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The Doctrine of the Holy Angels in Roman Catholicism as Contrasted with Scripture

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THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY ANGELS IN ROMAN CATHOLICISM AS CONTRASTED WITH SCRIPTURE

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M. Erich Knippa

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of my thesis is to set forth the doctrine of the holy angels as it is taught in Roman Catholicism, the doctrine of the holy angels as it is presented to us in Scripture, and to evaluate this facet of Roman theology in the light of Scriptural witness.

The subject of treatment is necessarily limited. The doctrine of the evil angels, as it finds expression in the two above-mentioned sources, will receive no primary consideration in this study. Only then will the evil angels be referred to when, in the estimation of the writer, such a reference is unavoidable.

A word of explanation is in place on the use of terminology employed in the forthcoming paragraphs. Whenever the terms "angel" and "Catholicism" appear without further qualification, the holy angels and the Roman Catholic Church are signified.

Quotations from Scripture cited in the recounting of the Roman viewpoint are from the Duay translation of the Bible. Quotations in the section which reviews the Biblical account of the holy angels are from the Authorized King James Version.

My overall aim is not to engage in destructive criticism here. Isaiah, the Prophet, expresses my sentiments

perfectly when he says, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Is. 11:9).

CHAPTER II

THE HOLY ANGELS IN ROMAN CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

Roman Catholicism holds two opinions in regard to the time of the creation of the holy angels. It is agreed that they were not brought into existence after the sixth day of creation. Therefore, the terminus ad quem is established among them, but the terminus a quo elicits discussion. The dictum of the Fourth Lateran (1215) and the Vatican Council (1870), the latter a reaffirmation of the former, and the interpretation placed upon it by some papal theologians, exposes the two-fold viewpoint. The dictum reads:

> God . . . created out of nothing, from the very beginning of time, both the spiritual and the corporeal creature, to wit, the angelical and the mundane, and afterwards the human creature . . . .[1]

Pohle-Preuss reflects:

> When the angels were created is not so clearly defined. Whether the creation of the angels was simultaneous with that of the material universe is uncertain. As St. Thomas has pointed out, the definition of the Fourth Lateran Council was aimed at a Manichaean heresy which did not bear directly on the time of the creation of the angels. Nevertheless many theologians regard the interpretation just suggested as superficial and hold the simultaneous creation of the angels and the material universe to be a theologically certain doctrine, which may not be rejected without temerity. We prefer not to read into the Lateran definition something which its authors evidently did not intend to put

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[1]Pohle-Preuss, God, the Author of Nature and the Supernatural (Sixth Revised Edition; St. Louis and London: B. Herder Book Co., 1934, Vol. 3, 313.

> there, and adopt the affirmative view merely for the reason that it is a common teaching of the theologians. It would at any rate be unreasonable to assume an immoderately long time to have elapsed between the creation of the angels and that of the physical universe. The only thing we know positively is that the angels existed at the time of Adam, whence it follows that they were created no later than the sixth day.[2]

Thus there are those Roman theologians who hold that "the angels were created at the same time with the material universe,"[3] and as the dictum stipulates, before the mundane creation. Also there are other papal theologians who hold, "Long before this cosmos came into being the angels existed."[4]

Roman Catholicism has no distinct conception of the true nature of the holy angels. Repeatedly papal writings tell us that the angels are "pure spirits."[5] It is also possible to adduce from Roman literature numerous acceptable definitions of the angelic being. We read:

> The angels, then, are pure spirits: this means that they are intelligent substances without matter or body. God is a pure spirit, but His spirituality is infinitely more beautified and incomprehensible than the angels. The souls of men are spiritual, but naturally

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[2]Ibid., pp. 313-14.

[3]Frederick A. Houch, Our Friends and Foes (St. Louis and London: B. Herder Book Company, 1948), p. 12.

[4]David P. McAstocker, Speaking of Angels (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1946), p. 98.

[5]Joseph Husslein, The Spirit World about Us (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1934), p. 103.

> capable of union with a body; they are not pure spirits . . . ."[6]

Again, we are told, "It is Catholic doctrine, though not yet an article of faith, that the angels are incorporeal substances, i.e., pure spirits."[7] We are therefore taken somewhat by surprise when, immediately following the latter assertion, the question is asked, "Are the angels without matter and form?" and the answer reads:

> That is quite a different question . . . . Granted that the angels are pure spirits, it may be asked whether their purely spiritual nature admits of a composition of matter (determinable) requiring for its actuation a form (determinans), or whether, like the Divine Essence, they are metaphysically simple.[8]

So, on the one hand, Rome speaks of the angels as "pure spirits;" on the other hand, it finds itself in doubt as to whether they are totally without matter or form.

Romanism is unified on the teaching that the angels did not at first enjoy the Beatific Vision of the Holy Trinity. It maintains that "they had to undergo a probation, during which they found themselves in the status viae and had to merit the Beatific Vision of the Holy Trinity."[9] The assertion is that the angels, being rational creatures, could not by nature behold such beatitude. Therefore God had to

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[6]Sister Mary Paula, Presenting the Angels (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1935), p. 5.

[7]Pohle-Preuss, op. cit., p. 314.

[8]Ibid., p. 316.

[9]Ibid., p. 328.

extend to them the help of grace. Thus, by means of infused virtue, the motion of their will was turned toward God.[10] This supernatural endowment also enlightened them "as to their future designs in their regard according to the use they should make of their free will."[11] Some papists believe that the angels were first created in puris naturalis, i.e., in a pure state of nature, and that they were raised to the supernatural order at a later time. Others believe, and these are today in the majority, that the creation of the angels and their endowment with sanctifying grace was simultaneous.[12] Rome is persuaded that this help of grace made them "the elect angels" (I Tim. 5:21), since it is said that here God was opening up for them the way into His presence.[13] Furthermore, it is held that the evil angels were also thus elevated to the divine state.[14] How long the probation lasted is not specified.[15] Nor has it been definitely determined wherein the probation consisted. A surmisal is that Christ revealed to them the truth of His future

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[10]Houch, op. cit., p. 13.

[11]Mary Paula, op. cit., p. 12.

[12]Thomas Acquinas, The Summa Theologica, translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Second and Revised Edition; London: Burns, Oates, and Washbourne, Ltd., 1922), Part I, 62.

[13]Pohle-Preuss, op. cit., p. 325.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Husslein, op. cit., p. 130.

Incarnation, that He asked supreme adoration for Himself in this state, and that this would naturally be something which the devils would disdain. Some theologians say, "One-third of the vast number rebelled against the Creator and lost heaven."[16]

Human reason is given full play in papacy for determining the total number of angels which God has created. Thomas Acquinas begins the tabulation. He observes:

> . . . . It is the perfection of the universe which God chiefly intends by the creation of beings; and the more perfect some things are, in so much greater a number are they created by God. There is no parallel,[17]

he says,

> in the magnitude of those incorruptible bodies which sail through the blue vaults of heaven and the corruptible substances of earth; so, too, there is no comparison in the stupendous multitude of the immaterial beings created by God and the material substances of His hands.[18]

This statement of the Angelic Doctor, however, confines itself to present material substances and then accounts the angels to be more than these in number. Occasionally statements of papal orientation go on to include also the souls of men who have lived in the centuries gone by, and the result is that the adding machine is still in the red--more angels than these. Should we ask, "What is the ratio of angels to men according to Roman calculation?" then the answer

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[16]Mary Paula, op. cit., p. 12.

[17]McAstocker, op. cit., p. 48.

[18]Ibid.

is, "99:1." Jesus' parable of the ninety-nine safe sheep and the one lost one is adjudged the attestation. Man is the one lost sheep. The angels are the ninety-nine safe sheep in the wilderness.[19] Husslein, however, considers the great number of angels spoken of in Roman Catholicism as lying in the field of speculation.

Roman Catholicism broaches the question, "Of what species are the angels?" In this matter there are three schools of thought, and a fourth which avoids analysis of the problem. Scotus and Cardinal Toletus testified that all of the angels are of a single species.[21] Suarez was persuaded that all of the angels in a given choir are of the same species and bear a distinct relation to each other.[22] Thomas Acquinas maintained that each angel constitutes a separate species.[23] Pohle-Preuss esteems the consideration one which "really defies the limited powers of human reason . . . ."[24] Husslein observes that this discussion is "obviously without Scriptural basis."[25] Sister Mary

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[19]Pohle-Preuss, op. cit., p. 321.

[20]Husslein, op. cit., p. 129.

[21]Pohle-Preuss, op. cit., pp. 321-22.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Husslein, loc. cit.

Paula says:

> Today, the general opinion is that all angels form but one species, with no two exactly alike, just as it is on earth--unity of species amid great variety of individuals. Both men and angels differ in capacity, grace, and virtue.[27]

Roman Catholicism teaches that every person has a guardian angel. It is said, "The angels exercise a kind of general guardianship over the human race."[28] Vonier states, "Great as is the Christian faith in the privileged state of those that are baptized in Christ, it never made the guardianship of the angel an exclusive privilege of the regenerate."[29] To put it bluntly, "Every human being on the face of the earth is believed to have the protection of a guardian angel, either individually or collectively with other people,"[30] and, "the burden of opinion is in favor of individual angelic guardianship."[31] Passages of Scripture cited in support of this tenet are all such as are said to apply specifically but not exclusively to the angelic guardianship which the children of God enjoy.[32] Husslein says:

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[27]Mary Paula, op. cit., p. 14.

[28]Pohle-Preuss, op. cit., p. 330.

[29]Dom Anscar Vonier, The Angels (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928), Vol. 8, 48.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Husslein, op. cit., p. 15.

> St. Paul expressly states that the specific mission of the angels is to minister to men who have not yet attained the Heavenly Kingdom: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?"[33]

Papacy declares that the office of the guardian angel is to serve the individual as guide and companion,[34] to protect his client from any serious harm,[35] to intercede for the human being before God,[36] to supply by perpetual homage to God's glory for the person's neglect and make reparation for irreverence,[37] and to use every legitimate means to bring his charge safely to the heavenly fatherland.[38] Acquinas believed that the guardianship of the individual began at birth and ended with death. Husslein affirms that it starts with the first instance of human life and continues after death, that at death the angel guardian ferries the soul in his care to heaven, but since it must be confined for a time to the refining fires of purgatory, the angel takes it there, and provided that he leaves it at all, then he visits and consoles it often, and when the purging is done, the guardian angel bears the soul to God in final triumph.[39]

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[33]Husslein, op. cit., p. 3.

