

EXCERPTS FROM

April - June 1982

THE LINK

North Road Chapel (Evangelical)

BIDEFORD

Internet Edition

ANGELS AND THEIR MINISTRY

This article is the substance of two sermons preached at North Road Chapel under the section covering the Creation, in a study on Genesis.

The Word of God not only gives us a complete account of the creation of this planet, which we call Earth, with its vegetable, animal and human life, but it also speaks of a vast limitless sphere, a host of planets, an area not known to man. "Thus the HEAVENS and the earth were finished, and ALL THE HOST OF THEM". (Genesis 2:1). "...by whom also He made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:2). "Through faith we understand that the worlds were formed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made by the things which do appear." (Hebrews 11:3). "By the word of the Lord were the HEAVENS made and ALL THE HOST OF THEM. (Psalm 33:6).

The foregoing references which are in the plural refer to the planets and heavenly orbs, (Cf. Deut.17:3): the host of the cosmic heavens which cannot be numbered (Cf. Jer.33:22). These were all spoken into being out of nothing, by the Word of Almighty God, in six days. "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is..." (Exodus 20:11)

The words, "all that in them is" opens up another aspect of creation, for not only are there a host of planets, but the Bible speaks of a host of angelic spirit beings. Sometimes these two hosts are spoken of together, although kept distinct, as in Nehemiah 9:6 - "Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, WITH ALL THEIR HOST, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preserveth them all; and the HOST OF HEAVEN worshipeth thee." Again, in Psalm 146:2-3, "Praise ye him all his angels: praise ye him, all his HOSTS. Praise ye him, SUN and MOON; praise ye him, all ye STARS OF LIGHT".

These heavenly spirit beings, as well as creatures of earth were all created, by God and all within the six days.

(Exodus 20:11). These creatures are ministering spirits of the Most High God, and are exceedingly numerous. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place". Psalm 68:17). "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him..." (Daniel 7:10). "And suddenly there was with the angel a MULTITUDE of the HEAVENLY HOST praising God..." (Luke 2:3).

As to their nature, they are spirit beings, but are CREATED BEINGS. "GOD IS A SPIRIT" (John 4:24), but He is Eternal Spirit - UNCREATED. He ever was, without beginning, without end. Angels date their existence from creation week, for the scriptures expressly declare that at the end of six days, "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them". Their exact form cannot be understood by us in our finite state, for they are of a different order to humans: they are incorporeal, inasmuch as they have not flesh and bones. They do not marry (Matthew 22:30). To us in our present state they are invisible, but in our glorified state this will not be so.

When John was given a revelation of "The hereafter" one of his most frequent remarks was "I saw an angel", "I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne". They were ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands. John actually SAW AND HEARD them, but he was "in the spirit" on that occasion - caught up into that realm to receive this revelation in order that we might be informed.

Angels are rational and moral beings of SUPER INTELLIGENCE "...wise according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth". (2 Sam.14:20). Yet, they are not omniscient (Cf. Matthew 24:36). They are immortal, but not in the sense in which God is immortal: "who only hath immortality..." (1 Timothy 6:16). The redeemed of the Lord will one day put on immortality - "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, neither can they die any more; for they ARE EQUAL UNTO THE ANGELS: and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." (Luke 20:35-36).

The immortality of the redeemed will be like that of the angels. It differs from Him "who only hath immortality" (1 Timothy 6:16), inasmuch as, God is ABSOLUTE: He is the source of all things. The immortality which one day will be ours through grace, will be as that of the angels - DERIVED FROM GOD.

The number of angels remains constant and unchanging, for being spirit, they do not die, neither do they procreate. Their number remains the same as when they were created; NO MORE - NO LESS. Whenever the Bible makes reference to them, invariably it is as if the number is too vast to calculate: "As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured" (Jeremiah 33:22). They are a vast company of spirit beings: a spiritual force of great magnitude.

The Scriptures also make it clear that there are degrees and orders within their ranks. There are:-

1. CHERUBIM. These are creatures of extraordinary power. They are present in the descent of God to earth - (2 Samuel 22:11 - Psalm 18:9-10). They seem to guard God's holiness: in Eden - in the tabernacle - in the temple. (Genesis 3:24 - Psalm 99:1 - Isaiah 37:16). More than any other creature they appear to minister and serve in matters pertaining to God's power and majesty.

