

# The Holy Angels

## *Meditations for the Month of October*

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The Angel by Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones (1833-1898); 1881; Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow, Scotland  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Burnejones3.jpg>

## Prayer to my Guardian Angel

**O** most faithful companion, whom God has appointed to watch over me, my guide and my protector, ever at my side. What thanks can I offer thee for thy love, thy constancy, and thy innumerable benefits? Thou watches over me in sleep; thou consoles me in sorrow; thou raises me when I fall; thou wards off danger; thou prepares me for the future; thou withdraws me from sin; thou urges me to good; and moves me to do penance, and reconciles me with my God. Already, perhaps, I should have been thrust into hell, unless thou by thy prayers have averted from me the dreadful wrath of God. Desert me not, then, I beseech thee: encourage me in adversity; restrain me in prosperity; protect me in dangers; and assist me in temptations, lest at any time I yield to them. Offer to the Divine Majesty all my prayers and sighs and works, and obtain for me the grace to die in the friendship of God, and so to enter into life eternal. Amen.

## Guardian Angel Prayer and Petitions

**O** holy Angel, who art appointed by God to be my guardian, to conduct my blindness, teach my ignorance, strengthen my weakness, and to expiate my slothfulness; I heartily praise our Good Lord for so singular a benefit, and I thank thee for the many good offices which thou has done me:--for defending me amidst so many dangers to both soul and body, and especially for withholding me from sin when I was hastening to my own destruction. Continue, I beseech thee, the same care on my behalf. Offer up to God all my good desires; offer to Him my hopes and my sighs. Make known to Him all my wants. Do thou watch over me while I sleep; strengthen me when I faint; and enlighten my blindness. Shield me from the enemies who persecute me; and, at the hour of my death, intercede for me and bring my soul to the happy haven of everlasting salvation. Amen.

October 1<sup>st</sup>

## Who are the Angels

*T*he Holy Angels were God's first creation. Before them God was alone in His Divine Majesty. But His infinite love prompted Him to create other beings to share His happiness and His glory, and He made the Angels in His own image and likeness, and gave to them gifts which should prepare them for their glorious destiny. It is the mark of true love that it desires that its happiness should be shared by others. Have I this love too all around me?

*T*he Holy Angels are the beings who approach in their nature most nearly to God Himself. They have no corruptible bodies to drag them down. They are thus immeasurably superior to ourselves in natural gifts. They have a knowledge altogether surpassing the highest knowledge to which men can attain, and a control over the natural world compared with which man's puny efforts to control it are mere feebleness. In every part of his nature man is inferior to them. Yet one day, by God's mercy, we shall escape from the bondage of corruption and share all the privileges which they enjoy.

*T*he Holy Angels from their first creation reflected in themselves God's infinite perfections in a way that no other created beings ever did. This was because they were so near to God, on the very threshold of His Presence. They were like courtiers trained up from childhood in the ante-chamber of their king, and learning gradually to share in His royal prerogatives from their very nearness to Him. If I desire to be like to God, I must live in a continual remembrance of Him, with the thought of Him continually present in my heart.

October 2nd

## Their Relation to Us

The Holy Angels are our brethren, children of the same Father in Heaven, united to us in Him by ties of fond affection, loving us with a love higher than any earthly love. We sometimes complain that we have none to love us. We forget that every one of that glorious company has a personal and individual love for us, and rejoices in all that makes us happier and nearer to God. This shall be my consolation in my loneliness. I will picture to myself those loving friends around me.

The Holy Angels are also our models. If we wish to serve God perfectly, all we have to do is to imitate them. Purity of heart is termed the angelic virtue. Perfect submission to God is the secret of their holiness and their continual joy. To say that any child of Adam lives an angelic life is the highest praise we can bestow on him. We pray continually: "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven." Do I seek to imitate the Angels, and in what?

The Holy Angels are also our future companions. There are a number of vacant places in their ranks that the Saints are destined to fill. When Satan and the rebel spirits fell from Heaven, their places are generally believed to have been reserved for the elect among the children of men. In one of the angelic companies is a place for me, if I am faithful to my Lord and King. Oh, what a moment of exquisite happiness, when I take my place among them!

October 3rd

## Their Time of Trial

When first created, the Holy Angels were not in their present state. They were very near to God, but they did not behold Him face to face. They had graces without number, but the grace of final perseverance was not assured to them from the first. They had to be tried: their obedience and submission had to be tested before they entered into their reward. All must be tried before they can receive their inheritance and their crown. Before I am admitted to the joys of Heaven, I must have trials and temptations. These are the prices to be paid for the treasure of eternal joy. How willingly I should accept them, seeing that this is God's universal law!

