

THE

**BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.**

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ARTICLE I.

THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH.

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ANY one who believes in the existence of a Supreme Being, and who regards the human race as sprung from those who were his direct creation, need not hesitate to accept as literal the statement that God walked in Eden with our first parents, and manifested to them his visible presence. We can scarcely conceive, otherwise, how they could have gained an adequate idea of his existence and attributes — such an idea as would have elicited from them the acts and feelings which he desired.

It is true that we are left greatly in ignorance as to the mental endowments of Adam and Eve; but all the knowledge we have seems to be against the conclusion that they were able to grasp directly the indefinite idea of God as a spiritual being. Ever since the Jewish worship was established there have been provisions apparently designed to overcome this difficulty. In both the Tabernacle and the Temple was the awful Shechinah or Divine Presence hovering over the mercy-seat, and giving vividness and power to the idea of a personal God; and even now, under that more spiritual dispensation for which the mind of the race has been in training during ages of a more material form of worship, — even now, with all their cultivated powers of abstraction, men are able to have but dim and vague ideas of divine attributes inhering

in a spiritual essence; and it is only as they behold God reflected in his incarnate Son that they can rise to this highest of human conceptions, and feel their hearts and lives under the full pressure and power of a clear apprehension of the attributes of the great spiritual Supreme. But if, when men were more able to apprehend God in his true spiritual nature, there have been provisions to obviate the lesser inability which still remains, are we not permitted — nay, required — to conclude that more manifest provisions existed at first to meet the demands of greater infirmity? If God's presence was revealed to the Israelites in the mysterious cloud hovering over the mercy-seat, how much more evidently might we expect him to manifest himself to our first parents as they stood wonderingly in Eden, filled with eager questionings of how they came to exist, and looked around for an object upon which to expend the emotions of reverence and worship which were welling up in their souls. It seems natural — at once in harmony with the divine nature and the divine condescension — that God should have impressed the fact of his own being and nature upon the race at first, by speaking to them through a form which his wisdom found most suitable.

Neither can we understand how men could have been trained to confide in truth communicated by direct mental and spiritual impressions, had not God prepared the way by a personal revelation of himself as the source of these impressions, and then gradually advanced from personal and visible converse through the mediate agency of angels to the immediate inflashing of divine communications into the souls of men. Perhaps these considerations may at least suffice to remove *a priori* objections urged against the probability of direct manifestation of the divine presence to men — objections which some suppose so insuperable as to require us to reject the plainest meaning of passages which mention such manifestations, and to accept the most far-fetched explanation which favors a different interpretation. If these considerations suffice for this purpose, then we can take the most obvious explanations of such pas-

sages as the true. Hence when we read that God walked in the garden, and Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of the Lord, we must believe that God was visible to them in some form — that they saw him when he sentenced them for their sin. Whether God usually appeared to men when it is recorded that the Lord spoke to men we do not know; but the fact that no other manner of communication is mentioned than the personal seems to favor this conclusion. When, however, we read that the Lord appeared unto Abram on the plain of Moreh (Gen. xii. 7), and again, that the Lord appeared unto him when he was ninety years old (Gen. xvii. 1), we can scarcely conceive that anything else is meant than that God had direct communication with Abram in some visible form.

Thus far nothing farther can be determined than that God appeared in some form. From this time forward, if he revealed himself at all to other than spiritual senses, it must have been as the angel of Jehovah, unless the record of some of his visible revelations of himself is omitted.

This fact itself furnishes an argument for the conclusion that the angel of Jehovah was a divine person; for if God has appeared to men up to this time it is probable that he did so afterward, inasmuch as there appears no reason why his direct communications should then cease. If they were continued, they must have occurred in the person of the angel of Jehovah. Let us see how far the records of the appearing of the angel of Jehovah favor this conclusion that he was divine.

He is first mentioned as appearing to Hagar (Gen. xvi. 7-14). He promises her a numerous progeny in his own name, without a hint that he used a delegated authority. The writer of Genesis declares that it was Jehovah who spake to her, and she herself called him אֱלֹהֵי אֲדָמָה, Thou Lord seest me.

We next read that the Lord appeared to Abram under the oak at Mamre (Gen. xviii. 1 sq.). The chief of the three men who come to his tent and partake of his hospitality says

to him, "I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." When Sarah laughed at this promise, it is said that Jehovah asked: "Wherefore did Sarah laugh?" and continued the conversation. He who is here called Jehovah, who promises on his own authority, and who understands the secrets of the heart, is evidently the chief of the three men mentioned as beginning the conversation. Further, as the three depart, one who is twice called Jehovah reveals to Abram the awful fate hovering over Sodom, and Abram intercedes with him for the wicked city. The conclusion that he was one of the three who first appeared to Abram is strengthened by the fact that but two of them went down to Sodom. The third, who is called Jehovah, tarried with Abram. As the other two are called angels, we are justified in the conclusion that the third is he who is elsewhere called the angel of Jehovah.

