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ing its advance. We cannot but feel that in their own interest, and in the interest of the Church of which they are the responsible ministers, the Bishops will do well to consider afresh the whole question. The best solution seems after all that which has many times been suggested during the last few years, namely, to exclude the service of Holy Communion altogether from the sphere of Prayer Book revision. Agreement upon the other points ought not then to be very difficult.

W. GUY JOHNSON.

THE HOLY ANGELS: THEIR APPEARANCES AND MINISTRATIONS.

BY THE REV. JOHN R. PALMER, Litt.D.

IN these days we need to bear in mind that true faith in the reality of the unseen world, and of a future life, does not necessitate any prying into the "secret things that belong unto the Lord our God," and which are not "revealed" unto us in His holy Word.¹ But the present subject is one which has always possessed a genuine and reasonable interest for Christian students and believers.

St. Matthew closes his account of the temptation of our Lord with the words—"and behold, angels came and ministered unto Him."² How full of comfort are these words! Is it not matter of rejoicing to know that at the end of our blessed Lord's forty days' fast and temptation He was strengthened and refreshed by the ministry of angels? They had looked down with wonder from their bright abode upon the mysterious conflict between their Lord and the Prince of Darkness, and now it is ended, they hasten to supply His wants. These holy spirits, St. Paul tells us, were witnesses in a special way of the mysterious Incarnation—"God manifest in the flesh was seen of angels."³ They sang at His birth.⁴ They ministered to Him after His temptation. They strengthened Him in His Agony.⁵ They announced his "glorious Resurrection."⁶ They "desire to look into"⁷ the mysteries of man's Redemption.

¹ Deut. xxix. 29.

⁴ St. Luke ii. 9-14.

⁶ Ib. xxiv. 4-8.

² St. Matt. iv. 11.

⁵ Ib. xxii. 43.

⁷ 1 Pet. i. 12.

³ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

They witness the trials and the triumphs of the servants of their Lord.¹ And the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews asks: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"² Our eyes see but the visible framework of the universe and this only partially, and those who share with us a common nature. We see not the holy spirits from a brighter world who throng our daily path. They are not the less real because our hands may not touch them, our eyes may not see them. And how often do we fail to realize that they are united with us in one Great Society. How often we grieve these loving friends who silently and invisibly watch over us in our earthly pilgrimage! And yet there is joy in their presence³ when the wanderer returns to Him whose will it is their glory to fulfil, and Who sends them on their gentle ministrations. How many sudden changes in untoward circumstances we may owe to their timely intervention we cannot tell. How often they have shielded us from harm and danger, and guided our steps in life's rough way, we may never know. How often they have desired, it may be, to comfort and strengthen us in the sorrows and afflictions of this life, we cannot relate. And they are in a very special sense the guardians of the "little ones" of Christ's flock. "In Heaven," said our blessed Lord, "*their* angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven."⁴ Precious words spoken of two classes—the childlike in heart, and the tender in years—the "little child," and the saint of maturer age. There is often a "wondrous intimacy" between these guileless souls and the Holy Angels. From Genesis to Revelation the gentle, active ministry of angels is brought before us in a multitude of ways, and under circumstances the most varied—in the history of the Patriarchs, in the visions of the Prophets, in the sacred songs of the Psalmists. They "sang together"⁵ at the creation, they appeared amid the tent-life of "the Friend of God,"⁶ to the sorrowing outcast in the lonely wilderness, to the aged priest amid the incense of the temple worship, and to the last surviving Apostle "in the isle of Patmos"⁷ Indeed, as we pass from the Old Testament to the New Testament, "fresh light from heaven discloses more of the invisible world," and shows

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 9.² Heb. i. 14.³ St. Luke xv. 10.⁴ St. Matt. xviii. 10.⁵ Job xxxviii. 7.⁶ St. Jas. ii. 23; Gen. xviii.⁷ Gen. xvi. 6-14, xxi. 14-21; St. Luke i. 5-25; Rev. i. 9.