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This test eliminated, from the ranks of the Angels, Lucifer and his rebel host. Michael and all the Holy Angels obeyed with joy, and received as their recompense the Beatific Vision and joy unspeakable to all eternity. How generous God is in His rewards! One momentary act of submission and the Heaven of Heavens is its guerdon! How happy am I to have so generous a Master!

October 4th

## Their Confirmation in Grace

The trial of the Angels was one that required a far more complete submission than that which God asks of us, for the Angels could not help knowing the superior excellence of their own nature. Yet they never hesitated for one moment in their obedience, but paid to the Manhood of Jesus, to His Sacred Body, made though it was of the dust of the ground, the supreme homage due to God alone. This it was that made their obedience so meritorious, and earned for them the privilege of sinlessness forever, and the joy of continually seeing the face of their God. How God loves those who are willing to stoop!

Their intimate union with God makes it impossible for the Angels to fall away, or even to depart in the least particular from the will of God. The joy of serving God is so great that every other motive disappears before it. The sweetness of the Beatific Vision is so overwhelming that they could not find satisfaction in anything else for a single instant. This is the reward of humility. It breaks down the barrier that hides God from us.

Every one of the Holy Angels knows that he is safe for all eternity that he is beyond the power of any temptation. To many humble Saints, God has often given this to them, in confidence. It does not make them careless, but only more eager to serve God perfectly. It is the greatest happiness possible for any created being. It turns the happiness of certain hope into the happiness of an assured expectation. It makes their life on earth an anticipation of the reward which is already theirs in hope through their reality.

October 5th

## Their Present Sinlessness

Can the Angels sin? No, it is impossible for them to sin, because they behold the face of God. They continually contemplate His infinite goodness, and derive thence a perfect happiness which satisfies every portion of their nature. Outside God there is nothing which has any attraction for them. There is no good possible for them except in doing His will; hence they cannot sin. Whenever I sin it is because I grasp at some temporal good instead of God, and this though I know in the end it will bring me misery.

Are the Angels free if they cannot sin? Yes, perfectly free. He who freely chooses evil instead of good abuses his freedom. He does his best to make himself a slave instead of free. Perfect freedom is the freedom of those who choose only out of various ends all leading to God. God is the end at which the angels always aim, but they are free to choose the means which lead to that end. We do not always choose God, but our own pleasure, as the end at which we aim. Hence we are always impairing our freedom. How can we choose right means when our end is not rightly chosen?

Hence the Angels are far more free than we are in their choice. They always choose means which lead to God. We get in a state of confusion because our intention is not pure. We seek self, not God; this hampers us and ties us down. We are conscious of something that hinders our liberty; this is nothing but self-will preventing us from always seeking God.

October 6th

## Their Unclouded Happiness

*H*appiness consists in the unimpeded activity of every part of our nature: the nobler our nature, the greater our capacity for happiness. Perfect happiness consists in full activity of a perfect nature. The Angels have a nature perfect in its order and degree, and their whole nature is occupied with the joy of seeing God face to face. Hence their happiness is perfect. So too will my happiness be one day, if I am faithful to God.

*H*appiness requires that we should look forward to the future without any misgivings or fear lest we should forfeit our present joy. The Holy Angels know that for all eternity nothing in Heaven or on earth can cloud the brightness of their vision of God, or hinder the streams of delight that flow thence to them unceasingly. We on the other hand dread coming evils. Yet why should we do so, when all things work together for good to those who love God? If we loved God more, what we now fear as evil would lose all its power to terrify us. What we now dread most would be gladly accepted by us as certain in the end to work for our good.

*T*he Holy Angels never have their wills crossed, never are thwarted, never are disappointed, because they have no will save God's. Before they know His will, they tend to do what seems to them the greatest good. But they always do so under the condition that God does not will otherwise. Their own will disappears when His is known to them. This is the secret of happiness in this world as well as in the next.



October 7th

## Their Purity

What do we mean when we speak of Angelic Purity? We mean, first of all, a perfect hatred and contempt for all sinful pleasures of sense, and a due esteem of their vileness and worthlessness. We mean a firm determination to resist any temptation to any indulgence of our bodies which is opposed to the will of God. We mean, moreover, a most careful avoidance of all that could lead us to offend God by evil thoughts or imaginations; a careful custody of our eyes, a watchfulness over all our senses, and a continual modesty of demeanor. Can I lay claim to all this?

The purity of the Angels is much more than this. It includes also complete detachment from all thought of themselves, from all self-will, from all desire to further their own glory. In this, what a contrast to myself, who am continually dwelling on self, cherishing my self-love, resenting any injuries that self has suffered! All this is not angelic, but very much the opposite.