The next mention of the angel of Jehovah is when he arrested the hand of Abraham as it was stretched out to sacrifice Isaac (Gen. xxii. 11 sq.). Abraham was about to present his son as a burnt-offering to Jehovah; yet the angel of Jehovah claims the offering as intended for himself, thus identifying himself with Jehovah; and Abraham called the place Jehovah Jireh, "Jehovah will provide or see."

The angel of Elohim, or God, appears to Jacob in a dream (Gen. xxxi. 11 sq.), and designates himself the God, the *El* of Bethel, the Being to whom Jacob had made a vow. Now this vow was made to Jehovah (Gen. xxviii. 20-23). Hence the angel of *Elohim* is also identified with Jehovah. As Jacob proceeds on his journey, the night before his meeting with Esau, the angels or host of Elohim meet him (Gen. xxxii. 1). One wrestles with him, and Jacob calls the name of the place Penuel; because, said he, "I have seen Elohim face to face" (Gen. xxxii. 30). "That this was the chief of the host of angels he had seen the evening before, or the angel of Jehovah, appears from Hosea xii. 4 sq., where it is said that "Jacob had power with the angel and prevailed; he wept and made supplication unto him; he found him in

Bethel, and there he spake with us, even Jehovah Elohim of hosts." Jacob, in his benediction upon the sons of Joseph, calls upon "God who fed him, the angel which redeemed him from all evil" to "bless the lads" (Gen. xlviii. 15, 16). This angel who is here called God was, no doubt, the angel of Jehovah who had before appeared to him at the ford Jabbock, and delivered him from Esau.

The angel of Jehovah appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush (Ex. iii. 2 sq.). It is said that when Jehovah saw that Moses turned aside to see this great sight God (Elohim) called to him out of the bush. Who could the angel of Jehovah in the bush be but the Jehovah, the Elohim, who called to Moses out of the bush? This angel of Jehovah, who is called Jehovah and Elohim, commanded him to put off shoes from his feet, because the very ground was holy because of his own nearness. He calls himself the God of his fathers, and Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look upon God. He promises to accompany Moses, and declares his name to be *אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי*, "I am that I am" — a name which should be his memorial to all generations. He directed Moses to say to the Israelites that *יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ* had appeared to him. Who could this Lord God be but the angel of Jehovah who appeared to him out of the flame? This must be so, unless both the angel of Jehovah and Jehovah Elohim, as distinct persons, appeared to him at the same time in the same flaming bush.

The angel of God was in the pillar of the cloud and fire which accompanied the Israelites (Ex. xiv. 19), and it is said that Jehovah looked through this pillar of fire, and troubled the hosts of the Egyptians in the Red Sea (Ex. xiv. 24). The angel of God and Jehovah are both in the cloud, or the latter is the designation of the former. When Moses was on the mount Jehovah promised to send an angel before the people, of whom they were bidden beware and obey his voice, for he would not forgive their transgression, and this was because Jehovah's "name was in him" (Ex. xxiii. 20, 21), viz. in him were the divine attributes, and hence he

must be obeyed, hence he had the prerogative to pardon or punish. Jehovah calls him my messenger or angel (vs. 23), thus identifying him with the angel of Jehovah. We read afterward that Jehovah refused to go up in the midst of the Israelites, but at the intercession of Moses promised that his presence should continue with them—his presence, evidently that of the promised angel of Jehovah, who abode in the pillar of cloud and fire, and spake to Moses from thence as Jehovah (Ex. xxxiii. 14).

The angel of Jehovah met Balaam as he went to curse Israel, and said: "The word that I speak unto thee that shalt thou speak" (Num. xxii. 35). When Balaam had come to Balak it is said that Elohim met him, and Jehovah put the word into Balaam's mouth (Num. xxiii. 5). The angel of Jehovah promised to speak to Balaam; he who does meet him and speak to him is Jehovah Elohim.

A man with a drawn sword in his hand appears to Joshua before Jericho (Joshua iii. 13–15). He describes himself as the prince of the host of Jehovah. Joshua is commanded to put off the shoe from his foot, for the place where he stood was holy, just as Moses was commanded thus to do by the angel of Jehovah in the burning bush. There can be but little doubt that this prince of the host of Jehovah is the angel of Jehovah. It is worthy of notice that Joshua fell on his face and worshipped him. The word שָׁחָה, translated "worship," means in the Hithpael to prostrate one's self in respect, or to render religious worship. It cannot here have the former meaning, for he fell on his face before he rendered the homage expressed by this verb. Therefore he must have rendered to the angel such homage as is due to Jehovah, and the man or angel did not refuse, but accepted it as his right.