us that we "stand towards it in new and unsuspected relations." Without entering into the domain of mediæval error as to "worshipping of angels,"¹ or seeking their intercessions, it would be well if we oftener and more thankfully meditated on the teaching of Holy Scripture so faithfully set forth by our Church, and dwelt upon the loving ministry of these bright and happy spirits, and if we endeavoured to realize our fellowship with them in offering that true worship which the Most High accepts. On the contrary, there are many in these days who systematically put them out of sight, who so frame their teaching and theology as to exclude all reference to their very existence. Such treatment of the blessed truths concerning these holy beings is in no sense agreeable to the mind of the English Church, as it is reflected in her Book of Common Prayer. In proof of this statement we would point out a few of the clearest intimations contained in that book of the faithful regard the Church has shown for this important branch of revealed truth. We would instance the Collect for "St. Michael and *all-Angels*" in which is set forth their *two-fold* "service" before the Throne "in heaven" which is the only part of their service that is thought of by some who occupy the place and office of teachers in the Church of Christ—Who Himself condescended to receive their ministrations at the close of His Wilderness Temptation—and their service in "succouring and defending us on earth." Again, how beautifully do those noble words of the Ter-Sanctus, or Thrice Holy, in our Communion Service, which are not only directly grounded on the words of Scripture² but have been used from Apostolic times before the Prayer of Consecration, set forth the worship offered by the Holy Angels, and certify our fellowship with them in that worship: "Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name; evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord GOD of hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory: Glory be to Thee, O Lord most High"; to say nothing of references to the same subject in the Te Deum, Benedicite,³ and Collect of the "Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary," and in other parts of the Prayer Book. It may, however, be said that such references are few and not to be compared with the rest of the book in which they are found.

¹ Rev. xix. 10, xxii. 8, 9; Col. ii. 18. ² Isa. vi. 1-4; Rev. iv. 8.

³ Ezek. i. 15, 26.

But what they may lack in point of *number* they more than make up for in clearness and conclusiveness of statement. And would it not be well, if objectors allowed these lessons as to the nature and employment of the Holy Angels to bear in their instructions the same proportion to the rest of their teaching as they do in the Book of Common Prayer? Moreover St. Paul speaks of the presence of the Holy Angels in our Christian congregations, intimating that they take part in our worship. Such was also the belief of the eminent scholar and commentator, Bishop Christopher Wordsworth (Lincoln). An able writer has well said of their appearances in Scripture, and of the way in which they are themselves ignored in thought and teaching: "There must be something of fitness in the times of their manifestation, and in the persons to whom they make themselves known. In a material age they cease to appear. There must be a certain saintly second-sight—a something angelic in the angel seen. With us they are conveniently put out of remembrance. We almost speak with the Sadducees, who believed in no angel or spirit.¹ Their name is used to fill up the syllables of a line, or to round off a fantastic compliment. Their figures appear above a column or a spire. We think of beings more than half fabulous draped and winged, the griffens and wyverns of the heraldry of a gentle mythology. How few *meditate*, with holy Hooker, upon their nature, order, and blessed obedience to GOD'S will! We may believe if we will that mechanical law is all in all. . . . If it be so, there is no unseen world, and, *therefore*, no veil to hang between it and us. Then the accounts of St. Luke—that there appeared unto Zacharias an Angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense; that the angel of the Lord was sent from GOD unto Nazareth; that suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host—are simply so many fairy tales." And, giving us a specimen of the way in which a sceptical criticism has dealt with the subject, he adds, "Paulus has explained the appearance to Zacharias by an intensity of emotional excitement, which made of the incense-smoke, when its dense folds were irradiated by the lamps of the sanctuary, a floating image of a winged spectre!"² Is not the subject of these created intelligences, their nature, and employment, a part of GOD'S revelation?

¹ Acts xxiii. 8.

² Bp. Alexander, in *Poems of the New Testament*, see *The Quiver*, Jan. 1880.

If so, is it right either to ignore their existence, or to allow the truth to be cast into the crucible of a criticism, which is doing all it can to overthrow the supernatural in the Word of the Living God? At the Reformation some of the principle changes made in the Service-books of the Church consisted in the cutting away of "uncertain stories and legends," and expunging from the Litany long lists of invocations of saints and of angels; but while the Church no longer sanctions the invocations of angels, she still retains her Collects, the Ter-Sanctus, and other passages setting forth the nature and employments of angels in heaven and on earth. Therefore, if we are to hold that she has omitted what she no longer sanctions, what are we to say about what she has retained? There is reason to believe that *some* of the omissions were due to the superstitious use which was widely made of things otherwise harmless, and so it was found advisable in the judgment of the Reformers to omit them altogether. Clearly this must strengthen the claim of what is retained. What excuse have we, therefore, for ignoring anything *retained* relative to the subject under consideration? What real excuse can be pleaded why it should not have all due attention given to it in teaching professedly based on the Word of GOD and in accordance with the mind of the Church, as it is expressed in her formularies?