The purity of the Angels consists above all in their whole nature being centered upon God. He is the one object of their existence. His glory and His honor their only motive of action. Their only joy is to serve Him, to praise Him, to show Him reverence. Everything apart from Him is worthless in their sight. This is what gives them their exceeding happiness. This is what I must seek after, if I am to attain angelic purity.

October 8th

## Their Joys

*Everything* that happens in the universe is a source of joy to the Holy Angels. In all they recognize the accomplishment of that which God has fore-ordained; they know that from all He derives honor and glory, and they find unceasing happiness in seeing how He is glorified in all. This is the secret of true contentment; it is because we think of ourselves and not of God that we are troubled and dissatisfied. If only I could take the Angelic view, nothing would disturb me, and I too should always rejoice.

*But* the Angels have a special joy in all that promotes God's greater glory, in the holiness of the Saints and the repentance of the sinner. They know the willing service of His rational creatures is more beautiful in His sight than all else. The return of wanderers to the fold seems above all to fill them with happiness. "There is joy before the Angels of God over every sinner who does penance." Do I too rejoice in the holiness of those around me, and in witnessing the conversion of the sinner?

*The* Angels also rejoice whenever one of the children of men joins their happy company. They welcome at the threshold of the celestial paradise every soul that centers upon its eternal reward. The happiness of all derives a fresh accession from each addition to their choirs, and their song of triumph rises louder before the throne of God. How different is their large-hearted charity from my petty jealousy of the success or happiness of others!

October 9th

## Their Sorrows

Can real sorrow ever invade the ranks of the Holy Angels? Never. Not a single pang of disappointment, or regret, or anxiety, or sadness, or self-reproach can ever enter into their sinless souls. They were fixed in unalterable joy, when they were confirmed in grace and admitted to the Beatific Vision. Their perfect union with the Divine will prevents them from regretting anything that God permits. One day there will be, through God's mercy, no more sorrow for me.

*But* how is it that we speak of our Guardian Angels as shedding tears over our sins and turning away his face in sorrow and disgust, and lamenting over our ingratitude? These phrases are intended to express what would be the effect of our mis-doings upon the Angels if they were capable of suffering. Alas! how many of our actions are of a nature to cause sorrow to those who love us best! How many caused the most poignant grief to the Sacred Heart of Jesus when He was on earth! How many times, moreover, have we grieved our parents and friends, the guides of our youth, and those who have watched over us!

*Yet* we can in this sense cause them sorrow, in that when we disobey God's holy inspirations, we deprive them of the additional joy they would have taken in our obedience. We rob them of the happiness we might have bestowed on them. This loss to them is but a shadow of the loss we ourselves suffer by each willful act of disobedience to grace.

October 10th

## Their Good Works

Can the Holy Angels advance in the love of God and in happiness? They could during their state of probation, but they cannot do so now. Now they have all the happiness of which their natures are capable. The cup is full to the brim and can receive no more. Here it is that we differ from them. We can advance by every good act we perform. How eager we should be to omit no occasion of making progress, seeing how short our time on earth will be.

Do not then the Angels merit by their service rendered to God? No, for merit implies that those who merit are still on their trial. The trial of the Angels is over, and the service they render to God is a part of their reward. What a happy state, when everything that men do now with difficulty and after a struggle with their corrupt nature, will be an unmixed joy and happiness!

The Angels in this are more like to God Himself than any creatures which are not yet made perfect. They have arrived at the goal of their existence, instead of being still in a state of discipline and consequently of suffering. They are like to God in His unclouded, unapproachable, immeasurable happiness. We too shall one day be made perfect and like to God Himself in the absence of all that interferes with happiness. The more we seek to merit now, the more intense will be the joy of seeing God in Heaven.

October 11th

## Their Words

We have in Holy Scripture many sayings of the Holy Angels recorded for our benefit. What is it that we notice as most prominent in the words they utter?

They always seek to encourage the friends of God. "Peace be to you, fear not," are the words of St. Raphael to Tobias. "Fear not, Daniel," are the words of St. Gabriel to the Prophet. "Fear not, Mary," says the same Archangel to Our Lady. If the Angels always give such counsel, why should I fear? I will take courage, and I, too, will seek to encourage others after the manner of the Holy Angels.

They always attribute all to God, and are careful to declare that it is God who sends them on their missions to men. St. Gabriel's last word to Tobias is: "Bless ye the Lord." The song taught by the Angel to the three young men in the fiery furnace is: *Benedicite*. Is this spirit of gratitude and dependence the spirit that pervades my prayers?

