

No. 128.

A N G E L S .

An Address by Mr. P. W. Heward
At 65, St. Mary Axe, E. C.
31st July, 1914.

OUTLINE:

1. Scripture Silence and Scripture Unfolding.
2. The Gloriousness of our God.
3. The Ministry of Angels unto Him.
4. Gradation, with Thoughts Concerning God's Mention of Michael and Gabriel.
5. Fallen Angels.
6. Present Day Theories in the Light of God's Truth:
 - (a) "Guardian Angels".
 - (b) "Gone to be an Angel".
7. The Worshipping of Angels.
8. Our Salvation, and What it Means.

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We are concerned, beloved friends, with the Scripture teaching as to angels. With the SCRIPTURE teaching, let me say at the outset, for Scripture has made it very definite, that if we are to be instructed it must be the work of the Spirit of God through the book which God has given. Speculation and art have no room. What has God revealed? Scripture silence is precious. Scripture unfolding is precious. There are no mistakes in Scripture. Proportionately, and I think this will surprise most of us, angels are mentioned more in the Later Scriptures than in the Earlier. The word for an "angel" in the Hebrew (מַלְאָכִים) has three renderings, - angels, messengers, and ambassadors. The term "ambassador" only occurs several times, for example "the ambassadors of peace." "Messenger" is fairly common, the first case being in Gen. 32:3 where we have the messengers from whom Jacob sent before him to Esau his brother, into the land of Seir, the country of Edom. This shows that the word is employed, not only of superior beings, but also of men on the earth, and moreover indicates that the ROOT idea of the word is one engaged on a certain piece of work, or a certain form of definite business. Indeed from the root of this very word (מַלְאָכִים) there comes the word "מַלְאָכִים" which is the very expression used in the Hebrew Scriptures for "business". The angel was a messenger having some-

thing important to do, consequently "Malachi" means "MY Messenger." As a rule, I have already mentioned, we can tell if the allusion is to a man or to an angel. There are a few difficulties, however, e.g. Judges 2:1 "And an angel of the Lord came up from Gelgal to Bochim, and said (margin "A messenger of the Lord") Have we here an angel, or an earthly prophet? Can we decide here in a moment? I think not. Heavenly beings are more often before us. Though the first mention of angels, in a human sense, messengers, is Gen. 32; angels in a heavenly sense occur for the first time in Gen. 16 and Gen. 19. In Gen. 16 with respect to Hagar (verse 7) "And the angel of the Lord found her". In Gen. 19 with regard to the two angels who went to Sodom, and arrived there at even, and were welcomed by Lot. After this, the next occurrence is Gen. 21:17 - again with reference to Hagar. In Gen. 22:11 we read with regard to Abraham's offering up of Issac "And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven". One almost wonders if the Lord Jesus Himself is before us here, that Wonderful Messenger of the Covenant, in condescending love.

In the Later Scriptures the first mention of an angel is with respect to Joseph's dream. We find angels before us again and again in the Gospels, e.g. with respect to the birth of Christ, and when the Lord Jesus Christ was in the wilderness: - the angels came and ministered unto Him there. But specially in the Garden we note the possibility of 12 legions of angels, and we are told that an angel strengthened Him. We find Angels, moreover, with respect to His resurrection, and in Acts 1 as to His glorious ascension. But the Book of Scripture which contains more about angels than any other book is the book of Revelation, where in chapters 1 to 3 we have earthly messengers called angels, and in chapters 4 to 22 heavenly messengers. Apart from general passages I should like to mention that there are a goodly number which speak of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Angel of the Covenant, and in similar ways, for He Who was God became a Messenger, He Who was from eternity became the Word, - the Revelation of the Father. Indeed, this was His eternal purpose, that He should, in the fulness of time, not only become a Messenger occasionally, but that Messenger Who walked this earth for 30 years, and Who as the true Martyr, and more than martyr, sealed His testimony with His blood, and thereby made an atonement, a complete atonement, for poor lost and guilty sinners. The passages to which I would specially refer you with respect to the Lord Jesus are such as

Gen. 48:16. The Angel Which redeemed me, - Exod. 3:2. The Angel in the bush, - Judges 6. The Angel and Gideon, - Judges 13, The Angel and Maneah and Maneah's wife. In these passages we have, plainly, a reference to our Lord Jesus Christ; nor is it strange that He should be so characterised, inasmuch as His delights were with the sons of men (Prov. 8:31).

