longer cease
To love and praise him too;
For I, of all the race that fell,
Or all the heavenly host,
Have greatest cause, with humbler soul,
To love and praise him most.

Did God the Father love men so,
As to give up his Son
To be a ransom, and redeem
Them from the sins they'd done?
Did Jesus leave the Father's breast,
That heaven of heavens on high,
To come to earth, this world of woe,
For guilty worms to die?

No longer, then, will I lie here,
But rise, and praise, and pray!
And join to sing, while I enjoy
A glimpse of heavenly day.
Lord, give me strength to die to sin,
To run the Christian race;
To live to God, and glorify
The riches of his grace.

8. And what an argument here with which to win the neglecter of the gospel and of Jesus!

“Jesus, and shall it ever be,
A mortal man ashamed of thee?
Ashamed of thee whom angels praise,
Whose glories shine through endless days!”

“There are no tears in heaven; but when angels come down to earth, it may be they can fall

into companionship with human sadness and even learn to weep; and where is the spectacle that shall wring tears from eyes which they were never meant to stain, if it be not that of the obstinate rejection of the gospel of reconciliation, and of careless trifling with a thing so inestimably precious as the soul? Old men, buried with your gold, angels weep over you! Young men, frittering away your days in vanities and pleasures, angels weep over you!"

9. When Christ comes in glory at the last day, he is to be accompanied by his holy angels. They are to separate the tares from the wheat and cast the tares into their everlasting burning. And then (oh! the terrible nature of the sting) lost souls are to be tormented in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb! The angels are now hovering over the impenitent, waiting with interest to know how they will decide the all-important question. They who are witnesses here of the long-suffering love of the Lamb will there be witnesses of his undying wrath on those who die without having received Christ as their Saviour. "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God." Luke 12:9.

But on the other hand, the angels are to be sent forth with the great sound of a trumpet, and they

shall gather together God's elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (Matt. 24:31.) The dead shall come forth from their graves, and those who are alive shall be caught up by the angels in a cloud to meet the Lord in the air. And then, together, angels and redeemed men shall ascend into that glorious temple in which, with united voices, they shall be engaged in worshipping God and praising the Lamb. Behold them

“In celestial measures move,
Circling the throne and singing.”

Catch the notes of their glorious song. Our elder brothers began it at the creation, while they rejoiced over the new-made earth. In the grand anthem with which they accompanied the Incarnation, they carried it to a higher strain. Every sinner saved by grace gives occasion for a new note. Every soul taken to heaven joins in the song and increases the volume. When the whole work of salvation is complete, it will roll on with a never ending harmony throughout the unbounded universe of God. If we are faithful now, we shall join in it too. Let us remember, then, whither we are going and who are to be our companions there. In spirit let us all our life long unite with them in their song. Let our whole conduct be at once the invitation and the response to the invitation: “Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel

in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul." Ps. 103 : 20-22.

10. And while, day by day, encouraged the more to faithfulness in the duties of the Christian life, to the patient endurance of its trials, to the deeper realization of its joys, and to the more thorough preparation for the glory that is yet to be revealed, by the precious truths concerning the angels and their relation to us, let us cultivate this

LONGING AFTER HEAVEN

Ye angels who stand round the throne,
And view my Immanuel's face,
In rapturous songs make him known;
Tune, tune your soft harps to his praise.
He formed you the spirits you are,
So happy, so noble, so good;
While others sunk down in despair,
Confirmed by his power, ye stood.

Ye saints who stand nearer than they,
And cast your bright crowns at his feet,
His grace and his glory display,
And all his rich mercy repeat;
He snatched you from hell and the grave,
He ransomed from death and despair;
For you he was mighty to save,
Almighty to bring you safe there.

Oh, when will the period appear
When I shall unite in your song?
I'm weary of lingering here,
And I to your Saviour belong.
I'm fettered and chained up in clay;
I struggle and pant to be free;
I long to be soaring away,
My God and my Saviour to see.

I want to put on my attire,
Washed white in the blood of the Lamb;
I want to be one of your choir,
And tune my sweet harp to his name.
I want,—oh, I want to be there,
Where sorrow and sin bid adieu,
Your joy and your friendship to share,
To wonder and worship with you.

APPENDIX

CONFESSIONAL STATEMENTS

OUR little volume has been exhibiting the teaching of the Bible concerning the angels. Its references and quotations suggest the prominence which, in all ages of the Church, the subject has occupied in religious literature, in the writings of theologians and poets, and especially in hymnology; while perhaps the practical influence on the minds of the masses of Christians has been very slight. The creeds and confessions of the Church have not largely dealt with these heavenly creatures. They have not, however, been entirely overlooked by all.

I. THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS have the following declarations :

I. *Confession of Faith*

Ch. 3, sec. 3, 4. "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and *angels* are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

"These *angels* and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and

definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished."

Ch. 5, sec. 4. "The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of *angels* and men, and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God; who being most holy and righteous, neither is, nor can be the author or approver of sin."

Ch. 21, sec. 2. "*Religious worship* is to be given to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and to him alone: *not to angels*, saints, or any other creature: and since the fall, not without a mediator; nor in the mediation of any other but of Christ alone."

Ch. 33, sec. 1. "God hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father. In which day, not only *the apostate angels shall be judged*; but likewise all persons, that have lived upon earth, shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds; and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil."

2. *The Larger Catechism*

“Q. 12. *What are the decrees of God?*”

“A. God’s decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of his will, whereby, from all eternity, he hath, for his own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time, *especially concerning angels and men.*”

“Q. 13. *What hath God especially decreed concerning angels and men?*”

“A. God, by an eternal and immutable decree, out of his mere love, for the praise of his glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, *hath elected some angels to glory;* and in Christ hath chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof: and also, according to his sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of his own will (whereby he extendeth or withholdeth favor as he pleaseth), hath passed by, and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of his justice.”

“Q. 16. *How did God create angels?*”

“A. God created *all the angels*, spirits, immortal, holy, excelling in knowledge, mighty in power, to execute his commandments, and to praise his name, yet subject to change.”

“Q. 19. *What is God’s providence toward the angels?*”

“A. God by his providence permitted *some of the angels*, willfully and irrecoverably, to fall into sin

and damnation, limiting and ordering that, and all their sins, to his own glory; and established *the rest* in holiness and happiness; employing them all, at his pleasure, in the administration of his power, mercy, and justice."

"Q. 105. *What are the sins forbidden in the first commandment?*

Among the sins enumerated in the answer is "praying, or giving any religious worship, to saints, *angels*, or any other creatures."

"Q. 89. *What shall be done to the wicked at the day of judgment?*

"A. At the day of judgment, the wicked . . . shall be cast out from the favorable presence of God, and the *glorious fellowship with Christ*, his saints, and *all his holy angels*, into hell, to be punished with unspeakable torments both of body and soul, with the devil and his angels forever.

"Q. 90. *What shall be done to the righteous at the day of judgment?*

"A. At the day of judgment, the righteous, . . . shall join with him in the judging of reprobate angels and men: and shall be . . . made perfectly holy and happy both in body and soul, *in the company of innumerable saints and angels.*"

II. THE SECOND HELVETIC CONFESSION (A. D. 1556), ch. vii.: "Of the creation of all things; of angels, the devil, and man," says: "Among all the creatures, the angels and men are most excellent.

Touching angels, the Holy Scripture says, 'Who maketh his angels spirits, his ministers a flaming fire' (Ps. 104:4); also, 'Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' Heb. 1:14.

"Some angels persisted in obedience, and were appointed unto the faithful service of God and men; and others fell of their own accord, and ran headlong into destruction, and so became enemies to all good, and to all the faithful, etc.

"We condemn all opinions of all men whatsoever who think otherwise of the creation of angels, devils, and men than is delivered unto us by the Scriptures in the Apostolic Church of Christ."

III. THE BELGIC CONFESSION (A. D. 1561), art. 12: "He" [God] "also created the angels good, to be his messengers and to serve his elect; some of whom are fallen from that excellency, in which God created them, into everlasting perdition; and the others have, by the grace of God, remained steadfast and continued in their primitive state. The devils and evil spirits are so depraved that they are enemies of God and every good thing to the utmost of their power, as murderers watching to ruin the Church, and every member thereof, and by their wicked stratagems to destroy all; and are, therefore, by their own wickedness, adjudged to eternal damnation, daily expecting their horrible

torments. Therefore, we reject and abhor the error of the Sadducees, who deny the existence of spirits and angels; and also that of the Manichees, who assert that the devils have their origin of themselves, and that they are wicked of their own nature, without having been corrupted."

Art. 37, "Of the last judgment": "The faithful and elect shall be crowned with glory and honor; and the Son of God will confess their names before God his Father and *the elect angels*."

IV. THE IRISH ARTICLES (A. D. 1615): "Of the creation and government of all things": "18. In the beginning of time, when no creature had any being, God, by his word alone, in the space of six days, created all things, and afterward, by his providence, doth continue, propagate, and order them according to his own will.

"19. The principal creatures are angels and men.

"20. Of angels, some continued in that holy state wherein they were created, and are by God's grace forever established therein; others fell from the same, and are reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

V. THE CONFESSION OF THE FREE WILL BAPTISTS OF AMERICA (A. D. 1834, 1868): chapter 4, Creation:

"2. Of the angels: The angels were created by

God to glorify him and obey his commandments. Those who have kept their first estate he employs in ministering blessings to the heirs of salvation, and in executing his judgments upon the world."