When, too, they execute God's messages of wrath, they always do so in God's name, and not their own. Even in his contest with Satan we are told that St. Michael said: "The Lord rebuke thee." They are careful to express their dependence on God, and to refer their actions to Him as their primary Cause. If I wish to be like the Angels, I must speak as God inspires me, not according to my own desires.

October 12th

## Their Discourse

In the Book of Tobias (xii. 6-15) the Archangel Raphael delivers to the family of Tobias a model sermon.

*He* puts in the front the duty of giving glory to God. "Bless ye the God of Heaven; give glory to Him in the sight of all that live." He knew that unless we give glory to God in all our actions, they are worthless in God's sight. To take the glory to ourselves instead of giving it to God was the sin of the Pharisees and of the heathen world. Do I give glory to God in all my actions?

*He* recommends prayer as a means of obtaining a treasure far greater than treasures of gold, but it must be accompanied (1) with fasting or some sort of mortification, (2) with almsgiving, (3) with tears and earnest desires for what we ask. Such prayers of ours the Angels themselves offer to God. Such prayers are sure to meet with an answer from Him. Are these the characteristics of my prayers?

*He* tells the aged Tobias that his trials and temptations, far from being a sign of God's anger, were on the contrary a sign of His love. "Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee." The troubles that befell him were sent simply because he was pleasing in God's sight. We must not therefore despair if we are sorely tried, but take courage, and regard it as a proof of God's love.

October 13th

## Their Natural Knowledge

The Angels have a much more intimate knowledge of created things than we can ever attain to. They have more powerful intellects and have a nature more like to the nature of God. They see immediately and at a glance what we learn only by long study and reasoning. One day, through God's mercy, we hope to enjoy a knowledge like to theirs. Then our present ignorance will be changed into an excellent knowledge of God and of all created things!

Do the Angels know the future by their own natural powers? They can foresee all that takes place in strict accordance with natural law, but they cannot foresee what depends on the will of men, and still less what depends on God. They rest happy in their ignorance. So, too, I must not vex myself about the future, but must gladly leave all to God.

Do the Angels know the secrets of hearts? They can guess at a great deal. Even the devils can do this. They not only read the expression of our faces, but behold the picture painted on our imagination. Moreover, God reveals to them all that is necessary for their guidance and care of our souls. How careful I must be that my soul is pure from sin, and such as my Guardian Angel will behold with satisfaction, and that no picture is through my own fault painted there, from which my Guardian Angel would avert his eyes in shame and sorrow!

October 14th

## Their Supernatural Knowledge

The Angels received at the beginning a knowledge of the Incarnation of the Divine Word. God revealed it to them when He required them to adore the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ. But they knew not all the circumstances that would accompany it. They did not know that He was to lead on earth a life of sorrow and to die a death of shame. These were revealed gradually and in part. We must rest content, as the Holy Angels do, to know just as much as God pleases and nothing more.

The Holy Angels have also an infused knowledge of human affairs. God reveals to them all that is necessary for the exercise of their guardianship of us, the dangers that we shall be exposed to, the temptations that will beset us, sometimes the secrets of our hearts. We should pray God that our Guardian Angels may know us very thoroughly, that so they may keep us in perfect safety.

The Angels understand far better than we do all the mysteries of grace. Why is this? It is because of their purity of heart. It is this that makes them full of light, and in virtue of this light they see far into the depths of the ways and works of God and His dealings with His creatures. We often are so dulled by earthly things and earthly passions that we seem to lose all appreciation of things Divine. It is the clean of heart to whom is granted the privilege of understanding the hidden things of God.



October 15th

## Their Employment

To behold the face of God in Heaven is the noblest and happiest occupation of which His creatures are capable. It is enough and more than enough to satiate them with unspeakable delight through all eternity. This is the essential joy of the Holy Angels. Everywhere and at all times they behold the face of God, and drink in continually fresh draughts of love as they gaze on His infinite perfections.

They also find unceasing satisfaction in falling on their faces and adoring the Most High, as if, thereby, to express their self-annihilation in the presence of God. They forget themselves in God. He is all in all to them. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, because Thou hast created all things, and for Thy will they were and have been created." Is God thus all in all to me?

They also sing aloud: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty," and to this song melody their celestial harmonies. This is to them of all songs the sweetest, because to publish aloud the holiness of God is the end of all rational creatures, and therefore the source of all true happiness. There is always a sweet music going up to the throne of God from the beautiful harmony of the lives of His saints, and from their adoration of His Infinite Holiness. Do I love and adore the holiness of God, and meditate on the contrast of my unholiness?