[34]McAstocker, op. cit., p. 81.

[35]Husslein, op. cit., p. 21.

[36]Mary Paula, op. cit., p. 13.

[37]Joseph Ventura, "Our Guardian Angels," American Ecclesiastical Review, Vol. 94 (January--June, 1936), p. 28.

[38]McAstocker, op. cit., p. 86.

[39]Husslein, op. cit., pp. 24-7.

While not an article of faith, the doctrine of the universal guardianship of the human race is tantamount to one. It is taught by the ministerum ordinarium, which Pohle-Preuss reminds, "voices the manifest teaching of Scripture and Tradition."[40]

Roman Catholicism teaches that every Christian from the moment of his Baptism has a particular guardian angel.[41] We should not understand this thesis to mean that prior to Baptism the individual is believed not to have a particular guardian angel, because "the burden of opinion is in favor of individual angelic guardianship"[42] also before the Washing of the Water by the Word. Here the emphasis is merely that the Christian may be very certain of this blessing, because from the time of Baptism the angel guardian is especially solicitous in affording care and protection. McAstocker says, "The angels are on intimate terms with those who expend themselves for the neighbor."[43] Again, he says, "These heavenly spirits are mostly interested in the humble and contrite heart."[44] To undergird this principle, all the passages adduced in support of the initial proposition are

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[40]Pohle-Preuss, op. cit., p. 330.

[41]Ibid., p. 332.

[42]Vonier, op. cit., p. 48.

[43]McAstocker, op. cit., p. 124.

[44]Ibid., p. 51.

employed with the difference in rendition being that now they are said to apply with special force.[45] Since they are uniquely attracted to the Christian, the patron angel, also called saint, rejoices when his client does penance,[46] affords increasing aid as the same lives an undefiled life,[47] directs his life lovingly as guide and shepherd,[48] ever forms a stronger protective netting against moral and physical death,[49] lends his charge a heightening feeling of safety,[50] inculcates into him a universal love for fellowman,[51] delivers him from melancholy,[52] lends him a helping hand in business conducive to salvation, comforts him when bereaved with heavenly consolation,[53] and may be employed by him in the interest of advancing the well-being, physical and spiritual, of needy fellowman.[54]

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[45]Husslein, op. cit., p. 15.

[46]Ibid., p. 24.

[47]Ibid., p. 129.

[48]Pohle-Preuss, op. cit., p. 33.

[49]Husslein, op. cit., p. 178.

[50]McAstocker, op. cit., p. 119.

[51]Ibid., p. 81.

[52]Ibid., p. 79.

[53]Husslein, op. cit., pp. 27-8.

[54]Ibid., pp. 17, 24.

Roman Catholicism teaches that "not only Christians, but heathens and sinners also have each a guardian angel."[55] We read, ". . . they [the guardian angels] minister to the vilest of earth's intelligent creatures as tenderly and as carefully as they do to the noblest."[56] Husslein, while he does tone the matter down a little, nevertheless subscribes to the doctrine in general. He says:

> The devil it is true ever goes about trying to kill souls, but the guardian angel never leaves his charge. It is also true that passages in the Fathers seem to affirm that when a person commits sin the angel guardian turns away, but these are not to be taken too literally. The angel guardian never totally leaves his charge. The relation, on the other hand, between the faithful and its guardian angel, how intimate and delightful![57]

Statements similar to the one just quoted are to be found on pages fifteen and sixteen of Husslein's The Spirit World about Us. Suarez describes this proposition as embodying "the common consent of the theologians and Fathers."[58] A Scripture passage used to verify this principle is Psalm 34: 7, "The angel of the Lord shall camp round about them that fear Him, and shall deliver them."[59] Husslein looks to this passage for support of the principle that each person--

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[55]Pohle-Preuss, op. cit., p. 335.

[56]Mary Paula, op. cit., p. 27.

[57]Husslein, op. cit., p. 19.

[58]Pohle-Preuss, op. cit., p. 335.

[59]Husslein, op. cit., p. 18.

non-Christian, Mohammedan, agnostic, atheist, or anyone designated by religious leaning or lack of it--is under the guardian protection of an individual angel. The statement of Socrates in which he asserted that he enjoyed the guidance of a tutelary spirit is regarded as expostulating a profound truth.[60]

Roman Catholicism teaches that "every state and ecclesiastical province has its own tutelary spirit."[61] Pohle-Preuss evaluates this belief as a probable opinion, which, he says, finds some slight support in the famous vision of Daniel.[62] The principle incorporates the supposition that every country, city, town, the Roman Catholic Church, its dioceses and orders have each a guardian angel. Many passages of Scripture are summoned to champion this thesis, but as stated above, these all receive their color from the Daniel reference. The Daniel chapters (10-12) present Michael as Prince of the Jewish people (Dan. 12:1). In his vision, the Prophet also sees a man, whom Papacy regards as having been Raphael.[63] Raphael, then, speaks to Daniel of two other princes, the Prince of the Kingdom of Persia (Dan. 10:13), and the Prince of Grecia (Dan. 10:20). The Prince of Grecia

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[60]Pohle-Preuss, op. cit., p. 337.

[61]Ibid.

[62]Ibid.

[63]Ibid.

is identified as Gabriel,[64] while the Prince of the Kingdom of Persia is left unidentified. What was the situation as conceived by Husslein? Daniel had prayed to God for the return of the Jews from captivity, which return was now overdue. Raphael also tells Daniel that the return from captivity had not been effected on schedule because the Prince of the Kingdom of Persia had withstood him. The latter had pleaded that God keep the Jews in his patron country. This he had done, it is said, possibly because he was looking out for the spiritual well-being of the people in his care. The Jews had God's written Word, and if kept in his land, his people would have continued opportunity to read the Word, to have their religion purified, and thus be saved. We are told, moreover, that he may have felt the Jews needed further purification; however, Michael, the Prince of the Jews, had finally come to the aid of Raphael. Thus, God was persuaded to bring about the deliverance forthwith. We are advised that these angels were really not at enmity with each other. Each was merely concerned about the well-being of his protectorate. Though the Prince of Grecia seemingly was not too much taken up over the matter, his will was also that the Jews remain. These Princes, then, in Roman Catholic thought, are the Patron Angels of these various lands mentioned. On the basis of the construction, it is inferred that every country, city, and town has its guardian angel.

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[64]Husslein, op. cit., p. 119.

Inasmuch as Michael is here represented as the Prince of the Jewish nation, it is raised to a high degree of probability that whenever the Old Testament speaks of an angel coming to the rescue of the Hebrews in critical times that this angel was Michael. Thus, Michael is likely the angel whom God promised Jacob's Seed as warrior in the conquest of Canaan (Ex. 23:20); the angel who appeared in Jericho's plains to Joshua as Captain of the Lord's host (Josh. 5:15); the angel who showed himself to Zechariah underneath the myrtle trees in the bottom as Israel's intercessor (Zech. 1:8-12).[65] The man whom Paul saw in a vision at Troas turns out to be the Patron Saint of Macedonia. Finally, since Michael was supposedly the guardian of the Hebrew nation, the Church of the Old Testament, he is today the protector of the Roman Catholic Church, the ecclesia of the New Testament. From this proposition the guardian angels of the Church's dioceses and orders emanate.[66]

How does Rome apply its doctrine of the guardian angels? It declares: 1. We should be filled with gratitude and love and thank the Almighty for giving each of us "a spiritual associate in the fullest sense of the word,"[67] cast aside all cares and worries completely,[68] be joyful in

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[65]Husslein, op. cit., pp. 62-5.

[66]McAstocker, op. cit., pp. 76-7.

[67]Ibid., pp. 44-5, 87.

[68]Ibid., p. 75.

spirit,[69] and cultivate the widest kind of catholicity in thought and action.[70] 2. We should be filled with admiration for these ministering spirits; this in view of their innate greatness and goodness,[71] and foster "a deep or fervent respect and devotion" for our guardian angel.[72] We hear that St. Paul of the Cross would bow to his friends at recreation merely out of respect for their guardian angels. 3. The guardian angels "evoke our everlasting love, being so exalted, so near the throne of God, they are pure, so humble, so eager to consort with the lowest of the low,"[73] follow them in their unselfishness of service,[74] be inspired of them to a more ardent, consistent union with the source of all goodness,[75] and be devoted to God since sin is also an affront to them.[76] It is said that Peter Faber's fruitful life was but the outgrowth of devotion unto the guardian angels. 4. We should invoke them, depend upon the help of these celestial beings for greater spirituality,[77] wrestle

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[69] Ibid., p. 79.

[70] Ibid., p. 81.

[71] Ibid., pp. 45-8.

[72] Ibid., p. 89.

[73] Ibid., p. 49.

[74] Ibid., pp. 78-9.

[75] Ibid., p. 150.

[76] Ibid., p. 182.

[77] Ibid., p. 183.

with them in prayer as Jacob to avoid disaster,[78] seek aid for mental peace and quiet and effectiveness of endeavor,[79] beg guidance of them for certainty of action,[80] send our own guardian angel along with dear ones at critical moments,[81] enter into league with the patron of another when seeking to do him good,[82] lean upon the tutelary spirit of another when efforts to do him good have failed,[83] and rest upon the angelic guardianship of the individual, the town,[84] the nation for success in Gospel endeavor.[85] "The Catholic Church teaches that every man has a Guardian Angel, whom he should venerate and invoke. This teaching is founded on Sacred Scripture (Gal. 1:8; I Tim. 3:16; I Pet. 1:12)."[86] Joseph Ventura says:

> As often as the gloom of temptation threateneth thee, or the sharpness of tribulation hengeth over thee, call upon him that keepeth thee, thy Shepherd, thy Refuge in times of trouble, call upon him, and say, 'Lord, save us, we perish.'[87]

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[78] Ibid., p. 86.