II

Shall we not endeavour to gain comfort and strength from the truths revealed concerning the bright and happy beings, who not only encircle the Throne of the Eternal but move though invisible to us in our earthly path, succouring and comforting the faithful in their dangers and sorrows? Shall we ignore them and their gentle, loving ministry on earth, and yet all the while hope to enjoy their society in a better world? Are they not the holy messengers ever speeding between earth and heaven? Do they not carry the faithful at last to their rest? ¹ Are we not told that "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them"? ² Was it not permitted to Elisha and his servant to *see* the fulfilment of this com-

¹ St. Luke xvi. 22.

² Ps. xxxiv. 7.

forting promise in their case? ¹ Are they not in some mysterious way employed in the presentation of our prayers: "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer it *with* the prayers of *all* saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." ² Angels announced our blessed Lord's Birth and Resurrection, and appeared to the disciples at His Ascension; and He their Lord as well as ours, deigned to receive their ministration in His hour of weakness and anguish in the Wilderness and in the Garden. ³ An angel is "sent" by GOD to shut the lions' mouths, that they should not "hurt" ⁴ His servant, and again with an answer to that servant's prayer, announcing in this instance that it was by "the *commandment* which came forth" that he appeared. And the Psalmist exclaims: "Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that *do His commandments*, hearkening unto the voice of His word." ⁵ Again, the same agency is employed to deliver His Apostle from prison and from death, to feed the despairing prophet in the desert when fleeing from an arm of flesh, and to assure the great Apostle of the Gentiles that he should escape the watery grave which, humanly speaking, threatened to terminate his arduous "course." ⁶ Such are a few of the instances mentioned in Scripture in which angels have been and are employed in the service of man, and for the glory of GOD. But we are not to suppose that these instances represent the whole of their loving service; we may reasonably believe that under GOD they convey to us spiritual blessings in strengthening the weak and wavering will, in supporting us in difficult paths and trying circumstances of life, in inspiring us with hope when the future seems dark and frowning, and the present a fitting prelude to it, in urging the spirit to rise in grateful adoration when otherwise it would be hopelessly depressed and saddened with the ills and cares of life. They have "turn'd to help us in th' unequal fray" when we have been conscious of the presence of mighty spiritual foes, and have been "in heaviness through *manifold* temptations." ⁷ They are closely and intimately connected with

¹ 2 Kings vi. 13-18.

² Rev. viii. 3.

³ St. Luke ii. 8-15; i. 26-38; St. Matt. i. 18-25; Acts i. 10, 11; St. Matt. iv. 11; St. Luke xxii. 43.

⁴ Dan. vi. 22; ix. 20-27.

⁵ Ps. ciii. 20.

⁶ Acts xii. 5-11; 1 Kings xix. 1-8; Acts xxvii. 21-26; 2 Tim. iv. 7.

⁷ 1 Peter i. 6.

the dispensations of God's providence as they are evolved in the lives and experiences of the saints. Oh! let us not hold, as some do that such beings have but a shadowy existence whose only sphere is the human imagination, and that belief in their existence is only entertained because it elevates the feelings of the good, and renders more serious those of the wicked and the worldly. Such theories derive no support or countenance from the Word of GOD. It teaches in a multitude of ways the truth and reality of an unseen world peopled by various orders of created intelligences, who again and again have been permitted to burst on the astonished vision of the best and holiest of mankind, and render to them all kinds of service. They fulfil the commands of their Lord as the evil spirits do those of theirs, and both classes of spirits are organized and disciplined as "principalities and powers."¹ It is an awful thought that, if "order is Heaven's first law," there is also that which answers to it in the abode of darkness, though widely different are the ends and purposes for which it exists in the two places. But happily we may believe that they who are for us are more than all that are against us. Were it otherwise, Scripture would scarcely be as hopeful as it is concerning the final salvation of the faithful. With what confidence did our blessed Lord speak of the "legions"² whom He might have summoned to His assistance. We do not believe that the hosts at the command of the Evil One outnumber those of "the King of Kings and Lord of Lords." We believe that the contrary is implied in numerous passages of Scripture. "Suddenly there was with the angel a *multitude* of the heavenly host."³ "For 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*: all things were created by Him, and for Him."⁴ "*Thousand thousands* ministered unto Him, and *ten thousand times ten thousand* stood before Him."⁵ Again, who are "the ninety and nine" in our Lord's Parable of the Lost Sheep who "went not astray,"⁶ if the lost "one" represents the human race? If the lost "piece of silver"⁷ represents fallen man, who are represented by the nine pieces not lost? "A saint of GOD lies down to sleep beneath the cold sky, with a stone for his pillow ;

¹ Ps. ciii. 20 ; St. Matt. xii. 24 ; Eph. iii. 10 ; vi. 12.

