

Faith of Our Fathers

[A WEEKLY INSTRUCTION FOR YOUNG AND OLD.]

Second Article: The Angels.

6. The angels hold the highest rank amongst all God's creatures, by reason of the nobility of their nature.

The angels are pure spirits; not like the spirit or soul of man formed to animate a body, though they possess the faculty of appearing to man under borrowed bodies or forms.

The angelic nature is very far superior to that of man. The angels are endowed with a natural intelligence, will, power, and beauty far surpassing that which is most perfect in man. One angel exterminated in a single night 105,000 men of the army of King Sennacharib. St. John says, in the Apocalypse xviii. 1, "I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power, and the earth was enlightened with his glory."

The angels originally were all clothed with the light of grace, and destined to enjoy glory and the Beatific Vision, to be the ministers of God and the princes and ornaments of the celestial courts. But, before allowing them to share His glory, God willed that they should undergo a trial as proof of their fidelity.

All were not steadfast under their trial. Great numbers of the angelic host rebelled against their Sovereign Master, and, having fallen into the sin of pride, were precipitated into the fires of hell for all eternity, and became devils. Those who had remained faithful were admitted to the glories of heaven, and they are called the angels of heaven, angels of light, the good, the holy angels.

7. The angels of heaven are many in number. Daniel the prophet, in his divine visions, saw millions and thousands of millions of these glorious spirits around the throne of God. It is supposed that they are much more numerous than the great multitude of the fallen angels.

8. The angels are divided into three hierarchies, and these again are each divided into three choirs. The first hierarchy comprises the Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones; the second consists of the Dominations, Principalities, and Powers; and the third is divided into the Virtues, Arch-angels, and Angels.

9. The name angel, meaning messenger, is commonly applied in general to all the blessed spirits, without distinction of hierarchies and choirs. Only three amongst them are known to us under special names: Gabriel, the Strength of God; Michael, Who is like unto God; and Raphael, the Remedy of God.

10. The demons, called also the bad angels and angels of darkness, are not always confined to the limits of hell. Great numbers are permitted to disperse over the world, carrying, however, their torments with them.

The devils, animated constantly with a violent hatred of God and of His work, man, have one wish and one thought, and it is to bring about man's destruction. By means of temptations they try to ensnare him into sin, and by sin into the bottomless pit of hell. Sometimes also their baneful influence affects even the body, by means of possession and sensible troubles and vexations. Their power, however, is limited by Almighty God, and they cannot exercise it over the human body in the visible world without His special permission; nor can they tempt our souls to sin, excepting under certain restrictions and within certain bounds. "God is faithful," says the Apostle, "who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, so that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. x. 13). Nevertheless, it is God's will, in time of temptation, that we should implore His aid by prayer.

11. The good angels have the office of praising God in heaven, of being His messengers, His ministers, and the guardians of men on earth.

12. Those blessed spirits are called guardian angels, who, by the mercy of God, are appointed to be the protectors and defenders of men. Faith teaches us that each one of us has a guardian angel attached to his person during the whole course of his life. "Beware of scandalising one of these little ones," says Our Lord: "for their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father, who is in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 10). It is, moreover, a generally accepted doctrine, founded on the Scriptures, that

communities—such as the Church, dioceses, and kingdoms—have also their tutelary angels.

The guardian angels defend those of whom they have charge against all the assaults of the demons, and they endeavor to preserve them from all evil of soul and body; but their solicitude tends principally to guard us from sin, and the occasions of sin. If we grieve them by falling, they help us to rise again; and however great be the resistance and indocility of the sinner, his angel guardian never entirely deserts him. If we are docile, our angels keep us in the right path, and help us to become more and more virtuous and holy, suggesting to us good thoughts and holy desires, offering our good actions and our prayers to God, and, above all, assisting us at the hour of death.

After death, if the soul he has been guarding is in a mortal sin, the angel abandons it to the devil; and if it is in the state of grace, he conducts it to purgatory, whence, when entirely purified, he leads it to heaven.

13. The angels constantly enjoy the Beatific Vision, and during their sojourning on earth their beatitude remains ever with them, according to the words of Our Lord: "Their angels look upon the face of My Father, who is in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 10).

WEDDING BELLS

HAMMERSLEY—O'CONNOR.

The wedding was solemnised at St. Patrick's Church, Kaponga, on June 30, of Thomas Joseph, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Hammersley, of Kaponga, and Miss Beatrice Mary O'Connor, of Awatuna. Rev. Father N. Moore officiated and celebrated a Nuptial Mass, assisted by Rev. Father Duffy, C.S.S.R. The bride, who was given away by her father, was attired in a frock of ivory silk, with a beautifully worked tulle veil and wreath of orange blossoms, and carried a bouquet of white flowers and asparagus ferns. She was attended, as bridesmaids, by Miss Mary Laurence, who wore a cream serge costume and pale blue hat, and Miss Mary Hammersley (sister of the bridegroom), who was attired in a frock of vieux-rose crepe-de-Chine with hat to match. Both carried pretty bouquets. The bridegroom was attended by his brother (Mr. P. Hammersley) as best man, and Mr. P. O'Connor (brother of the bride) as groomsman. The "Wedding March" was played by Miss J. Melville as the bridal party left the church. Wedding breakfast was partaken of at the residence of the bride's brother (Mr. P. O'Connor). Rev. Father Moore presided, and the customary toasts were duly honored. Many beautiful and valuable presents (including cheques for substantial amounts) were received. The bridegroom's presents to the bridesmaids were gold brooches. During the afternoon the newly-wedded couple left en route to Auckland, where the honeymoon was spent; the bride travelling in a navy serge costume with hat to match. She also wore a costly set of furs, the gift of the bridegroom.

GUTHRIE—O'DONNELL.

The wedding was solemnised at the Church of St. Mary of the Angels', Boulcott Street, Wellington, of John Patrick Guthrie (only son of the late Patrick Samuel and Mrs. J. F. Guthrie, Nelson Street, Petone, and grand-nephew of the late Daniel Guthrie, of Geraldine, South Canterbury) and Mary (eldest daughter of the late William and Mrs. O'Donnell, Co. Clare, Ireland). The Rev. Father Mahony officiated and celebrated Nuptial Mass. The bride, who was given away by her brother (Mr. William O'Donnell), was attired in a saxe blue tailored costume, with hat to match, and was attended by Miss Ada Guthrie (sister of the bridegroom), as bridesmaid. Mr. Patrick O'Donnell attended the bridegroom as best man. After the ceremony the guests adjourned to Dustin's reception hall, where wedding breakfast was partaken of, and the usual toasts duly honored. Mr. and Mrs. Guthrie left by the midday Auckland express on their honeymoon, which was spent at Rotorua and other northern pleasure resorts.

The work an unknown good man has done is like a vein of water flowing hidden underground; secretly making the ground green.—Carlyle.

S. Lovell

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