The Angels and the Believer

The inspired account relates to man the manner by which Yahweh formed the Creation which we see around us: “By the word of Yahweh were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth” (Ps 33:6). So it was that “all things” were made by “The Word”, or logos – the spoken command of the Creator (cp Jno 1:1-5). The Word was spoken and it was done. He gave the command, the Angels obeyed. “God said, “Let there be light, and there was light” (Gen 1:3). As the Psalmist declared, “He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast” (Ps 33:9). In this way, the angels, the *elohim* (See Ps 8:5) were the agents employed by the Almighty to accomplish his Will in Creating the Heavens and Earth, in obedience to His commands. Indeed, this is the very first teaching of all of Scripture: “In the beginning, *Elohim* created the heavens and the earth” (Gen 1:1).

But even after the 6 literal days of Creation, the Angels are still engaged in creative activity, for they are closely involved with the 6 millennial “days” (cp Heb 4:3-6) of preparation of the New Creation. Just as Yahweh, through His Spoken Word caused light to shine in the dark emptiness of the formless globe, even so He has caused the Light of His Glory to shine through His Word into the dark and barren hearts of the ungodly, so effecting the New Creation in Christ Jesus. This is the testimony of Paul; “God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2Cor 4:6), this “light” being “the light of the glorious gospel of Christ” (v 4) which those who are blinded by “the god of this world” cannot perceive. But for those who have the humility to permit their otherwise darkened hearts to become so illuminated, they become “a new creature” in Christ (2Cor 5:17), “created in Christ Jesus unto good works” in obedience to their God (Eph 2:10). And thus becoming “heirs of salvation”, they are given Divine Ministers to watch over their spiritual development, ensuring that as sons of Yahweh, they are provided for according to the Will and Wisdom of their Creator. As the Spirit to the Hebrews puts it, in speaking of the Angels, “are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb 1:14).

THE INVOLVEMENT OF ANGELS WITH MAN

The Genesis account reveals that the Angels have been intimately involved with human affairs right from the beginning, for in speaking of how man was formed in the image of Yahweh, and the rest of the heavenly host, it teaches: “and *Elohim* said, Let ***us*** make man in ***our*** image, after ***our*** likeness” (Gen 1:26). Notice the plural terms used here: Although being inferior in nature (Ps 8:5), we are thus made after the likeness of the *Elohim*, or mighty ones – the Angels of God. Indeed, this is the image of God himself, as it is written: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Gen. 1:27). But the similarity would appear to extend further. Speaking of the consequence of man’s transgression, “Yahweh Elohim said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil” (Gen 3:22). It was through transgression that Man came to know Good and Evil in the experimental sense – and in this regard became like the Angels which formed him. Bro Thomas reasoned from this that the Angels themselves had once passed through a period of probation as man, and had themselves sinned, thereby gaining the knowledge of good and evil:

> “The Lord of the Elohim himself declares that they also had been experimentally sensible of evil, for this is the idea expressed by the Hebrew word YADA, to know. In short, it is credible that none of the Elohim of the only Potentate’s dominion were created immortal; but earthly, or animal, like Adam. The eternal King is the only being who is originally immortal in any sense, hence it is written that “He only hath immortality”. The

immortality of all other intelligences is derived from Him as a reward for the "obedience of faith". Just men at the resurrection of the First Fruits will be equal to Elohim" (Elpis Israel, p 187).

And again:

> "The Scripture reveals the principle upon which the Elohim of the Universe are developed by the Eternal Spirit. They are immortals, but were not always so. The Eternal Spirit, dwelling in light, is alone essentially immortal, without beginning; but all the Mighty Ones, or Gods, He has created, have at some point of their history been subject to evil even as we. Moses teaches this in Gen 3:5,22". And again, speaking of the way in which Adam and Eve came to "know good and evil", he wrote: "When this was affirmed of Adam and Eve, "the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked," and they were both ashamed and afraid. This was the form of the "evil" which they experienced at that crisis; and Yahweh-Elohim testifies, that it was an evil they themselves had been the subjects of. Those who were Elohim contemporary with Adam had once been the subjects of shame and fear; and as these are symptoms of an evil conscience, they had once been sinners; and as it is the law of the Eternal Spirits empire, that sin works death, so they must have been once mortal: which is a conclusion in agreement with Paul's testimony, that the Invisible One "only hath immortality" .... But at the fitting up of the earth as a new arena for the display of the power and wisdom of the Eternal Spirit, they who figure in the work, had attained to their eternal redemption; and had become "spirits" – Holy Spirit corporeal intelligences – because they had been born of the Eternal Spirit, or Father. ***To what orb or planet of the universe they are indigenous, is not revealed; but as they are not ab-original to an earth-born race, they are not sovereign here;*** but only, as Paul says, "public official spirits, sent forth for service on account of those thereafter to inherit salvation" (Heb 1:14)" (Phanerosis, p 72,73).

The suggestion is that the Angels themselves had been part of a mortal Creation, and had fallen, causing them to "know Good and Evil" as in the case of Adam, and therefore had been saved by a Divinely instituted way of redemption. If this were so, they were intimately involved with man's beginnings in a very personal way; he was made in their likeness, and like them, he fell, and experienced both Good and Evil. What appropriateness there would be therefore, in these Angelic ministers being given the care of those sinners who sought redemption by the appointed means! They would be able to feel for those under their charge, in all the trials and difficulties it is necessary for them to endure, for they themselves would have experienced similar things! But the Scriptures do not specifically say that this was so. It is not an unreasonable proposition in the light of what we are told, but we must be careful about dogmatising about matters upon which the Word is largely silent. Be that as it may, from the time of the fall of man, it is clear that the Angels have been given the charge of Ministering to those who take hold of the Almighty's Plan of Salvation, keeping them in the Way (Ex 23:20), and bringing them through the trials of life (Gen 48:16), that they might ultimately attain to immortality, being equal unto them (Luke 19:36).

