

AQUINAS ON GUARDIANSHIP OF ANGELS AS AN EXECUTION OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the perspective of Saint Thomas Aquinas on the guardianship of angels over human persons. It appears conflicting if we are endowed with free will and yet guardian angels are assigned to us. How are we free if they simply move us to do their bidding? Humans can choose what is good for themselves, and they know how to since they are naturally aware of natural law. Furthermore, all that God created He governs by his providence, which includes mortals, of what use are the guardianship of the angels, if God who is omnipotent and infinitely more potent than the angels is already guarding us, the guardianship of inferior creatures in the person of the angels seems superfluous. Aquinas maintained that we are guarded by the angels without our will being violated. For this paper, the analytical and critical methods of inquiry were patronized.

Keywords: God, Angels, Guardianship, Divine Providence, Humans, Angelic Hierarchy.

Introduction

It seems to be difficult to identify the role of the angels in the salvific mission of Christ. Among the early Christians down to the medieval times and even now among contemporary believers. Finding the balance seems to be an issue. An instance of this confusion is visible in the letter to the Hebrews, “We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment” (Heb. 2:1-2). From this passage, there is an admonition to be attentive to the guardianship of the angels for neglecting their guardianship will amount to punishment. Such an admonition might necessitate one to give top veneration to the angels. But in the same chapter of Hebrews it says, “It is not to angels that He has subjected the world to

come, about which we are speaking” (Heb. 2:5). Now we are further told that the world is not under their subjection, meaning it is subjected to someone else, and further in this chapter Christ is identified. This puts the Christian in confusion about where to place the angels concerning Christ in terms of divine providence (Stuckenbruck 1995).

There were heretical teachings among the early Christians that Paul also addressed vehemently in his epistle to the Colossians (Arnold 1996): “Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you” (Col. 2:18), he demonstrated the supremacy of Christ and the creator of the angels when he said:

“The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him, all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things; in him, all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is beginning and the firstborn from among the dead so that in everything he might have the supremacy” (Col. 1:15-19).

Though there is a big gap between the early Christians who worship the angels and the time of Aquinas, in his teaching on divine providence, his thought on angelic guardianship is a contribution to the work done by early Christian apologists. In this essay, we will discuss the nature of divine providence, and structure of divine providence and the role of the angels. We will achieve this objective by analysing the divine providence, the relationship between the angels, the angels' mission in accomplishing the salvific mission of Christ, their guardianship of other material creatures, and the assault of the sinner angels.

Divine Providence

Understanding Divine Providence

Aquinas sees the very name, God, to mean “providence”, “to watch over”, and “to contemplate and consider” not as a spectator but as a provider (ST, I, q.13, a.8, co.; Div. Nom., c.12; PG III, c.969). Aquinas draws his definition of providence from Boethius’ book *De Consolatione Philosophiae* “*ratio ordinis rerum in finem*” which means “the intelligent scheme for the ordering of things to their end” (ST, I, q.22, a.1, co.). Obviously inclusive, this definition can be used to describe both divine and human providence. Another definition of providence from Aquinas is “*ipsa divina ratio in summo omnium principe constituta quae cuncta disponit*” which means “the heavenly ideal scheme set by the universe's supreme Ruler, by which He arranges everything” (ST, I, q.22, a.1, co.).

Later on, Aquinas adds to the already given definitions when he says “*Ratio autem alieuius fiendi in mente auctoris existens est quaedam praeexistentia rei fiendi in eo*” meaning “the reason of the other's becoming existing in the mind of the author is a kind of pre-existence of things to be done in it”. Aquinas consequently aims to establish a prior existence of the universe's order in the Mind and Will of God by demonstrating Providence. It could be considered God's purposeful presence in the world in this way. The Ruler of the world is present to it by His knowledge of all His creation and His intelligent disposition of them to their ultimate end, just as the Master of a house is present to the entirety of the house by his knowledge of all his assets and his clever disposition of them. It would be more accurate to state that Providence is the universe's existence in God's knowledge and love, just as His Government of the world is God's presence in the world through His essence and power, given that knowledge and intellectual disposition are His immanent activities.

To further understand divine providence, it is fitting to distinguish it from human providence. Human providence is prudence concerned with planning and organizing future events in light of past experiences and the knowledge of the present (ST, I, q.22, a.1, co.; II-II, q.49, a.6, co.). It suggests that both the mind and the will are engaged in activities that involve seeking out and choosing the most effective means for achieving the desired results. It is therefore claimed to imply a deliberative, adjudicative, and imperial rectitude without which there can be no accurate orientation to the purpose (ST, I, q.22, a.1, ad.1; II-II, q.49, a.6, ad.3). In the situation of Divine Providence, we ought to resist the urge to attribute to God any temporal attributes. On the level of the created beings, the relations between creatures are present, past, and future. They are meaningless in the context of the Transcendent God who is the Originator of all time but Who Himself is outside of succession and time in the enigmatic divine dimension of His *tota simul* of eternity. God need not remember the past or has to predict the future. His attitude is *presens ad praesens* toward everything.

Evidence of Divine Providence

Aquinas begins tracing the proof of divine providence from created entities, owing to the reality that the substances of all created being are good though not absolutely, which necessitates them moving towards the betterment of their good. This movement is ordered by God, and all things move towards God who is the ultimate good. Aquinas says:

“For every good thing that exists in things was created by God. Good is found in things, not only as regards the substance of things but also as regards the order of them towards the end, especially the ultimate end which is divine goodness. This is, therefore, a good order in which the existing things were created by God” (ST, I, q.22, a.1, co.).

Aquinas on Guardianship of Angels as an Execution of Divine Providence

“But when God is the cause of things through his understanding, and so for any effect of its own, a reason must pre-exist in it...; it is necessary that the system of the order of things should end in pre-exists in the divine mind. Now the reason for ordering to the end is proper providence” (ST, I, q.22, a.1, co.).

The finality things evoked is not any specific physical or biological finality (although it is obvious that the physical and biological are integrated on their level into the cosmic order), but rather the metaphysical finality of all creatures, individually and collectively, to the ultimate end of the universe which is the Divine Goodness. In a previous article, Aquinas addressed the question of whether all things are good by the goodness of God (*utrum omnia sint bona bonitate divina*). In that article, he provided a concise summary of his personal synthesis of Aristotle and Plato, rejecting Aristotle's subsistent forms and the doctrine of participation for the universals and accepting Plato's Subsistent Being as unquestionably true. The Supreme Source of existence and goodness is said to as the effective, illustrative, and ultimate cause of all being as a necessary complement to this notion of participation or imperfect assimilation. The entirety of Aquinas' metaphysics is encapsulated in this consequence. God is the efficient cause of all existence; He is the ultimate cause; He is the term, the Good to which all existence aspires through assimilation and imitation of His infinite Perfection, and this is the order of the universe (*ordo universi*); as an exemplary cause, He must know and will that participation of His Perfection which is integrated into the evolution of the universe to its ultimate end (ST, I, q.6, a.4, co.). Aquinas frequently uses the Neoplatonic metaphor of the emanation and return of all things from God, their First Source, to God, their Last End, to describe this universal order. However, a metaphysics of free creation displaces paganism's notions of inevitable emanation, and the return occurs when the Divine Will and Design are fulfilled rather than through absorption in the Absolute (de Finance 1950).