[79] Ibid., pp. 71-2.

[80] Ibid., p. 77.

[81] Husslein, op. cit., p. 18.

[82] Ibid., p. 23.

[83] McAstocker, op. cit., p. 83.

[84] Ibid., pp. 76-7.

[85] Husslein, op. cit., pp. 58, 69-70.

[86] Pohle-Preuss, op. cit., p. 330.

[87] Ventura, op. cit., p. 32.

On the one hand, the papacy teaches that we should respect, love, and invoke the holy angels. On the other hand, it teaches that the angels respect, love, and invoke the Virgin Mary. A title accorded Mary in Roman theology is "Queen of the Angels and of the Saints."[88] Her sway, like that of her divine Son, is acknowledged to be a universal one, embracing the domain of the spirit and of the material world.[89] Whence such glory? The explanation offered: The infinite character of her reign stems from her immaculate conception and her stainless life.[90] Tradition relates that upon her decease the archangel Michael stood guard over her body, that the Spirit of God summoned all of the Apostles from all parts of the world to the side of her mortal remains, and that three days after her visible earthly departure they found her tomb filled only with flowers,[91] for she had been escorted by her angelic subjects to the realm above that she might take her rightful place beside her Son in that Kingdom which shall flourish forever.[92] They say that since Mary is now with her Son in His throne, the angels accord her honor and acknowledge her as their everlasting

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[88]Husslein, op. cit., p. 91.

[89]McAstocker, op. cit., p. 186.

[90]Ibid., p. 193.

[91]Husslein, loc. cit.

[92]McAstocker, op. cit., p. 200.

queen.[93] Mary is believed to be the bridge between heaven and earth, and it is presumed likely that in her visits of earth she is ever attended by a number of her dutiful subjects.[94] The gradual elevation of Mary as queen of the angels has had its effect upon the works of art. Raphael had pictured her as kneeling before Gabriel in the Annunciation, but in the thirteenth century artists began picturing Gabriel and other angels as kneeling before Mary in acknowledgement of her superior holiness.[95] Today the papacy envisions the Virgin enthroned, while angels, admiring her who never gave them cause for shame, and rejoicing that their queen is home at last,[96] bask in the radiant beams of her abiding and incomparable glory,[97] with Gabriel, as Dante portrays him, constantly repeating in Paradise: "Hail! Mary, full of grace."[98]

Roman Catholicism believes that the holy angels are divided into nine choirs and three hierarchies. Husslein exposes the fountain source of this belief when he says, "That there are nine orders of angels and three hierarchies is

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[93] Ibid.

[94] Mary Paula, op. cit., p. 18.

[95] Clara Erskine Clement, Angels in Art (Boston: L. C. Page and Company, Inc., 1898), p. 93.

[96] McAstocker, loc. cit.

[97] Mary Paula, op. cit., p. 8.

[98] McAstocker, op. cit., p. 187.

derived from a book already in circulation at the time of Pope Gregory the Great who ruled the Church from 590 to 604."[99] The book referred to is the one supposed originally to have been written by Dionysius the Areopagite, the Athenian convert of Paul, to whom the Apostle revealed all that he had seen when transported into the seventh heaven.[100] Later the discovery was made that the book had been written by a Greek Church Father of the fifth century.[101] To conserve the weight of authority, Rome today places the emphasis on the antiquity of the record.[102] Pontiff Gregory, guided by Pseudo-Dionysius, asserted its divisions of the angels into nine choirs to be founded upon Scripture.[103] Sister Mary Paula, however, denominates theology as the source of this construction.[104] Pohle-Preuss goes along with Gregory, but Husslein maintains that the inspired writings are indistinct on the precise number of angelic orders.[105] Concerning the three hierarchies, the admission is: ". . . no reference whatsoever in the Sacred Books."[106]

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[99]Husslein, op. cit., p. 106.

[100]Clement, op. cit., p. 16.

[101]Husslein, loc. cit.

[102]Ibid.

[103]Ibid.

[104]Mary Paula, op. cit., p. 14.

[105]Husslein, op. cit., p. 105.

[106]Ibid., p. 109.

The ranks of angels as enumerated by the Greek Father are as follows: the Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. Retaining the order, and dividing by groups of three, we have his three hierarchies.[107] Gregory adopted the conception, save that he interchanged the positions of the Virtues and Principalities.[108] The book assigned to the first hierarchy the mission of enlightenment; the second, government; the third, execution.[109] Pohle-Preuss reduces the testimony on the higher nobility illuminating the lower through the impartation of knowledge to "a more or less well-founded opinion."[110] Pseudo-Dionysius excluded the supreme hierarchy from the external ministry. Acquinas, however, declared all angels employed in the service of mankind, only that the higher ranks are selected for the higher ministries.[111]

Romanism under the Dionysian orientation devolves upon the several choirs their specific nature and function. Thomas Acquinas stated that we really know nothing on how the angelic orders differ in character and function, and many theologians are in agreement with him, yet the Greek Father's scheme finds adoption on the whole. The Seraphim,

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[107] Ibid., p. 106.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Pohle-Preuss, op. cit., p. 324.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Mary Paula, op. cit., p. 56.

thus, have as their chief characteristic "a burning love for God and for the ever glorious Queen of heaven and earth."[112] The Cherubim have as their distinctive quality "a deep insight into the secrets of the throne," and "make known to the lower choirs the action of the divine intellect."[113] The Thrones rest in God and God upon them, possess a more passive knowledge and love of God than the Seraphim and Cherubim, have an intimate acquaintance and appreciation of correct procedure in the court of heaven,[114] and have as their chief characteristic, submissiveness, "which makes them fit to receive God in His majesty, and, in some way, bear Him to other creatures especially when He passes judgement upon them."[115] The Dominations rule "with profound humility, yet indominable strength,"[116] "appoint and order what is to be done," and control "that kingdom we banished children of Adam and Eve so ardently desire to see."[117] Their chief attribute is "zeal for the honor and glory of the King of Kings . . . ."[118] The Virtues [Modern English--Energies] represent the strength of God "in working of signs

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[112]McAstocker, op. cit., pp. 166-7.

[113]Mary Paula, op. cit., p. 23.

[114]McAstocker, op. cit., p. 167.

[115]Mary Paula, loc. cit.

[116]McAstocker, loc. cit.

[117]Ibid.

[118]Ibid.

and marvels,"[119] regulate weather conditions,[120] and are distinguished by their enthusiasm for the work to be accomplished.[121] The Powers symbolize the power of God. Their work consists in sharing the duties of government by enlightening the inferior choirs on how things ordered are to be accomplished,[122] and in planning the spiritual campaign against Satan and his hords, the enemies of mankind.[123] The Principalities have as their peculiar mission to guard the nations,[124] to protect persons of great authority in the Church and in the State, and to defend the good spirits against the evil ones. It is believed that they appointed Michael archangel in the spiritual battle which took place in heaven. The archangels are also guardians of the nations and possibly of bishops in the Church.[125] Their number is fixed at seven (Tobit 12:15); however Rome has established only three names of archangels as authoritative--Michael, Raphael, and Gabriel.[126]

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[119]Husslein, op. cit., p. 112.

[120]Mary Paula, op. cit., p. 24.

[121]Ibid.

[122]Ibid., p. 25.

[123]Ibid., p. 28.

[124]Husslein, op. cit., p. 111.

[125]Mary Paula, op. cit., p. 26.

[126]Pohle-Preuss, op. cit., p. 312.

It is thought that the archangels may be the very highest of all angels, belonging to the rank of the Seraphim.[127] Some assize Michael the highest of all angels, while others think that Gabriel outranks them all.[128] Michael is venerated by Rome as the marshal of Paradise,[129] the protector of the faithful in life and in death,[130] the heavenly physician,[131] and the weigher of souls at the end of days.[132] Raphael is recognized as the patron of travelers, the guardian of youth, and the skilful healer.[133] Gabriel is the angel of childbirth, the one who helps us overcome sins and faults,[134] and the spirit who imparts fortitude for a life of self-denial.[135] The angels, we are told, are "the ordinary messengers and guardians of God's children on earth. Their characteristic virtue is humility."[136] They "go cheerfully whither they are sent; and minister to the vilest of earth's intelligent creatures as tenderly as they do the

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[127]Husslein, op. cit., p. 116.

[128]Ibid., p. 117.

[129]Mary Paula, op. cit., p. 30.

[130]Husslein, op. cit., p. 76.

[131]Ibid.

[132]Ibid., p. 74.

[133]Mary Paula, op. cit., p. 109.

[134]Ibid., p. 146.

[135]Ibid., p. 142.

[136]Ibid., p. 27.

noblest . . . ."[137] The observation is made that perhaps "as a reward for their humility . . . some angels are sent as an escort to the Blessed Virgin when she visits her children on earth."[138]

Finally, we observe the application made by Romanism of the doctrine concerning the nine choirs of angels. The Seraphim are pictured as praying incessantly to God for our eternal salvation. McAstocker reflects, "The least we can do is to cooperate with them in placing our personal sanctification above everything else."[139] The Cherubim are esteemed spirits with fullness of divine knowledge. The resolution encouraged: "Frequently and earnestly we shall pray to the Cherubim that all men may come to a knowledge and love of the Almighty."[140] The Thrones are the angels spoken of as dwelling in God and God upon them. They are said to teach us that "always He [God] should be the center of our thoughts, our actions, our dreams."[141] The Dominations, by calling to our minds God's universal reign over all His creatures, visible and invisible, reputedly accentuate our ultimate end.[142] The Virtues are assigned to the regulation

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[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid.

[139] McAstocker, op. cit., p. 167.

[140] Ibid., p. 168.

[141] Ibid., p. 169.

