

## The Limits of Angelic Power.

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them which shall be heirs of salvation?"—Hebrews I., 14.

What do we know of the ministry of the angels in our behalf? It is a somewhat difficult question to answer, because there is no one passage of Holy Scripture that treats exhaustively of the subject. What teaching there is has to be gathered here and there, here a little and there a little, and we have to combine the fragments of teaching thus gathered, and work them for ourselves into one harmonious whole, ere we can grasp the grandeur of their work, the loftiness of their standing, and the reality of their ministration and service towards us.

Still, let us never consider for one moment that we are left to conjecture for ourselves. God's truth is never left to our conjecture or imagination. He may be pleased to conceal some things from us altogether; but what He reveals, He reveals; and whatever He reveals, though it be but little by little, is enough for the time at which He reveals it. And He gives to us, His children, the Indwelling Presence or power and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, that we may not grope in darkness, nor wander in the uncertain and deceitful light of our own imaginations, but may be guided into all truth, according to our Blessed Saviour's promise: "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He shall guide you into all truth."—John xvi., 13.

Now, instead of considering the whole nature and ministry of the angels, let us consider what they are not, rather than what they are, and as following from it, what they cannot do, rather than what they can; and we shall find that, even from this aspect, the subject will bring before us useful and profitable lessons.

1. They are not of the same nature as men. It may be difficult to express in exact scientific language—which necessarily deals only with material things—the nature and qualifications of beings essentially spiritual; but we can at least say with certainty that angels are not men. When our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, came to dwell in the world, to accomplish God's plan of our salvation, "He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham." And the reason, if we may so call it, given for the taking on of human and not angelic nature at the Incarnation, is, that "Jesus being made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage, for verily, He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham." Jesus then took man's nature, a compound nature, with one part subject to decay and death, in order