

ANGELS AND DEMONS ACCORDING
TO LACTANTIUS

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JOHANNES QUASTEN

*Professor of Ancient Church History and Christian Archaeology
Catholic University of America*

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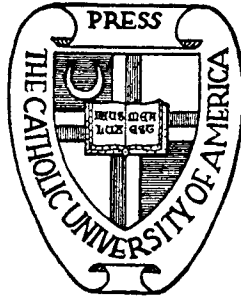
ANGELS AND DEMONS ACCORDING TO LACTANTIUS

BY

EMIL SCHNEWEIS, O. F. M. CAP.

A DISSERTATION

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TO MY
FATHER AND MOTHER

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present work is to make a study of the views of Lactantius on angels and demons. Various studies have been made concerning the angelology and demonology of the Fathers and Ecclesiastical writers. The period of the Greek Apologists has been ably and succinctly treated in the work of F. Andres.¹ This same writer also examined the writings of Clement of Alexandria,² Augustine's works³ and those of Gregory the Great⁴ have been studied to yield what light they give concerning these writers' expressions on the angels. Most of the other writers of the early centuries have received some attention but it has been in a general way, so that much remains to be done in this particular field.

In studying the works of Lactantius special attention was paid to the cultural background from which he viewed the subject. This gives us a greater insight and understanding of his views, which otherwise might appear strange or even strained. The work is readily divided into angelology and demonology. Each of these parts is developed along parallel lines by studying, first, the reality or existence, secondly, the nature, and thirdly, the activity of each of these classes of beings.

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¹F. Andres, *Die Engellehre der griechischen Apologeten des zweiten Jahrhunderts*, Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte XII, Paderborn, 1914.

²F. Andres, "Die Engel- und Dämonenlehre des Klemens von Alexandrien" *Römische Quartalschrift* XXXIV, 13-27; 129-140; 307-329.

³K. Pelz, *Die Engellehre des hl. Augustinus*, Münster, Wien, 1913.

⁴L. Kurz, *Gregors des Grossen Lehre von den Engeln*, Rome, 1938.

directing this dissertation. He, likewise, wishes to thank his Capuchin Superiors of the Province of St. Joseph for the opportunity of higher studies, the Capuchin Friars of the Province of St. Augustine for their kind hospitality at Capuchin College, Brookland, Washington, D. C., the Faculty of the School of Sacred Theology, the other members of the staff of the Catholic University of America for the many services rendered during the period of graduate study at this same university.

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EXPLANATION OF ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Antike und Christentum
CE	Catholic Encyclopedia
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DACL	Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie
DThC	Dictionnaire de théologie catholique
FlP	Florilegium Patristicum
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte
Hastings, Dict.	Hastings, J., Dictionary of the Bible
Hastings, Encyc.	Hastings, J., Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics
JHS	Journal of Hellenic Studies
LQF	Liturgiegeschichtliche Quellen und Forschungen
LThK	Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche
OP	Funk, Opera Patrum Apostolicorum
Pauly-Wissowa	Realencyklopädie der Klassischen Altertumswissenschaft
PG	Migne, Patres Graeci
PL	Migne, Patres Latini
RB	Revue Biblique
RHLR	Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuse
RSPT	Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques
RT	Revue thomiste
RQ	Römische Quartalschrift
StML	Stimmen aus Maria Laach
StZ	Stimmen der Zeit
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen.

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PART I.
ANGELOLOGY OF LACTANTIUS

CHAPTER I

THE REALITY OF THE ANGELS

1.

The Notion of the Angels

Like nearly all the rest of the Fathers and Ecclesiastical Writers of the early centuries, Lactantius did not devote a special treatise to the angels. As far as we know, Clement of Alexandria is the only one who had such a treatise in mind, but even of him we have no certainty that he ever wrote it.¹ Lactantius' views and convictions on the angels are scattered throughout the several of his works that have come down to us. That he considered the angels of importance is seen from the way he brings them into his writings. He is an apologist, and like the apologists his goal is to convince the pagans of the unicity of God. In such a scheme the angels have a secondary but important place. It is true they are brought into his writings only in relation to that main purpose, but nevertheless this is done in such a way that we can gather the expressions on the angels to form a fairly complete angelology.

In speaking of the angels it was necessary to point out their place very clearly. The pagans could very easily mistake them for lesser gods, especially since many of the gods themselves were viewed as limited in power and subject to a higher God. It is not surprising then that Lactantius should bring the angels forward very early in his writings to establish their place. He has scarcely begun his argumentation that there is only one God when the pagan objection of secondary gods has to be met. The pagans admit that the gods have ministers. Lactantius does not deny this, but he points out that the ministers of God cannot be

¹Clement of Alex., *Stromata* VI, 3 (GCS Clemens 2, 466 Stählin).

called gods, but that they must be called angels. This is the basic notion of the angels: that they are ministers of God. Lactantius appeals to two pagan sources for this. One of them is Seneca: Lactantius uses him to show that God has His ministers: "And that is true what I have before related that Seneca said in his exhortations that God produced ministers of His kingdom. But they are neither gods, nor do they wish to be called gods or worshipped in as much as they do nothing but execute the command and the will of God".² And then Lactantius appeals to Apollo to justify the name of angel, for Apollo speaking of the most high God calls himself a minister (ἄγγελος) of the Most High God,³ consequently "the ministers of God ought not to be called gods but angels".⁴

Lactantius usually speaks of them as *angeli*. They are those beings whom "we call the angels" *quos angelos dicimus*.⁵ The just in heaven shall become like to the angels: *similes angelis effecti*.⁶ Without any other qualification, *angelus* is sufficient to point out the intermediaries between God and man, the ministers whom God created to serve Him. This use of the term *angelus* is in conformity with that of the early and contemporary Christian writers. If any difference existed it is this, that Lactantius uses the term more strictly, as will be pointed out a little later.

²*De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 7, 5 (CSEL 19, 26 Brandt): "Et est illud verum quod dixisse in Exhortationibus Senecam supra rettuli, gemisse regni sui ministros deum. Verum hi neque dii sunt neque deos se vocari aut coli volunt, quippe qui nihil faciant praeter jussum ac voluntatem dei". Cf. E. Lucius (G. Anrich) *Die Anfänge des Heiligenkults in der christlichen Kirche*, Tübingen 1904, p. 13ff.

³*De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 7, 1 (CSEL 19, 25 Brandt): "Apollo enim, quem praeter ceteros divinum maximeque fatidicum existimant, . . . quaerenti cuidam quis aut quid esset omnino deus, respondit. . . αὐτοφύνης ἀδίδακτος ἀμήτωρ ἀστυφέλικτος | οὐνομα μηδὲ λόγφ χωρούμενος, ἐν πυρὶ ναίων, | τοῦτο θεός, μικρὰ δὲ θεοῦ μερίς ἄγγελοι ἡμεῖς."

⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 7, 8 (CSEL 19, 27 Brandt): "Credant Apollini suo. . . tertius enim versus ostendit ministros dei non deos, verum angelos appellari oportere."

⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 7, 2 (CSEL 19, 286 Brandt).

⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 6, 1 (CSEL 19, 603 Brandt).

This itself is remarkable because of the rather unique relationship in which Lactantius stands to pagan writers. We have already seen how he appeals to the responses of Apollo and to a quotation of Seneca to support his argument both that God has ministers and that these ministers must be called angels. Lactantius prefers to use pagan sources wherever he can. He fought paganism as strenuously as the other Fathers and writers have done, but he appeals to pagan testimony much more frequently. Most of the time this is done to make one pagan writer testify against the claims of another, but very often they are also used as his authorities. Pagan and apocryphal writings are sometimes spoken of as sacred writings; this is particularly the case in the Sibylline Oracles and in Hermes Trismegistus.⁷ The Sibylline Oracles alone are cited some seventy-five times using 200 verses of this writing.⁸ Lactantius uses several pagan authors with reference to the angels and the demons. He appeals to Apollo, to Hermes, Socrates, Plato, Seneca, to show that the pagans recognized angels and demons. Although these sources are quite different in their meaning of intermediaries from what Lactantius has in mind,⁹ still he uses them for his own advantage, without paying much attention to the meaning the pagans had attached to the terms angel and demon.

In pagan writings angels are mentioned, but it is doubtful whether there was a distinct being that could be called an angel. Although the term is referred to intermediaries,

⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 6, 6ff (CSEL 19, 20ff Brandt); cf. M. Heinig, *Die Ethik des Lactantius*, Grimma 1887, p. 7; R. Pichon, *Lactance, étude sur le mouvement philosophique et religieux sous le règne de Constantin*, Paris, 1901, p. 79-80; P. Bertold, *Prolegomena zu Laktantius*, Metten, 1902, p. 28ff; K. Prümm, "Das Prophetenamt der Sibyllen in kirchlicher Literatur" *Scholastik* (1929) 54ff.

⁸M. Heinig, *op. cit.* p. 7; P. Bertold, *op. cit.* p. 28ff.

⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 7, 1ff (CSEL 19, 25ff Brandt) cf. note 4; *De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 9 (CSEL 19, 164 Brandt): "Nam Plato etiam naturas eorum in Symposio exprimere conatus est et Socrates esse circa se adsiduum daemona loquebatur, qui puero sibi adhaesisset...".

together with the term demon, very likely, it did not represent a specific underworld being.¹⁰ It is rather the name of a whole class of beings related to the nether-world. The name is assigned to these beings because of the functions they performed as messengers, rather than to name a definite intermediary nature, as the usage of the term in Christian writings restricted the term.

The term *angelus* itself is not a specifically Christian term.¹¹ In its earliest origins it had a meaning different from that which it obtained on its adoption in the Septuagint.¹² It was probably of pagan origin, and when taken into the Septuagint it was restricted to a higher meaning than it had among the pagans. The Jewish concept of a ministering servant of God, a *malach Jahwe* was attached to the ἄγγελος of the Greeks, thereby fixing for themselves a term that had a very complex variety of meanings in the ancient world. Christian writers took both name and the teaching concerning the angels, from the Jews, together with the Christian inheritance from the Old Testament. Without any other qualifications ἄγγελος refers to an intermediary between men and God.¹³ Thus the Christian writers speak of angels without any modifier to signify the good angels and to distinguish them from the *evil* angels or *fallen* angels;¹⁴ only very rarely is the term *angelus* as such referred to both classes of intermediaries: to both the good

¹⁰F. Andres, "Angelos" Pauly-Wissowa III Supplement (1918) 107.

¹¹M. Dibelius, *Die Geisterwelt im Glauben des Paulus*, Göttingen 1909, p. 209-220.

¹²M. Dibelius, *op. cit.* 209ff. W. Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums in späthellenistischem Zeitalter* (Handbuch des Neuen Testaments 21) 3rd ed. Göttingen 1926, p. 320-321.

¹³Justin., *Apol.* II, 7 (Pfaettisch): ἀλλ' ὅτι αὐτεξούσιον τό τε τῶν ἀγγέλων γένος καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός.

¹⁴Justin, *Dial.* 105, 3; cf. *Dial.* 78, 9; F. Andres, *Die Engellehre der griechischen Apologeten des zweiten Jahrhunderts*, (Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte XII) Paderborn, 1914, p. 12-13.

and evil angels.¹⁵ This is never the case in the works of Lactantius.

If we compare the use of the term *angelus* by Lactantius with the pagan usages we shall see several sharply defined differences in the use of the term. In the ancients the term could be used in an earthly sense, in a profane or physical sense to signify messengers. Homer for instance speaks of the coming of the messengers, the *angeloi*, to Thebes.¹⁶ They had various functions and duties; Xenophon says they are sent as representatives.¹⁷ Herodotus gives their character as arbitrators.¹⁸ Their position is honorable¹⁹ and gave them a place among the ancients. Generally, it implied that they were friendly.²⁰ Even the com-

¹⁵Tertullian, *Apologeticum* XXIII (Oehler 106-107): "Porro si et magi phantasmata edunt et jam defunctorum infamant animas si pueros in eloquium oraculi elidunt, si multa miracula circulatoriis praestigiis ludunt, si et somnia immittunt habentes semel invitorum angelorum et daemonum adsistentem sibi potestatem, per quos et caprae et mensae divinare consuerunt, quanto magis ea potestas de suo arbitrio et pro suo negotio studeat totis viribus operari quod alienae praestat negotiationi? Aut si eadem et angeli et daemones operantur quae et dei vestri ubi ergo praecellentia divinitatis, quam utique superiorem omni potestate credendum est?" *De Idololatria* IX (CSEL 20, 38, Reifferscheid-Wissowa): "Unum propono, angelos esse illos desertores dei amatores feminarum, proditores etiam hujus curiositatis, propterea quoque damnatos a Deo. O divina sententia usque ad terram pertinax, cui etiam ignorantes testimonium reddunt! Expelluntur mathematici, sicut angeli eorum. Urbs et Italia interdicatur mathematicis, sicut angelis eorum caelum. Eadem poena est exilii discipulis et magistris.

Tertullian speaks of good and evil angels, but only of evil demons. Cf. *De Anima* I (CSEL 20, 298-299 Reifferscheid-Wissowa); J. Schuemmer, *Die altchristliche Fastenpraxis*, (LQF Heft 27) Münster, 1933, p. 25.

¹⁶*Iliad* V, 803-804: ὅτε τ'ἤλυθε... ἄγγελος ἐς Θήβας.

¹⁷Xenophon, *Hellenica* I, 4, 2: οἱ τε Λακεδαιμονίων πρέσβεις... καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι ἄγγελοι.

¹⁸Herodotus, *History* I, 99: δι' ἄγγέλων πάντα χρᾶσθαι.

¹⁹Cf. above, note 17.

²⁰Xenophon, *Hellenica* VI, 4, 19: ἐπεμψαν (οἱ Θηβαῖοι) ἄγγελον ἑστεφανωμένον, καὶ ἅμα μὲν τῆς νίκης τὸ μέγεθος ἔφραζον, ἅμα δὲ βοηθεῖν ἐκέλευον.

mon messenger of some event of daily life, had a sacred character, so much so that at the time of Homer, Achilles does not dare to vent his anger on the messengers of Agamemnon.²¹ This sacredness of character arose from the fact that the messengers were mediators and links to connect men with their fellows: the desirability of this contact led all to safeguard it instinctively.²² Sometimes, too, the birds were spoken of as messengers of the gods.²³ Homer speaks of the "bird the swift messenger".²⁴ Plutarch calls them "the messengers and the heralds of the gods".²⁵ Xenophon speaks of the gods sending as their messengers, dreams and birds.²⁶

Lactantius does not refer to this usage at all. He uses the term only in the otherworldly sense. Although this usage shows the aptitude of the term to express the functions of the angels, for it points out some of the functions of the angels, it is however, completely insufficient. When Lactantius speaks of earthly messengers he calls them *nuntii*. This latter term is used to refer to the angels in only one passage of his works.²⁷ Otherwise, the simple unmodified *angelus* is reserved for intermediaries and indeed for the good intermediaries alone. Nor is this accidental that this should be the case. Lactantius keeps them clearly distinguished from earthly messengers and from the demons; from the latter very particularly because according

²¹*Iliad* I, 344: *χαίρετε, κήρυκες, Διὸς ἄγγελοι ἠδὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν.*

²²G. Kittel, *Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Stuttgart, 1933, I, 72.

²³cf. G. Kittel, *op. cit.* I, 73.

²⁴*Iliad* XXIV, 299: *αἴτει δ'οἰωνόν, ταχὺν ἄγγελον.*

²⁵*Pyth. Or.* 22, *Θεῶν ἄγγελοι καὶ κέρυκες* [viz. *ἔρωδιοὶ καὶ τρόχιλοι καὶ κόρακες*].

²⁶Xenophon, *Symp.* IV, 48: *Θεοὶ πέμποντες ἀγγέλους φήμας καὶ ἐνύπνια καὶ διωνοῦς.*

²⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 7, 4 (CSEL 19, 26 Brandt): "Sed fortasse quaerit aliquis a nobis idem illud, quod apud Ciceronem quaerit Hortensius, 'Si deus unus est, quae esse beata solitudo queat'. Tamquam nos quia unum dicimus, desertum ac solitarium esse dicamus. Habet enim ministros, quos vocamus nuntios..."

to him, the angels who fell no longer merit the name of angels, since by their fall "they lost both the name and the substance of angels".²⁸

In the otherworldly sense, this strict use of the term angel scarcely leaves more in common between the angels of Lactantius and the intermediaries of the writers to whom he refers than the name itself. Even that may not be overestimated. The ancient writers speak less of angels than of demons. When they use either of the two terms angel or demon, it can refer to one of the gods, to the heroes, or to departed souls. Sometimes the idea behind the demon or angel connotes much of the activity performed by the good angels, but even then the term angel is rarely used. Pagan intermediaries are generally referred to as demons, be they good or evil in character. Thus while there was no distinct pagan angel, there was a distinct pagan demon with a very great influence on the life of the people. Sometimes the *angelus* was used to refer to God Himself. In Homer, *angelos* and *theos* or *daimon* and *theos* are referred to God.²⁹ Again it might mean one of the messengers of the gods: ἄγγελοι τῶν θεῶν. But concerning this usage, Heinze says: "There would be nothing in the way, that as far as the Greeks are concerned demons might not on occasion be called ἄγγελοι τῶν θεῶν, but I find the expression neither before the time of Philo, nor in writers who are not influenced by Judaism".³⁰ Again, the *angelus* might refer to a messenger from the netherworld. Hermes is spoken of as a messenger from the netherworld and his name is joined to

²⁸*Epitome* XXII, 10, (CSEL 19, 695 Brandt): "...et nomen angelorum et substantiam perdidierunt."

²⁹M. Dibelius, *Die Geisterwelt im Glauben des Paulus*, Goettingen, 1909, p. 225; F. Andres, "Daimon", *Pauly-Wissowa*, III Supplement (1918) 282.

³⁰R. Heinze, *Xenokrates*, Leipzig, 1892, p. 1131: "Es stände nichts im Wege, dass schon vorher von griechischer Seite die Dämonen gelegentlich ἄγγελοι τῶν θεῶν genannt worden wären; aber ich finde den Ausdruck weder vor Philo noch auch später in nicht jüdisch-beeinflussten Schriftstellern"; cf. F. Andres, "Daimon", *Pauly-Wissowa* III, Supplement (1918) 108.

that of Hecate the chthonic spirit.³¹ Hecate herself was called an angel and was represented in a female guise, as the *Hecate Enodia* who is to conduct souls to the other world.³² Sometimes these intermediaries were spoken of as good, sometimes as evil. The same being might be good and favorable at one time, and inimical at another.

This extremely varied use of the term *angelus* by the pagans could furnish Lactantius with the ground for rejection of their usage. Lactantius might simply have denied this pagan usage, or have corrected it with a distinction, to show that they had a wrong notion of the good angels, for example, when they spoke of intermediaries as departed souls or heroes. Lactantius prefers to choose a different way. He points out that the angels are ministers of God; they are good beings, holy friends of God. All the pagan intermediaries, gods, lesser gods, heroes and departed souls regarded as intermediaries, no matter how they are spoken of or what functions they perform, are to be classed among the demons, the fallen wicked spirits. Not only this, but Lactantius brings forward his own notion of demon and ascribes it to the pagans themselves, because they speak of them as demons also. In reality however, the notion of the pagans was very different from such a notion, as is evident from what has just been said. For an example of this kind: Hesiod had written that the men of the Golden Age after their death became demons. In that capacity they were the guardians of other men. These demons of Hesiod were departed souls. Hesiod had no notion of a fallen angel, but Lactantius quotes Hesiod to show that the poets knew of the fallen angels, just because Hesiod spoke of these departed souls under the name of demons. Lactantius uses Hesiod as a pagan witness to the fall of the angels.³³ After narrating the fall of the angels, Lactantius cited Hesiod to show that these demons of Hesiod were demons in his own sense of the word: "The poets knew them to be demons and

³¹M. Dibelius, *op. cit.* p. 212.

³²*Ibid.* 212.

³³*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 7 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt).

described them as such. Hesiod says: 'These are the demons according to the will of the great God living on the earth, the guardians of mortal men' ".³⁴ Something similar is the case with regard to the use of angels and demons as synonyms. For the pagan they were frequently interchangeable; not however, for Lactantius. In such a passage where both the names angel and demon are used, Lactantius refers the intermediary to the evil angels and accuses the so-called angel of falsely assuming the name. This is the case in the reference in which Apollo calls himself both angel and demon. In a very arbitrary method of arguing Lactantius accepts the testimony of Apollo as to how the ministers of God must be called, but says Apollo lied when he ascribed this name to himself. As he called himself a demon also, he can only belong to the evil angels: "Apollo, indeed, whom they think divine above all others and especially prophetic . . . to some one who asked, Who and What God is, replied in twenty-one verses of which this is the beginning:

'Self-produced, untaught, without a mother, unshaken,
A name not even to be comprised in word, dwelling in fire,
This is God, and we his messengers (ἄγγελοι) are a slight
portion of God' ".³⁵

And a little later, Apollo in replying to the question how he should be addressed, refers to himself as a demon:

"O all wise, all learned, versed in many pursuits! Hear
O Demon. . . O harmony of the World, bearing light, all-

³⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 7 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt):
"Eos poetae et sciunt esse daemones et locuntur. Hesiodus ita tradit:
τοὶ μὲν δαίμονες εἰσι Διὸς μεγάλου διὰ βουλᾶς | ἑσθλοὶ, ἐπιχθόνιοι,
φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων, . . . quod idcirco dictum est, quoniam custo-
des eos humano generi Deus miserat."

³⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 7, 1ff (CSEL 19, 25 Brandt):
"Apollo enim, quem praeter ceteros divinum maximumque fatidicum
existimant . . . quaerenti cuidam quis aut quid esset omnino deus, re-
spondit viginti et uno versibus quorum hoc principium est: αὐτοφυῆς
ἀδίδακτος ἀμήτωρ ἀστυφέλικτος | οὐνομα μηδὲ λόγῳ χωροῦμενος, ἐν πυρὶ
ναίων, | τοῦτο θεός, μικρὰ δὲ θεοῦ μερὶς ἄγγελοι ἡμεῖς."

wise Demon".³⁶ Lactantius insists, that although Apollo calls himself an angel when he says "And we his messengers (*ἄγγελοι*) are a slight portion of God", that he is just a demon: "Concerning himself, he indeed lied, because being of the number of demons he joined himself to the angels of God".³⁷ Here, likewise, Lactantius substitutes his own notion of demon. He finds confirmation in the words of Apollo himself when the latter says: "The demons who go about the earth and about the sea without weariness are subdued beneath the scourge of God".³⁸ "What therefore remains" Lactantius says, "but that by his own confession, he is subject to the punishment of the true God and to eternal suffering".³⁹

Furthermore, Lactantius was led to keep his views sharply distinct from those found in pagan writers for the reason that the latter represented the same kind of intermediary now as good and again as evil. This is entirely against the concept of the Christian angel as Lactantius knew it. The angels are wholly good. This however, does not exclude the idea that they might be sent to punish men for their misdeeds. But the thought that there could be anything sinister or evil in the angel is excluded. This factor stood out strongly at the time of Lactantius; under the influence of oriental mysteries, intermediaries were being shaded more and more in evil lines, even by the pagans themselves. The mysteries devoted a considerable part of their ritual to the fending off of harmful spirits.

³⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 7, 9 (CSEL 19, 27 Brandt): *πάνσοφε παντοδίδακτε πολύστροφε κέκλυθι δαίμων || ἄρμονίη κόσμιοι, φρασφόρε πάνσοφε δαίμων.*

³⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 7, 9 (CSEL 19, 27 Brandt): "De se quidem ille mentitus est, qui cum sit e numero daemonum, angelis se dei adgregavit. . ."

³⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 7, 10 (CSEL 19, 27 Brandt): *δαίμονες οἱ φοιτῶσι περὶ χθόνα καὶ περὶ πόντον | ἀκαμάτου δαμνῶνται ὑπὸ μάστιγι Θεοῦ.*

³⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus*, I, 7, 10 (CSEL 19, 27 Brandt): "Quid ergo superest nisi ut sua confessione verberibus dei veri ac poenae subjaceat sempiternae?"

The point that Lactantius struggled against most of all was the identification of angels with the gods. Particularly, as the lesser gods were the messengers sent, Lactantius argued they could not be real gods. Their subjection to higher gods, by that very fact robs them of their divinity. He stresses the character of the angels as messengers, but allots them their proper place. They cannot be gods, simply because they are made by God.⁴⁰

This is the attitude of Lactantius to the pagan use of the term angel. His usage of the term demon will be considered later, when speaking of the notion of the demons. Lactantius is in complete contrast to the use of angels by ancient writers among the pagans. Although he wants to stabilize his Christian doctrines with the writings of the pagans, in order to gain a hearing from the pagans, still he does not care to do so in a way that Philo had done: namely, by melting down the differences that existed between philosophy and revelation. For that reason too, their attitude to angels of pagan writers are considerably different. For Philo, the Logos itself is a messenger and is sometimes confused with the angels. Philo speaks of forces which have the angels, demons and souls as servants.⁴¹ Although Lactantius leans strongly towards Subordinationism, he still keeps the angels distinct from the Word.⁴² Whereas of Philo it is said "Where ever in a biblical reference a single angel appears he can be identified with the Logos by Philo. Philo takes the Jewish angelology and brings it into relationship with the Greek Hellenistic demonology".⁴³ Philo

⁴⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 7, passim, (CSEL 19, 25ff Brandt).

⁴¹A. Lemonnyer, "L'air comme séjour des anges d'après Philon d'Alexandrie." *RSPT* I (1907) 304-306; K. Prümm, *Der christliche Glaube und die altheidnische Welt*, Leipzig, 1935, I, 151; J. Lebreton, *The History of the Dogma of the Trinity* (tr. Algar Thorold) New York, 1939, I, 148ff.

⁴²Cf. below, pp. 67-71.

⁴³A. Lemonnyer, *loc. cit.* p. 305; F. Andres, *Die Engellehre der griechischen Apologeten des zweiten Jahrhunderts*, Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte XII, Paderborn, 1914, p. 165; G. Kittel, "Angelos" *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Stuttgart, 1933, I, 74: "Wo also in der biblischen Vorlage

speaks of angels in terms of souls. For him, the heroes of the Greeks are the same as the angels.⁴⁴ Souls, however, are of various kinds; some are mortal, others are immortal. Of the immortal, some live in the air, others live in heaven. Only the last mentioned are essentially good.⁴⁵

Lactantius does not seek to melt down the difference existing between paganism and Christianity. He is deliberately in contrast to that view. He points out the finite and limited character of the angels. Even where he might make concessions he prefers not to do so in order to keep his classes of intermediaries sharply distinct. He could do this despite the fact that he used pagan writers whenever he could, because he does not depend on them alone. Another very important source for Lactantius were the Christian writers of the African Church, whom he followed very closely with regard to the content of his apologetical writing. He was a rhetorician convert and well conversant with pagan writings. His profession implied:

A high degree of familiarity with the entire range of classic letters on the one hand; no less, however, through the essential postulate of mastering the theory of argumentation was it kept in living touch with dialectic and other elements of philosophy whose chief schools then of necessity were familiarly known to the more aspiring members of that profession.⁴⁶

Yet on the other hand, Lactantius did not hesitate to follow Minucius Felix, Tertullian and Cyprian in their apologetical treatises. He agreed with them in teaching, but he said that to him their style or manner of presentation were

ein einzelner Engel auftritt, kann er von Philo mit dem Logos identifiziert werden. Er nimmt nun überhaupt die jüdische Angelologie auf und setzt sie mit der griechisch-hellenistischen Dämonologie in Verbindung. Die Engel und Dämonen werden dargestellt als Kräfte und Bewegungen des Weltalls."

⁴⁴J. Drummond, "Philo", *Hastings Dict.* Extra Vol. p. 200.

⁴⁵A. Lemonnyer, "L'air comme séjour des anges d'après Philon d'Alexandrie" *RSPT I* (1907) 308.

⁴⁶E. G. Sihler, *From Augustus to Augustine*, Cambridge, 1923, p. 167-168.

faulty. Minucius Felix might have been a great defender of the truth, "If he had given himself altogether to that pursuit".⁴⁷ Tertullian was admired for "his skill in literature of every kind, but he had little readiness in eloquence . . . and was obscure".⁴⁸ Cyprian, however, failed to please because Lactantius considered his mystic expressions fit and acceptable to the faithful alone.⁴⁹

Besides calling the intermediaries angels, however different from pagan usages these may be, Lactantius also refers to them with other names. Sometimes this is done in connection with the term angel, as for example when he speaks of them as "the angels whom God generated",⁵⁰ the "angels whom God formed out of His breaths".⁵¹ They are therefore also simply called spirits, they are the *spiritus Dei*, the breaths of God. This elusive but highly interesting expression is a term used to explain their nature and will be met with when treating of their nature.⁵² By means of this expression, spirits of God, they are also brought into relationship with the Word, who is the *spiritus Dei par excellence*. These are points of similarity and differences. The consideration of these would take us far beyond the no-

⁴⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 1, 22 (CSEL 19, 402 Brandt): "Ex iis qui mihi noti sunt Minucius Felix non ignobilis inter causidicos loci fuit. Hujus liber, cui Octavio titulus est, declarat quam idoneus veritatis adsertor esse potuisset, si se totum ad id studium contulisset."

⁴⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 1, 23 (CSEL 19, 402 Brandt): "Septimius quoque Tertullianus fuit omni genere litterarum peritus, sed in eloquendo parum facilis et minus comptus et multum obscurus fuit."

⁴⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 1, 26 (CSEL 19, 402 Brandt): "...hic (Cyprianus) tamen placere ultra verba sacramentum ignorantibus non potest, quoniam mystica sunt quae locutus est et ad id praeparata, ut a solis fidelibus audiantur..."

⁵⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 5, 9 (CSEL 19, 597 Brandt) "Sicut angelos genuit."

⁵¹*Epitome* XXXVII, 3 (CSEL 19, 712 Brandt): "Denique ex omnibus angelis, quos idem Deus de suis spiritibus figuravit..."

⁵²cf. below, pp. 29-41.

tion of the angel; they too must be left to a later treatment.⁵³ Furthermore, there are references to angels as "ministers of so great a power"⁵⁴ and expressions that sound something like Philo's forces, as when Lactantius says that there is "angelic strength and celestial power".⁵⁵ The similarity to Philo however, is hardly more than material, as Lactantius is merely giving descriptive names of the angels thereby. When he speaks of the "heavenly guard"⁵⁶ there is no reference to the angels at all. It refers rather to God's omnipresence clothed in language that reminds one of Plato's accompanying demon.⁵⁷ For Lactantius there is no intermediary in it however.

2.

The Existence of the Angels

In the mind of Lactantius the reality or the existence of the angels is a fact that needs only to be mentioned to be acceptable to all those to whom he addresses his writings. To appreciate this fully it is only necessary to recall the ancient ideas on animism to which the whole system of pagan intermediaries is linked. The ancient writers and the popular beliefs considered the world full of divine forces; gods were given off endlessly.⁵⁸ Anything novel, or even slight-

⁵³cf. below, pp. 67-71.

⁵⁴*De Ira Dei* XXIII, 13 (CSEL 27, 130 Brandt): "Non modo daemones et ministri tantae potestatis, sed et caelum et terra et rerum natura omnis contremescit..."

⁵⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 10, 1 (CSEL 19, 301 Brandt): "...In virtute angeli aut potestate caelesti..."

⁵⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 17, 19, (CSEL 19, 455 Brandt): "Non potest ergo fieri quin hominem justum...caelestis tutela custodiat an non..."

⁵⁷A. C. Pearson, "Demons and Spirits" *Hastings, Encyc.* IV, 593ff.

⁵⁸C. Michel, "Les bons et les mauvais esprits dans les croyances populaires de l'ancienne Grèce" *RHLR* I (1910) 194ff.

ly out of the ordinary was called a god or an intermediary between men and the gods. Sophocles is said to have called a good thought a god,⁵⁹ while so common an occurrence as the finding of a suitable shade tree on a hot day, was due to the benign influence of a god.⁶⁰ In a world so spirit conscious, it is not necessary for Lactantius to set out to prove the existence of the angels. He can simply state it as a fact. It is important however to clarify their position and to explain their nature and the function they perform in the scheme of Divine Providence. Both the existence and the nature of the angels are brought into relationship with the explanations and proofs which Lactantius forges to show the existence of One God and of a Divine Providence.

In such a scheme the angels are a part of the world, just as much as men and the visible world about men are facts and are a part of the world. The pagan's admission of superhuman intermediaries and ministers is a point that pagan and Christian have in common and can serve as a point of departure to explain their dependent nature.

Because of this no special appeal is made to Sacred Scripture to show that they exist. There is only the general reference to: "The prophets and their sacred writings" or "the sacred letters teach us that the Son of God is the Word of God and the rest of the angels are spirits".⁶¹ No specific text is cited; no definite reference is made to the inspired books, but after such a general appeal, Lactantius says: "Let us leave the testimony of the prophets. . . let us come to authors and for the demonstration of the truth cite as witnesses those very persons whom they (pagan writers)

⁵⁹C. Michel, *loc. cit.* p. 195.

⁶⁰C. Michel, *loc. cit.* p. 195, 198; F. Andres, "Daimon", *Pauly-Wissowa*, III Supplement (1918) 271.

⁶¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 8, 6ff (CSEL 19, 296 Brandt): "Sed tamen sanctae litterae docent, in quibus cautum est illum dei filium dei esse sermonem itemque ceteros angelos dei spiritus esse".

are accustomed to make use of against us".⁶² These are the poets and the philosophers from whose works he wishes to establish the central truth that there is but one God and that all the ministers of God are created finite creatures coming from the hand of God.

Because of this method of treatment, it does not occur to him to consider the possibility of knowing the existence of the angels from reason alone. This is an angle of the question he did not treat. He states a principle underlying such a solution and allows us to form a judgment as to what he thought about the subject. Lactantius is spiritualistic in his outlook.⁶³ He minimizes the powers of reason; he has a low regard for anything connected with matter. Spiritual things, such as God or the human soul, and consequently also the angel as intermediary between God and the human soul cannot be known naturally. He says: "But we can never know the nature of heavenly things in any way, because we can never discover anything by thinking".⁶⁴ For the same reason he looks down on the efforts of the philosophers, because philosophy cannot generate certainty. The philosopher can only conjecture.⁶⁵ As far as the Christian

⁶²*De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 5, 1 (CSEL 19, 13 Brandt): "Sed omittamus sane testimonia prophetarum, ne minus idonea probatio videatur esse de his quibus omnino non creditur. Veniamus ad auctores et eos ipsos ad veri probationem testes citemus, quibus contra nos uti solent, poetas dico et philosophos. . . ."

⁶³cf. P. Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne*, Paris 1905, III, 296; J. Tixeront, *History of Dogmas* (tr. by H. L. B.) 2d ed. St. Louis, 1923, I, 415.

⁶⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* III, 10, 13 (CSEL 19, 204 Brandt): "Sed rationem rerum caelestium cognoscere nullo modo possumus, quia nihil eiusmodi potest cogitando inveniri."; P. G. Frotscher, *Des Apologeten Lactantius Verhältnis zur griechischen Philosophie*, Leipzig, 1895, p. 17ff; F. Marbach, *Die Psychologie des F. Lactantius*, Jena, 1889, p. 37ff.

⁶⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* III, 3, 1 (CSEL 19, 181 Brandt): "Duabus rebus videtur philosophia constare, scientia et opinione, nec ulla re alia. Scientia venire ab ingenio non potest, nec cogitatione comprehendi, quia in se ipso habere propriam scientiam non hominis sed dei est"; cf. *Epitome* XXVI, 1 (CSEL 19, 700 Brandt).

is concerned, he need not depend very much on the philosophers since Lactantius thought there was a revelation for everything: "But we, since we have a divine testimony for everything, will assuredly show by how much surer arguments truth may be defended when even false things are so defended that they appear to be true".⁶⁶ God showed His goodness to men in giving them a revelation, in opening their understanding of the truth. This is the reason why Lactantius appeals to authority with such great assurance. He thought that this revelation might also be given to pagans.⁶⁷ Of the philosophers, however, he says: "They might well speak as men of learning, but they could not speak truly, because they had not learned the truth from Him in whose power it was".⁶⁸

From this, in all probability, Lactantius was of a mind to deny the possibility of knowing anything about the angels without a revelation from God. In actual practice, Lactantius as well as the other Christian writers knew of the angels, not from reason, or from the pagans, but from Revelation. Generally some text is cited, some direct testimony is brought from the pages of Holy Writ. Justin appeals to the Psalms, saying: "God has revealed that there are angels and powers in heaven",⁶⁹ whereupon he refers to Psalm 146. Origen naturally speaks very much about the angels in his commentaries on Sacred Scripture. The appeals are made to the belief in angels as a doctrine of the faith: that they are God's caretakers of the world. Lac-

⁶⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* III, I, 12 (CSEL 19, 179 Brandt): "Nos autem cum ad res singulas testimonia divinae vocis habeamus."

⁶⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 6, passim, (CSEL 19, 18 Brandt); P. Bertold, *Prolegomena zu Laktantius*, Metten, 1902, p. 28ff.

⁶⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* III, 1, 14 (CSEL 19, 179 Brandt): "Loqui enim bene potuerunt ut homines eruditi, vere autem loqui nullo modo, quia veritatem non didicerant ab eo qui ejus potens esset."

⁶⁹Justin, *Dialogue* 85, 6 (Archambault II, 58). ἔστιν οὖν ὁ λόγος, δι' οὗ ἐσήμανε τὸν θεὸν δηλοῦν ὅτι καὶ ἄγγελοι εἰσιν ἐν οὐρανῶ καὶ δυνάμεις οὗτος· Αἰνεῖτε τὸν κύριον ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν, αἰνεῖτε αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ὑψίστοις. αἰνεῖτε αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ, αἰνεῖτε αὐτὸν πᾶσαι αἱ δυνάμεις αὐτοῦ.

tantius is an exception to this practice of citing Sacred Scripture, but he does it purposely; he wishes to use those sources that are acceptable to the pagans.

3.

