

FROM THE LORD'S WORD

OLD TESTAMENT

“Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way
and to bring you into the place which I have prepared” (Exodus 23:20).

Then as [Elijah] lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, “Arise and eat.” Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. And the angel of the Lord came back the second time, and touched him, and said, “Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you.” So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God (I Kings 19:5-8).

The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them (Psalm 34:7).

And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?” So he answered, “Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” And Elisha prayed, and said, “Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.” Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha (II Kings 6:15-17).

The Lord has established His throne in heaven,
And His kingdom rules over all.
Bless the Lord, you His angels,
Who excel in strength, who do His word,
Heeding the voice of His word.
Bless the Lord, all you His hosts,
You ministers of His, who do His pleasure....
(Psalm 103:19-21)

Because you have made the Lord...your habitation,
No evil shall befall you,
Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;
For He shall give His angels charge over you,
To keep you in all your ways.
They shall bear you up in their hands,
Lest you dash your foot against a stone.
You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra,
The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.
(Psalm 91:9-13)

NEW TESTAMENT

“I am the resurrection and the life.
He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.
And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die” (John 11:25-26).

“The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness.... Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matthew 13:41,43).

[T]here met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, “What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?” ...So the demons begged Him, saying, “If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine.” And He said to them, “Go.” So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water (Matthew 8:28-32).

“In the world, you will have tribulation;
But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight...but now My kingdom is not from here” (John 18:36).

“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance. Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!’ Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:4-10).

Jesus was led...into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil...
Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan...” Then the devil left Him,
And behold, angels came and ministered to Him (Matthew 4:1,10-11).

“The kingdom of God does not come with observation...
For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”
(Luke 17:20-21)

THE HEAVENLY DOCTRINE

The Lord Leads Us by Means of Angels and Spirits

The Lord has provided that there should be angels and spirits with each individual, and that a person should be ruled by the Lord through these (*Heaven and Hell* 247).

The Lord leads a person as if by the hand, permitting and withholding as far as he is willing to follow in freedom. If a person looks to the Lord, he is brought by continual steps out of hell up towards heaven and into heaven. This the Lord does without the person knowing it, because if a person knew it he would disturb the continuity of that process by leading himself (*Apocalypse Explained* 1174:2).

To enable the Lord's life to flow in and be received by people in accordance with all His law, angels and spirits are present with them constantly—angels from heaven and spirits from hell.... [T]here are with every person two spirits and two angels (*Arcana Coelestia* 5848).

The two spirits who are linked to a person provide a communication with hell, while the two angels provide a communication with heaven. Without the communication with heaven and hell a person could not go on living for even a moment. If the two lines of communication were taken away the person would fall down lifeless as a log, for if they were removed his connection with the Primary Source of Being, which is the Lord, would be taken away (*Arcana Coelestia* 5849).

Angels serve as the Lord's ministers, so that they may have an active life, and from this derive happiness. Nevertheless the duties they perform as His ministers are not initiated by themselves but by influx from the Lord... (see *Arcana Coelestia* 6482).

While a person lives in the world he is so far as his interiors (his spirit) are concerned in contact with other spirits.... [I]nteriorly he is in communication with the spiritual world. He cannot be led by the Lord in any other way (*Arcana Coelestia* 5861).

The nature of the Lord's love surpasses all human understanding and is unbelievable in the extreme to people who do not know what heavenly love is in which angels abide. To save a soul from hell the angels think nothing of giving their own lives; indeed if it were possible they would suffer hell themselves in place of that soul. Consequently their inmost joy is to transport into heaven someone rising from the dead. They confess however that that love does not originate one little bit in themselves but...in the Lord alone (*Arcana Coelestia* 2077:2).

The Lord could by means of angels use almighty force to lead a person to have good ends in view. But it is an inviolable law of God that a person should be left in freedom, and that godness and truth, or charity and faith, should be implanted when he is in freedom, and by no means under compulsion. For what is received in a state of compulsion does not remain but disperses.... For this reason the Lord governs people by means of their freedom and restrains them as far as possible from the freedom of thinking and willing what is evil (*Arcana Coelestia* 5854:2).

Where Angels Come From

Hell consists of people born in the world who were made devils or satans by themselves, and heaven consists of people born in the world who were there made angels by the Lord. All people as to the interiors which belong to their minds are spirits, clothed in the world with a material body (*Apocalypse Explained* 1142:2).

