# "ANGELS' VISIT"

## Sunday Discourse By Dr. Chapman, the Noted Pastor Evangelist.

### A Beautiful Lesson Drawn From the Psalm Written in Memory of the Wilderness Wonderings—Angels Guardians.

NEW YORK CITY.—The following beautiful and uplifting sermon is by the Rev. Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman, the best known evangelist in the country and one of the most popular pulpit orators of New York. It is entitled "Angels' Visits," and was preached from the text, "He shall give His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways." Psalm 91: 11.

The writer of this Psalm is undoubtedly Moses. We shall appreciate its strength and beauty all the more when we realize that it was written in the memory of the wilderness wanderings. In these verses we find that Moses speaks of victory in every sort of trial. Things hidden and seen are to be overcome and influences most insidious as well as trials that are most abundant and powerful would be as nothing because of the fact that the Lord is the leader of them all, and the very angels of heaven are their bodyguards. It is a general Psalm, evidently for every one, as indicated by the words, "He that dwelleth in the secret places of the most High." Verse 1. It is a Psalm of sweetness because the secret place is suggested where we may meet God, and not only tell Him our secrets, but listen to Him as He speaks, "for the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." It is a Psalm of light as indicated by the mention of shadows, for shadows ever accompany the light and likewise a place of comfort, for the thought of the feathers would suggest the building of a bird's nest, all the thorns of which are covered with birds' feathers, and Moses would mean in this way as to the comfortable position of the child of God. It is a Psalm in which God subjects His faithfulness to His own, for in the 14th and the 16th verses there are six "I wills" mentioned.

"I will deliver him."
"I will set him on high."
"I will answer him."
"I will be with him."
"I will deliver him and honor him."
"I will satisfy him."

All these blessings as indicated by the 11th Psalm are for us if we stay in the secret place of the Most High and not without. To preach privileges without saying to whom they belong is like putting a letter in the post box on which no direction has been written. Men have always believed in angels, and the Bible confirms this belief. Their ministry is quite distinct from that of the Holy Spirit of God and yet quite as real. They are not to be confused with our beloved dead, for our loved ones are higher than they. In speaking of Jesus the writer to the Hebrews says, "Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." Hebrews 1: 3-4. And that we are to have the same as Christ has received is indicated in the prayer of Jesus, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me, for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." John 17: 24.

The Holy Spirit in all dispensations has been the interpreter of the word of God, but angels have had a more material work to perform.

When Joshua was in trouble an angel appeared unto him as the captain of the hosts; when Peter was in prison an angel threw back the bolt of the prison door and talked with him. The best illustration of the ministry of the two is in the life of our Lord. He was led by the Spirit, taught by the Spirit, filled with the Spirit, but was fed by angels, defended by angels, strengthened by angels. The law was spoken by angels, so the word of God declares, "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." Acts 7: 53. "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward." Hebrews 2: 2. While the Gospel was spoken by the Spirit, "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." 2d Corinthians 3: 3.

Angels are actual beings. They ate with Abraham, they took Lot by the hand, they refused to be worshiped and they accepted hospitality. They are a company rather than a race; they do not marry, neither do they die; they are of two orders, good and evil, but they were not always so. Once they were all holy; then some sinned and kept not their first estate. The others are distinguished from this company in the fact that they are called the elect-angels. The employment of angels is twofold, heavenly and earthly.

First, they minister as priests in the temple in the city of God. Isaiah beheld such a vision, Isaiah 6: 1-8. "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved, at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I hear the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."

They are interested in creation. In the very beginning they have their part in the anthem of praise. Job 38: 7. "When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" While in all that has to do with the control of nature they are an active agency. Psalm 103: 20, "Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word." Their office is seven fold.

First, they guide. When Philip was at work in Samaria they sent him into the desert. Acts 8: 26-29. "And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip saying, Arise and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went, and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Gadace, Queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near and join thyself to this chariot."

Second, the help. They fed Elijah when he was starving and they ministered to our Lord in His weakness. Matthew 4: 11 "Then the devil leaveth him, and behold angels came and ministered unto him."

Third, they defend. When Daniel was in the lion's den they were his comfort and concerning little children it is said "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." Matthew 18: 10. That is not the angels of the children behold the face of the Father, but the angels that guard the children behold His face, as if to know His will concerning them.

