

Angel

INTRODUCTION

INFLUENCED by a long tradition of religious symbolism in painting and poetry, our imagination responds to the word "angel" by picturing a winged figure robed in dazzling white and having the bodily aspect of a human being.

This image, common to believers and unbelievers, contains features which represent some of the elements of meaning in the abstract conception of angels as this is found in the writings of Jewish and Christian theologians and in related discussions by the philosophers. The human appearance suggests that angels, like men, are persons; that they are most essentially characterized by their intelligence. The wings suggest the function of angels—their service as messengers from God to man. The aura of light which surrounds them signifies, according to established conventions of symbolism, the spirituality of angels. It suggests that to imagine angels with bodies is to use a pictorial metaphor.

Another interpretation might be put upon this aura of light if one considers the role which the notion of angel has played in the history of thought. Wherever that notion has entered into discussions of God and man, of matter, mind, and soul, or knowledge and love, and even of time, space, and motion, it has cast light upon these other topics. The illumination which has been and can be derived from the idea of angels as a special kind of being or nature is in no way affected by doubts or denials of their existence.

Whether such beings exist or not, the fact that they are conceivable has significance for theory and analysis. Those who do not believe in the existence—or even the possible existence—of utopias nevertheless regard them as fictions useful analytically in appraising ac-

cepted realities. What an ideal society would be like can be considered apart from the question of its existence; and, so considered, it functions as a hypothesis in political and economic thought. What sort of being an angel would be if one existed can likewise serve as a hypothesis in the examination of a wide variety of theoretical problems.

The idea of angels does in fact serve in precisely this way as an analytical tool. It sharpens our understanding of what man is, how his mind operates, what the soul is, what manner of existence and action anything would have apart from matter. Hence it suggests how matter and its motions in time and space determine the characteristics of corporeal existence. Pascal's remark—that "man is neither angel nor brute, and the unfortunate thing is that he who would act the angel acts the brute"—points to the different conceptions of man which result from supposing him to be either angel or brute rather than neither. Such views of human nature, considered in the chapters on ANIMAL and MAN, cannot be fully explored without reference to theories of the human mind or soul in its relation to matter and to body. As the chapters on MIND and SOUL indicate, theories carrying the names of Plato and Descartes, which attribute to the human mind or soul the being and powers of a purely spiritual substance or entity, seem to place man in the company of the angels. In this tradition Locke applies the word "spirits" equally to human minds and to suprahuman intelligence.

IT WOULD BE misleading to suppose that the idea of angels is primarily a construction of the philosophers—a fiction invented for their

analytical purposes; or that it is simply their conception of a supramundane reality, concerning the existence and nature of which they dispute. In the literature of western civilization, angels first appear by name or reference in the Old and the New Testaments. Readers of the Bible will remember many scenes in which an angel of the Lord performs the mission of acquainting man with God's will. Among the most memorable of such occasions are the visits of the angels to Abraham and Lot and the angelic ministry of Gabriel in the Annunciation to Mary.

In one book of the Bible, Tobias (Tobit, as it is called in the King James Apocrypha), one of the leading characters is the angel Raphael. Through most of the story he appears as a man, but at the end, after he has accomplished his mission, he reveals his identity. "I am the angel Raphael," he declares,

one of the seven, who stand before the Lord.

And when they had heard these things they were troubled; and being seized with fear they fell upon the ground on their face.

And the angel said to them: Peace be to you, Fear not.

For when I was with you, I was there by the will of God: bless ye him and sing praises to him.

I seemed to eat and to drink with you; but I use an invisible meat and drink, which cannot be seen by men.

It is time therefore that I return to him that sent me . . .

And when he had said these things, he was taken from their sight; and they could see him no more.

AS A RESULT of scriptural exegesis and commentary, the angels become a fundamental topic for Jewish theologians from Philo to Maimonides, and for such Christian theologians as Augustine, Scotus Erigena, Gregory the Great, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Pascal, and Schleiermacher. They figure in the great poetry of the Judeo-Christian tradition—in *The Divine Comedy* of Dante, in *Paradise Lost* of Milton, and in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* and Goethe's *Faust*.