² St. Matt. xxvi. 53. ⁴ Col. i. 16.

⁶ St. Matt. xviii. 12-14.

³ St. Luke ii. 13.

⁵ Dan. vii. 10.

⁷ St. Luke xv. 3-7, 8-10.

and, behold, above him—friendless as he seems—a ladder reaching from Earth to Heaven, on whose bright stair the Angels of GOD are ascending and descending all night long! ” (Burgon). Jacob, we read, trembled at the prospect of meeting with his brother, but in order that he might not be utterly cast down on account of the “four hundred men” that were coming out against him, GOD granted him the vision of the “two camps”—“Mahanaim”—and he exclaimed, “This is GOD’s host.”¹ We, too, may derive comfort and encouragement in meditation on the hosts who by day and by night, and in every part of the universe of GOD, do His holy bidding. Not only do we find that they were with the servants of GOD when they “appeared”²— $\omega\phi\theta\eta$ —unto them, that is, when they took a form in which they could be discerned by the bodily senses, but that they were as really present when they were not so discerned, as in the case of Elisha’s servant who was not aware of their presence until, in answer to his master’s prayer, “the Lord opened his eyes.”³ And as it was with the prophet and his servant so may we confidently believe it is with us—“they that be with us are more than they that be with” our spiritual enemies. Our bodily eyes may be “holden,”⁴ so that we see them not as we see our fellow-men, but with the eye of faith we may still discern their presence. The dispensation has passed away under which they “appeared” objectively to the faithful; but speaking of the Christian’s experience in all ages the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, “Ye are come unto Mount Sion . . . and to an *innumerable company of angels*,” or, according to the original, to “myriads” of angels.⁵ It has been truly said that “if Revelation had been silent respecting angels, reason would be a sufficient ground for our believing in their existence.” Let us then beware of a Sadduceeism which would rob us of the comfort of a reasonable belief in their existence and ministrations. But we must not forget that there is another side in the employment of angels revealed to us in the Word of GOD which we have not yet dwelt upon. There are many instances recorded in which these holy beings not only brought blessings to the faithful, but also condemnation and destruction on the wicked. They not only delivered “righteous” Lot, but brought swift destruction on the

¹ Gen. xxxii. 1–12.

² St. Luke i. 11.

³ 2 Kings vi. 13–18. See Dr. Goulburn’s “Occasional Sermons,” Serm. xiv., *Christ wielding the Keys of Death, and of the World Unseen*.

⁴ St. Luke xxiv. 16.

⁵ Heb. xii. 22.

cities of the Plain.¹ When David sinned an angel slew of his people no less than "seventy thousand men."² "The angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand."³ An angel smote Herod when "he gave not GOD the glory."⁴ "Angels" will be employed, our Lord said, in executing the final judgment on the ungodly.⁵ We need not multiply instances of their bringing destruction swift and terrible on the wicked, as well as succouring, defending and comforting the faithful. Enough has been said to show us that their office is one which should fill the hearts of the faithful with gratitude and love both to GOD and to them. But we have not by any means reviewed the whole of the teaching of Scripture in this important matter. It is plainly implied in Scripture that they are gifted with the power "to discern good and bad,"⁶ and we are told that St. Michael and his angels contended in behalf of the people of GOD with the devil and his angels. The Holy Angels are the servants of GOD Whose they are, and Whose commands they obey. They are "fellow-servants" with the faithful and so do not receive their worship. They are required to worship our blessed Lord in His Incarnate life "Who," in common with mankind in His humanity, "was made a little lower than the angels"⁷; and yet He willed to receive their ministrations in the two great crises of His holy life in the Wilderness and in the Garden.⁸ In the latter instance, He is said to have been "strengthened" by the ministrations of "an angel," as Daniel, the "man greatly beloved," tells us that he was.⁹ Thus did our Lord, though sinless, put Himself on a level in the conditions of His humanity with the *adopted* sons of GOD, whom "He is not ashamed to call His brethren."¹⁰ In St. Matthew's account of the Temptation, we find the words already quoted, "And behold angels came and *δηκονοῦν*—ministered—unto Him."¹¹ Now what this ministration consisted in we are not able to say for certain, but it is reasonable to believe that these blessed spirits brought our Lord the food He needed after His forty days' fast. We may also believe

¹ 2 Pet. ii. 6-9; Gen. xix.

² 2 Sam. xxiv. 15-17.

³ 2 Kings xix. 35.

⁴ Acts xii. 23.

⁵ St. Matt. xiii. 41, 42.

⁶ 2 Sam. xiv. 17.