Attributes of Divine Providence

Firstly, Aquinas believed that God's Providence had to be both universal and specific because of His Divine Causality. Every agent acts to forward a goal, and the structure of effects only reaches the goal since the first agent's causation does. However, God, the first actor, extends his causality to all entities, not only in terms of individual principles but also in terms of species-level principles, including both corruptible and incorruptible beings. Because of this, all they possess, in whatever form, must be directed by God toward their goal. Everything is necessary in proportion to how much it shares the fact that it is, in the interim, subject to divine providence since nothing else in the universe is of God's providence other than the reason for the order of things to the end (ST, I, q.22, a.2, co.). Since creation participates in an order of being that is transcendentally

dependent on the Absolute, every created being is inevitably relative by its participation (Van 1946). It is significant to notice that Aquinas believes that this particular Providence is not a matter of faith but rather of reason. Philosophers could be excused for not demonstrating the temporal origin of the creation, but he calls any intellectual denial of an individual providence "dumb" (ST, I, q.23. a.2, co.). Only by faith and miracles was Philo able to discover a unique, distinct Providence (Wolfson 1948). Lalande divides Providence into a specific, peculiar, supernatural Providence and a universal, natural Providence, which would be carried out by natural law and the laws of nature (Lalande 1938). The metaphysics of Divine Causality and Participation, according to Aquinas, leads to a Providence that is both universal and unique.

Secondly, God is directly responsible for the universal order of created beings. This is against the backdrop of those who hold the contrary. The Arabs' doctrine of successive emanations and creations and Gregory of Nyssa's explanation of Plato's triple Providence, which holds that the First Cause immediately provides for the separated substances in general lines of species and universal causes throughout the world, is the doctrine of simultaneous emanations and creations and opposing all these ideas that constrained God's causality and, as a result, his interest and providence over the world and where the separated substances, in turn, have providence over the individual generations and corruptions through the movement of the heavenly bodies. The implementation of an intelligent organization of the world's occurrences and the arrangement itself must be distinguished, according to Aquinas. Providence relates immediately to God and not to lower intellectual beings as postulated by the Arabs and creation is wholly God's. An essential result of God's infinite knowledge of everything, His transcendent perfection, and His immediate creation is the immediateness of Divine Providence. The concept of successive and mediating creations proposed a purely intermediary Providence (ST, I, q.22, a.3, co.; q.103, a.6, co.).

Thirdly is the infallibility of divine providence, granted that Divine Providence is universal and singular and that God Himself immediately arranges the order of the universe - i.e., the subordination of all material things to the service of man and the ordination of mortals to their ultimate end, the question now arises about the infallibility of this Providence. Does Divine Providence, from a natural and metaphysical perspective, indicate just that creatures are directed toward their ends with the means to achieve them, or does it also imply that their ends are achieved? If mortals are truly free, it would appear that God has abandoned them to pursue their goals on their own and that Providence is not infallible and of itself, because it depends on man to be successful. Aquinas thought that divine providence is infallible. Nothing can occur outside of the divine government's plan

since God is the universal first cause—not only of one kind of being but of all beings (ST, I, q.103, a.7, co.).

The Two Aspects of Divine Providence

Divine providence has two aspects to it, the legislative aspect and the executive aspect. This is the nature of divine governance. The design of divine governance of all things is immediately characteristic of God. This is because everything must be assigned to God in the purest form of goodness. After all, God is the very essence of goodness. The highest degree of goodness in any practical order, design, or knowledge—and this is how the government is designed—consists in knowing the people being acted upon, just as the best doctor is not the one who can only pay attention to general principles but who can also take into account the minutest details, and so on in other domains. Therefore, we must assert that God has a plan for the governance of everything, not only the smallest things. The executive aspect is the carrying out of the designed divine governmental plan and this is done immediately by God concerning some while by delegation or mediation concerning others. Since the government has to make things it governs perfect, the better this government will be the more perfect the things it governs become. Being good in and of itself is a good quality, but being good in and of itself and the cause of goodness in others is a greater perfection. God, like a teacher who not only imparts knowledge to his students but also bestows upon them the ability to teach others, regulates things in such a way that some of them become the causes of others in government (ST, I, q.22, a.3, co.; q.103, a.6, co.). The intermediate governance of things is delegated by God to the angels, as Aquinas stated, the angels are good because God has moved them to Himself but still better, He reveals to them how they can move humans to God and this is the foundation of angelic guardianship. Now that we have understood divine governance, we will now focus on the nature of divine providence through the angels.

Angelic Guardianship of Lower Angels

To begin the discussion of angelic guardianship, it seems necessary to reiterate the connection between divine providence and the guardianship provided by the angels. Divine providence means God's governance of all created entities, He governs by immediately legislating the principles for the movement of creatures toward their end, while in executing these principles He has enacted, He does so immediately and also through intermediary means by using the angels. So, angelic guardianship is an execution of divine providence. Also worth noting is that Aquinas used angelic guardianship by limiting it to the guidance these celestial beings offer humans to save them from danger, while the governmental administration of superior angels to inferior angels Aquinas

referred to it as illumination. But in this article, the executive activities of the divine providence by the angels concerning their fellow angels and celestials to humans will all be referred to as angelic guardianship.

Angelic Illumination of Lower Angels

To understand what our author means under this subheading, we should make recourse to Dionysius, who thought that there is a hierarchy in the order of the angels, this order is manifested in three tiers with three choirs in each of the tiers. The choirs of the angels in the first order are superior to those of the second and third and those of the second are superior to those of the third order (Coel. Hier. VI.164). The choirs in the first order of the hierarchy are the Seraphim, the Cherubim and the Thrones, these are the nearest to God (Coel. Hier. VI.164). The second order in the hierarchy has the Powers, the Virtues, and the Dominions, who are the middle-class angels, and the third order of angels are the Principalities, the Archangels, and the Angels (Coel. Hier. VI.165).

For Aquinas, the angels of the second order are governed by the angels of the first order and those of the second order govern the third order hierarchy of angels. This angelic guardianship of lower intellectual beings is possible for two reasons. Firstly, the superior power of their intellect and this superiority is manifested in the receptive capacity of the higher angels to contain more truth in the likeness of greater divine activities than the inferior angels (Reinhardt 2008). Therefore, the highest order of the hierarchy guards the middle class against the contemplation of the truth and the middle-class guards the lowest order of the hierarchy from the truth (ST, I, q.106, a.1, co.). Secondly, the likeness to the understood (God), the nature of the enlightenment received from God by the first order of the angelic hierarchy is in a universal form, these angels comprehend the eternal truth in the highest possible form for created entities to comprehend the truth in its universality (De Veritate, q.9, a.1, ad.3.). This is the likeness they share with that which they understood. They in turn guard the lower angels to the comprehension of the truth in a lesser universal manner best fitting to the receptive power of their intellect (ST, I, q.106, a.1, co.).