Fourth, they watch over the church. Paul must have had this in mind when he said, "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last as it were appointed to death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels and to men." I Corinthians 4: 9.

Fifth, they have charge of the dead, as is indicated in the story of Stephen and the death and resurrection of Lazarus, also in the fact that our Lord was in the tomb and two angels were guarding Him.

Sixth, they shall accompany Christ at His second coming. Prophets, evangelists, apostles all declare this truth.

Seventh, they shall be the executors of judgment. Matthew 13: 41-42. "The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kindom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

It is my purpose to show something concerning angels' visits in days that are past that I may make application of the truth to the present time.

I.

Their visit to Abraham. Genesis 18: 1-2. "And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre. and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day, and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him; and when he saw them he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground."

We have here the thought of communion of which the Christian Church is so much in need in these days. It is not so much service that is demanded now as fellowship with Him and waiting upon Him by means of which we may know His will. I like to picture this visit of angels. Abraham at his tent door during the heat of the day, when suddenly the angels appeared. There were three of them, the angel of the Covenant being their leader.

I stood on the very spot where it is said, according to tradition, the tent of Abraham stood and the place seemed holy ground. I doubt not the tent was ever more beautiful to Abraham and Sarah, for as a matter of fact homes are transfigured and lives made beautiful just in proportion that Christ, the Angel of the Covenant, fills us, and He still comes to us today, and in His coming He is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. He entered the home of Zaccheus and gave him a new song, and salvation came to his entire household. He filled the heart of Peter so that when Paul was converted he came down just to visit him that he might know concerning his Master. Doubtless he saw the couch where He rested, possibly the room where He slept, and I have no question at all but Peter and Paul journeyed together visiting the scenes that were made sacred by His gracious presence. He walked with the two on their way to Emmaus and illumined the Scriptures and also made their hearts burn. We may have angels' visits in these days in unexpected ways.

I like the story of the German boy who sat a place at the table for Christ, and suddenly there was a knock at the door. When the child opened the door he found there a peasant poorly clad; bade him take the seat, feeling that since Jesus could not come He had sent this man in His place.

Whatever may be the dispensational interpretation of the 28th chapter of Matthew, the 35th to the 40th verses are at least most striking in this connection. "For I was an hungered and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave Me drink, I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; naked and ye clothed Me; I was sick and ye visited Me; I was in prison and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered and fed Thee? or thirsty and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger and took Thee in? or naked and clothed Thee? Or, when saw we Thee sick or in prison and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." As a matter of fact we never give a cup of cold water, we never say a kind word, we never lift another's burden for the glory of Christ that we do not do these things unto Him.

II.

Their visit to Lot. Genesis 19: 1-3. "And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom; and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; and he said, Behold, now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay, but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly, and they turned in unto him and entered into his house, and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat." Will you notice the difference between the number of angels in the first picture and the second; three in the first, two in the second.

Lot is a type of a worldly Christian, a man who had a good start and made a miserable failure. With such a man the Angel of the Covenant can have little fellowship, while for his soul he may have a great longing. Note the steps in Lot's downfall. He pitched his tent toward Sodom. They moved into Sodom. Then Sodom gained possession of him; then he lost his influence with his own household, his fellow-citizens and with the angels of heaven. He is like the man who came into a service after he had been wandering from Christ for thirteen years. Once he had been faithful and true, brought face to face again with Christ he renewed his vows and then started out to win his children, but returned at the close of the day after he had been in their beautiful homes to say that they had every one of them lapsed into infidelity, and he was powerless to move them. There may be such a wanderer here who is saying, is there any hope. In answer I give you the picture of Jacob and the angels guarding him when he was a supplanter and a cheat. Genesis 32: 1-2. "And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them he said, This is God's host, and he called the name of that place Mahanaim," and of Peter concerning whom the angels said as they gave the Master's invitation for the disciples to meet Him, "He told His disciples and Peter."

These angels went into Sodom and that is the way to work, not to sit with folded hands in the pew and expect the unsaved to come to us; they hastened Lot, for they were dead in earnest. The church needs a baptism of enthusiasm. They laid hold upon the hand of Lot. Preaching is not enough; there must be personal contact with those who are lost.

III.

The angel of strength. Matthew 4: 11. "Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him." There is no reason why we should fail in these coming days granted the fact that the flesh is weak, the tempter strong, our appetite awful, but still I Corinthians the 10th chapter and the 13th verse is true. "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it."