The philosophers, especially in the 17th and 18th centuries, are motivated by Scripture or provoked by theology to consider the existence, the nature, and the activity of angels. Hobbes, for example, attacks the supposition

that angels are immaterial on the ground that the notion of incorporeal substance is self-contradictory and undertakes to reinterpret all the scriptural passages in which angels are described as spirits. After examining a great many, he says that "to mention all the places of the Old Testament where the name of Angel is found, would be too long. Therefore to comprehend them all at once, I say, there is no text in that part of the Old Testament, which the Church of England holdeth for Canonical, from which we can conclude, there is, or hath been created, any permanent thing (understood by the name of *Spirit* or *Angel*) that hath not quantity . . . and, in sum, which is not (taking Body for that which is somewhat or somewhere) Corporeal."

All the passages can be interpreted, Hobbes thinks, simply in the sense in which "angel" means "messenger" and "most often, a messenger of God," which signifies "anything that makes known his extra-ordinary presence." If, instead of existing only when they carry God's word to men, the angels are supposed to have permanent being, then they must be corporeal. As "in the resurrection men shall be permanent and not incorporeal," Hobbes writes, "so therefore also are the angels . . . To men that understand the signification of these words, *substance* and *incorporeal*"—and mean by "incorporeal" having no body at all, not just a *subtle* body—the words taken together "imply a contradiction." Hence Hobbes argues that to say "an angel, or spirit, is (in that sense) an incorporeal substance, is to say in effect that there is no angel or spirit at all. Considering therefore the signification of the word *angel* in the Old Testament, and the nature of dreams and visions that happen to men by the ordinary way of nature," Hobbes concludes that the angels are "nothing but supernatural apparitions of the fancy, raised by the special and extraordinary operation of God, thereby to make his presence and commandments known to mankind, and chiefly to his own people."

Locke seems to take the exactly opposite position. Asserting that we have "no clear or distinct idea of substance in general," he does not think spirits any less intelligible than bodies. "The idea of *corporeal substance*," he

writes, "is as remote from our conceptions and apprehensions, as that of *spiritual substance* or spirit; and therefore, from our not having any notion of the substance of spirit, we can no more conclude its non-existence, than we can, for the same reason, deny the existence of body." Just as we form the complex idea of bodies by supposing their qualities, such as figure and motion, or color and weight, to co-exist in some substratum; so by supposing the activities we find in ourselves—such as "thinking, understanding, willing, knowing, and the power of beginning motion, etc."—to co-exist in some substance, "we are able to frame the *complex idea of an immaterial spirit*."

Not only does Locke think that "we have as clear a perception and notion of immaterial substances as we have of material," but he also finds the traditional doctrine of a hierarchy of angels quite acceptable to reason. "It is not impossible to conceive, nor repugnant to reason, that there may be many species of spirits, as much separated and diversified one from another by distinct properties whereof we have no ideas, as the species of sensible things are distinguished one from another by qualities which we know and observe in them."

Locke goes even further—beyond the mere possibility of angels to the likelihood of their real existence. His reasoning resembles the traditional argument of the theologians on this difficult point. "When we consider the infinite power and wisdom of the Maker," he writes, "we have reason to think that it is suitable to the magnificent harmony of the Universe, and the great design and infinite goodness of the Architect, that the species of creatures should also, by gentle degrees, ascend upward from us toward his infinite perfection, as we see they gradually descend from us downwards."

Such speculations concerning the existence and the order of angels are usually thought to be the province of the theologian rather than the philosopher. But Francis Bacon, like Locke, does not think it unfitting for the philosopher to inquire into such matters. In natural theology—for him a part of philosophy—Bacon thinks it is improper "from the contemplation of nature, and the principles of human reason, to dispute or urge anything

with vehemence as to the mysteries of faith." But "it is otherwise," he declares, "as to the nature of spirits and angels; this being neither unsearchable nor forbid, but in a great part level to the human mind on account of their affinity."