October 16th

## Their Further Employment

Next to the praises of the Infinite God, it is the chief delight of the Angels to adore the Lamb that was slain. "To Him that sitteth upon the Throne and to the Lamb, benediction and glory, honor and power, for ever and ever." They are never tired of making Heaven resound with their songs of gratitude. So too on earth it is the joy of all the Saints to adore the unspeakable love of the Lamb of God. Is this my joy? Can I say, "Lord", Thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love Thee with my whole heart?"

It is also the delight of all the Holy Angels to sing the praises of the Mother of God. Even the Seraphim have not a glory which in any way approaches hers. After her Incarnate Son, she is the splendor of the Heavenly Court, and the Angels behold her in all her glory, and are ravished at the sight. Is she not the Mother of their King and God? If I desire to behold her with delight in Heaven, I must love and serve her now.

The Holy Angels also rejoice in the companionship of the Saints of God. They welcome them into the celestial kingdom. Their delight is to contemplate the glory and the triumph of those who have fought and conquered on earth, of the martyrs and confessors, of all who have been redeemed with the Precious Blood of Christ. Each one who enters the celestial paradise adds to the joy of all Heaven and fills up one of the places left empty by the fall of the rebel Angels. Do I rejoice in this happiness of others?

October 17th

## Their Queen

*F*ar above Cherubim or Seraphim, very near the Throne of God Himself, Mary sits enthroned. In her are combined the burning love of the Seraphim, the knowledge of the Cherubim, the majesty of the Thrones, the authority of the Dominations. She rules them all in virtue of the higher perfection of her soul in the order of grace. If they are so exceedingly beautiful, what must she be? If they are so full of tender love for man, how much more must she overflow with love and mercy?

*W*hat is it that exalts Mary before them all? Not merely her obedience to the will of God, for this has always characterized them all, but her obedience in circumstances the most trying, amid suffering the most intense. She approached in her Compassion most nearly to the Passion of her Son. None save He ever surpassed her in suffering. She was the Queen of Martyrs, and therefore is the Queen of Angels. Thus it is that she has earned a more excellent reward than they. Hence learn to value suffering for God's sake.

*T*here was yet another reason for Mary's exaltation. She was more closely united in body and soul to her Divine Son and God than any of the Holy Angels. When we receive Holy Communion, we are as closely united to Our Lord as is possible for mortal man. O Jesus! Unite me more and more to Thee, that I may receive more copious graces from Thy Sacred Heart.

October 18th

## Their Nine-Choirs – The Seraphim

The Seraphim are the highest of the Angelic Choirs. Their distinguishing mark is their burning love for God. They have a greater capacity for love than any of the choirs beneath them. They are more like to God, who proclaims Himself to be above all a God of Love. God does not identify Himself with any of His perfections as He does with His love. St. John tells us that God is love. God has given me a capacity for loving. Do I employ it in loving God?

The Seraphim, in consequence of this love, are more closely united to God, and enjoy a larger share of His infinite happiness than any other of the Angels. Their nobler nature gives them a more powerful will, and this will is wholly sacrificed to God. Do I thus sacrifice my will to His, or do I cling to my own, and fancy that my perverse obstinacy is firmness and strength of will?

This union of their wills with God makes them more like to Him than the rest of the Holy Angels. If we desire to be truly godlike, we must sacrifice our own will out of pure love of God, and not for the sake of any reward accruing to ourselves. We must do His will simply because it is His will and because that will is dearer to us than all the world, far dearer than our own. Then we shall be made like Him. Then we shall be joined to Him in intimate friendship.

October 19th

## Their Nine Choirs – The Cherubim

The Cherubim are the second in dignity of the Angelic Choirs. The faculty by which they are specially distinguished is their intimate knowledge of God, and clear perception of His infinite beauty. Something of this appreciation of the Divine perfections is granted to the Saints. God reveals Himself to them because their eyes never dwell with delight on mere earthly beauty and attractiveness. If I know little of God, it is because so many earthly affections hide His face from me.

The Cherubim are always represented as little children. At first we are inclined to wonder that those who possess the deepest knowledge of God are represented not as venerable sages, but under the form of simple childhood. But what dearer indication can there be than this, that the capacity for knowing God depends, not on intellectual power or elaborate study of theology, but simply on purity of heart? "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God."

The Cherubim are described by the Prophet Ezechiel as covering their faces and their feet with their wings in the presence of God, as if in dread lest some impurity should be found in them. They know that if He shall mark iniquity none can abide it, and that the very Angels are not pure in His sight. If they have this fear, how much more should I, full as I am of imperfection and sin! How can I dare to appear before Him? How can I hope to be ever admitted to gaze upon His unveiled majesty?

