

THE CHRISTIAN.

"FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD."—Paul.

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MINISTRY OF ANGELS.

NO. III.

"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." (Math. xviii: 10.) The expression in the text "*little ones,*" in some sense have angels which are theirs. "All the angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation, (Heb. i: 14). But this general ministrations is effected by a ministrations of particular ones. Their angels then are the angels especially charged with ministering to them individually. The fact here stated worthy of our notice is that, "They do always behold the face of the Father in heaven," a fact which shows the efficiency of their guardianship, seeing that in addition to their own power, they have access to the helping hand of God. The fact that these weak disciples have such angels to watch over them, makes it exceedingly preposterous that we should despise them.

2. But more especially now we desire to speak of the ministry of angels in connection with Christian life. That the phrase "*these little ones,*" refers to the disciples present with the Saviour can hardly admit of a doubt. He warns certain persons not to despise them, and gives a reason for the warning, that in heaven their angels do always see the face of God. "Their angels" is the significant phrase in the verse. But what is the meaning? Not that these disciples owned and controlled certain angels, as parents control their children. This is not the meaning. It must then be that certain angels had been assigned to the duty of watching over them, and of noting, if not avenging, such injuries as might be done to them. Even to despise one of these little ones is a sin.

3. Again it can scarcely mean that there is a particular group of the angels of heaven watching over this particular group of disciples. The meaning most likely, is that to each disciple had been assigned an angel, in other words, that God appoints an angel to watch over each of his children so long as they are in the flesh. There can be no other reasonable meaning which this clause will bear except this. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that what is here said was true of those disciples only, exclusive of all others.

4. Certainly if it is true that these disciples have angels, the same is true of all other disciples. You also have an angel, a guardian angel. The phrase "*these little ones*" can not mean the apostles. It certainly includes them, but does not exclude others, and if it includes all, then all have their angels. This conviction seems to have existed in the minds of the first Christians and it is difficult in the light of the Saviour's remark to possibly see how it could be otherwise than all have their angels.

5. When Rhoda affirmed and reiterated, that she had first heard Peter's voice at the gate, and

that he stood there, the disciples told her she was mad. But she still persisted, and they there said "it is his angel."

They certainly believed that Peter had his angel, and no doubt as they believed of him, they believed of all others. Is it not true then that each child of God while struggling through this world of sorrow, sickness and sadness, has his or her angel? Then God has no uncared-for orphans here in this world after all. Each is watched—watched everywhere, watched always. A sentinel stands by us evermore, to protect and keep us from harm. They also bear the redeemed souls into paradise at death. They are Christ's ministers now—as they will be of judgment hereafter. Let us have high and exalted conceptions, of God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the angels of God.

CARROLL GHENT.

THE GRACE OF GOD.

Perhaps there is not a more common expression in the religious world than the caption of this article. It is commonly spoken of as some subtle influence undefinable, indescribable, that enters the heart of man. It is to most minds "the power of God unto salvation," that which is received direct from God in answer to the prayers of the awakened sinner as he looks at the terrible doom that awaits him and turns his sorrow to joy and fills his soul with peace. This Grace of God is supposed thenceforth to abide in the soul and keep its possessor from evil, or, if not altogether from evil, from the consequences of evil by turning them from the evil before they die. Therefore, the person who receives this Grace of God is saved in time and in eternity. As expressed by one man with whom I conversed, he said, "When I received the Grace of God he pardoned not only all the sins I had ever committed but all that I ever should commit." In a conversation with another, who claimed to have been converted by the reception of this wonderful power, though at the time of the conversation he was not walking with the religious society to which he belonged, neither did his morals compare favorably with many who did not profess to be converted, he said, I think there is a spark of the Grace of God left in my heart, and God will yet fan it into a flame. These and similar expressions met with day by day shows a want of understanding of God's word on this subject and calls for investigation.

Paul in writing to Titus, ii: 11, says, For the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared, (marginal reading.) Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, &c. We notice here three things affirmed of the Grace of God. First, it brings salvation. Second, it appeared. Third, it taught: The Grace of God that bringeth salvation. When man who God made upright disobeyed his Creator by partaking of the forbidden fruit, God in pity looked upon him. The divine mind was moved with com-

passion and salvation was promised. God said the *seed* of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. This promise was renewed to Abraham when he had offered up Isaac his son at the command of God in these words, "In thy *seed* shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. From time to time God renewed this promise till in the fulness of time He sent His Son to this earth. Jesus was born a babe in Bethlehem's manger, yet he was the Son of God. He who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men.

When Christ was about to be born the Father said to Joseph, Thou shalt call his name *Jesus* for he shall *save* His people from their sins. In the conversation which Jesus had with Nicodemus, he said, God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world *through Him might be saved*. Again we read the Saviour's words, *The Son of man is come to save that which was lost*. And again, I came not to judge the world but to *save the world*. Jesus the babe in Bethlehem's manger is the *seed* that was to bruise the serpent's head the *seed* in which all nations of the earth should be blessed. It was of Him the prophet said, "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and *with His stripes we are healed*." This same Jesus the night he was betrayed as he ate the passover with His disciples, said, "This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many *for the remission of sins*." John the beloved disciple said of Him in his first letter, "The blood of His Son Jesus Christ *cleanseth us from all sin*." It is evident from the foregoing and much more that might be given that Jesus Christ was the expression of the grace of God. It is affirmed in the second place of the grace of God that it hath appeared. This is true of Jesus Christ. Even the infidel does not pretend to deny the fact that He lived here among men and died upon the Cross of Calvary. That He was a wonderful man and a good man. It is affirmed in the third place, That the grace of God teaches us certain things. Read carefully Titus ii: 11-15. When the Jewish ruler came to Jesus by night he said, "We know that thou art a *teacher come from God* for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." We see by this that Jesus was acknowledged as a teacher from God. What did he teach that we should deny? Ungodliness and worldly lusts. Jesus said, If any man will be my disciple let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me daily. The length of the article forbids our further examination of those things affirmed of the grace of God. Suffice it to say that the teaching of those verses is the embodiment of true religion. What then is the grace of God here brought before us? and we answer without hesitation, *Jesus Christ*. How then or in what sense can Jesus Christ be represented as the grace