He does not further instruct us concerning angels in the *Advancement of Learning*, but in the *Novum Organum* he throws light on their nature as well as ours by touching on one characteristic difference between the human and the angelic mind. Discussing there the theory of induction, he holds that "it is only for God (the bestower and creator of forms), and perhaps for angels or intelligences at once to recognize forms affirmatively at the first glance of contemplation."

UNLIKE MOST of the great ideas with which we are concerned, the idea of angel seems to be limited in its historical scope. It is not merely that since the 18th century the discussion has dwindled, but also that the idea makes no appearance in the great books of pagan antiquity—certainly not in the strict sense of the term, whereby "angel" signifies a creature of God, spiritual in substance and nature, and playing a role in the divine government of the universe.

There are, nevertheless, analogous conceptions in the religion and philosophy of the ancients; and in philosophy at least, the points of resemblance between the analogous concepts are sufficiently strong to establish a continuity of discussion. Furthermore, elements in the thought of Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus exercise a critical influence on Judeo-Christian angelology.

Gibbon relates how the early Christians made the connection between the gods of polytheism and their doctrine about angels. "It was the universal sentiment both of the church and of heretics," he writes, "that the daemons were the authors, the patrons, and the objects of idolatry. Those rebellious spirits who had been degraded from the rank of angels, and cast down into the infernal pit, were still permitted to roam upon the earth, to torment the bodies and to seduce the minds of sinful men. The daemons soon discovered and abused the

natural propensity of the human heart towards devotion, and, artfully withdrawing the adoration of mankind from their Creator, they usurped the place and honors of the Supreme Deity."

In the polytheistic religions of antiquity, the demigods or inferior deities are beings superior in nature and power to man. "The polytheist and the philosopher, the Greek and the barbarian," writes Gibbon, "were alike accustomed to conceive a long succession, an infinite chain of angels, or daemons, or deities, or aeons, or emanations, issuing from the throne of light." In Plato's *Symposium*, for example, Diotima tells Socrates that Love "is intermediate between the divine and the mortal . . . and interprets between gods and men, conveying and taking across to the gods the prayers and sacrifices of men, and to men the commands and replies of the gods; he is the mediator who spans the chasm which divides them." Love, Diotima explains, is only one of "these spirits and intermediate powers" which "are many and diverse."

Such demigods are intermediate by their very nature. Although superhuman in knowledge and action, they still are not completely divine. Occupying a place between men and gods, they are, according to Plato, "by nature neither mortal nor immortal." Their existence is necessary to fill out the hierarchy of natures. They are links in what has come to be called "the great chain of being."

The analogy with the angels arises primarily from this fact of hierarchy. Both pagan and Christian religions believe in an order of supernatural or at least superhuman beings graded in perfection and power. In both, these beings serve as messengers from the gods to men; they act sometimes as guardians or protectors, sometimes as traducers, deceivers, and enemies of man. But the analogy cannot be carried much further than this. The angels, according to Christian teaching, are not inferior gods, or even demigods. As compared with the "intermediate spirits" of pagan religion, they are less human in character, as well as less divine. Nevertheless, the reader of the great poems of antiquity will find a striking parallelism between the heavenly insurrection which underlies the

action of *Prometheus Bound* and the angelic warfare in *Paradise Lost*.

IN THE WRITINGS of Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus, philosophical inquiry turns from the sensible world of material things to consider the existence and nature of an order of purely intelligible beings. As there is an inherent connection between being perceptible to the senses and being material, so that which is purely intelligible must be completely immaterial. If ideas exist independently—in their own right and apart from knowing or thinking minds—then they constitute such an order of purely intelligible entities.

At this point a number of difficult questions arise. Are the intelligibles also intelligences, *i.e.*, are they an order of knowers as well as a realm of knowables? Can they be regarded as substances? And if so, do they have a mode of action appropriate to their mode of being—action which is other than knowing, action which in some way impinges on the course of events or the motions of the physical world?