But it is well to notice that in all the numerous passages which speak definitely of angels, - and there are, if I mistake not, considerably over four hundred occurrences of the word, of which the majority concerns celestial beings, - that in all the large number of places we have no suggestion of much which is prevalent in COMMON opinion. We do not have angels described as babies, or as women, although artists have sought to represent them thus. This usual perversion must evidently have another ground than that of Scripture, a ground which is ANTI-Scriptural, as we shall see on another occasion. Suffice it now to notice that angels frequently appeared as MEN. "God maketh His Angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire", but when they took any personal form it was the personal form of a man. Abraham was standing at his tent door, three MEN came to him. The Men went on toward Sodom, and when they reached there we are told "The two angels." The angels were the men. Again and again we have this illustrated throughout Scripture; nor can we forget such a passage as that in Daniel, "The Man Gabriel". Just as we have no feminine partnership in the Deity, despite theosophic speculations and eastern religions, so we have nothing of this with respect to angels. God has particularly warned against this; but a large number of forms of idolatry are marked by the number and variety of their goddesses, nor can we forget the way in which that which is beyond mere respect in reference to Mary, has intruded into the nominal Church of Rome.

We pass next to consider the gloriousness of our God. The more we speak of His creation the more we realize the majesty of the Creator. The infidel is most absurd in his postulates. He tries to conceive of a wonderful earth, and a yet more wonderful visible heaven above it, without a personal Creator. If we accept the Scripture revelation of God, and of God's angels, everything falls into line. Unbelief is a tremendous strain on credulity, whereas belief is linked with a faith that God gives. The

gloriousness of our God is set forth on this background of His works. Do I behold the sun, moon, and stars? They tell of Him who formed, placed, and governed them, before Whom there was nothing, for He Alone is from everlasting. Do I speak of the angels? How mighty then must He be Who called them into being, and before Whom they worship, refusing worship unto themselves. There are few passages which give us a greater view of the unseen, unknown, and incomprehensible greatness of our God, than Dan. 7. "I beheld till the thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days did sit, ^a Whose garment was white as the snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool. His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him, thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him; the judgment was set the books were opened." Oh HOW great is our God; The greatest of beings are small in their appearing before Him; yea, their existence is under His control. The monarchs of earth have their breath in His hand, "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will," and all the myriads of angels are completely under His control. When our beloved Lord said, "Thinkest thou not that I cannot now pray to the Father, and He would at once give Me more than twelve legions of angels," He gave us a little insight into the swiftness of obedience which characterised these mighty powers. Nor can we be unmindful of the manner in which the living creatures of Ezekiel 1 went and returned as a flash of lightening, But they never exalt themselves in His presence; the greatest of them has a name to direct attention away from self, unto the Lord; for it signifies "Who is like God?" (Michael) The seraphim occupy their time in sounding forth the solemn words "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts," and likewise we find the living ones of Rev. 4 continuing this wonderful ascription of praise. Nor can we be forgetful of the fact that the seraphim with their SIX wings occupy themselves more with reverence and worship before Him than with flying, for only two wings are mentioned in the latter connection. It is precious to be engaged in active service for the Lord, but it is yet BEYOND this to be reverent before the Lord. A lack of reverence is one of the saddest marks of the present day. We think of ourselves as privileged, and blessed, and helped in such a way

that we ^{NOW} (almost) treat God familiarly. But, beloved friends, we are only creatures of the dust by nature, and if we are brought near, it is in infinite grace that no flesh should glory in His presence, but the boasting one should keep on boasting IN THE LORD. Our God is the High and Lofty One Who inhabiteth eternity, Whose Name is Holy. Never should we utter His name with unbecoming Lightness. It is true we are not under the Mosaic law, it is true that the right repetition of the word is not taking the Name in vain, rebuked in Exod. 20, but there is a grave danger of this lightness. The Jewish fear of uttering the very sound "Jehovah" is not altogether desirable, but it is possible we have approached the swing of the pendulum the other way. God is SO great and majestic; heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. He is from eternity to eternity. He is the King immortal, Eternal, Invisible, the Only Wise God over all, God blessed for ever; and yet we who deserved more than His censure, who merited His eternal wrath, have been made near to Him, if so be that we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, - even made near to Him in infinite grace and infinite compassion, and are blessed WITHIN those Hands which will never let us slip out.

The Ministry of angels unto God may therefore come in front of us not only as a fact, but as a declaration of His glory and His majesty and His righteousness, and an encouragement to His dear people to treat Him with suitable quietness and solemnity. I have already referred in passing, to the way in which angels delighted to be in service to the Lord Jesus when He walked this earth. This we always realize as a precious indication of His deity, for those beings were held back, we might almost say, because He had taken upon Him the form of a Servant; but as soon as they could go to Him they were seen to be surrounding and attending Him. When the Only Begotten is brought into the world the second time, the words will ring out, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." But even the first time ~~they~~ they sought to do Him homage WHENEVER opportunity was granted.