All the celestial angels contemplate the essence of God without one guarding the other. The guardianship is expressed in the extent to which the lower angels can reach save with the assistance of higher angels (ST, I, q.106, a.1, ad.1). The angelic guardianship of other angels should not lead to confusion as God is very much the ultimate One governing the angels by creating them in His image and secondly, He is their ultimate end, in this instance, God is immediately and solely involved but in the leading of the angels to higher truth, He uses intermediaries (ST, I, q. 106, a. 1, ad. 3.). All the blessed angels receive their enlightenment from God (Sent. II. dist. 11, q.2, a.4, co). This enlightenment is

threefold: nature, grace and glory, angelic guardianship strengthen the enlightened nature of the lower angels, which necessitates the increment in the grace they receive and the greater the graces they receive, the higher their blessedness (ST, I, q.106, a.1, ad.2.).

The angels are creatures with willpower bestowed on them by God (ST, I, q.59, a.1, co.). The object of the will is good, and will is appetitive power, so: will gravitate to its object as the appetitive power. The movement of their will towards God is an aspect of angelic providence. The will of these intelligent creatures is moved in two ways, firstly, the superior angels move the will of the inferior angels in an accidental manner, which occurs by way of persuasion. In this instance, the will is moved by the object of the will which is good, the superior angels make this good more desirable to the inferior angels and the good propels their will to itself just as an appetizer strengthens the appetite. It is in this instance that the superior angels guard the inferior concerning the will. Secondly, the will of the angels is essentially moved only by God who bestowed on them the power of the will and influences the inclination of their will. God alone can change the inclination of the will and determine the gravitation of the angelic will (ST, I, q.106, a.2, co.).

The higher celestial entities guard their lower counterparts by curing their intellect of nescience while God cleanses their intellect of its defects and make them reach their ultimate end (ST, I, q.106, a.2, ad.1). As regards the will, which is moved accidentally by the superior angels, the Seraphim who are chiefly tasked with the responsibility of enkindling as indicated by their name (Coel. Hier. VII.), give heat to or persuade the wills of the angels to move (ST, I, q.106, a.2, ad.2). This is the order of the execution of divine providence that God moves the highest hierarchy of angels and they, in turn, cause the movement of lower angels to God. The reverse is never the case as the lower hierarchy of spiritual beings does not guard superior angels to God (ST, I, q.106, a.3, co.). For Aquinas says:

Therefore, whoever causes someone to perform an act of life, for example, to act well, to know, to will, to love, can be called his father. [...] And therefore, since among the angels one illuminates another, makes him more perfect and purifies him - and these are hierarchical acts - it is manifest that one angel is the father of another, as the master is the father of his disciple (Gilles 2005).

Good in itself very nature communicates, it expresses itself to its subordinates. The greater the good, the better the communication of itself. God is the ultimate good, He communicates Himself to the superior angels in the best possible way. As possessors of divine good, superior angels guard inferior angels in the communication of that which they have been graciously blessed with not by reserving certain truths to themselves, but

they give unreservedly to the inferior angels yet they comprehend more the essence of God not by restriction of certain truths but by most excellent reception of the knowledge gifted to them by God, just as a teacher comprehend more than a student that which the student has been taught by the teacher. The superiority of that which the guardian and the guarded is in the mode of the possession of the truth, the guardian possesses the truth in a universal mode while the guarded possesses the truth in particularity, by particularity we do not simply mean singularity but eminence to the truth, the guardian is more in eminent possession of the truth than the guarded (ST, I, q.106, a.3, ad.1). To illustrate further, Peter Lombard thought that guardian of the lower angels understood the mystery of the incarnation fully before the guarded angels did, not that the inferior angels did not know the mystery, but their less eminence to the mystery necessitated that they should arrive at the fullness of the truth of the incarnation only after it had been fulfilled though they had prior to the fulfilment been guarded to the truth of the incarnation mystery (Sent. II, D, XI, ST, I, q.106, a.3, ad.2). Thomas contends that while all angels had knowledge of the truth (*substantia facti*) of the incarnation and passion (the knowledge of the "secret of Christ's humanity") from the beginning, they did not have knowledge of the circumstances, timeline, and boundaries of this mystery (Sent II. 11, q.2, a.4, co). The inferior angels are yet still guarded. The guardian angels of the guarded angels govern not in a singular or ended angelic providence but yet continuously until the day of the final judgment, this is so due to the mystery of the salvation of the elect is still being revealed by God to the superior angels, who in turn guard to lower angels to the truth of the salvation of the elect (ST, I, q.106, a.3, ad.3). So, this is what Jesus meant when He said: "But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son [in His humanity], but the Father alone" (Matt. 24:36). Therefore, the guardian angels of mortals are themselves guarded on how to guard humans. This will necessarily lead us to the conclusion that angelic guardianship of humans does not end in this world, but continues even in heaven as the saints continue to be guarded regarding the mystery of the final judgment just as all other angels are guarded.

The Method of the Angelic Guardianship of Lower Angels

By this subheading, we mean the medium of communicating the truth to the inferior angels. The intelligible truth that the superior angels communicate resides in the intellect of angels habitually, actually, and relationally. By habitually our author means the storage of the truth in their memory, by actually he means the contemplation of the truth, and by relationally it means the passing on of the knowledge to the lower angels. Through the will of the higher-created incorporeal entities, they command the intelligible objects in their memories which they conceive to be made known to the lower spiritual beings (ST, I, q.107, a.1, co.). The angels' knowledge is not immediately made known to the inferior

angels else there will be no guardianship (Goris 2003). Their knowledge is hidden in their will, and only in the event of the will relationally communicating the intended intelligible object are the inferior angels illuminated of the truth to be communicated (ST, I, q.107, a.1, ad.1). The angels make no use of voiced words, signs or gestures to communicate, for humans, their knowledge is hidden in their will and when the will intends to communicate the intelligible object, it is further hidden behind the body, therefore, the body is needed to communicate the knowledge in the forms of sounds, signs, and gestures but this is nonapplicable to the angels who are spirits (Jacques and Raïssa 1983) so their knowledge is solely protected in their will (ST, I, q. 107, a. 1, ad.2). Therefore, neither guardianship nor simple angelic communication can deal with those things that are a part of the natural knowledge that all angels get as a result of God's creative gift (De Veritate, q.9, a.1, ad.9).

Angels are in a determinate locality of operation, which they perfectly contain as Damascene argued (De Fide Orth. I.13), what this implies is that only a single angel is in a terrain of operation. When there is the need for further information to be communicated to the angels on a mission in various places, distance in no way impedes angelic guardianship as angelic governance transcends the “here and now” or place and time of the location of the mission (ST, I, q.107, a.4, co.). This is possible based on the reality that the intelligible truth meant to be related dwells in the superior angel who guards. Geographical distance does not impede the vision of one angel to the other, therefore, the inferior angel sees his guardian angel, and he sees also the truth meant to be communicated to him (ST, I, q.107, a.4, ad.1). Angelic guardianship of the inferior angels are marked by certain signs that symbolize to the guarded the magnitude and the intensity of the message related. For example, when Isaiah says “And they [Seraphim] were calling [crying] to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isa. 6:3), the words calling or crying are an expression of the importance of the content of the object of communication (ST, I, q.107, a.4, ad.2).

