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We are very much indebted to the Art Resource Company, New York, NY, for the use of the beautiful picture of Raphael's Deliverance of San Pietro on page 44.

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"And there was a great battle in heaven, Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels: And they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven." (Apoc. 12)

The Angels Our Spiritual Cousins



—The Battle—

Before the dawn of the material creation there was a lot of im-material (though hardly in the

sense of unimportant) and awesome activity going on. At one point it developed into war-

fare. A spirit war, if you can imagine it. The swords wielded by the good side, under the captainship of Saint Michael, were devastating in power. More potent than anything nuclear physicists can come up with, the arms of the good angels struck at the enemy, a multitude of proud spirits, who could not be harmed by any bombs. With a force that shook the walls of the angelic paradise, the phalanx of Saint Michael and his troops pressed forward and in a split second's time cast forth the bad angels with Lucifer, their head, into the fiery pits of hell that Almighty God had prepared for them.

It must have been quite a spectacle: the Prince of the heavenly hosts making the higher courts resound with his battle cry, "*Who is like unto God!*" in a flashing and overpowering rebuke to the proud protest of Lucifer "*I will not serve!*" Billions and billions of angels were engaged in the brief but momentous conflict that saw one third of them cast forth as a just punishment for their terrible refusal to obey a command of the Most High God. "*And that great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, who is called the devil and Satan . . . and his angels were thrown down with him.*" (Apoc. 12, 9) And again the same Scripture says, "*And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth . . .*" (Apoc. 12, 14).

Our Lord and Savior Himself, as the Eternal Son of God, referred to this stupendous event

when, in encouraging His seventy-two demon-expelling disciples, He said, "*I saw Satan like lightning fall from heaven.*" (Luke 8, 10) Like lightning? Yes, Satan, whose name as an angel was Lucifer, that is, "*light-bearer*", was striking in his glory. Some theologians maintain that he was the highest in the choir of the cherubim. So, his fall was tremendous. "*I will ascend into heaven*", was the boast of the rebel angel, "*I will exalt my throne above the stars of God,—I will be like the Most High.*" (Isaias 14: 13-14) Proud Lucifer! He did not want to be greater than God, only equal to Him! Then a shout was heard from a higher angel, greater in talent and certainly greater in love, a shout that gave its mighty seraphic bellow his name, for *Michael* in Hebrew is an exclamation "*Who is like unto God!*" The Prince's name was then, and is now, a compelling rebuke to all the proud spirits, be they demons or men.

We have here a magnificent scenario. Better to have been dropped off in the middle of the excitement before hearing an explanation of the how, when, where, and why, of it all. The basic event of the angelic war is no fairy-tale, it is fact. It has always been believed and taught. There are angels, untold billions of them. They did do battle for the glory of God against rebels of their own stock. No blood was shed, for angels have no blood; but sanctifying grace was shed, and trampled underfoot by the sin

of one third of those angels. They were condemned to hell. Their crime? Pride in the first degree. Here is how it all began.

Their Creation

"*In the beginning God created heaven and earth.*" Many saints have understood "*heaven*" here to include the angels. Moses, the inspired writer, did not mention them in the story of creation by name. It is certain, nonetheless, that they were created before men. What glory came to be when God brought them forth, all at once, in a silent display of awesome power. They were not, and then they were, and they would never die. And they praised the God Who created them.

In many ways they resemble our father Adam, and again, in many ways they do not. In both cases they just found themselves, "*presto*," existing, fully conscious, utterly intelligent, and instantly aware of the fact that they were created by a Personal God. Talk about an experience! Another similarity: neither Adam and Eve nor the angels had parents, and in both cases, for obvious reasons. God was their common Father. Indeed, that made our first parents and the angels brothers in the highest sense of the word, children of but One Father. Then too, they shared that common endowment, though in varying degrees, of having been created in the image and likeness of God. That is, they had intelligence, the faculty of knowledge; and they had a will, the faculty of desiring and loving. In Adam, intelligence was far

inferior to the angels' and acquired by a different means, though at the same time we must know that his mind was far superior to even the very best of his children, who have all on his account suffered a big drop in IQ potential after the Fall. And the same distinction is to be made for the will also.

The greatest thing that Adam shared with the angels was the gift of sanctifying grace that made him, as truly as they, *children* of God rather than just His creatures. This was a sheer gift on God's part, an expression of His overabundant Love. Adam and the angels were heirs to the kingdom of God—not yet possessors. For not even the angels were created in the Beatific Vision. Our first parents and their spiritual neighbors, who most likely had familiarized themselves with their earth-dwelling cousins, were perfectly happy, glorying in their gifts and thanking their Divine Benefactor, while reflecting in their holiness and innocence the face of their Creator. But this paradisaal state was not meant by God to be forever. He had even greater plans for His creatures.