There are gradations among angels, for God is the God of order. Scripture makes this clear throughout nature, and throughout salvation. In both we have brought before us God's order. We read of principalities and powers, even with respect to fallen angels, suggesting that there are degrees among them. Nor can we forget the way in which, as we have already noticed

we read of seraphim and cherubim, of Gabriel and of Michael the archangel. As to Michael the archangel it is expressly said "Michael and his angels" showing us plainly that there are gradations. It has sometimes been said that there are two archangels. Scripture gives no warrant for this thought. We read in 1 Thess. 4 that the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel. Now that passage of itself would give room for another archangel, but we are not told of such another one. It has been said Gabriel is an archangel. Gabriel is mentioned in Dan. 8 and Dan. 9 and Luke 2. He is called "The man Gabriel" and one that stands in the presence of God, but not an archangel. Indeed I think we have Scripture for asserting that Michael has a very peculiar and dignified position. We think of Jude 9 "But Michael THE archangel, when disputing with the devil concerning the body of Moses did not dare to have brought on to him a judgment of blasphemy, but said, The Lord have honor over thee." Possibly, therefore, the devil was the greatest of beings, and Ezek. 28 confirms this. When he fell, Michael appears to have received a kind of precedence and consequently we find in Rev. 12 a terrible conflict, a war in heaven, Michael and his angels warred with the dragon, and the dragon warred and his angels; and they had not strength, nor was there place found still in heaven. We learn more about Michael's position from the book of Daniel. Whereas Daniel is VISITED by Gabriel, we also have a description of one who is a mighty prince, - it is Michael. He is called, in Dan 10:13. "Michael, one of the chief princes," and I suppose this word indicates there are other chief princes, but we are not told they are archangels. I do not say they are not, or they are. We simply leave the matter; where God is silent we will be silent. We know one archangel and we know that he is, in the words of Dan. 12. "The great prince that standeth up" for the children of Daniel's people. He is the one who specially comes into prominence with regard to the preservation of the elect, and the carrying out of the purposes of God toward Israel.

"Fallen Angels" are commonly before us in Scripture. I suppose in one sense we may describe evil spirits as fallen angels, yet in another it is well to notice that where God uses the word "spirit" He has a reason for not employing the word "angel". There may be through this a fuller development of the thought of different degrees. Eph. 6 with a threefold reference of the book to principalities and powers, (chapters 1;3;6) may

next be noted. We read "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places." Satan is the prince of the power of the air, and there are spiritual wickednesses in HEAVENLY PLACES, his servants, - they are principalities and powers, they have jurisdiction, they have spheres, they are called "world-rulers"; and Dan. 10 makes clear that they have different geographical limits. There is one such evil being described in that chapter as the prince of the kingdom of Persia. Another "demon" (Use the word "demon" because it SEEMS to be employed in a very wide meaning for many of Satan's "forces" in 1 Cor. 10), but possibly it would be clearer to say another evil power is the prince of the kingdom of Greece, and I believe that each of these princes of different countries may be regarded as seriously affecting the affairs of the country. The history of nations ~~is~~ is largely introduced with the influence of demon powers. Moreover, ^{if} Satan works out in connection with geography his wonderful purposes of evil, is it too much to suggest that there are, probably, evil spirits for different cities and for different places? I have felt, - I do not bring it forth as an article of faith, - but I commend it to the meditation of the Lord's people, - I have felt that different evil powers have control of different street corners, and I have sometimes realized difference of results in connection with the attendance at an open air, in a way that I could only account for by regarding the evil spirit at one corner as more vigilant and more enthusiastic in his attempt to hinder the work of God. It seems to me that we have a tremendous conflict with a tremendously organized opposition. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers." Surely we need the WHOLE armour of God to be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Some particular passages which mention Satan's angels are the following: - Psalm 78:49 "Sending evil angels among them"; 1 Cor. 6 "Know ye not that we shall judge angels," 1 Cor. 11:10, the believing woman should have a sign of authority on her head "Because of the angels"; Col. 2, "A worshipping of Angels"; 2 Pet. 2:4, "Angels that sinned"; Rev. 9, angels bound in the river Euphrates. I am inclined, moreover, to believe that Rom. 8:38 contains more than simply a suggestion that NO power can remove us from the Lord. Where it says "I am persuaded that neither angels", it alludes to evil angels, - it alludes to evil angels