In traveling through the country yesterday a friend called my attention to the fact that the leaves which have been upon the scrub oak all through the winter months were now falling away. The wind of the winter did not make them fall nor the weight of the snow could not make them break away from the branches, but now they were falling because the new life of the spring in the tree is pushing them off. This is the secret of victory over sin with the new life within, and while we may be hedged about with difficulties Satan can never put a roof over us. There is always a vision straight up into the skies. Do not look at your faith or your feelings, but away to the promises of God, especially such a one as my text. "He shall give His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways." Has He ever failed, are the planets overdue, do the seasons ever forget to come, has He ever failed to keep His word with any one, is there any reason why He should begin with you? God is faithful and will not forsake us.

IV.

The angel of comfort. Genesis 21: 14-21. "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. And the water was spent in the bottle. And she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went and sat down over against him a good way off, as it were a bow shot; for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him and lift up her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the bottle with water and gave the lad drink. And God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness and became an archer. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt." This is a sad story of Hagar and her child; but there is many a mother whose heart is just as heavy. It may be because of sickness, possibly because of trial, undoubtedly because of the sin of some one. The 19th verse is most striking. The angels showed Hagar a well of water. The Bible is a well, for all who are oppressed, prayer is a well for all who are cast down, the church is such a well, stoop down and drink this morning and go away refreshed.

V.

The angels in the tomb. John 20: 11-12. "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain."

One of the most popular legends of Brittany was that relating to an imaginary town called Is, which is supposed to have been swallowed up by the sea at some unknown time. There are several places along the coast which are pointed out as the site of this imaginary city, and the fishermen have many strange tales to tell of it. According to them the tops of the spires of the churches may be seen in the hollow of the waves when the sea is rough, while during a calm the music of their bells ring out the hymn appropriate to the day.

There are many hearts to-day submerged by grief and despair and trouble up from which there is rising a great cry. To meet this longing the angels visit us.

A Highland regiment in India a number of years ago was for some unknown reason found to be actually dying rapidly. Their food was the best and the water was perfect, but one day a Scotch piper began to play a Scotch air and instantly the whole command was enlivened. They were simply homesick for old Scotland, and the most of us are homesick for those days when we were free from trial, and best of all the better days when we shall see Christ as He is, but alas, between us and that fair city lies the grave, and we shudder and draw back, but I bring a word of cheer this morning in the fact that if the Lord should tarry and we should go into the tomb all the while we rest there angels will guard us, for in every tomb from Christ's down to the present time if a child of God rest there the angels of heaven keep guard.


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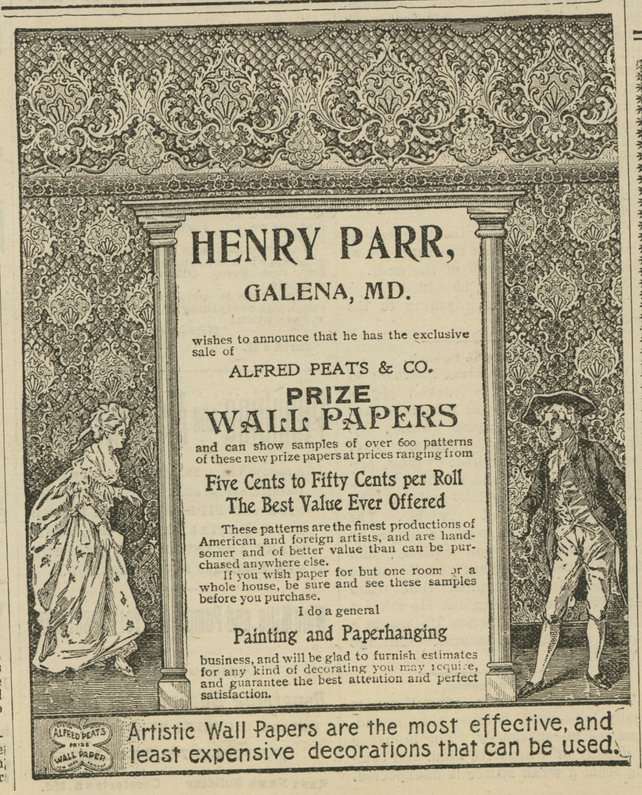


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