[142] Ibid., p. 170.

of atmospheric condition. "Therefore pious people invoke them during severe storms and droughts."[143] Since it is believed that the Powers plan the spiritual campaign against Satan, the question is asked, "Does it not behoove us wanderers in the mist of doubt and uncertainty . . . to seek light and fortitude from them?"[144] The Principalities, placed over the nations and high officials in Church and State, make the avenue clear. The archangel, Michael, and Raphael and Gabriel are objects of worship. Michael is represented as the protector of all people and not only of the Catholic Church. Hence, prayer to him is encouraged of all.[145] May eighth is St. Michael's Day in the Catholic Church.[146] The faithful are urged to look to him for healing in body,[147] and help of soul.[148] At Mass they pray, "Holy Michael, the Archangel, be our protector against the wickedness and snares of the devil."[149] Raphael is invoked as the patron of the sick and of many mercy institutions designed to relieve the suffering members of Christ's mystical

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[143]Mary Paula, op. cit., p. 24.

[144]McAstocker, op. cit., p. 173.

[145]Husslein, op. cit., p. 74.

[146]McAstocker, op. cit., pp. 31-2.

[147]Ibid., pp. 106-7.

[148]Husslein, op. cit., pp. 76-7.

[149]Ibid., p. 71.

Body,[150] and Catholic doctors look to him for assistance in attaining medical wisdom.[151] Gabriel is the angel of childbirth, and is also entreated for aid in curbing sins and faults, strength to love one's neighbor as one's self, and for fortitude "along the highway of self-denial."[152] A Roman resolution:

> With the assistance of the nine choirs of angels, I will imitate the particular virtue of each so that I may be faithful to my vocation and thereby glorify God and save my soul.[153]

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[150]Mary Paula, op. cit., p. 47.

[151]Ibid., p. 54.

[152]McAstocker, op. cit., pp. 142, 146, 148.

[153]Mary Paula, op. cit., p. 29.

CHAPTER III

THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT OF THE HOLY ANGELS

Scripture tells us that God created the holy angels within the six days of creation. First, it contains many general and a few specific passages to underscore the fact that God has created them. Moses says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Gen. 1:1). Again, he says, "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." (Gen. 2:1). Nehemiah, a prophet of God in the Old Covenant, confesses, "Thou . . . art Lord alone; Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host . . . ." (Neh. 9:6). Also St. Paul, an apostle in the New Testament, declares, "For by Him [God] were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, ..." (Col. 1:16). The Psalmist, becoming more specific, exhorts, "Praise ye Him, all His angels," and then submits as reason, ". . . for He commanded, and they were created." (Ps. 148:2.5). Once more, employing great plainness of speech, he affirms, ". . . the Lord . . . maketh His angels spirits . . . ." (Ps. 104:1.4). Second, Scripture tells us that God created the holy angels within the hexaemeron. Moses informs, ". . . in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day . . . ." (Ex. 20:11). Perhaps, God intends to tell us also that He created the angels right

before calling all material substance into existence. He asks, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . . When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God sang for joy?" (Job 38:4.7).

Scripture tells us that the holy angels are spirits. Writing by divine inspiration, the Psalmist states, ". . . the Lord maketh His angels spirits . . . ." (Ps. 104:1.4). The author of the book of Hebrews repeats this statement in the way of emphasis (He. 1:7). Scripture, however, does not always refer to the holy angels when it uses the term "spirit." Sometimes it calls God a spirit (Jn. 4:24). Then again, the application is to the Holy Spirit, who is the third person in God (Matt. 28:19). Also, the human individual is at times signified thereby. In fact, the Bible uses this word "spirit" in at least nineteen different ways.[1] The context is always one way in which to determine the sense in which this symbol is being employed. The term "spirit" is, however, also used with reference to the holy angels. (Ps. 104:4; He. 1:7). Whenever it applies to them, Scripture is describing to us the nature of these celestial beings. Jesus said, ". . . a spirit hath not flesh and bones . . . ." (Lk. 24:39). Also Paul, speaking of angels, says that they are not composed of "flesh and blood."

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[1]Gen. 1:2; 25:8; Ez. 1:1; Is. 29:24; Ps. 76:12; Job 32:8; Mal. 2:15; Ps. 32:2; II Cor. 4:13; Jn. 4:23; Dan. 4:8.9; Phil. 1:27; Prov. 25:8; I Pet. 3:19; I Sam. 28:7; Eph. 2:2.

(Eph. 6:12). Since the angels are spirits, they have no body of any kind. Yet they are complete beings in their spiritual essence; and because they are spirits, the angels are invisible (Lk. 24:39), do not occupy space (I Ki. 7:17), can move about rapidly from place to place (Ex. 12:23.29; Ps. 78:49), and should God will, they can assume human form so that His people might perceive their presence (Gen. 18:22; 19:1).

Scripture teaches that God's people have been privileged to see the holy angels. Ordinarily the angels are not perceptible. The word "spirit" in the Hebrew and the Greek originals signifies air, wind, breath. As air, wind, breath are imperceptible, so are the holy angels imperceptible; yet the Bible shows that they can assume matter and form at God's discretion (Acts 10:2.30). Angels appeared to Jacob at Bethel (Gen. 28:12). Zechariah saw the angel Gabriel standing on the right side of the altar of incense in the temple at Jerusalem (Lk. 1:11.12). When Christ was born, a multitude of the heavenly host sang the praises of God before shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem (Lk. 2:9). Jesus disclosed the Revelation unto St. John the Divine by means of His angel (Rev. 1:1). In recent times God has not deemed it necessary for the angels to appear to His children on earth. During the period of history prior to the existence of His written Word and during the time that His written Word was in the process of formulation, God sent His angels to His people to transmit to them His comfort (II Ki.

1:3.15; Mk. 16:6-7), instruction (I Ch. 21:18; Matt. 2:13), and admonition (Matt. 1:18-21). The reason that God no longer speaks to His own in this way is very likely because, as we know, His written Word is now complete (Rev. 22:18-19). In God's Word, the Bible, we have adequate instruction for all matters of faith and life (Lk. 16:31; He. 2:14). In ages gone by, however, the angels appeared to God's children time and again, even partook of food, not indeed for necessity's sake, but probably to accept the hospitality for which God's people are famous and to convince men of the reality of their appearance (Gen. 19:1-3).

Scripture teaches that the angels are God's messengers unto men. The title "angel" signifies messenger, envoy, ambassador. God employs the holy angels as His embassies in dealing with mankind. It is interesting to observe that Scripture uses the word "angel" no less than one hundred and fifty times in speaking about God's heavenly messengers.[2] Of course, in Scripture God at times calls Himself an angel (Ex. 3:2-6; Rev. 10:1; 4:3) when He comes to impart a very important message to His dear ones. The symbol is apparently also used to denote Christian ministers on occasions (Rev. 2:1; 8:18; 3:1), for they are also messengers of God unto men. For the most part, however, Scripture has this title to connote the invisible, created messengers of God,

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[2]Gen. 19:1; 28:12; Dan. 3:28; 6:22; Acts 5:19; 6:15; Rev. 7:1; 17:1.

the holy angels. God has frequently engaged the services of these celestial essences to protect (Dan. 3:28), help (Jn. 5:4), and to chastize (I Ch. 21:15) his people and to punish the wicked (II Ch. 32:20-21; II Ki. 19:35). An angel delivered Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego from the consuming flames of the fiery furnace. An angel went down into the pool of Bethesda in ancient Jerusalem at a certain season each year to afford healing virtue to the water. When David, a man after God's heart, sinned, and Israel with him, in that, out of vanity, a census of the population was taken, God sent an angel against Jerusalem to destroy it. God also commissioned an angel to go into the camp of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, armored before Jerusalem, and this angel in one night smote one hundred and eighty-five thousand enemy soldiers.

The Bible tells us that the holy angels are very great in number. In the days of the prophet Elisha the Syrians were constantly thwarted in their efforts to subjugate God's people. Finally the king of Syria was advised that there was a prophet in Samaria, who was ever acquainted with everything that he planned in secret council. The king, therefore, sent an army to Samaria either to capture or to kill Elisha. One morning Elisha's servant saw the enemy horsemen and charioteers encompassing the city. He was filled with fright, but Elisha asked God to open his servant's eyes. When the Lord had done so, "he saw, and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about

Elisha." (II Ki. 7:17). Daniel enumerates the angels as "thousand thousands . . . , and ten thousand times ten thousand . . . ." (Dan. 7:10). John in his vision of heaven beheld and heard "the voice of many angels . . . and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." (Rev. 5:11). Summing up the matter, St. Paul tells Christians, "But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels." (He. 12:22). As God alone knows the time of the last Judgement, so only God is acquainted with the exceeding great multitude of the holy angels.

Scripture teaches that there are various orders of holy angels. Not all of the angels are of the same rank. We are told that when God drove man from the Garden of Eden, He placed at its East entrance "cherubim." (Gen. 3:24). God instructed Moses to make two figures of cherubim for either end of the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 25:18) and to embroider representations of cherubim on the first covering of the Tabernacle (Ex. 26:11) and on the curtain which was to separate the holy place from the holy of holies (Ex. 26:31). Solomon's temple, which was built also according to God's specifications (I Ch. 28:12), was literally filled with representations of the cherubim (I Ki. 6:23-35; 7:29.36). The word "cherubim" appears some eighty times in Scripture (He. 9:5). Besides the cherubim, the Bible also mentions the seraphim (Is. 6:1-7). These, however, are

mentioned definitely only once in the Bible. Isaiah saw them in a vision (Is. 6:2). It is common belief among people who accept the testimony of the Bible on the holy angels that the seraphim form the higher rank of celestial beings. In contrast to the cherubim, which apparently were to be made with two wings, the seraphim had six wings when Isaiah saw them (Is. 6:2). That there are ranks existing among the angels is made very clear when Scripture calls Michael, the archangel (Jude 9). An archangel is a superior angel, and in Revelation 12:7 Michael is definitely presented as the leader of the heavenly host. All the Bible tells us is that there are ranks or orders of holy angels. It tells us nothing about the number of those ranks, the station they occupy in relation to each other, or how they differ in constitution and office.

Scripture informs us that the angels are personal beings. Jude speaks about the archangel Michael (Jude 9). The angel who announced the forthcoming birth of Christ to Mary was Gabriel (Lk. 1:26). These two angels are mentioned by name also in the Prophecy of Daniel (Dan. 8:16; 9:21; 10: 13.21; 14:1), and Michael is once more spoken of in the book of Revelation (Rev. 12:7). Names of other angels do not appear in Scripture. Why God names only Michael and Gabriel we do not know. It is impossible on the basis of the Bible to say whether all of the angels have their own name.