October 20th

## Their Nine Choirs – The Thrones

*T*he Third in order of the Choirs of Angels are the Thrones. They are the representatives of the majesty of Almighty God, as the throne of an earthly monarch is supposed to have communicated to it something of the dignity of him who sits thereon. Men bow to the throne as worthy of honor and respect. They pay it a relative honor as the seat of their King. So to the Thrones in Heaven is communicated something of the majesty that belongs to the invisible God.

*T*he Thrones are the intimate friends of God. They talk to Him and He to them, as a man talks to his friend. Like to them were many of the Saints of the Old Testament; Abraham, the friend of God; Henoah, who walked with God; David, the man after God's own heart; the Apostles of Our Lord and many holy women, like the Blessed Margaret Mary. God gives this glorious privilege to those, who are obedient to the faintest whisper of His Divine Voice speaking to their souls.

*H*ow can we attain to this intimate friendship with God? By a continual and exact obedience. The Thrones are a created reflection of the perfect will of God. His will is theirs and theirs is His. Nothing wins God's heart like obedience. This made Abraham the friend of God. God reposes in the obedient with perfect confidence. No wonder, for implicit, unquestioning obedience leads without fail to every other virtue.

October 21st

## Their Nine Choirs – The Dominations

The Three Choirs of Angels that we have been hitherto considering are the Angels of pure contemplation. Next to them come what are called the Regulative Choirs, who are engaged in the regulation of the general arrangements of God's Providence. The Dominations are the highest of these Regulative Choirs.

The lesson they teach is that to serve God is to reign. His service represents a dignity far greater than that of the highest and most glorious of earthly sovereigns. He who serves God is a king, a priest to God. If we are ambitious, here is an opportunity of the highest possible dignity for us.

They also teach that only those who serve God are fit to rule others. Obedience is a necessary qualification for a good superior. None are successful as rulers unless they have previously learned to obey and to be led by some higher guide than their own will and judgment. If I am in any position of authority, I must obey well those over me, if I am to rule well those beneath me.

They also proclaim the principle of true liberty. What tyranny worse than that of the French Revolution! What liberty more perfect than the liberty of Christ! To be subject to others does not mar our liberty, it only perfects it. To be subject to God is necessary to liberty. We must serve some one. It is a choice between being the servant of God, or the slave of the devil and of our own passions.

October 22nd

## Their Nine Choirs – The Virtues

The Second of the Regulative Choirs of the Holy Angels is called the Virtues. They represent unshaken fortitude in the cause of God. Among the Saints on earth, the Martyrs represent their spirit of undaunted courage in the cause of God. The Apostles after the Resurrection were endowed with it. All those who boldly confess Christ before men, or endure shame for His sake, share the same spirit. Am I one of these brave soldiers of Jesus, or do I play the coward from fear of man and human respect?

The office of the Virtues is to be the instruments through which God works His miracles. They have the arrangement and control of them committed to their hands. Unshaken fortitude is the characteristic of all who work miracles in God's name. Hence the miraculous power of Eliseus, St. Paul, St. Francis Xavier, and others. If I am to do great things for God, I must be brave, I must deny myself, I must not yield to human respect.

The Virtues among the Angelic hosts have also the task of dispensing the graces of God, which make difficult things easy. How wonderful is the power of God's grace! Suffering and persecution, and even death itself become sweet to those, who have the grace of God aiding and consoling them, and giving them strength to endure and filling them with supernatural joy. God has always ready the grace necessary for us, if we will only avail ourselves of it. Courage then, faint heart, in every trial!



October 23rd

## Their Nine Choirs – The Powers

The Powers are the Angelic representatives of all lawful authority, ecclesiastical and civil, of the Supreme Power of Christ's Vicar on earth, of all Bishops, Archbishops, and Priests. They fence round the dignity which is inherent in the highest office of the State. All whose duty it is to govern, receive through them their authority over their subjects. One of the surest marks of loyalty to God is loyalty to those whom He has appointed to take His place on earth.

The special office of the Powers is also to keep the devil in check. If his schemes were not continually thwarted, if he were not hindered from exerting the wonderful force of his spiritual nature, the devil would play havoc with men at his will. It is the superior power of God, exercised through the Holy Angels, which alone frustrates his efforts and protect us from his temptations. We should thank God for those heavenly influences which thus save us from destruction.

The Powers have thus complete mastery over the devils, simply because the former were ready to submit implicitly to God, the latter were not. Without God, authority has no foundation on which to rest. It is His authority which must underlie all authority exercised by the creatures He has made, if it is to carry weight and to prevail. Even Our Lord spoke with authority, because He was subject in all things. We too must be subject if we are to rule with authority. No man is a good superior unless he has first learned to obey.