The Time and Purpose of the Creation of the Angels

There is no single definite statement in Lactantius which would permit the formation of an unmistakable judgment concerning the time of the creation of the angels. There are some general indications however. In the *Divine Institutes* the time is mentioned only to the extent that their creation is posterior to the generation of the Son: "God generated an incorruptible spirit whom He calls His Son and although He afterwards had created others whom we call angels, yet only the First-born has the dignity of Sonship".⁷⁰ In the *Epitome* the expression is slightly different. There the indication seems to point to a creation that took place from all eternity, and not merely before the creation of the visible world. There Lactantius says: "God the Creator. . . before He created the world, generated a Son from the fount of His eternity and from His divine and perennial spirit. . . Then from among all the angels whom the same God spirated from His breaths, He chose only Him to be the partner of His supreme power and He was called God."⁷¹ At first sight this would seem to indicate an eternal

⁷⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 6, 1 (CSEL 19, 286 Brandt): "Deus igitur machinator constitutorque rerum, sicut in secundo libro diximus, antequam praeclarum hoc opus mundi adoriretur, sanctum et incorruptibilem spiritum genuit, quem filium nuncuparet. Et quamvis alios postea innumerabiles creavisset, quos angelos dicimus, hunc tamen solum primogenitum divini nominis appellatione dignatus est, patria scilicet virtute ac maiestate pollentem."

⁷¹*Epitome* XXXVII, 1ff (CSEL 19, 712 Brandt): "Deus in principio antequam mundum instituteret, de aeternitatis suae fonte deque divino ac perenni spiritu suo filium sibi ipse progeniuit incorruptum fidelem, virtuti ac maiestati patriae respondentem. . . Denique ex omnibus angelis, quos idem deus de suis spiritibus figuravit, solus in consortium summae potestatis adscitus est, solus deus nuncupatus. . ."

creation of the angels, because the Son is said to be chosen from among the angels to be the Partner of God. However, Lactantius probably thought the Word of God was called the Son of God only in virtue of some act on His part, which might be considered a kind of trial. This subordinates the Word of God to a certain extent. Because of this, the creation of the angels need not be eternal. It follows the generation of the Son, but precedes the elevation of the Word to the dignity of Sonship as Lactantius views it. It is a creation of the angels before the creation of the visible world however.⁷² There is a further reason for this in the statement of Lactantius wherein he wards off the objection that God cannot be one because He could not be happy in His solitude. Lactantius places the objection and then replies to it, that God is not unhappy because He is not alone: "But perhaps some one will ask us the same that Cicero is asked by Hortensius: 'If God is one, how can His solitude be happy' as though we said God is without company and alone because He is one. For God has His ministers whom we call angels".⁷³ It is only a short step from such a view to the other that the creation of the angels took place from all eternity.

It is well to recall that the view of God creating the angels long before the visible world is in harmony with expressions of other writers before the Council of Nicea. Justin places their creation in the cast of a general expression: that God created the angels *in the beginning* τὴν ἀρχὴν.⁷⁴ Origen was under the impression that God could not be idle,

⁷²*Epitome* XXXVII, 1ff (CSEL 19, 712 Brandt); cf. note 71; *De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 6, 1, (CSEL 19, 286 Brandt).

⁷³*De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 7, 4 (CSEL 19, 26 Brandt): "Sed fortasse quaerat aliquis a nobis idem illud, quot apud Ciceronem quaerit Hortensius, 'Si deus unus est, quae esse beata solitudo queat' tamquam nos quia unum dicimus, desertum ac solitarium esse dicamus. Habet enim ministros, quos vocamus nuntios. . ."

The term "angel" is not mentioned in this text, but it is brought in a little later.

⁷⁴Justin, *Apol.*, II, 7, 5; cf. above p. 6, note 13.

that He therefore created worlds and intelligences to guide these worlds from all eternity.⁷⁵ Concerning the angels as such, and their creation, he speaks more reservedly however: "This also is a part of the teaching of the church, that there are certain angels of God and certain good influences, which are His servants in accomplishing the salvation of men. When these however were created or of what nature they are, or how they exist is not clearly stated".⁷⁶

Because of Lactantius' conception of the creative act of God whereby the angel is produced, the question arises whether he thought the angels were produced in one creative act of God or whether this took place in a successive and continued process, as for example some of the Jews thought.⁷⁷ Lactantius however does not consider the question, even though it follows from his manner of speaking of their creation as breaths of God. The way he speaks of the numberlessness of the angels might seem to point that way, but it need not do so. It can be harmonized with either of the two views.

As another aspect of their created condition, Lactantius speaks of the purpose for which God created the angels. Mention has already been made of this from a different angle, viz. that the angels are placed in heaven by Lactantius to ward off the objection of a lonely and deserted and therefore unhappy God. To stress their presence in this relationship will seriously affect his view on the purpose of their existence. In such a view the angel is an eternally

⁷⁵*De Principiis* III, 5, 3 (GCS Origen, V, 273 Koetschau): "Nos vero consequenter respondebimus observantes regulam pietatis et dicentes quoniam non tunc primum, cum visibilem istum mundum fecit Deus, coepit operari, sed sicut post corruptionem hujus erit alius mundus, ita et antequam hic esset, fuisse alios credimus. . ."

⁷⁶*De Principiis*, Praefatio 10 (GCS, Origen, V, 16 Koetschau): "Est etiam illud in ecclesiastica predicatione, esse angelos Dei quosdam et virtutes bonas, qui ei ministrant ad salutem hominum consummandam; sed quando isti creati sint, vel quales aut quomodo sint, non satis in manifesto distinguitur."

⁷⁷G. Kittel, "Angelos" *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Stuttgart, 1933, I, 80; E. Langton, *The Ministries of Angelic Powers*, London, 1934, 135ff.

necessary being. Lactantius indeed places them in the world for this purpose, but he does not go as far as to admit they are necessary in any real sense. God is completely self-sufficient and independent. He is the source of all goodness which He shares with creatures in giving them life and existence.⁷⁸ Besides, to stress the purpose of the angels as the companions of God, is to limit the perfection of God. It is based on a misunderstanding of the true perfection of God and of His essential happiness.

Several purposes are listed for which the angel is created. They are contained in the various functions assigned to the angel. They are all reducible to one function and one purpose: to be the ministers of God: they are created *ad ministerium*.⁷⁹

In speaking of purpose, Lactantius invents a notion of his own, in which he is confused on the true nature of final causality. He restricts the purposiveness of a thing to usefulness or to a benefit which a thing furnishes to something outside of itself: "For nothing as I think", he says, "that was made, was made on its own account, but whatsoever is made, is made for a purpose. For who is so inept or so idle and unconcerned (*otiosus*) as to undertake a work from which no utility is expected".⁸⁰ He goes so far as to say: "It cannot even be said that God made the world for Himself, because He can be without it as He was formerly. . . The purpose of the world, however, is to serve animated creatures".⁸¹ God did not make the world for Himself, because He gets no benefit or utility out of it.

⁷⁸*De Ira Dei*, XI, *passim* (CSEL 26, 94-97 Brandt).

⁷⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 8, 8 (CSEL 19, 296 Brandt).

⁸⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 4, 4 (CSEL 19, 593 Brandt): "Nihil est, ut opinor, quod sit propter se ipsum factum, sed quidquid omnino fit, ad usum aliquem fieri necesse est. Quis est enim vel tam ineptus vel tam otiosus, ut adgrediatur aliquid facere frustra ex quo nullam utilitatem, nullum commodum speret?"

⁸¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 4, 8 (CSEL 19, 594 Brandt): "Sed ne illud quidem dici potest, quod deus propter se ipsum fecerit mundum, quoniam potest esse sine mundo, sicut fuit antea, et iis omnibus quae in eo sunt quaequae generantur deus ipse non utitur. Apparet ergo animantium causa mundum esse constructum. . ."

Applying this general principle to the world of the angels, Lactantius consistently with this notion of final causality places the purpose of the angel completely in service. Service is the utility which the angel is to give, and for which he was created. The service is expressed in several ways: they form the court of heaven;⁸² they adore and praise God; they serve God in the visible world in the manifold functions of Divine government which they execute for God.⁸³ In all this, however, there is no mention of the angel giving God objective glory. All the indications are of a subjective glory. The objective glory is implied somewhat in the way creation itself is spoken of, as a sharing of God's goodness,⁸⁴ but it is not stressed like the subjective glory resulting from the activity of the angels.

4.

Classification of the Angels

Lactantius in speaking of the "spirits of God" distinguishes, the Word of God, then "That other spirit whom God made, but in whom the natural goodness of his origin did not remain" and thirdly, the other spirits or angels.⁸⁵

⁸²*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 6, 1 (CSEL 19, 603-604 Brandt): "Nunc totam rationem brevi circumscriptione signemus. idcirco mundus factus est, ut nascamur: ideo nascimur, ut adgnoscamus factorem mundi ac nostri deum: ideo agnoscimus, ut colamus: ideo colimus, ut immortalitatem pro laborum mercede capiamus, quoniam maximis laboribus cultus dei constat: ideo praemio immortalitatis adficimur, ut similes angelis effecti summo patri ac domino in perpetuum serviamus et simus aeternum deo regnum."

⁸³*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 6 (CSEL 19, 168 Brandt); cf. below, pp. 56-66.

⁸⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 8, 3 (CSEL 19, 129 Brandt): "...ut ab eo bonum tamquam rivus oreretur longaeque profunderet, produxit...".

⁸⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 8, 6 (CSEL 19, 296 Brandt); *Ibid.*, II, 8, 4 (CSEL 19, 129 Brandt): "Deinde fecit alterum, in quo indoles divinae stirpis non permansit".

In this triple mention, only the Word of God and Satan are clearly distinguished, while the angels as a class are left undistinguished. No further mention is made of any classes. Satan is a fallen angel, he is always given a higher place than the rest, but beyond that Lactantius does not go. There are indeed terms like "the angels who dwell in heaven"⁸⁶ and "there are many spirits of angels in heaven",⁸⁷ but these expressions refer to the place rather than to the class of the angels.

The texts of some of the manuscripts of the works of Lactantius have a division into two classes of angels: some of whom were fixed in good, others fallible. Concerning these, Brandt says: "Two kinds of angels were made by God, one incorrupt whom God wishes to have always faithful to Himself, like to the spirit on His right hand and to be His companions. The other class were made corruptible so that when tempted they might become like to the spirit of evil and his ministers".⁸⁸ This dualistic reconstruction of the text, sometimes ascribed to Lactantius, is rejected by the editors of his works.⁸⁹ Lactantius outside of this disputed passage of his works does not revert to a mention of angels made into a class precisely to become fallen angels. He does not distinguish classes clearly enough; in fact he does not mention them beyond distinguishing Satan, the prince of the fallen angels from the rest of the angels.

As there is no way of knowing how far Lactantius may have distinguished the classes of angels, so similarly it is

⁸⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 7, 2 (CSEL 19, 292 Brandt): "Nomen ejus ne angelis quidem notum esse qui morantur in caelo".

⁸⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 5 (CSEL 19, 168 Brandt): "...eo, quod multi sint in caelo spiritus angelorum et unus dominus ac parens omnium Deus. . ."

⁸⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 8, 2 (CSEL 19, 131, note, Brandt): "Duo genera angelorum a deo facta esse, . . . unum incorruptibile eorum quos vellet semper sibi fidem servantes similes esse spiritus illius recti ejusque socios, alterum corruptibile eorum qui facti essent ad id, ut ad peccatum inlecti similes fierent spiritus illius pravi atque ejus satellites."

⁸⁹cf. O. Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Litteratur*, II, 2d ed., Freiburg im Breisgau, 1914, 548.

difficult to find out whether he thought the angel might vary in perfection, by an increase in perfection. Of the human soul, he says that it is possible to increase in knowledge, but that it remains substantially the same.⁹⁰ As the angel is created immortal without any fear of losing this immortality, he is viewed as highly perfect, but the possibility of losing it is not excluded.

In this almost complete absence of classes among the angels, Lactantius differs considerably from the other writers before the Council of Nicea. Usually at least the archangels are mentioned, by reason of the gospel appearances of St. Gabriel, or the care of the church by St. Michael.⁹¹ Lactantius however mentions no choirs, nor individual angels.

Lactantius however says that the angels are innumerable.⁹² Unlike the heathen gods, whose number is countable, the angels as the ministers of God are not countable.

5.

The Habitation of the Angels

A final question connected with the reality of the angels is that of the place where they abide. This always in-

⁹⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 12, 10 (CSEL 19, 620 Brandt): "Mens ergo id est intelligentia vel augetur vel minuitur pro aetate. Anima in statu suo semper est, et ex quo tempore spirandi accipit facultatem, eadem usque ad ultimum durat, donec emissa corporis claustrum ad sedem suam revolet."

⁹¹H. Achelis, *Das Christentum in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, Leipzig, 1912, I, 130ff; J. Quasten, *Monumenta Eucharistica et Liturgica Vetustissima* (FIP Fasc. VII) Bonn, 1935-1937, p. 61, 100.

⁹²*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 5 (CSEL 19, 168 Brandt): "...eo, quod multi sint in caelo spiritus angelorum". *Ibid.* I, 7, 6-7 (CSEL 19, 26 Brandt): "Quodsi cultores deorum eos ipsos colere se putant, quos summi dei ministros appellamus, nihil est quod nobis faciant invidiam, qui unum deum dicamus, multos negemus. Si eos multitudo delectat, non duodecim dicimus aut trecentos sexaginta quinque ut Orpheus, sed innumerabiles esse... Sciant tamen quo nomine appellari debeant, ne violent verum deum, cujus nomen exponunt, dum pluribus tribuunt."

terested the early Fathers and writers, because of the manner in which they considered the angels. Even when they thought of them as spirits, they still pictured them as having some kind of organism. They thought of them as bodied creatures, and so connected them with some place.

In speaking of this place, they simply called it heaven. Lactantius, too, without any discussion as to the need of any place, says they are in heaven.⁹³ God created Heaven as the dwelling place of Himself.⁹⁴ The angels are associated with Him and stand in His sight.

Heaven is a definite place. Lactantius thought of it as over and above the earth. Man is an upright creature; unlike the animals who are bowed down to the earth, man must look upwards to heaven.⁹⁵ Heaven is associated with light and with God. As the region of light, it is opposed to the region of darkness namely, the earth.⁹⁶ It is the region

⁹³*Ibid.*

⁹⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 9, 2 (CSEL 19, 142 Brandt): "Fecit igitur deus primum omnium caelum et in sublime suspendit, quod esset sedes ipsius dei conditoris. deinde terram fundavit ac subdidit caelo. . . suum vero habitaculum distinxit claris luminibus et inplevit, sole scilicet et lunae orbe fulgenti et astrorum micantium splendentibus signis adornavit. Tenebras autem, quod est his contrarium, constituit in terra; nihil enim per se continet luminis, nisi accipiat e caelo: in quo posuit lucem perennem et superos et vitam perpetuam, et contra in terra tenebras et inferos et mortem. . ."

⁹⁵*De Opificio Dei* V (CSEL 27, 19 Brandt); *De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 2, 19 (CSEL 19, 102 Brandt): "... ille vobis sublimem vultum dedit, vos in terram curvamini, vos altas mentes et ad parentem suum cum corporibus suis erectas ad inferiora deprimitis tamquam vos paeniteat non quadrupedes esse natos. . ."

⁹⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 9, 5 (CSEL 19, 142-143 Brandt): "Ipsius quoque terrae binas partes contrarias inter se diversasque constituit, orientem scilicet occidentemque. Ex quibus oriens deo ad censetur, quia ipse luminis fons et inlustrator est rerum et quod oriri nos faciat ad vitam sempiternam: occidens autem conturbatae illi pravaeque menti adscribitur, quod lumen abscondat, quod tenebras semper inducat et quod homines faciat occidere atque interire peccatis. Nam sicut lux orientis est, in luce autem vitae ratio versatur, sic occidentis tenebrae sunt, in tenebris autem mors et interitus continentur." Cf. F. J. Dölger, *Die Sonne der Gerechtigkeit und der Schwar-*

beyond the moon, for the region between earth and heaven is the abode of the evil spirits, living in the airy atmosphere.⁹⁷

Yet not all the angels are in heaven. Many of them are busy about the world. They are the executors of God's plan in the government of the world. Although Providence belongs to God alone, the government of the world is effected through the ministry of the angels.

ze, (LQF Heft 14) Münster, 1919, p. 37 ff; J. Quasten, *Monumenta Eucharistica et Liturgica Vetustissima* (F1P Fasc. VII) Bonn, 1935-1937, p. 74.

⁹⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 5, 11 (CSEL 19, 598 Brandt): "Itaque ineffabili virtute ac potentia praeclara mundi opera molitus est: suspensis in altitudinem levibus elementis et gravibus in ima depressis et caelestia firmavit et terrena constituit."

CHAPTER II

THE ANGELS BY NATURE AND BY GRACE

1.

The Finite Spiritual Nature of the Angels

The existence of the angels is pointed out sufficiently clearly in Sacred Scripture, but relatively little is said about the nature of the angels: this is told in a few basic notes concerning their created spiritual nature as God's ministering servants. The writers of the first centuries found difficulty in expressing themselves on the subject. For one thing the basic facts mentioned about the nature of the angel in revelation are few; whatever else is known is largely the result of theological exposition of these facts.¹ The angel appears constantly and predominantly in his ministerial rôle. His practical rôle is kept before our eyes, rather than what he is. And because the concepts themselves in which this nature of the angel is expressed were not fixed in learning,² this difficulty is found fairly commonly with varying degrees of importance in various writers of this time.

Despite some appearances to the contrary Lactantius undoubtedly viewed the angels as created and finite in character. When Lactantius makes a comparison between angels and the Word of God³ in so far as they are spirits, the

¹A. Vonier, *The Angels*, New York, 1928, p. 7.

²L. Hackspill, "Etude sur le milieu religieux et intellectuel contemporain du N. T." *RB* X (1901) 200ff.; *idem*, "Angélogologie juive à l'époque néo-testamentaire" *RB* XI (1902) 530ff.

³*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 8, 6 (CSEL 19, 296 Brandt): "...primum nec sciri a quoquam possunt nec enarrari opera divina, sed tamen sanctae litterae docent, in quibus cautum est illum dei filium esse itemque sermonem ceteros angelos dei spiritus dei esse".

angels seem to be on an equal level with the Word of God, for God is said to choose the Word of God from among the number of the angels to share his power: "Then from among all the angels which the same God formed from his breaths, He chose only Him (the Word) to share His power, only He was called God".⁴ Christ is also called the "Princeps angelorum".⁵ While on the other hand the angels and the Word of God are spoken of as distinct: the Word of God is a spoken breath of God, but the angels are silent breaths of God.⁶ Further Lactantius shows that the Word of God is really one with the Father, while the angels are just ministers, so that their created character is seen.⁷ Lactantius speaks of the angels, as finite, as closely associated with the Word, but still distinct and not as equals.

In fact the created finite character of the angels is practically the sole reason Lactantius has for mentioning them, since they are brought into his works chiefly on that score. God alone is the one Supreme Ruler and Creator of all things. This is the central truth in all the works of Lactantius. God made all things and provides for them. Divine Providence enters into all his apologetic, so much so that he says he can hardly speak of anything without at the same time speaking of Divine Providence.⁸ Because

⁴*Epitome* XXXVII, 3 (CSEL 19, 712 Brandt): "Denique ex omnibus angelis, quos idem deus de suis spiritibus figuravit, solus in consortium summae potestatis adscitus est, solus deus nuncupatus".

⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 4, 17 (CSEL 19, 328 Brandt): "...filium suum principem angelorum legavit ad homines"; cf. H. Leclercq, "Anges" *DACL* I, 2, 2144ff; F. J. Dölger, *Ichthys I. Das Fischsymbol in frühchristlicher Zeit*, Rome, 1910, 273ff.

⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 8, 7, (CSEL 19, 296 Brandt): "Sed tamen quoniam spiritus et sermo diversis partibus proferuntur, siquidem spiritus naribus, ore sermo procedit, magna inter hunc dei filium ceterosque angelos differentia est"; cf. below, pp. 67-71.

⁷Cf. below, pp. 67-71; E. Overlach, *Die Theologie des Lactantius*, Schwerin, 1858, p. 18-21.

⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 2, 6 (CSEL 19, 7, Brandt).

there must be a Divine Providence, it must also be one, ruling all things; otherwise, it would destroy the very notion of Providence. The angels cannot be gods, they can only be servants and must therefore be created. Even the philosophers, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato and the rest, with a few exceptions like Epicurus and Democritus, admit that there is a Divine Providence:

There is a divine Providence, as those men whom I have named have perceived, by whose energy and power all things visible were both made and are governed. For so vast a system of beings... could not have arisen without a Provident Maker nor continue to exist so many centuries without a powerful inhabitant, or have been governed unendingly without a skilful and wise ruler.⁹

With this admission on the part of the philosophers, even though it is often enough a hesitant and uncertain admission, Lactantius tries to lead them on to the admission of the fact that the gods cannot be real gods, since they must be created. They can only be servants: these Lactantius calls the angels: "And that is true which we have quoted Seneca as saying: 'God raised up ministers for his kingdom'; these however neither are gods, nor do they desire to be called or honored as such since they do nothing beyond the command and the will of God. . . they must be called angels".¹⁰ The only reason for speaking of the angels is the fact that they

⁹*De Ira Dei*, X, 50-51 (CSEL 27, 94 Brandt): "Est igitur divina Providentia, ut senserunt his omnes quos nominavi, cujus vi ac potestate omnia quae videmus et facta sunt et reguntur. nec enim tanta rerum magnitudo... aut olim potuit sine provido artifice oriri aut constare tot saeculis sine incola potenti aut in perpetuum gubernari sine perito ac sentiente rectore."

¹⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 7, 5 (CSEL 19, 26 Brandt): "Et est illud verum quod dixisse in Exhortationibus Senecam supra rettuli 'Genuisse regni sui ministros Deum'. Verum hi neque dii sunt neque deos se vocari aut coli volunt, quippe qui nihil faciant praeter jussum ac voluntatem Dei... Sciant tamen quo nomine appellari debeant... ministros dei non deos, verum angelos appellari oportere." cf. E. Langton, *The Ministries of the Angelic Powers*, London 1936, p. 27ff, 95ff.

are the ministers whom God has raised up. They are created finite ministers of God.

The personality of the angels is not considered in stated terms but it is implied. The angels are viewed in a manner analogous to the human being. From this analogy it appeared quite obvious that they were persons, just as human beings are. From the manner in which Lactantius speaks of the angels, it is clear that he always viewed them as personified beings. He places them into relationships in which their personality appears. As ministers of a personal God, compared with Christ and with human beings they appear as persons.¹¹ The execution of the providential designs of God, where they are the willing servants of God; their mission to men, both in the ordinary course of Providence and in the extraordinary missions that may be entrusted to them, they act as personal beings. Their free deliberate action, their very sin, show them to be endowed with personality.

To understand this created nature itself, the key-word around which the angelology of Lactantius revolves, is the term *spirit*. The angels are the *spiritus Dei*.¹² *Angelus* is the term which best expresses their functions. It shows their ministerial character. *Spiritus*, however tells us what the angel is by nature. It gives us the essential character of his being. Yet at the same time, it does so only in a general way because of the wide use in which the term *spiritus* can be employed. From the fact that the angels are called *spiritus Dei* we cannot immediately conclude to an absolutely immaterial and intellectual nature. Spirit separates the angels from matter in the physical sense of the word, but the term is too flexible to demand an exclusion of all materiality from their nature.¹³

¹¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 7, 2 (CSEL 19, 292 Brandt); *Epitome* XXXVI, 4 (CSEL 19, 712 Brandt); *De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 7, 4 (CSEL 19, 26-27 Brandt).

¹²*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 8, 6 (CSEL 19, 296 Brandt); *Epitome* XXXVII, 3, (CSEL 19, 712 Brandt) cf. note 3 and 4.

¹³K. Prümm, *Der christliche Glaube und die altheidnische Welt*, Leipzig 1935, II, 113ff, 135ff.

There is still too close a contact with the pagan thought of these centuries in which the spiritus (*πνεῦμα*) could be something quite material:

In Hellenic philosophy it (spiritus) never became disengaged from its materialist origins or got beyond the system of Stoicism; in that system, however, the part played by it is by no means negligible whether we consider the universal spirit, God, or the individual spirit the human soul, or some of the relations uniting them, such as inspiration and divination. . . . Long before the Stoics the word spirit (*πνεῦμα*) was employed by the Greeks both in the psychological sense to signify the human soul, and in the physical sense to signify the air or wind.¹⁴

A threefold sense must be distinguished in determining the use of *spiritus*. There is the physical sense of moving air, or breath. Lactantius speaks of this when he says: "Breath and speech are produced in different parts of the body, breath proceeds from the nostrils, speech from the mouth".¹⁵ There is secondly, a physiological sense in which the *spiritus* is taken for breath, but as a figure for the life of man.¹⁶ And thirdly, there is the psychological sense in which it is taken for an individual being itself.¹⁷ It is in this last sense that the angels appear as spirits. However, it is through the use of the term in the physical sense that this is effected.

¹⁴J. Lebreton, *History of the Dogma of the Trinity*, tr. Algar Thorold, New York, 1939, I, 61.

¹⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 8, 7 (CSEL 19, 296 Brandt): "Sed tamen quoniam spiritus et sermo diversis partibus proferuntur, si quidem spiritus naribus, ore sermo procedit. . ."; cf. *De Opificio Dei*, XV, 1ff (CSEL 27, 50 Brandt).

¹⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 11, 19 (CSEL 19, 155 Brandt): "deus. . . corpus effinxit, ipse animam qua spiramus infudit, illius est totum quidquid sumus"; cf. J. Lebreton, *op. cit.* I, 61ff.

¹⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 25, 6-7 (CSEL 19, 376 Brandt): "Etenim cum constet homo ex carne ac spiritu et oporteat spiritum justitiae operibus emereri ut fiat aeternus, caro quoniam terrena est ideoque mortalis, copulatum sibi spiritum trahit secum et ad immortalitatem inducit ad mortem. Ergo spiritus carnis expers dux esse homini ad immortalitatem nullo pacto poterat"; cf. K. Prümmer, *op. cit.* I, 115.

Lactantius speaks of spirits in a singularly anthropomorphic manner. He goes back to the verbal derivation of the word and to the physical sense of *spiritus* to the inhalation and exhalation of the breath. He conceives God in this anthropomorphic way as inhaling and exhaling; the exhalations of God, the breaths of God, constitute the scale of spiritual and intellectual natures.¹⁸

However, since God is infinitely perfect, His breath is of a much more exalted nature than ours. Unlike our breath which is transitory in character, God's breaths remain stable and fixed: "Our breaths are dissoluble because we are mortal, the breaths of God live and remain and are perceptive (*sentiunt*) because he is immortal and the giver of life and sense."¹⁹ Through some majestic yet mysterious way, this living stable, indissoluble sentient breath of God forms what we know as the spirit world.²⁰

All spirits outside of God are derived from God in some way.²¹ Lactantius does not visualize this spiration in the Trinitarian sense, but as a copy of the human manner of breathing. He senses the insufficiency of his conception, but he does not question it, because it is a mystery: "Should anyone wonder that God is able to generate God by the giving forth of breath, he will immediately cease to wonder on becoming cognizant of the sacred words of the prophets".²²

¹⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 8, 3ff (CSEL 19, 129-130 Brandt).

¹⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 8, 10 (CSEL 19, 297 Brandt): "Nostri spiritus dissolubiles sunt, quia mortales sumus, dei autem spiritus et vivunt et manent et sentiunt, quia ipse immortalis est et sensus ac vitae dator. . ."

²⁰*Ibid.* IV, 8, 6 (CSEL 19, 296 Brandt).

²¹"Derived" rather than "created" for the Word of God is also a spirit. Lactantius however speaks of the Word as "created" cf. below, pp. 67-71, for Lactantius' subordination of the Word to the Father.

²²*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 8, 12 (CSEL 19, 297 Brandt): "Quodsi quis miratur ex deo deum prolatione vocis ac spiritus potuisse generari, si sacras voces prophetarum cognoverit, desinet profecto mirari".

In God Himself, this conception of Lactantius does not apply exactly, but in the Word of God it does apply in a unique and eminent way: for He is *Spiritus cum voce prolatus*.²³ He is not only a breath of God, but the spoken Word of God. This conception further applies to Satan: "Then secondly God made that other spirit in whom the natural excellence of his divine origin did not remain".²⁴ Finally, it applies to the other angels, and to human souls. Of the angels he says: "Likewise the rest of the angels are the spirits (breaths) of God".²⁵ While of human souls, Lactantius says, they are "heavenly spirits"²⁶ whose origin is from God.²⁷ With regard to the fallen angels a distinction has to be made. They are still called spirits after their fall, but spirits in a somewhat different sense than before, since Lactantius says, that "they lost the name and the substance of angels"²⁸ by their fall.

In Christ the use of the term *spiritus* is set apart from the others, since He is the spoken Word of God while the others are silent spirits. In the rest of the spirits however, in Satan, angels and human souls, in so far as they are spirits, they are spoken of in much the same way. Although Lactantius keeps them apart as far as their nature is concerned, the same predicates are applied to them. This is particularly true of the way in which Lactantius speaks of angels and human souls. What he says of the one class can be applied to the other with one main exception: that

²³*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 8, 9 (CSEL 19, 296 Brandt).

²⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 8, 4 (CSEL 19, 129 Brandt): "Deinde fecit alterum (spiritum), in quo indoles divinae stirpis non permansit".

²⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 8, 6 (CSEL 19, 296 Brandt): "...itemque ceteros angelos dei spiritus esse. . .

²⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 12, 11 (CSEL 19, 157 Brandt): "Est enim quasi vasculum, quo tamquam domicilio temporali *spiritus hic caelestis* utatur."

²⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 12, 7 (CSEL 19, 156 Brandt): "Anima. . . quae oritur ex deo".

²⁸*Epitome* XXII, 10 (CSEL 19, 695 Brandt): "Tum damnati sententia dei et ob peccata proiecti et nomen angelorum et substantiam perdiderunt".

the human soul has a glorious immortality conditioned on its victory over the body: "Immortality is not a consequence of nature, but the reward and the premium of virtue"²⁹ whereas "the angel has immortality without any fear or danger of any evil".³⁰ In his dualistic tendencies, Lactantius has the soul bound to a body as an unwilling prisoner. By a laborious and difficult struggle it can and must overcome the condition of matter which is evil. By so doing, it obtains a perfect immortality, in fact becomes like to the angel who has immortality perfectly and inamissibly. The soul is united to the body, but it leads a life in opposition to the body. The soul uses the body as a container;³¹ it is the spirit that really makes the man, for man lives "by the spirit alone".³² Man is a stranger to earth³³ in fact man himself, says Lactantius cannot be seen or touched because he lies hidden under the visible receptacle of the body.³⁴ From all this we see that the human soul is viewed very much like a complete being by Lactantius.

Lactantius speaks in greater detail of the human soul and its characteristics than he does of the angels. What he says of the soul can be applied as a minimum standard to judge the perfections of the spiritual nature of the angel.

²⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 5, 20 (CSEL 19, 600 Brandt): ". . . ergo immortalitas non sequella naturae, sed merces praemiumque virtutis est."

³⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 4, 9 (CSEL 19, 598 Brandt): "Angeli. . . quibus inmortalitas sine ullo malorum periculo ac metu constat."

³¹cf. above, p. 35, note 26.

³²*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 21, 2 (CSEL 19, 651 Brandt): ". . . In solis spiritibus vivunt".

³³*De Ira Dei* XV, 3 (CSEL 27, 106 Brandt).

³⁴*De Opificio Dei* XIX, 9 (CSEL 27, 63 Brandt): "Nam hoc corpusculum quo induti sumus, hominis receptaculum est. Nam ipse homo neque tangi neque aspici neque comprehendi potest, quia latet intra hoc quod videtur"; cf. *De Opificio Dei*, I, 11 (CSEL 27, 6 Brandt): "Animus id est homo ipse verus".

Some of these attributes are incorporeity,³⁵ invisibility, intangibility. It eludes touch, and has nothing concrete about it.³⁶ It is insoluble and indestructible.³⁷ All these perfections pertain to the soul in so far as it is something heavenly as opposed to earth "where everything is fragile that can be seen. . . On earth there is nothing that is not weak and destructible"³⁸ whereas the soul is heavenly and eternal.

With this minimum characterization of the angel as a spirit, for the angel is a higher being than the soul, more light is thrown on the way Lactantius viewed their natures. The angel is incorporeal in the ordinary sense of the word; he is an intangible, incomprehensible, invisible, living breath of God. Sometimes, he, like the human soul, is spoken of as though he were an emanation of the Divine Being itself.³⁹ He is ethereal and heavenly, yet a created nature, for while Lactantius speaks of him as a breath of God, he is not a pantheist, even when he uses expressions that may point that way.

This conception of the angel as a breath of God is not a completely original conception. It is partially taken from

³⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 9, 7 (CSEL 19, 611 Brandt); *ibid* VII, 12, 2 (CSEL 19, 618 Brandt); VII, 21, 1 (CSEL 19, 650); cf. L. Atzberger, *Geschichte der christlichen Eschatologie innerhalb der vornicänischen Zeit*, Freiburg 1896, 584ff.

³⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 21, 2 (CSEL 19, 650 Brandt) VII, 12, 2 (CSEL 19, 618); "non solubilis"; III, 12, 2 (CSEL 19, 207): "Tenuis et invisibilis, cum iis congregiitur hostibus qui videri tangique non possunt"; VII, 12, 2 (CSEL 19, 618): "Anima vero tenuis et tactum visumque fugiens".

³⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* III, 12, 2 (CSEL 19, 207 Brandt).

³⁸*De Opificio Dei*, IV, 6 (CSEL 27, 15 Brandt): "...Fragilia sunt omnia quae videri ac tangi possunt. . . in terra nihil est quod non sit infirmum"; *De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 11, 9 (CSEL 19, 618 Brandt): "Quid quod ea quae visibilia sunt oculis et tangibilia manu, quia externam vim pati possunt, aeterna esse non possunt, ea vero quae neque sub tactum neque sub visum veniunt, sed tantummodo vis eorum et ratio et effectus apparet, aeterna sunt, quia nullam vim patiuntur extrinsecus". cf. L. Atzberger, *op. cit.* 585.

³⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 12, 9 (CSEL 19, 156 Brandt); L. Atzberger, *op. cit.* 585-586.

the language of Sacred Scripture, where a similar mode of expression is used as a figure. In the *Psalms* the expression occurs: "Who makest thy angels spirits: and thy ministers a burning fire".⁴⁰ God is represented in a partially anthropomorphic manner: "Thou shalt take away their breath and they shall fail and shall return to dust. Thou shalt send forth thy spirit and they shall be created".⁴¹ *Genesis* speaks of God breathing on the clay which thereupon became a living being: "And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth: and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul".⁴² It is also partially in accord with the Stoic conception of spirit as something fiery and ethereal, and yet material. Lactantius does not believe that God is a fire or that the soul or the angels are a fiery nature in the material sense. He does say, however, that souls are of a heavenly fire,⁴³ that these beings are something ethereal and airy, using the Stoic manner of expression.⁴⁴ Like the Stoics Lactantius pictured God to himself as an organized being. The breath of God was a fairly natural expression. It was of a higher nature than earthly breath, but is best described by comparing it with earthly fire and air, the active elements in the world according to the Stoics.

According to Lactantius the angel is not completely immaterial. He denies the angel a body of a gross nature such as the bodies on earth, but not those of an ethereal fine matter. Since they are breaths (*spiritus*) some in-

⁴⁰*Psalm* CIII, 4.

⁴¹*Psalm* CIII, 29-30.

⁴²*Genesis* II, 7.

⁴³*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 12, 14 (CSEL 19, 157 Brandt): "Quodsi anima ignis est ut ostendimus, in caelum debet eniti sicut ignis, ne extingatur..." This is in contradiction to *De Opificio Dei* XVII, 4 (CSEL 27, 56 Brandt) where Lactantius denies that the soul is fire. In the latter passage, he however denies it because of his opposition to calling the soul an earthly fire.

⁴⁴M.-J. Lagrange, "La religion des stoiciens av. J.-C." RT XXXIII (1928) 45ff; K. Prümm, *Der christliche Glaube und die alt-heidnische Welt*, Leipzig, 1935, I, 79ff; J. Lebreton, *The History of the Dogma of the Trinity*, tr. Algar Thorold, New York, 1939, I, 61ff.

tangible yet partially material substance is ascribed to them. Furthermore the intangible and invisible qualities are such in relation to man and earth; it is not the case in an absolute sense.⁴⁵ It is in this sense that Lactantius says: "God's power is so great that it also comprehends incorporeal things. In whatever way He wishes, He can affect them. For the angels also fear God because they can be punished by Him in some unspeakable way".⁴⁶ The fact that they could be punished was considered a sign of some materiality. They could fall into vice and into sins of lust because they were not pure spirits in the strict sense of the word.⁴⁷

The absolutely immaterial concept of the angel was largely unknown to the early writers. The angel was always spoken of as immaterial and spiritual, but some limits were contained therein. Compared to man they are immaterial. Compared to God, they were thought of as bodied. It was hard to see how a creature while being perfectly spiritual would still fall short of being God.⁴⁸ To safeguard the absolute transcendence of God, these early writers posited that inconsistent and even contradictory notion of a spirit that was in some way a material thing. For example, Justin held that they have a spiritual nature, yet he also ascribed a fine ethereal body to the angels, in fact it sometimes appears as though he viewed them in a manner similar to man, for he spoke of their food and nourishment.⁴⁹

⁴⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 20, and 21 (CSEL 19, 648-650 Brandt).

⁴⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 21, 1 (CSEL 19, 650 Brandt): "...Tantum esse Dei potestatem, ut etiam incorporalia comprehendat et quemadmodum voluerit adficiat. nam et angeli deum metuunt, quia castigari ab eo possunt inenarrabili quodam modo..." cf. below, pp. 110-134.

⁴⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 1 (CSEL 19, 162ff Brandt).

⁴⁸G. Bareille, "Ange" *DThC* I, 1195; J. Turmel, *Histoire du diable*, Paris 1931, 57 ff.

⁴⁹Justin, *Dial.* LVII, 2 (Ed. Archambault I, 264ff). Cf. F. Andres, *Die Engellehre der griechischen Apologeten des zweiten Jahrhunderts*, Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte XII, Paderborn, 1914, 6-7.