The angel of Jehovah appeared to the Israelites at Bochim (Judges ii. 1). He claims that it was he who caused them to go forth from Egypt, who swore to bring them into the land of Canaan, and asserts that the covenant made with them was his covenant. But it was Jehovah who thus swore

to them, and it was Jehovah's covenant which was made with them.

*The* angel of Jehovah, or, as it is in our translation, *an* angel of Jehovah, appears to Gideon (Judges vi. 11 sq.). He is called Jehovah twice in the account which follows. As the fire rose from the rock and consumed the sacrifice, and the angel vanished, it is said that Gideon perceived that he was the angel of Jehovah, and said: "Alas, O Lord God, for because I have seen the angel of Jehovah face to face." It nowhere appears that such fear as Gideon manifested was shown in view of meeting any common angel, or any being not divine. Gideon feared, probably, because of what Jehovah had said to Moses, "Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live." This angel appeared to Manoah and his wife (Judges xiii. 3 sq.). His countenance was very terrible. He called his name Wonderful. When they recognized him as the angel of Jehovah they feared, as did Gideon, and probably for the same reason, and said, "We shall surely die, for we have seen Elohim." This same angel appears in two of Zechariah's visions. Joshua the high-priest and Satan are arraigned before him (Zech. iii. 1 sq.). Referring to the angel of Jehovah, it is said, "And Jehovah said unto Satan, Jehovah rebuke thee, Satan." The same prophet declares also that "the house of David shall be as God; as the angel of Jehovah" (Zech. xii. 8), thus, if not identifying Elohim and Malak Yehovah, at least, asserting their equality.

The angel of Jehovah is mentioned in the Old Testament in a few other passages, which do not determine anything respecting his nature. It was he who cursed Meroz (Judges v. 23), who plagued Israel for David's sin (2 Sam. xxiv. 16), who slew the host of Sennacherib (2 Kings xix. 35); and it was he, probably, who slew the first-born of Egypt. The Psalmist also refers to him three times: "The angel of Jehovah encampeth around about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Ps. xxxiv. 7), where no ordinary angel is referred to; "Let the angel of Jehovah chase them"; and

“Let the angel of Jehovah persecute them” (Ps. xxxv. 5, 6).

From this examination of all the passages in the Old Testament in which the expressions “angel of Jehovah” and “angel of God” occur, the following general statements are derived in proof of the position that these words designated a divine person.

I. He frequently applies to himself the name Elohim and Jehovah, and declares that the name “I am that I am” was to be his name to all generations.

II. Whenever he speaks to men he speaks with absolute and independent authority, assuming to himself prerogatives inconsistent with the pretensions of any other than a divine person.

III. He exacts from men divine honor, worship, and sacrifice.

IV. Scripture writers designate him by the divine names Elohim and Jehovah.

These proofs of the divinity of the angel of Jehovah would seem to be sufficient. But an explanation has been framed to obviate the necessity of such a conclusion. It is urged that the angel of Jehovah was merely an ordinary angel, but that he represents himself, and is represented and treated, as Jehovah himself, because he appears in the name and as the representative of Jehovah.

In support of this view it is urged that the expression *מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה* is indefinite, and should be rendered “an angel of Jehovah,” and not “the angel of Jehovah.”

*מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה*, as far as its form is concerned, may sometimes be indefinite, although this cannot be proved, and is doubted by high authority; but it is certainly definite in many cases of its use. According to a general rule of almost all languages, the second mention of an object or person in the same connection makes the object or person definite, and the definite article is required when it can be used. The expression *מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה* is frequently repeated in the closest connection, and is hence definite, although the article is not used to express this definiteness, probably because *יְהוָה*, to

which the article should be appended according to Hebrew usage, is incapable of receiving it. If מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה is definite without the article in some places, proof cannot be adduced that it is not thus definite in all places where it occurs without the article. It may not be; but if it be said that the expression is capable of receiving the article, then it is evidently definite in all cases of its use; for we cannot conceive that the sacred writers would have failed to denote the different usage of definite and indefinite were it possible. Hence, as there is no difference in form, we conclude, on this supposition, that they are always alike in respect of definiteness. But the expression is often definite by position; hence it is always definite in use; and the explanation is that the expression מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה is sufficiently definite in itself, without the article.

But while the grammatical form and position of מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה would incline us to believe that the expression is definite, and refers to one particular angel, the character ascribed to him makes this still more evident, if not undoubted.