October 24th

## Their Nine Choirs – The Principalities

We now come to the Three Administrative Choirs, who carry out the directions of the Regulative Choirs. Of these three the highest is called the Principalities.

The Principalities consist of those members of the Heavenly Host who have entrusted to their care provinces and kingdoms. They are the guardians of nations and peoples. They seek to influence the hearts of their rulers, and to guide events under God's direction for the benefit of the land or district committed to their care. We ought to pray to the Angel who guards our country as well as to its Patron Saint for its many needs.

The Principalities take so special an interest in their own province, that we find in Daniel x. 2, a sort of contest between the Prince or ruling spirit of Persia and the Prince of Palestine respecting the return of the Jews. They each had, at first an opinion of their own, yet as soon as God's will was known, it is an equal joy to both to carry it out. Is this my case?

The Principalities are thus the Generals of the army of Heaven, carrying out instructions as a general does those of his chief or of the Cabinet at home. To their ranks will be added many who are sent to carry the gospel to heathen lands, or who are entrusted with widespread authority over the faithful. Among them we shall one day see many great Saints, and many Bishops and Archbishops, Christian kings and others, who have ruled faithfully the Church or State.

October 25th

## Their Nine Choirs – The Archangels

The Archangels are the Captains of the Heavenly Host. They guide the squadrons that fight against the foe. They lead the bands that are sent to guard the Saints of God. They are the immediate superiors of the Holy Angels, who obey them with joyful and unreasoning obedience. So, too, I ought to obey those immediately set over me. I ought to see God in my superiors as the Holy Angels do. Do I do so?

The Archangels are also the personal guardians of the most illustrious of the Saints, St. Ignatius is said to have had an Archangel for his guardian. Many others of the chosen friends of God have been similarly honored. Such a privilege points to a high destiny and means signal grace. The Archangels deem it a privilege to minister to the Saints. God gives us the same privilege of ministering in one way or another to the holy servants of Christ. How rarely this privilege is appreciated as it ought to be!

The Archangels also stand before God's throne ready to be sent as His messengers to men. Thus St. Gabriel was sent to Our Lady, St. Michael to the Prophet Daniel, St. Raphael to Tobias. These messages of mercy are highly esteemed by them. They do not regard it as in any way unworthy of their exalted dignity to be the means of communication between God and man. I also ought to esteem thusly any work undertaken for God, even though it be that of a humble servant carrying messages to and fro.

October 26th

## Their Nine Choirs – Saint Michael

When Lucifer fell from Heaven, St. Michael, who had led the faithful armies of God against the rebel hosts, took his place as chief of the Archangels and Angels before the Throne of God. Henceforth he was to be the leader in the warfare of good against evil, of Heaven against Hell. This was the reward of his obedience. We shall never rise high in God's service unless we are children of obedience. Then, and then only, will He trust and honor and exalt us.

What was the secret of St. Michael's power? It was his ever-present recognition of the sovereignty of God. It is because there was no interference of self with the absolute and perfect dominion of God over every thought and action. His name signifies, "Who is like to God?" Pray for this continual recognition of the exclusive claim of God. Pray that in all temptation you may say, 'Who is like to God?' What is all else in comparison with Him?

Before St. Michael Satan trembles, recognizing in him the authority of the Omnipotent God. It was St. Michael who had to guard the body of Moses from the devil, who sought to wrest it from his hands. It is St. Michael who will marshal the dead to the Last Judgment. It is St. Michael who is the defender of all faithful souls in the hour of death. Ask him to defend you in that awful hour and save you from the power of the Evil One.

October 27th

## Their Nine Choirs – Saint Gabriel

The name Gabriel means, 'The Strength of God.' St. Gabriel is strong, not with his own strength, but with God's, and he imparts this strength to the servants of God on earth. It is his office to show how out of weakness God brings strength. If I am weak by nature, I have only to beg of God and He will send an Angel to make me strong in Him and in the power of His grace.

For this reason St. Gabriel was the messenger of the Incarnation. God, made Man, was the utmost limit of which strength in weakness was capable. The infinite power of God was joined to the feebleness of the lowest rational nature that God had created. Hence it was Gabriel who prophesied to Daniel of the coming of the Messias. It was Gabriel who announced to our Blessed Lady at Nazareth that she was to be the Mother of God. Adore God's strength made perfect in infirmity, and learn to admire in the Saints of God the Divine power imparted to them.

St. Gabriel is also generally believed to have been the Angel sent to comfort Our Lord in His sacred Agony. Then, more than ever, was the Humanity of the Son of God emptied of all its strength, and St. Gabriel came to minister strength to Him in His human weakness. Pray that your times of infirmity may prove the occasion of God's strength in you, and that He may console you and help you to persevere to the end, and to pass safely through your last agony.