And this brings us to their final point of similarity—both Adam and the angels had to pass a simple test before they could enter into God's Glory and see their Creator face to face. For, as yet, even the angels were living by faith, having seen only the exterior effects of God, not His very Being. That had to be merited by the help of His grace. We are well aware of the test of Adam and

Eve. What was the test of the angels?

The Trial

It would seem from the protest of Lucifer, the infamous *Non serviam* (I will not serve), that the test of fidelity given to the spirits was one of humility. There would seem to be no question of adoration due to their Creator, for all were intelligent enough to know that there was a God to Whom they owed reverence. There were no atheists among the angels. Stupidity was impossible to their nature. God in His Omnipotence they should and would adore, but not—and here was the rock of contradiction by which their goats were separated from their sheep—a God in His helplessness, a God lying in a manger, a Man-God,—that, they would never do!



The wonderful mystery of the Incarnation was revealed by God to his angels and they were commanded to adore God in a nature inferior to their own. Moreover, they were commanded to receive as their Queen a little girl of the race of men. This was too much for the proud. And the dragon's tail drew one third of these shining spirits of light and made them into demons of darkness. But, the loyal angels, by far the majority, amidst profound acclamations of joy from the stunning wonder of it all, bowed down their faces before the Divine Child of an age to come and His Immaculate Mother, and they were instantly transported over the threshold into the wedding chamber of Beatific bliss.

Opposition From the New Age

For some the existence of angels presents a problem. It is too indicative of a faith that is not supposed to be seen or expressed. It just doesn't fit in polite society's cozy world of what is or what isn't acceptable. "Polite" society today is a humanistic society. A belief in a type of God the humanists have fabricated, a God who is rather far away and impersonal (some kind of Supreme Being—as they say) is all right. Just don't insist on a Father, Son, and Holy Ghost Deity. That smacks too much of Christianity. And it is hardly a hidden fact any more that Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is not a welcome figure in today's polite society. If you don't believe it, just go into any marketplace and listen to the way His Holy

Name is abused; then very openly bless yourself and say, "*Blessed be the Holy Name of Jesus!*" Just watch, your friends will turn the other way, as if they don't know you, and you will find yourself alone, a lonely soldier.

The belief in angels is another one of those "*extremisms*" that is just too much. Why can't angels be tolerated? Because to accept them means to accept revelation, the Bible and tradition, as factual truth, for how else (short of a vision) would our minds acquire a knowledge of them?

Of course, the loss of faith that hit this unfortunate generation didn't just leave its victims (principally the young) suspended in mid-air. Great numbers have fallen easy prey to the bad angels, or demons, whose existence they once denied. Now they no longer deny it. They have had too much firsthand experience with satanic things (rock music, occult books, drugs) to ever again doubt the "*other*" reality. The trouble is that the demons have corrupted so many willing minds, through their evil human agents, that now many of the liberated believe that the devil is necessary for the balance of the universe. A new Manichaeism is on the rise. That proud creature, the devil, has found ears itchy enough to swallow the idea that he is the other half of God! "*It is so easy to be evil and so hard to be good,*" the weak and faithless reason; "*perhaps we should jump on the bandwagon and join the winning team.*" And so many do, in one form or another, join the "*winning*" team, turning their back on

the God of Love to embrace the lying and empty delights of the beast of hell who wants nothing more than to kill men. And if his victims do not repent, they will die eternally, and justly, in the fires of hell.

Yes, many doubters now believe. Karl Marx, a Jew, supposedly was an atheist—strange inconsistency for a man who used to prefix to his signature in special letters written to certain fellow conspirators, "*Sincerely, Your Brother in Satan*". Are we naive enough to believe that the world conspirators of our day, the descendants of the inner club who financed Marx and the Bolsheviks, are so stupid as to be atheists? They are not atheists. They are Satanists, who have sold themselves to the devil so that they might rule the world. However, their reign is quickly approaching its end. That is why we see such turmoil around us. It is a diabolic turmoil. The forces of hell are disturbed. They know they are running out of time. Someone very powerful is approaching, very meekly, very humbly, yet "*terrible as an army set in array*"; she is the Woman come to crush the serpent's head.

In the Creed at Sunday Mass we proclaim: "*I believe in One God, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible*". By the "*invisible*" creation, the fathers of the Nicene Council, who gave us this Creed, meant the angels. And lest we forget our kinship with our immaterial neighbors, is not part of ourselves included in that invisible creation? Do we not