There is a broad distinction between the angel of Jehovah and the other angels, which cannot be explained upon the hypothesis that the former had a higher official position as the messenger of God than the latter. Other angels appear as the messengers of God to reveal his present and future will; but they never call themselves Jehovah Elohim; they never assume to themselves the memorial name "I am that I am." They do not claim divine prerogatives, and, above all, divine worship. They are not named Jehovah by Scripture writers. In the account of the appearance of the three men or angels to Abram on the eve of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, there appears a broad distinction between the one who is addressed as Jehovah and the others. Yet they were upon the same mission. The angel Gabriel who appeared to Daniel—this angel who was included by the Jews among the arch-angels, with some show of evidence—was sent to make Daniel understand (Dan. viii. 16). He was caused to fly swiftly with the decree which had been sent forth (Dan. ix. 21). He was

sent, but was withstood one and twenty days by the prince of Persia. How different from the declarations of the angel of Jehovah and what is said of him! Yet Gabriel was an angel, probably a very high angel. He was Jehovah's messenger. Both from the grandeur of the events he predicted, and the relation in which he stood to God and Daniel, he had as much right to speak authoritatively, and personate Jehovah, as had the angel of Jehovah, were this latter a created angel like himself. As the representation of the two is so different, and as this difference cannot be explained because of what was external to each, we must conclude that it was due to an internal difference, a distinction of nature.

In Zechariah, also, an angel talked with the prophet. It was he who made known to the prophet the divine will as to the present and future. He was doing the very same work as the angel of Jehovah when he assumed to himself divine prerogatives and personated God. Yet he speaks *in the name* of Jehovah. But the angel of Jehovah, although not seemingly so directly the messenger of God, is called Jehovah by the same prophet. It appears from this, also, that the angel of Jehovah was not Jehovah from what he did as Jehovah's representative. He must have been thus named, then, from what he was, and must have been a definite being, distinct from the other angels.

Again, in Revelation, an angel is sent as God's messenger to John. He is acting in the same capacity as the angel of Jehovah. Yet the former would not *permit* worship (Rev. xix. 10), while the latter *required* it in several instances. Here, as in the other cases, a difference of nature must be the ground of the different action, since there was no difference in office. Besides, Gideon and Manoah, when they recognized the angel which appeared to them as the angel of Jehovah, thought they must die. No such fear was expressed by any at seeing an ordinary angel. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that Gideon and Manoah from the first recognized him who spake to them as an angel. As they only feared when they knew it was the angel of Jehovah.

they evidently considered him distinct from common angels, and superior to them. We conclude, then, that the expression מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה always denoted the same Being — a Being distinct in nature from all created angels ; and the hypothesis that it denotes any angel through whom God chose to communicate falls to the ground.

But those who do not regard the מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה as a divine person, not only seek to substantiate their view by denying that he was always the same person, distinct from the other angels, they attempt to show also that all the scriptural representations of the angel of Jehovah are insufficient to prove him a divine person, even though his distinct personality be admitted. As Kurtz states it, "All these facts [respecting the angel of Jehovah] are accounted for by the lively consciousness that Jehovah personally appears and speaks through his angel." Or as Delitzsch explains, "In and through the angel it is indeed not Deity exclusively who appears, but it approximates this result as the angel wholly and passively surrenders himself an instrument to divine activity, and transmits the rays of divine glory unbroken and undarkened." We do not see what is gained by the adoption of this view, at least by a Trinitarian, while it lies open to peculiar objections. It is surely as easy to suppose that God assumed an independent form as to conceive that he took possession of a living being, and destroyed his personality and consciousness while he spake through him.

Besides, if this view be true, why did Jehovah not then possess other angels through whom he spake, which we have already seen he did not do. It is doubtful, also, whether it is any more consistent with any of the facts of the appearance of the מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה.

It is objected against the idea that the angel of Jehovah was essentially Jehovah that if this were so he would not be called מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה, messenger of Jehovah, but Jehovah only.

Apart from the sufficient reply that one person of the Trinity, as officially subordinate to the other, might be thus designated without impropriety, it may be responded that if Jehovah

really acts through the angel,—the angel being altogether passive, his personality being supplanted by the divine,—then it is just as much and altogether Jehovah who acts and speaks as though he appeared in a body which never was the habitation of a finite personality. Hence there lies against this view the same objection which holds against the other in respect of the designation “angel of Jehovah.”

It is also urged against the idea that the angel of Jehovah is essentially Jehovah that he speaks of Jehovah sometimes in the third person, e.g. he says to Abraham: “I know that thou fearest *God*, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from *me*” (Gen. xxii. 12). It is said, if Jehovah and the angel were essentially one, the latter would always refer to Jehovah in the first person, and never in the third. But is this difficulty removed by assuming that Jehovah took possession of a finite angel so as to speak through him in his own personality? It is the old story of avoiding Scylla to fall into Charybdis. This last assumption requires that Jehovah should speak in his own personality in one sentence, and that the angel should speak in *his* own personality in the next,—nay, that one sentence which Jehovah begins to utter as Jehovah should be caught up and finished by the angel as the angel speaking for Jehovah. Again, the angel of Jehovah appeared in a material form on several occasions, at least. It seems to be the teaching of Scripture that angels are spirits, and have no material bodies. Hence the hypothesis which we are opposing requires that Jehovah take possession, so to speak, of a created angel, and this angel, thus possessed, take on him a body. How much more simple, how much less difficult, the supposition that one of the divine Trinity took on him this form directly.