Plotinus answers affirmatively that the purely intelligible beings are also pure intelligences, but he does not conceive them as having any power or action except that of knowledge. Another answer to these questions given in antiquity and the Middle Ages is that the intelligences are the celestial motors, the movers of the heavenly bodies. "Since we see," Aristotle writes, "that besides the simple spatial movement of the universe, which we say that the first and unmovable substance produces, there are other spatial movements—those of the planets—which are eternal (for a body which moves in a circle moves eternally), each of *these* movements also must be caused by a substance, both unmovable in itself and eternal." These secondary movers, Aristotle thinks, are "of the same number as the movements of the stars," and not only must they be eternal and unmovable, as is the prime mover, but also "without magnitude" or immaterial.

Plato offers an alternative hypothesis—that the celestial bodies are alive and have souls. This hypothesis, like Aristotle's, tends in the Middle Ages to be restated in terms of the theory of angels. Aquinas reports Augustine as

thinking that "if the heavenly bodies are really living beings, their souls must be akin to the angelic nature." He himself holds that "spiritual substances are united to them as movers to things moved," the proof of which, he says, "lies in the fact that whereas nature moves to one fixed end, in which having attained it, it rests; this does not appear in the movement of the heavenly bodies. Hence it follows that they are moved by some intellectual substances."

The question whether intelligences govern the planets also occupies the attention of an astronomer like Kepler. Although he denies any need for such intelligences—among other reasons because planetary motion is not circular but elliptical—he argues that the celestial movements are the work either "of the natural power of the bodies, or else a work of the soul acting uniformly in accordance with those bodily powers." But whether or not they are to be regarded as *movers*, as well as *knowers* and *knowables*, the intelligences represent for ancient and medieval thought a mode of being exempt from the vicissitudes of physical change even as it is separate from matter.

WHEN MODERN philosophers consider spirits or spiritual being, they seldom deal with the ancient speculations about pure intelligibles or separate intelligences without being influenced by the theological doctrine of angels which developed in medieval thought.

The extent of this doctrine may be judged from the fact that the *Summa Theologica* of Aquinas contains a whole treatise on the angels, as well as additional questions on the speech of angels, their hierarchies and orders, the division between the good and the bad angels, and their action on men—the guardianship of the good angels and the assaults of the demons. That these additional questions are contained in the treatise on divine government throws some light on their theological significance.

The primary fact about the angelic nature is immateriality. An angel is immaterial both in its substantial being and in its characteristic activity which, says Aquinas, is "an altogether immaterial mode of operation." Being immaterial, they are also incorruptible. "Nothing is

corrupted except by its form being separated from the matter . . . Consequently," Aquinas writes, "a subject composed of matter and form ceases to be actually when the form is separated from the matter. But if the form subsists in its own being, as happens in the angels, it cannot lose its being." To signify that they are intelligences existing apart from matter, the angels are sometimes called "subsisting forms" and sometimes "separate substances."

Although they are imperishable in being and have immortal life, the angels are not, like God, truly eternal. "The Heaven of Heavens, which you created 'in the Beginning,' that is, before the days began, is some kind of intellectual creature," Augustine writes, but it is in "no way co-eternal with you." As created, the angels have a beginning. Yet, while not eternal, neither are they temporal creatures in continual flux, but, according to Augustine, they "partake in your eternity . . . through the rapture and joy of [their] contemplation of God . . . clinging to you unflinchingly" and transcending "every vicissitude of the whirl of time." It is for this reason that the angels are spoken of as "aeviternal." Nevertheless, as Calvin points out, "a fancied divinity has been assigned them" by men because "the minds of many are so struck with the excellence of angelic natures."

The familiar question concerning the number of angels able to stand on a needle's point—if it was ever asked by medieval theologians—merely poses the problem of how an incorporeal substance occupies space. In his Preface to *Saint Joan*, Shaw corrects the myth about the medieval inquiry concerning the number of angels on the point of a needle. "The medieval doctors of divinity who did not pretend to settle how many angels could dance on the point of a needle," he writes, "cut a very poor figure as far as romantic credulity is concerned beside the modern physicists who have settled to the billionth of a millimetre every movement and position in the dance of the electrons." Quantum mechanics, with which Shaw was unacquainted, does not alter his comparison.