Scripture presents the holy angels to us as beings who are superior in knowledge to man. The wise woman of Tekoah

had this understanding (II Sam. 12:2.20). One like the appearance of a man, God in human form, told Daniel that the future course of world history, as disclosed to the prophet, was known to none other beside Michael and Himself (Dan. 10: 18-21). Jesus Christ imparted the Revelation to St. John the Divine by means of His angel (Rev. 1:1; 22:16). Our Lord implied that the angels surpass us by far in knowledge when He said of the end of the world, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only." (Matt. 24:36). At the same time it is apparent from the statement of Jesus that the angels are not omniscient as God.

Scripture teaches that the holy angels are greater in power than man. Ezekiel's description of the cherubim is very impressive on this point. He says, "And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host . . . ." (Ez. 1:24; 1:5; 10:20). Although God has made man His viceroy on earth, yet He made him a little lower than the angels (Ps. 8:5), having made the angels superior to him in power and might (II Pet. 2:11). The great power of the angels is apparent, especially from the phenomenal feats of destruction which God has accomplished through them. One angel, in less than three days, slew 70,000 Israelites (I Ch. 21:12-15). In another instance, even greater power is shown when 185,000 of Sennacherib's soldiers were killed in a single night by one

angel; however the power of the angels is not only great to destroy, it is equally great to save. The horsemen and chariots of fire protected Elisha against the evil which a Syrian army sought to bring upon him (II Ki. 7:17). Although the angels under the Lord's hand slew the firstborn of man and beast throughout Egypt in one night, guided by God, they also failed to inflict this ill upon every Israelite who acted the part of a child of faith.[3] From the role that the angels will be given in the last Judgement their exceeding great power is acknowledged. They will gather all offenders and sinners together (Matt. 13:41-42), namely, all such as in their life-time thought they could get along without Christ (II Thess. 1:7-8), and they will cast them into hell, and they will gather together the elect from the four corners of the earth unto God (Matt. 24:31). Omnipotence is not attributed to the holy angels, for this is God's prerogative (Gen. 17:1). And the only man superior in strength to the angels is the God-Man, Jesus Christ (He. 1:6-8).

Scripture reveals to us that the holy angels are confirmed in a state of bliss. It calls them "the elect angels." (I Tim. 5:21). Since God has elected them, it is impossible for them to sin. They abhor all iniquity and every inclination to sin and take delight only in righteousness. God created them in a state of goodness (Gen. 1:31), and now

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[3]Ps. 78:49; Ex. 12:23-29; Ex. 12:12.

He has lovingly sealed them unto Himself. Jesus speaks of them as such who always behold the face of the heavenly Father (Matt. 18:10). God did not create them in this circumstance, for we know that many of the angels sinned, and thus became evil angels (II Pet. 2:4; Lk. 8:30). Perhaps God confirmed the holy angels right after the fall of the evil angels. In line with the general testimony of Scripture, we say that God elected the holy angels out of His loving-kindness and that He forever consigned the devils to hell according to their just deserts (Jer. 32:18). In consequence of the fact that God has sealed them unto Himself, the good spirits, as far as God is concerned, have as their unceasing employment for time and eternity to intone the praise of the everlasting and Triune God (Rev. 4:8).

Scripture teaches that God employs the holy angels in providing physical protection for His children here on earth. The Psalmist assures, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them." (Ps. 34:7). Again the Psalmist, emphasizing the individual, all-embracing, and loving physical protection which God's children receive through the holy angels, says:

> He shall give His angels charge concerning thee, to keep thee in all thy way. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. (Ps. 91:11-12).

Especially does God have the angels to protect the little ones on earth who believe in Christ (Matt. 18:6). Jesus says to us:

> Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do behold the face of My Father which is in heaven. (Matt. 18:10).

Does every believer have a separate guardian angel? The Bible does not answer this question. The Psalmist emphasizes collective protection when he says, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him . . . ." (Ps. 34:7). Jesus did not answer this question either by His statement concerning the angelic protection which believing children enjoy. He said, ". . . their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 18:10). It may be that at one time a believer has this angel, at another time that angel, or even a contingent of angels guarding over him. So also Hebrews 1:14 is broad in scope. It reads, "Are they [the angels] not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" While the angels also take an interest in our spiritual well-being, it is doubtful whether they afford us any true spiritual aid. In only one recorded instance did an angel give a human being true spiritual aid, and that was to Christ, the God-Man, in Gethsemane, and how a creature could strengthen the Creator will remain a wonder unto the end of time (Lk. 22:43). The angels are the physical protectors of God's children on earth. On the other hand, God has frequently used them to punish the wicked, as in the case of Pharaoh and his people (Ex. 12:23.29).

Scripture attests that the holy angels take an active interest in the Holy Christian Church here on earth. When

Christ, man's Savior, was born, they sang the praises of God on Bethlehem's plains (Lk. 2:14). An angel strengthened Christ for the cross in Gethsemane's Garden (Lk. 22:43). An angel descended from heaven to announce the glad Easter tidings (Matt. 28:5-6). Angels take a great delight in the study of God's Gospel dispensation to man (I Pet. 1:12). Whenever a sinner repents, the angels rejoice (Lk. 22:43). They are happy to hear of such as are confessors of Christ, the Savior (Lk. 12:9). An angel is pictured in Revelation as offering up the prayers of the saints, namely, of Christians (Rev. 8:3). The angels observe Christians in their public worship of God, having as their interest that things are always done in accord with godliness (I Tim. 5:21). Their example in humility before God (Is. 6:2) encourages us to be humble in our life's station (I Cor. 11:10). They carry the soul of the believer to God at death (Lk. 16:22), and on the last day they will gather all the elect from the four corners of the earth unto God (Matt. 24:31).

Scripture instructs us not to worship the angels, but, like them, to worship God only. John tells us that in his heavenly vision ". . . all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and [they] fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God." (Rev. 7:11). Paul informs us that the individual who worships angels will lose heaven unless he repents. He says, "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels . . . ." (Col. 2:18). After

John had received the Revelation from an angel, apparently from reason of sheer wonder, he fell down before the angel in an act of worship. The angel exclaimed, ". . . worship God!" (Rev. 22:9). The angels, along with God's people, are fellow-servants to God. (Rev. 22:9). To worship them is to worship the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:25), which is to say, it is a form of idolatry. The angels are servants of God to us in a physical degree, and, spiritually, they afford us aid in a passive sense, much the same as we are one another's assistants by the Word. We are not to present our prayers to them, for prayer is a type of worship (Lk. 18:9-14). Yet, what about the angel who appeared to Moses in the bush of Midian and demanded that he take off his shoes before Him (Ex. 3:2-6), and the man [apparently also an angel] who appeared to Joshua in Jericho's plains and made the same demand (Josh. 5:13-15)? We shall study these and other references in the Old Testament and the few found in the New Testament which deserve consideration in this connection, and we will observe that whenever worship is demanded by an angel in Scripture, that this angel is God, more specifically, Christ, the uncreated Angel, the great Angel of the Covenant (Mal. 3:1), our blessed Savior. We should thank God for giving us Christians His angels as protectors against physical harm and be encouraged by their passive spiritual aid to us to do God's will by the power of His Word and Spirit.

Scripture weaves the angels into every major doctrine of our Christian religion. It is said that God created them (Ps. 148:2.5). When God drove Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, after they had plunged man into a state of natural depravity, it is said that God posted at the East entrance to the garden "cherubim." (Gen. 3:24). God gave His Law, or Ten Commandments, by which we are lead to Christ, or rather driven to Him, through the instrumentality of angels (Acts 7:53). Think of how important our Savior's perfect life, innocent suffering and death, resurrection, ascension into heaven, and return at the Last Day are to us! They are the pivot around which our holy faith revolves. Yet, in each of these steps of our redemption the angels have their passive role. Jesus told Nathanael that during our Savior's life he would see the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man (Jn. 1:51). An angel came to Jesus in Gethsemane right before our Lord went to the judgement (Lk. 22:43). Angels were present at the empty tomb (Jn. 20:12). They were also there at Mt. Olivet when our Lord ascended into heaven (Acts 1:10). And Jesus says that when He shall sit upon the throne of glory in judgement on the Last Day, all the holy angels will be with Him (Matt. 25:31). It may well be said, "Prove from Scripture that there are no angels and you crumble into ruin the entire citadel of our religion." This, however, is impossible if we use the Word of God as guide. Rather, will we then find them at every station along the way of truth so that our hearts may beat a

little faster and that we might know that these things are even so. May we, therefore, thank God daily for the instruction, reproof, correction, and education in righteousness which He affords us through His great story on the holy angels.

CHAPTER IV

AN EVALUATION OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC VIEW ON THE HOLY ANGELS

Neither of the two schools of thought in Roman Catholicism with regard to the time of the angel creation is correct. The one school which holds that the angels were created within the Hexaemeron and before all material substance goes beyond assured testimony of Scripture. There can be no doubt that God made the angels within the six creation days. Moses says, ". . . in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day . . . ." (Ex. 20:11). And perhaps God intends to tell us in Job 38:4-7 that they were brought into existence prior to all mundane substance; yet, we cannot on the basis of this reference be entirely certain of this point. The reference says that when God laid the foundations of the earth "the sons of God" sang for joy. Scholars are agreed that these "sons of God" were the angels. I will not call this consensus of opinion into question, because I am of the same conviction. However, the laying of the foundations of the earth may have reference to the raw material made by God on the initial day of creation, or it may denote the entire work of creation at the beginning of time. I am inclined to believe that the latter is signified. It is then as if God asked Job, "Where were you when I first created all things, at the time when the angels extolled the praise of Him who

had just created them?" Since it is God's will that we teach nothing in addition to the witness of His Word, the Fourth Lateran and Vatican Council dictum goes too far when it says:

> God . . . created out of nothing, from the very beginning of time, both the spiritual and the corporeal creature, to wit, the angelical and the mundane, and afterwards the human creature . . . .[1]

The other papal school which holds that long before the cosmos came into being the angels existed manifestly contradicts the clear Word of God set forth in Exodus 20:11. All that we can safely say about the time of the creation of the angels is summed up tersely by Dr. Franz Pieper when he says:

> Was die Zeit der Erchaffung der Engel betrifft, so faellt sie in der Sechstagewerk. Die Engel wurden nicht vor der Welt erchaffen, weil vor der Welt nur Gott war, Joh. 1, 1-3.[2]

Roman Catholicism errs in suggesting that the angels may have some sort of a body for the sake of performing external acts. It appears strange that papal theologians should speak so much of the angels as "pure spirits" and then ask the question, "Are the angels without matter and form?" What matter and form might these spiritual essences possess? Scripture makes a distinction between a being

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[1]Pohle-Preuss, God, the Author of Nature and the Supernatural (Sixth Revised Edition; St. Louis and London: B. Herder Book Co. 1934), Vol. 3, 313.