⁷ Dan. x. 10-21, xii. 1; Jude ix.; Rev. xii. 7; xix. 10; xxii. 9; Col. ii. 18; Heb. i. 6; ii. 6-11; Ps. viii. 4, 5.

⁸ St. Matt. iv. 11.

⁹ St. Luke xxii. 43; Ps. cxxviii. 3; Dan. x. 19; St. Matt. iii. 17.

¹⁰ Heb. ii. 11.

¹¹ St. Matt. iv. 11.

that they brought Him supernatural support and comfort ; coming directly from the presence of His Father, they may have been employed to confirm the words of approval spoken at His Baptism. As to the word *δῆκονοῦν* from *διακονέω*, *διακονεῖν* signifies *to be an attendant on any one*, to serve at table, and so it comes to mean to supply with *food*. We have many instances of these uses of the word in the New Testament.¹ It is thus related to “ministrare” in Latin. And we also find Bengel using the words of the angels ministering to our Lord, “allato cibo.” We read, moreover, of an angel ministering to the disconsolate prophet, Elijah, in the Wilderness in this way : “And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold an *angel* touched him, and said unto him, Arise and *eat*. And he looked, and, behold, there was a *cake baken on the coals and a cruse of water* at his head. And he did *eat and drink*, and laid him down again.”² Krummacher has some thoughts on this incident in the prophet’s life—not less striking than beautiful. One passage well worth quoting is as follows : “Elijah, apparently more asleep than awake, stretched out his hand, ate of the bread, drank of the water, and sank down again, weak and weary, and fell asleep. For that he fell asleep may be supposed from the angel’s touching him a second time. We, however, should have thought that his surprise would have been so excited, and his thoughts so set in motion, as to have rendered it impossible for him to fall asleep again immediately. But here is no appearance of surprise expressed. He partakes of the refreshment, not as if he were lying in a desolate uninhabited wilderness, but as if he were at home in his own dwelling. If he was not in a half-awakened state, he must have been absorbed, like Mary Magdalene at her visit to the sepulchre, in higher thoughts. This is no un-supposable case ; and, spiritually applied, it is a very common one. Persons of weak faith, and under spiritual temptation, may hear the word of consolation, and receive it ; but taking only a hasty draught of the living waters of promise, the enjoyment is soon gone again. It is, however, not without its use. If it effect nothing more, it serves to revive and confirm the persuasion, that He Who can thus cast a ray of comfort into the benighted soul, is able at any moment to send into it the full sunshine of peace. The sleep of Elijah serves also to remind us of those who are for the most

¹ St. Matt. viii. 15 ; xxvii. 55 ; St. Luke viii. 3 ; xvii. 8 ; xxii. 27 ; St. John xii. 2 ; Acts vi. 2.

² 1 Kings xix. 4-8.

part spiritually asleep, and have never yet been thoroughly awakened. They eat and drink, or, in other words, they hear much that is good, they read the Bible, and are regular in attending the worship of God; yet everything seems lost upon them, and not the smallest decided proof of spiritual life is discoverable in them. Yet let no one venture to say, before their course is ended, that such persons have eaten and drunken in vain. They may suddenly one day prove the contrary to your surprise. The food they have received may at unawares be found effectually to have nourished them. *Let all diligently use the means of grace*"—and we would add as a passing comment on the whole of this remarkable passage—let the servant of God as diligently and hopefully dispense them to His flock. Let us believe the blessed promise, "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."¹ And if the labourer himself reap not of his toil another may; as our Lord said, "Other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours."² Happy will that servant³ be who shall receive his Lord's commendation—"He hath done *what he could*."⁴ He shall assuredly receive that still further proof of his Lord's approval—"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."⁵

We conclude this article with Keble's beautiful lines about the bright and happy spirits whose existence and ministrations Scripture so wonderfully unfolds—

Ye stars that round the Sun of righteousness
 In *glorious order* roll,
 With harps for ever strung, ready to bless
 God for each rescued soul;
 Ye eagle spirits, that build in light divine,
 O! think of us to-day,
 Faint warblers of this earth, that would combine
 Our trembling notes with your accepted lay.

Nor less your lay of triumph greeted fair
Our Champion and your King.
 In that first strife, whence Satan in despair
 Sank down on scathed wing:
 Alone He fasted, and alone He fought;
 But when His toils were o'er,
 Ye to the sacred Hermit duteous brought
 Banquet and hymn, your Eden's festal store.

JOHN R. PALMER.

¹ Eccl. xi. 1.

² St. John iv. 38.

³ Is. xxxii. 20.

⁴ St. Mark xiv. 8.

⁵ St. Matt. xxv. 21, 34.