The way in which Aquinas discusses "angels in relation to place" discloses how the ques-

tion serves to raise generally significant issues concerning the nature of space and quantity, and their relation to causality. He points out that a body occupies place in a circumscribed fashion, *i.e.*, its dimensive quantity is contained within the space; whereas "an angel is said to be in a corporeal place by application of the angelic power in any manner whatever to the place . . . An incorporeal substance virtually contains the thing with which it comes into contact, and is not contained by it." To an objector who thinks that since, unlike bodies, angels do not fill a place, several can be in the same place at the same time, Aquinas replies that two angels cannot be in the same place because "it is impossible for two complete causes to be immediately the cause of one and the same thing." Since an angel is where he acts, and since by the power of his action he contains the place at which he acts, "there cannot be but one angel at one place."

Angels are also said to go from one place to another without traversing the intervening space and without the lapse of time. Considering their immateriality, such action is less remarkable for angels to perform than is the action of electrons, which, according to modern quantum mechanics, jump from outer to inner orbits of the atom without taking time or passing through interorbital space.

The immateriality of angels has other consequences which throw comparative light on the conditions of corporeal existence. In the world of physical things we ordinarily think of a species as including a number of individuals. While all men have the same specific nature, they differ numerically or individually. But because angels are immaterial substances, it is held that each angel *is* a distinct species. "Things which agree in species but differ in number," Aquinas explains, "agree in form but are distinguished materially. If, therefore, the angels are not composed of matter and form . . . it follows that it is impossible for two angels to be of one species."

Furthermore, as Aquinas states in another place, among "incorporeal substances there cannot be diversity of number without diversity of species and inequality of nature." Each species is necessarily higher or lower

than another, so that the society of angels is a perfect hierarchy in which each member occupies a distinct rank. No two angels are equal as, on the supposition that they share in the same specific humanity, all men are. Yet such names as "seraphim" and "cherubim" and the distinction between archangels and angels indicate an organization of spiritual substances into various groups—according to the tradition, into nine orders or subordinate hierarchies.

The nine orders or ranks of angelic being are described by Dante in the *Paradiso* as distinct circles of love and light. Using these metaphors he thus reports his vision of the heavenly hierarchy. "I saw a point which radiated a light so keen that the eye on which it blazes needs must close because of its great keenness . . . Perhaps as near as a halo seems to girdle the light which paints it, when the vapor that bears it is most dense, at such distance around the point a circle of fire was whirling so rapidly that it would have surpassed that motion which most swiftly girds the universe; and this was girt around by another, and that by a third, and the third by a fourth, by a fifth the fourth, then by a sixth the fifth. Thereon the seventh followed, now spread so wide that the messenger of Juno entire would be too narrow to contain it. So the eighth and the ninth."

Beatrice explains to him how the relation of the circles to one another and to the Point which is God depends upon their measure of love and truth, whereby there is "a wondrous correspondence of greater to more and of smaller to less, in each heaven with respect to its Intelligence." She then amplifies her meaning: "The first circles have shown to you the Seraphim and the Cherubim. Thus swiftly they follow their bonds, in order to liken themselves to the point as most they can, and they can in proportion as they are exalted in vision. Those other loves who go round them are called Thrones of the divine aspect, because they terminated the first triad . . . The next triad that thus flowers in this eternal spring which nightly Aries does not despoil perpetually sings Hosannah with three melodies which sound in the three orders of bliss . . . first Do-

minions, then Virtues; and the third are Powers. Then in the two penultimate dances, the Principalities and Archangels circle; the last is wholly of Angelic sports. These orders all gaze upward and prevail downward, so that toward God all are drawn, and all do draw."