So we seem to be shut in to one of two conclusions respecting the angel of Jehovah. Either he was a created angel, speaking for Jehovah as his representative and personating him,—a view already referred to,—or he was a divine person, speaking and acting in his own right.

In support of the first view, it is urged that prophet

sometimes utter the divine decrees in the first person, without prefacing them with a "Thus saith the Lord." The following are the chief instances. Moses says: "And I have led you forty years in the wilderness; your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot, that ye might know that I am Jehovah your God" (Deut. xxix. 2-5). Again, he says: "If ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments, . . . . to love the Lord your God to serve him, . . . . then I will give you the rain, . . . . and I will send grass" (Deut. xi. 14, 15). Once more, Moses says to Joshua: "Be strong and of a good courage; for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swore unto them, and I will be with thee" (Deut. xxxi. 23). These are the chief passages, as far as I know, in which a prophet ever uses the first person in delivering God's message. We reply, however, that the cases are not similar. In the case of Moses, who used the first person most frequently, and thus affords the strongest support for the view we are opposing, he only uses this form of expression three times in many hundreds of messages which he had delivered from God. The people had grown accustomed to receive God's messages from his lips. He had, in each case, just before ascribed his words to Jehovah. What if he did fail to supply the words "saith Jehovah" in this one sentence? The people could not fail to supply them themselves, and attribute this part of the message to Jehovah, as all the other parts and other similar messages had been expressly declared to be his. But in the case of the *אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה* how different. He *always speaks* as Jehovah. He *always acts* as Jehovah. There is nothing to prevent his hearers from supposing him to speak his own words, and believe him a divine person, but everything to induce this belief; and if language can make anything plain, they did regard him as a divine person communicating his own message.

Again, no possible utterance could have induced the Israelites to believe Moses a divine person. They knew of his birth, his history, his sin, his exclusion from Canaan on

account of it, his approaching death. He himself was the meekest man upon earth, and all the prophets must have been oppressed with their own immeasurable littleness and nothingness as they stood in such close relations to the great God. They would, we presume, be the last men to make such an appearance before the people as would confound themselves as God's representatives with him whom they represented. But everything in the case of the *מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה*, if he were merely the messenger of God, would tend to lead the people into this very error. He comes and goes mysteriously. He appears in a flame of fire. He dwells in the awful pillar of cloud and fire. He descends upon Sinai amid smoke and thundering and the quaking earth. He smites, and the first-born of Egypt die; thousands of Israelites are slain; and the proud army of Sennacherib is annihilated. In the case of Moses and the other prophets any claim to divine attributes would have been dashed by the circumstances of their lives with which all are familiar. In the case of the angel of Jehovah, all that men knew of him — of his manifestations and acts and circumstances — were in harmony with divine pretensions, and corroborated his own declaration to that effect.

Once more, the angel of Jehovah not only permitted religious homage, but claimed and demanded it. He required sacrifice from Abraham (Gen. xxii. 12) and Gideon (Judges vi. 19, 22), and worship from Moses (Ex. iii. 5) and Joshua. But can we conceive that any prophet would make such a demand as a representative of Jehovah. Paul shrank from religious worship (Acts xiv. 15) with horror; and could any inspired man do less.

Finally, Scripture writers and those to whom the *מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה* appeared call him Jehovah. Can we conceive of any prophet being thus denominated?

But says Mr. Noyes: "It is not unnatural that still stronger language should be used in reference to angels, who are represented as existing merely to be ministering spirits around God's throne than in reference to mortal men."

Two remarks may suffice as an answer to this. Other angels, who deliver as important divine messages as many of those announced by the angel of Jehovah, never personate Jehovah, never assume his name, never are addressed by it, as the angel of Jehovah always is. As already noticed, this difference can be explained only on the ground of a difference in nature. Again, other angels, under precisely similar circumstances with the angel of Jehovah, refuse worship when it is offered, on the ground that they are fellow-servants and brethren. The angel of Jehovah claims this very worship when it is not proffered. Hence he cannot be a fellow-servant like the other angels. But if not a fellow-servant, can he be less than divine? for are not all creatures servants? Hence, as the "still stronger language" which Mr. Noyes thinks used in reference to the angel of Jehovah merely because he is an angel, is not used respecting the other angels, his remark cannot hold.

