

15. The Good Angels.

By Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible. Col. 1,16.

The foremost among the invisible creatures are the good angels. Everywhere in Scripture they are described as rational beings of a high order. Yet they have not flesh and blood; they are spirits. In ages past they sometimes assumed bodily shapes and appeared to man; but their nature is complete without a body. Their number remains ever the same, for they do not marry, neither do they die. They are very numerous. Jesus could have asked His Father for a guard of more than twelve legions of angels. And the Prophet Daniel says: "Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him."

Heaven is their blessed abode; as Jesus says: "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven." And again: "In the resurrection they [the saints in heaven] neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." And from heaven they come down to the earth as messengers and ministers of God to carry out His commands and to serve mankind. Swiftly, as a ray of light flashes through space, they go from place to place.

God created these spirits with superior intelligence. Their knowledge far surpasses that of man. We read 2 Sam. 14, 20: "My lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth." And they are very powerful spirits. An angel of the Lord in one night smote all the first-born in Egypt. An angel broke the power of Sennacherib by slaying 185,000 Assyrians in one night. The good angels are sent forth by their Creator on missions of various kinds, generally on missions of love and mercy, but sometimes on errands of wrath and judgment, especially upon those who persecute the Church.

The good angels praise and bless the Lord, their God. They also protect and guide the godly on their pilgrimage to heaven. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them."

Prayer.

O everlasting God, who hast ordained the services of angels and men in a wonderful order, mercifully grant that, as Thy holy angels always do Thee service in heaven, so by Thy appointment they may succor and defend us on earth. We beseech Thee that Thou wouldst give these ministering spirits charge over us and over all who fear Thee, that the Evil Foe may not disquiet or harm us. Let Thy holy angels serve Thy faithful children on earth and protect them from the assaults of Satan and the wickedness of the world; and on the Last Day let them gather us from our graves into Thy heavenly kingdom and receive us into their blessed company, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Though destruction walk around us,
Though the arrows past us fly,
Angel guards from Thee surround us;
We are safe if Thou art nigh.

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