VI. THE CONFESSION OF THE WALDENSES (A. D. 1655): "We believe: . . .

"7. That the angels were all in the beginning created pure and holy, but that some of them have fallen into irreparable corruption and perdition; and that the rest have persevered in their first purity by an effect of divine goodness, which has upheld and confirmed them."

"VII. THE LONGER CATECHISM OF THE ORTHODOX, CATHOLIC EASTERN CHURCH, examined and approved by the Most Holy Governing Synod, and published for the use of schools and of all orthodox Christians, by order of His Imperial Majesty," the Czar of Russia, deals more minutely with the subject than the foregoing:—

"99. What is meant in the creed by the word *invisible*?

"The *invisible* or *spiritual world*, to which belong the *angels*.

"100. What are the *angels*?

"Incorporeal spirits, having intelligence, will, and power.

"101. What means the name angel?

"It means a *messenger*.

“ 102. Why are they so called ?

“ Because God sends them to announce his will. Thus, for instance, Gabriel was sent to announce to the Most Holy Virgin Mary the conception of the Saviour.

“ 103. Which was created first, the *visible* world or the invisible ?

“ The invisible was created before the visible, and the angels before men.

“ 104. Can we find any testimony to this in Holy Scripture ?

“ In the Book of Job, God himself speaks of the earth thus: *Who laid the corner stone thereof? When the stars were created, all my angels praised me with a loud voice.* Job 38 : 6, 7.

“ 105. Whence is taken the name of *guardian* angels ?

“ From the following words of Holy Scripture: *He shall give his angels charge over thee, to guard thee in all thy ways.* Ps. 91 : 11.

“ 106. Has each one of us his guardian angels ?

“ Without doubt. Of this we may be assured from the following words of Jesus Christ: *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father, which is in heaven.* Matt. 18 : 10.

“ 107. Are all angels good and beneficent ?

“ No. There are also evil angels, otherwise called devils.

“ 108. How came they to be evil?

“ They were created good, but they swerved from their duty of perfect obedience to God, and so fell away from him into self-will, pride, and malice. According to the words of the Apostle Jude, they are *the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation.* Jude 6.

“ 109. What means the name *devil*?

“ It means *slanderer* or *deceiver*.

“ 110. Why are the evil angels called devils—that is, slanderers or deceivers?

“ Because they are ever laying snares for men, seeking to deceive them, and inspire them with false notions and evil wishes.”

VIII. IN CHRISTIAN ART the representations of angels are more numerous and even more striking than in the confessions, the theologians, the practical writings, the hymnology, of the Church. In them there is much that is imaginary and fanciful, and they reproduce in a remarkable manner the ideas concerning them which from time to time have prevailed in the Church. In one and all, however, “ we may trace, through various modifications of treatment, an embodied commentary upon the brief but expressive declaration concerning their nature and office which is given in the Epistle to the Hebrews (1 : 14). Worship, or service rendered unto God, and work of ministration done on God’s behalf to men, these are the two spheres

of angelic operation suggested in Holy Scripture, and these, under various modifications, curiously characteristic of the successive ages in which they are found, come before us in a series of monuments extending from the fourth to the close of the fourteenth century. . . . Absent (almost if not altogether) for the first four centuries, they subserve purposes of dogma in the fifth century; they are scriptural still, but also in one case legendary in the sixth. From that time forward, canonical and apocryphal Scripture and mediæval legend are mixed up together. We find them imperial in character, or sacerdotal and liturgical, as the case may be; while in the later Middle Ages even feudal notions were characteristically mixed up with the traditions concerning them derived from Holy Scripture." (Smith and Cheetham's Dictionary of Christian Antiquities, art. "Angels.")

IX. IN THE LITURGIES OF THE CHURCHES, the angels prominently appear in the beginning of worship. The *Te Deum laudamus* bursts forth with the declaration of their leadership in the praise of God:—

"We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.

"All the earth doth worship thee, the Father everlasting.

"To thee all angels cry aloud; the heavens and all the powers therein."

Or, in the Canticle, *Benedicite, omnia opera Domini*:—

“O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord; praise him and magnify him forever.

“O ye angels of the Lord, bless ye the Lord; praise him and magnify him forever.”

X. THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER has among its services for special days one for “Saint Michael and all angels.” For the Epistle, it gives Rev. 12: 7–12; the Gospel, St. Matt. 18: 1–10; and the Collect:—

“O everlasting God, who hast ordained and constituted the services of angels and men in a wonderful order; mercifully grant, that as all thy holy angels always do thee service in heaven; so, by thy appointment, they may succor and defend us on earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

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