[2]Robert F. Kamphoefner, Biblical Angelology and Resultant Problems (Thesis; 1939), Vols. 3, 5, p. 21.

which is spirit only and one that is also composed of matter and form. When Jesus appeared to His disciples behind locked doors after His resurrection, they supposed Him to be a spirit (Lk. 24:37). Jesus, however, said to them, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I myself: handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." (Lk. 24:39). St. Paul also tells us Christians that in doing battle with the evil angels, who are likewise spirits, we are not wrestling against "flesh and blood." (Eph. 6:12). While the angels have assumed shape and form in the performance of deeds of judgement (I Ch. 21:15) and protection (Gen. 28:12), they have also effected many of such acts without this provision. Angels smote the firstborn of man and beast in Egypt on the night of Israel's departure (Ps. 78:49; Ex. 12:23.29), yet Pharaoh never seemed to realize how this evil was accomplished. We are also assurred, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him . . . ." (Ps. 34:7); however, none of us has ever actually seen the angel of the Lord who protects us. The assumed bodies of the angels in their appearances served merely the fulfillment of God's gracious purposes in His communion with His people. They were not an essential part of the angelic being.[3] The Bible does speak of the angels as if they had hands (Ps. 91:12), just as it speaks of the hand of the Lord (Ex. 9:3). These, however, are anthropomorphic expressions,

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[3]Ibid., p. 19.

designed to reveal to us a certain characteristic of their essence. We ordinarily employ our hands for the achievement of our endeavors, and so also the angels are not without power in the accomplishment of their undertakings. Indeed, it is impossible for us to conceive the totally spiritual nature of the angelic being. Yet, there are also many things in our world of sense perception which have no form whatsoever as light, air, and heat. Then, too, Scripture discloses countless truths which are utterly beyond test-tube comprehension, as the mystery of the Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection of Christ. Still we accept these verities implicitly. Consequently we should believe that the angels, as the Bible says, are spirits, and should find it wrong even to suggest that they have a body of one sort or another.

Roman Catholicism in broaching the question, "Are all angels of the same species?" is not only introducing an item of pure speculation but also one that is spiritually dangerous for anyone who attempts to answer it. It was presumptuous for Roman theologians of times past to maintain that all angels are of the same species, or that all the angels of a given choir were of the same species, or that all of the angels are of a distinct species. It is also presumptuous for papal scholars of today to believe that all of the angels are of a like species. Scripture says absolutely nothing about this metaphysical subject of discussion. If Roman Catholicism therefore has a desire to be Scriptural, it will

also say nothing further in this regard. Scripture exhorts us to cast down "imagination and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (I Cor. 10:5), and to bring "every thought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ." (I Cor. 10:5).

Roman Catholicism does not remain within the bounds of Scripture when it asserts that the angels are more in number than all material substance, the souls of men having lived on this earth, plus people presently living, all totalled. It is impossible to find any constructions of this nature in Scripture. Scripture also discounts the reasoning which enters into the papistic tabulation. Thomas Acquinas said that since it was the perfection of the universe which God desired, the more perfect things are, in so much greater a number are they created by God. Allowing our reason to rule us, we could also say, that since in Scripture God continually discounts the weight of numbers (Ju. 7:4), if God really wanted to make a thing perfect, He would make it in the least possible amount and grace it most profusely. God, however, severely frowns upon such a magisterial use of reason in religious matters. Paul simply tells us that the holy angels are an innumerable company (He. 12:22); Daniel says that they are thousand thousands (Dan. 7:10); and John speaks of them as thousands of thousands (Rev. 5:11). God, therefore, wishes that we content ourselves with the knowledge that the angel number, as far as we are concerned, is beyond tabulation. It sanctions no attempt on our part to

calculate their number. Rome is also guilty of misrepresenting Scripture when it states that the angels outnumber men by the ratio of 99:1. The parable of Jesus cited in defense of this proposition does not treat of angels at all (Lk. 15:1-7). Its context shows that Jesus was teaching His disciples a lesson in humility. The ninety-nine sheep safe in the wilderness are possibly such as those who in pride think themselves righteous and spiritually safe, deserving an exclusive place in paradise and having no religious concern for that segment of the human race which they regard irreparably lost. Christ, however, would have us to know that without Him we too are totally lost, that also those in the mire of sin have been redeemed altogether by Him, and that therefore we should diligently and zealously proclaim this very thing to our fellowmen in thought and action. Thus the Roman interpretation of Luke 15:1-7 constitutes a wresting of Scripture upon which rests God's curse (II Pet. 2:16). We need scarsely to be informed by Rome that the great number of the angels of which it speaks lies in the field of speculation,[4] yet this formulation is essential, as we can see, for the maintenance of many other features of Roman angelology.

No Scriptural warrant exists for the papistic assumption that the angels did not at first enjoy the Beatific

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[4]Joseph Husslein, The Spirit World about Us (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1934), p. 129.

Vision of the Holy Trinity. Jesus says of the holy angels that they do always behold the face of the heavenly Father (Matt. 18:10). Job 38:4-7 tells us that the angels were with God at the time of the inception of the world; and since only God is from eternity (Rev. 1:4), they did not exist before that time. Why should it have been impossible for the angels to behold such beatitude by nature? We are told that all of God's work of creation at the beginning was very good (Gen. 1:31). Not only did the angels immediately see God in His essence, but it seems that even man originally enjoyed a daily and direct communion with his Maker (Gen. 3:8). Also since the angels upon creation were very good, they had no need of having the motion of their will turned toward the ultimate beatitude of every rational creature by an infusion of grace, and so equipped from on high and from beneath carve out for themselves a place in heaven. They had heaven already, and the only thing they could do was to lose it. True, God made the angels free moral agents, yet I see no thought of probation in this fact. That the holy angels remained true to God was of no credit to them. The credit belonged only to God, who gave them the inherent power to remain faithful. That the evil angels fell away from God was their own fault, because they failed to take advantage of their power for good. Though the holy angels were not saved by grace, there is nevertheless an analogy here for us. We cannot save ourselves, for heaven has been prepared for us in Christ (Jn. 3:16). Yet we can deny the Lord

who bought us by unbelief, sin and shame, and thus bring upon ourselves swift destruction (II Pet. 2:1). "The elect angels" (I Tim. 5:21) spoken of in Scripture, who observe a Christian minister on how he conducts his ministry, and who are ashamed of ungodly conduct on the part of a servant of Christ, cannot also be the evil angels, whom God likewise elevated to a state of grace so that they might earn the blessing of dwelling in His presence. The elect angels are the good angels whom God, after the evil angels had fallen away from Him, confirmed in their state of bliss. The evil angels were never of the elect. Paul uses the same term ἐκλεκτῶν of the children of God, whom nothing shall separate from the love of God (Rom. 8:33-38). The holy angels were confirmed by God's lovingkindness, and the evil angels justly damned since created in holiness they had strength to serve God but chose not to (II Pet. 2:4). And it is pagan teaching that man with the help of grace earns heaven (Eph. 2:8-9). Finally Christ condemns the speculation that one-third of the angels sinned. He says, ". . . If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (Jn. 8:31-32).

Roman Catholicism flies in the face of Scriptural testimony when it maintains that every human being has a guardian angel from birth until death, or from the first moment of life until the consummation in bliss. This formulation is but an adoption of the belief of the heathen philosopher

Socrates who spoke of being guided in life by a tutelary spirit.[5] It is nothing but a sidestepping of Scripture when Romanism says that the Bible passages which speak of the angelic protection which God's children enjoy are meant to apply to these only with special force. And it is a mutilation of God's Word to say that the guardian angel rejoices over his client when he does penance. The Bible tells us that the angels rejoice over the μετανοοῦντι (Lk. 15:10), the person who experiences a change of mind, and turns in sorrow over sin to Christ as his only Savior (Acts 3:19). Over such an individual the angels, not the guardian angel, rejoice, and not over one who submits to papal penance in order to further his salvation (Gal. 3:10.22). The passage Hebrews 1:14, according to Roman thinking, should be inflected thus when read, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?" This verse should, however, be interpreted in the light of other clear passages of Scripture. Psalm 34:7 reads, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." Also Jesus, having spoken of the little ones who believe in Him, says that their angels do always behold the face of the Father who is in heaven (Matt. 18:6.10). Scripture says that children of God, believers, have guardian angels. It says nothing about unbelievers having them. What Scripture says

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[5]Pohle-Preuss, op. cit., p. 337.

is a strong encouragement for us to have our little ones baptized and for us to turn to Christ in sincere repentance. What Rome teaches is no encouragement of such a nature and would even allow the possibility of consummation in bliss for all. Yet Jesus speaks of those who on the last day shall be on His left (Matt. 25:41). The idea that the guardian angel by his perpetual homage to God's glory makes reparation for the individual's neglect and irreverence discounts Christ as only Mediator (I Tim. 2:5-6). Purgatory, the place where it is said that the guardian angel visits and comforts the soul, exists only in papal imagination (Lk. 16:19-31). Scripture speaks of an angel offering up the prayers of the believers to God (Rev. 8:3), but it says nothing of the angels interceding for the unbelievers, who, in unbelief, do not pray to God anyway but rather sacrifice to devils (I Cor. 10:20). The guide which God has given us on the road that leads to heaven is not an angel, but the Word of God, which David says is a "lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Ps. 119:105).