He says: "This much is clear, they nourish themselves, in heaven, even though not with the same kind of food; for concerning the manna which your fathers ate in the desert, Scripture says: 'they ate the bread of angels' ".⁵⁰ Justin thought manna was the regular food of the angels.⁵¹ Athenagoras and Tatian also thought of the angel as spiritual and material. Athenagoras came near to a purely spiritual concept but he did not quite attain it.⁵² Tatian ascribed some materiality to the angels: this then is the basis for the change to something more gross and ponderous in those angels who fell.⁵³ Even later, St. Augustine claimed they had a heavenly body;⁵⁴ it would still take a long period of time to clarify the position of the angels as pure spirits and at the same time retain their finite character, particularly as

the doctrine concerning the angels belongs to those aspects of our faith in which really remarkable historical developments are visible; for the data of Sacred Scripture leave some things to be desired, which however are clarified only by repeated and widespread affirmations on the subject. . . The connection of this doctrine with the weightiest dogmas of Christianity is not so intimate that all certainty can be had thereby.⁵⁵

⁵⁰Justin, *Dialogue* 57, 2 (Archambault I, 264-266): δῆλόν ἐστιν ἡμῖν τρεφόμενοι κἄν μὴ ὁμοίαν τροφήν ἤπερ οἱ ἄνθρωποι χρώμεθα τρέφονται (περὶ γὰρ τῆς τροφῆς τοῦ μάννα, ἣν ἐτράφησαν οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ἢ γραφῇ οὕτω λέγει ὅτι ἄρτον ἀγγέλων ἔφαγον).

⁵¹F. Andres, *Die Engellehre der griechischen Apologeten des zweiten Jahrhunderts*, Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte XII Paderborn, 1914, p. 7.

⁵²F. Andres, *op cit.* p. 70: "Allerdings ist die Leiblichkeit, die er ihnen zuschreibt, möglichst fein aetherisch. Er nennt sie νοηταί φύσεις" (*De resurrectione* 10 Ed. Schwartz p. 58).

⁵³Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos* XV (Schwartz 16): δαίμονες δὲ πάντες σαρκίον μὲν οὐ κέκτηνται, πνευματικὴ δὲ ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς ἢ σύμπηξις ὡς πυρός καὶ ἀέρος.

In Tatian, angels have to be studied in the light of his expressions concerning the demons; cf. F. Andres, *op. cit.* p. 38.

⁵⁴Augustine, *Sermo XII*, 9, 9 (PL 38, 104).

⁵⁵J. Schwane, *Dogmengeschichte der patristischen Zeit*, I, 299 (Münster 1899) "Die Lehre von den Engeln gehört zu denjenigen Bestandtheilen des Glaubens, an welchen recht merkliche geschicht-

Although angels and souls are spoken of in terms that make them appear to be very similar in nature, this similarity must not be overstressed to the extent of identifying the two classes of beings. Lactantius never says that the human soul is an angel in the flesh, even when he speaks of the soul as a prisoner in the body and a stranger to earth.⁵⁶ Nor does the soul's ability to live outside of the body imply that it is a completely self-subsisting spirit without any need of a body. Despite the fact that Lactantius speaks of them in similar terms, he keeps them apart. He points out the distinction between souls and angels as a distinction intended by the Creator: souls are spiritual beings destined for fragile bodies, while the angel has no such destiny: "Although (God) might always procreate innumerable souls with His breaths as He generated the angels, . . . nevertheless He thought out a wondrous plan whereby He would create an infinite multitude of souls whom He would first bind into fragile and weak bodies. . .".⁵⁷ He also rejects the idea that the soul could have existed in some way before being united to the body, so that the soul would really be a kind of spirit incarnate. He stresses the fact that the soul is created for the body in which it is to be placed for its period of trial.⁵⁸ Nor will it ever be joined to another body

liche Entwicklungen sichtbar sind; denn die Aussprüche der Hl. Schrift über die Engel liessen über manche Punkte Zweifel übrig, welche erst allmählig durch wiederholte und allseitige Besprechungen der einschlägigen Fragen gelöst wurden. Andererseits war auch der Zusammenhang zwischen der Engellehre und den wichtigsten Dogmen des Christentums nicht ein so inniger, dass daraus mit aller Sicherheit sogleich eine Antwort auf viele Fragen hätte hergeleitet werden können."

⁵⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 13, 3 (CSEL 19, 160 Brandt).
De Ira Dei XV, 3, (CSEL 27, 106 Brandt).

⁵⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 5, 9 (CSEL 19, 597 Brandt):
"Cum posset (deus) semper spiritibus suis immortalibus innumerales animas procreare, sicut angelos genuit. . . excogitavit tamen inenarrabile opus, quemadmodum infinitam multitudinem crearet animarum quas primo fragilibus et inbecillis corporibus inligatas constitueret inter bonum malumque medias. . ."

⁵⁸*De Opificio Dei* XIX (CSEL 27, 60-61 Brandt).

after its departure from the body to which it was united after its creation. The opinion of Pythagoras that souls had a relationship to other bodies after their union to human bodies is ridiculed by Lactantius.⁵⁹ Transmigrationism is completely foreign to him. He calls it a vain and impossible solution⁶⁰ and says that it is an opinion "which is worthy of ridicule and scorn rather than of a school, nor does it merit a serious refutation".⁶¹

It is clear that whatever similarities there may be between the human soul and the angel, in so far as they are spirits, they are nevertheless distinct natures, created by God for distinct destinies.

2.

The Endowments of the Angelic Nature

The natural powers of the angels must now be considered. These embrace the life of the angel, his intellect and will, and manner of appearing to men.

The manner in which Lactantius views the life of the angel is seen from the way he speaks of the life of a spirit, namely that the life of a spirit consists in activity. Life consists in movement for: "rest belongs either to sleep or

⁵⁹Epitome XXXI, 7ff (CSEL 19, 707 Brandt): "Quid Pythagoras, qui primus est philosophus nominatus, qui animas quidem immortales esse [dixit]; in alia tamen corpora vel pecudum vel avium vel bestiarum commeari? Non satius fuerat eas cum suis corporibus extingui quam sic ad aliena damnari...atque utinam solus delirasset! Inventi etiam qui crederent et quidem <non> indoctos homines ad quos stultitiae transivit hereditas." Cf. VII, 12, 30ff (CSEL 19, 624 Brandt); W. Harloff, *Untersuchungen zu Lactantius*, Borna-Leipzig, 1911, p. 66-67.

⁶⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* III, 19, 19 (CSEL 19, 243-244 Brandt).

⁶¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 12, 31 (CSEL 19, 624 Brandt): "Quae sententia deliri hominis quoniam ridicula et mimo dignior quam scola fuit, ne refelli quidem serio debuit."

death".⁶² Sleep is a condition to revive material bodies. Neither sleep or death can affect a spirit. A spirit must be constantly active.⁶³ Of God the supreme spirit, the activity mentioned by Lactantius is the care of the world.⁶⁴ Souls too, are ever moving. The angels as intermediate between God and human souls are spirits as active and mobile as human souls of whom it is said "while we are asleep, the body indeed is at rest, but the soul is restless and agitated, it forms for itself images which it may behold so that it exercises its natural power of motion by a variety of visions and calls itself away from false things until the limbs are satiated and receive vigor from rest, eternal rest belongs to death alone".⁶⁵ The life of the angel as a spirit is a moving perceptive eternal life. Negatively, it is an eternal or unending life because like the human soul, it is so largely freed of matter. As Marbach points out: "Lactantius has the idea that every visible and tangible thing must be destructible and go to ruin, whereas anything that is invisible and intangible is eternal".⁶⁶ Positively, the life of the angel as a spirit is eternal because it has received its life from God: "It consists of heavenly spirit and lives forever because the divine spirit is eternal".⁶⁷ This life of the angel is one and

⁶²*De Ira Dei* XVII, 4 (CSEL 27, 110 Brandt): "Quies igitur sempiterna solius mortis est. si autem mors deum non attingit, deus igitur numquam quietus est."

⁶³*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 12, 4 (CSEL 19, 619 Brandt): "Quod ex caelesti spiritu, id constat ac viget semper, quoniam divinus spiritus sempiternus est."

⁶⁴*De Ira Dei* X, 50 (CSEL 27, 94 Brandt), see note 9.

⁶⁵*De Ira Dei* XVII, 3 (CSEL 27, 110 Brandt): "Nam cum soporati sumus, corpus quidem quiescit, animus tamen inquietus agitur; imagines sibi quas cernat adfingit, ut naturalem suum motum exerceat varietate visorum, avocatque se falsis, dum membra saturantur ac vigorem capiant de quiete. Quies igitur sempiterna solius mortis est."

⁶⁶F. Marbach, *Die Psychologie des F. Lactantius*, Jena, 1889, p. 71: "Weiterhin steht fuer Laktanz der Satz fest, dass alles Sichtbare und Beruehrbare zu Grunde gehen muss, waehrend alles was nicht gesehen oder beruehrt werden kann ewig bleibt."

⁶⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 12, 4 (CSEL 19, 619 Brandt): "Quod ex caelesti spiritu, id constat ac viget semper, quoniam divinus spiritus sempiternus est".

complete. A spirit life does not grow. Lactantius does not say this expressly of the angels, but his opinion concerning human souls is applicable to the angels. The human mind grows, the intelligence increases, but the soul remains in the same state till it is released from the prison of the body.⁶⁸ As long as a spirit exists, it is of a complete undivided perfection, that neither increases or decreases substantially. In this a sharp contrast is brought out between spirit and matter.

The constantly active movement that constitutes the life of the angel is capable of further determination. The angels express this movement in their intellectual activity.

Lactantius says that spirits move and are sentient.⁶⁹ This does not mean that he ascribes sense knowledge to the angels. The term sentient has a wider signification. It is used for perception and for knowledge in a general sense without distinguishing between sense and intellectual knowledge. He uses it of sense knowledge also but not exclusively for sense knowledge. It is used to designate the powers of the soul separated from the body: and is practically equivalent to consciousness as when he says: "The soul does not therefore die because it is not seen after it leaves the body, for it is constituted a sentient and living thing. . .".⁷⁰ So too when he speaks of man as "Man alone of all the animal creation is sentient having the use of reason whereby he can know God".⁷¹

⁶⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 12, 10 (CSEL 19, 620 Brandt): "Mens ergo id est intelligentia vel augetur vel minuitur pro aetate. Anima in statu suo semper est, et ex quo tempore spirandi accipit facultatem, eadem usque ad ultimum durat, donec emissa corporis claustrum ad sedem suam revolet."

⁶⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 8, 10 (CSEL 19, 297 Brandt): "...vivunt manent sentiunt."

⁷⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 9, 7, (CSEL 19, 611 Brandt): "...non idcirco interire animam credibile est, quia non videtur, postquam recessit a corpore, quoniam constat esse aliquid sentiens ac vivens quod non veniat sub aspectum."

⁷¹*De Ira Dei* XIV, 2 (CSEL 27, 104 Brandt): "Solus est enim qui sentiens capaxque rationis intelligere posse deum."

Although the angels are the *taciti spiritus* in contrast to the Word of God Who proceeds from God "by speech and with sound from the mouth of God",⁷² this fact does not militate in any way against their power of knowledge. Lactantius calls them "silent spirits" since God did not create them to "teach the way of the knowledge of God".⁷³ Only the Son proceeded as the spoken word of God, because He alone was to make use of His voice in preaching to the people: he was to teach the knowledge of God and through Him the heavenly mystery was to be revealed to man. The angel is not a mediator between God and man in this sense. He has, however, the function to instruct men in other ways: this is part of his service to men, for this he is sent.⁷⁴ This duty certainly demands a considerable knowledge on the part of the angels.

In the various functions of the angel knowledge is implied. Mention has already been made of them when speaking of the purpose for which God has created them. And because the angel is assigned as man's protector, to keep him from the wiles and deceits of Satan, this knowledge must be fairly vast.

The vastness of the knowledge also follows from a principle which Lactantius lays down concerning knowledge and ignorance. "Knowledge in us," he says, "is from the soul which has its origin from heaven. Ignorance comes from the body which is of the earth. Wherefore there is in us something in common with God and with the animal kingdom. Since we are composed of these two elements, the one of which is endowed with light, the other with darkness, a part of knowledge is given us and a part of ig-

⁷²*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 8, 8 (CSEL 19, 296 Brandt): "Ille vero cum sit et ipse spiritus, tamen cum voce ac sono ex dei ore processit sicut verbum. . ."

⁷³*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 8, 7 (CSEL 19, 296 Brandt): ". . . quia non ad doctrinam Dei tradendam, sed ad ministerium creabantur."

⁷⁴*cf. De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 1 (CSEL 19, 162 Brandt); *Epitome* XXIII 1ff (CSEL 19, 695 Brandt).

norance".⁷⁵ Ignorance depends on matter and on the body; as a being approaches God, it has knowledge because it recedes from matter. As it approaches the nature of matter, it is ignorant.⁷⁶ According to this principle, the angel as a being of light and almost complete immateriality is a being endowed with a corresponding knowledge. On the other hand we see again, how matter seems to be postulated in the angel as a limitation for their knowledge. In any case even though the knowledge of the angel is vast, it is not limitless. God alone has knowledge of all things. However perfect the knowledge of the angel may be, it is finite and limited.

The limits of this knowledge are not easily determined. The angel knows God because he is present with God and abides in His sight.⁷⁷ He knows the created world, and that quite perfectly, although the angel is represented as knowing it in much the same manner that a human being would know it. The difference is mainly in the perfection of this knowledge. The limited character of the knowledge of the angel is shown from the fact that the Redeemer could not come as an angel because of a twofold reason: as a Redeemer, Lactantius thought, the chief purpose was to be an example for men; but He also had to be God in order to have the fulness of knowledge to teach men.⁷⁸ The angel was unable to fulfill either of these conditions, lacking both the corporeal condition of mankind and the excellence of knowledge. A limit is also expressed when Lactantius says that the angels did not know the name of the Word of God.

⁷⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* III, 6, 3 (CSEL, 19, 187 Brandt): "Scientia in nobis ab animo est, qui oritur e caelo, ignorantia a corpore, quod ex terra; unde nobis et cum deo et cum animalibus est aliqua communitas. Ita quoniam ex his duobus constamus elementis, quorum alterum luce praeditum est, alterum tenerbis, pars nobis data est scientiae, pars ignorantiae."

⁷⁶*Ibid.*

⁷⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 1 (CSEL 19, 162 Brandt); and II, 16, *passim* (CSEL 19, 167ff Brandt); *De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 14, 13 CSEL 19, 327 Brandt): "...in conspectu Dei et angelorum...".

⁷⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 24, 4 (CSEL 19, 371-372 Brandt).

This name is known only to the Father and to the Word Himself. Among the angels however, the Word is known by a special name, so too among men.⁷⁹

Only a few particulars are given concerning the actual extent of the knowledge of the angels. There is no pretence to completeness, since particular instances are given as occasion demands. Lactantius viewed the knowledge of the angels as greater than that of the evil spirits.⁸⁰ This is seen from a passage in which he says that even the fallen angels, the evil spirits have a presentiment of the future because they at one time were God's ministers and servants.⁸¹ Because of this their knowledge extends to many future things which they abuse for their own evil purposes.⁸² From this we see that the angels know of many of God's dispositions concerning the future, since even the evil angels retain this knowledge after their fall. Lactantius says that these things have been decreed by God: "As often as something good is in store for a people or a city according to the decree of God, they (the evil spirits) promise they will effect it or claim to have done it. . .".⁸³ This shows us that it is less a matter of knowing the future in its

⁷⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 7, 1ff (CSEL 19, 293 Brandt): "Sed quamvis nomen ejus, quod ei a principio pater summus inposuit, nullus alius praeter ipsum sciat, habet tamen et inter angelos aliud vocabulum et inter homines aliud, Jesus quippe inter homines nominatur. nam Christus non proprium nomen est, sed nuncupatio potestatis et regni: sic enim Judaei reges suos appellabant." *Ibid.* "Primum scire nos convenit nomen ejus ne angelis quidem notum est qui morantur in caelo sed ipsi soli ac Deo Patri."

⁸⁰Le Nourry, *Dissertatio de Septem Divin. Institut. Libris I*, art. II (PL VI 832-833).

⁸¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 14 (CSEL 19, 170 Brandt): "Nam cum dispositiones dei praesentiant, quippe qui ministri ejus fuerunt".

⁸²*Ibid.* II, 16, 14 (CSEL 19, 170 Brandt): "Interponunt se in his rebus ut quaecumque a deo vel facta sunt vel fiunt, ipsi potissimum facere aut fecisse videantur. . .".

⁸³*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 14 (CSEL 19, 170 Brandt): "Et quotiens alicui populo vel urbi secundum dei statutum boni quid inpendet, illi se id facturos. . . pollicentur."

causes, than a case of knowing the future because God has revealed it to them.

There is one question however, on which some of the earlier writers were inclined to restrict the knowledge of the angels, namely, with regard to the knowledge of the Incarnation. Sometimes expressions are found that imply a lack of knowledge on the part of the angels; they seem to imply that the angels found out about Christ's Incarnation only when it was being accomplished.⁸⁴ This may easily be the reason why Lactantius holds to the view that the Word of God had a different name among the angels than among men, where he was known as Jesus the Savior: "He has one name among the angels and another among men. He was called Jesus among men, for Christ was not His proper name, but of His power and kingdom".⁸⁵ We are not told however, what the name was, by which the angels knew Him.

No mention is made of the medium in which the angel knows. He is present with God, but is represented in concrete circumstances. His knowledge is viewed after the fashion of human knowledge. Nor are we told whether, like the human soul, the angel could increase in knowledge. It is implied in the limited condition of their knowledge, however. Only an indirect mention is made of the speech of the angel. Since the angel is viewed very much after the fashion of a human being, it might be expected that speech is possible to them. This is also behind the thought in which Lactantius speaks of the special name by which the Word of God is known among the angels⁸⁶ and is contained in their duty to praise God with an everlasting worship.⁸⁷

Of the volitional power of the angel, Lactantius speaks only indirectly.⁸⁸ They are endowed with a free will. God

⁸⁴G. Bareille, "Ange", *DThC* I, 1201.

⁸⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 7, 1ff (CSEL 19, 291 Brandt).

⁸⁶cf. above, p. 47, note 79.

⁸⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 26, 5 (CSEL 19, 666 Brandt).

⁸⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, and II, 16, (CSEL 19, 162ff Brandt).

forbade them to do what He knew they would do, so that they might have no hope for pardon.⁸⁹ They are in a state of reward or punishment according to the choice they have made.⁹⁰ The good angels obey God willingly and gladly seek to fulfill His will.⁹¹ The freedom of their will is the postulate of his explanation of the fall of the angels, for the angels are incited to vice gradually until it leads them to a serious fall.⁹² Their sin shows that their will is free, for there is no vice, according to Lactantius where there is no *propositum voluntatis*.⁹³

A final aspect related to the nature of the angels is their mode of appearing to men. These concern themselves with the extraordinary missions of the angels to men. In the ordinary activity of the angels among men they are invisible ministers of Divine Providence. Lactantius speaks of these mostly. There are a very few instances of visible apparitions of the angels however. One concerns itself with the angel appearing to Licinius to teach him the prayer of victory:

While Licinius was asleep, an angel of God stood by him beckoning him to arise and pray to God with his whole army; if he would do so, victory would be his. When he had heard this in a dream, he saw

⁸⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 1 (CSEL 19, 162 Brandt): "Quibus praecepit ante omnia, ne terrae contagione maculati substantiae caelestis amitterent dignitatem. scilicet id eos facere prohibuit quod sciebat esse facturos, ut veniam sperare non possent."

⁹⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14 *Passim*. Also II, 16, 10 (CSEL 19, 162ff and 169ff Brandt). "Inmortalitatem. . .quam ipsi sua nequitia perdidierunt."

⁹¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 6 (CSEL 19, 168 Brandt); *Ibid.* I, 7, 4 (CSEL 19, 26 Brandt): "Quippe qui nihil faciant praeter jussum ac voluntatem Dei."

⁹²*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 2 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt): "Itaque illos cum hominibus commorantes dominator ille terrae fallacissimus consuetudine ipsa paulatim ad vitia pellexit et mulierum congressibus inquinavit."

⁹³*De Divinis Institutionibus* III, 17, (CSEL 19, 228 Brandt); *Ibid.* I, 20, 20 (CSEL 19, 75 Brandt); cf. F. Bussel, *The Purpose of the World-process and the Problem of Evil as Explained in the Lactantian and Clementine Writings*. Oxford, 1896, p. 181ff.

himself arise whereupon the angel who stood by him taught him how and with what words he should pray. Thereupon he awoke and commanded a notary to come to take down the words he had heard.⁹⁴

Here it is a vision in a dream in which the angel appears. Another apparition concerns itself with the coming of Christ, accompanied with the host of the angels. The latter are his warriors; they will deliver the hosts of anti-Christ into the hands of Christ's faithful followers:

Then suddenly a sword shall fall from heaven, so that the just may understand the Leader of the heavenly army is about to descend. He will come down to earth accompanied by the angels, an inextinguishable flame of fire shall precede Him, the power of the angels shall deliver the multitude that has besieged the mountain of the just, into their hands.⁹⁵

In neither of these passages, however, does Lactantius say anything of the mode of their appearance; or if they have a body, of what kind this may have been. It is not unlikely however that he followed Tertullian in the matter of angelic apparitions, for he uses Tertullian considerably even though he disagrees with him in the manner of the presentation. Tertullian believed that the angels in their visible apparitions assumed a true living body. They took on a body of flesh, but it was not human flesh: "It is patent," Tertullian said, "that the angels did not carry a body of flesh (*carnem*) as natures of a spiritual substance, but when they had a body, it was *sui generis* transformable into

⁹⁴*De Mortibus Persecutorum* XLVI, 3-5 (CSEL 27, 226 Brandt-Laubmann) "Tunc proxima nocte Licinio quiescenti adsistit angelus dei monens, ut ocius surgeret atque oraret deum summum cum omni exercitu suo: illius fore victoriam, si fecisset. Post has voces cum surgere sibi visus esset et cum ipse qui monebat adstaret, tunc docebat eum, quomodo et quibus verbis esset orandum. discusso deinde somno notarium jussit acciri et sicut audierat, haec verba dictavit."

⁹⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 19, 5 (CSEL 19, 645 Brandt): "Cadet repente gladius e caelo, ut sciant justi ducem sanctae militiae descensurum, et descendet comitantibus angelis in medium terrae et antecedit eum flamma inextinguibilis et virtus angelorum tradet in manus justorum multitudinem illam quae montem circum sederit".

human flesh for a time, so that they could be seen and could treat with men".⁹⁶ This body was solid and could be seen by men.⁹⁷

Lactantius also very likely pictured the angels as winged. The common mode of representation in early times was to picture them as young men.⁹⁸ This, according to A. C. Beck, was the more common mode up to the fourth century, when the winged conception began to predominate. Lactantius certainly knew of Tertullian's expression concerning their winged state. Tertullian had said in his *Apology*: "Every spirit is possessed of wings. This is common property of both angels and demons; so that they are everywhere in a single moment. The whole world is as one place to them. All that is done the whole world over, they can easily know and report".⁹⁹ Although Lactantius does not refer to this particular expression of Tertullian, he has a reference to the passage in which this statement occurs and even uses practically the same facts concerning the evil spirits as Tertullian does.¹⁰⁰

3.

The Angel in the Supernatural Order

The angel is pictured as existing in a state of holiness in the presence of God. He knows God and loves and serves Him. Lactantius does not say to what extent this life of

⁹⁶Tertullian *De Carne Christi* VI (Oehler 891) Constat angelos carnem non propriam portasse, utpote natura substantiae spiritualis, etsi corporis alicuius, sui tamen generis, in carnem autem humanam transfigurabiles ad tempus videri et congregari cum hominibus posse".

⁹⁷Tertullian *De Carne Christi* VI (Oehler 891-892).

⁹⁸A. C. Beck, *Genien und Niken als Engel in der altchristlichen Zeit*, Giessen, 1936, p. 1-3; H. Leclercq, "Ange" *DACL* I, 2, 2081.

⁹⁹Tertullian *Apologeticum* XXII (Oehler 106) "Omnis spiritus ales est. Hoc angeli et daemones. Igitur momento ubique sunt; totus orbis illis locus unus est. Quid ubi geratur tam facile sciunt quam annuntiant".

¹⁰⁰Compare Lactantius *De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14-16 and Tertullian *Apologeticum* XXII, XXIII.

the angel pertains to his nature and what part of it is due to grace. That they are in a supernatural state is seen from this that their state is one with that which the just, through the redemptive works of Christ, will enjoy after their time of trial on earth. They are the family of God living as sons and friends of God in eternal light and happiness.¹⁰¹ No details are given, since Lactantius is writing a treatise more for pagans than for Christians. To them much of this would be largely unintelligible.

Lactantius never mentions the word supernatural. He speaks of it in another way, using a different word to connote the idea of the supernatural, namely, immortality. In its literal sense, immortality is the freedom from the penalty of death. The angel is immortal in this sense. So, likewise, are the demon and the human soul. Every spirit is immortal because of its very nature.¹⁰² It is only the earthly body that can die. The full significance of immortality is not exhausted with this literal meaning. Lactantius uses it in a higher sense. Despite the fact that the soul is immortal by nature, he speaks of immortality as the "heavenly reward" the *caeleste praemium* of the good;¹⁰³ immortality is the unspeakable reward of eternal life.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, the demons despite their unending existence and their freedom from death, nevertheless have lost their immortality. They are busy trying to turn men away from the cult of God: "Lest men gain that immortality which they themselves have lost by their wickedness".¹⁰⁵ They

¹⁰¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 6, 1ff (CSEL 19, 603 Brandt).

¹⁰²*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 8, 10 (CSEL 19, 297 Brandt): "Dei autem spiritus et vivunt et manent et sentiunt, quia ipse immortalis est et sensus ac vitae dator".

¹⁰³*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 14, 3 (CSEL 19, 628 Brandt):

¹⁰⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 5, 9 (CSEL 19, 598 Brandt): ". . . ne immortalitatem delicate adsequerentur ac molliter, sed ad illud aeternae vitae ineloquibile praemium cum summa difficultate ac magnis laboribus pervenirent."

¹⁰⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 9 (CSEL 19, 169 Brandt): "Quos nituntur a cultu et notitia verae maiestatis avertere ne immortalitatem possint adipisci, quam ipsi sua nequitia perdiderunt".

still live forever and are punished eternally. So too with souls. Lactantius says they lose their immortality but still must undergo everlasting punishment: "Eternal punishment has not this power that it extinguishes souls altogether; we call it second death because it is perpetual even as immortality is perpetual".¹⁰⁶ Souls to whom unending existence is assured must still win their immortality. God places the soul in a body for just this purpose "in order to win the reward of immortality through its labors."¹⁰⁷ This is not said of the immortality of the body, but of the soul, for it is a prize to be won by a life of justice and true wisdom.¹⁰⁸ Similarly with the angels, they do not seek cult or allow themselves to be called gods "because they are immortal"¹⁰⁹ unlike the evil spirits who lost their immortality and seek to be called gods.¹¹⁰

Immortality is opposed to wickedness in these expressions of Lactantius. Hence there is a meaning attached to immortality that goes beyond the mere continuance in life. It is indeed used to point out the freedom from death, but it is also used and more frequently as Atzberger points out¹¹¹ for the higher economy in order to contrast the state of enjoyment in the light of heaven as opposed to the state of punishment in the darkness of hell. Both of these states are eternal; the one is eternal life, or immortality; the other

¹⁰⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 12, 8 (CSEL 19, 156 Brandt): "Cujus non ea vis est (tenebrarum) ut inustas animas extinguat omnino. . .eam poenam mortem secundam nominamus, quae est et ipsa perpetua sicut et immortalitas"; cf. *Epitome* LIV, 3 (CSEL 19, 735 Brandt).

¹⁰⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 5, 9 (CSEL 19, 597 Brandt).

¹⁰⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 6, 1 (CSEL 19, 604 Brandt): ". . .ut immortalitatem pro laborum mercede capiamus, quoniam maximis laboribus cultus dei constat."

¹⁰⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 6 (CSEL 19, 168 Brandt) "Neque angeli, cum sint inmortales, dici se deos aut patiuntur aut volunt".

¹¹⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 9-10 (CSEL 19, 168-9 Brandt).

¹¹¹L. Atzberger, *Geschichte der christlichen Eschatologie innerhalb der vorrnicaenischen Zeit*, Freiburg, 1896, p. 584ff.

is eternal death, and is called the second death to distinguish it from corporeal death. In this manner Lactantius takes one phase of the supernatural, namely, the freedom from death which the body will enjoy and with it characterizes the whole of the supernatural order. The whole supernatural eternal life is crystallized into one expression and placed in opposition to eternal death. Lactantius uses it as another instance to apply the dualistic conception of life in his writings. As matter is opposed to spirit, life to death, good to evil, so mortality is opposed to immortality. Bodily life is opposed to bodily death. Everlasting life of the soul or of the angels, is opposed to the eternal death of lost souls and the fallen angels respectively.

The angel is immortal in both the natural and the supernatural sense. The natural immortality is inadmissible. The supernatural immortality is his in a manner that is free from every threat or danger, but it does not constitute the same thing as the final fixed beatitude of the angel. According to Lactantius, it is but a part of this and leads to the final state.

4.

The Beatitude of the Angels

While the angel does not fear the loss of his supernatural state, the possibility of doing so is not excluded. The angel is not so fixed in good that he cannot fall. For the angel to be immortal is not the same as to be fixed in good.

In Lactantius we do not find any opinion mentioned as to the trial of the angels by means of which their state of immortality is won. He does not speak of it, but simply views the angels as existing in that state from their very creation. Many of them fall away from this state on being sent as the guardians of the human race.¹¹² The thought

¹¹²*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 1 (CSEL 19, 162 Brandt).

of a trial is contained in this mission to earth, but their happiness is not dependent on it. It is looked on as a condition of their happiness or woe, although in reality it is a determining factor of their eternal welfare or eternal damnation.

The angel is viewed after the fashion of the human being on earth, namely as essentially fallible. Despite his happiness the angel has a free will and according to Lactantius could fall from his heavenly free state as some actually did. This viewpoint again shows how Lactantius views the absolute perfection of God. He alone is absolutely and perfectly holy. In comparison to Him all else is weak and imperfect. All else trembles in his sight.¹¹³ The angels too fear the anger of God;¹¹⁴ this implies the possibility of a culpable guilt punishable by God.¹¹⁵

When a man dies, his lot is fixed irrevocably. This is also the case with the fallen angels, their lot is fixed irrevocably and there is no hope for pardon. Still, with regard to the good angels, Lactantius like others of the pre-Nicene period deferred their absolute permanence in good till after the Last Judgment. It is only after the final consummation that they will be absolutely and unalterably fixed in good, whereupon Lactantius says, they will view the punishment of the wicked; these will be punished forever in the sight of the just souls and the angels.¹¹⁶

¹¹³*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 21, 1, (CSEL 19, 650 Brandt): “. . . nam et angeli deum metuunt, quia castigari ab eo possunt, et daemones reformidant”; *De Ira Dei*, XXIII, 13 (CSEL 27, 130 Brandt): “Si tam lenis est quam philosophi volunt, quomodo ad nutum ejus non modo daemones et ministri tantae potestatis, sed et caelum et terra et rerum natura omnis contremescit.”

¹¹⁴cf. *De Ira Dei* V, 9 (CSEL 27, 75 Brandt).

¹¹⁵*Ibidem*.

¹¹⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 26, 7 (CSEL 19, 666, Brandt): “Sed dominus illorum cum ministris suis comprehendetur ad poenamque damnabitur, cum quo pariter omnis turba impiorum pro suis facinoribus in conspectu angelorum atque justorum perpetuo igni cremabitur in aeternum.”

CHAPTER III

THE ANGELS IN THE SCHEME OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

1.

The Angels as the Servants of God and the Ministers of Divine Providence

The reality of the angel as a fact in the world and the discussion of his nature lead to a consideration of the various relationships in which the angel stands and the activity in which he is engaged because of these relationships.

Because he is an intermediary, these relationships can be grouped according to the terms of his mediation, namely, first, his relationship to God; this brings up the further consideration of the relationship in which they stand toward Christ. Then from the other term of their mediation, namely, man, we are also brought into contact with the functions of the angel over the elements of the world and the power he exercises as a restraining influence over the evil spirits; this is particularly the case when we come to that phase of their ministry in which they are the guardians of mankind. Man must have a definite attitude toward the angel, for he is a great benefactor. The question therefore arises whether man owes the angel any cult.

The entire range of the activity of the angel can be called a service of God. The angel has been created to be God's minister. Still it can be taken in a more limited sense to mean the service the angel renders to God in the heavenly court as distinguished from that in which he serves God by being active in the government of the world. Lactantius does not distinguish sharply those angels who serve God in heaven from those who are busy about the elements on earth. They may be one and the same class of angel, now

busy on earth, now in heaven. There is no question however that there is a twofold service on the part of the angels, and that Lactantius distinguishes the two, for not all the angels are busy about the earth. Some of them are spoken of as the angels "who dwell in heaven".¹ Their work is to dwell "in God's presence to sacrifice to Him and serve Him forever".² The angels just as well as man must worship God as the highest good in their life. In the angel this is quite clear and evident. Lactantius does not have to defend it as he does in the case of human beings who are composed of matter as well as spirit³ and are therefore allured by matter to *forsake* God. Matter drags man down and tempts him. The angel's service of God, however, is one that is free from this constant struggle and temptation. The angel is a friend of God living with God and enjoying His presence. This is vividly expressed by Lactantius in a phrase that simply links the angels with God, for the Word of God is spoken of as "dwelling *in the sight of God and the Angels*".⁴ There can hardly be a way to show a more intimate association in which the angel performs his willing service of God. They are called the sons of God, but they are also servants. This distinction is not an idle one according to Lactantius. He thereby again stresses the fact that they are creatures. As sons they love and serve God as a loving Father, but in their capacity of servants, they stand in the sight of God in

¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 7, 2 (CSEL 19, 291 Brandt):
"...angeli...qui morantur in caelo..."

²*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 26, 5 (CSEL 19, 666 Brandt):
"...versabuntur semper in conspectu omnipotentis et domino suo sacrificabunt et servient in aeternum".

³*De Divinis Institutionibus* III, 9, 13 (CSEL 19, 200 Brandt):
"Atquin remotis omnibus officiis corporis in sola mente ponenda est hominis ratio. Non ergo ideo nascimur, ut ea quae sunt facta videamus, sed ut ipsum factorem rerum omnium contemplerur id est mente cernamus. Quare si quis hominem qui vere sapiat interroget, cujus rei causa natus sit, respondebit intrepidus ac paratus colendi se Dei gratia natum, qui ideo nos generavit, ut ei serviamus."

⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 14, 13 (CSEL 19, 327 Brandt):
"...aut aliquando in conspectu dei et angelorum steterunt".

trembling and in fear.⁵ God is the transcendently perfect master in whose sight they are imperfect. God rules all things and as their ruler they fear His anger which strikes terror into all the created world. "God", says Lactantius, "who is one, has a twofold person, He is both Father and Lord; we must love Him in so far as we are His sons, and we must fear Him in so far as we are His servant."⁶ The angels stand in the same relationship to God in heaven as men do on earth. There is this difference that they need no longer labor to win their immortal happiness as men must.

On the other hand, the angels are the exemplar of men in the human worship of God. Man's duty on earth is to imitate the service which the angels render to God in heaven, with the hope that he will one day be united with them rendering this service to God in heaven,⁷ for "God created man in order that he might have some one *on earth* who would call Him Creator and Father and would worship and adore Him as Lord. The world is created for man, but man is made for God".⁸

That the angel should fear God in his service of God in heaven seems strange, but it is easily understandable if the exalted idea of the transcendence of God is kept in mind. God was exalted to such an extent that He was made to recede from everything created. No creature could be present in his sight without fear and trembling. Some of

⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 21, 1 (CSEL 19, 650 Brandt): "Nam et angeli deum metuunt, quia castigari ad eo possunt inenarrabili quodam modo. . ."

⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 4, 2 (CSEL 19, 282 Brandt): "Deus autem, qui unus est, utramque personam sustinet et patris et domini, et amare eum debemus quia filii sumus, et timere quia servi."

⁷cf. above p. 57, note 2: E. Peterson, *Das Buch von den Engeln, Stellung und Bedeutung der heiligen Engel im Kultus*, Leipzig, 1935, p. 38ff.

⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 6, 1 (CSEL 19, 603 Brandt): "Ideo nascimur, ut agnoscamus factorem mundi ac nostri deum: ideo agnoscimus, ut colamus: ideo colimus, ut immortalitatem pro laborum mercede capiamus. . .ideo premio immortalitatis adficimur, ut similes angelis effecti summo patri ac domino in perpetuum serviamus"; cf. M. Heinig, *Die Ethik des Lactantius*, Grimma, 1887, p. 17.

this was undoubtedly due to the ideas of the Platonists who made God too perfect to care for creatures. In Lactantius this fear is further understandable when we remember that he did not ascribe a perfectly inamissible beatitude to the angels. The angel is immortal and happy, but the possibility of losing this exalted state is still there. Some of the angels in reality lost it.⁹ Lactantius like other early writers seems to have been afraid that the angels might be mistaken for something more than mere creatures; hence the repeated insistence on their finite character. The stress laid on the fact that the angels fear God and tremble in His presence brings this out plainly and forcibly.

The second kind of service which the angels render to God, according to Lactantius, is to be the ministers of Divine Providence. They help God in a secondary capacity. For although God had countless angels and "there are many spirits of angels in heaven,¹⁰ there is only one God, the Lord and parent of all things".¹¹ God Himself is the Ruler of the World and the Provider, in such a fashion that to deny either of these attributes necessarily entails a denial of God Himself.¹² God is also spoken of as active in the world. Lactantius cannot find a more worthy work than the government of the world:

And what greater and more worthy administration can be assigned to God than the government of the world, than the care of living beings, especially of man? . . . What is so worthy of God, and what is so proper to God besides Providence? If God does not care for anything or provide for anything, He loses all divinity.¹³

⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 1 (CSEL 19, 162 Brandt).

¹⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 5 (CSEL 19, 168 Brandt):
". . . multi spiritus in caelo. . ."

¹¹*Ibid.* II, 16, 5 (CSEL 19, 168 Brandt): "Et unus dominus ac parens omnium deus."