Before concluding the examination of Old Testament evidence on this part of our subject, one general remark is in place. We cannot conceive how the idea that the מלאך יהוה was a created angel can be in keeping with the character and prerogatives of God. If he was a creature, how do worship and religious service paid to him consist with the command, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," and the declaration, "My glory will I not give to another." But idolatry was the great sin to which the Israelites were most liable. If the מלאך יהוה was a creature, as he was sent by Jehovah to personate himself, to speak words, to do deeds, and to be surrounded by circumstances most in keeping with a divine nature, then Jehovah himself tempted the people to the sin he most abhorred. That the people *were* thus tempted, if the angel of Jehovah was a creature, is proved by the fact that the Jews continued to regard him as divine and to be worshipped. But such worship did not trench upon the prerogatives of Jehovah; for it was not rebuked, but encouraged. Hence from these considerations also, as well as many others

already noticed, we are forced to conclude that the *אֱלֹהִים* was divine.

This much for the Old Testament evidence upon the point. It is asserted, however, by Kurtz, the learned author of *The History of the Old Covenant*, and concurred in by others, that even though this conclusion be deemed necessary from a study of the Old Testament, the teaching of the New will compel us to adopt the view that the angel of Jehovah was a created angel.

The "*ἄγγελος κυρίου* in the New Testament," it is urged, is identical with the *אֱלֹהִים* of the Old. But the *ἄγγελος κυρίου* of the New Testament is evidently a created angel. Therefore the *אֱלֹהִים* of the Old must be a created angel likewise.

The reasoning upon which the major premises of this argument is based seems insufficient. The mere fact that the New Testament writers use the Septuagint translation of *אֱלֹהִים* to designate an angel does not necessarily prove that this angel is the *אֱלֹהִים* of the Old; although, we admit, it furnishes a presumption in favor of this view. This presumption, however, is outweighed, we conceive, by the following consideration. In two of the six times in which the *ἄγγελος κυρίου* is separately referred to in the New Testament he is expressly declared to be the angel Gabriel (Luke i. 19, 26; compare Luke i. 11). Now this angel is frequently referred to in Daniel, but is never termed *אֱלֹהִים*. On the contrary, as already shown, he is widely distinguished from the latter in all that is peculiar to him. Indeed, many of those who hold the view we have taken, and many who oppose it, identify the *אֱלֹהִים* with Michael, from whom Gabriel is plainly distinguished in Daniel. If, then, in two instances in the New Testament the term *ἄγγελος κυρίου* is applied to another than the *אֱלֹהִים* of the Old, the *ἄγγελος κυρίου* does not always refer to this being. If it does not always refer to him it never does, unless it is a fixed designation for no separate angel. But, as already shown, *אֱלֹהִים* is a fixed designation of a single being. Hence, in either case, the use of *ἄγγελος κυρίου* in the New Testament and *אֱלֹהִים* in the Old must be widely different.

As an instance of the consistency of the opponents of the view we advocate, Kurtz thinks that a candid consideration of Old Testament evidence would require us to conclude that the *אֱלֹהִים* is a divine person. The use of *ἄγγελος κυρίου*, however, is his chief reason for a different conclusion. In short, he supposes *ἄγγελος κυρίου* is identical with *אֱלֹהִים*. The being designated by the latter, however, is Michael. It seems strange that a man of his caution should overlook the fact that the former is identified, where he is identified, with Gabriel, from whom he himself admits Michael to be distinguished.

Again, the only place in the New Testament where the angel of Jehovah is certainly referred to is Acts vii. 3. There, according to the best manuscripts, he is not termed *ἄγγελος κυρίου*, but simply *ἄγγελος*. Would this have been so had *ἄγγελος κυρίου* been the New Testament designation of the Old Testament angel of Jehovah? Neither can it be said that Stephen in calling him simply *ἄγγελος* shows his disbelief in the idea that he was a divine person. Stephen says that an angel appeared to Moses in a flame of fire in a bush. As he drew near to behold it, "the voice of the Lord came to him, saying," etc. Is it not evident that the voice of the Lord to Stephen's mind came from the angel? for otherwise why should the angel appear or be mentioned?

Finally, the *אֱלֹהִים* is distinguished from all other angels in the Old Testament, and assumes divine prerogatives and names, and has them applied to him. The *ἄγγελος κυρίου* is not distinguished in any way from the other angels in the New.

These considerations seem to suffice abundantly to destroy the identity of the *אֱלֹהִים* and the *ἄγγελος κυρίου*. If so, the argument from the nature of the latter to that of the former is altogether irrelevant.

The other argument from the New Testament against the divinity of the angel of Jehovah is as follows: It was the angel of Jehovah who delivered the law to Moses on Sinai. In the New Testament the law is said to have been given by

“disposition of angels” (Acts vii. 53), to have been “ordained by (through) angels” (Gal. iii. 19), to have been “spoken by (through) angels” (Heb. ii. 2) in distinction from a direct communication from God. Hence the angel of Jehovah is distinguished from God, and is not divine.