Rome's teaching that every Christian has his own particular guardian angel cannot be demonstrated from Scripture. Psalm 34:7 says, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." This passage emphasizes collective protection rather than individual guardianship. The Savior's sentence that the angels of little children who believe in Him do always behold the heavenly Father's face is broad in scope (Matt. 18:6.10). Hebrews

1:14 which reads, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?" retains the comprehensive tone. Other passages adduced in defense of this belief are Genesis 48:16 and Acts 12:15. In the first, we find Jacob, as he blesses Ephraim and Manasseh, saying, "The angel who delivered me from all evil bless the lads." It will be noted that here no limitation in rescue is expressed as in the provision of Psalm 90: 12, "lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." The angel of whom Jacob speaks is one to whom the patriarch looks to make of Ephraim and Manasseh the fathers of a numerous offspring (Gen. 48:16). Hence, this angel is God Himself, who sets the solitary into families (Ps. 68:6), the Savior, who says to His disciples, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:20). In the second, we find the early Christians, saying of Peter, who had been miraculously delivered from prison, and who was asking entrance to Mary's house, "It is his angel." The Christians were however not formulating a doctrine, but, as it turned out, simply giving expression to a superstitious belief. The affirmation that the guardian angel provides the Christian with increasing protection as he lives an undefiled life is contrary to Matthew 18:6.10 which makes angelic guardianship incumbent upon faith. That the angel helps the Christian in business conducive to salvation is based upon the Tobias story, the authority of which we discount. Our source of comfort in death is not an angel, but the Gospel of our Lord

Jesus Christ (Rom. 38-39). The Scripture knows nothing of our ability to lend our guardian angel to someone else for the sake of another's physical or spiritual well-being. Scripture implies the very opposite of what Romanism affirms, "Not only Christians, but also heathens and sinners have each their own Guardian Angel."[6] Although some papists say that the guardian angel ministers just as lovingly to the godless as to the godly, and others are willing to tone this down to a certain extent, yet on the whole there is agreement with them in the proposition in general. We admire Suarez at least for the fact that he stated this opinion to be the common consent of the theologians and the Fathers only, but it is disconcerting to see Husslein try to weave the testimony of Scripture into this matter. He is even so bold as to employ Psalm 34:7 for his own purpose. This passage says, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him . . . ." The theologian intends to assert that this verse of the Bible states that even an atheist has a guardian angel. Evidently, however, an atheist is not one who fears the Lord very much in the Scriptural usage of that term. He may indeed be afraid of God, for there is no peace to the wicked, yet he knows nothing of the kind of childlike fear which prompts us as His dear children out of love to depart from evil. Even if a godless person had the protection of an angel, this would still not do him any good.

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[6] Ibid., p. 335.

> Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied Him? When ye say, Everyone that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgement?" (Mal. 2:17).

God indeed uses the holy angels in dealing with those who reject Him, for when their time of grace has come to an end, He has them to afflict upon them the death blow (Dan. 10:12. 11:3). We are told in Scripture that the king of Persia refused to let the children of Israel go out of captivity in God's time. Then Christ and Michael came to deal with the presumptuous monarch and by this his doom was sealed.

Scripture does not say as Rome does that every state and ecclesiastical province has its own tutelary spirit. The explanation of the Daniel reference sounds very plausible, that is, until it is viewed in its true light. A comparison of Daniel 10:5-6 and Revelation 1:13-18 shows us that the Man who appeared to Daniel was not Raphael but Christ. Thus it was Christ who came to tell Daniel that his prayer for Israel's deliverance was heard. Christ also tells Daniel why the deliverance of Israel had been delayed. He says, ". . . the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood Me one and twenty days . . . ." (Dan. 10:13). Now it ought to be plain that this prince who withstood Christ could not have been a good angel, the supposed guardian angel of this heathen land. We at once say, now that we understand the Man to be Christ, that this prince must either be the king of Persia, or, this presumptuous being must be

the devil. Paul calls Satan ". . . the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (Eph. 2:2). However, there is strong implication that the prince referred to was in this instance the king of Persia. We observe that in Daniel 10:20 Christ says, ". . . now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come." The thought is that Christ would deal the prince of Persia a coup de grace, and the prince of Grecia would take him to the morgue. Who is the prince of Grecia? We learn who he is just four verses later. Chapter 11:3 of Daniel reads, "And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will." This prince then is Alexander the Great. The sum: Christ and Michael, called the prince of the Jews later on (Dan. 12:1), would fight against him from heaven, and Alexander would fight against the Prince of Persia from earth. Thus with both realms pitted against him his doom was unquestionably sealed. This then has destroyed the guardian angels of heathen nations. Finally, we need to consider Michael, here denominated the prince of the Jews. It is said, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." (Ps. 34:7). Since this is true, Michael evidently had been assigned as prince of the Jews only because they had again become God's dear children. Captivity as an external stimulus had performed its good work. It is also vain to say that the angel who delivered the Jews at

critical moments of their history was probably this same Michael. In most instances this angel was Christ who directly saved His people.[7] In other instances Christ saved them through some unknown angel as in the day of Hezekiah (II Ch. 32:20-21). Only then can a nation, a city, a town, a church, its precincts and societies speak of angelic protection when these are Christian; otherwise there is absolutely no Scriptural warrant for entertaining such high thoughts.

Scripture does not go along with Rome when it teaches that we should thank God for giving us a spiritual associate in the fullest sense of the term and when it says that we owe our guardian angel respect, love, and worship. The heathen are not assured of angelic protection in the Bible, and they could not thank God if they wanted to, because they do not know Him. God wants us Christians to thank Him for angelic protection (Ps. 105:1.36), but He does not want us to thank Him for our own guardian angel, because we cannot be sure that we have one. God does not want us to thank Him for granting us an angel, a spiritual associate in the fullest sense of the term, since it is very doubtful that the angels give us any kind of true spiritual aid. The interest which the angels take in the church,[8] our membership in the

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[7]Ex. 23:20-23; Jos. 5:13-6:2; Num. 23:10; Zech. 1:10-12.

[8]Lk. 2:14.22:43; Matt. 28:2-6; I Pet. 1:12.

Church,[9] and our privileges as members of the Church[10] are on a physical plane, which, sanctified by the Word of God, redounds to the glory of God (II Tim. 3:16-17). In only one recorded instance did an angel give to a human being true spiritual aid, and that was to Christ, the God-Man in Gethsemane, and this will remain a mystery of wonder for all time (Lk. 22:43). Christ showed us the source of spiritual strength when in His conflict with Satan He said, "It is written." (Matt. 4:4.7.10). We are taught by Scripture to love our fellowmen (Matt. 22:39), but the kind of catholicity of thought which emanates from a supposed universal guardianship of angels and that would have us regard all men by nature as God's dear children is foreign to the Scripture (Eph. 2:1). Only then may we be joyful at all times and be assured of angelic protection in a physical sense when we are Christian. The Bible does teach us to regard the angels as superiors (I Tim. 3:16; I Pet. 1:12), respect them as beings of truth (Lk. 1:19), but that we should be devoted to them savors the unsavory. The angel to whom Paul was devoted, whom he served (Acts 27:23) was Christ (Mal. 3:1; Col. 3:24). God tells us to love Him above all, and our neighbor as ourself (Matt. 22:37-39), but He says nothing about love which we owe the angels. And God forbids us in so many words and in fearful language to worship the angels

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[9]Lk. 22:43.12:9; I Tim. 5:21; I Cor. 11:10; Acts 8:16.

[10]Rev. 8:3; Lk. 16:22; Matt. 24:31.

(Col. 2:18). Prayer, being an act of worship (Lk. 18:9-14), is not to be directed to an angel. The Scripture presents the angels to us as our great and mighty servants under God (He. 1:14). They are not a pantheon of demigods to whom we must cater in our various circumstances. Says the Bible of the Lord, "O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come." (Ps. 65:2). Praying to the angels is a type of worship extended to the creature alongside of the Creator (Rom. 1:25), which kind of divided worship God will not tolerate. An angel, himself, forbad John to worship him and instead exhorted the apostle, "Worship God." (Rev. 22:9).

Scripture disagrees with Rome when it teaches that the angels are to be accorded dulia and God latria.[11] Dulia, it says, is the worship we should render to the saints and angels, while latria, being supreme worship is to be rendered to God only. Scripture knows of no such degrees of worship. It insists, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." (Matt. 4:10). Rome, however, not only discounts this statement, but it turns Colossians 2:18 into something that it does not say. Paul, the story goes, forbad the Colossian Christians from worshipping the eons of Jewish and Gnostic orgies.[12] The Catholic Encyclopedia also tells us that the apostles did not want to start a cult of angel worshippers in the first century of the Christian era,

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[11]Pohle-Preuss, op. cit., pp. 143-44.

[12]Ibid.

because then the Christians would come to look upon the angels as inferior deities like the gods of Roman and Greek mythology.[13] John, it is said, was forbidden to worship the angel, because he was either according him latria, or, he was giving him dulia which in this instance was also out of place, because as an apostle he was the angel's equal.[14] Actually, however, the angels, according to Roman conception, are inferior deities, whose aid we must curry in our various circumstances. As we have already seen, not only are the angels, as they think, the managers of our physical and spiritual life, but the beings who rule heaven and earth, each having a distinct domain of control. The angels are no longer ministers who serve us, a great wonder to be sure, but in contrast to God's Word, they have become Lords to whom we should bow in respect, love, devotion, and prayer. They are no longer creatures beholden to us, but Masters to whom we are beholden.

Scripture does charge us to worship one Angel, but contrary to papal opinion this Angel is Christ, the uncreated Angel. Also, in the New Testament He is spoken of as one in a couple of instances. Oftentimes, when He appears thus, He demands latria and then, too, divine names, attributes, and works are ascribed to Him. We hear that the Angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar in the wilderness (Gen. 16:7-19).

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[13]The Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907), Vol. 1, 485.

[14]Pohle-Preuss, loc. cit.