¹²*De Ira Dei*, IV, 4 (CSEL 27, 72 Brandt).

¹³*De Ira Dei*, IV, 4 (CSEL 27, 72 Brandt): "Et quae major, quae dignior administratio deo assignari potest quam mundi gubernatio, quam cura viventium maximeque generis humani. . . Quid tam dignum, tam proprium deo quam providentia? Sed si nihil curat, nihil providet, amisit omnem divinitatem."

And in a summing up of testimonies concerning Divine Providence, Lactantius brings forward the fact that God Himself is active: "These testimonies", he says, "clearly show that there is one rule and one power in the world whose origin cannot be fathomed and whose force cannot be described".¹⁴ In these and similar expressions, Lactantius refers Divine Providence and Divine Government back to God Himself, as God's own activity in the world.

In such expressions the angels seem to have very little or no part in the government of the world. In reality this is not the case. Lactantius does not mean that the action of God affects the government of the world immediately without the aid of secondary beings. God is indeed active, but Lactantius places the angels into the picture as the instruments of God in executing the government of the world.¹⁵ He explains the part the angels have in the government of the world by means of a comparison taken from civil life and government. God is compared to the chief official of a province, while the angels are likened to his subordinates through whom this higher official carries on the government of the province. Actually, the angels do the work, yet it is also the work of the superior because it is done under his command and under his vigilance. Lactantius says: "We say the world is ruled by God after the fashion of a ruler of a province. No one thinks that those magistrates who govern in his stead are partners in this rule, even though the affairs are executed by their ministry".¹⁶ Yet Lactantius

¹⁴*Epitome* VI, 1 (CSEL 19, 680 Brandt): "Haec igitur tot ac tanta testimonia liquido perdocent unum esse regimen in mundo unam potestatem, cujus nec origo excogitari nec vis enarrari potest." Cf. *De Ira Dei* X, 50 (CSEL 27, 94 Brandt): "... omnium sententia quamvis sit incerta eadem tamen spectat ut providentiam unam esse consentiant."

¹⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 7 (CSEL 19, 168 Brandt).

¹⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 7 (CSEL 19, 168 Brandt): "Sic enim mundum regi a deo dicimus ut a rectore provinciam cujus apparitores nemo socios esse in regenda provincia dixerit, quamvis illorum ministerio res geratur". Cf. *De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 3, 18, (CSEL 19, 10 Brandt); *ibid* I, 3, 10 (CSEL 19, 9 Brandt).

makes haste to point out the differences between a civil magistrate of this kind and the rule of the world as performed by the angels. A civil magistrate can evade the commands of his superior because the governor of a province is not present to all his subordinates; the angels cannot do this, for God is immediately present to them. Lactantius restricts this power of the angels as follows:

These indeed (the rulers or magistrates of a province) can go against the will of the governor by reason of his ignorance which is a human thing. The ruler of the world and the governor of the universe, Who knows all things, to whose eyes nothing is hidden, He alone has the power over all things, the angels have nothing else to do, but to obey his commands.¹⁷

Even while he brings forward the part that the angels have in the government of the world, Lactantius keeps a firm grip on anything that might restrict God's part as the directing mind and the one sole supreme power in the government of the world. The pagan might argue that the lesser gods have a care in the government of the world; Lactantius will not deny that there are secondary causes operating under the direction of one supreme cause, but he makes it clear that they are not independent beings. They have no character as gods, but only of ministers and satellites of one supreme ruler: "For since the followers of the gods are aware that Providence must be one, they say that the gods so preside over the separate offices and duties that there is still only one chief ruler"¹⁸ and he continues:

¹⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 8 (CSEL 19, 168 Brandt): "Et hi tamen possunt aliquid praeter iussa rectoris per ipsius ignorantiam, quae est condicionis humanae: ille autem praeses mundi et rector universi, qui scit omnia, cujus divinis oculis nihil saeptum est, solus habet rerum omnium potestatem nec est in angelis quicquam nisi parendi necessitas. . ."

¹⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 5 (CSEL 19, 168 Brandt): "Hi porro incesti ac vagi spiritus ut turbent omnia et errores humanis pectoribus offundant, serunt ac miscent falsa cum veris. Ipsi enim caelestes multos esse finxerunt unumque omnium regem Iovem eo, quod multi sint in caelo spiritus angelorum et unus dominus ac parens

The others therefore according to this principle cannot be gods, but only attendants and ministers whom the one most mighty and almighty appoints to their separate offices, while they themselves will be subservient to his authority and command. . . For if God is a title of the highest power, He must be incorruptible, perfect, incapable of suffering, and subject to no other being. Therefore they are not gods whom necessity compels to obey the one greatest god.¹⁹

In another comparison, these ministers of God, the governing angels are compared to the members of the body. Like the members of the human body, they fulfill and execute what the chief member the head has ordained.²⁰

Lactantius has this view in common with the other early writers. He does not carry out his explanation of it to as great detail as some of the others have done. The reason for this is the fact that he speaks of the part the angels play in the government of the world only indirectly, as a support of his proof of the unity of God and the necessity of a Divine Providence. In such a scheme, the place of the angels is that of finite secondary ministers. Lactantius does not devote any part of his work to point out the manner in which the angels carry out the designs of God. Justin had placed some of the angels as the servants of the throne of God while others were placed in the world to care for the different orders of created beings.²¹ This was done partial-

deus". Cf. J. Geffcken, *Zwei griechische Apologeten*, Leipzig, 1907, 197. J. Lortz, *Tertullian als Apologet*, Münster 1928, II, 31ff. E. Peterson, *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem*, Leipzig 1935, p. 46.

¹⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 3, 21ff (CSEL 19, 11 Brandt): "Quod quia intellegunt isti adsertores deorum, ita eos praeesse singulis rebus ac partibus dicunt, ut tamen unus sit rector eximius. iam erga ceteri non dii erunt, sed satellites ac ministri, quos ille unus maximus ac potens omnium iis officiis praefecerit, ut ipsi ejus imperio ac nutibus serviant. . . Nam si deus nomen est summae potestatis, incorruptibilis esse debet, perfectus impassibilis nulli rei subjectus. Ergo dii non sunt quos parere uni maximo deo necessitas cogit".

²⁰*De Ira Dei*, X, 44 (CSEL 27, 92 Brandt): "Sed sicut omne corpus mens et animus gubernat, ita et mundum deus. Nec enim veri simile est ut minora et humilia regimen habeant, majora et summa non habeant".

²¹Justin, *Apol.* II, 5, 2.

ly after the manner of the pagan subordination of various categories of creatures under different gods, as for example the gods over the crops and fruits,²² over the meadows and individual occupations.²³ These writers were also partially influenced by the apocryphal writings where fancy led the way, so that the least herb had its angel watching over it.²⁴ This was an inducement for them to work out the functions of the angels in great detail. Justin has special angels set over men. He says "God gave the care of men and of all things under heaven to the angels appointed over them".²⁵ According to Justin, this care over the world is a part of their trial; some of them transgressed God's law while caring for the world.²⁶ Athenagoras speaks of the "host of angels and servants of God whom the creator has appointed through the Word to control the elements of the world".²⁷ According to him, angels are set over the single created things to care for them and to provide for them. The angel has power over these single things confided to his care, but God retains the power over the entire world and reserves its general government to Himself.²⁸ Tertullian gives an example of the detail to which this development was sometimes carried. It was the opinion of Tertullian that the angels took a

²²H. Usener, *Götternamen*, Bonn, 1896, p. 258; F. Andres, "Daimon" in *Pauly Wissowa III Supplement* (1918) 270ff.

²³H. Usener, *Götternamen*, Bonn, 1896, 247.

²⁴O. Everling, *Die Paulinische Angelologie und Dämonologie*, Goettingen, 1888, p. 73.

²⁵Justin, *Apologia* II, 5, 2: ὁ θεὸς . . . τὴν μὲν τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῶν ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν πρόνοιαν ἀγγέλοις, οὓς ἐπὶ τούτοις ἔταξε, παρέδωκεν.

²⁶F. Andres, *Die Engellehre der griechischen Apologeten des zweiten Jahrhunderts*, Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte XII, Paderborn, 1914, p. 10.

²⁷Athenagoras, *Legatio X* (Schwartz 11): καὶ πλῆθος ἀγγέλων καὶ λειτουργῶν φαμεν, οὓς ὁ ποιητὴς καὶ δημιουργὸς κόσμον θεὸς διὰ τοῦ παρ' αὐτοῦ λόγου διένειμε καὶ διέταξεν περὶ τε τὰ στοιχεῖα εἶναι καὶ τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ τὸν κόσμον καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν τούτων εὐταξίαν.

²⁸Athenagoras, *De Resurrectione* XVIII (Schwartz 70): μηδὲν ἡγεῖσθαι μήτε τῶν κατὰ γῆν μήτε τῶν κατ' οὐρανὸν ἀνεπιτρόπευτον μηδ' ἀπροσῆτον, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πᾶν ἀφανὲς ὁμοίως καὶ φαινόμενον μικρὸν τε καὶ μείζον διήκουσαν γινώσκειν τὴν παρὰ τοῦ ποιήσαντος ἐπιμέλειαν.

very active part in the formation of the human embryo. He calls it a divine work, but explains it by saying the work is not done immediately by God but through the angels.

Now the entire process of sowing, forming and completing the human embryo in the womb is no doubt regulated by some power that ministers therein to the will of God, whatever may be the method which it is appointed to employ. Even the superstition of Rome, by attending to these points, imagined the goddess Alemonia to nourish the fetus in the womb, as well as the goddess Nona and Decima called after the most critical months of gestation; and Partula to manage and direct birth; and Lucina to bring the child to birth and to light of day. We on our part, believe the angels to officiate herein for God.²⁹

Lactantius himself illustrates a case of this kind in which he shows the activity of the angels as they operate in the government of the world. In speaking of the liberation of the Israelites from the bondage of the Egyptians and their passage through the Red Sea, Lactantius says: "God showed the power of His majesty. He carried the people through the middle of the Red Sea, His angel going before and dividing the water so that the people could walk over it as on dry land".³⁰ In *Exodus*, the description of the passage of the people through the Red Sea is described as follows:

And when Moses had stretched forth his hand over the sea, the Lord took it away by a strong and burning wind blowing all the night and

²⁹Tertullian *De Anima* XXXVII (Oehler 1054): "Omnem autem hominis in utero serendi, struendi, fingendi, paraturam aliqua utique potestas divinae voluntatis ministra modulatur, quamcumque illam rationem agitare sortita. Haec aestimando etiam superstitio Romana deam finxit Alemoniam alendi in utero fetus, Nonam et Decimam a sollicitioribus mensibus, et Partulam, quae partum gubernet, et Lucinam, quae producat in lucem. Nos officia divina angelos credimus."

³⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 10, 6 (CSEL 19, 302 Brandt); "Tum misertus eorum deus eduxit eos ac liberavit de manu regis Aegyptiorum post annos quadringentos et triginta duce Moyse per quem postea lex illis a deo data est. In qua educatione ostendit virtutem maiestatis suae deus. tranjecit enim populum medio mari rubro praecedente angelo et scindente aquam, ut populus per siccum gradi posset."

turning into dry ground and the water was divided. . . .for the water was a wall on their right and on their left.³¹

Where the book of *Exodus* speaks of God operating through the elements of the world, through the burning wind, which blew all night, Lactantius inserts the activity of the angel as actually doing this work of dividing the waters, as actually executing the commands of God.

It is impossible to determine the exact limits of the powers of the angels in the government of the world. Lactantius after the example of Tertullian and like the earlier apologists viewed them as busy in the world without paying too much attention to the limits of their power. There is one exception however. There is a definite limit set up by these early writers which is also mentioned indirectly by Lactantius: namely, that the angels had no power to create matter.³² Lactantius does not speak of it directly, but the way he stresses the fact that God is the Creator of all that exists; that everything that has any being must have come from Him as from a source, his view is plain enough.³³ The reason for this is that it is linked up with his proof for the unity of God. All things must come from one source. Lactantius says:

He who follows reason will understand that there can be only one Lord, there can be but one Father. If then God who created all things is both Father and Lord, He must be one, that the source of all things may be one. Otherwise, the sum total of creatures cannot exist unless all things are referred back to one who holds the reins and governs all the members as one mind.³⁴

³¹*Exodus* XIV, 21.

³²Justin, *Dial.* LXII; Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses* IV, 20, 1; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromatum* IV, 17.

³³*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 9, 5 (CSEL 19, 142 Brandt); III, 15, 5 (CSEL 19, 221 Brandt): "Et sicut unus est hujus mundi constitutor ac rector deus, una veritas, ita unam esse ac simplicem sapientiam necesse est. . ."

³⁴*Epitome* II, 1-2 (CSEL 19, 676-677 Brandt): "Sed qui rationem sequetur, intellet nec dominum esse posse nisi unum nec patrem nisi unum. Nam si deus, qui omnia condidit, et idem dominus et idem

And again: "Unless there is one who rules this earth, that is, He who also is its creator, then either it would have to go to pieces or could never have been created."³⁵

Passages like these point out to us that "the angel's sole duty is to obey God's commands" as Lactantius calls their activity. It tells us that they are limited and completely subordinate in power. Lactantius, indeed, ascribes power to them, but where there is any danger of conflict with one of the divine attributes, it is restricted sharply and definitely.

Most of what has been said about this ministry of the angels concerns itself with their activity as the ordinary ministers of Divine Providence. Concerning their extraordinary missions, Lactantius says very little. He mentions a few apparitions, which have already been spoken of, but he does not enter into any detail concerning this phase of the angels' activity. Although, as Prümmer³⁶ points out, in the early ages the consciousness of the functions of the angels was very pronounced because of the nearness of these writers to the high point in history which was accompanied by an extraordinary abundance of angelic apparitions and angelic activity, we find that Lactantius, unlike other writers of this period, did not stress the visible operation of the angels to any great extent, as this was beyond the scope of his work. His purpose is realized when he has shown their activity as the ministers of a paternal Providence and a loving government in the world.

pater est, unus sit necesse est, ut idem sit caput idemque fons rerum. Nec potest aliter rerum summa consistere, nisi ad unum cuncta referantur, nisi unus teneat gubernaculum, nisi unus frena moderetur regatque universa membra tamquam mens una. . ."

³⁵*Ibid.* "sic in hac mundi re publica nisi unus fuisset moderator qui et conditor aut soluta fuisset omnis haec moles aut ne condidit omnino potuisset. praeterea in multis non potest esse totum, cum singula sua, officia suas obtineant potestatis."

³⁶K. Prümmer, *Der christliche Glaube und die altheidnische Welt*, Leipzig, 1935, I, 137;

2.

The Angels in their Relations to Christ

Lactantius often speaks of the angels in connection with his expressions concerning the Word of God. This is not done with a view to point out their functions toward Christ, but to compare the angels with the Word of God; to point out their relationship to the Word of God in so far as both the Word and the angels are "Spirits of God" and "produced by God". Some of this has already been mentioned when speaking of the created nature of the angel.³⁷ Although some differences are always pointed out, the manner of doing this is not always perfectly clear, so that the angels and the Word of God appear to be alike in certain respects. Thus Lactantius in a passage in the *Epitome* says:

God, in the beginning, before He founded the world, from the fountain of his eternity and from His divine and everlasting spirit (*divino ac perenni spiritu*) produced an incorruptible and faithful Son... then from among all the angels which the same God formed from His breaths, only He was admitted to share His power; He alone was called God.³⁸

Although Lactantius here speaks of the Word as one of the angels, he does not say they are equal in nature. Lactantius leans considerably toward Subordinationism. He places the Word under the Father,³⁹ but still he distinguishes the

³⁷Cf. below, pp. 29-41.

³⁸*Epitome* XXXVII, 1-3 (CSEL, 19, 712 Brandt): "Deus in principio antequam mundum institueret, de aeternitatis suae fonte deque divino ac perenni spiritu suo filium sibi ipse progenit incorruptum fidelem, virtuti ac maiestati patriae respondentem...denique ex omnibus angelis, quos idem deus de suis spiritibus figuravit, solus in consortium summae potestatis adscitus est, solus deus nuncupatus". F. J. Doelger, *Ichthys*, I, *Das Fischsymbol in den antiken Religionen und in Christentum*, Rome, 1910, 273 ff.

³⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 8, 4 (CSEL 19, 129-130 Brandt); J. Tixeront, *The History of Dogmas* Tr. H. L. B. 2d ed. St. Louis, 1921, I, 415-417.

Word sharply from the angels. This is seen, if we compare the passage just cited with its corresponding passage of which that already given is an extract:

God before He began this wonderful work of the world, begot a holy and incorruptible spirit, whom He called His son and although He afterwards created innumerable others whom we call angels, only this first-born was given (*dignatus est*) the divine name as having the divine power and majesty. That he is the Son of the highest God, who is possessed of greatest power, is not only the testimony of all the prophets, but also the preaching of Trismegistos and is shown by the Sibylline Oracles. . . .⁴⁰

The angels and the Word are brought together, yet the difference between them is pointed out more clearly than in the preceding passage. God *begot* the Son and *only later created the angels*. If the Word is again subordinated to the Father, He nevertheless "was given the divine name as having divine power and majesty". Furthermore, the fact is pointed out that the Word is the Son of God and is one with God.

The similarity between the Word and the angels is not always stressed. There are other passages in which Lactantius shows the distinction between the person of the Word and that of the angels. By comparing the similarity and noting the differences, the position of the angels and the Word will be seen to be this: that while Lactantius may be said to look on the Word as an angel and to speak of him in that way, as we have seen, yet the relations of the Word and the angels toward God the Father are entirely different. The similarity is a similarity of origin. The Word is one

⁴⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 6, 1-2 (CSEL 19, 286 Brandt): "Deus igitur. . .antequam praeclarum hoc opus mundi adoriretur, sanctum et incorruptibilem spiritum genuit, quem filium nuncuparet. Et quamvis alios postea innumerabiles creavisset, quos angelos dicimus, hunc tamen solum primogenitum divini nominis appellatione dignatus est, patria scilicet virtute ac maiestate pollentem. Esse autem summi dei filium qui sit potestate maxima praeditus, non tantum congruentes in unum voces prophetarum, sed etiam Trismegisti praedicatio et Sibyllarum vaticinia demonstrant."

with the Father, while the angels are the ministering servants of the Word as well as of the Father.

The similarities which Lactantius brings forward are due to the origin of both the Word of God and the angels as *spirits of God*.⁴¹ Then, secondly, both the Word of God and the angels are spoken of as spirits who were "made" and who were "created": "He is born as a man of the virgin without a father, so that as he was *created* in the first spiritual birth, by God, *He was made a holy spirit*, so in the second carnal birth of a mother alone, he was made a holy flesh".⁴² Thirdly, although Lactantius speaks of the great difference existing between the Word of God and the other spirits, as the *spoken word of God* and *silent spirits* respectively⁴³ he still compares "this son and the rest of the angels"⁴⁴ and calls the Word the *Primogenitum* and the *principem angelorum*.⁴⁵

The differences expressed by Lactantius however make it clear that Lactantius did not identify the Word and the angels by nature. He can speak of the Word as one of the angels, by reason of the common origin as spirits of God; yet he misunderstood this latter, since he made the Word dependent on the Father.

Some distinction is pointed out even when he compares the angels and the Word. The greatest difference, however, is that the Word is called the Son of God. The Father and

⁴¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 8, 6 (CSEL 19, 296 Branát): "Primum. . .illum dei filium dei esse neminem itemque ceteros angelos dei spiritus esse. . ."

⁴²*Epitome* XXVIII, 9, (CSEL 19, 715 Brandt): "Renatus est ergo ex virgine sine patre tamquam homo, ut quemadmodum in prima natiuitate spiritali *creatus [est] ex solo deo sanctus spiritus factus est*, sic in secunda carnali ex sola matre genitus caro sancta fieret. . ."

⁴³Cf. above, p. 30, note 6.

⁴⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 8, 7 (CSEL 19, 296 Brandt): "magna inter hunc dei filium ceterosque angelos differentia est. . ."

⁴⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 6, 1-2 (CSEL 19, 286 Brandt) cf. above, p. 60, note 40; *De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 14, 17 (CSEL 19, 328 Brandt): ". . .filium suum principem angelorum legavit ad homines, ut eos converteret. . .ab iniquitate ad iustitiae opera traduceret. . ."

the Son are spirits, and they are one.⁴⁶ "For God produced a spirit like unto Himself who was endowed with the powers of God".⁴⁷ Such a comparison is never made of the angels. They are sons of God in a much wider and looser sense, which is applicable to human beings as well.⁴⁸ It is particularly noteworthy that Lactantius says: "Through Him (the Word-incarnate) God wanted to be acknowledged and adored. . . not as though there were two Gods, for the Father and the Son are one. For since the Father loves the son, He has given Him all things . . ." ⁴⁹ Because the Father and the Son are one, the Son must be given the honor due to God Himself. This is a thing that Lactantius denies strenuously to the angels. He says: "Since they are immortal, they will not suffer themselves to be called gods, nor do they desire worship".⁵⁰ Finally, as already pointed out elsewhere, the angels did not know the name of the Word of God whereby He is known to the Father. That name is known only to the Word and to the Father, showing the equality existing between the Father and the Son.⁵¹

From this it is clear that, notwithstanding certain expressions in which this similarity is brought forward, the angel according to Lactantius is just a ministering servant in his relations to Christ. Lactantius is consistent with his teaching concerning their created finite nature and the angels' functions toward God.

⁴⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 29, 4 (CSEL 19, 392 Brandt).

⁴⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 8, 3 (CSEL 19, 129 Brandt): "...produxit (Deus) similem sui spiritum, qui esset virtutibus patris dei praeditus. . ."

⁴⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 4, 1-2 (CSEL 19, 282 Brandt) cf. above p. 58, note 6.

⁴⁹*Epitome* XLIV, 2, 2ff (CSEL 19, 722-723 Brandt): "Per illum (Christum) se deus et agnosci et coli voluit. . . nec tamen sic habendum est, tanquam duo sint dici. Pater enim ac filius unum sunt. Cum enim pater filium diligit omniaque ei tribuat et filius patri fideliter obsequatur nec velit quidquam nisi quod pater, non potest utique necessitudo tanta divelli, ut duo esse dicantur in quibus et substantia et voluntas et fides una est."

⁵⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 6 (CSEL 19, 168 Brandt).

⁵¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 7, 1ff (CSEL 19, 291-292 Brandt).

This comparison of the angels with Christ is understandable. Christ is the perfect mediary between God and man. In a certain sense he has an angelic function of carrying the greatest message of God to man. Christ is called the angel of the Testament in Sacred Scripture.⁵² Lactantius also speaks of him as the medium between God and man: "Wherefore, since He was God, He became flesh in order to become a medium between God and man, so that having overcome death He might lead men to God".⁵³ Lactantius, however, speaks of this too much like some of the Gnostics who even numbered Christ among the angels. For Lactantius, however, the comparison is due to his inaccuracy of expression. This is an instance in which he uses language loosely, as when he speaks of the generation of spirits as the breaths of God, and of human souls as "made of God" (*constare ex Deo*).⁵⁴ Of the Word incarnate he says also, that he "was God in man and man in God".⁵⁵

Taking all the various expressions concerning the angels and the Word of God, the attitude of Lactantius is seen to be that which he has given in the passage where he speaks of the second coming of Christ. There the angels are the companions and the servants of Christ. They are his ministers, descending with Him to fight His battles and those of the just.⁵⁶

⁵²*Malachy* III, 1: "Ecce ego mitto angelum meum et praeparabit viam ante faciem meam; et statim veniet ad templum suum dominator quem vos quaeritis et *angelus testamenti quem vos vultis*".

⁵³*Epitome* XXXIX 7 (CSEL 19, 716 Brandt): "Idcirco igitur cum deus esset, suscepit carnem, ut inter deum et hominem medius factus hominem ad deum magisterio suo superata morte perduceret".

⁵⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 12, 9 (CSEL 19, 156 Brandt).

⁵⁵*Epitome* XXXIX, 3 (CSEL 19, 715 Brandt): "Emmanuel, quod significat nobiscum deus. Fuit enim nobiscum in terra, cum induit carnem, et nihilominus deus fuit in homine et homo in deo..."

⁵⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 19, 5 (CSEL 19, 645 Brandt): "Cadet repente gladius e caelo...et descendet comitantibus angelis in medium terrae et antecedit eum flamma inextinguibilis et virtus angelorum tradet in manus justorum multitudinem illam quae montem circum sederit..."

3.

The Angels as the Ministers and the Guardians of Mankind

In proportion as the need of Divine government is stressed by Lactantius, to that extent also the actual ministry of the angels toward men is witnessed to, for the angels are the ministers through whom God, the Divine Supreme Governor of the universe, carries on his government of the World.⁵⁷ Man as the king of the visible creation is the beneficiary of all this activity. Some of it is given to man directly, but much of it is done so, indirectly: this latter is bestowed by the angels in their care of the world. The angels not only regulate the visible world, but they also help men positively in his struggle against the forces of evil. It is not only a question of protection and defence against evil, but also a help to better his condition. Lactantius speaks of this saying: "When, therefore, the number of men began to increase, a Provident God foreseeing lest the devil, through a deceitful abuse of the power which God had given him over the earth, might corrupt men or destroy that which He had made in the beginning, sent His angels both for the protection and the *betterment* of the human race".⁵⁸ It was not to be merely a negative warding off of any danger or harm, but also a building up of the human race through the help of the angels. In the *Epitome* Lactantius words the thought in much the same way: "When God saw this, He sent His angels to improve the life of men and to protect them from every evil".⁵⁹

⁵⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 7 (CSEL 19, 168; Brandt); VII, 4, 8 (CSEL 19, 594 Brandt).

⁵⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 1 (CSEL 19, 162 Brandt): "Cum ergo numerus hominum coepisset increscere, providens deus ne fraudibus suis diabolus, cui ab initio dederat terrae potestatem, vel corrumperet homines vel disperderet, quod in exordio fecerat, misit angelos ad tutelam cultumque humani generis".

⁵⁹*Epitome* XXII, 9 (CSEL 19, 695 Brandt): "...quod Deus cum videret, angelos suos misit ut vitam hominum excolerent eosque ab omni malo tuerentur."

Details concerning the manner in which this help is given to mankind are not told us by Lactantius. Nor does he tell us whether this ministry of the angels is that performed by the guardian angels strictly so called or whether it is distinct from it and pertains to the angels in general. Very likely, he refers it to the guardian angels strictly so called. The reason for this is that he speaks of the angels who had been sent as the guardians of men as falling into sin while they dwelt among men.⁶⁰ These are the angels who had been sent to better the human race and to protect men from the wiles of the devil.

In speaking of this guardianship, Lactantius gives only the general statement that the angels were sent to guard men, and, later, he says that the fallen angels wish to be known as the guardians of men because they were such in reality formerly.⁶¹ He does not speak of individuals having their single guardian angel, and, consequently, there is no reason to speak of any further reservation whether this benefit belongs to Christians alone⁶² or also to pagans, as was sometimes done by other writers.⁶³

Lactantius however certainly believed in the guardianship of individual men, even though the limits of this cannot be determined. He says the evil spirits cling to individual men because they wish to appear in the guise of guardians.⁶⁴ They do so because they seek solace and comfort for their loss in seeking to ruin those for whose protection they had been sent. There is an underlying concept in this which shows that he held to the guardianship of individual men. Besides, this was a tradition common not only to Christian-

⁶⁰cf. *De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14 passim (CSEL 19, 162 Brandt); II, 16 (CSEL 19, 168ff Brandt); *Epitome* XXII (CSEL 19, 695 Brandt).

⁶¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 8 (CSEL 19, 164 Brandt): Sed et ipsi, cum sint perditores hominum, custodes tamen se videri volunt," the reason being: "quoniam custodes eos humano generi deus miserat. . ."

⁶²Origen, *De Principiis* II, 10 (PG XIII, 1889-1890).

⁶³*Ibid.*

⁶⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 12 (CSEL 19, 164 Brandt).

ity, which derived it from the Jews, but even pagan circles believed in guardian spirits.⁶⁵ Here, it is important to recall that Lactantius, at least for his apologetical purposes, always questions the character of the spirits accompanying the pagan. To Lactantius these are the demons, the fallen angels. This may be an indication that he restricts the guardianship of the angels to the just and to the Christians. Very likely, as we shall see later on, Lactantius was of the opinion that there was an evil spirit accompanying individual men; this does not argue against the universality of the guardianship of the angels.⁶⁶

The work of the angels in so far as they are guardians as distinct from their activity in general is not determined by Lactantius except that it is a special phase of the improvement and protection of the human race.

Lactantius differs from the other writers in the way in which he speaks of the time when the angels were assigned as the guardians of men. He alone allows a lapse of time between the fall of mankind and the sending of the angels to be the protectors of men. He says: "When, therefore, the number of men had begun to increase. . . , God sent His angels . . .".⁶⁷ And in another reference we read: "Nor did he (Satan) cease from infusing the venom of malice into the breast of man through each generation, nor did he cease from corrupting them with such crimes that an instance of justice became rare, so that men lived after the manner of beasts." At this point, Lactantius says: "When God saw this, he sent His angels to instruct the race of men and to

⁶⁵F. Andres, "Daimon": *Pauly-Wissowa* III Supplement (1918) 287; H. Usener, *Götternamen*, Bonn, 1896, 296ff; A. C. Pearson, "Demons and Spirits" *Hastings, Ency.* IV, 591ff; F. Andres, *Die Engellehre der griechischen Apologeten des zweiten Jahrhunderts*, Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte XII, Paderborn 1914, 137ff, 141, 146.

⁶⁶Cf. below, pp. 81-91.

⁶⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 1 (CSEL 19, 162 Brandt): "Cum ergo numerus hominum coepisset increescere. . ."

protect them from every evil".⁶⁸ The lapse of time as given by Lactantius is indefinite, but as Isaeus points out, Lactantius referred it to the time prior to the Deluge.⁶⁹ His expression "instances of justice being now rare" seems to refer to the account of Genesis just prior to the Deluge.⁷⁰ The fall of the angels is linked up with this period of time also, taking place some time prior to the destruction of men by the waters of the Deluge.⁷¹ Lactantius here⁷² speaks in a manner similar to Tertullian. The latter in a reference to the account of Genesis concerning the marriage of the "sons of God and the daughters of men" says: "For thus does Scripture withal suggest: 'and it came to pass,' it says, 'when men had begun to grow more numerous upon the earth, there were daughters born to them; the sons of God, having seen the daughters of men that they were fair, took to themselves wives of all whom they chose' ".⁷³ This wedding of the sons of God and the daughters of men is the fall of the angels according to Tertullian,⁷⁴ and also Lactan-

⁶⁸*Epitome* XXII 8, CSEL 19, 695 Brandt): "Nec quievit (Diabolus) deinceps quominus per singulas generationes pectoribus hominum malitiae virus infunderet, corrumperet depravaret, tantis denique sceleribus obrueret, ut iustitiae iam rarum esset exemplum, sed viverent homines ritu beluarum..." *Ibid.* XXII, 9 (CSEL 19, 695 Brandt): "Quod Deus cum videret, angelos suos misit, ut vitam hominum excolerent eosque ab omni malo tuerentur..."

⁶⁹J. Isaeus, *Nota in Secundum Librum Divinarum Institutionum*, (PL VI 935-936).

⁷⁰*Genesis* VI, 5 and 8.

⁷¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 1 (CSEL 19, 162ff Brandt).

⁷²*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 2 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt): "Itaque illos cum hominibus commorantes dominator ille terrae fallacissimus consuetudine ipsa paulatim ad vitia pellexit et mulierum congressibus inquinavit."

⁷³Tertullian, *De Virginibus Velandis* VII (Oehler 522): "Nam et scriptura sic suggerit: Et factum est, inquit, cum coepissent homines plures fieri super terram, et filiae natae sunt eis; conspicati autem filii dei filias hominum, quod pulchrae essent, acceperunt sibi uxores ex omnibus quas elegerunt".

⁷⁴Tertullian, *De Virginibus Velandis* VII (Oehler 522) "Si enim propter angelos, scilicet quos legimus a deo et caelo excidisse ob concupiscentiam feminarum..." cf. *De Cultu Feminarum* I, 2 (Oehler 355); *De Idololatria*, 9 Oehler 39-40).

tius, as we shall see in the next Chapter. Tertullian however, does not say anything about their designation as guardians of men.

The angels as the guardians of men are set over men as instructors and monitors. This shows the relationship that is to exist between them. Man's attitude is to be one of obedience and subjection. He is to follow the lead of the angels, and consequently some reverence is already implied in the very relationship that exists between man and angel. This is the so-called relative cult of the angel.

When Lactantius therefore denies all cult to the angel and says: "Nor is there anything in the angel except the necessity to obey (God)"⁷⁵ and "They do not wish *any honor* paid to them, since their honor is in God",⁷⁶ the circumstances in which he says this have to be considered in order to understand in what way he considers the cult he denies to the angels, and what he considers in the "honor" that is to be withheld from them. Lactantius is strong in his language in denying the cult of the angel. The reason is that he takes cult in the strict sense of the term as the worship which is due to God (*latría*). The angels have no right to this kind of cult: "Neither do they wish to be called gods or worshipped as such".⁷⁷ The context of these expressions shows clearly enough in what meaning Lactantius takes this denial of cult: the angel must worship God as well as man must. It is quite evident that man may not give the worship that is due to God to anyone else but God. It is just in this that the evil spirits fail and cause men to fail. They

⁷⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 8 (CSEL 168 Brandt): "nec est in angelis quicquam nisi parendi necessitas."

⁷⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 9 (CSEL 168 Brandt): "...itaque nullum sibi honorem tribui volunt, quorum honor omnis in deo est..."

⁷⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 6 (CSEL 19, 168 Brandt): "...neque angeli...dici se deos aut patiuntur aut volunt..."

seek for themselves the worship that is due to God so that men cease to worship the true God.⁷⁸

Lactantius certainly excludes and forbids men to worship the angels in the strict meaning of the term worship. But he does not exclude the reverence due to them as benefactors of the human race and as the close friends of God. This is implicit in the relation in which men stand to the angels and also in that which men will have in the next life, when men and angels shall be associated together in the eternal worship of God, forming the eternal kingdom of God.⁷⁹

The severity of the language of Lactantius has its cause in the struggle of these early centuries of Christianity against both angel and demon cults. The Gnostics worshipped angels, Celsus pleaded that demons have a right to worship. There was a twofold difficulty with which these early writers had to contend. As Leclercq reminds us, there was always the danger that the pagans might confound intermediaries with God to form a kind of Christian Pantheon. On the other hand, the Gnostics gave rise to endless sects with a fantastic display of spiritual beings and eons. "A great reserve alone would permit the church to avoid this double peril, each of which tended to give rise to a sort of polytheism opposed to the essence of Christianity".⁸⁰ Lactantius like others is rather reactionary, his ex-

⁷⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 10 (CSEL 19, 169 Brandt); *ibid.*, I, 7, 5 (CSEL 19, 26 Brandt): "Verum hi neque dii sunt neque deos se vocari aut coli volunt. . . ." Cf. G. Bareille, "Le culte des anges à l'époque des Pères de l'Eglise", RT VIII (1900) 41ff; H. Leclercq, "Anges", *DACL* I, 2, 2144; E. Lucius (G. Anrich), *Die Anfänge des Heiligenkults in der christlichen Kirche*, Tübingen, 1904, p. 10ff; E. Peterson, *Das Buch von den Engeln, Stellung und Bedeutung der heiligen Engel im Kultus*, Leipzig, 1935, p. 36ff.

⁷⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 7, 2 (CSEL 19, 292 Brandt).

⁸⁰H. Leclercq, "Anges", *DACL* I, 2, 2144: "Une grande réserve devait seule permettre d'éviter ces deux écueils qui aboutissaient à une sorte de polythéisme en opposition avec l'essence du Christianisme."

pressions tend to go against the cult of angels altogether because of this danger. It is not, however, a condemnation of cult in the wider sense of reverence and veneration for one who constantly sees God, and who is always looked on as holy and saintly.

Other early writers mention the reverence given to the angels. Justin in refuting the charge of atheism acknowledges the cult of the angels.⁸¹ So too Athenagoras says that Christians do not only have a cult which extends to Father, Son and Holy Ghost, but that they also acknowledge the angelic hosts.⁸² The way the angels are spoken of as the holy angels, and hosts of God is a mark of reverence and a kind of cult.

There are a number of points connected with the guardianship of men by the angels about which Lactantius does not speak. For example, he says nothing about the angels of the nation; nor of the special protection given by St. Michael in favor of the church. Because of the general mode of presentation, the minute details about the guardianship of the angels which Origen gives are wholly wanting in Lactantius.

⁸¹Justin, *Apologia* I, 6.

⁸²Athenagoras *Legatio* X.

PART II.
DEMONOLOGY OF LACTANTIUS

CHAPTER I

THE REALITY OF THE DEMONS

1.

The Notion of the Demons

The age in which Lactantius lived still merited the characterization that was given by Geffcken¹ to the age of the Greek Apologists, namely, that "it was an age that was constantly speaking and writing of demons".² This is true not only of the Christian writers of the time, but also of their pagan contemporaries. These too were very greatly influenced by their belief in demons and evil spirits. This belief was both ancient and universal. Popular beliefs were centered around it; the philosophers were influenced by it. In fact, the difference in the religious views of the philosophers and those of the popular beliefs is pointed out in the place and importance each of them assigned to the demons.³ Lactantius in attempting a refutation of paganism is largely penning a refutation of the pagan demonology, because of the close identification he established between the pagan religions and the demons. This accounts both for the frequency in his references to the demons and the hostile attitude which he assumes in treating of them.

The demonology of Lactantius is spoken of in a manner similar to his angelology. There is a complete angelology and there is a complete demonology, but like the former, the latter is presented in its more general aspects, rather than in finely detailed pictures. There is a great abundance of

¹J. Geffcken, *Zwei griechische Apologeten*, Leipzig, 1907, p. 212.

²*Ibid.*

³P. Scholz, *Die Ehen der Söhne Gottes mit den Töchtern der Menschen*, Regensburg, 1865, p. 100; Ch. Michel, "Les bons et les mauvais esprits dans les croyances populaires de l'ancienne Grèce" *RHLR* I (1910 N. S.) 193.

detail, but it concerns itself with a limited number of aspects, such as the part the evil spirits or demons have in pagan worship, in influencing men toward evil, and their hostility towards the Christians.