2. SERAPHIM. The only place in Scripture where these angelic beings are mentioned is in Isaiah Chapter 6, and from this passage it is quite clear that their sphere of ministry is the throne of God. Not only do they continually announce the holiness of that throne (verses 2 and 3), but their ministry also has to do with the preparation of men for their proper approach to God. (verses 6 and 7).

3. GABRIEL and MICHAEL. These are two angels who are specifically mentioned by name. Firstly, Gabriel. We need to turn to the Scriptures to learn of this amazing being. (Daniel 8:15-17. - Daniel 9:21-22. - Luke 1:18-19 and 26-28.) From these passages it is abundantly clear that his ministry is that of extraordinary revelation and interpretation.

Secondly, Michael. He is first spoken of in the Book of Daniel and he is there shown to be a Prince among angels (Cf. Daniel 10:12-13 and 21). Later, his role is seen as a mighty warrior, defending God's people Israel (Daniel 12:1). Jude, in his epistle, verse 9 identifies him as the ARCHANGEL; "Arch" meaning chief or principal. In this capacity as the CHIEF of this vast spiritual force, he heads the great battle in the heavens, as recorded in Revelation 12:7-22. Michael is the one who directs that fearful conflict in the spirit realm.

It will thus be seen from scripture that angels are a vast and highly organized spiritual force, and it is a right understanding of their existence and power that gives meaning to the words in Colossians 1:16: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him:" A vast array of unseen dominions, principalities and powers created by Him and for Him: divinely supervised and possessing power which is totally beyond man's comprehension (Cf. Matthew 26:53).

All have a particular ministry to the elect. They are all ministering spirits "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Hebrews 1:4): that is, to those "chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world". (Cf. Ephesians 1:4). Such are the peculiar charge of these ministering spirits. They also protect the young (Matthew 18:10). - They rejoice at the conversion of the sinner (Luke 15:10). They have the care (finder God) of His own: they are to watch over and protect - "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Psalm 91:11). - "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." (Psalm 34:7).

If only we, as the people of God, had a greater appreciation of the significance of this, many fears would be dispelled. There is, at all times, this vast army of unlimited power - although unseen - encamped about us; mighty sinless beings, supremely organised ministering spirits unto the heirs of salvation. How often are we like the servant of Elisha, who, seeing the armies of Syria cried, "alas my master! how shall we do?" and he, (Elisha) answered, "Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man} and he saws and, behold, the mountain WAS FULL of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." (2 Kings 6:15-17).

So far, we have only considered the "unfallen" angels, the ministering spirits of the Almighty God. There are also fallen spirit beings. A "section" of the original creation, described in the Word of God as "the angels which kept not their first estate" (Jude 6). They, with Satan their leader, were "cast out" and Satan's domain is now the lower heavens; he is styled, "the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2) - "the prince of this world" (John 12:31 - 14:30 - 16:11).

The fallen angels too, have superhuman power and are the emissaries of the devil. Under their leader they are in unceasing and constant revolt against God and His people. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Ephesians 6:12).

In many ways and in subtle forms this conflict goes on with unabated fury, and will continue until the day of judgment, when they will be eternally put away. All these creatures, without exception, are doomed to the "lake of fire and brimstone". There is NO SALVATION for them, they are lost and hopeless spirits. "...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" (2 Peter 2:4). Not yet, perhaps, limited or restricted to one place, but RESERVED UNTO JUDGMENT, and in the words of John Calvin, "They drag their chains wherever they go".

In view of this intensely solemn fact that fallen angels are irretrievably lost, is it any wonder that, when the Son of God became incarnate and was born in Bethlehem, that a multitude of THE HEAVENLY HOST of unfallen angels burst through space at the announcement to fallen man of the glorious news that unto THEM was born a Saviour? "FEAR NOT, (you fallen men have nothing to fear) ... for unto you is born ... a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:9-10).

No announcement like this was ever made to fallen angels, or ever will be. Their time is short, and their end is indicated in the following words: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41). Thus, in a place of eternal torment they will remain for ever, as also will fallen men whose names are "not found written in the book of life" (Revelation 20:10-15).

W.H.Molland.

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How can the fear of God dwell in our hearts, if we acquiesce even tacitly, in statements that nullify, or undermine, the authority of Holy Scripture? How can we be on the Lord's side, if we do not uncompromisingly maintain the authority and absolute truthfulness in all things, of God's word written.