But this argument proves too much. It assumes that the law was given by the angel of Jehovah, a single angel, a distinct being. The New Testament, however, declares that the law was spoken by angels—many were employed in ordaining it. How can these two assertions be reconciled? Only, we conceive, in one of two ways. Either the מַלְאָכִים אֲנֹכִי transmitted the law to Moses immediately, through the agency of these angels; in which case there is nothing opposed to his divinity, but everything to favor this idea, since he would seem thus to be identified with Jehovah, who is described in Exodus as giving the law; or the view must be adopted that the word spoken by the angels was not the law, and that their disposition—their ordination of the law—did not refer to its *viva voce* communication to Moses; in which case these passages have no bearing upon the question as to the nature of the angel of Jehovah.

Hence we conclude that the argument against the divinity of the angel of Jehovah drawn from the New Testament references to the giving of the law is doubly unsound, as was that from the identity of the מַלְאָכִים אֲנֹכִי of the Old and the ἄγγελος κυρίου of the New. Hence the original evidence for his divinity drawn from the Old Testament remains intact, and that seemed to be amply sufficient.

Our second question for discussion now arises. If the angel of Jehovah was a divine person, was he identical with Jehovah in personality, as well as in nature. We think not, from the following reasons:

1. The title “angel of Jehovah” itself would be inconsistent with this supposition. If the expression angel or messenger of Jehovah mean anything, it must establish a distinction between Jehovah and this angel—the one being the sender and the other the sent. Neither can the force of

this remark be taken away by assuming that the words "angel" and "Jehovah" are in apposition; for, while this assumption is thought inadmissible by the best scholars, the designation of the term "angel" or "messenger" to Jehovah when delivering his own independent will would be a use of language either meaningless or misleading.

2. What we thus infer from the title "angel of Jehovah" is confirmed by independent Scripture evidence. Jehovah sends the angel of Jehovah to go before the Israelites. If this angel were the same person as Jehovah, this would be equivalent to saying that Jehovah sent himself. In Zech. i. 12, also, we read: "Then the angel of Jehovah answered and said, O Lord of hosts," etc. Unless the angel of Jehovah is a different person from Jehovah, Jehovah here invokes himself. This is sufficient to overthrow the idea that the angel of Jehovah is altogether identical with Jehovah. This brings us to the last part of our task. If the angel of Jehovah was a divine person, and yet distinguished from Jehovah, who was he?

In the light of the New Testament we know that Jehovah refers to the Father. The angel of Jehovah, then, must have been one of the other persons of the Trinity — either the Son or the Spirit. An *a priori* consideration would at once lead us to conclude that he must have been the Son.

The Spirit in the New Testament never appeared in human form and spoke to men. As there is a progress in the manner of revealing truth, as well as in the truth itself, we should expect this more intimate relation of the Spirit to men existing in New Testament times, if at all. Hence the idea that the angel of Jehovah was the Spirit, as it would reverse in this case the progress which is made in every other, cannot be held unless there be express teaching to this effect. But such teaching is not to be found.

Again, our Lord, when on earth, promised to send the Spirit when he himself departed to the Father. Whatever more this may signify, it must mean at least that the Spirit would be more intimately related to God's people in the

future than in the past. But if the angel of Jehovah was the Spirit, the Spirit had already been more closely associated with the church than he has ever been since. The more prominent and active part, also, which the Son takes in the redemption of the race, forbids the supposition that he took no direct part in the history of the Jews, while the Spirit, to whom there is scarcely an independent reference in the Old Testament, was directly active in so many instances as the angel of Jehovah. But there is direct evidence that the angel of Jehovah was the Son, the eternal Logos.

We will premise one remark. It would only be in harmony with God's general method to foreshadow the incarnation of the Son in the New Testament by just such a manifestation of him in the Old Testament as his identification with the angel of Jehovah would furnish.

1. The Son is the Revealer. For this he became incarnate ; for this he lived ; for this he died, as well as to atone for sin. From his office in the New Testament we can infer that this was his office in the Old. But this inference is confirmed by direct teaching. According to the apostle John, our Lord existed before he appeared on the earth as the Logos or Word. If this appellation is used because it is descriptive of our Lord's chief work in his pre-existent state, — and we can conceive of no other reason for its use, — it must have been our Lord's distinguishing function, prior to his appearing among men as the son of Mary, to make the logos or word of God known. This was the chief function of the angel of Jehovah. As the angel of Jehovah was a divine person, and identical with the Logos in office, was he not identical with him also in personality.

2. Some significance may exist in the following facts. As the *mal'ak* was God's angel or messenger, the one sent by him, so is Christ called the apostle (Heb. iii. 1), the one sent forth ; and he himself, as well as Scripture writers, speaks of his being sent of God. As the *mal'ak* is called the angel "of his face" (Isa. lxiii. 9), Christ is called an "image of the invisible God," "the express image of his

person." The מְלִאֲכָה יְהוָה calls his own name "Wonderful"; Isaiah declares that the Messiah shall bear this name.