PERSONAL "MINISTERING SPIRITS"

If we are the heirs of Salvation then, the Angels are our ministers, to provide for us according to the beneficent wisdom and mercy of our Heavenly Father. But the Scriptures also indicate that whilst a believer may well benefit from the interventions of many angels in their life, each saint has been assigned with his/her own personal angel throughout the duration of their mortal

probationary period. This is not merely a fanciful fairy story to be taught to children, as the world would have us believe, but it is clear Scriptural teaching. Consider the words of the Lord 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 (Mat 18:10). The disciples who become as Children before the Father therefore, have their own Angels who appear in His Presence. And this forms a powerful exhortation for us – if we treat one of Christ's brethren adversely, if we "despise" them, their Angel appointed to care for them is a witness to our behaviour, and will render such an account before the Father whose Face they behold. Truly it is, that "the eyes of the Yahweh are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of Yahweh is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth" (Ps 34:15,16). Let us therefore not be the cause of our brother's cry, for his Angel beholds the face of their Father in Heaven.

It would appear that the Lord Jesus had his own personal angel, spoken of in the Apocalypse: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John" (Rev 1:1). Whilst it is true that the Lord is over all of the Angels (Heb 1:6), the reference here seems to be to a particular Angel – "his" angel, not simply "one of the angels". And we might speculate as to which Angel this was – could it have been Gabriel? The holy one which was sent to communicate to Daniel the 70 weeks prophecy which spoke of the timing of Messiah's cutting off (Dan 9:21-27), and then to Mary, to inform her of the things concerning his Birth, and future exaltation (Luke 1:26-38)? There would seem an appropriateness in this Angel also being sent to communicate to John the events leading up to the Return of the Lord Jesus – but again we cannot tell for sure.

It is evident that the Apostles believed that they each had a personal Angel. When Peter was released from prison, he came to Mary's house, and knocked at the door of the gate. A sister by the name of Rhoda, "when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel. But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished" (Acts 12:14-15). So it was that the disciples, being unable to believe that Peter had been released, seeking another explanation, said "it is his angel", not opening the door. Only when he persisted, and they eventually did go to the door did they realise their mistake. But mistake though it was, their remarks do illustrate the point that the disciples did believe in personal angels, and for some reason, they thought it was Peter's that was knocking on the door.

ANGELIC DELIVERANCE

An objection to the ministering care of the Angels over believers has been raised in the form of the question, "If we each have an Angel ministering to us, how is it that we experience problems and hardships in our lives? Why is it that we hear of such terrible things happening to other brethren, both past and present?" But those who make such enquiry overlook a fundamental principle of Sonship. Our Father has never promised that no trials will come upon us – on the contrary, we have the Divine assurance that they will come. It is necessary that we be tried, and tested that our characters might be moulded to fit us for immortality. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons ... But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons" (Heb 12:6-8). If we are the Sons of God, we will be chastised. We will experience evil. But we have the Divine assurance that we are not left to endure these

things alone. “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted (tried) above that ye are able, but will with the temptation (trial) also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1Cor 10:13). His Angel, our minister, will stand with us, and provide a way to escape. He will be with us, and “deliver us from evil” (Mat 6:13), as the Lord taught his disciples to pray. An illustration of this is found in the inspired record of Jabob’s life, for he was a man who endured many trials and troubles – perhaps more than most. Yet his life ended with the confident assurance that it was the Angelic minister which had delivered him out of them all: “The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads” (Gen 48:16). Notice this point – the Angel did not prevent the evil from coming, but when it came, he led Jacob through it. He redeemed him from it.

Similarly, in echoing these principles, David spake of his confidence of deliverance out of adversity: “This poor man cried, and Yahweh heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The Angel of Yahweh encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them” (Ps 34:7). Again, the Angel did not prevent evil from coming, for as the same Psalm teaches, “many are the afflictions of the righteous”. But he did effect Divine deliverance, as the verse continues “but Yahweh delivereth him out of them all” (v 19). David was a man who endured many afflictions – some of his own making, and some to prepare him for the exaltation of King over the Lord’s people. Indeed, as the title of this Psalm indicates, these words were written at the time when he was fleeing for his life from Saul, when humanly speaking, his future looked more bleak and as insecure than ever. Yet David’s confidence was in the Lord, that by the Angelic ministrations, deliverance would come, and the promised of God made concerning him would indeed be fulfilled.

From the time that we become “heirs of salvation” then, we are given an Angelic Minister to keep us in the way, and deliver us from all evil. What a comforting thought that is! Our Father will never leave us, nor forsake us, not for a moment, as our unseen minister operates entirely for our benefit, that the Purpose of the Almighty might be worked out in us. But let us beware! If we really and truly believed the Angel was there watching us, would we do some of the things we do? Whilst our Angels may experience great joy at the examples of faith they may see illustrated in us, what disappointment they must feel at other times when they behold some of the things we do! The Angel will keep us from falling so long as we strive to be faithful, but does not remove our free-will. If we choose to stray from the path, the Angel cannot stop us, and we will suffer the consequences of our foolish actions. It has so truly been said that in these days of the unseen hand of Providence, only in the Kingdom will we be able to fully appreciate the ministrations of our Angel. But until that time comes, let us be thankful to our Father that we are not left alone in this dark world. We must apply ourselves to the Word of Truth, that we might learn to do His Will, seeking to work with the Angel, that at the end, we might enter into our Lord’s Rest.

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