Truth is not so much endangered by the open antagonism of its foes, as by the smooth treacherousness of its pretended friends. A lion seen in the way is less to be dreaded than a viper hidden in the grass. Professedly to honour Scripture, and then, by a non-natural interpretation of its words, to make them channels of falsehood, is something more to be dreaded than an open repudiation of its testimonies.

B. W. Newton

THE DETHRONEMENT OF THE BIBLE

Queen Victoria said that the secret of England's greatness was an open Bible. That was said when England was great, and was the leading nation of the world. The Bible, however, has been closed and almost forgotten by the nation. Hence the nation's decline.

Some 100 years ago the Enemy began his all-out attack on the Bible. Few homes then were without the Bible and in many homes it was read aloud. An appeal to the Bible in those days settled most arguments. Mr. Gladstone spoke of it in Parliament as "the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture".

But the Enemy planned to discredit it in the eyes of the people and he began by making it appear that the Old Testament was of less importance than the New. In place of the Bible one frequently saw a New Testament. When a young man was leaving home a New Testament instead of a Bible, as previously, was packed with his luggage. Many people were unable to follow in Church passages from the Old Testament because they possessed only a New Testament.

Then, with people less familiar with the Old Testament came the attack upon it. Darwin's theory of evolution was accepted as scientifically sound and this "opposition of science falsely so called" necessitated some modification of the early chapters of Genesis. Even a child, if he is honest, can see clearly the incompatibility of the theory of evolution with the Bible. And today we have the sad spectacle of intelligent school-children being reprimanded when they dare to defend the Bible against the incredulous imaginings of evolution, which are presented to them as the "assured results of scientific discovery".

As a consequence of the early promulgation of this theory, it was suggested that certain parts of the Bible were fictitious allegories (long since referred to by freemasonry as myths and legends), yet nevertheless profitable to convey spiritual truths. It soon became apparent, however, that the relegation of the early chapters to the realm of folklore necessitated, for the sake of consistency, similar treatment being accorded many other passages of Scripture.

So it was suggested that the Bible was not in itself the Word of God and it was left to human ingenuity to discern the Truth from among the mass of incredible material with which it was surrounded.

Then came the findings of the Higher Criticism and the process of "sifting" by the higher critics finally left little of the Old Testament which, in their judgment, could be regarded as reliable. This process was followed by the New Theology from Germany, first sponsored in this Country by the late R. J. Campbell. It was considered necessary in the light (or darkness) of a discredited Old Testament, to "re-think" our Christian doctrine.

The result of this teaching was the virtual denial of many fundamental doctrines of the historic Christian faith. This discrediting of the written Word soon led to the discrediting of the Incarnate Word and the New Testament was subjected to the same blasphemous unbelief as the Old had been.

The Lord Jesus Christ linked the testimony of Moses with His own as being of equal value; "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" (John 5:46-47). The rejection of the writings of Moses therefore necessitated the rejection of the witness of Jesus. The discrediting of the Old Testament, robbed the New Testament likewise, of all its authority.

This has led to the Bible being regarded as of no more value than the writings of the heathen philosophers. And it was not surprising to find a Bishop of the Church of South India suggesting that the Old Testament be scrapped entirely and the New Testament bound up with extracts from Buddha, Confucius, the Hebrew prophets, the Hindu Vedas, etc. so that a really useful volume could be presented to the world. The various meetings of the Fellowship of Faiths bringing together in so-called worship parts of the Bible and extracts from Buddha, Confucius, the Koran, etc. follow the same pattern as also does the League of Mohammedans and Christians.

All this is the logical outcome of the substitution of the theory of evolution for the inspired record of Genesis and other Biblical passages.

Let us therefore hold fast to the infallibility of the Old Testament and prize its instruction, and the New Testament will then present little difficulty. Paul declares that the Gospel of Jesus Christ was made known to all nations by the Scriptures of the Prophets (Rom.16:26). When Jesus taught His disciples after His resurrection, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself". Paul witnessed to small and great "saying none other things than the Prophets and Moses did say should come" and he further declares that the Scriptures preached the Gospel to Abraham.