who would seek in every possible way to separate the Lord's people from the Lord, were it not that the mighty Lord secures all His own people. Further the description "Elect angels" implies that there are some who have fallen, and therefore we are Scripturally warranted in not only speaking of demons and evil spirits, but of fallen angels. Demons who are working in men may be one grade of them. There are some who with their prince, inhabit the air. There are others to be specially released from the bottomless pit in Rev. 9, with a king over them whose name is Appollynn. The view that Scripture gives of unseen powers is amazing. It is bewildering, overpowering; and did we not realize the preciousness of the Divine statement "Greater is He That is in you than he that is in the world," we might well become despondent. There is a great need that our eyes should be opened that we may see by faith, the record of the mountains full of horses and chariots round about Elisha, and know that our God is the God of Elisha. Oh that our ears may be opened too for the sound of a going in the top of the mulberry trees; For if Satan has myriads who would overthrow the people of the Lord, "He shall give His angels charge concerning thee to keep thee IN ALL THY WAYS, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone". "Are they not all ministering spirits keeping on being sent forth (present tense) to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Present-day theories need always to be tested in the light of God's truth. We are told there are GUARDIAN angels; is this according to the testimony of God? If it is, accept it; if not, reject it. The usual idea is that every man has his guardian angel. I am inclined to view this conception as too small for children of God. I believe they have more than a guardian angel. I like the plurals of Scripture. Satan misquoted the verse, but he is quite correct when he refers to Psalm 91, as indicating angels will take charge of the Lord's own. A Guardian angel Beloved friends? They are ministering spirits KEEPING ON being sent forth. If a legion of evil spirits could be in one man, the Lord can send a legion of angels to protect one saint. One horse and one chariot by Elisha's side? Not at all, - "horses and chariots". If the Lord has ten thousand times ten thousand before him. He loves His people enough to send forth angel after angel to do His bidding in His protection. It is a delightful thought. But do

not we read in Scripture that when Peter appeared at the door they said, "It is his angel?" Yes, but those who do not believe the answer to their prayers are hardly examples to us. Nevertheless are we not told "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of your Father?" Undoubtedly, but these are not guardian angels down here, they are representative angels, - angels IN THE GLORY as the pledge that these little ones who believe in the Lord will not be stumbled in the way thither. They shall reach the glory. It may seem they will be cut short, but eternal life is eternal. God keeps His word. The ever loving God is the ever-truthful God, and all His power is on the side of His people, and all His love is toward them. How foolish is our nervousness; How foolish is our self-defending. Let us leave our affairs in God's hands. He will look after us. If need be many angels, myriads of them, shall be told off to protect us. We need not be alarmed. Beyond the blackest cloud we know there is God's grace. It is well to have confidence in HIM.

"Gone to be an angel" is a common expression. Does it stand the test of God's truth? I think not. I would not convict this error in this connection by the passage "We shall judge angels" because THAT undoubtedly signifies fallen angels. Man is lower than angels, Heb. 2 shows us this fact. But when the Lord Jesus came into the world He took not upon Him angels, to redeem them, but took on Him the seed of Abraham, - a wondrous burden of gracious condescension. - (In passing, notice how the passage before us again refers to the fact that there were "Fallen angels") But if He took upon Him the seed of Abraham, and His people are joined to Himself, they are lifted up above angels. What a dignity! What a glory! But ~~we~~ does it not say believers are angels when they depart from this world? No, Scripture says, Equal to the angels. In what way? The passage is speaking of the absence of mere human relationship, and the absence of death. In THESE respects we shall be as angels.

The worshipping of angels in Colossians 2 was, and is, very serious. It was a center of gnosticism, and I believe is the key to much of Romanism today. Why is it an idol attracts certain worship? And from Romanism we can easily pass to heathenism. An angel has his shrine within. The profession of humility that made angels into mediators was very unsatis-

factory to Paul. Let us realize our dignity as children of God. There is one, God and ONE Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. Elect Angels will not intrude into the glory of Him Who, though over all God blessed for ever, was manifest in the flesh to be the Mediator via His own sacrifice.

One word more on Salvation, and what it means. For this subject brings truth to our hearts that we may realize the preciousness of God's love to us. He has given so much for us, and He has given so much to us, and He has given so much to us. Surely we should be those who seek by grace to realize the meaning of ~~s~~alvation. Not only does God graciously bring us to know His name, but He guarantees that we shall reach the glory. He leads us every inch of the journey, and many angels are occupied in bringing home His people. Salvation is not only a change of state, but it involves an entire change of relationship. We are now creatures in Christ Jesus, and God having loved us with an everlasting love, will not permit that we should lose that love which He has granted. O how grateful every child of God ought to be! Are we full of praise, or not?