THE THEORY of angels raises many questions regarding the similarity and difference between them and disembodied souls. But for comparison with men, perhaps the most striking consequences of the theory of angels as bodiless intelligences concern the manner of their knowledge and government. The comparison can be made on quite different views of the nature of man and the soul. In fact, diverse conceptions of man or the soul can themselves be compared by reference to the angelic properties which one conception attributes to human nature and another denies.

Lacking bodies, the angels are without sense perception and imagination. Not being immersed in time and motion, they do not reason or think discursively as men do by reasoning from premises to conclusion. Whereas "human intellects," according to Aquinas, "obtain their perfection in the knowledge of truth by a kind of movement and discursive intellectual operation . . . as they advance from one known thing to another," the angels, "from the knowledge of a known principle . . . straightway perceive as known all its consequent conclusions . . . with no discursive process at all." Their knowledge is intuitive and immediate, not by means of concepts abstracted from experience or otherwise formed, but through the archetypal ideas infused in them at their creation by God. That is why, Aquinas goes on to say, angels "are called *intellectual beings*" as contrasted with such *rational* natures as "human souls which acquire knowledge of truth discursively." If men "possessed the fullness of intellectual light, like the angels, then in the first grasping of principles they would at once comprehend their whole range, by perceiving whatever could be reasoned out from them."

It would appear from this that conceptions of the human intellect which minimize its dependence on sense and imagination, and

which emphasize the intuitive rather than the discursive character of human thought, attribute angelic power to man. The same may be said of theories of human knowledge which account for its origin in terms of innate ideas or implanted principles. Still another example of the attribution of angelic properties to man is to be found in the supposition that human beings can communicate with one another by telepathy. The angels are telepathic; one angel, it is said, can make its ideas known to another simply by an act of will and without any exterior means of communication.

Lacking bodies, the angels are without bodily emotions, free from the human conflict between reason and passion, and completely directed in their love—or the motion of their will—by what they know. In *The Divine Comedy* Beatrice speaks of the angelic society as one in which "the Eternal Love opened into new loves." Adverting to the division between the good and the bad angels, she tells Dante, "Those whom you see here were modest to recognize their being as from the Goodness which had made them apt for intelligence so great: wherefore their vision was exalted with illuminating grace and with their merit, so that they have their will full and established." Yet their vision and love of God is not equal. In heaven, "The Primal Light that irradiates them all is received by them in as many ways as are the splendors to which It joins Itself. Wherefore, since the affection follows upon the act of conceiving, the sweetness of love glows variously in them."

Such a society, governed by knowledge and love, has no need for the application of coercive force, for angels are ordered to one another in such a way that no misunderstandings or disagreements can occur among them. The philosophical anarchist who proposes the ideal of a human society without restraint or coercion seems, therefore, to be angelicizing men, or at least to be wishing for heaven on earth. Conceiving government on earth in other terms, the writers of *The Federalist* remark that "if men were angels, no government would be necessary." If they had considered that the angelic society is governed by love alone and without force, they might have said,

"if men were angels, no coercion would be necessary in their government."

ONE OF THE GREAT theological dogmas asserts that, from the beginning, the angels are divided into two hosts—the good and evil spirits. The sin of Lucifer, or Satan, and his followers is that of disobedience, or rebellion against God, motivated by a pride which refuses to be satisfied with being less than God. As Satan himself says, in *Paradise Lost*,

... pride and worse Ambition threw me down
Warring in Heav'n against Heav'ns matchless King.
... All his good prov'd ill in me,
And wrought but malice; lifted up so high
I 'sdeind subjection, and thought one step higher
Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
The debt immense of endless gratitude . . .
. And that word
Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
Among the spirits beneath, whom I seduc'd
With other promises and other vaunts
Then to submit, boasting I could subdue
Th' Omnipotent.

The theologians try to define precisely the nature of Satan's pride in wishing to be God. "To be as God," Aquinas explains, "can be understood in two ways: first, by equality; secondly, by likeness. An angel could not seek to be as God in the first way, because by natural knowledge he knew that this was impossible . . . And even supposing it were possible, it would be against natural desire, because there exists in everything the natural desire to preserve its own nature which would not be preserved were it to be changed into another nature. Consequently, no creature of a lower nature can ever covet the grade of a higher nature, just as an ass does not desire to be a horse."