The Lord Jesus Christ declared that "the Scripture (i.e. the Old Testament) cannot be broken". That word here translated "broken" means "set aside" and is used in the Talmud to indicate the setting aside of an argument when such is overthrown by a subsequent argument. Thus the Lord says, in effect, that no subsequent argument, whether scientific or philosophical, can ever overthrow the Scriptures. "The Scripture cannot be broken".

The Lord Jesus Christ said to His Father, "Thy Word is Truth". May we be able to say with the Psalmist, "O how love I thy law", for "Thy Law is the Truth' (Psalm 119:97 and 142).

The above article was written by Pastor James Payne, Editor of the Magazine, "Watching and Waiting" and is reprinted with his kind permission.

God's own account of His own creation has been rejected as untrue. It is a sin that demands the deepest repentance, and the most unreserved confession.

B. W. Newton

THE CUCKOO BIRD AND THE RELIGIOUS MODERNIST

The cuckoo bird doesn't bother to build a nest of its own: it waits until some other kind of bird builds its nest and lays its eggs. Then the cuckoo drives the other bird away just long enough for it to borrow the nest to deposit its own eggs. Then the other bird sits on the nest and hatches its own eggs as well as the eggs of the cuckoo. Then it works hard to feed its own baby birds as well as the baby cuckoos. The baby cuckoo birds seem to be stronger than the others and sometimes push them out of the nest, and in this manner they get all the food. Of course this saves the cuckoo from a lot of hard work in building a nest, sitting on the eggs, and feeding the young, yet their kind is still perpetuated.

The modernists must have learned their tactics from the cuckoo. They let the Bible believers build the Bible Schools, the Colleges, and the Seminaries. Then they cleverly slip in and lay the 'eggs of modernism' in the nest, where they are hatched and fed by Bible believers. Of course, if they are allowed to go on, they end up taking over the schools and the entire denomination. If there is not a regular infusion of believing blood, they will eventually turn it into a socialist social organization that stands for almost anything, but the truth of God's Word.

Nearly every large religious school in America was built by people who believed the Word of God. In most instances today they are controlled by modernists. The modernists never build anything. They are the cuckoo birds of religion. They borrow, infiltrate, contaminate and desecrate what God's people have built and maintained for years. They are generally smart enough to get God's people to continue to finance their false teaching. In other words, Bible believers build the nest and feed the cuckoo birds, year after year, and then they wonder why there are so many cuckoo birds.

When the issues of modernism and unbelief surface from time to time, they must cover it up, in order to save the convention and its program - which they have been brainwashed into believing is more important than truth.

Reprinted from Plains Baptist Challenger, Nov. 1979.

JOHN KENT
(Hymn Writer and Poet)

When the eleventh edition of the Gospel Hymns and Poems of John Kent was published it included a biography of the life of the Author by his son, and this is of particular interest as John Kent was a native of Bideford. Having in mind the limited amount of space available, it is the purpose of this article to give a brief sketch only, of the account as it is recorded.

The annals of the church of Christ record the memory of those who have fought the good fight, who have finished their course, and who are now before the throne where the labours of mortal life are forgotten; every tear which once moistened the cheek is for ever dried up; and they now possess the inheritance promised to them from before the foundation of the world. Transplanted to a better soil, where mildew and frosts are unknown, they breathe a more genial atmosphere, where the air of the New Jerusalem is perfumed with the undying odours of the Rose of Sharon.

Among this number is the subject of this memoir who was born in the town of Bideford, in December 1766, of poor but pious and industrious parents. For a number of years they enjoyed the holy ministrations of Samuel Lavington, whose piety and zeal in the pastoral office, to which he was usefully devoted, was well known and warmly spoken of.

John was the youngest of a numerous family, whose pressing wants obliged their parents to leave Bideford, where they had long set forth the power of divine grace upon their souls to the glory of God and the comfort of his people with whom they had long worshipped.

As the whole support of the family depended on the labours of the parent, he was induced to seek employment as a shipwright in the Royal Arsenal at Devonport. John at the age of fourteen was apprenticed to his father. Steady in all his actions and virtuous in the pursuits of youth, he soon gained the esteem of all who knew him. Evident marks of poetic talent were clearly to be perceived in him in very early life. The advantages of academical instruction were

unknown to him, nor could he boast of an inferior scholastic education, owing to the narrow resources of the family. The little learning that he had was instilled into his mind by his fond and pious father, who taught him all he knew, and thus endeavoured to compensate for his inability to provide other instruction. He thus acquired the simple rudiments of learning. His anxious parent, however, sought every occasion to carry the thoughts of all his children to higher subjects. He set much value on human learning; but the knowledge of salvation by Jesus Christ, through the more powerful operations of the Holy Ghost upon the heart was more sublime, and, in his estimation beyond all price.