The guardianship of one inferior angel is not the guardianship of all inferior angels. Having argued earlier that the intelligible object of the superior angel is given in mentorship to the mentee angel, in a relational manner, having been freed by the obstacle of the will that prevents its access to all mentee angels and mentors angels alike, the relational possession of this object does not avail access to all incorporeal beings superior or inferior angels alike rather the will that grants this access, grant it relationally by limiting it to only the mentee or when necessary to an intended number of angels. So, other superior angels do not know what is communicated to the mentee angel neither do other lower angels know what was communicated to the intended mentee (ST, I, q.107, a.5, co.).

The Governmental Structure of Angelic Guardianship of Inferior Angels

The governmental structure of angelic guardianship is sectioned into three levels. The reason for the triple levels and not less or more is rooted in the reality that most created things have a beginning, a midway, and an end (ST, I, q.108, a.2, co.). So, also this celestial structure which is founded on the dissemination of truth is multiplied making the intelligible object structured into the elite class, middle class, and lower class. The intelligible object is multiplied due to the reason that the more universal a thing is, the more oneness it possesses. The ultimate oneness of the truth is God in its supreme universality. In the superior angels, the intelligible object dwells in them not as in their nature as it is in God, but as a gift from God which they possess therefore, the truth is less universal in comparison to God but most universal in comparison to all other created intelligent beings. The lower angels as already mentioned earlier possess the truth in particulars and by particular it means this intelligible object is multiplied, the lower the angel the more multiplied the intelligible object is, or the less universal it is and whatever is in numbers has a beginning, middle and end. This is the reason why there are three orders in the governmental structure of the guardianship of higher angels over the lower angels.

The angelic society has all intelligible things in common, although some things are held more excellently by some than by others. Each gift is more perfectly owned by the one who can guard than by the one who cannot or guard in a lesser manner, just as a hot object that can share heat is more perfect than one that cannot. And the greater grade an angelic person holds, the better he is at communicating his gift, just as he is in a higher grade of mastery when he can instruct in higher science. Using this analogy, we can calculate the various grades or ranks among the angels, according to their roles and deeds (ST, I, q.108, a.2, ad.2.).

This structure of governance is established by God in two ways, firstly, by His natural gifts to the angels, this is the creation of the angels who have intellect and will be gifted to them all commonly yet the powers gifted them have varying degrees of power enabling to love and know

God with their natural powers. Secondly, the varying degrees of angelic powers make some receive more of God's gratuitous gifts than others because of their receptive capacities (ST, I, q.108, a.4, co.). In the highest hierarchy are the orders of Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones (Coel. Hier. VII). The middle hierarchy is the orders of Dominions, Virtues, and Powers (Coel. Hier. VIII). The third hierarchy of orders is Principalities, Archangels, and Angels (Coel. Hier. IX). This governmental hierarchy will not outlast Judgment Day in a certain way and will also outlast it in a certain way. Concerning the superior angels giving enlightenment to the lower angels regarding the

salvation of the human race, that will come to an end but concerning the nature of their receptive capacity of the grace of God, that will stay (ST, I, q.108, a.7, co.).

Humans in heaven will get into the hierarchy of angels. Men cannot be assumed to be members of the angelic orders when solely taken into account in terms of their level of nature, as the natural distinction will always exist. Some said that because of this difference, saints can't achieve equality with angels. However, this claim is false because it contradicts Christ's promise that the children of the resurrection will have the same status as angels in heaven (Luke 20:36). Because what comes from nature is the physical component of an order, what perfects come from grace, which depends on God's generosity rather than on the natural order. As a result, via the gift of grace, mortals can merit glory to the point where they are on par with angels in all angelic grades. This suggests that men are raised to the orders of angels. However, some claim that only virgins or the perfect are admitted into the angelic orders, and the rest will form their order that, in a sense, corresponds to the entire angelic society. But Augustine asserts that "there will not be two societies of mankind and angels, but only one (De Civ. Dei XII, 9.); for the beatitude of all is to belong to God alone." This goes against what Augustine states (ST, I, q.108, a.8, co.). A lower angel cannot climb up the ladder of the angelic hierarchy owing to the reality that the measure of grace they receive equates to the rank they occupy but this does not apply to humans, therefore, a saint in heaven can be in the superior hierarchy of angels.

Demonic Assault of Lower Demons

Though the topic in view is angelic guardianship as an execution of divine providence, it begs the imagination to inquire about the relationship between fallen angels having already seen the relationship between the blessed angels. Even though this does not immediately fall under the current discussion, it is related to it because even among the sinner angels there are naturally higher devils assaulting lower devils which defines their relationship. God also uses the assault among themselves and their assaults on humans to fulfil His divine providence in some ways.

The Order of Assault among Sinner Angels

One might ask, how is there order among the demons and not a disorder? This is a result of the fact that God created them well. Grace has two colourations, the natural nature gifted to them by God, and the illuminating grace they lost. All angels were created in grace, though this grace of nature is imperfect (ST, I, q.62, a.3, co.). Therefore, before their fall, they were already in the angelic hierarchy based on the natural grace they

received from God, even after their apostasy, this natural grace remains and this accounts for the reason why there is a hierarchy among the rebellious angels (ST, I, q.109, a.1, co.). The ordering which is also considered a holy principle can be attributed to the demons based on the fact that God also uses them to fulfil His holy purposes (ST, I, q.109, a.1, ad.2). Though there is a hierarchy among them, the names of Seraphim and Cherubim or the other names are not given to the sinner angels because these names oppose their corrupted natures (ST, I, q.109, a.1, ad.3).

The use of the term “demonic assault” is because the action of a thing corresponds to the nature and powers of the subject of the action. Where nature or powers are superior, there is a superiority of actions that necessarily created an order ranging from the superior to the inferior. So, there is a precedence of assault, not guardianship in the case of devils whereby the actions of the inferior angels are subordinate to the will of the superior demons. A second reason is credited to God who created order out of chaos, though they sinned, their sin did not corrupt the natural grace God has given them which is the foundation of the order of hierarchy among them (ST, I, q.109, a.2, co.). This hierarchy does not stem from demonic justice in the city of these devils but from the justice of God (ST, I, q.109, a.2, ad.1.). There is a natural priority among demons because they are not naturally equal, which is not the case with mankind who are normally equal though not in terms of powers. The fact that the superior is in charge of the inferior is not to their advantage, but rather to their harm because, given that doing evil is inherently miserable, it follows that being in charge of evil is even unhappier (ST, I, q.109, a.2, ad.3).

Among the devils, there cannot, strictly speaking, be enlightenment. Because true illumination is the manifestation of the truth concerning God, Who illuminates every intellect (ST, I, q. 107, a.2, co.). Speech, such as when one angel communicates his idea to another angel, is another way the truth might be manifested. One demon cannot enlighten another because of the demon's perversity, which instead leads people away from God's rule. However, one demon can communicate his mental idea to another through speech and this communication is a form of assault. A body abounding in light can enlighten a body deficient in light, just as the sun enlightens the moon. However, not all manifestations of the truth are enlightenment. As a result, the participation of natural light is abundant with superior demons. Therefore, it appears that somewhat figuratively speaking, the higher demons can illuminate the inferior (ST, I, q.109, a.3, ad.2).