It must be in the other way, then, Aquinas thinks, that Satan sinned by wishing to be like God. But this requires further explanation. "To desire to be as God according to likeness can happen in two ways. In one way, as to that likeness whereby everything is likened unto God. And so, if anyone desire in this way to be Godlike, he commits no sin; provided that he desires such likeness in proper order, that is to say, that he may obtain it from God. But he would sin were he to desire to be like God

even in the right way, but of his own power, and not of God's. In another way, he may desire to be like God in some respect which is not natural to one; e.g., if one were to desire to create heaven and earth, which is proper to God, in which desire there would be sin."

In this last way, Aquinas asserts, "the devil desired to be as God. Not that he desired to resemble God by being subject to no one else absolutely, for thus he would be desiring his own non-being, since no creature can exist except by participating under God." But he "desired as the last end of his beatitude something which he could attain by virtue of his own nature, turning his appetite away from the supernatural beatitude which is attained by God's grace."

In the original sin of Lucifer and the other fallen angels, as well as in all subsequent intervention by Satan or his demons in the affairs of men, lie the theological mysteries of the origin of evil in a world created by God's love and goodness, and of the liberty of those creatures who, while free, can only do God's will. As indicated in the chapter on SIN, the fall of Adam from grace and innocence involves the same mysteries. Man's destiny is connected with the career of Lucifer in traditional Christian teaching, not only on the side of sin, but also with regard to man's redemption—salvation replacing the fallen angels by the souls of the elect in the heavenly choir.

Among the most extraordinary moments in our literature are those in which Lucifer talks with God about mankind, as in *Paradise Lost*; or about a particular man, as in the Book of Job or in the Prologue in Heaven in *Faust*. Their pagan parallel is the speech of Prometheus to a silent Zeus, but Prometheus, unlike Satan, is man's benefactor and he can defy Zeus because the Fates, whose secret he knows, rule over the gods. Lucifer, on the contrary, seems always to be in the service of God. When he appears to Ivan in *The Brothers Karamazov*, he protests, "I love men genuinely . . . and against the grain I serve to produce events and do what is irrational because I am commanded to." If it were otherwise, the warfare between the powers of light and darkness would have to be construed as a battle

between equals, which, according to Christian orthodoxy, is the Manichaeian heresy that regards the world as the battleground of the forces of good and evil.

The word "angelic" usually has the connotation of perfect moral goodness, but that must not lead us to forget that the demons are angelic in their nature although of a diabolical or evil will. Nor should the fact of Satan's subservience to God cause us to forget that Christian theology tries not to underestimate the power of the devil in his goings and comings on earth. Satan tried to tempt even Christ, and throughout the New Testament the destruction of the diabolic influence over men occupies a prominent place. The intervention of the devil in man's life provides, if not the theme, the background of Goethe's *Faust*.

As the theory of demonic influence and diabolic possession is an integral part of the traditional doctrine of angels, so, in modern times, demonology has been a major focus of attack upon theological teaching concerning

spirits. Moralists have thought it possible to explain human depravity without recourse to the seductions of the devil, and psychiatrists have thought it possible for men to go mad or to behave as if bewitched without the help of evil spirits. The idea of the devil, according to Freud, is a religious fiction—"the best way out in acquittal of God" for those who try "to reconcile the undeniable existence . . . of evil with His omnipotence and supreme goodness."

The characteristic skepticism of our age has been directed against the belief in angels generally. It casts doubt by satire or denies by argument the existence of spirits both good and evil. Yet, all arguments considered, it may be wondered whether the existence of angels—or, in philosophical terms, the existence of pure intelligences—is or is not still a genuine issue. Or are there two issues here, one philosophical and the other theological, one to be resolved or left unresolved on the level of argument, the other to be answered dogmatically by the declarations of a religious faith?