Spirits and angels are human souls living after the death of the body, and they have more exquisite senses than people.... But spirits and angels are not able to see anything in the world... for the light of the world is to them as thick darkness (see *Arcana Coelestia* 1880:1, 2).

Angels as to their form are people, having faces, eyes, ears, bodies, arms, hands and feet, and they see and hear one another and talk together. They lack nothing that a person has, except that they do not have a material body (see *Heaven and Hell* 75).

How Guardian Angels Operate

Angels from each society [in heaven] are sent to people to watch over them and to lead them away from evil affections and consequent thoughts, and to inspire them with good affections so far as they will receive them in freedom. By means of these they also direct the deeds or works of people by removing as far as possible evil intentions (*Heaven and Hell* 391).

Angels watch carefully and unceasingly to see what the evil spirits and genii present with a person are...trying to do. And so far as the person allows them, they turn evils into good, or into something approaching good, or into something which leads in that direction (see *Arcana Coelestia* 5980).

The angels present with [those governed by good] immediately turn aside any falsity that is a product of evil or any evil that is a product of falsity the moment it is imparted to them whether in the words coming from an evil person or in the thought coming from an evil spirit.... They bend it towards some truth and good in which such persons have been confirmed (*Arcana Coelestia* 2380).

The angels through whom the Lord leads and also protects a person are near his head. Their function is to impart charity and faith, to notice the direction in which the person's delights turn, and to modify and bend those delights towards what is good, so far as they can do so in the person's freedom. The angels are forbidden to act in any violent manner and thereby crush a person's evil desires and false assumptions; they must act gently (*Arcana Coelestia* 5992).

One of the uses the angels enjoy is to be with people, to insinuate goods and truths, and to turn aside evils and falsities (*Spiritual Experiences minor* 4773).

The function of the angels is also to control evil spirits who come from hell, which is done in countless ways. For example, when evil spirits infuse evils and falsities the angels instill truths and goods. Even if they are not accepted serve to temper what the former infuse. Spirits from hell are constantly on the attack, and angels provide protection (see *Arcana Coelestia* 5992).

The Lord's kingdom is wholly a kingdom of ends and uses. For this reason also the angels present with a person pay no attention to anything other than his ends and uses, and elicit nothing else from the person's thought. All other things, which belong to mental and material levels, they do not care about since these are far beneath their own sphere (*Arcana Coelestia* 1645).

Equilibrium and Freedom

Every person, so long as he is living in the world, walks midway between heaven and hell and is thereby in equilibrium, and thus in freedom of choice either to look upwards to God or downwards to hell. If he looks upwards to God, he acknowledges that all wisdom is from God, and in spirit he is actually with the angels in heaven. He who looks downward is in spirit actually with the devils in hell (*True Christian Religion* 69:3).

At least two evil spirits and two angels are present with every person. Through the evil spirits a person is in communication with hell, and through the angels with heaven. Without communication in both directions no one can survive for the smallest fraction of time (*Arcana Coelestia* 697).

A love of evil which does not make itself apparent is like an enemy in ambush. Being in freedom to think and to will evil while also learning spiritual truths, helps a person learn how to guard or shut the door against these evils (see *Divine Providence* 281:3).

The angels call forth...good and truth residing with a person and set them opposite the evils and falsities activated by the evil spirits. As a result the person is in the middle and is not conscious of the evil or of the good. And being in the middle he is in freedom to turn towards one or towards the other. Angels from the Lord employ means like these to lead and protect a person, doing so every instant and fraction of an instant. For if the angels were to let up merely for a single moment the person would be plunged into evil from which...he cannot possibly be brought out. The angels are motivated to do all this by a love they receive from the Lord, for nothing gives them greater delight and happiness than to remove evils from a person and lead him to heaven. This is their joy (*Arcana Coelestia* 5992:3).

The Proximity of the Angels with Us

When angels are with people they dwell as it were in their affections. And they are near to a person just in the degree in which he is in good from truths, and are distant from him just in the degree in which his life is distant from good (*Heaven and Hell* 391).

The angels depart as hellish spirits come nearer. Yet the angels from heaven never depart completely from a person (*Arcana Coelestia* 5979).