October 28th

## Their Nine Choirs – Saint Raphael

St. Raphael, the third of the chieftains of the Heavenly Host, receives from God a power to heal all sickness and infirmity, and repair the ravages that are wrought by sin. His very name indicates his office: The Healing of God. As God sometimes allows Satan to spread disease among men, as in the case of holy Job, so He employs St. Raphael to avert sickness and restore health. Hence he is our model in the privilege that God grants to all, of helping to alleviate misery, and bind up and cure the wounds of men. Do I heal the ills of those around me? Do I not too often aggravate them?

*It was St. Raphael who was sent to keep the young Tobias safe from dangers of body and soul during his journey to seek for a wife among his kindred, and to furnish him with means to bring to naught the attempt of the devil to destroy him; to cure his aged father of his blindness, and to leave peace and happiness behind him. God often sends an Angel to keep us safe, though we too often scarce recognize our need of it, and make little account of our heavenly protector.*

*It is generally believed to have been St. Raphael who was sent to impart to the Pool of Bethesda this power to heal him, who first bathed in it after the Angel's visit (John V. 4). We little know how often God employs angelic agency in our behalf. Men often attribute to natural causes what is done by angelic hands. Remember their agency, and thank God for their aid.*

October 29th

## Their Nine Choirs – The Angels

*T*he Angels are the lowest of the Heavenly Choirs. They are an innumerable host, each perfectly satisfied, none wishing for a moment to be higher in Heaven than he is, but finding happiness without alloy in his knowledge that God's will has ever been done, and will ever be done, in all that regards him. This it is at which we must aim. This is the secret of true contentment and solid peace. This will make our life on earth a foretaste of Heaven.

*E*ach of the Angels has his own office and his own work. Some have to chant the praise of God; others to adore the Blessed Sacrament on earth; others to act as escort to Our Lady; others to tend the servants of God. Sometimes God employs them in one way, sometimes in another. They are equally willing for every occupation. All that they desire is simply to know the will of God and to do it. Is this my frame of mind in all that God arranges for me, either directly or through the hands of superiors?

*T*he Angels obey those who are above them, not for their own sakes, but simply out of love for God. They see God in all who have a right to command them. They look directly to Him. Hence it matters not who commands them. This, too, should be my spirit. If I see God in my Superiors, I shall always obey with loyal readiness, quite irrespective of the individual through whom God speaks.

October 30th

## Their Care of Us

*H*as every child of Adam a Guardian Angel? Yes, every one without exception, as long as his probation lasts--Heathens and Christians, princes and beggars, the idiot as well as the man of genius, the little child just born into the world as well as the old man on the verge of the grave. What respect this should give us for others! How we should tremble before the anger of their Guardian Angels, and count ourselves happy to win their approval!

*E*ven when the Guardian Angel knows that his task is hopeless or almost hopeless, still he faithfully remains at his post. At least he can do something to save the poor soul from the full violence of the demons who have dominion over it, and it may be that, through some miracle of God's mercy, repentance will come before it is too late. He never ceases, as long as life lasts, to do his utmost to turn the stubborn will to contrition and penance before it is too late. He never relaxes in his efforts or loses hope. Hence we too should not despair.

*I*f evil happens to men, if they lose their souls, are their Guardian Angels responsible for it? No, they always faithfully perform their task. They continue to warn, to aid, to breathe into the soul of God's holy inspirations with unremitting fidelity. It is because we neglect their warnings, reject their proffered help, that we do not profit more by their presence at our side. How often my Guardian Angel would have helped me if I had accepted his aid!



October 31th

## Their Jealousy over Their Charge

The Holy Angels are very jealous over anything that in any way affects the honor of Almighty God. As they love men only for God, so their only care is to maintain His honor and promote His glory. Those who are His enemies are their enemies also. They are the ministers of His vengeance as well as of His love. How terrible a thing it would be to think that we had the Angels as our enemies!

The Holy Angels are also very jealous over the interests of their clients. Anyone who gives scandal to those committed to their charge incurs their anger. When we set a bad example to others, or rouse them to anger, or tempt them to sin, how little we think there is one by their side whose swift vengeance will fall on us, because we sought to lead into sin the client committed to his charge.

The Holy Angels are especially jealous over the innocence of the young. Woe be to those who teach them evil or do not respect them as they ought! Woe be to those who through their culpable neglect or carelessness allow children committed to them to mix with bad companions or to run into peril of sin. "Beware," says Our Lord, "of giving scandal to one of those little ones; for their Angels always behold the face of My Father who is in Heaven." He will hear their cry for vengeance on those who harm their little clients.