The blessed angels have precedence over all orders of the devils, even the lowest glorious angel in angelic nature can direct the actions of the superior fallen angel in angelic nature because the entire hierarchy of prominence originates with God and is shared by all creatures in proportion to their proximity to God. Because more flawless and divinely close entities influence other beings. Given that demons lack the highest perfection and

that which takes them closest to God, which belongs to creatures who enjoy God, such as holy angels, the good angels have priority over the wicked, and these are dominated by them (ST, I, q.109, a.4, co.). When divine justice necessitates the demons to act in any way for the punishment of the evil or the trial of the virtuous, the holy angels reveal a great deal about divine mysteries to the evil angels, much like how judges' assessors reveal their verdict to the executioners in human matters. If compared to the angelic guardianship, this revelation can be referred to as enlightenment because they direct it toward God; nevertheless, it is not an illumination on the part of the demons because they direct it away from God and toward the accomplishment of their wickedness (ST, I, q.109, a.4, ad.1). Demons may be naturally superior, yet an angel who is lower in the natural order presides over them because the force of Divine justice, to which the good angels cleave, is greater than the natural power of the angels. Aristotle claims that "the virtuous man is the rule and measure of all human activities" (Ethic. III, 4; X, 5) and that "the spiritual man judges all things" (1 Cor. 2:15).

Angelic Guardianship Of Humans

Human understanding and affection for tasks at hand can vary and err in numerous ways from what is good, necessitating the assignment of angels to watch over humans to control them and steer them toward what is right (ST, I, q.113, a.1, co.). Humans need the guardianship of the angels for these reasons, firstly, man can avoid evil to a certain extent through free will, but not to a significant extent because of his weak affinity for good due to the various soul appetites. Secondly, similar to how the universal natural understanding of the law, which belongs to humans by nature, helps guide them in the right direction to some extent, but not sufficient because when it comes to applying the universal principles of law to specific activities, man is imperfect in many ways (ST, I, q.113, a.1. ad.1).

God is the ultimate guardian who assists the inclination of our will towards the good immediately by the gifts of His grace and virtues but as regards the methods for the application of universal principles to particulars, He employs the medium of the angels (ST, I, q.113, a.1. ad.2). The angels are not liable for the loss of the guarded not because the guardian is incompetent or negligent but because of a sinful passion, just as men turn away from their moral compass, so they also turn away from the good angels' inspiration, which happens covertly when they educate man so that he may do what is right. Because of this, it is not the fault of angels that people die; rather, it is the fault of human evil (ST, I, q.113, a.1, ad.2).

Guardian angels were not assigned to us after the fall of man but even before the fall. Though part of the guardian angels' job is to protect us from ourselves by making us avoid internal discord, our first parents were assigned guardian angels simply because though they initially had internal harmony, they were faced with exterior threats (ST, I, q.113, a.4, ad.2). Also it seems useless if Divine Wisdom knows someone will end up being damned to be assigned a guardian angel because he will be damned anyway. Yet they are assigned guardian angels anyway for their protection of them from the assault of themselves that will result in the harm of others and further, they are not assaulted as the demons would have liked (ST, I, q.113, a.4, ad.3).

Aquinas thought that to one person one guardian angel is assigned. Not one angel to several persons because God assigns one angel to the species of other corporeal things but for the dignity and importance of the human person, one angel should be assigned to one man. Again, one angel is assigned to one human person because it relates more to things internal in man than things external to him (ST, I, q.113, a.2, ad.1). It is the duty of the lowest angels to guard humans for the more universal an angelic being is, the higher his guardianship functions, as such, Archangels are tasked with a more universal task like the annunciation of Christ incarnation, the Virtues are responsible for corporeal things, the Powers responsible for the coercing of the demons likewise the Principalities (ST, I, q.113, a.3, co.). Each man is assigned a guardian angel because as Psalm 141:4 says, the journey is littered with dangers and snares waiting to devour man and this journey is a personal race, therefore, each person needs an angel as a wayfarer companion and as the end of the journey if he arrives in heaven, he no longer needs a guardian per se but an angel to reign with but if he arrives in hell, he is assigned a demon to punish him (ST, I, q.113, a.4, co.). Resulting of this discussion it should not be supposed that Christ had a guardian angel superior to Him because His divine nature as the Word of God was immediately available for the guardianship of His human nature but as regards the passible body, He had angels minister to Him, not as His superiors but inferiors as it is said: "the angels came to minister to Him" (Matt. 4:11) (ST, I, q.113, a.4, ad.1).

Angels are not hurt by transgressions or the suffering endured by humans. According to Augustine, anguish and sorrow are caused by events that happen against our volition (*De Civ. Dei* XIV.15). However, nothing in the world happens against the will of the angels and the saints since their will is completely subordinate to the Divine justice's governing principles. In contrast, nothing in the world occurs unless it is caused or sanctioned by Divine justice. Simply said, nothing in the world happens against the will of the angels and the saints. This is universally speaking, it is the will of God for no one to suffer and if they have to suffer it is for the person to be saved, therefore one may say they suffer and

grieve in a particular situation only as an expression of their happiness universally speaking (ST, I, q.113, a.7, co.).

Guardian angels are not only assigned to Christians but to all, they are not assigned at baptism but at birth, for at conception and while the mother is still pregnant the tie is not entirely severed so, one angel guards the mother and the unborn baby (ST, I, q.113, a.5, co.; ST, I, q.113, a.5, ad.3). They are not assigned because one is a Christian but because one is a spiritual substance. Part of the purpose of guardianship is to bring about knowledge through their instruction. However, it also has many additional effects that are typical of children, such as the ability to ward off demons and protect against the harm that is both physical and spiritual (ST, I, q.113, a.4, ad.2). Once assigned to a person, they do not entirely withdraw or forsake the guarded. Just as God is said to forsake (Ps. 21:2), God does not entirely forsake anyone, to be entirely forsaken by God means to be out of being, but being is a participation in the life of God, therefore, to be forsaken by God means God allowed some punishment or suffering for the good of the person. In like manner, the guardian angel is said to forsake the guarded only to allow the person to be punished following divine command delivered to them (ST, I, q.113, a.6, co.).

Angelic Guardianship of the Human Intellect and Will

We have established already that according to divine providence, the inferior turn to the superior for enlightenment (ST, I, q.109, a.2, co.). Men, who are inferior to angels, are enlightened by them in the same way that lower angels are enlightened by superiors. Angelic guardianship has duo functionalities which are the empowering of the human intellect by the angels and the making of intelligible species available within the grasp of humans. This occurs in angels when they divide their omniscient conception of reality into portions appropriate for mankind's mind. However, because of its inherent need to understand through the use of phantasms, the human intellect is unable to comprehend the universal truth as it has been revealed. According to Dionysius "The divine ray can't shine on us, other than cloaked by the multiplicity of the sacred veils," (Coel. Hier. I.) the angels, therefore, present the understandable truth to humans under the analogies of sensible things. However, the operation of the angelic intellect strengthens the human intellect, which is inferior. And an angel enlightens man in these two ways (ST, I, q.111, a.1, co.).