In studying the demonology of Lactantius his truly singular viewpoint must be kept in mind. He frequently refers to the demons of the pagans but in doing so he restricts the meaning of the term demon to the Christian concept of demon, as a fallen evil spirit. This fact stands out prominently and really makes it easier to treat his doctrine of evil spirits. Lactantius certainly realized that the pagans did not think of demons in the same way as he did, yet he uses that viewpoint when he writes of the demons. He wants to bring the pagans forward as witnesses to what he has to say about the demons. He does not take into cognizance the various ways in which pagan literature uses the term, nor that these uses might be quite different from what he has in mind. He pays no attention to this, but supposes that, for the purpose he has in mind, the meaning is the very same. For Lactantius, the demon is the exact counterpart of the good angels. This already shows how he speaks of them; as the angels are the intermediaries of God, in a good sense, so the demons are the intermediaries of evil, of all that is opposed to God. Whether the pagan looked on the demon as a kindly or a hostile being is of little importance to Lactantius as, in either case, he simply classes them among the evil spirits who are always harmful to man and inimical to God and to men.

This fact stands out the more sharply, if we briefly enumerate the ways in which the pagans viewed the demons. Some of this has already been touched upon when considering the notion of the angel in antiquity. The two terms angel and demon cannot always be kept apart; in ancient literature they are frequently interchanged.

Etymologically, the word demon is usually derived from *δαίωμα* meaning to distribute or to divide. The demon, is a distributor, usually of destinies. Lactantius recalls the opinion of Plato, that demon might come from *δαήμονας*

meaning one who is skilled and learned, because, says he, "Grammarians say demons were gods by reason of their skill and their knowledge."⁴ Very early in history the term demon had a religious and a spiritual signification, and was referred to the other-world.⁵ In its religious signification it was used in a threefold sense in pagan antiquity, namely: for gods, intermediaries, and for the souls of the dead without any direct connection with intermediaries. These three senses are further developed into a very intricate and complex maze of meanings, but as Lactantius does not take these meanings into consideration, it is enough for the present purpose to point out the fundamental meanings.

What has been said with regard to the use of the term *angelos* for *theos*, is true of *daimon* in a more proper sense than of *angelos* itself. *Daimon* was used as a synonym for *theos*.⁶ The latter in Homer, referred to the person of God while *daimon* referred to the activity of God particularly in those instances where an explicit reference to God was deemed to be unbecoming or out of place. Thus when speaking of the wrath of the gods, or of the gods sending calamities to men, *daimon* was preferred to *theos*. *Daimon* thereby began to take on some of the significations of the harmful and began to be used for those sudden accidental happenings which befall man, such as death, sudden misfortune, and the like.⁷ According to Dibelius, it was this

⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 14, 6 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt): "...daemonas autem grammatici dictos aiunt quasi δαίμονας, id est peritos ac rerum scios: hos enim putant deos esse"; cf. Plato: *Cratyl.* 398B (Engelmann): ὅτι φρόνιμοι καὶ δαίμονες ἦσαν, δαίμονας αὐτοὺς ὠνόμασε. καὶ ἔν γε ῥῆ ἀρχαία τῇ ἡμετέρα φωνῇ αὐτὸ συμβαίνει τὸ ὄνομα· λέγει οὖν καλῶς καὶ οὗτος καὶ ἄλλοι ποιεῖται πολλοὶ ὅσοι λέγουσιν ὡς ἐπειδὴν τις ἀγαθὸς ὦν τελευτήσῃ, μεγάλην μοῖραν καὶ τιμὴν ἔχει καὶ γίγνεται δαίμων κατὰ τὴν τῆς φρονήσεως ἐπωνυμίαν.

⁵M. Dibelius, *Die Geisterwelt im Glauben des Paulus*, Göttingen, 1909, 221; cf. J. Lortz, *Tertullian als Apologet*, Münster 1928, II, 32.

⁶M. Dibelius, *op. cit.* p. 223; F. Andres, "Daimon" *Pauly-Wissowa Supplement III* (1918) 280-282.

⁷M. Dibelius, *op. cit.* 223.

use of *daimon* for God which led the translators of the Septuagint to use *daimonion* in preference to *daimon* when speaking of the evil spirits.⁸ *Daimonion* had a more restricted meaning; it represented those spirits of the popular religions toward whom man took up an attitude of aversion and horror.⁹ The *daimon* of Homer was not an intermediary in the strict sense, he was not a dependent being, but a god in his own right.

The earliest use of a demon acting as an intermediary is that mentioned by Hesiod in his *Works and Days*.¹⁰

After the earth covered this race,
They are the demons, according to the will of the great God,
The guardians of mortal men.

Hesiod's demons are the souls of those men who lived in the Golden Age, but who after their death became demons watching over the rest of men. The demon here is of a lower nature than the demon of Homer, but he is still largely independent and vaguely autonomous. He is half-god, and half-creature. From the time of Hesiod on, the demons were sometimes intermediaries of good and sometimes of evil. They performed the manifold functions ascribed to the angels and to the demons of the Christians. In Hesiod they are mentioned as the guardians of men, much after the fashion of guardian angels. As we have already seen, Lactantius takes up a part of the above quotation to show that Hesiod knew of the demons, for he is brought forward as a

⁸*Ibid.* p. 223.

⁹H. Kaupel, *Die Dämonen im Alten Testament*, Augsburg, 1930, pp. 23ff., 92ff.; W. Foerster, "Die alttestamentliche und spätjüdische Dämonenanschauung"; G. Kittel, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, II Stuttgart, 1935, p. 12; W. Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter* (Handbuch zum Neuen Testament 21) 3rd ed., Göttingen, 1926, pp. 320ff., 332ff.

¹⁰Hesiod, *The Works and Days*, 121-123: *αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ τοῦτο γένος κατὰ γαῖ' ἐκάλυψε | τοὶ μὲν δαιμονέες εἰσι Διὸς μεγάλου διὰ βουλᾶς | ἔσθλοί, ἐπιχθόνιοι, φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων.* Cf. G. C. Ring, *Gods of the Gentiles*, Milwaukee, 1938, p. 204-205.

witness to the fall of the angels.¹¹ Hesiod viewed them as the souls of the departed who had lived on earth at one time, and now were dwelling above the earth. However, since he mentioned that they were demons, Lactantius identifies them with the evil spirits.¹²

Even among the pagans themselves, the intermediaries of the lower classes began to be looked on as harmful¹³ at a time considerably later. All who were considered harmful were placed in the class of the demons. Sometimes they still had the character of secondary gods, at other times they were spoken of as dependent beings, or as souls of the departed. It was only relatively late, however, that the concept of the demon approached nearer to that of the Christian idea of demon, namely as a finite dependent being entirely and completely evil. Prophyrius recognized some of these demons, who were completely evil, and essentially dependent beings.¹⁴

In the third place, the pagan writers used the term *daimon* for the souls of the departed. This is not to be confused with that other usage in which the souls of the departed were spoken of in demonological connections as in-

¹¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 7 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt): cf. above, p. 11, note 34; R. Pichon, *Lactance, étude sur le mouvement philosophique et religieux sous le règne de Constantin*, Paris 1901, p. 208ff.

¹²Cf. above, pp. 3-28.

¹³H. Usener, *Götternamen*, Bonn, 1896, p. 248; M. Dibelius *Die Geisterwelt im Glauben des Paulus*, Göttingen, 1909, p. 222.

¹⁴Prophyrius, *De abstinencia* II, 40: *τρέπουσιν τε μετὰ τοῦτο ἐπὶ λιτανείας ἡμᾶς καὶ θυσίας τῶν ἀγαθοεργῶν θεῶν, ὡς ὠργισμένων. ταῦτα δὲ καὶ τὰ ὅμοια ποιοῦσιν μεταστῆσαι ἡμᾶς ἐθέλοντες ἀπὸ τῆς ὀρθῆς ἐννοίας τῶν θεῶν καὶ ἐφ' ἑαυτούς ἐπιστέψαι. πᾶσι γὰρ τοῖς οὕτως ἀνομολόγως καὶ ἀκαταλλῆλως γινομένοις αὐτοὶ χαίρουσι καὶ ὡσερ ὑποδύντες τὰ τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν πρόσωπα τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀβουλίας ἀπολαύουσι προσεταιριζόμενοι τὰ πλήθη διὰ τοῦ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐκκαίειν ἔρωσι καὶ πόθοις πλούτων.* Cf. F. Andres, *Die Engellehre der griechischen Apologeten des zweiten Jahrhunderts und ihr Verhältnis zur griechisch-römischen Dämonologie*, Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte XII, Paderborn, 1914, p. 155. M. Pohlenz, *Vom Zorne Gottes*, Göttingen, 1909, pp. 144-146.

intermediaries. Here it simply meant the souls of the departed in general without implying any such connection.¹⁵ Lactantius, however, makes no reference to this usage.

Of these three large divisions, Lactantius is concerned chiefly with the second, in which the demons appear as intermediaries, but even then it is with the restricted viewpoint already referred to. He rejects the notion that the demons might be real gods; but not vice versa, that the gods of the pagans, unreal as divinities, are nevertheless the evil spirits. In fact he makes every effort to identify them with the evil spirits in order to show how degrading the worship of the pagans really is. It is true that he sometimes speaks of the pagan gods as worthless idols, or in other connections as mythological conceptions and purely human inventions, yet even when he does so, he does not exclude the fact that the demons have a part in it.¹⁶ He tries to transfer the pagan idea of the gods to the second class of intermediaries, to the demons, in order to identify the two classes: gods and evil spirits.

From the effort of Lactantius to link the whole of pagan demonology together under the one heading of evil spirits, regardless of the viewpoint of the ancient writers, a three-fold difference arises between his usage and that of the ancient writers, much as was the case with regard to the usage of the term angel. The demon of the ancient writer often was an intermediary of a good thing. The demon of Socrates is spoken of as a beneficent influence directing the life of the philosopher. Plato too refers to demons as helpful guardians of men.¹⁷ Lactantius however, classes these kindly demons of Socrates and Plato among the evil spirits: "These are the unclean spirits, the authors of the evil which men do, their leader is the devil"; he adds that it was of these evil spirits that the philosophers spoke:

¹⁵M. Dibelius, *op. cit.* 222.

¹⁶cf. below, pp. 135-160.

¹⁷*Republic* X 617E (Engelmann) οὐχ ὑμᾶς δαίμων λήξεται, ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς δαίμονα αἰρήσεσθε. . . αἰτία ἐλομένου. Θεὸς ἀναίτιος (Engelmann 620D) Ἐκείνην δ'ἐκάστω ὄν εἴλετο δαίμονα τοῦτον φύλακα ξυμπέμπειν τοῦ βίου καὶ ἀποπληρωτὴν τὴν αἰρεθέντων.

"The philosophers also spoke of them, for Plato tried to explain their nature in his *Symposium* and Socrates spoke of an accompanying demon who was with him from childhood and by whose direction and command his life was ruled".¹⁸ Even though Lactantius finds the philosophers speaking of good done by demons, he is far from ascribing it to the good angels, however close the resemblance may be from the activity described. For him it is the work of the fallen angels, the evil spirits; furthermore, the benefits conferred, according to Lactantius, are not real but only apparent goods given to men, with a view to ensnare men and to bring harm upon them eventually.¹⁹

A second difference that arises from Lactantius' usage is due to the fact that the intermediary of the ancients might be a soul. Lactantius has heavenly and earthly demons which constitute a triple class of demons, namely, Satan and the fallen angels make up the *daemones caelestes*, while the offspring of the fallen angels constitute the *daemones terreni*.²⁰ They bear some resemblance to intermediaries who are souls. They are intermediaries of evil,

¹⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 5 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt): "Hi sunt immundi spiritus, malorum quae geruntur auctores, quorum idem diabolus est princeps". *Ibid.*, II, 14, 9 (CSEL 19, 164 Brandt): "...philosophi quoque de his disserunt. nam Plato etiam naturas eorum in Symposio exprimere conatus est et Socrates esse circa se adsiduum daemona loquebatur, qui puero sibi adhaessisset, cujus nutu et arbitrio vita sua regeretur."

¹⁹*Ibid.* Cf. *De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 10-11 (CSEL 19, 164 Brandt): "Magorum quoque ars omnis ac potentia horum adspirationibus constat, a quibus invocati visus hominum praestigiis obcaecantibus fallunt, ut non videant ea quae sunt et videre se putent illa quae non sunt. Hi ut dico spiritus contaminati ac perditii per omnem terram vagantur et in solacium perditionis suae perdendis hominibus operantur...".

²⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 2-5 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt): "Itaque illos cum hominibus commorantes dominator ille terrae fallacissimus consuetudine ipsa paulatim ad vitia pellexit et mulierum congressibus inquinavit. Tum in caelum ob peccata quibus se immeruerant non recepti ceciderunt in terram. Sic eos diabolus ex angelis dei suos fecit satellites ac ministros. Qui autem sunt ex his

but Lactantius never speaks of them as souls. In the *Book of Enoch* from which this class of demons became known, this third class of demons are the giants who after their death became the wandering demons of the earth. In Enoch the giants bear resemblances to this class of demons as viewed by pagans. Lactantius, however, classes these earthly demons, as he calls them, among the evil spirits or demons without making any other distinction except that they are of an intermediate nature between angel and man: "Those born of them (the angelo-human marriages) because they were neither angels nor men, but of an intermediate nature, were not received into hell as their parents were not received into heaven".²¹ They are spoken of as evil spirits; no mention whatever is made of their association with the giants of whom Enoch speaks. Lactantius keeps his division of intermediaries sharply distinct in two classes: there are only good spirits or angels, and evil spirits; there is no class of souls that might form a kind of bridge between the two.

Thirdly, Lactantius differs from the ancient writers in speaking of intermediaries who are entirely dependent creatures. In pagan antiquity, they frequently were gods in their own right. They can be called gods only in the sense that the gods are not real beings. Most assuredly they are not independent beings: Lactantius stresses this by bringing it in relation to the unique character of Divine Providence.²² This central fact stands out clearly; he comes back to it again and again: God alone rules the uni-

procreati quia neque angeli neque homines fuerunt, sed mediam quandam naturam gerentes, non sunt ad inferos recepti sicut in caelum parentes eorum. Ita duo genera daemonum facta sunt, unum caeleste, alterum terrenum. Hi sunt inmundi spiritus, malorum quae geruntur auctores, quorum idem diabolus est princeps."

²¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 4 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt); cf. note 20: "...qui autem sunt ex his procreati..."; E. Mangenot "Démon", DThC IV, 355.

²²*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 18, 10 (CSEL 19, 174 Brandt): "(Docui religiones deorum vanas esse)...quod spiritus qui praesunt ipsis religionibus condemnati et adjecti a deo per terram voluntentur; qui non tantum nihil praestare cultoribus suis possint, quoniam rerum

verse, all else is dependent on Him. It is this uniformity of view that really lends strength to his apologetic reasoning. There is no exception to his usage of the term. He formulates the argument that pagan religion is a worship of demons. The demons are all evil, and in consequence pagan religion is something evil. He does more than merely reject pagan worship by doing so. He derives a double advantage from it. He not only makes the pagan religion look ridiculous and even hateful by reason of its connection with the enemies of the human race, but at the same time it gave him the opportunity to link the fundamental doctrines of Christianity to this apologetic attempt.²³ Lactan-

potestas penes unum est, verum etiam mortiferis eos inlecebris et erroribus perdant, quoniam hoc illis cottidianum sit opus, tenebras hominibus obducere, ne quaeratur ab iis verus deus..”

Ibid. II, 16, 5 (CSEL 19, 168 Brandt): “Hi porro incesti ac vagi spiritus ut turbent omnia et errores humanis pectoribus offundant, serunt ac miscent falsa cum veris. Ipsi enim caelestes multos esse finxerunt unumque omnium regem Iovem eo, quod multi sint in caelo spiritus angelorum et unus dominus ac parens omnium deus.”; cf. Chapter III, 1. *The Angels as the Servants of God and the Ministers of Divine Providence.*

²³*De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 20, 1-12 passim (CSEL 19, 468-469 Brandt): “Isti autem quia nesciunt vel quid vel quomodo sit colendum, caeci et imprudentes in contrarium cadunt. Adorant itaque hostes suos, latrones et interfectores suos victimis placant et animas suas cum ture ipso cremandas aris detestabilibus inponunt. Irascuntur etiam miseri quod non simul et alii pereant, incredibili mentium caecitate. Quid enim videant qui solem non vident? Quasi vero si dii essent, indigerent hominum auxilio diversus contemptores suos. Quid ergo nobis irascuntur, si illi nihil possunt? nisi quod ipsi deos suos destruunt, quorum potestate diffidunt, magis inreligiosi quam qui omnino non colunt..si dii sunt isti qui sic coluntur, vel propter hoc solum colendi non sunt, quod sic coli volunt, digni scilicet detestatione hominum, quibus cum lacrimis, cum gemitu cum sanguine de membris omnibus fluente libatur. At nos contra non expetimus ut deum nostrum, qui est omnium velint nolint, colat aliquis invitus, nec si non coluerit, irascimur. Confidimus enim maiestate eius, qui tam contemptum sui possit ulcisci quam etiam servorum suorum labores et iniurias..” Cf. R. Pichon, *Lactance, étude sur le mouvement philosophique et religieux sous le règne de Constantin*, Paris, 1901, pp. 83ff., 215; J. Lortz, *Tertullian als Apologet*, Münster, 1928, II, Ch. VIII: “Die Religion des Monotheismus”, pp. 7ff.

tius here follows the lead of Tertullian, in whom this same tactic is applied. He practically restates the argument of Tertullian when the latter said:

This divinity of yours is no divinity. . . Let your search then be after real gods, for those whom you had imagined to be so, you find to be spirits of evil. The truth is, as we have shown, that neither they themselves nor any others have a claim to deity; you can therefore see at once who is really God . . . and also whether you are to believe in Him and worship Him after the manner of our Christian faith and discipline.²⁴

As ministerial servants of God are called angels and spirits, so here Lactantius places emphasis on the fact that the demons are *fallen* angels and *evil* spirits. They are called the "unclean spirits of demons",²⁵ the "incestuous and impure spirits",²⁶ the "unjust spirits"²⁷ "cast off by God"²⁸ "vitiated and lost spirits".²⁹ These names apply to all of them indiscriminately. So too all of them are demons; this name is given sometimes to the one class, sometimes to all, and sometimes it is used of Satan alone. It refers most properly to that mythical class of beings that we meet

²⁴Tertullian *Apologeticum* XXIII (Oehler 108-109) "Adeo nulla est divinitas ista quam tenetis. . . Jam deos quaerite. Quos enim praesumpseratis, daemones esse cognoscitis. Eadem vero opera nostra ad eisdem deis vestris non tantum hoc detegentibus quod neque ipsi dei sint neque ulli alii, etiam, illud in continenti cognoscitis qui sit vere Deus, et an ille et an unus quem Christiani profiteremur et an ita credendus colendusque est ut fides ut disciplina disposita est christianorum".

²⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 22, 23 (CSEL 19, 477 Brandt): ". . . quod inmundi daemonum spiritus, . . . se corporibus se inmergunt. . ."

²⁶*Epitome* XXV, 1 (CSEL 19, 699 Brandt): "(docui) . . . quod spiritus qui eas religiones sibi vindicant, incesti et impuri sint. . ."

²⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 18, 16 (CSEL 19, 461 Brandt): ". . . qui spiritibus iniustis aeternum paravit ignem, quod ipse per vates suos inpiis ac rebellibus comminatur".

²⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 17, 10 (CSEL 19, 174 Brandt): "Quod spiritus qui praesunt ipsis religionibus condemnati et abjecti a deo per terram volutentur. . ."

²⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 11 (CSEL 19, 164 Brandt): ". . . hi ut dico spiritus contaminati ad perditum per omnem terram vagantur".

in Lactantius and some of the other early writers, namely, the offspring of the fallen angels.³⁰

Satan is spoken of in a similar profusion of terms. He is the first of the fallen angels: "He having become evil who formerly was good is called *diabolos* by the Greeks, but we call him the accuser because he entices to crime and then accuses his victim before God".³¹ He is likewise known as the serpent because that was his own proper mode of appearing to men.³² He is called a disturbed and depraved mind,³³ the adversary of God,³⁴ even anti-God;³⁵ he is the dominator of the earth.³⁶ His relations toward men are pointed out in the very names Lactantius gives him: "*conductator noster*",³⁷ "*machinator omnium malorum*"³⁸ "*dux damnatus qui vitiis praesit ac malis*".³⁹ In short, he

³⁰*Ibid.* II, 14, 1ff (CSEL 19, 162 Brandt); *Epitome* XXII, 6 (CSEL 19, 695 Brandt).

³¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 8, 6 (CSEL 19, 130 Brandt): "Hunc ergo ex bono per se malum effectum Graeci *δίαβολον* appellant, nos criminatorem vocamus, quod crimina in quae ipse inleceit ad Deum deferat"; *Ibid.*, II, 14 5 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt); II, 12, 17 (CSEL 19, 158 Brandt); VI, 4, 2 (CSEL 19, 489 Brandt); *Epitome* XXII, 6 (CSEL 19, 695 Brandt). Cf. K. Kurze, *Der Engels- und Teufelsglaube des Apostel Paulus*, Freiburg, 1915, p. 32.

³²*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 11-12 (CSEL 19, 169 Brandt): "...quod serpens urbem Romam pestilentia liberavit Epidaurum accersitus. Nam illuc daemionarches ipse in figura sua sine ulla dissimulatione perlatus est, siquidem legati ad eam rem missi draconem secum irae magnitudinis advexerunt".

³³*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 9, 5 (CSEL 19, 143 Brandt): "occidens autem conturbatae illi pravaeque menti adscribitur..."

³⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* VI, 6, 5 (CSEL 19, 499 Brandt): "...qui nec deum nec adversarium dei scierunt..."

³⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 9, 13 (CSEL 19, 144 Brandt): "...nox autem, quam pravo illi antitheo dicimus adtributam, eius ipsius multas et varias religiones per similitudinem monstrat".

³⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 2 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt): "...dominator ille terrae fallacissimus..."

³⁷*De Opificio Dei*, I, 7 (CSEL 27, 5 Brandt).

³⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 24, 5 (CSEL 19, 659 Brandt).

³⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* VI, 3, 14 (CSEL 19, 488 Brandt).

is "that perverse power inimical to truth whose sole work is to blind the minds of men".⁴⁰

His minions are the fallen angels, the *depravati angeli*;⁴¹ these latter are called the *fugitivi suae majestatis ac nominis*.⁴² They are the satellites of the devil, the latter is the leader.⁴³ These demons represent the same idea as the Latin *genius*,⁴⁴ yet the description of the *genius* given by Lactantius differs from such a conception. Here again, whatever good influence was expected of the *genius*, it is either denied by Lactantius as non-existent, or it is stigmatized as a deception of the evil spirits. Lactantius has room for only two kinds of demons—*daemones caelestes et daemones terreni*;⁴⁵ but as the *daemones caelestes* are distinguished from their leader, it is permissible to speak of three classes of demons; these are Satan, the fallen angels, and the offspring of the fallen angels.

2.

*The Existence and Origin of the Demons through the
Fall of the Angels*

The existence of the evil spirits or demons is stated as a plain fact. It is to be expected in view of the universal acceptance of the existence of demons. Their existence follows from the existence of the good angels. They take

⁴⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 1, 13 (CSEL 19, 97 Brandt): "...perversa potestas veritati inimica cui unum sit opus hominum caecare mentes".

⁴¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 15, 8 (CSEL 19, 166 Brandt).

⁴²*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 4, 4 (CSEL 19, 282 Brandt).

⁴³*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 5 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt); *Ibid.*, VII, 24, 5 (CSEL 19, 659 Brandt); *Epitome* LXVII, 2 (CSEL 19, 759 Brandt): "...sed et ipse daemonum princeps..."

⁴⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 12 (CSEL 19, 164 Brandt): "...ac sibi geniorum nomen adsumunt; sic enim latino sermone daemonas interpretantur..."

⁴⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 5 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt).

their origin from the fall of the angels. More particularly, Lactantius gives the story of the fall of the angels as it is told in the *Book of Enoch*.⁴⁶ It is very unlikely that he knew the *Book of Enoch* personally. He very likely knew this doctrine by way of a mediate source, namely, the writers that preceded him in the African church, particularly Tertullian.⁴⁷ Tertullian, however, appeals to this book and even defends its authenticity and genuineness.⁴⁸

The three classes of demons which Lactantius distinguishes must be kept apart when speaking of the fall of the angels. They have distinct origins as to time and differ in the reason for their fall from good. Satan's fall is the fall of the first of the angels of God.⁴⁹ God had made him before the rest with a view to give him charge over the material world.⁵⁰ Satan is prince and ruler of the earth.⁵¹ He was not created evil, but became evil through his own choice: "God made that other spirit in whom the natural excellence of his origin did not remain. Infected with envy as with a poison, he passed from good to evil. By his own will which had been given him free, he earned a different name for himself."⁵² The reason for this fall is given as

⁴⁶*Enoch* VI-VII (GCS *Das Buch Henoch*, Fleming Rademacher: pp. 23ff) cf. below p. 100, note 76.

⁴⁷Tertullian *De Cultu Feminarum* I, 3 (Oehler 390-391); Ch. Robert, "Les fils de Dieu et les filles de l'homme" *RB*, IV (1895), 366ff, 539ff.

⁴⁸Tertullian *De Cultu Feminarum* 1, 3 (Oehler 390-391).

⁴⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 8, 4 (CSEL 19, 129 Brandt): "Deinde fecit alterum in quo indoles divinae stirpis non permansit..." *Ibid.* IV, 6, 1 (CSEL 19, 286) no distinction is made between Satan and the other angels: "incompactibilem spiritum genuit...et quamvis alios postea innumerabiles creavisset, quos angelos dicimus..."

⁵⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14 1 (CSEL 19, 162 Brandt): "...diabolus cui ab initio dederat terrae potestatem..."

⁵¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 1 (CSEL 19, 162 Brandt); *Epitome* XXII (CSEL 19, 695 Brandt).

⁵²*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 8, 4 ff (CSEL 19, 129 Brandt): "Deinde fecit alterum, in quo indoles divinae stirpis non permansit. Itaque suapte invidia tamquam veneno infectus est et ex bono ad malum transcendit suoque arbitrio, quod illi a deo liberum fuerat datum, contrarium sibi nomen adscivit."

envy: Satan envied the Word of God: "For he envied his predecessor who persevering with God the Father was approved by Him and was dear to Him".⁵³ It is a deliberate turning away from God through envy, so that envy is spoken of as the source of all evils.⁵⁴ Through envy and jealousy Satan fell irremediably, became the enemy of God and all that is associated with God.

In this description of the fall of Satan, Lactantius says clearly enough that it was a free deliberate fall. At other times, however, he speaks of it as though it took place inevitably, planned and willed by God as a necessary part of the universe, so that without it there would have been no possibility for men to acquire virtue or do any good. Virtue and the performance of good require an evil that must be avoided.⁵⁵ He says: "No one can choose the better or know what is good unless he also knows at the same time how to reject and avoid what is evil. They are so connected that, where one is taken away, the other of the two must necessarily be taken away as well".⁵⁶ This is a principle he establishes and to which he recurs again and again. Satan therefore is *set up* that we might have an adversary,⁵⁷ and again, God has allowed him to fall that He might provide us with some one with whom we must wrestle.⁵⁸ Lactantius thereby brings forward the rôle that evil and the prince of evil must play in the lives of human beings. He does not

⁵³*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 8, 5 (CSEL 19, 130 Brandt): "...invidit enim illi antecessori suo, qui deo patri perseverando cum probatus tum etiam carus est."

⁵⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 8, 4 (CSEL 19, 129-130 Brandt); cf. above, notes 52-53.

⁵⁵*De Ira Dei* XIII, 14 (CSEL 27, 102 Brandt): "Non potest enim quisquam eligere meliora et scire quod bonum, sit nisi sciat simul reicere ac vitare quae mala sunt. Invicem sibi alterutra conexa sunt, ut sublato alterutro utrumque sit tolli necesse."

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

⁵⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* VI, 4, 17 (CSEL 19, 493 Brandt): "...nobis adversarium Deus reseravit, ut possemus capere virtutem..."

⁵⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 30, 2 (CSEL 18, 394 Brandt): "...ne quando in laqueos et fraudes illius adversarii nostri cum quo nos luctari deus voluit incideremus..."

make an explicit study of the relations of the free will of Satan to his rôle as the tempter of the human race, so that there are many points that need clarification, before the place of Satan really can be understood.

The opposition, however, is not nearly as strong as it appears at first sight, if we remember that Lactantius imitates Tertullian's way of writing when he speaks in this way. Tertullian speaks of the evil in the world in these terms: that evil in the world is not willed by God or planned by him, but that it is consequent on Satan's fall. Creatures have been perverted by a hostile power after they had been formed by the hand of God.⁵⁹ It is not enough merely to consider by whom a thing was made, he says, but also by whom it was perverted:⁶⁰ "There is a vast difference between the corrupted state and the primal purity, just because there is a vast difference between the Creator and the corrupter".⁶¹ Tertullian stresses the fact that the condition of the world was good at first, but that its corruption was consequent on the free fall of Satan. Lactantius rather stresses the fact that it is *now* evil and that Satan provides the temptation for mankind in his search after immortality. Such a viewpoint does not militate against the freedom of the fall of Satan.

Satan's fall is spoken of as a solitary fall. He was created by God and then passed from good to evil. No companions are mentioned by Lactantius, nor are any implied in the temptations which mankind endures before the fall

⁵⁹Tertullian, *De Spectaculis* II, (CSEL 20, 4 Reifferscheid-Wissowa): "Nos igitur qui domino cognito etiam aemulum ejus inspeximus, qui institutore comperto et interpolatorem una deprehendimus, neque mirari neque dubitare oportet, cum ipsum hominem, opus et imaginem dei, totius universitatis possessorum illa vis interpolatoris et aemulatoris angeli, ab initio de integritate deiecerit, universam substantiam eius pariter cum ipso integritati institutam pariter cum ipso in perversitatem demutavit adversus institutorem, ut quam doluerat homini concessam, non sibi, in ea ipsa et hominem reum deo faceret et suam dominationem collocaret."

⁶⁰Tertullian, *De Spectaculis* II, (CSEL 20, 3-4 Reifferscheid-Wissowa).

⁶¹Tertullian, *ibid.*

of the other angels. It is ascribed to Satan alone.⁶² In this description the view of Lactantius is somewhat simpler than that of the earlier apologists. Justin and Athenagoras, for example, had other spirits associated with the fall of Satan.⁶³ Athenagoras like Lactantius had Satan set over the world.⁶⁴ Satan's fall consisted in a lack of fidelity in the work that was entrusted to him by God for he is the "spirit entrusted with the control of matter".⁶⁵ Concerning this spirit and those associated with him, Athenagoras says: "Some continued in those things for which God had made them and over which He had placed them, but some outraged both the constitution of their nature and the government entrusted to them, namely, the rule of matter and its various forms".⁶⁶ Athenagoras further places the fall of some of those angels associated with Satan in a sin of the

⁶²*Epitome* XXII, 6ff (CSEL 19, 695 Brandt).

⁶³Justin II, *Apol.* 7; cf. below, p. 97, note 70; *Dial.* 76; cf. F. Andres, *Die Engellehre der griechischen Apologeten des zweiten Jahrhunderts*. Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte XII, Paderborn, 1914, p. 22.

⁶⁴Athenagoras, *Legatio* XXIV (Schwartz 31): *καὶ ἑτέρας εἶναι δυνάμεις κατελήμμεθα περὶ τὴν ὕλην ἐχούσας καὶ δι' αὐτῆς, μίαν μὲν τὴν ἀντίθεον, οὐχ ὅτι ἀνριδοῦσιν τί ἐστι τῷ θεῷ ὡς τῇ φιλῖα τὸ νεῖκος κατὰ τὸν Ἐπεδοκλέα καὶ τῇ ἡμέρα νύξ κατὰ τὰ φαινόμενα (ἐπεὶ κἄν εἰ ἀντειστέθειται τι τῷ θεῷ, ἐπαύσατο <ἄν> τοῦ εἶναι, λυθείσης αὐτοῦ τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμει καὶ ἰσχύϊ τῆς συστάσεως), ἀλλ' ὅτι τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀγαθῷ ὃ κατὰ συμβεβηκός ἐστιν αὐτῷ καὶ συνυπάρχον ὡς χροῖα σώματι οὐ ἄνευ οὐκ ἔστιν (οὐχ ὡς μέρος ὄντος, ἀλλ' ἀνάγκην συνόντος παρακολουθήματος, ἠνωμένου καὶ συγκεχωρωμένου ὡς τῷ πυρὶ ξανθῷ εἶναι καὶ τῷ αἰθέρι κνανῷ), ἐναντίον ἐστι τὸ περὶ τὴν ὕλην ἔχον πνεῦμα, γενόμενον [μὲν] ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ καθὼ <καὶ> οἱ λοιποὶ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ γεγόνασιν ἄγγελοι, καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ τῇ ὕλῃ καὶ τοῖς τῆς ὕλης εἶδει πεπιστευμένον διοίκησιν.*

⁶⁵*Ibid.*

⁶⁶Athenagoras, *Legatio* XXIV (Schwartz 32): *οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἄγγοι ἔμειναν ἐφ' οἷς αὐτοὺς ἐποίησεν καὶ διέταξεν ὁ θεός, οἱ δὲ ἐνύβρισαν καὶ τῇ τῆς οὐσίας ὑποστάσει καὶ τῇ ἀρχῇ οὗτός τε ὁ τῆς ὕλης καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ εἰδῶν ἀρχῶν καὶ ἕτεροι τῶν περὶ τί πρῶτον τοῦτο στερέωμα (ἴσται δὲ μηδὲν ἡμᾶς ἀμάρτυρον λέγειν, ἃ δὲ τοῖς προφήταις ἐκπεφώνηται μηνύειν), ἐκείνοι μὲν εἰς ἐπιθυμίαν πεσόντες παρθένων καὶ ἥττους σαρκὸς εὐρεθέντες, οὗτος δὲ ἀμελήσας καὶ πονηρός περὶ τὴν τῶν πεπιστευμένον γενόμενος διοίκησιν.*

flesh. This was connected with the sin of unfaithfulness to the providential mission entrusted to them.⁶⁷ Tatian too, has a certain "first-born rise up against the law of God accompanied by angels,"⁶⁸ whereupon they become engrossed in matter, becoming the image of earthly things.⁶⁹ Justin associates some angels with the fall of Satan,⁷⁰ but there is a twofold sin in their fall, pride and the sin of the flesh. Lactantius agrees with these early writers in the fall of the highest of the angels, namely, that it was a sin of pride and envy. The motive for it, however, is different. In Justin, this sin is brought into relationship with the sin of Adam and Eve;⁷¹ in Lactantius it was due to envy of the Word of God. In Lactantius the fall of Satan is a solitary fall, while in the earlier Apologists, Satan or the demoniarch is accompanied by other angels. The difference arises from the fact that Lactantius clearly places a period of time between the fall of Satan and the fall of the other angels, as will be pointed out very shortly. Lactantius thereby shows his independence of these writers and his closer adherence to his African compatriots. In Tertullian, the fall of the angels is not spoken of as taking place together with that of

⁶⁷*Ibid.*

⁶⁸Tatian *Oratio* VII (Schwartz 7) και επειδή τινι φρονηματώτερον παρά τους λοιπούς ὄντι διὰ τὸ πρωτόγονον συνεξηκολούθησαν καὶ θεὸν ἀνέδειξαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ <ἄγγελοι> τοῦ ἐπανιστάμενον τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ, τότε ἡ τοῦ λόγου δύναμις τὸν τε ἄρξαντα τῆς ἀπονοίας καὶ τοὺς συνακολουθήσαντας τούτῳ τῆς αὐτῷ διαίτης παρητήσατο.

⁶⁹Tatian *Oratio* XV (Schwartz 17): τῆς γὰρ ὕλης καὶ πονηρίας εἰσὶν ἀπαντάσματα

⁷⁰Justin, *Apol.* II, 7. ἵνα καὶ οἱ φαῦλοι ἄγγελοι καὶ δαίμονες καὶ ἄνθρωποι μηκέτι ὄσι . . .

⁷¹Justin, *Dial* 124, 3 (Archambault II, 238) Ἴδον δὴ ὡς ἄνθρωποι ἀποθνήσκετε καὶ ὡς εἰς τῶν ἀρχόντων πίπτετε· ἵνα δηλώση καὶ τὴν παρακοὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, τοῦ Ἀδάμ λέγω καὶ τῆς Εὔας, καὶ τὴν πτώσιν τοῦ ἐνὸς τῶν ἀρχόντων, τουτέστι τοῦ κεκλημένου ἐκείνου ὄφρεως πεσότος πτώσιν μεγάλην, διὰ τὸ ἀποπλανῆσαι τὴν Εὔαν.

Cf. F. Andres, *Die Engellehre der griechischen Apologeten des zweiten Jahrhunderts*, Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte XII, Paderborn, 1914, p. 18ff; E. Mangelot, "Démon", *DThC* IV, 341; A. L. Feder, *Justins Lehre von Jesus Christus*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1906, 202.

Satan.⁷² Minucius Felix speaks of the functions of the demons with very little to say concerning their nature or their origin, except the fact that they are fallen angels immersed in vice.⁷³

Concerning the fall of the angels as distinct from Satan, Lactantius says they fell by committing a sin of the flesh. He describes it as follows:

When men had begun to increase in number, the Provident God sent his angels to guard and build up the human race, lest the devil to whom in the beginning He had given power over the earth, might corrupt men by his frauds or destroy what he had made. God gave commandments to the angels, before all things not to lose the dignity of their heavenly nature through contamination with the contagion of earth, that is, God forbade them what He knew they would do, so that they might not have hope for pardon. Thereupon, that deceitful dominator, gradually hardened them and led them into vice, soiling them through defilement with women. After this, they were no longer received back into heaven because of the sins into which they had fallen, but they fell back upon the earth.⁷⁴

⁷²Tertullian, *Apologeticum* XXII (Oehler, 104)

⁷³Minucius Felix, *Octavius* XXVI, 7 (CSEL 2, 38 Halm): "At nonnumquam tamen veritatem vel auspicia vel oracula tetigerunt. Quamquam inter multa mendacia videri possit industriam casus imitatus, adgrediar tamen fontem ipsum erroris et pravitatis, unde omnis caligo ista manavit, et altius eruere et aperire manifestius. Spiritus sunt insinceri, vagi, a caelesti vigore terrenis labibus et cupiditatibus degravati. Isti igitur spiritus, posteaquam simplicitatem substantiae suae onusti, et inmersi vitiis perdiderunt, ad solacium calamitatis suae non desinunt perditam iam perdere et depravati errorem pravitatis infundere et alienati a Deo inductis pravis religionibus a Deo segregare."