“As when some bird each fond endearment tries,
To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay
Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way”

The first efforts of his poetic genius are unknown. For many years he shut himself in, not daring to venture upon the uncertain tide of public opinion. Manuscript upon manuscript of original hymns lay in concealment for a long period. These would have been lost but for the pressing and anxious solicitations of his most intimate friends, who fully appreciated the value of the talent committed to his care by the great Head of the Church. Their urgent entreaties for him to publish the produce of his leisure were for a considerable time, fruitless.

The wishes of his friends at length prevailed and the little volume was launched on the uneven tide of public opinion. The reception by the Household of Faith far exceeded the expectations of the author and of his more intimate friends and as the successive editions passed through the press he had the happiness of knowing that his labours were still more highly appreciated, and he was thereby encouraged from time to time to increase the usefulness of the work by a large number of additional hymns.

The great mysteries of redemption, through the infinite merits of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, was a theme of contemplation which at all times overflowed his soul with wonder and joy. The seeds of pure and undefiled religion were early sown in his heart. He experienced a great source of profitable and delightful enjoyment when turning over the

sacred pages of inspired truth. With much study, accompanied by the teachings of the Holy Spirit, he became well acquainted with the sublime realities of its contents. His thoughts ran deeply into the inexhaustible mines of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, made known to him by inspired rays of light unfolding the glories of that Saviour, who became the Mediator of a better covenant, ordered in all things and sure.

His style of writing was clear, and easy of comprehension even to the new-born child of grace. His language was forcible and instructive; unadorned by human learning, but dripping with sweets from the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

In singing the praises of redeeming love, he ever felt enjoyment and delight. The musical ability which he possessed, in common with all the members of his family, he gladly used, to aid the worship of the church.

Before he attained the age of threescore years, he was afflicted with a contraction of vision, and as this shortness of sight grew upon him, so did the amount of his reading and writing diminish. His bodily health remained good until the year 1838, when it pleased his Heavenly Father to lay his afflicting hand upon him. He suffered a severe stroke and was obliged to lay aside his book and pen altogether, owing to the defect in his sight; but still the powers of a healthy mind were active and vigorous.

His grandson was now his amanuensis; and, though very young, he would often be seen catching the words as they fell from his aged grandsire's lips and committing them to paper.

After a long period of suffering, he departed this mortal life on the 15th of November 1843 aged seventy-seven years.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THURSDAY 22nd April at 7:30 pm. Mr. J. Roberts (General Secretary) will speak on the work of THE LORD'S DAY OBSERVANCE SOCIETY.

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Three addresses are to be given by Mr. Malcolm H. Watts (Salisbury), as follows:

TUESDAY 8th June at 7:15 pm. Subject -
"THE PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION".

WEDNESDAY 9th June at 7.15 pm. Subject -
"THE THREE MAIN LINES OF PROPHEPIC THOUGHT".

THURSDAY 10th June at 7.15 pm. Subject -
"ISRAEL IN THE SCRIPTURES".

Over the centuries some of the greatest of spiritual men have been divided over matters of prophecy, and still are today.

Because a rigid adherence to a particular line of interpretation can have serious effects upon other fundamental doctrines of Holy Scripture it is essential that we do not become slavishly bound to things which can be little more than the traditions of men. It is for this reason that these meetings have been arranged and we heartily invite you to join with us.

Mr. Watts will also be preaching at both services on SUNDAY 13th June (D.V.)

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Preliminary Announcement - Our annual BIBLE CONVENTION will be held on SATURDAY 24th July 1982. The Guest Speaker will be Mr. John Thackway (Devizes).

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Mr. Molland in his studies on Genesis is, at present, dealing with the beginnings or basic institutions set out in the Scriptures. Having dealt with Creation over a period of several weeks, he is now dealing with the Sabbath, tracing it through the Word of God. This will be followed by the Institution of Marriage.

(L. W. Gee - Editor).