The angels guard us to faith, for Aquinas, we arrive at faith first, by the knowledge of the articles of faith which aligns with Paul's letter to the Romans 10:17, and this the angels do reveal to us, and in James 2:14-26, James says that faith without work is dead, they also teach the actions that accompany faith. This is the role they play. Secondly, faith is a gift

from God because of the intellectual practice whereby one is inclined to submit to a volition that tends toward divine truth. Because the intellect submits to the truth of faith under the direction of the will rather than being persuaded by reason, Augustine said that only willing believers believe. In this way, faith is solely a gift from God (ST, I, q.111, a.1, ad.1).

The human will is another aspect of angelic guardianship. The human will be changed by God and the subject who wills strictly speaking. The act of moving the will is nothing more than moving toward the object of the will, and God is solely responsible for this inclination towards the object of the will. He gives the intellectual nature the ability to have such a predisposition. Because just as God alone is responsible for causing nature's inclination, so too is God responsible for the will's inclination. The angels move the human will in this manner by the passion found in the sensitive appetite; as a result, the will is prone to want something when it is concupiscent or enraged. The angels can raise these passions in this way by enticing the will with its object, but the will is not compelled to do so because the will is always free to agree with or reject the passion (ST, I, q.111, a.2, co.). In like manner, the devils do not have the power to change our wills from within since the act of the cogitative faculty is controlled by the will, the devil cannot force thoughts into our minds from within. Nevertheless, the devil is known as the kindler of thoughts because he stimulates thought by making us want the things we are thinking about, by persuading us, or by igniting our passions. Damascene refers to this kindling as "a putting in" because it involves internal action. However, even though they might be obtained through the assistance of angels, positive ideas are attributed to a higher principle, namely God (ST, I, q.111, a.2, ad.2.).

Angelic Guardianship of the Human Imagination and Bodily Senses

Imagination arises from phantasies which are motions resulting from the sense in the act. The human imagination can be a source of angelic guardianship for this reason, everything that can be caused by the local movement of material is subject to the angels' natural might because corporeal nature obeys the angel in this regard. To explain further, Aquinas resulted in Aristotle's explanation of the imaginative influences from the cause of visions in a dream. When describing the origin of dreams, it is said that "when an animal sleeps, the blood descends in ample supply to the sensitive principle, and movements flow down with it," (De Insomniis III) meaning that the impressions made by the animal's movements are "moved" by the sensitive principle and give the appearance that the sensitive principle is subsequently being altered by the external objects. The disturbance of the spirits and humour may be so intense that such appearances may even occur to those who are awake, as is the case with people who are insane and similar individuals. So too can the same be accomplished through the power of good or bad

angels, sometimes with or without alienation from the physical senses (ST, I, q.111, a.3, co.). An angel protects the imagination, but not by imbuing it with an imaginative form that was never before perceived by the senses (because he cannot make a blind person perceive colour humour), but rather by the regional movement of the spirits and humour, as was previously mentioned (ST, I, q.111, a.3, ad.2). When an angel causes an imaginative vision, he may also enlighten the intellect so that it understands what the images mean and there is no deception. However, there are situations when heavenly intervention just causes things to appear similar in the mind; in these instances, the flaw is in the person's intellect rather than the angel being to be blamed for the deception for the blessed angels do not deceive (ST, I, q.111, a.3, ad.4). The senses' action is the foundational idea of imagination. Because, just as a blind person cannot imagine colours, neither can angels affect our imagination with information that is not available to our senses. This is because we cannot imagine anything that we have never fully or partially experienced through our senses. But occasionally, the imagination is so well-informed that the act of the creative movement is prompted by the impressions held within (ST, I, q.111, a.3, ad.1).

The angels guard us also with the influencing of our bodily senses when the angels struck the people of Sodom with blindness (Gen. 19:11). For our author, the bodily senses can be influenced externally and internally. Externally by sensible objects presenting themselves to the senses, someone singing is sensible to the ears of the listener and, internally, fever could cause a poor taste sensation to the tongue of the sick person. Either way, the angel with its natural powers can influence our bodily senses, which also implies that since with their natural powers, the bodily senses can be influenced, the evil angels can likewise manipulate the bodily senses to their evil schemes. An angel can affect the actions of the nutritive power, as well as the appetitive and sensitive power and any other power using a corporeal organ, through the internal movement of the spirits and humour (ST, I, q.111, a.4, ad.2). An angel can produce a change in the senses outside the usual mode of nature in some unique ways. An angel cannot do anything outside the complete order of created nature, but he can do outside of some specific natural orders because he is not subject to those orders (ST, I, q.111, a.4, ad.3.).

Angelic Participation in the Salvific Mission of Christ

The mission is being in a place where the person was not or changing the end goal if the emissary is already there for the sake of executing the senders or self-sent plans. Christ or the Holy Spirit is said to be sent not to mean they are not omnipresent, but to mean the incarnation of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit respectively. About the angels, who are not omnipresent beings, they are finite in location, therefore, as a specific

agent, an angel cannot reach the entirety of the cosmos; instead, he can reach one thing in a manner not available to another, and as a result, he is not both "here" and "there" at the same time. As a result, anytime an angel has a task to complete involving a corporeal being, he uses his power to apply himself once more to that body, starting over. All of this happens under the divine order. Therefore, it follows that God sends an angel. However, the action carried out by the dispatched angel is returned to God as its ultimate goal since it is derived from God as its fundamental source—the same God who commands and has authority over all angels. This is what is meant by a guardian since a guardian is an intelligent instrument, as opposed to an unintelligible instrument that is controlled by another and directed to perform in a certain way. Angels are therefore considered to be sent to minister because of their deeds, which are referred to as "guardianship" (ST, I, q.112, a.1, co.).

The angels are ministering spirits primarily to God their creator and secondarily to us as spiritual substances meant to cleave to God with them as fellow citizens of God's city. Their guardianship is an act of charity leading us to God just as Paul said "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Rom. 15:1) (ST, I, q.112, a.1, ad.4). The angels lose nothing when they leave heaven to guard us by executing certain roles in the salvific mission of Christ. It makes sense to assign the higher substance to a nature that ranks above bodies, the empyrean heaven is a congruous attribute of angelic dignity. An angel, however, does not draw his dignity from the empyrean heaven; as a result, nothing of his dignity is lost when he is not literally in the empyrean heaven, just as a king does not lose any of his dignity when he is not seated on his regal throne, which suits his majesty (ST, I, q.112, a.1, ad.2).