⁷⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 1ff (CSEL 19, 162-163 Brandt): "Cum ergo numerus hominum coepisset increscere, providens deus ne fraudibus suis diabolus, cui ad initio dederat terrae potestatem, vel corrumperet homines vel disperderet, quod in exordio fecerat, misit angelos ad tutelam cultumque generis humani: quibus praecepit ante omnia, ne terrae contagione maculati substantiae caelestis amitterent dignitatem, scilicet id eos facere prohibuit quod sciebat esse facturos, ut veniam sperare non possent. Itaque illos cum hominibus commorantes dominator ille terrae fallacissimus consuetudine ipsa paulatim ad vitia pellexit et mulierum congressibus inquinavit. Tum in caelum ob peccata quibus se inmerserant non recepti, ceciderunt in terram."

The account given in the *Epitome* is very much like to this. There, Lactantius describes the creation of man and the attack of the serpent on mankind. Satan led man from crime to crime until justice was rare among men. They lived after the manner of beasts. At this point,

when God saw this, He sent his angels to instruct the race of men and to protect them from every evil. He gave them a command to abstain from earthly matters in order that they might not be polluted by any taint of earth, and lose the honor of angels.

But the wily accuser allured them to pleasure while they tarried among men, so that they defiled themselves with women. Then, being condemned by the sentence of God they were cast forth from Heaven because of their sins. They lost both the name and the substance of angels.⁷⁵

In both accounts Lactantius gives their sin as the marital union between the angels and members of the human race. The occasion of the fall is the temptation of Satan, the accuser. He succeeds in hardening them to vice gradually, while they are among men as the guardians and protectors of mankind. Lactantius implies that it was a free deliberate fall, for he says that they were allured little by little to pleasure, that it led to a fall only gradually.

As the other apologists had done, Lactantius here also speaks of unfaithfulness in their ministry; but it is of a different nature. They are unfaithful as the guardians of men. They neglected the office committed to them to become engrossed in the things of earth and freely entered into sinful union with the daughters of men.

⁷⁵*Epitome* XXII, 9 (CSEL 19, 695 Brandt): "Quod Deus cum videret, angelos suos misit, ut vitam hominum excolerent eosque ab omni malo tuerentur. His mandatum dedit ut se terrenis abstinerent, ne qua labe maculati honore angelico multarentur. Sed eos quoque idem ille subdolos criminator, dum inter homines commorantur, inlexit ad voluptates, ut se cum mulieribus inquinarent. Tum damnati sententia dei et ob peccata proiecti et nomen angelorum et substantiam perdiderunt". Cf. P. Scholz, *Die Ehen der Söhne Gottes mit den Töchtern der Menschen*, Regensburg, 1865, p. 77ff.

From this marriage of the angels and human beings, the intermediate class of demons, the *daemones terreni*: half-angels and half-human-beings arose.

That the angels could forsake God to enter into marriages with human beings was not Lactantius' original idea. Mention has already been made that this description of the fall of the angels goes back to the apocryphal *Book of Enoch* for a basis. It has an interesting and long history.

In the *Book of Enoch*, the angels are spoken of as the sons of God: they fell by committing a sin of lust with the daughters of men;⁷⁶ of this union then the giants were born.⁷⁷ These giants caused much of the evil in the world of which *Genesis* speaks, so that upon the complaint of the archangels, Almighty God decreed that the Deluge take place "in order to heal the earth which the angels have spoiled".⁷⁸

It was not only in the *Book of Enoch* however that this view rested. Besides this, in some readings of the Septuagint, the Genesis account was the following: "The angels of God seeing the daughters of men, that they were fair to behold, took to themselves wives of all which they chose".⁷⁹ The corresponding reading of the Vulgate has "the sons of God seeing the daughters of men...".⁸⁰ Flavius Josephus

⁷⁶*Enoch* VI-VII (GCS *Das Buch Henoch* tr. Fleming-Rademacher 23-25): "und als die Menschenkinder zahlreich geworden waren, da wurden ihnen in jenen Tagen schöne und liebliche Töchter geboren. 2. Und es sahen die Engel, die Söhne der Himmel, und sie begehrten ihrer und sprachen untereinander 'Wohlan, wir wollen uns Weiber auswählen aus den Menschenkindern und uns Kinder erzeugen...'"

⁷⁷*Ibid.* XV 8 (GCS *Das Buch Henoch* Tr. Fleming-Rademacher, 43): "Und nun die Riesen welche von den Geistern und Fleisch gezeugt worden sind, böse Geister werden sie auf Erden genannt werden, und auf der Erde ihre Wohnung sein..."

⁷⁸*Ibid.* X, (GCS *Das Buch Henoch*, Tr. Fleming-Rademacher, 30-31): "...Da sprach der Höchste... '...und heile die Erde, die die Engel verderbt haben...'"

⁷⁹*Genesis* VI, 2 (Septuagint) *ιδόντες δὲ οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ τὰς θυγατέρας τῶν ἀνθρώπων...*

⁸⁰*Genesis* VI, 2 (Vulgate): "Videntes filii Dei filias hominum... acceperunt sibi uxores ex omnibus quas elegerant."

also concurs in this saying, that it was a Jewish tradition which was rather common: "For many angels of God accompanied with women and begat sons that proved unjust and despisers of all that was good, on account of the confidence they had in their own strength; for the tradition is that these men did what resembled the acts of those whom the grecians call giants".⁸¹

Although the Genesis reading might have been enough to lead the Fathers to this consideration, it is hardly likely that it has done so, particularly, since Enoch enjoyed a high reputation in the early centuries.

Among the early Fathers this view of the fall of the angels was the common view. Some of the Fathers were dependent on Enoch, as Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria for example.⁸² Tertullian even tried to explain how the Book of Enoch, which he said goes back to the Henoch of Genesis, came down to his own time.⁸³ Other Fathers like Lactantius derived this view from the Christian writers who preceded them and whose works they used. At any rate, we find this opinion in Justin,⁸⁴ Athenagoras,⁸⁵ Irenaeus,⁸⁶ Clement of Alexandria,⁸⁷ Methodius of Philippi,⁸⁸

⁸¹*Antiquities*, 1, 3, 1 Tr. Wm. Whiston, *Works of Flavius Josephus*, London, n. d.

⁸²Tertullian, *De Cultu Feminarum* I, 3 (Oehler 390-391) "Scio scripturam Enoch, quae hunc ordinem angelis dedit, non recipi a quibusdam, quia nec in armarium Iudaicum admittitur. Opinor, non putaverunt illam ante cataclysmum editam post eum casum orbis omnium rerum abolitorem salvam esse potuisse. . ."; Clement of Alex. *Eclog*, *Ex Script.* 53 (GCS, Staehlin III, 151-152).

⁸³Tertullian, *De Cultu Feminarum* I, 3 (Oehler 390ff).

⁸⁴Justin, *Apol.* II, 5, ὁ θεός. . . τὴν μὲν τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῶν ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν πρόνοιαν ἀγγέλοις, οὓς ἐπὶ τούτοις ἔταξε, παρέδωκεν. οἱ δ' ἄγγελοι, παραβάντες τὴνδε τὴν τάξιν, γυναικῶν μίξειςιν ἠτήθησαν καὶ παῖδας ἐτέκνωσαν, οἱ εἰσὶν οἱ λεγόμενοι δαίμονες.

⁸⁵Athenagoras, *Legatio* XXIV (Schwartz 31-32); cf. above, p. 96, note 64-65.

⁸⁶Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* IV, 16, 2.

⁸⁷Clement of Alexandria, *Stromatum* III, c 7 (GCS, Staehlin II, 222).

⁸⁸Methodius, *De Resurrection* I frag. 37, 3 (GCS Methodius, 278, Bonwetsch): ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν λοιποὶ ἐφ' οἷς αὐτοὺς ἐποίησε καὶ διέταξεν ὁ

Origen, although he has some hesitations,⁸⁹ Minucius Felix,⁹⁰ Commodianus,⁹¹ and at a later time, in Ambrose of Milan.⁹²

It was only when the *Book of Enoch* was rejected that this view of the fall of the angels gradually disappeared, and, as this happened at an earlier date in the East, this takes place earlier there too. However, of even more importance than Enoch for the rejection of this view, is the realization of the sanctity of the angels.⁹³ The earlier Fathers and writers indeed looked on the angels as holy, but not to the extent that it excluded the possibility of a fall, as it did with the later Fathers and writers.

Lactantius stresses the fact that the angels had a special command from God to protect their angelic dignity. The implication is that it was a caution and that the angels had full knowledge of the danger to which they were exposing themselves, so that there is no excuse for their

θεὸς ἔμειναν, ὁ δὲ ἐνύβρισε καὶ πονηρὸς περὶ τὴν τῶν πεπιστευμένων ἐγένετο διοίκησιν, φθόνον ἐγκισσῆσας καθ' ἡμῶν ὥσπερ καὶ οἱ μετὰ ταῦτα σαρκῶν ἐρασθέντες καὶ ταῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰς φιληδονίαν ἐνομιλήσαντες θυγατράσιν.

⁸⁹Origen, *Contra Celsum* V, 55, (GCS Origen II 58 Klosterman): ἀλλ' ἵνα καὶ ἐδγνωμονέστερον αὐτῷ δῶμεν ἢ μὴ εἴωρακεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἐν τῇ Γενέσει γεγραμμένων, ὅτι ἰδόντες οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ τὰς θυγατέρας. . .

⁹⁰Minucius Felix, *Octavius* XXVI 7 (CSEL 2, 38 Halm); cf. above, p. 98, note 73.

⁹¹Commodianus, *Instruct.* 3 (CSEL 15, 7 Dombart):
 Cum Deus omnipotens exornasset mundi naturam,
 Visitari voluit terram ab angelis istam;
 Legitima cujus spreverunt illi dimissi;
 Tanta fuit forma feminarum, quae flecteret illos,
 Ut coinquinati non possunt caelo redire,
 Rebelles ex illo contra Deum verba misere.
 Altissimus inde sententiam misit in illis;
 De semine quorum Gigantes nati feruntur. . ."

⁹²Ambrose, *De Noe* (CSEL 32 Schenkl): "Gigantes autem erant in terra in diebus illis. Non poetarum more gigantes illos terrae filios vult videri divinae scripturae conditor, sed ex angelis et mulieribus generatos adserit quos hoc appellat vocabulo volens eorum exprimere magnitudinem corporis."

⁹³Scholz, *Die Ehen der Söhne Gottes mit den Töchtern der Menschen*, Regensburg, 1865, p. 88-89.

fall.⁹⁴ The effect is irremediable and their loss irreparable. From the heavenly abode these angels fell to earth becoming the ministers of the devil. "In this way, the devil made satellites and ministers for himself out of the angels of God".⁹⁵

Another result of their fall is that they suffered a change in nature. They not only lost their exalted dignity and position as the servants of God and the administrators of Divine Government in the world, but, according to Lactantius, this was a degradation of the angelic nature itself. It is difficult to say in what this degradation consisted, as Lactantius does not speak of it. He says that, whereas they were heavenly angels, they now became earthly; but such an expression is too general to be of much assistance to determine the extent of their degradation.

The earlier Apologist Tatian had gone into greater detail in explaining the degradation, saying that they became engrossed in material things, not only in their activity, but that their very nature became coarse and gross and material.⁹⁶ This degradation according to Lactantius however, was not such as to make them like to the third class of demons, having the intermediate nature: half-angelic and half-human. Lactantius keeps them apart from this third class of demons. They are still of a higher nature than that.⁹⁷

⁹⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 1 (CSEL 19, 162 Brandt): "...quibus praecepit ante omnia, ne terrae contagione maculati substantiae caelestis amitterent dignitatem. scilicet id eos facere prohibuit quod sciebat esse facturos, ut veniam sperare non possent."

⁹⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 3 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt): "Sic eos diabolus ex angelis dei suos fecit satellites ac ministros."

⁹⁶Tatian, *Exhortatio* XII (Schwartz 13): ὡμως δ' οὖν καὶ οἱ δαίμονες οὗς ἡμεῖς οὕτω φατέ, σύμπηξιν ἐξ ὕλης λαβόντες κτησάμενοί τε πνεῦμα τὸ ἀπ' αὐτῆς ἄσωτοι καὶ λίγνοι γεγόνασιν, οἱ μὲν τινες αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὸ καθαρώτερον τραπέντες, οἱ δὲ τῆς ὕλης ἐπιλεξάμενοι τὸ ἔλαττον καὶ κατὰ τὸ ὅμοιον αὐτῇ πολιτευόμενοι. τούτους δὲ, ἄνδρες Ἕλληνες, προσκυνεῖτε γεγονότας μὲν ἐξ ὕλης, μακρὰν δὲ τῆς εὐταξίας εὐρεθέντας.

⁹⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 5 (CSEL 18, 163 Brandt): "Ita duo genera daemonum facta sunt, unum caeleste, alterum terrenum."

The fall of the angels also gives rise to that mythical class of beings, the offspring of the fallen angels.

Those who were born of this union because they were neither angels nor men, but having an intermediate nature were not received into hell as their parents were not received into heaven. There are therefore two kinds of demons, one heavenly, the other earthly. These are the unclean spirits wandering about the earth. . . .⁹⁸

According to Tatian, these beings, the offspring of the marriage between the angels and human beings, were the giants spoken of in the *Book of Genesis*.⁹⁹ The *Book of Enoch* had spoken of them in this same way.¹⁰⁰ Lactantius, however, does not mention them in any such manner. From the way he speaks, it is clear that Lactantius looked on them as demons, without any connection with the giants of Genesis. According to Turmel,¹⁰¹ Lactantius here provides a turning point in the clarification of the view on the fall of the angels. He no longer is dependent on the *Book of Enoch* to such a great extent as other writers of the time immediately preceding him. With the discredit of Enoch, the fall of the angels is gradually looked on as one with that of Satan, a fall through pride. However, Justin, Athenagoras, Tatian, Minucius Felix, Tertullian as well as Lactantius have this three-fold class of demons.¹⁰²

A peculiar aspect in the description of the fall of the angels by Lactantius is the time when the fall of the angels

⁹⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 4 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt): "Qui autem sunt ex his procreati quia neque angeli neque homines fuerunt, sed mediam quandam naturam gerentes, non sunt ad inferos recepti sicut in caelum parentes eorum. Hi sunt immundi spiritus malorum quae geruntur auctores, quorum idem diabolus est princeps".

⁹⁹ Cf. *Genesis* VI, 4.

¹⁰⁰*Enoch* XV 8 (GCS *Das Buch Henoch*, Tr. Fleming-Rademacher, 43); cf. above, p. 101, note 77.

¹⁰¹J. Turmel, "Histoire de l'angéologie," *RHLR* III (1898) 302ff.

¹⁰²Cf. above pp. 102-103, notes 90ff.; P. Scholz, *Die Ehen der Söhne Gottes mit den Töchtern der Menschen*, Regensburg, 1865, pp. 77ff.; Ch. Robert, "Les fils de Dieu et les filles de l'homme," *RB* IV (1895) 348ff. and 536ff.; A. d'Alès, *Le théologie de Tertullien*, 3rd ed., Paris, 1905, pp. 156-157.

is to have taken place. It is not only distinct from the time when Satan fell, but it is much later, even though at the instigation of the devil himself. According to Lactantius, the angels were assigned as the guardians of men sometime after the fall of Adam and Eve, when the machinations of Satan threatened to corrupt man and destroy God's handiwork; the fall is posterior to this designation of the angels as the guardians of men. As this took place sometime before the Deluge, the fall of the angels also is viewed by Lactantius as occurring around that time.¹⁰³

3.

The Organization and Habitation of the Demon World

In the organization of the spirit world of demons, Lactantius like the other Christian writers differs very greatly from the non-christian expressions on the subject. These early apologists group the entire demon world about the one leader Satan. Satan or the Demoniarch, as he is sometimes called, rules this kingdom like a despot, the other spirits are his servants and satellites.¹⁰⁴ Whether this pre-eminence is entirely due to his more exalted nature is not pointed out very clearly, but the pre-eminence is there, and Satan rules and dominates the sphere of evil. There is a slight difference, however, in the viewpoint of several of the writers. Lactantius speaks of this domination of Satan as a consequence of the fall, that he subjected the fallen angels to himself after enticing them to the fall. There is very little question of any choice on the part of these angels, whether they wish to have Satan for their leader or not.

¹⁰³*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 1 (CSEL 19, 162 Brandt); cf. above, p. 98, note 74.

¹⁰⁴cf. F. Andres, *Die Engellehre der griechischen Apologeten des zweiten Jahrhunderts*, Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte XII, Paderborn, 1914, 18ff.

In some of the other early apologists, Satan has this power because the other spirits chose to throw in their lot with him in the revolt against God.¹⁰⁵

The organization is seen to be of at least three classes, Satan, the *daemones caelestes* and the *daemones terreni*. But whether the *daemones caelestes* can further be divided into classes cannot be determined from the writings of Lactantius. Nor is there any mention of the number of the angels who fell.¹⁰⁶

The dwelling place of Satan is the earth.¹⁰⁷ Satan is not condemned to punishment till after the end of the world. He was set over the earth; despite his fall, he still retains this position and is busy about it as he dwells on it. Nor is this said of Satan alone. His satellites and the demons of the third class, those intermediate by nature, are also spoken of as active on the earth: "The fallen angels condemned by sentence of God fell to the earth".¹⁰⁸ "They were not received into hell as their parents were not received back into Heaven".¹⁰⁹ At first sight, this may seem to imply that the parents of the demons were received into hell. Lactantius, however, as has been pointed out, thought the fallen angels were busy about the earth.¹¹⁰ He did not restrict the activity of the demons to that of the *daemones terreni*; this is another point in which he differs from the Enoch account. In the latter, the fallen angels are bound under the earth, while their offspring are the demons ac-

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.* p. 22.

¹⁰⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 1 (CSEL 19, 162 Brandt); cf. above, p. 98, note 74.

¹⁰⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 1 (CSEL 19, 162 Brandt); II, 9, 6, (CSEL 19, 143 Brandt).

¹⁰⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 3 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt): "Tum in caelum ob peccata quibus se inmerserant non recepti ceciderunt in terram. . ."

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.* II, 14, 4 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt): ". . .non sunt ad inferos recepti sicuti in caelum parentes eorum. . ."

¹¹⁰Cf. above, p. 87, note 18.

tive in the world.¹¹¹ It is not correct to say that Lactantius also held this view.¹¹² He refers to the second class, the fallen angels, as active also, for he says that those angels who had been sent as the guardians of men, now are busy working for the ruin of men. They seek to destroy those to whom God had sent them as guardians. This can only apply to the *daemones caelestes* and not at all to the third class, the *daemones terreni*. It is in this light, too, that we must view that other expression of Lactantius that the fallen angels began to be earthly angels.

The earth is the region of Satan and his angels. It is further divided into two parts by Lactantius: into regions of light and darkness. The demons live in the air, but Lactantius, in accordance with an old tradition, ascribed the West to the demons as the special domain of the evil spirits, whereas the East belongs to God by reason of its relation to light.¹¹³ Light is the element that most nearly approached

¹¹¹*Enoch* XXI, 10 (GCS *Das Buch Henoch*, Fleming-Rademacher p. 51): "Und er sprach zu mir: Dieser Ort ist das Gefängnis der Engel, und hier werden sie gefangen gehalten bis in Ewigkeit." *Ibid.* XVII, 1 (GCS *Das Buch Henoch*, Fleming-Rademacher, p. 45) "Und sie nahmen mich hinweg an einen Ort wo diejenigen, welche daselbst hausen, wie flammendes Feuer sind, und wann sie wollen, erscheinen sie wie Menschen. . ."

¹¹²*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 3 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt); II, 16, *passim*, (CSEL 19, 168ff Brandt); *Epitome* XXII, 11 (CSEL 19, 695 Brandt): "Ita diaboli satellites facti, ut habeant solacium perditionis suae, ad perdendos homines converterunt, quos ut tuerentur advenerant".

¹¹³*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 9, 5-6 (CSEL 19, 142-143 Brandt): "Ipsius quoque terrae binas partes contrarias inter se diversasque constituit, orientem scilicet occidentemque. Ex quibus oriens deo ad censetur, quia ipse luminis fons et inlustrator est rerum et quod oriri nos faciat ad vitam sempiternam: occidens autem conturbatae illi pravaeque menti adscribitur, quod lumen abscondat, quod tenebras semper inducat et quod homines faciat occidere atque interire peccatis. Nam sicut lux orientis est, in luce autem vitae ratio versatur, sic occidentis tenebrae sunt, in tenebris autem mors et interitus continetur." Cf. below, pp. 110-134; F. J. Dölger, *Die Sonne der Gerechtigkeit und der Schwarze* (LQF 14) Münster, 1919, 47ff.; J. Quasten, *Monumenta Eucharistica et Liturgica Vetustissima* (FIP VII) Bonn, 1935-37, p. 74.

to God. Darkness is the element that corresponds most perfectly with the characteristics of evil.¹¹⁴

Heaven was considered the source of light. It was viewed as situated above the earth and towards the east. Hell is the abode of darkness and was thought to be in and under the earth: "Nothing was in and under the earth, but death and hell".¹¹⁵ Hell itself is a place of utter darkness; there is fire in it, but it gives no light. It causes suffering and is both like and yet unlike earthly fire. Like earthly fire, it destroys; but because it is not merely earthly fire, it also replaces what it has destroyed: "The same fire, therefore, with one and the same force and power will both burn the wicked and will form them again and will replace as much as it shall consume of their bodies and will supply itself with eternal nourishment".¹¹⁶ To this place of darkness and suffering the evil angels will be sent after the final judgment. Until that time, Lactantius thought they were relatively free from suffering. They are already condemned, but the execution of their sentence has not yet

¹¹⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 9, 6 (CSEL 19, 143 Brandt): "Deinde alteras partes eadem ratione dimensus est, meridiem et septentrionem, quae partes illis duabus societate iunguntur. Ea enim quae est solis calore flagrantior, proxima est et cohaeret orienti, at illa quae frigoribus ac perpetuo gelu torpet, eiusdem est cuius extremus occasus. Nam sicut contrariae sunt lumini tenebrae, ita frigus calori. Ut igitur calor lumini est proximus, sic merides orienti, ut frigus tenebris, ita plaga septentrionalis occasui. . ."

¹¹⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 9, 3 (CSEL 19, 142 Brandt): "Nihil enim per se continet luminis, nisi accipiat e caelo: in quo posuit lucem perennem et superos et vitam perpetuam, et contra in terra tenebras et inferos et mortem". *Ibid.* II, 2, 22 (CSEL 19, 102 Brandt): "Quid ergo rebus inferioribus subiacetis? quid capitibus vestris terram superponitis? cum enim vos terrae submittitis humilioresque facitis, ipsi vos ultro ad inferos mergitis ad mortemque damnatis, quia nihil est inferius et humilior terra nisi mors et inferi. Quae si effugere velletis, subjectam pedibus vestris terram contemneretis atque mentem cum eo qui fecit conferre possetis. . ."

¹¹⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 21, 5 (CSEL 18, 651 Brandt): "Idem igitur divinus ignis una eademque vi ac potentia et cremabit impios et recreabit et quantum e corporibus absumet, tantum reponet ac sibi ipsi aeternum pabulum sumministrabit. . ."

taken place. The fire itself has already been prepared, but until the time of the final judgment, they continue to be active in the world where their consolation and their solace is to bring ruin to men. They serve God's purpose in tempting men, helping them to win their eternal reward.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷*De Ira Dei* XIII, 13 (CSEL 27, 102 Brandt); *Ibid* XIII, 16: "Ergo sicut bona innumerabilia data sunt quibus frui posset, sic etiam mala quae caveret. Nam si malum nullum sit, nullum periculum, nihil denique quod laedere hominem possit, tolletur omnis materia sapientiae."

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE AND POWERS OF THE DEMONS

1.

The Finite Nature of the Demons

Since the evil spirits as a class are the fallen created angels according to Lactantius, it is evident they are finite and limited beings dependent on a higher principle of being. They are creatures whom God has made to minister to Himself, but who by a free deliberate act of their will have been transformed from their primal state of innocence and happiness to one of perversity and enduring hostility toward God.¹ There is no questioning of this fact with regard to the second and third classes of demons; for, the second class is the class of the fallen angels, who were created for God's ministry; the third class is that intermediate class of beings, born of the union of angels and human beings; these are neither purely angelic nor purely human, but half-angel and half-human in nature.² Both of these classes form the *daemones caelestes* and the *daemones terreni*, whose origin from a created state is sufficient to point out the fact that they are finite and limited. Furthermore, they are dependent on a leader: they are Satan's satellites and ministers.³ They are subject to an overlord, so that not only their origin, but even their condition of subjection shows that they are finite and their nature is limited and dependent on some one higher than themselves.

¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 3 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt); *Epitome* XXII 7ff (CSEL 19, 695 Brandt). Cf. above, pp. 81-109.

²Cf. above, pp. 29-41.

³*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 3 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt): "...sic eos diabolus ex angelis dei suos fecit satellites ac ministros".

This is also true concerning Satan, the leader of the hostile forces. Here it is less clear, however. Lactantius mentions it plainly enough from time to time, but he also brings other testimonies into his writings, in which he speaks of Satan as the lord of the world and the ruler and dominator of the earth; the earth is his realm in which he opposes God.⁴ He brings this out in phrases and expressions which, if they do not cast doubt on the point, yet serve to confuse the issue and because of it they cannot be passed over without some mention.

Thus Satan is brought into such opposition to God and the Word of God that it gives Satan an undeserved pre-eminence and makes him the counterpart of God. Lactantius does not oppose Satan to the good angels so much as to Christ. In the fall, Satan is spoken of as envying the Word, the first-born of God. Lactantius certainly believed that the Word was God, for he says that He is one with the Father.⁵ This comparison between the Word and Satan, brings Satan forward more than is warranted. As God is the ruler of the kingdom of the good, so Satan dominates over all that is evil. Mention has already been made how he is called the adversary of God and even the evil anti-God: *pravus antitheus*.⁶ In order to give a solution to the problem of evil, Lactantius builds up the opposition existing between good and evil, between God and Satan, the latter personifying the forces of evil opposed to God. He does this in expressions that infringe on the independence and unique character of God as the sole Lord, Creator and principle of all things. Lactantius nevertheless holds this principle very firmly. Lactantius places a kind of dualism in the world: God and Satan are opposed to each other. The forces of good war against those of evil. The good angels

⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 9, *passim*, (CSEL 19, 143ff Brandt).

⁵*Epitome* XLIV 2-4ff (CSEL 19, 722-723 Brandt).

⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 9, 11 (CSEL 19, 144 Brandt); F. J. Dölger, *Die Sonne der Gerechtigkeit und der Schwarze*, LQF Heft 14, Münster, 1919, p. 44, 73.

protect men from evil forces. The demons are pictured as ministers of their leader Satan in much the same way that the angels are pictured as the ministers of God.⁷ Furthermore, in the physical world too, there is the opposition of matter to all that is not matter, and in man himself there is the constant struggle between the higher element, the soul, which is a heavenly being, and the body which is of the earth and under the domination of Satan.⁸ There is a constant struggle between ignorance which is a condition of matter and earth, and knowledge which comes from God: life battles against death, light and darkness are opposed. These opposites are at war.

Lactantius expresses this opposition between good and evil in the Pythagorean doctrine of opposites. We find that he lists a considerable number of such opposites to express this struggle; they are listed in much the same way that we find them in Hippolytus. Hippolytus has the following:

Unity	Duality
Good	Evil
Right	Left
Day	Night
Life	Death ⁹

⁷Compare *De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 3 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt); *Ibid.* I, 7, 4 (CSEL 19, 26 Brandt); cf. *Ibid.* II, 16, 5, (CSEL 19, 168 Brandt): "Hi porro incesti ac vagi spiritus ut turbent omnia et errores humanis pectoribus offundant, serunt ac miscent falsa cum veris. Ipsi enim caelestes multos esse finxerunt unumque omnium regem Iovem eo, quod multi sint in caelo spiritus angelorum et unus dominus ac parens omnium deus. . ."

⁸R. Pichon, *Lactance étude sur le mouvement philosophique et religieux sous le règne de Constantin*, Paris, 1901, p. 118ff. *De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 9, 25 (CSEL 19, 146 Brandt); *Ibid.* II, 12, 4 (CSEL 19, 153 Brandt); III, 6, 3 (CSEL 19, 187 Brandt); F. W. Bussel, *The Purpose of the World-process and the Problem of Evil as explained in the Clementine and Lactantian Writings in a System of Subordinated Dualism*, Oxford, 1896, p. 184.

⁹Hippolytus *Elenchos* IV, 44, 1 (GCS Hippolytus III, 67, Wendland): τὴν γὰρ φύσιν ἐξ ἐναντίων συνισταμένην λέγουσιν ἐκ τε καλοῦ καὶ κακοῦ, ὡσπερ δεξιὸν καὶ ἀριστερόν, φῶς καὶ σκότος, νῦξ καὶ ἡμέρα,

The list in Lactantius is somewhat longer, although it is not found in any one place in his works; he opposes

Heaven	Earth
Light	Darkness
Heavens	Hell
Life	Death ¹⁰
East	West
South	North ¹¹
Right	Left ¹²
God	Anti-God ¹³

ζωή και θάνατος. Cf. F. J. Dölger, *op. cit.*, p. 42; J. Quasten, *Musik und Gesang in den Kulturen der heidnischen Antike und christlichen Frühzeit*, LQF Heft 25, Münster, 1930, p. 93.

¹⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 9, 2 (CSEL 19, 142 Brandt): "Fecit igitur deus primum omnium caelum et in sublime suspendit, quod esset sedes ipsius dei conditoris. Deinde terram fundavit ac subdidit caelo, quam homo cum ceteris animalium generibus incoleret. Eam voluit umore circumflui et contineri. Suum vero habitaculum distinxit claris luminibus et inplevit, sole scilicet et lunae orbe fulgenti et astrorum micantium splendentibus signis adornavit. Tenebras autem, quod est his contrarium, constituit in terra; nihil enim per se continet luminis, nisi accipiat e caelo: in quo posuit lucem perennem et superos et vitam perpetuam, et contra in terra tenebras et inferos et mortem. . ."

¹¹*Ibid.*, II, 9, 5-6 (CSEL 19, 142-143 Brandt): "Ipsius quoque terrae binas partes contrarias inter se diversasque constituit, orientem scilicet occidentemque. Ex quibus oriens deo ad censetur, quia ipse luminis fons et inlustrator est rerum et quod oriri nos faciat ad vitam sempiternam: occidens autem conturbatae illi pravaeque menti adscribitur, quod lumen abscondat, quod tenebras semper inducat et quod homines faciat occidere atque interire peccatis. Nam sicut lux orientis est, in luce autem vitae ratio versatur, sic occidentis tenebrae sunt, in tenebris autem mors et interitus continetur. Deinde alteras partes eadem ratione dimensus est, meridiem ac septentrionem, quae partes illis duabus societate iunguntur."

¹²*De Divinis Institutionibus* VI, 4, 1 (CSEL 19, 489 Brandt): "Una est itaque virtutis ac bonorum via, quae fert non in Elysios campos, ut poetae loquuntur, sed ad ipsam mundi arcem 'At leava malorum | exercet poenas et ad impia Tartara mittit' (Virg. *Aeneid* VI, 542). Est enim criminantis illius, qui pravis religionibus institutis avertit homines ab itinere caelesti et in viam perditionis inducit".

¹³*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 9, 11-12 (CSEL 19, 144 Brandt): "Dies, quem primus oriens subministrat, dei sit necesse est, ut omnia

Besides being found in Lactantius and Hippolytus, this Pythagorean idea of opposites also lives on in Methodius of Phillipi.¹⁴ It is a means at hand for apologetical purposes.

Lactantius joins this dualistic idea of good and evil to another very ancient idea, when he sums up this struggle as the *way of life and the way of death*: "There are therefore two ways along which the life of man must go, one of them leads into Heaven, the other sinks downward into hell".¹⁵ As Lactantius points out, it is not his own idea, but it is something every ancient with which the philosophers and poets also were familiar.¹⁶ Lactantius says their re-

quaecumque meliora sunt, nox autem, quam occidens extremus inducit, eius scilicet quem dei esse aemulum diximus. . . nam sicut sol, qui oritur in diem, licet sit unus. . . tamen quia verum ac perfectae plenitudinis lumen est et calore potentissimo et fulgore clarissimo inlustrat omnia, ita in deo, licet sit unus, et maiestas et virtus et claritudo perfecta est. Nox autem, quam pravo illi antitheo dicimus adtributam, eius ipsius multas et varias religiones per similitudinem monstrat. Quamvis enim stellae innumerabiles micare ac radiare videantur, tamen quia non sunt plena et solida lumina, nec caloris praeferunt quicquam nec tenebras multitudine sua vincunt. . ."

¹⁴Methodius *Symposion* 3, 7, 67 (GCS *Methodius* 34 Bonwetsch) δύο γὰρ τὰ εἰς ἄκρον ἀλλήλοις ἐναντία ζωὴ καὶ θάνατος, ἐφθαρσία καὶ φθορά. ἰσότης μὲν γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ ζωὴ, ἀνισότης δὲ ἡ φθορά, καὶ ἁρμονία μὲν ἢ δικαιοσύνη καὶ ἡ φρόνησις, ἀναρμοσία δὲ ἡ ἀδικία καὶ ἡ ἀφροσύνη. Cf. F. J. Dölger, *Die Sonne der Gerechtigkeit und der Schwarze*, LQF, Heft 14, Münster, 1919, p. 92ff; J. Quasten, *Musik und Gesang in den Kulte der heidnischen Antike und christlichen Frühzeit* LQF, Heft 25, Münster, 1939, p. 93.

¹⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* VI, 3, 1 (CSEL 19, 485 Brandt): "Duae sunt viae per quas humanam vitam progredi necesse est, una quae in caelum ferat, altera quae ad inferos deprimat. . ."

¹⁶*Ibid.*, VI, 3, 1-2 (CSEL 19, 485 Brandt): "...quas et poetae in carminibus et philosophi in disputationibus suis induxerunt. Et quidem philosophi alteram virtutum esse voluerunt, alteram vitiorum, eamque quae sit assignata virtutibus, primo aditu esse arduam et confragosam: in qua si quis difficultate superata in summum eius evaserit, habere eum de cetero planum iter, lucidum amoenumque campum et omnium laborum suorum capere fructus uberes atque

flections on these two ways were wise, but he cannot agree with them because they failed to grasp the meaning of the two ways properly. The philosophers took the two ways too strictly and brought them into relationship chiefly with frugality and luxury. Such a restriction makes them completely earthly and thereby too limited according to Lactantius.¹⁷ The poets extend the two ways beyond this life, but they likewise fail to understand them rightly. His judgment on both philosophers and poets, although he mentions none by name, is that they were partially true, but yet spoke incorrectly: "Both, therefore, spoke with truth and yet both erred; for the ways ought to have been referred to life and the ends to death. We, therefore, speak better and more truly when we say the two ways belong to heaven and to hell, because immortality is promised to the righteous and everlasting punishment is threatened to the impious".¹⁸ Lactantius wants to bring the two ways forward more sharply than the philosophers and poets had done; he wants a more complete opposition of good and evil expressed in the two ways.

Lactantius can bring this thought forward and take issue with the philosophers and poets because the idea was a well-known ancient tradition. Christians too were acquainted with this characterization of the struggle between good and evil. Moreover it is probable that the Jews had

jucundos. . ." Cf. O. Becker, *Das Bild des Weges und verwandte Vorstellungen in frühgeschichtlichen Denken* (Hermes: Einzelschriften, Heft 4, Berlin, 1937) for a detailed study of the picture of *The Way* in Greek thought.

¹⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* VI, 3, 5 (CSEL 19, 486 Brandt): "Sapiens prorsus disputatio, si virtutum ipsarum formas ac terminos scirent. Non enim didicerant vel quae sint vel quid eas mercedis a deo maneat: quod nos his duobus libris docebimus. Hi vero quia ignorabant aut dubitabant animas hominum immortales esse, et virtutes et vitia terrenis honoribus aut poenis aestimaverunt. Omnis ergo haec de duabus viis disputatio ad frugalitatem ac luxuriam spectat."

¹⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* VI, 3, 10 (CSEL 19, 487) "Nos igitur melius et verius, qui duas istas vias caeli et inferorum esse dicimus, quia justis immortalitas, iniustis poena aeterna proposita est. . ."

an instruction of proselytes entitled "The Two Ways".¹⁹ It is given in the *Didache*²⁰ and in the *Epistle of Barnabas*.²¹ W. Bousset points out that Christians claimed it as something that belonged to them from the very beginning.²² Lactantius, however, goes farther than merely making it a struggle between good and evil. He opposes Satan and God and has an entire scheme in which this struggle of good and evil takes place. God is the source of the way of life and its goal. The way of death leads to Satan and to companionship with his evil hordes for all eternity. God, as the source of all that is good, cannot be the author of anything evil. Evil must arise elsewhere; its source is the "ever hostile enemy of the divine name".²³ "From these two principles, good and evil take their origin. The things that come from God are good and give rise to immortality; . . . those that come from the other principle have this characteristic: after they lead away from heavenly things and

¹⁹A. Harnack, *Die Apostellehre und die jüdischen beiden Wege*, Leipzig, 1886, p. 27; G. Solomon, "Non-canonical Books, London, 1886, p. 57, quoted in Harnack.