This Angel promises to make her the mother of a numerous offspring (Gen. 16:10), and she also calls Him Lord and God (Gen. 16:13). It was the Angel of the Lord who stayed Abraham's hand to prevent the sacrifice of his son Issac unto God (Gen. 2:1-18). This Angel, however, accounts that Abraham was going to sacrifice his son unto Him (Gen. 2:12), promises to make Abraham the father of a great people (Gen. 2:17), and says that the promised Savior will arise from his descendants (Gen. 2:17). The Angel of God appeared to Jacob in Haran (Gen. 31:11-13) and said to the patriarch, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and vowest . . . a vow unto Me." (Gen. 31:13). In blessing Ephraim and Manasseh Jacob prayed that the God before whom his fathers walked, the Angel who had delivered him from all evil should make the lads very fruitful (Gen. 48:15-16). The Angel of the Lord disclosed Himself to Moses in Midian in a bush of fire and said, "I am . . . the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob . . . ." (Ex. 3:2-6). God told the children of Israel that His Angel would bring them into the land of promise. He said that His Name was in this Angel (Ex. 23:20-21). Again, God told Israel that His Angel would drive the heathen inhabitants out before His people, and this time He calls this Angel His face (Ex. 33: 2.14). Who is this Angel who has God's Name in Him, that is, the Angel who is one with God and is the very face of God? We have Him identified in the Aaronic blessing. It reads, "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make

His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee . . . ." (Num. 6:24-25). And Paul says:

> . . . God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (II Cor. 4:6).

Isaiah tells us that the Messiah, who was at that time still going to die for man's sin, was the Intercessor for the transgressors before God (Is. 53:12). Also in Zechariah 1:8-12 the Angel who appeared to the prophet is represented as the great Intercessor of God's people. Malachi explicitly calls the Messiah the Angel of the Covenant (Mal. 1:3). The Angel whom John, in his vision, saw coming down from heaven, having a rainbow upon His head, who was clothed with a cloud, and whose face did shine as the sun, was none else than Christ, the Son of God (Rev. 10:1; 1:16). Now, when the Angel of the Lord, our Savior, appeared to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, He demanded supreme worship saying, ". . . Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." (Ex. 3:5). It is, therefore, not as Rome says that the angels oftentimes merged so much into their message that they behaved as God. The Bible represents the angels as very humble beings who always know that God is above them and act in the light of this awareness (Jude 9).

Scripture denounces the belief of Romanism that Mary is queen of the angels and of the saints. This teaching savors of pagan lore, which speaks of male and female deities.

Christ and Mary are the male and female gods. The angels are the pantheon. The only thing missing is the thought of propagation, formally condemned. The basis of Mary's enthronement does not bear the light of Scriptural investigation. She was not immaculately conceived, for when she had been informed of the fact that she was to become the mother of the promised Savior, she said, ". . . My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior." (Lk. 1:46). Since she was born in sin, she did not lead a perfect life. As a result of natural depravity, Scripture states, ". . . all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23). Her enthronement, and the tradition surrounding this doctrine is an incantation of the devil, who ever has as his interest to turn us aside from the sole worship of God (Matt. 4:9). That the angels worship Mary is nothing short of rank blasphemy. The passage, Revelation 22:8-9, is thus given a new turn. Instead, the angel comes to worship the human being. What does God say of such mockery? He says, "I am the Lord: that is My Name: and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images." (Is. 42:8). Scripture well attests the exaltation of Christ above the angels, also, according to His human nature (Eph. 6:12), but it says nothing of Mary's being exalted thus. The woman pictured in Revelation 12 is not Mary but the Holy Christian Church. The passage shows the divine origin of the Church (Rev. 12:1), the helplessness of the Church without Christ (Rev. 12:6.13-17), her redemption through Christ (Rev. 12:2.5), the

expulsion of the devils from heaven since they were not redeemed (Rev. 12:7-9), and the final victory of the Church, which though accused of sin by Satan, is cleansed before God through the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 12:10-11).

Scripture does not teach as Rome does that there are nine choirs and three hierarchies of angels. It is openly admitted that the Bible says nothing about the three supposed hierarchies; therefore this emendation should be stricken from the body of Christian teaching. The conclusions which have arisen on the basis of this construction should also be discounted. Pohle-Preuss ought to go much further than to adjudge the suggestion that the higher choirs enlighten the lower "a more or less well-founded opinion." He should say that this notion was the expression of a Greek Church Father's pride. Nor did Thomas Acquinas go far enough when he rejected the principle that the higher choirs were excluded altogether from the external ministry, and preferred to limit these to the higher services on earth. Since we do not have a clear passage of Scripture on the distinct services of the angel choirs, the doctor should have professed his utter ignorance on this score. This part of the system comes under the condemnation of Christ who says, ". . . in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matt. 15:9). We agree with those Roman theologians who say that on the basis of Scripture we know of the existence of various choirs of angels but that Scripture tells us nothing of their number or

of their distinction in constitution and rank. We disagree with those papal scholars who say that the arrangement of the angels into nine choirs is founded upon Scripture and then go on to classify the choirs according to constitution and rank. It is believed that Colossians 1:16 proves the existence of the Thrones, Dominations, Principalities, and Powers as distinct choirs of angels.[15] The passage says that God created the things [τὰ πάντα] which are in heaven and in earth, whether they be thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers. A personification of these authorities constitutes a changing of the intended sense of Scripture. Personify the heavenly and we must also personify the earthly, for they are mentioned side by side in the text. Yet, who would think of personifying such things in earth as thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers of which God is Creator? It is said that Ephesians 1:20 establishes the existence of the Virtues.[16] The reference states that Christ is exalted far above all principality, power, might [virtue], and dominion in heavenly places. The verse does lead us to the conclusion that there are various ranks of angels in heaven. A principality is a sizable area of rule. A dominion is a smaller protectorate, but it is certainly a wild guess to account might or virtue as connoting personal beings. The archangels as a choir of angels is based upon

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[15]Husslein, op. cit., p. 110.

[16]Ibid.

Tobit 12:15. This book was not written by divine inspiration. The reference speaks of seven spirits who stand before the throne of God; consequently also those passages of Revelation which speak of the seven spirits before the throne of God are regarded as in all likelihood signifying the seven archangels of which Rome speaks (Rev. 1:4; 8:2). Jesus, however, says that the angels of believing little children do always behold the face of the heavenly Father (Matt. 18:6-10). On the basis of such reasoning we might conjecture that all of the angels are archangels. Husslein tells us that there is really only one archangel explicitly mentioned in the Bible (I Thess. 4:15; Jude 9).[17] Now, it is difficult to conceive of one archangel constituting an angelic choir. Finally, it is simply said that the angels are mentioned throughout Scripture. This is true, of course, but where does this prove that they are a separate heavenly order? Thus the entire construction is a figment of imagination. The Bible mentions only the cherubim and the seraphim as distinct choirs of angels. Rome should either burn the book of Pseudo-Dionysius or on the foreword of the same the word "worthless" should appear in bold letters and the nihil obstat affixed right under it.

Finally, Scripture does not sanction the application that is made by Romanism of the doctrine of the nine angel choirs. We are told that since the seraphim are constantly

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[17]Ibid., p. 109-10.

praying for our salvation, the least we can do is to cooperate with them by placing our personal sanctification above everything else; but, the seraphim do not condone salvation by good works, for St. Paul says, ". . . as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse . . . ." (Gal. 3: 10). The cherubim are not to be the objects of prayer in our interest of bringing others to a knowledge of the truth. Jesus states, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest." (Matt. 9:38). The Thrones cannot teach us anything. It is impossible for the Dominations to accentuate our ultimate end. When there is storm, drought, and sickness, Scripture does not turn us to the Virtues, but to the Lord (I Sam. 12: 16-25; James 5:14.17-18). The Powers do not afford us technique on how to overcome Satan. The Lord bruises him under our feet (Rom. 16:20) through the Gospel (Lk. 10:1-20). God says, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thine help." (Hos. 13:9). He says nothing about the Principalities. The assize of Michael in Roman theology is blasphemy. He is represented as the one who will at the end of time weigh

> all the thoughts and words and deeds of all mankind, since the day when Adam cast his last fond glance on the lost Paradise, and instead beheld the cherubim and the inexorable blade of fire.[18]

Christ is thus displaced as Judge of all (Matt. 25:31-46).

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[18]Ibid., p. 74.

Our patron in travel is not the mythical Raphael, but the Savior (Matt. 28:20). Gabriel may be one of the angels whom God at times employs in our own guardianship, though he is not an archangel. He may help us physically and spiritually in a passive sense, but the woman in child-birth has faith as her salvation (I Tim. 2:15), and we have the love of God to give us strength to love our neighbor (I Jn. 4:19) and the walk with Jesus to afford us power to deny ourselves (Matt. 17:24).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

I venture to say that there are few points of teaching in Rome's doctrine on the holy angels which do not in one way or another go beyond or contradict the account of the Bible on this segment of Christian instruction.

We naturally ask ourselves the question, "Why is this?" The reason: Rome uses not only the Bible as a source for religious truth, but alongside of and on a par with Scripture it relies on the Apocrypha, tradition, philosophy, and the pronouncements of the Roman See. Whenever, in addition to God, man also is asked, "What is your opinion about this and that point of Christian teaching?" the note which will sound forth will always prove to be a discordant one. The Bible tells us that by nature we are the enemies of God. (Col. 2:21).

God in His abundant grace has reconciled us to Himself by the blood of Christ (Col. 2:20). Through His means of grace and by His Holy Spirit who works on us by them God has brought us to faith in Christ (I Jn. 4:19). Also God tells us now to accept His Word as our one and only Guide to heaven (Rev. 22:18). If we do, then we shall reach our heavenly fatherland safely. Failure to do so is disastrous. Rome, which boasts of being the true Church of the New Testament, by disowning Scripture as the only source and norm of truth, has become an idolatrous organization.

It is not that all members of the Roman Church will be lost. Some are papists in name only. Others, though they worship the angels, undoubtedly look to Christ for forgiveness. Also God can save those who at the last moment will repent; but such setting aside of God's Word and mutilation of Scripture will without question result in the damnation of untold millions. A close study of the papacy exposes it as the Great Anti-Christ mentioned in the Bible.

I can do no better than to close this study by employing the earnest exhortation of John, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." (I Jn. 5:21).

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