Based on the rule of divine providence as we have already discussed, the superior directs the inferior and based on that rule, the inferior angels are primarily assigned to guard human affairs back to God. The divine endowments determine the order of the angels. As the order of nature is ignored for grace, the order of grace currently has no order above itself that it should be ignored. Similarly, it can be shown that nature's order is ignored when miracles are performed to strengthen faith; this aim wouldn't be strengthened if the angelic order were ignored as we are unable to discern it. Additionally, the Divine Ministries are limited to what the lower orders are capable of. Gregory writes "those who announce the highest things are termed archangels" (Hom. XXXIV in Evang.). The archangel Gabriel was sent to the Virgin Mary because this was the greatest of all Divine missions. Aquinas unanimously declared with Dionysius that we must state categorically that higher angels are never assigned to the external ministry (Coel. Hier. XIII; ST, I, q.112, a.2, co.). But in some respect, all angels are sent. When the mission pertains only to corporeal and external things alone, only the inferior are sent but with regards to the

spiritual renewal of the guarded, superior angels are sent in the sense that, the final angel delivering the message received his enlightenment from superior angels (ST, I, q.112, a.2, ad.1). Aquinas clarified even further influenced by Dionysius on this point some confusion regarding Isaiah 6:6-7 where a Seraph purified the lips of the prophet. The Seraphim are the highest order of angels and if they had a direct mission to carry out, it seems to be at loggerhead with what he is arguing. The inferior border of angels sent to cleanse the prophet's lips was termed a "Seraph," which is euphemistically translated as "kindling," because that is what he did when he came. It is also possible to say that the inferior angels' work serves as a conduit via which the superior angels convey the correct gifts by which they are known. As a result, one of the Seraphim is supposed to have purified the prophet's lips with fire—not directly, but via the power of a lesser angel, just as the Pope is claimed to have absolved someone through the intermediary of another (ST, I, q.112, a.3, co.).

There is another vital matter to be distinguished in the mission of the angels. The mission carried out by the superior angels can be differentiated from those carried out by the inferior angels. The inferior angels are sent but cannot assist the guarded but when the superior angels are sent (in the instance when superior angels are sent, as we have already discussed), they also can assist the guarded for to assist, the angels need to behold the Divine Essence immediately and that is gifted only to the superior angels, that is why only them can assist (ST, I, q.112, a.3, ad.2).

For further clarity, it is fitting to mention the order of angels responsible for the guarding of human affairs. The Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones are not immediately involved because as their names indicate, they are detached from such external duties likewise the Dominions, in the second hierarchy, just as their name indicates, Dominions relay the commands they have received to the Virtues and Powers, that means that the order of angels immediately concerns with the ministry of human guardianship are Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels and angels. The angels are therefore grouped as the assistant angels (superior angels) and ministering angels (guardian angels) (ST, I, q.112, a.4, co.). Aquinas also touched on the number of angels. The number of the ministry angels is said to be more because the farther a thing is from the universal substance which is one, the more in number it is. While the assisting angels are said to be more because the nearer a thing is to its ultimate perfection which is God, the better it is, and God who is perfect created better things (ST, I, q.112, a.4, ad.2).

Angelic Guardianship of Corporeal Creatures

Corporeal creatures are guarded by the angels, in this instance, it is not that they are feared to be lost if not guarded, but it is the principle of the universal power governing particular powers that is applicable here. As previously mentioned, the superior angels who rule over the inferior have a more encompassing understanding (ST, I, q. 55. a.3, co; I, q. 108, a.1, co.). Now it is clear that the power of any particular body is more specific than the power of any spiritual element. This is because every corporeal body is an immaterial form, whereas material forms are absolute and understandable. As a result, just as the superior angels oversee the inferior angels, who have the less universal forms, so do angels rule over all that is corporeal. Not only the holy doctors but all philosophers who accept the presence of incorporeal objects have established this (ST, I, q. 110, a. 1, co.). Corporeal entities have predetermined behaviours, but they only employ these predetermined actions when they are moved because it is a characteristic of a body to not act without being moved. Therefore, an angelic creature must move a corporeal creature (ST, I, q. 110, a. 1, ad.1.).

Some church doctors argued in line with the reason already mentioned. The devil was one of the angelic powers that oversaw the terrestrial order, according to Damascene (*De Fide Orth.* II.4.); according to Origen (*Num.* 22:23), "when the ass saw the angel," "the world needs angels who preside over beasts, and over the birth of animals, and trees, and plants, and the increase of all other things" (*Hom.* XIV in *Num.*). The reason for this, however, is to be found in the order of Divine wisdom, Which appoints various rulers over various things. An angel is not better suited by nature to govern over animals than over plants; each angel, even the least, has a higher and more general authority than any form of corporeal thing. The existence of more than nine orders of angels does not follow either (ST, I, q. 108, a.2, co.), because the orders are distinguished by their general offices. Gregory, therefore, claims that all angels whose job it is to rule over demons are of the "powers" order, while those angels who rule over merely corporeal creatures appear to belong to the "virtues" order because sometimes miracles are worked through their intercession.

Angelic guardianship of created material things is not to be misconstrued for miracles. For Aquinas defined a miracle as when something is accomplished outside of the laws of nature, it is considered to be a miracle. However, if something is done outside the grain of a certain nature, it does not qualify as a miracle. Therefore, a miracle must be outside the natural order of all that has been created. But only God is capable of doing this because anything an angel or other creature does on their own will follows the laws of nature as it was intended to be, and is therefore not a miracle. So, miracles can only be performed by God (ST, I, q. 110, a.4, co.). Some angels are said to perform miracles, either because

God performs them at their request, similar to how holy men are said to perform miracles, or because they engage in some form of ministry in connection with the miracles that occur, such as gathering the dust during the general resurrection or by acting on that nature. Although angels can act in ways that go against the laws of corporeal nature, they cannot perform the kind of miracle that requires action outside of all of creation (ST, I, q. 110, a. 4, ad.1).

According to Aristotle, the motions of the celestial bodies are moved by angelic entities, the quantity of which he attempted to determine following the apparent motions of the celestial bodies. However, he did not claim that any angelic entities had direct control over the inferior bodies, except human souls. This is because he did not believe that any operations took place in the inferior bodies other than natural ones for which the motion of the heavenly bodies was sufficient (Metaph. XI, 8). However, because we contend that many other activities take place in the lower bodies in addition to natural corporeal functions for which the movements of the astronomical objects are insufficient, we must contend that the angels have immediate presidency over both the heavenly bodies and the inferior bodies (ST, I, q. 110, a. 1, ad.2).

As already mentioned above, the angels are mere guardians of corporeal beings but not the cause or creation of these beings. Now it is obvious that what is generated, insofar as every agent that creates it does so similarly, is like the maker. Therefore, anything that creates natural things bears a resemblance to the composite; either because it is the composite itself, as when fire produces more fire, or because the entire "composite" as regards both substance and form is within its power; and this is God's alone. Therefore, all information about matter comes directly from God or a physical source; it does not come directly from an angel (ST, I, q. 110, a. 2, co.). This argument is Aquinas' response to some philosophers who argued the contrary. Because the material forms are believed to be the participation of immaterial forms, Plato said that the immaterial forms cause the forms that matter (Phaedo. XLIX: Tim. (Did.) vol. II, p. 218). However, as Aristotle demonstrates what is formed is the "composite," since this is what exists. In contrast, the form is referred to as a being, not as something that is, but rather as something by which something is; as a result, neither is a form, strictly speaking, formed, as that which is made, since to be is nothing more than the path to existence (Metaph. VII, Did. VI, 8). Nothing would stop an angelic force from causing a natural effect that would be impossible for corporeal beings to accomplish. To lessen matter to the act of the substantial form does not outweigh the power of a corporeal agent because it is natural for like to produce like. However, this is not to obey an angel's will (just as matter does not obey the mere will of a cook when he controls the fire according to the prescription of his

art to produce a dish that the blaze could not have produced by itself) (ST, I, q. 110, a. 2, ad.3). Any task that a lesser power can complete, a greater power may complete it more effectively. For instance, the mind has a greater grasp of rational truths than the senses. By influencing the corporeal beings themselves as the superior cause, an angel can therefore alter corporeal matter more effectively than corporeal agents (ST, I, q. 110, a. 2, ad.2).