The angels turn aside ends that are evil and introduce ones that are good. If this is not possible they withdraw. The less it is possible, the further they withdraw and the more remote is the position from which they inflow, with the result that the evil spirits draw closer (*Arcana Coelestia* 5854).

The Role of Truth

That operation by the angels is effected by means of an imperceptible inflowing which, when a visual presentation of it is made, looks like an inflowing beam of light. That light is made up of countless truths present within good which focus on one particular truth known by a person and which, while they sustain the truth in him, also sustain the love that belongs to that truth. This is the way the angels raise a person's mind above falsities and protect it from evils. Yet the person is totally unaware of any of this (see *Arcana Coelestia* 5893:3).

When evil spirits have thrust evils and falsities at a person, the angels from the Lord...maintain the truths implanted in a person previously and so withhold him from those evils and falsities. The truths of faith which, through an affection for truth, have become rooted in a person serve as a level into which angels can operate. People who do not have this level laid down in them cannot be led by angels but allow themselves to be led by hell. For without it the operation of the angels cannot become established anywhere and so passes away from them. That level for angels to operate into cannot however be acquired unless the truths of faith have been put into service and thus have been implanted in the person's will and through this in his life (see *Arcana Coelestia* 5893:3).

The Evil Spirits

Anyone who does not lead a life consisting of good that stems from charity and who does not allow himself to be led by the Lord is one of those who belong in hell, and after death he also becomes a devil (*Arcana Coelestia* 697).

Just as the delight and bliss of heaven consist in doing what is good to a person and contributing to his eternal salvation, so conversely does the delight of hell consist in doing ill to a person and bringing about his eternal ruin (*Arcana Coelestia* 5864).

In the same degree in which angels have wisdom and intelligence infernal spirits have malice and cunning. Their malice is so great that it is hardly possible to describe even a thousandth part of it. If a person were not protected by the Lord he could never be rescued from hell. For with every person there are spirits from hell as well as angels from heaven. And yet the Lord cannot protect a person unless he acknowledges the Divine and lives a life of faith and charity. For otherwise a person turns himself away from the Lord and turns himself to infernal spirits (see *Heaven and Hell* 577).

In the hour of conflict evil spirits are present who absolutely hate everything that is good and true, that is, every element of love and faith in the Lord (see *Arcana Coelestia* 59).

While a person is being regenerated and becoming spiritual he is involved constantly in conflict. For before regeneration started, evil desires were in control. During the process of regeneration his desires and falsities cannot be done away with instantly. So for a long time evil spirits are left with him to activate his desires, and so release them in countless ways...in order that those desires may be turned by the Lord towards something good (see *Arcana Coelestia* 59).

Conscience or Lack of Conscience

All those have the good of charity present with them who possess conscience, that is, who are unwilling to depart at all from what is just and fair, good and true.... These people think and desire for the neighbor that which is good without any repayment to themselves, even if he is unfriendly towards them. These are the people with whom good flowing from charity is present, whether they are outside the Church or inside. Those inside the Church revere the Lord and gladly listen to and carry out the things He has taught (*Arcana Coelestia* 2380:2).

People who are immersed in evil have no conscience. They have no concern for what is just and fair except insofar as they are thereby able to earn a reputation of seeming to have such a concern.... What is more, they think and desire for the neighbor that which is evil, and they also actually do it even to a friend, if he does not show them favor, and they take delight in doing so. If they do anything good it is for the sake of some repayment (*Arcana Coelestia* 2380:3).

A person is continually withdrawn by the Lord from the evils that he attaches and as it were attracts to himself by his affiliation with infernal spirits. If he is not withdrawn by the internal bonds of conscience, which he fails to receive if he denies a Divine, he is nevertheless withdrawn by external bonds, which are, as said above, fears in respect to the law and its penalties, and fears of the loss of gain and the deprivation of honor and reputation (*Heaven and Hell* 577).

It is a momentous truth that the Lord governs people by means of spirits and angels. When evil spirits start to have dominion, angels set to work to ward off evils and falsities, as a consequence of which conflict arises. It is by means of perception, dictate, and conscience that a person comes to feel this conflict. These, together with temptations, make it possible for a person to become plainly aware of the fact that spirits and angels are residing with him (*Arcana Coelestia* 227).