3. It is significant, also, that the angel of Jehovah does not appear in the New Testament, at least as he was described in the Old. If Christ was the angel of Jehovah under the old dispensation, the non-appearance of this angel in the New is but what we would expect, since he had taken permanently another form, and had received another name. But if Christ be not the מְלִאֲכָה יְהוָה, then we have no explanation of the strange fact that the grandest person of the Old Testament, the one who had the most to do with God's people, drops out of sight to be seen no more.

These considerations, together with the fact that Christ's work included that of the angel of Jehovah, furnish strong evidence that Christ and this angel were the same person.

But finally, and chiefly, the New Testament writers seem to identify the angel of Jehovah and our Lord. In Malachi iii. 1 we read: "Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and Jehovah whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger [angel] of the covenant whom ye delight in." This messenger who was to prepare the way before the messenger of the covenant is referred to in Malachi iv. 5, 6: "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and dreadful day of the Lord"; and is declared by the angel who appeared to Zacharias, as well as by Christ himself, to be John the Baptist. In Malachi he is to prepare the way before the angel of the covenant; in the New Testament he prepares the way before Christ. Hence Christ and the angel of the covenant are the same person. But the angel of the covenant was evidently the angel of Jehovah. The covenant spoken of was the old; for there is no mention of the new, and those to whom the prophecy was addressed would understand it, under the circumstances, of the old. The only being who could be called pre-eminently *the* angel or messenger of this covenant was the מְלִאֲכָה יְהוָה.

In 1 Cor. x. 4 we read: "And they all drank of the

spiritual rock which accompanied them, and the rock was Christ." Stripping this passage of its figurative language, — adopted, it is supposed, in view of a current Jewish tradition, — it asserts, at least, that Christ accompanied the Israelites and supplied their needs. But if Christ accompanied and supplied the Israelites, it must have been as the angel of Jehovah; for no other whom we could possibly conceive to be Christ thus accompanied and supplied them. Indeed, no one bore these relations to them but the angel of Jehovah, who was sent by Jehovah for that very purpose. The apostle exhorts the Corinthians: "Neither let us tempt Christ [or the Lord, as the weight of manuscript-authority seems to require], as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents" (1 Cor. x. 9).

We believe that we cannot understand "God" after the clause "as some of them also tempted." Unless the apostle had intended his readers to understand the same divine person would be tempted in each case, he would have written, "Let us not tempt the Lord as some of them also tempted God." What makes it more probable that Paul intended his readers to believe that the Israelites tempted Christ or the Lord, in the verse before us, is the fact that he had just stated that Christ accompanied them and supplied their wants. He would naturally speak of their tempting the divine person who went with them.

But if the Israelites did tempt Christ in the wilderness, they must have tempted him and been destroyed by him as the angel of Jehovah. This conclusion is rendered almost, if not quite, certain by the fact that the angel of Jehovah was to accompany them to mete out justice as well as aid. For God bade the Israelites "beware of him," as he would not "pardon their transgressions."

Thus we find that the argument from ablation, the indirect inferential argument, and the direct teaching of the New Testament all unite to support the conclusion that the angel of Jehovah of the Old Testament and the Christ of the New are the same person. The proof seems various and ample.

We do not deem ourselves rash in believing that the proposition with which we began can be satisfactorily established — the proposition, namely, that the angel of Jehovah was a divine person, that he was distinct from Jehovah, that he was Christ. In contemplating the conclusion to which we have been led by our examination of this question, the conviction is freshly forced upon us that the more we study the inspired pages the broader and deeper will the foundations of the great truths of Christianity be found to be laid, and the more self-consistent will the sum of Scripture teaching appear.

If the conclusions which we have reached be correct, then the glorious mystery of God made manifest in the flesh does not burst upon us all at once, but after ages of foregleaming ; then the divinity of our Lord as taught in the New Testament does not startle us with its suddenness, for we see it clearly revealed from the earliest times ; then the Sun of the new dispensation does not arise upon us without any dawn, like an eastern day, but it is the glory of the old dispensation becoming the still greater glory of the new ; then Christ, the chief actor in the redemption completed in the New Testament, does not spring forth from the silence of eternal obscurity, but comes from being the grandest character of the Old to be the still grander character of the New Testament ; then the two dispensations are not separated by an impassable chasm, because Christ, who is seen to be the centre and bond of each, becomes thus the centre and bond of both. Yes, if our conclusion is correct, and Christ and the angel of Jehovah are one, — then, we repeat, the incarnation of Deity, the pre-existence of our Lord, the divinity of Christ, and the doctrine of the Trinity — carrying with them, as they do, the whole superstructure of apostolic instruction — are not exclusively of New Testament growth, but strike their roots down through all inspired teaching to the beginning of the world, thus binding all revelation together in a complete unity, in a progressive and harmonious whole.