The guardianship of the angels also involves the movement of corporeal entities locally. This is possible firstly because as Dionysius says "Divine wisdom has joined the ends of the first to the principles of the second". It follows that angelic nature and material nature are complementary at their best. The physical nature is now subordinate to the angelic nature. Local motion, however, is the most ideal of all bodily movements. This line of thought is also in consonance with Aristotle who says that local motion is the most ideal type of bodily movement (Phys. VIII, 7). The angels can make other movements by first generating local motion, or by using physical agents to do so, much like a craftsman might use fire to soften iron (ST, I, q. 110, a.3, ad.2). Unlike the strength of the soul, the power of an angel is not as constrained. As a result, the soul's ability to move other objects through the vivification of its associated body is constrained. However, an angel's power is not restricted to any one person, thus it can move nearby objects that are not attached to it (ST, I, q.110, a.2, ad.3).

Demonic Assault on Humans

We judge it fitting to include in this essay how devils attempt to sabotage the ministerial work of the angels concerning human salvation. The demons' attack can be divided into two components the actual attack and how it is orchestrated. The attack itself is the result of the devils' malice, who use jealousy and pride to steal a semblance of divine power by sending particular sham ministers to attack people while God's angels serve people in various capacities for their salvation. However, God is the one who has ordered the attack since He is the only one who can beneficially use evil. On the other hand, God is to be credited as the original author of both the angels' guardianship and their organizational structure (ST, I, q.114, a.1, co.). The evil angels attack humans in two ways: first, by encouraging them to sin; as a result, God does not send them to do so; and second, by occasionally allowing them to assault us following God's righteous punishments. But occasionally they attack as a kind of retaliation against a person, in which case they are sent by God, like when the lying spirit was dispatched to punish Achab, King of Israel (1 Kg. 22:20). God is cited as the originator of that punishment. However, the demons sent to punish have a different purpose than the one for which they were sent; they punish out of enmity or envy, but God sent them because He is just (ST, I, q.114, a.1, ad.1).

The devils assault us by using our weaknesses against us. To know our weaknesses, they initial trials. A trial is necessary for them to learn more about something; hence knowledge is always the direct result of temptation. But occasionally, a different end—either good or bad—is sought to be attained through that knowledge; a good end, for example, when one wants to know about someone's knowledge or moral character to advance him; a bad end, when that knowledge is pursued to mislead or ruin him. However, the devil constantly tempts people to sin to hurt them. In this sense, it is argued that tempting others is his appropriate job, for when a man tempts someone in this way, he is acting as the devil's deputy (ST, I, q.114, a.2, co.). As we have discussed trial is chiefly about ascertaining knowledge and the wicked angels are not omniscient, they are aware of what transpires among people on the outside, but only God, who is the "weigher of spirits," is aware of how people are on the inside (Proverbs 16:2). Man is more susceptible to one vice than another due to this inclination, therefore the devil tempts people to understand their inner selves and tempt them toward the vice to which they are most susceptible (ST, I, q.114, a.2, ad.2).

Having discussed trial as a means used by the wicked spirits to attack humans, the use of wonders and miracles is another tool used by them. If we define a miracle strictly, neither devils nor any other creature — other than God — can perform miracles since, in the strict sense, a miracle is an act performed outside the established order of all of creation, within which every creature's power is contained. However, miracles can occasionally be interpreted broadly to include everything that defies human understanding and ability. Demons are therefore capable of performing miracles—i.e., feats that astound man—because they are outside of human control and knowledge (ST, I, q.114, a.4, co.; De Civ. Dei XX.19). The miracles of the devils are not true miracles as the ones performed by the Egyptian magicians against Moses. Aquinas gives two reasons to support his argument that the apostate angels perform deception not a true transformation of corporeal bodies. Firstly, interior deception, a demon can manipulate a person's imagination or even physical senses to make something appear different than it is. This is occasionally possible thanks to the strength of some bodies. Secondly, in exterior deception, they can dress any corporeal item in any corporeal form so that it seems there, just as they create a body of any shape and size out of the air and suppose it to appear there visibly (ST, I, q.114, a.4, ad.2; De Civ. Dei XVIII, 18).

Aquinas also addressed the duration of a demonic assault on a person. He quoted Chrysostom to explain the duration "the devil does not tempt man for just as long as he likes, but for as long as God allows; for although He allows him to tempt for a short time, He orders him off on account of our weakness." (Super Matt. Hom. V). He also

paraphrased Ambrose saying "The devil runs from repeated defeat because he is scared of persevering." Matthew 12:44 makes it clear that the devil does occasionally resume the attack: "I'm going back home to where I came from" (ST, I, q.114, a.5, co.).

Conclusion

We can make some inferences from our discussion of Aquinas' ideas after going into great depth about his views on the guardianship of angels. First and foremost, God has immediate authority over all living things. He is the legislator of divine providence, the chief executive officer with angels serving as subordinates to carry out His will, and the ultimate judge of what is best for the divine plan, making Him the judiciary of divine providence. He is the only one who designates the angels to carry out divine providence.

Secondly, His government is structured from the superior angels to the inferior angels, and illumination flows from top to bottom. The angels are full of knowledge but not omniscient, therefore, they do not know all about their mission of guarding for God in His wisdom reveals to them that which is needed for the time being, that is why the inferior angels asked "Who is the king of glory?" and the superior angels answered having received from God the appropriate response "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle" (Psa. 28:8).

Thirdly, at the end of the journey of mortals on earth and if they arrive in heaven, they are not of a different city from that of the angels. The saints join the ranks of the angels. While inferior angels have no chance of ascending on the hierarchical ladder, humans through the grace of God can, therefore, humans can be in the order of any of the nine choirs of angels, which implies that a saint in the order of the Seraphim has a chance of enlightening an inferior angel, a saint can be the guardian of an angel in heaven. Also, our current guardian angels do not guard us after we arrive in heaven but rather reign with us in the beatific vision. If one is lost, the lost person is delivered to a wicked angel in hell for punishment. The angelic guardianship of mortals began at the creation of humans and will end on the Day of Judgment, while in terms of individuals, angelic guardianship starts at the birth of the child and ends at the death of the person.

Fourthly, the hierarchical orders saddled with the responsibility of guardianship are the orders of Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. All corporeal things are guarded by angels in groups of species but humans are guarded individually, therefore, all humans have guardian angels assigned to them by God, except Christ who is God, His human nature is immediately guarded by His divine nature, this is because angels cannot guard that which is superior to them let alone guard Christ who is infinitely superior to them, yet they minister to Him as inferiors. In their guardianship duties, the angels can use

our imagination within us or without us by using external objects but are limited to the information available to our imagination through our phantasies. While executing their functions they can work miracles but in a loose sense of the concept of a miracle.

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