²⁰*Didache* I, 1 (TU Harnack, *Die Apostellehre*, . . . 1886, p. 1 and 19) ὁδοὶ δύο εἰσὶ, μία τῆς ζωῆς καὶ μία τοῦ θανάτου, διαφορὰ δὲ πολλὴ μεταξὺ τῶν δύο ὁδῶν. 2. Ἡ μὲν οὖν ὁδὸς τῆς ζωῆς ἐστὶν αὕτη. . .

Ibid., V, 1.: Ἡ δὲ τοῦ θανάτου ὁδὸς ἐστὶν αὕτη. πρῶτον πάντων πονηρὰ ἐστὶ καὶ κατάρατος μεστή. . .

²¹*Epist. Barnabae* 18 (TU Harnack, *Die Apostellehre* 1886 p. 1) 'Ὀδοὶ δύο εἰσὶν διδασκαλίας καὶ ἐξουσίας ἢ τε τοῦ φωτός ἢ τοῦ σκότους. διαφορὰ δὲ πολλὴ τῶν δύο ὁδῶν. 19, 1: Ἡ οὖν ὁδὸς τοῦ φωτός ἐστὶν αὕτη. . . . Cf. Ph. Haeuser, *Der Barnabasbrief neu untersucht und neu erklart*, Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte, XI, Heft 2, Paderborn, 1912, p. 102-103.

²²W. Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter*, (Handbuch zum N. T. 21) 3rd. ed., Tübingen. 1926, p. 40ff. 320ff.

²³*De Divinis Institutionibus* VI, 6, 3 (CSEL 19, 499 Brandt): " . . . fons autem bonorum deus est, malorum vero ille scilicet divini nominis semper inimicus. . . "

immerse men in what is earthly, they bring eternal death".²⁴ Hence, by reason of the opposition between God and Satan, the latter is lifted up as the anti-God. The question then presents itself: did Lactantius really hold Satan to be an independent principle? As we shall see, Lactantius, despite these oppositions, did not wish to make Satan appear in other guise than that of a creature.

The issue is confused further when Lactantius speaks of evil as a kind of necessity in the world. Evil had to be possible to permit the possibility of good.²⁵ There would be no virtue unless there is something to which it can be opposed. God, therefore, set up this struggle between good and evil, to make virtue possible. The devil is pictured as a being that has to exist, even though Lactantius already pointed out that he is set up by God in order to test the virtue and justice of men²⁶ and to be the adversary of men²⁷ in their quest for immortality.²³ To all appearances, then,

²⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* VI, 6, 4 (CSEL 19, 499 Brandt):
"...ab his duobus principiis bona malaque oriuntur. quae veniunt a deo hanc habent rationem, ut immortalitatem parent...quae autem ab illo altero, habent officium, ut a celestibus avocatum terrenisque demersum ad poenam interficiant sempiternam..."

²⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* VI, chapters II, and IV (CSEL 19, 481ff. Brandt).

²⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* VI, 22, 2 (CSEL 19, 564 Brandt):
"...Cur ergo illa facta sunt, nisi ut iis fruamur? at enim saepe iam dictum est virtutem nullam futuram fuisse, nisi haberet quae opprimeret. Itaque fecit omnia deus ad instruendum certamen rerum duarum. Ergo inlecebrae istae voluptatum arma sunt illius cuius unum opus est expugnare virtutem justitiamque ab hominibus excludere...Nam sicut deus hominem ad vitam non nisi per virtutem ac laborem vocat, ita ille ad mortem per delicias ac voluptates, et sicut ad verum bonum per fallacia mala, sic ad verum malum per fallacia bona pervenitur".

²⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 30, 2 (CSEL 19, 394 Brandt):
"...ne quando in laqueos et fraudes illius adversarii nostri cum quo nos luctari deus voluit incideremus..."

²⁸R. Pichon, *op. cit.* p. 118ff.; The conclusion of F. W. Bussel (*op. cit.* p. 187,) that Satan was not free in the same sense that human beings are free is false. Cf. *De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 8, 4, (CSEL 19, 129 Brandt).

evil is necessary and its author too is necessary to a certain extent.

However, Lactantius did not view Satan as an independent principle. This is seen from other passages in his works which show the finite dependent character of Satan. It is true, Satan is brought forward as a principle of evil, but he is a finite created principle. He is created like the rest of the fallen angels, even though he was of a more exalted nature. Concerning his creation, Lactantius says: "After God had generated the Word, He made another spirit in whom the natural goodness of his divine origin did not remain. Being infected with envy as with a poison, he passed over from good to evil by his own will which had been given him free. He took a name opposed to God".²⁹ Lactantius speaks of the Word of God as the "first and greatest Son."³⁰ As noted above, the Word is produced by God and is called the son in virtue of election to Sonship by the Father.³¹ Although Lactantius speaks of the Word and the angels in much the same way, after this election by the Father, the Word is called God and is equal to the Father. Satan cannot therefore be considered a brother of the Word, as Turmel wrongly thought.³² Such a conclusion is unwarranted. Lactantius does not speak of Satan or any other spirits in the way he speaks of the Word of God. "First and greatest Son" refers to a like origin: namely, Lactantius speaks of the Word and spirits (angels and Satan) as produced by God, but after this there is no more

²⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 8, 4 (CSEL 19, 129 Brandt): "Deinde fecit alterum, in quo indoles divinae stirpis non permansit. Itaque suapte invidia tamquam veneno infectus est, et ex bono ad malum transcendit suoque arbitrio, quod illi ad deo liberum fuerat datum, contrarium sibi nomen adsevit."

³⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 8, 7 (CSEL 19, 130 Brandt): "Exorsus igitur deus fabricam mundi illum primum et maximum filium praefecit operi universo eoque simul consiliatore usus est..."

³¹Cf. above, p. 67, note 38; p. 69, note 41.

³²J. Turmel, *Histoire du Diable*, Paris, 1931, p. 15 "Donc selon Lactance le diable est le frère cadet du Verbe; mais un frère qui a mal tourné tandis que l'aîné par ses bons sentiments a mérité l'affection de son père".

similarity. The Word alone is the spoken breath of God. To Satan too must be applied the general characterization of "silent spirits".³³ Lactantius also explicitly calls Satan one of God's ministering servants: "The serpent who from his deed is called the devil",³⁴ "also was one of the ministers of God",³⁵ whereas the Word is the Counsellor and the Artificer whom God uses in planning and creating the world.³⁶

The reasoning which Lactantius applies to the refutation of the existence of eternal matter applies just as much to the character of Satan as an independent principle. He says:

It is impossible for God to borrow anything from another source, in as much as all things are in Himself and from Himself. For if there is anything before Him and if anything has been made but not by Him, He will therefore lose both the name and the power of God.³⁷

The reason for this is:

There would be two eternal principles and those indeed opposed to one another, which cannot happen without discord and destruction. For those things which have a contrary force and method must of necessity come into collision; . . . therefore the nature of that

³³*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 7, (CSEL 19, 296 Brandt): "Illi enim ex deo taciti spiritus exierunt, quia. . . ad ministerium creabantur. . ."

³⁴*Epitome* XXII, 6 (CSEL 19, 695 Brandt): "Serpens vero ille, qui de factis diabolus id est criminator sive delator nomen accepit."

³⁵*Epitome* XXII, 3 (CSEL 19, 694 Brandt): "Tunc serpens, qui erat unus ex dei ministris, invidens homini, quod esset immortalis effectus, inlexit eum dolo ut mandatum Dei legemque transcenderet."

³⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 8, 7 (CSEL 19, 130 Brandt): "Exorsus igitur deus fabricam mundi illum primum et maximum filium praefecit operi universo eoque simul et consiliatore usus est et artifice in excogitandis ordinandis perficiendisque rebus. . ."

³⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 8, 29 (CSEL 19, 135 Brandt): "quia nefas est Deum aliunde aliquid mutuari, cum ex ipso vel in ipso sint omnia. Nam si est aliquid ante illum, si factum est quicquam non ad ipso, iam potestatem dei et nomen amittet".

which is eternal cannot but be simple, so that all things descended from it as from a fountain or source.³⁸

It is in his insistence on the unique character of creation and divine Providence that the clearest indication is found concerning the manner in which Lactantius viewed Satan, namely, as finite, despite the fact that he exalted him in the sphere of evil. To consider Satan anything but a creature would invalidate all his reasoning on the unity of God and the existence of a Divine Providence. It would negate his concept of God's unique power and creatorship.

Lactantius, however, further shows that Satan is a fallen created being when he points out that his power is finite and limited. This is particularly true of Satan's struggle against the Christians. This kind of activity will be considered in greater detail in the next chapter. Here it suffices to point out the confidence Lactantius has in the struggle against this powerful but chained adversary: "Let us wage an indefatigable war for God", he says, "let us observe stations and watches. Bravely let us battle with our enemy, whom we recognize as our adversary, so that triumphing over our conquered foe, we may obtain the reward of virtue".³⁹

The reason for this teaching can be traced. It rests on the vivid conception of the conflict that is going on between the forces of good and those of evil. The stress is laid on the sharp hostility which Satan and the evil spirits show towards God and men. Christ has broken the power of Satan and his grip on the human race, but the battle still

³⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 8, 31 (CSEL 19, 135 Brandt): "Duo igitur constituuntur aeterna et quidem inter se contraria, quod fieri sine discordia et pernicie non potest; conlidant enim necesse est ea quorum vis ac ratio diversa est. . . ergo fieri non potest quin aeterni natura sit simplex, ut inde omnia velut ex fonte descenderint."

³⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 27, 16 (CSEL 19, 672 Brandt): "infatigabilem militiam deo militemus, stationes vigiliasque celebremus, congregiamur cum hoste quem quem novimus fortiter, ut victores ac devicto adversario triumphantes praemium virtutis quod ipse promisit a domino consequamur."

rages on. It is quite natural then, that Satan should be opposed to Christ. We have already seen how this idea of the sharpness of the struggle leads Lactantius to use a great variety of names when speaking of Satan and the demons. They are more numerous than those he uses when speaking of the good faithful angels.⁴⁰ It is an expression of the same mentality that showed itself in the liturgical functions of these early centuries especially at Baptism, in the renunciation of Satan as well as in the profession of faith in Christ.⁴¹ The renunciation of Satan was accompanied with motions of repulsion and aversion, as the candidate turned toward the West, while the profession of faith took place toward the East with motions of acceptance.⁴² Actions so expressive of hostility show us how vividly the early Christians pictured this conflict that was going on between themselves and Satan. Nor is it surprising that, in the face of the almost universal dualism in contemporary secular life, some writers should be influenced by it to a certain degree. It need not surprise us that Lactantius should carry the Pythagorean idea of opposites so far as to extend it to God and the Demons.⁴³ As Prümmer points out, however, it is noteworthy how the early church overcame the idea of evil matter and of an evil principle; how she retained the thought of creation by God, the one sole supreme principle of all things.⁴⁴ Lactantius does not see his way entirely clear, but he holds fast to the main truth that God is the creator of all things, and that Satan, even though he be the source of evil, is nonetheless still a creature. In effect, he subscribes to Tertullian's idea that

⁴⁰Cf. above, pp. 3-28 and 81-109

⁴¹J. Quasten *Monumenta Eucharistica et Liturgica Vetustissima* FLP Fasc. VII, Bonn, 1935-1937, p. 74, p. 115ff.

⁴²F. J. Dölger *Die Sonne der Gerechtigkeit und der Schwarze* LQF Heft 14, 1919, Münster, 10ff.; J. Quasten, *op. cit.* p. 74, 115.

⁴³F. J. Dölger, *op. cit.* p. 43-44; K. Prümmer, *Der christliche Glaube und die altheidnische Welt*, Leipzig, 1935, I, p. 70ff.

⁴⁴K. Prümmer, *op. cit.* I, 117.

Satan is the great corrupter and the great spoiler.⁴⁵ Satan retains his office of ruler of matter, but he uses it for his own ends.⁴⁶ Because of this, Lactantius holds Satan to be free from suffering till the end of the world when the consummation of all things will take place.

The thought of bringing the prince of the demons into opposition with Christ rather than with the good angels is fairly common. It is contained in the opposition of the eternal kingdom and the kingdom of the world of which Satan is the head.⁴⁷ In the Apostolic Fathers, for example, Satan is pictured as the leader, the prime adversary of Christ the Redeemer; the hosts of God are associated with Christ as soldiers under one leader.⁴⁸ The Apologists speak of the good angels associated with God and the fallen angels are spoken of as choosing Satan as their leader.⁴⁹ It is not an attempt to identify the power of the leaders of each of these camps.

⁴⁵Tertullian, *De Spectaculis* II (CSEL 20, 2 Riefferscheid-Wissowa).

⁴⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 1 (CSEL 19, 162 Brandt).

⁴⁷M. Hagen, "Die Lehre von der Heiligen Schrift über den Teufel" *StML* XV (1898) 229ff, 370-371.

⁴⁸Clement, *Epistola ad Corinthios* XXXVII, 1ff (OP Funk I, 106) *Στρατευσώμεθα οὖν, ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, μετὰ πάσης ἐκτενείας ἐν τοῖς ἀμώμοις προστάγμασιν αὐτοῦ. 2. κατανοήσωμεν τοὺς στρατευομένους τοῖς ἡγουμένοις ἡμῶν, τῶς εὐτάκτως, πῶς ἐκτικῶς, πῶς ὑποταταγμένως ἐπιτελοῦσιν τὰ διατασσόμενα.*

Ignatius, *Ad Ephesios* XIII (OP Funk, I, 182): *Σπουδάξετε οὖν πυκνότερον συνέρχεσθαι εἰς εὐχαριστίαν θεοῦ καὶ εἰς δόξαν. ὅταν γὰρ πυκνῶς ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ γίνεσθε, καταρροῦνται αἱ δυνάμεις τοῦ Σατανᾶ, καὶ λυεταὶ ὁ ὄλεθρος αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ ὁμοιοῖα ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως. 2. οὐδέν ἐστιν ἄμεινον εἰρήνης, ἐν ἣ πᾶς πόλεμος καταργεῖται ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων.* Cf. *Ad Trallenses*, III (OP Funk I, 204); cf. above p. 116, notes 20-21, the expressions on the two ways in the *Didache* and the *Epistola Barnabae*.

⁴⁹Cf. above, pp. 81-109.

2.

The Spiritual Nature of the Demons

The finite nature of the evil spirits is a spiritual nature. To understand this nature, it is not enough to say they have a nature like to that of the angels, since they have their origin from the ranks of the angels. According to Lactantius the evil spirits differ considerably from the angels because they have fallen and suffered a degradation. He says: "The angels who fell lost both the name and the substance of angels".⁵⁰ In what this degradation consists, Lactantius does not explain. However, it is not merely a loss of their rank among the blessed and a consequent degradation from their former dignity, but of the angelic perfection itself; otherwise he could not speak of a loss of the angelic substance. On the other hand, he does not view them as grossly material, or bodily in the ordinary sense of the word. They are still incorporeal in the usual sense of the word and they still are spirits.

The attributes Lactantius applies to them are largely those which he applies to human souls and to the angels. Thus by reason of their spiritual nature they are invisible.⁵¹ Like the angels, they are called "slight and incomprehensible" *tenuēs et incomprehensibiles*.⁵² This last characteristic as tenuous intangible natures is common to all classes of spirits, and is the reason why the evil spirits are able to take up their abode in material beings. It is the reason why they are able to inhabit human bodies, statues, temples.⁵³ Nor does the fact that Lactantius calls them fallen angels

⁵⁰*Epitome* XXII, 10 (CSEL 19, 695 Brandt "Et nomen angelorum et substantiam perdidērunt. . .")

⁵¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 14 (CSEL 19, 165 Brandt) "Qui quoniam spiritus sunt tenuēs et incomprehensibiles, insinuant se corporibus hominum. . ."

⁵²*Ibid.* II, 14, 14 (CSEL 19, 165 Brandt); II, 16, (CSEL 19, 167 Brandt).

⁵³*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 13 (CSEL 19, 165 Brandt).

and "earthly" angels,⁵⁴ in contradistinction to the good angels and human souls who are "heavenly" beings,⁵⁵ militate against the fact that they can still have the attributes given to spirits. From this we see that, although they suffered a degradation of nature, this must not be overstressed as making them coarsely corporeal and grossly material. If this were the case, they could not carry on the activity which Lactantius ascribed to them. Great detail cannot be had concerning the intimate character of their nature. It is only by comparing them with souls and with angels that some knowledge of their spiritual nature is obtainable. It resolves itself into this, that it is a spiritual nature which is less perfect than that of the angels, and very likely more perfect than that of human souls, although this latter is not fully ascertainable.

This of course pertains to the *daemones caelestes*, as Lactantius calls the fallen angels; the *daemones terreni* are lower by nature. However, they too still fall under the general classification of evil spirits. They too are simply called unclean spirits—*immundi spiritus*.⁵⁶ Mention has already been made how Lactantius shows a transition from the idea taken from the *Book of Enoch*, that the third class of demons were the souls of the giants harassing the world. For Lactantius they are not souls, but simply spirits.⁵⁷

As the nature of the souls and of the angels according to Lactantius has some materiality, however slight, whereby

⁵⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 15, 8 (CSEL 19, 166 Brandt): "Adeo non ignoravit (Trismegistus) ex caelestibus depravatos *terrenos* esse coepisse".

⁵⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 12, 11 (CSEL 19, 157 Brandt): "Est enim quasi vasculum, quo tamquam domicilio temporali spiritus hic caelestis utatur".

⁵⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 5 (CSEL 16, 163 Brandt): "Ita duo genera daemonum facta sunt, unum caeleste, alterum terrenum. Hi sunt immundi spiritus, malorum quae geruntur auctores, quorum idem diabolus est princeps. . ."

⁵⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 4 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt): "...qui autem sunt ex his procreati quia neque angeli neque homines fuerunt, sed mediam quandam naturam gerentes...ita duo genera daemonum facta. . ."

they are a fiery ethereal substance, so similarly, the fallen angels have some materiality. This is said expressly of the *daemones terreni*: "They were neither angels nor men, but had an intermediate nature."⁵⁸ It pertains to the degraded angels. Of Satan it is not stated clearly. When he is called the serpent, it is because it is the mode of his appearance.⁵⁹ Still the reasons for demanding some materiality in the angels and in the evil spirits also apply to Satan. He too is a creature punishable by God. The power of God also extends to him so that he also trembles in God's sight.⁶⁰ The capability of punishment was an indication of materiality by Christian and pagan. Thus a contemporary of Lactantius, Porphyrius said that spirits were subject to passion in so far as they were bodied⁶¹ while the earlier fragment of Theodotus expressly considered this power of suffering punishment a condition of corporeal beings: "It is said the demons are incorporeal. It is not that they have no body, because they have a figure in which they are susceptible of punishment, which in comparison to other bodies is like the shadow of a body".⁶² Justin says that they sank into passions after their fall, and that they delight in the sacrificial blood as food.⁶³ It was the partially

⁵⁸*Ibid.* II, 14, 4 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt).

⁵⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 11-12 (CSEL 19, 169 Brandt): ". . .hinc quod serpens urbem Romam pestilentia liberavit Epidauro accersitus. Nam illuc daemioniarques ipse in figura sua sine ulla dissimulatione perlatus est, siquidem legati ad eam rem missi draconem secum mirae magnitudinis advexerunt. . ."

⁶⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* VI, 21, 1 (CSEL 19, 650 Brandt). ". . .et daemones reformidant, quia torquentur ab eo ac puniuntur."

⁶¹Porphyrius, *De Abstinencia* II, 39; cf. M. De Burigny, *Traité de Porphyre*, Paris, 1747, p. 141.

⁶²*Excerpta ex Theodoto* XIV (GCS, *Clement Alex.* III, 111 Stählin): τὰ δαιμόνια ἀσώματα εἶρηται, οὐχ ὡς σῶμα μὴ ἔχοντα (ἔχει γὰρ καὶ σχῆμα· διὸ καὶ συναίσθησιν κολάσεως ἔχει), ἀλλ' ὡς πρὸς σύγκρισιν τῶν σφωζομένων σωμάτων πνευματικῶν σιὰ ὄντα ἀσώματα εἶρηται.

⁶³Justin, *Apol.* I, 62, 1; cf. F. Andres, *Die Engellehre der griechischen Apologeten des zweiten Jahrhunderts*, Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte, Paderborn, 1914, p. 27.

material nature of the angels which lay at the bottom of their explanation of the fall of the angels, namely that some of the angels entered into marriages with human beings.⁶⁴ Because the angels were thought of as having very fine subtle bodies, intermediate between God and man by nature as well as by their functions, Lactantius like others found little difficulty in accepting the account that angels could and did enter in marriages with human beings.⁶⁵ Lactantius thereby tacitly subscribes to the explanation of Plato on the nature of demons: as intermediate by nature between the divine and mortal. He does not quote the actual words of Plato, but refers to the fact that Plato attempted to explain their nature.⁶⁶ Plato had said: "He (*daimon*) is a great spirit, and like all that is spiritual, he is intermediate between the divine and the mortal".⁶⁷ Lactantius is quite similar to Minucius Felix in expressing himself, although the latter also gives the explanation of Plato. Minucius says: "And in his Symposium does not Plato endeavor to explain the nature of the demons. For he will have it a substance between mortal and immortal; that is, mediate between body and spirit, compounded by a mingling of earthly weight and heavenly lightness".⁶⁸ This materiality is composed of an airy, fiery, substance. As the human soul is spoken of as a heavenly fiery substance, so the angels likewise were thought of as fiery breath-like beings. The demons while lower by nature are also fiery and airy beings, but less perfect than the angels.

⁶⁴P. Scholz, *Die Ehen der Söhne Gottes mit den Töchtern der Menschen*, Regensburg, 1865 p. 100.

⁶⁵Cf. above, pp. 81-109.

⁶⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 9, (CSEL 19, 164 Brandt): "Philosophi quoque de his (daemonibus) disserunt. Nam Plato etiam naturas eorum in Symposio exprimere conatus. . ."

⁶⁷*Plato Symposium*, tr. B. Jowett, *The Works of Plato*, N. Y. n. d. p. 33.

⁶⁸Minucius Felix, *Octavius* XXVI, 12 (CSEL 2, 39, Halm): "Et in Symposio etiam suo naturam daemonum exprimere conatur? vult enim esse substantiam inter mortalem inmortalemque, id est inter corpus et spiritum mediam, terreni ponderis et caelestis levitatis admixtione concretam. . ."

This concept of Lactantius is of a somewhat higher nature than that expressed by Tatian. According to the latter, the fallen angels sank deeper and deeper into matter becoming the slaves of concupiscence and lust.⁶⁹ They are not material in the ordinary sense of the word, but they have "an organism as of fire and air".⁷⁰ Athenagoras considered the third class of demons as the giants who lived on the earth. Their souls are the "demons alive in the world".⁷¹ This view of Athenagoras considered the giants largely after human fashion, as men of extraordinary size and brutal strength rather than of a different nature. This, in fact, is the way the *Book of Enoch* looked on them: as giants of immense strength.⁷² Lactantius has a simpler view than this; for him they are of the ranks of the spirits. They are differentiated from human beings by their nature. His views are largely those of his African compatriots: Tertullian, Cyprian, and Minucius Felix.⁷³ Although Arnobius is considered his teacher, Lactantius never refers to him at all.⁷⁴

⁶⁹Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos* XV; cf. F. Andres, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

⁷⁰*Ibid.* XV (Ed. Schwartz p. 16): δαίμονες δὲ πάντες σαρκίον μὲν οὐδέ κέκτηνται, πνευματικὴ δὲ ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς ἢ σύμψηξις ὡς πυρὸς καὶ ἀέρος.

⁷¹Athenagoras, *Legatio Pro Christianis* XXV (Schwartz 33): καὶ αἱ τῶν γιγάντων ψυχαὶ οἱ περὶ τὸν κόσμον εἰσὶ πλανώμενοι δαίμονες.

⁷²*Enoch* VII, 2 (GCS *Das Buch Henoch*, tr. Fleming Rademacher p. 27); cf. T. Halusa "Die Engel in den Apocryphen" *Pastor Bonus* XXXVII (1927) p. 286, P. Scholz, *Die Ehen der Söhne Gottes mit den Töchtern der Menschen*, Regensburg, 1865, p. 46; H. Junker, *Die Biblische Urgeschichte*, Bonn, 1932, p. 33ff.

⁷³Cyprian, *Quod Idola Dii non sint* VI; Tertullian, *Apologeticum* XXII and XXIII; Minucius Felix, *Octavius* XXVI and XXVII; *De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, ff (CSEL 19, 162 Brandt).

⁷⁴O. Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Litteratur* II, Freiburg, 1914, 525; W. Harloff, *Untersuchungen zu Lactantius*, Borna-Leipzig, 1911, 35-38, note 54, thinks that both Lactantius and Arnobius wrote simultaneously.

3.

The Intellectual and Volitional Powers of the Demons

Lactantius does not mention directly whether the demons are personified beings or not, but he does speak of them in a way that implies their individualized rational nature. They are spoken of as persons after the fashion of human beings and the good angels. They live and think and will. Their activity is based on their knowledge; all their evil planning, their machination is the result of the perversity of their will.

Their life is a spirit life. In common with human souls and angels they are ever active.⁷⁵ They, too, cannot cease to be active without ceasing to exist, since that is the nature of a spirit.⁷⁶

The knowledge of the demons is spoken of only in a general way. No distinctions are made between the knowledge of the different classes of demons. This follows from the manner of the treatment regarding the activity of demons. Lactantius does not distinguish the activity of the different classes sharply, yet it is from this activity of the different classes that most of what we know about their knowledge must be gathered.

Their knowledge is considerable. Lactantius says the derivation of the word itself shows this; he says that this is the view of the grammarians concerning the origin of the word.⁷⁷ Their knowledge was the reason why men took them to be gods.⁷⁸

⁷⁵*De Ira Dei* XVII, 4 (CSEL 27, 111, Brandt); and *De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 12, 4 (CSEL 19, 619 Brandt): "Quod ex caelesti spiritu, id constat ac viget semper, quoniam divinus spiritus sempiternus est. . ."

⁷⁶Cf. above, pp. 29-41.

⁷⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 6 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt): "...daemonas autem grammatici dictos aiunt quasi *δαίμονας*, id est peritos as rerum scios: hos enim putant deos esse."

⁷⁸*Ibid.*

The extent of their knowledge is partially seen from the fact that it embraces not only the present but also something of the future. This was one of the reasons why men took them to be gods. Lactantius explains this knowledge partially as real and partially conjectural when he says: "For they know many future things but not all, since they are not permitted to know the counsel of God entirely, and therefore they temper their responses with ambiguity".⁷⁹ When speaking of the seeming benefits conferred by demons he also speaks of their knowledge of the future: "They have a presentiment of the disposition of God because they formerly were his ministers".⁸⁰ In a passage describing the activity of the demons, which is very much alike in both Lactantius and Tertullian,⁸¹ the latter gives this explanation of the knowledge of the future on the part of the demons. He says: "They took the dispositions of God from the words of the prophets and now they sometimes set themselves up as the rivals of God as they steal his divinations".⁸² Lactantius subscribes to this notion wholeheartedly.

Their knowledge of the present is not stressed by Lactantius except in particular instances. It embraces a knowledge of natural phenomena; they can produce wonders through their knowledge of the powers of nature. Astrology, auguries, magic, oracles, necromancy, are the fruits

⁷⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 6 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt): "Sciunt illi quidem futura multa, sed non omnia, quippe quibus penitus consilium dei scire non liceat, et ideo solent responsa in ambiguos exitus temperare".

⁸⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 14 (CSEL 19, 170 Brandt).

⁸¹Tertullian, *Apologeticum* XXII, and *De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14 (CSEL 19, 162 Brandt).

⁸²Tertullian *Apologeticum* XXII (Oehler 106): "Dispositiones etiam Dei et tunc prophetis contionantibus excerpunt et nunc quasdam temporum sortes aemulantur divinitatem dum furantur divinationem. . ."

of their knowledge.⁸³ We have already seen how Tertullian speaks of angels and demons as winged to show their knowledge of affairs happening the world over.⁸⁴ How far Lactantius subscribed to this view lies beyond the scope of his works. Certainly, the knowledge of demons was thought to be great.

Lactantius thought that most of the phenomena they produce are deceptions. They make the false appear true and the true false in order to deceive. Their entire knowledge is put to this sole use: to deceive men. One of the reasons for this deception is the fact that their power is restricted. Although the effect is the same, whether a man is deceived by a reality or a shadow, Lactantius nevertheless made the distinction. It is a recurrence of the former expression, that while they hold the key to the natural secrets, the demons are limited in their power to employ what knowledge they possess.

With regard to the volitional activity of the demons, very little is said. They are volitional creatures enjoying the gift of a free will. This is said of Satan explicitly, and of the other demons implicitly. Both Satan and the other evil spirits fell freely, the latter being tempted little by little⁸⁵ until they finally gave way to a serious fall. Because of it they are condemned by sentence of God and in due time will be punished for their desertion of God.

While their will is free they cannot turn back to God. This is not stated as an absolute impossibility arising from their nature, but from their sin which is irremissible. Lactantius says: "God forbade them to do what He knew they

⁸³*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 1 (CSEL 19, 167 Brandt): "Eorum inventa sunt astrologia et haruspicina et auguratio et ipsa quae dicuntur oracula et necromantia et ars magica et quidquid praeterea malorum exercent homines vel palam vel occulte..."

⁸⁴Tertullian *Apologeticum* XXII (Oehler 105-106).

⁸⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 2 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt): "Itaque illos cum hominibus commorantes dominator ille terrae fallacissimus consuetudine ipsa paulatim ad vitia pellexit et mulierum congressibus inquinavit." Cf. *Epitome* XXII, 6 (CSEL 19, 695 Brandt).

would do so that they might not have hope of pardon".⁸⁶ There is an echo in this that the angels sinned with perfect knowledge and that there are no extenuating circumstances as generally is the case with men, and because of this their sin is irremissible.

As the entire knowledge of the good angels and his whole power of will is bent on executing God's least commands, so the evil spirits' sole will is to oppose God. They cannot attack God Himself, nor do they derive any benefit out of it, but their ill will is exercised on men to keep men from God. In this there is one thing however that they are unable to do: the demons are powerless to effect anything good. Everything is fraud and deception;⁸⁷ in cases where a good thing seems to come from the demons Lactantius makes haste to add that these things would have taken place anyhow. The demons ascribed to themselves those benefits which God had planned to effect for mankind:

The pagans think that kingdoms, victories, riches, and prosperous events are due to the demons, that by a nod of the demons the state is often freed from imminent perils. The demons forecast these perils in their responses and then turn them aside when sacrifice is offered. But this is deceit. Since they have a presentiment of the dispositions of God. . . they interpose themselves in these things, so that whatever has been done or is being done by God they may seem to have done or to be doing. And whenever by the decree of God something good is about to happen to a people or to a city they claim they will do it. . .so that when that happens which must come to pass they may obtain veneration for themselves.⁸⁸

⁸⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 2 (CSEL 19, 162 Brandt): "Quibus praecepit ante omnia, ne terrae contagione maculati substantiae caelestis amitterent dignitatem. scilicet id eos facere prohibuit quod sciebat esse facturos, ut veniam sperare non possent."

⁸⁷*Epitome* XXIII 4, (CSEL 19, 695 Brandt).

⁸⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 13ff (CSEL 19, 170 Brandt): "Ideoque ad ipsis adtribui putant et imperia et victorias et opes et eventus prosperos rerum, denique ipsorum nutu saepe rem publicam periculis imminentibus liberatam, quae pericula et responsis denuntiaverint et sacrificiis placati averterint. Sed omnia ista fallaciae sunt. Nam cum dispositiones dei praesentiant. . .interponunt se in his rebus, ut quaecumque a deo vel facta sunt vel fiunt, ipsi potissimum

In all this their craftiness is visible. Even their wonders are falsities. When the thing itself which they produce would by its nature be good or indifferent their evil purpose is always visible.⁸⁹ In this Lactantius again follows Tertullian closely. For Tertullian their work also is deceit and perversity. Sometimes, says he, "The bad things are their doing, but never the good",⁹⁰ "They would have themselves thought the authors of the things they announce".⁹¹ And as already pointed out, Tertullian thought "they steal the divinations of God in order to set themselves up as the rivals of God Himself"⁹² that men may turn to them rather than to God.

4.

The State of the Demons

Lactantius calls the state of the evil spirits as "fallen from immortality".⁹³ This does not mean that they will die or ever cease to exist, but that they lost a more glorious state and are now in one that is degraded and evil.

Satan and his followers are already in a state of condemnation although this has not yet reached its complete

facere aut fecisse videantur, et quotiens alicui populo vel urbi secundum dei statutum boni quid inpendet, illi se id facturos. . . pollicentur . . . quibus datis cum illud acciderit quod necesse est, summam sibi pariunt venerationem."

⁸⁹*Ibid.* II, 16, 14 (CSEL 19, 170 Brandt).

⁹⁰Tertullian *Apologeticum* XXII (Oehler 106) "Et sunt plane malorum nonnunquam, bonorum tamen numquam (auctores)".

⁹¹*Ibid.* "Sic et auctores interdum videri volunt eorum quae adnuntiant."

⁹²*Ibid.*

⁹³*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 10 (CSEL 19, 169 Brandt) "Ne immortalitatem possint adipisci quam ipsi sua nequitia perdiderunt".

fulfillment. This is still in the future.⁹⁴ Their state is one of hostility and enmity, primarily toward God, but in effect it is vented on men because they are unable to attack God Himself.⁹⁵ They do not suffer any severe pain but, from the way Lactantius speaks, they have considerable freedom as they wander about the earth. They are hindered mainly in their efforts to harm and in their plots against mankind.⁹⁶ Lactantius says that they seek compensation for their own loss in the ruin of men, although no real solace can be had:

Those however who fell away from the ministry of God, those who are the enemies of truth and the prevaricators of God, seek the name and the cult of gods for themselves, not that they desire the honor, for what honor can there be for the lost, nor that they may injure God, Whom no one can injure, but to injure men, whom they try to turn away from the knowledge of the true majesty, lest they obtain immortality which they themselves have lost by their wickedness.⁹⁷

They turn to the destruction and the ruin of men "*ut habeant solacium perditionis suae*".⁹⁸

This temporary state will continue till the end of the world. Lactantius, however, thought that six thousand

⁹⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* III, 29, 16 (CSEL 19, 270 Brandt): "Idcirco enim in primordiis transgressionis non statim ad poenam detrusus a deo est, ut hominem malitia sua exerceat ad virtutem: quae nisi agitur, nisi vexatione adsidua roboretur, non potest esse perfecta..."

⁹⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 9 (CSEL 19, 169 Brandt).

⁹⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 15, 2, 3 (CSEL 19, 165 Brandt). L. Atzberger *Geschichte der christlichen Eschatologie innerhalb der vornicaenischen Zeit*, Freiburg 1896, p. 599.

⁹⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 9ff (CSEL 19, 168-169 Brandt): "Qui desciverunt a dei ministerio, quia sunt veritatis inimici et pravaricatores dei, nomen sibi et cultum deorum vindicare conantur, non quo ullum honorem desiderent—quis enim perditis honor est?—nec ut deo noceant, cui noceri non potest, sed ut hominibus: quos nituntur a cultu et notitia verae maiestatis avertere, ne immortalitatem possint adipisci, quam ipsi sua nequitia perdiderunt".

⁹⁸*Epitome XXII*, 10 (CSEL 19, 695 Brandt).

years after creation, the millenium would set in. There would be an uprising on the part of the evil spirits, personified in Anti-Christ and his followers. Their short triumph would be broken by the coming of Christ. Then the golden age of the Millenium would begin. During the thousand years which Lactantius thought would begin around the year 500 A. D.,⁹⁹ the evil spirits were to be bound. Another short space of power would be granted them after the Millenium. Then the final consummation of all things was to follow. At this time the final judgment of all was to take place. After this, Satan and his evil angels, together with the multitude of the impious were to be condemned to eternal fire which had been prepared for them. As an expression of the loss suffered by the evil angels, Lactantius says they will be tortured in the sight of the good angels.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 25, 1ff (CSEL 19, 663 Brandt); L. Atzberger, *op. cit.* p. 601.

¹⁰⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* VII, 26, 6 (CSEL 19, 666 Brandt).

CHAPTER III

THE ACTIVITY OF THE DEMONS IN THE WORLD

The activity of the demons as viewed by Lactantius can be conveniently grouped about a few central topics. In fact, it hinges about one main topic: that of religion and worship. It is from this viewpoint that Lactantius, like the apologetical writers, considers it and brings it into his works.¹ These writers are opposed to polytheism. They associated polytheism with the activity of demons and stress the activity of the demons chiefly as a phase of their struggle against polytheism.

For convenience's sake it is better to divide the matter concerning this activity into several groups: namely, in so far as it affects the world in general, whether the object of demon activity be a pagan or a christian, then specifically, the part they take in pagan worship and thirdly their activity on Christians; this latter can be centered in the general theme of persecution: be it persecution in the strict sense, or the vexations of individuals by temptations and the like; then, finally, the counter-attack of the Christians in Christ's name and in the strength of His cross completes the expressions of their activity by Lactantius.

1.

The Activity of the Demons in General

Something has already been said concerning the activity of the demons in the world, when speaking of their powers. Lactantius thought they were on earth, working on matter² influencing man particularly in secret and interior

¹J. Lortz, *Tertullian als Apologet*, Chapter IX, "Der Kampf gegen die Dämonen", Münster 1928, II, p. 34ff.

²*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 2 and 8 (CSEL 19, 163-164. Brandt).

operations³ in order to deceive men wherever possible, so much so that the consummate character of deceitfulness can be described as the "*daemoniacae fraudes*".⁴ This activity of the evil spirits was considered of greater practical importance than the activity of the good angels. As a convert from paganism Lactantius was still influenced by his former pagan atmosphere, where it was said, gods were multiplied to such an extent that it was easier to meet a god than a man.⁵ The words of Achelis concerning the early Christians are applicable to Lactantius, when he says: "It is probably true that the practico-religious thought of the first centuries of Christians was not influenced as greatly by any other thought complex and affected by it as by the representation of the demons that surround the Christians at every step and lie in wait to do him harm".⁶ This was due to the sharp opposition that was placed between God and the demons.⁷ As far as the pagan was concerned the picture of Lactantius is even darker, for the pagans are not protected from their evil influence as the Christians are.⁸ The demons are all too successful in their activity on the pagans. And it is just this point that Lactantius uses, as Minucius⁹ and Tertullian¹⁰ also do, to show the decadent

³*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 15, 1 (CSEL 19, 165 Brandt).

⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 13, 16 (CSEL 19, 324 Brandt).

⁵Petronius, *Satir.* 17, 5.

⁶H. Achelis, *Das Christentum in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, Leipzig, 1912, I, 132.

⁷J. Lortz, *op. cit.*, II, Chap. VIII, "Die Religion des Monotheismus", pp. 4ff.

⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus*, II, 15, 2 (CSEL 19, 165 Brandt); cf. *De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 22, 23 (CSEL 19, 477 Brandt); cf. note 22.

⁹*Octavius* XXVI, 8, (CSEL 2, 38 Halm): "Isti igitur spiritus, posteaquam simplicitatem substantiae suae onusti et inmersi vitiiis perdiderunt, ad solacium calamitatis suae non desinunt perditum jam perdere et depravati errorem pravitatis infundere et alienati a Deo inductis pravibus religionibus a Deo segregare. . ."

¹⁰*Apologeticum* XXII, 9 (Oehler, 106): "Laedunt enim primo de hinc remedia praecipunt quod et curasse creduntur. Quid ergo de ceteris ingeniis vel etiam viribus fallaciae spirituale edisseram?"

degrading character of paganism. Its source is the evil spirit, so that no real good can be had out of it. It is therefore sufficient to bring out this connection of paganism with the evil spirits, to bring it into disrepute and to discredit it with any upright thinking man.¹¹

More specifically the demons are active in the evil that men do: "Astrology, divination, auguries, oracles, necromancy and magical arts are their inventions and whatever else that is evil that men do either openly or in secret".¹² They cast a pall about their activity in order to hide their true character for if they were clearly recognized, or if their purpose were known, they could not effect anything.¹³ Men would not turn to them, but "to their Lord and Father"¹⁴ nor could they succeed in their purpose of destroying souls, or as Lactantius words it "devouring souls"¹⁵ in human sacrifices.

The demons inflict bodily evils, sickness and misfortune, in order that by liberating men from this same sickness they may appear as wonder-workers: "The pagans thereby think them to be beneficial when they have ceased

Phantasmata Castorum, et aquam cribro gestatam, et navem cingulo promotam, et barbam tactu inrufatam, ut nomina lapides rederentur, ut deus verus non quaeretur."

¹¹J. Lortz, *Tertullian als Apologet*, Münster, 1928, II, chapter IX, "Der Kampf gegen die Dämonen", 42.

¹²*De Divinis Institutionibus*, II, 16, 1 (CSEL 19, 167 Brandt): "Eorum inventa sunt astrologia et haruspicina et auguratio et ipsa quae dicuntur oracula et necromantia et ars magica et quidquid praeterea malorum exercent homines vel palam vel occulte".

¹³*De Divinis Institutionibus*, VI, 7, 3 (CSEL 19, 505 Brandt): "Quomodo enim praecursor eius viae cuius vis et potestas omnis in fallendo est, universos in fraudem posset inducere, nisi veri similia hominibus ostentaret?"

¹⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus*, II, 16, 10 (CSEL 19, 169 Brandt): "Offundunt itaque tenebras et veritatem caligine obducunt, ne dominum, ne patrem suum norint..."

¹⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 21 (CSEL 19, 172 Brandt): "...idcirco etiam humanas hostias excogitaverunt, ipsi hostes generis humani, ut quam multas devorent animas."

to inflict harm".¹⁶ The physical causes of sickness and disease were largely unknown to Lactantius. Like his pagan contemporaries he readily attributed them to preternatural influences. He says the demons inflict sickness when they take up their abode in human beings.¹⁷ Mental ills and terrors are also traceable to the same source, to the demons who insinuate themselves into human bodies.¹⁸ Every ill is to be ascribed to them since earth is under the domination of the evil spirits and so too the human body.¹⁹ He does not say explicitly how the demons can influence the soul, when they take up their abode in a human being; but the fact is stated clearly enough that they do influence it; the only reason given for their power to do so is the fact that they are "*Tenuēs et incomprehensibiles*," that they are largely incorporeal beings unencumbered with gross matter as earthly beings are. Cases of possession by the demons were very frequent in the first centuries of Christianity²¹ as the frequent references to liberation from the dominion of the demons testify. It was used as an argument by the Christians to show the truth of Christianity;

¹⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 15, 1 (CSEL 19, 165 Brandt): ". . .prodesse enim putant eos, cum nocere desinunt, qui nihil possunt aliud quam nocere."

¹⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 14 (CSEL 19, 165 Brandt): ". . .insinuant se corporibus hominum et occulte in visceribus operati valetudinem vitiant, morbos citant, somniis animos terrent, mentes furoribus quatiunt, ut homines his malis cogant ad eorum auxilia decurrere." F. J. Dölger, *Der Exorzismus im altchristlichen Taufritual*, Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums, Paderborn 1909, p. 17-38.

¹⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 14 (CSEL 19, 165) cf. note 17.

¹⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* VI, 6, 3 (CSEL 19, 499 Brandt).

²⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 14 (CSEL 19, 165 Brandt): "Qui quoniam spiritus sunt tenuēs et incomprehensibiles, insinuant se corporibus hominum. . ."

²¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 27, passim (CSEL 19, 384 ff Brandt); *Epitome* XLIV, (CSEL 19, 722) and XLVI, 7, (CSEL 19, 724 Brandt); cf. P. Perrone, "De daemonum cum hominibus commercio" Migne, *Theologiae Cursus Completus*, Paris 1841, VII, 894-895.

for even the demons themselves testified to Christianity when placed under constraint. Lactantius refers to the liberation of souls from the power of the demons as one of the means whereby Christianity increased in numbers:

Nor is it a slight cause (of the increase in the number of Christians) that the unclean spirits of demons having received permission to throw themselves into the bodies of many when they are afterwards driven out, those who have been healed cling to the religion whose power they have experienced.²²

Lactantius, however, did not think that the demons could take up their abode in men at will, but only "*accepta licentia multorum corporibus se insinuant*".²³ Nor is this restriction of power limited to their efforts to harm Christians. He speaks of converts to Christianity in whom the demons had formerly taken up their abode; they converted to Christianity *after* the demons had been expelled. This shows that while the other expression is true, namely, that the demons have power over those whom the hand of God does not protect, namely, the pagans, yet the pagans are not entirely without the help of God.²⁴ The demons are able to afflict the pagans only so far as God allows them to do so.

In explaining the ills that the demons inflict on men, Lactantius expresses himself in nearly the same manner as the earlier writers of the African Church had done. This is the case not only with regard to the main thought, but down to some of the very expressions used. Tertullian, for example, says:

²²*De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 22, 23 (CSEL 19, 477 Brandt):
"...ne haec quidem levis causa est quod inmundi daemonum spiritus accepta licentia multorum se corporibus immergunt, quibus postea ejectis omnes qui resanati fuerint adhaerent religioni cujus potentiam senserunt."

²³*Ibid.* V, 22, 23 (CSEL 19, 477 Brandt).

²⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 15, 2 (CSEL 19, 165 Brandt):
"...nocent illi quidem, sed iis a quibus timentur, quos manus dei potens et excelsa non protegit, qui profani sunt a sacramento veritatis."

Their great business is the ruin of mankind, so that from the very first, spiritual wickedness sought our destruction: they inflict upon our bodies diseases and other grievous calamities while by violent assaults they harry the soul into sudden and extraordinary excesses. Their marvelous subtlety and tenuity gives them access to both parts of our nature.²⁵

In Minucius Felix the expression is very much similar:

Thus they weight men downwards from heaven and call them away from God to material things, they disturb his life, render his slumber unquiet, creeping also secretly into human bodies because of their subtlety as spirits, they feign diseases and alarm the mind, wrench about the limbs that they may constrain men to worship them, being gorged with the fumes of the altars or the sacrifices of cattle by remitting what they had bound they may seem to have cured it.²⁶

In all three of these writers the main ideas expressed are practically the same: the demons take up their abode in human beings, they cause diseases and they cure them in order to constrain men to come to them because of apparent favors rendered to men. Lactantius however differs from Minucius Felix in one instance in speaking of the deceptions of the evil spirits. Lactantius says they deceive out of perverseness: that they know the future but abuse their knowledge of it for their own purposes when they give oracles or cooperate in auguries and in necromancy.²⁷ Minu-

²⁵Tertullian *Apologeticum* XXII (Oehler 105) "Operatio eorum est hominis eversio. Sic malitia spiritalis a primordio auspicata est in hominis exitium. Itaque corporibus quidem et valitudines infligunt et aliquos casus acerbos, animae vero repentinos et extraordinarios per vim excessus. Suppetit illis ad utramque substantiam hominis adeundam subtilitas et tenuitas sua."

²⁶*Octavius* XXVII, 2 (CSEL 2, 39 Halm): "Sic a caelo deorsum gravant et a Deo vero ad materias avocant, vitam turbant, somnos inquietant, inrepentes etiam corporibus occulte ut spiritus tenues morbos fingunt, terrent mentes, membra distorquent, ut ad cultum sui cogant, ut nidore altarium vel hostiis pecudum saginati, remissis quas constrinxerant curasse videantur."

²⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 6 (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt): "Sciunt illi quidem futura multa, sed non omnia quippe quibus penitus consilium dei scire non liceat, et ideo solent responsa in ambiguos ex-

cius Felix, however, describes their activity as full of deceptions and falsehood. They indeed cooperate in these things, but they both deceive and are deceived themselves because they are ignorant of the truth.²⁸

In order to accomplish their baneful mission among men, Lactantius says, "they fill everything with snares, frauds, deceits and errors: for they cleave to single men and lurk about the doors of houses and take up the name of genii for thus the demons are interpreted into Latin".²⁹ Here the interesting question arises that when Lactantius says the demons cling to single men, does he subscribe to the opinion which was sometimes expressed in the early centuries that single men had a definite single demon accompanying him through life as the counterpart of the guardian angel. From the mere fact that Lactantius says the demons cling to individuals, no such conclusion can be drawn. Weber is right in saying that it is too slender a thread on which to hang an argument for such a conten-

itus temperare." *Ibid.* II, 16, 13-14 (CSEL 19, 170 Brandt): "In oraculis autem vel maxime fallunt, quorum praestigias profani a veritate intellegere non possunt, ideoque ab ipsis adtribui putant et imperia et victorias et opes et eventus prosperos rerum...sed omnia ista ministri ejus fuerunt, interponunt se in his rebus, ut quaecumque a deo vel facta sunt vel fiunt, ipsi potissimum facere aut fecisse videantur..."

²⁸Minucius Felix *Octavius* XXVII 1 (CSEL 2, 39 Halm): "Dum nonnumquam extorum fibras animant, avium volatus gubernant, sortes regunt, oracula efficiunt, falsis pluribus involuta. Nam et falluntur et fallunt, ut et nescientes sinceram veritatem et quam sciunt, in perditionem sui non confitentess..."

²⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 12 (CSEL 19, 164 Brandt): "Itaque omnia insidiis fraudibus dolis erroribus complent: adhaerent enim singulis hominibus et omnes ostiatim domos occupant ac sibi geniorum nomen adsumunt; sic enim latino sermone daemones interpretantur." Concerning Genii, cf. A. De Marchi, *Il Culto Privato*, Milan, 1896-1903 I, p. 69ff.; T. R. Glover, *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, London, 1909, p. 14; J. Quasten, *Musik und Gesang in den Kulturen der heidnischen Antike und Christlichen Frühzeit*, LQF, Heft 25, Münster, 1930, p. 158.

tion.³⁰ But, as far as Lactantius is concerned, it does not merely rest on the statement repeated twice in his works.³¹ There is a probability that Lactantius held to this view from other reasons contained in his works. We have already seen that Lactantius identified the Pagan demons with the evil spirits; this is common to all the apologists. Lactantius, however, wrote from the standpoint that the pagans knew of the demons in the same sense that he viewed them. This was done, partially at least, for apologetical reasons. The pagans, however, believed in accompanying demons. Many of these demons were looked on as kind benevolent beings: "They believed that a guardian spirit was given to man who watched over him from his birth, and who might be either friendly or inimical to his charge".³² A witness to this belief is the *Fragment of Menander* as quoted by Plutarch:

By every man at birth a good demon takes his stand
To initiate him in the mysteries of life.³³

Plato too believed in accompanying demons. He mentions demons who guard both the state and those who are the guardians of individual men.³⁴ The Stoics spoke of demons accompanying men through life, although they identified the demon with man himself to a certain extent: "These Stoics associate the idea of a divine being indwelling in man, with the idea of a guardian spirit which is given to man".³⁵

³⁰S. Weber, *De singulorum hominum daemone impugnatore*, Patterson, 1938, p. 23-24.

³¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 12 (CSEL, 19, 162 Brandt) cf. note 29.; *Epitome* XXIII, 3 (CSEL 19, 696 Brandt): "Adhaerent ergo singulis et sub nomine geniorum aut penatium domos occupant."

³²F. Andres, *Die Engellehre der griechischen Apologeten des zweiten Jahrhunderts*. Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte XII Paderborn, 1914, p. 108; A. C. Pearson, "Demons and Spirits", *Hastings Encyc.* IV, 590ff.

³³*De Tranquillitate Animae* 15 (474B): οὐ γὰρ, ὡς ὁ Μένανδρος φησιν, ἅπαντι δαίμων ἀνδρὶ συμπαραστατεῖ ἐδῆυς γενόμενος, μυσταγωγὸς τοῦ βίου ἀγαθός.

³⁴Plato, *Republic* X 617 (Engleman) and 620D; cf. F. Andres, *op. cit.*, p. 117ff.

³⁵F. Andres, *op. cit.*, 127ff.

Plutarch however, took this to be a good demon accompanying the individual through life.³⁶ Lactantius refers to several of these passages in the course of his works. He refers to the demon of Socrates and that of Plato.³⁷ He certainly was familiar with their notion of accompanying spirits. His efforts are directed toward showing that they are completely evil spirits. His point is to bring home to the pagans their character as completely evil in order to discredit their belief in the demons. He is willing to accept their belief and the existence of evil spirits as he was in other things, particularly when nothing definite was said about a doctrine in christian circles. And it is certainly in line with his dualistic set-up of the two ways, of matter opposing spirit, of light matching and opposing darkness, to oppose the evil angels to the good, and to have evil accompanying demons pairing up with the guardian angels. Hence it is probable that he held to this view. Still, it is only probable. He does not speak of it explicitly.

The further question of how far Lactantius might apply this view: whether to pagans only, or to Christians as well, cannot be answered. This much however is certain, that the power of the evil spirits was considered by Lactantius as less effective and dangerous to Christians than to pagans.

2.

The Demons and Pagan Religions

After writing a book on the false worship of the gods³⁸ Lactantius sets out to give the origin of these errors, namely that they stem from the activity of the demons.³⁹ There

³⁶Plutarch, *De Tranquill.* An. 15 (474B).

³⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 9 (CSEL 19, 164 Brandt): "philosophi quoque de his disserunt. Nam Plato etiam naturas eorum in Symposio exprimere conatus est et Socrates esse circa se adsidium daemona loquebatur, qui puero sibi adhaesisset, cuius nutu et arbitrio sua vita regeretur."

³⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* Liber I *De Falsa Religione*.

³⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* Liber II, *De Origine Erroris*; cf. II, 1, 1 (CSEL 19, 95 Brandt).

is nothing really new in this viewpoint. The tenor of Christian demonology is that the gods of the heathens are the demons. The Jews were already reminded of this in the Psalms that "the gods of the Gentiles are demons".⁴⁰ Christian Apologists were imbued with this thought. Andres says very well that "this identification of the heathen gods and demons with the fallen angels gives the demonology of the Apologists its own unique character and its greatest differentiating mark from the graeco-pagan demonology".⁴¹ False religion is the expression of the activity of the demons in the world. "Satan himself is believed to have brought men to this condition rather than that they adore the one true God in heaven. . .".⁴² By means of such a conception the apologists were able to explain all the myths about the gods, the narratives of their immorality, the occasional cases of prodigies that admitted of no known natural explanation. The gods were simply the demons living in those particular circumstances.⁴³ It is this idea that accounts for the antagonism which the Christians showed to anything in which the pagan religion was concerned; there was the thought of separation from the pagans; in this was expressed *the our and your* when they referred to pagan and Christian practices respectively.⁴⁴

The demons cause the evils that are in the world, but their activity on pagans is linked up in a close manner with

⁴⁰Psalm XCV, 5; F. J. Dölger, *Der Exorzismus im altchristlichen Taufritual*, Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums III, Paderborn, 1909, 19ff.

⁴¹F. Andres, *Op. cit.*, p. 171: "Diese Gleichsetzung der heidnischen Götter und Dämonen mit den gefallenen Engeln gibt der Dämonologie der Apologeten ihr ganz eigenes, sie von der griechisch-heidnischen Dämonenlehre unterscheidendes Gepräge"; cf. H. Achelis, *Das Christentum in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, Leipzig, 1912, I, 135; J. Lortz, *Tertullian als Apologet* Münster 1928, II, 31ff.

⁴²H. Achelis *op. cit.* I, 135.

⁴³*Ibid.* I, 135.

⁴⁴E. G. Sihler, *From Augustus to Augustine*, Cambridge 1923, 172; Erik Peterson, *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem*, Leipzig, 1935, 48ff.

religion. Lactantius speaks of the deception and the apparent favors they grant in order to lure men away from God; mention of this has already been made,⁴⁵ namely that the demons anticipate the benefits that God plans to bestow by means of their oracles and promises in order to have men believe they themselves will confer the benefit.⁴⁶ But even aside of this Lactantius also admits that they sometimes do perform prodigies for the same evil purpose:

For sometimes someone may have recourse to those things which are handed down by many and undoubted authorities that these very persons whom we have shown to be no gods have often displayed their majesty both by prodigies and dreams and auguries and oracles. Indeed many wonderful things may be enumerated.⁴⁷

Lactantius then gives a list of such prodigies and wonders related in ancient pagan writings. He recalls the appearances of Castor and Pollux,⁴⁸ of the Statue of Fortune speak-

⁴⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16; cf. above, p. 131, note 86 and p. 132, note 89.

⁴⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 14 (CSEL 19, 170 Brandt): "Nam cum dispositiones dei praesentiant, quippe qui ministri ejus fuerunt, interponunt se in his rebus, ut quaecumque a deo vel facta sunt vel fiunt, ipsi potissimum facere aut fecisse videantur, et quotiens alicui populo vel urbi secundum dei statutum boni quid inpendet, illi se id facturos vel prodigiis vel somniis vel oraculis pollicentur... quibus datis cum illud acciderit quod necesse est, summam sibi pariunt venerationem..."

⁴⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 7, 7-8 (CSEL 19, 125 Brandt): "Nam fortasse aliquis ad illa confugiat, quae a multis et non dubiis traduntur auctoribus, eos ipsos quos docuimus deos non esse, maiestatem suam persaepe ostendisse et prodigiis et somniis et auguriis et oraculis et sane multa enumerari possunt digna miraculo"; cf. G. C. Ring, *Gods of the Gentiles*, Milwaukee 1938, p. 279-280.

⁴⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 7, 7ff (CSEL 19, 125 Brandt): "Superest ingens quaestio, cuius disputatio non ab ingenio, sed ascientia venit: quae pluribus explicanda erit, ne quid omnino dubium relinquatur. Nam fortasse aliquis ad illa confugiat, quae a multis et non dubiis traduntur auctoribus, eos ipsos quos docuimus deos non esse, maiestatem suam persaepe ostendisse et prodigiis et somniis et auguriis et oraculis. Et sane multa enumerari possunt digna miraculo, in primis... quod Castor et Pollux bello Latino apud lacum Iuturnae visi sunt equorum sudorem abluentes, cum aedes eorum quae juncta fonti erat sua sponte patuisset..."

ing at various times, of Claudia leading a ship across the shoals of the Tiber, Esculapius freeing the city from a plague.⁴⁹ Various punishments are recorded because the gods were offended by being disobeyed. Appius Claudis loses his eye-sight because of disobedience to an oracle. Fulvius lost his mind because of a sacrilege in the Temple of Juno.⁵⁰ Various dreams are listed.⁵¹ Some of these pro-

⁴⁹*Ibid.* II, 7, 11 (CSEL 19, 126 Brandt): "Illud etiam mirabile, quod simulacrum Fortunae Muliebris non semel locutum esse traditur, item Iunonis Monetæ, cum captis Veiis unus ex militibus ad eam transferendam missus iocabundus ac ludens interrogaret utrumne Romam migrare vellet, velle respondit. Claudia quoque proponitur in exemplum miraculi. Nam cum ex libris Sibyllinis Idaea mater esset accita et in vado Tiberini fluminis navis qua vehebatur haesisset nec ulla vi commoveretur, Claudiam ferunt, quae semper inpudica esset habita ob nimios corporis cultus, deam submissis genibus orasse, ut si se castam iudicaret, suum cingulum sequeretur: ita navem, quae ab omni iuventute non valuit commoveri, ab una muliere esse commotam. Illud aequè mirum, quo lue saeviente Aesculapius Epidaurò accitus urbem Romam diurna pestilentia liberasse perhibetur..."; cf. G. C. Ring, *Gods of the Gentiles*, Milwaukee 1938, p. 281-282.

⁵⁰*Ibid.* II, 7, 14ff. (CSEL 19, 126-127 Brandt): "...sacrilegi quoque numerari possunt, quorum praesentibus poenis iniuriam suam dii vindicasse creduntur. Appius Claudis censor cum ad servos publicos sacra Herculis transtulisset, luminibus orbatus est...item censor Fulvius cum ex Iunonis Lacinae templo marmoreas tegulas abstulisset, quibus aedem Fortunae Equestris quam Romae fecerat tegeret, et mente captus est et amissis duobus filiis in Illyrico militantibus summo animi maerore consumptus est..."

⁵¹*Ibid.* II, 7, 20 (CSEL 19, 127-128 Brandt): "...Reperiuntur etiam somnia quae vim deorum videantur ostendere. Tiberio namque Atinio homini plebeio per quietem obversatus esse Iuppiter dicitur et praecepisse, ut consulibus et senatui nuntiaret ludis Circensibus proximis praesultorem sibi displicuisse, quod Autronius Maximus quidam verberatum servum sub furca medio circo ad supplicium duxerat, ideoque ludos instaurari oportere: quod cum ille neclexisset, eodem die filium perdidisse, ipse autem gravi morbo esse correptus; et cum rursus eandem imaginem cerneret quaerentem satisne paenarum pro neglecto imperio pependisset, lectica delatus ad consules et omni re in senatu exposita recepisse corporis firmitatem suisque pedibus domum redisse...Illud quoque somnium non minoris admirationis fuit quo Caesar Augustus dicitur esse servatus. Nam cum bello civili Brutiano implicitus gravi morbo abstinere praelio statuisset, medico ejus Artorio Minervae species obversata est monens, ne propter corpor-

digies are also found in Minucius Felix⁵² and in Tertullian⁵³ namely the Castor apparitions, the story of Claudia leading the ship with her girdle. Like these writers, Lactantius refers these prodigies back to the evil spirits, to Satan⁵⁴ and to the fallen angels and demons associated with him.⁵⁵

The demons were the cause why statues were made, and again the purpose is the same: to turn the minds of men away from God. The demons cause men to make images and statues; they teach them to adorn and fashion the pictures of dead kings with exquisite beauty and cause them to be erected and consecrated, while they themselves assumed the character and the names of these kings.⁵⁶

is inbecillitatem castris se Caesar contineret. Itaque in aciem lectica perlatus est et eodem die a Bruto castra capta sunt."

⁵²*Octavius* XXVII, 4 (CSEL 2, 40 Halm): "De ipsis etiam illa, quae paulo ante tibi dicta sunt, ut Juppiter ludos repeteret ex somnio, ut cum equis Castores viderentur, ut cingulum matronae navicula sequeretur. Haec omnia sciunt pleraque pars vestrum ipsos daemones de semetipsis confiteri, quotiens a nobis tormentis verborum et orationis incendiis de corporibus exiguntur."

⁵³*Apologeticum* XXII (Oehler 106): "Quid ergo de ceteris ingeniis vel etiam viribus fallaciae spiritalis edisseram? Phantasmata Castorum et aquam cribro gestatam et navem cingulo promotam, et barbam tactu irufatam ut numina lapides crederentur ut deus verus non quaeratur".

⁵⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 8, 1 (CSEL 19, 128 Brandt).

⁵⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 14, 3ff (CSEL 19, 163 Brandt).

⁵⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 3 (CSEL 19, 167 Brandt): "Hi sunt qui fingere imagines et simulacra docuerunt, qui ut hominum mentes a cultu veri dei averterent, effictos mortuorum regum vultus et ornatos exquisita pulchritudine statui consecrarique fecerunt et illorum sibi nomina quasi personas aliquas induerunt". Lactantius is thinking of Emperor worship, more particularly however of deceased emperors and rulers; cf. E. Beurlier, *Le culte imperial*, Paris, 1890; H. Lietzmann, *The Beginning of Christianity* New York, 1937, p. 217ff; A. D. Nock, "Notes on Ruler Cult I-IV", *JHS* XLVII (1927) p. 21-43; L. R. Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor*, Middleton, 1931; W. W. Tarn "Hellenistic Ruler Cult and the Demon" *JHS* XLVIII (1928) p. 206ff; K. Scott, *The Imperial Cult under the Flavians*, Stuttgart-Berlin, 1936, p. 156; G. C. Ring, *Gods of the Gentiles*, Milwaukee, 1938, Chapter XXXI "The Worship of Deified Emperors" pp. 308-313.

At the same time, however, the demons deride the credulity of men as they lie about the divinity of God. It is to their own benefit not to tell the truth, and in order to effect this the more easily they even imitate the economy of heaven. The demons realize that there is only one God and that all is subject to Him. They imitate the divine order, the better to ensnare and to disturb the minds of men, by mixing truth with falsity: "They said there were many gods, but that Jupiter was the chief because there are many spirits of angels in heaven, but only one God, the Lord and Parent of all. They took away the truth by hiding it under lying names".⁵⁷ By means of this perversion of the truth they perpetrate the greatest of crimes, so that even if men have a notion of a supreme being, they yet do not arrive at the notion of the true God.⁵⁸

Thus Lactantius ascribes all of pagan worship to the influence of the demons. Sometimes he also says the pagan worship of idols is a worship of mere statues.⁵⁹ With fine sarcasm he says that if the pagan gods are real gods, they must be present; a statue then is superfluous. If however, they are not present, the statue itself will be valueless.⁶⁰ Statues are weak productions, the work of man, to which no

⁵⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 5 (CSEL 19, 168 Brandt): "Ipsi enim caelestes multos esse finxerunt unumque omnium regem Iovem eo, quod multi sint in caelo spiritus angelorum et unus dominus ac parens omnium deus: sed veritatem mentitis nominibus involutam ex oculis abstulerunt".

⁵⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 16, 4 (CSEL 19, 167-168 Brandt).

⁵⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 4, 32 (CSEL 19, 113 Brandt).

⁶⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 2, 3-5 (CSEL 19, 99 Brandt): "Nam omnino fingendarum similitudinum ratio idcirco ab hominibus inventa est, ut posset eorum memoria retineri qui vel morte subtracti vel absentia fuerant separati. Deos igitur in quorum numero reponemus? Si in mortuorum, quis tam stultus ut colat? Si in absentium, colendi ergo non sunt, si nec vident quae facimus nec audiunt quae precamur. Si autem dii absentes esse non possunt, qui quoniam divini sunt, in quacumque parte mundi fuerint, vident et audiunt universa, supervacua sunt ergo simulacra illis ubique praesentibus cum satis sit audientium nomina precibus advocare..."

one should subject himself.⁶¹ At other times again he stresses the fact that the gods were eminent historical personages who became legendary figures and were glorified in the process. He recurs to Euhemerism, which lists the earthly history of the gods.⁶² In this system the Olympian gods were human beings immortalized by the poets and in consequence of this are called gods. Yet for Lactantius the demons may not be excluded in either of these two explanations, be it through the making of idols by men or by the apotheosis of earthly kings and rulers at the hands of poets. The demons have a hand in it. Lactantius even tried to fix the date of this deification, namely at a point in history not earlier than 1800 years before his time.⁶³ Saturn who is called the "sator omnium deorum"⁶⁴ lived some 300 years before the Trojan War, but this latter took place some fourteen hundred and seventy years ago, says Lactantius. The deification of these human beings consequently had to take place sometime after their departure from this

⁶¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 4, 32 (CSEL 19, 113 Brandt): "Unde apparet istos deos nihil habere in se amplius quam materiam de qua sint fabricati".

⁶²*De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 11, 33ff (CSEL 19, 42 Brandt); cf. R. Pichon, *Lactance, étude sur le mouvement philosophique et religieux sous le règne de Constantin*, Paris, 1901, p. 83ff.

⁶³*De Divinis Institutionibus* I, 23, 2ff (CSEL 19, 93-94 Brandt): "Theophilus in libro de temporibus ad Autolycom scripto ait in historia sua Thallum dicere quod Belus, quem Babylonii et Assyrii colunt, antiquior Troiano bello fuisse inveniatur annis trecentis viginti duobus. Belum autem Saturni aequalem fuisse et utrumque uno tempore adolevisse. Quod adeo verum est, ut ratione ipsa colligi possit. Nam et Agamemnon, qui gessit Troicum bellum, Iovis abnepos fuit et Achilles Aiaxque pronepotes, et Ulixes eodem gradu proximus, Priamus quidem longa serie. . . sed auctores quidam tradunt Dardanum et Iasium Corythi filios fuisse, non Iovis: nec enim si ita fuisset, ad usus impudicos Ganymeden pronepotem suum habere potuisset. Itaque parentibus illorum quos supra nominavi si congruentes annos dividas, numerus consentiet. Ab excidio autem Troianae urbis colliguntur anni mille quadringenti septuaginta. Ex hac temporum ratione manifestum est ante annos non amplius quam mille octingentos natum esse Saturnum, qui sator omnium deorum fuit. . ."

⁶⁴*Ibid* II, 23, 5 (CSEL 19, 94).

world. The demons instigated men towards false religions; they insinuated themselves into this worship of idols and historical characters. And it was through the evil spirits that the wondrous effects ascribed to the pagan gods have been produced. Lactantius sums up the whole of the worship of the gods by the pagans under the threefold heading in which he combines this threefold origin. There is a triple vanity in it. Firstly, because the images worshipped are representations of men who are dead: it is wrong and inconsistent with human dignity to worship a man: for the image of God to worship the image of man! Then secondly, the sacred images themselves are earthly, mere idols. Thirdly, the evil spirits have a hand in it. They are presiding over the religious rites, even though they themselves are condemned and cast off by God.⁶⁵

The results of this activity of the demons in pagan worship are plainly visible. Because of it, Lactantius held that a pagan worshipper of the gods could not be good.⁶⁶ The very worship of the false religions identified the pagans with evil, and by contrast alligned the christians with good.⁶⁷ "How shall they abstain from blood, if they worship blood-thirsty goddesses. . . . Can men good by nature re-

⁶⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 17, 6ff (CSEL 19, 173 Brandt): "Docui religiones deorum triplici modo vanas esse: uno, quod simulacra ista quae coluntur effigies sint hominum mortuorum; esse autem peruersum et incongruens ut simulacrum hominis a simulacro dei colatur: colit enim quod est deterius et inbecillius. . . . altero, quod ipsae imagines sacrae quibus homines inanissimi seruiunt omni sensu careant, quoniam terra sint. Quis autem non intellegat nefas esse rectum animal curvari, ut adoret terram? . . . (p. 174) Quod spiritus qui praesunt ipsis religionibus condemnati et abiecti a deo per terram volentur; qui non tantum nihil praestare cultoribus suis possint, quoniam rerum potestas penes unum est, verum etiam mortiferis eos inlecebris et erroribus perdant. . . ."

⁶⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 10, 15 (CSEL 19, 432 Brandt): "nec est difficile docere cur deorum cultores boni et iusti esse non possint."

⁶⁷J. Lortz, *Tertullian als Apologet*, Münster, 1928, II, 2ff; E. Overlach, *Die Theologie des Lactantius*, Schwerin, 1858, p. 12.

main good if they are taught injustice by the gods".⁶⁸ It is little wonder that they are immoral since they have models who were complete strangers to morality.⁶⁹ The demons lead the people on to cruelty and injustice particularly in their hatred against the Christians, about which more will be said when speaking of the persecutions ascribed to the demons.⁷⁰ In a word, justice is unpleasant to the men who agree with the character of their gods; they exercise the same impiety, the same violence.⁷¹ They are more cruel than beasts.⁷² These are the fruits that the demons sought according to Lactantius, and which were very abundant. They flow from pagan religions as the religions that worship the demons.

While it is due to the demons, Lactantius does not excuse the pagans from guilt. And although he says they cannot do anything good, they can always give up pagan practices and become Christians; that after all is the main purpose of his writing. They are guilty even as pagans. For one thing, he questions their uprightness of mind when they come to the worship of the gods. Lactantius says they fail in this and that they have no reverence or fear.⁷³ When adversity strikes them, however, then the truth forces

⁶⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 10, 15 (CSEL 19, 432 Brandt): "Quomodo enim sanguine abstinebunt qui colunt cruentos deos Martem atque Bellonam? Quomodo aut parentibus parcent qui expulsorem patris sui Iovem? . . . Quomodo pudicitiam tuebuntur qui colunt deam nudam et adulteram. . . possuntne inter haec iusti esse homines, qui etiamsi natura sint boni, ab ipsis tamen diis erudiantur ad iniustitiam?"

⁶⁹*Ibid* V, 10, 15 (CSEL 19, 432 Brandt); cf. G. C. Ring, *Gods of the Gentiles*, Milwaukee, 1938, p. 194 ff.

⁷⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 11, 18 (CSEL, 19, 436 Brandt).

⁷¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 10, 17 (CSEL 19, 433 Brandt): ". . . ad placandum enim deum colas iis rebus opus est, quibus illum gaudere ac delectari scias. Sic fit ut vitam colentium deus pro qualitate numinis sui formet, quoniam religiosissimus est cultus imitari."

⁷²*De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 11, 1, (CSEL 19, 433 Brandt).

⁷³*De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 19 passim (CSEL 19, 461 Brandt) *Ibid.* II, 1, 1 ff (CSEL 19, 95ff Brandt).

itself on them, and then they remember that there is one true God.⁷⁴ As soon as fear has left them and danger has passed away, they quickly hasten back to the temples of the gods, to pour libations "and to sacrifice to them, to crown them with garlands, but God whom they implored in their need, they do not thank at all."⁷⁵ In all this there is hypocrisy and infidelity while at the same time the demons also have a hand in it: "From what cause can we suppose this to arise, unless there is some perverse power which is always hostile to the truth, which rejoices in the errors of men, whose one and only task is to scatter darkness, to blind the minds of men, lest they should see the light and look up to heaven".⁷⁶

Nor will the pagans go unpunished for yielding to the machinations of Satan and his demons. They become the devil's ministers and as such they also will be condemned: "Whoever has venerated or attached himself to the evil spirits will not attain heaven or the life of light which belongs to God, but will depart into the darkness which is the portion of the evil angels."⁷⁷ This is to be expected. It is merely the final aspect of that opposition that has been placed between Christianity as the Religion of God and paganism and polytheism as the religions of demons. Lac-

⁷⁴*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 1, 9 (CSEL 19, 97 Brandt).

⁷⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 1, 11 (CSEL 19, 97 Brandt): "Postquam metus deseruit et pericula recesserunt, tum vero alacres ad deorum templa concurrunt, his libant, his sacrificant, hos coronant, deo autem quem in ipsa necessitate imploraverant, ne verbo quidem gratias agunt."

⁷⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 1, 13 (CSEL 19, 97 Brandt): "Quanam istut ex causa fieri putemus nisi esse aliquam perversam potestatem, quae veritati sit semper inimica, quae humanis erroribus gaudeat, cui unum ac perpetuum sit opus offundere tenebras et hominum caecare mentes, ne lucem videant, ne denique in caelum aspiciant. . ."

⁷⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 17, 5 (CSEL 19, 172 Brandt): "Illos ergo nequissimos spiritus quisquis veneratus fuerit ac secutus, neque caelo neque luce potietur, quae sunt dei, sed in illa decidet quae in distributione rerum adtributa esse ipsi malorum principi disputavimus, in tenebras scilicet et inferos et supplicium sempiternum."

tantius again brings in the oppositions of light and darkness. Light belongs to God. Darkness is the portion of the devil and his followers, as we have already seen.⁷⁸

The guilt of the pagans is seen from other expressions of Lactantius, in which he says that they destroy their souls by worshipping the demons. It is an unpardonable crime to do this: "in the first place they cause their own death by serving the most abandoned of demons whom God has condemned to everlasting punishment. They are the most pitiable of men. . .What else should I call them but miserable men who obey the instigations of their plunderers whom they think to be gods, of whom they now know neither the condition nor the origin nor the nature".⁷⁹

3.

The Demons and Persecution of Christians

Toward the Christians, the activity of the demons is expressed in hostility, be it by means of actual persecutions at the hands of the public officials, or by means of temptation against individuals. Over the pagans, the demons are largely successful in beclouding their minds with error. Over the Christians, who are united with God and protected by Him, they are thwarted in their efforts so they seek to vent their anger on Christians in various forms of vexation. Persecution is one of these forms of hostility against the Christians. They have to be ascribed to the demons, because they are too fierce and too utterly unreasonable to be thought of by any human being.

⁷⁸Cf. above, pp. 110-134, where this is treated at greater length.

⁷⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 19, 1 (CSEL 19, 461 Brandt): "Discant igitur et suarum et alienarum interfectores animarum quam inexpiabile facinus admittant, primum quod se ipsos iugulant perditissimis daemonibus serviendo, quos deus in aeterna supplicia damnavit. . .quid aliud dicam quam miseros qui praedonum suorum instigationibus parent, quos deos esse opinantur? quorum neque conditionem, neque originem, neque nomina neque rationem sciunt. . ."

A blind and irrational hatred which we see, but of which they are not aware, rules. For men themselves do not persecute since they have no reason why they should be angry with the innocent, but the evil contaminated and fallen spirits to whom the truth is known and by whom it is understood, insinuate themselves into their minds and instigate this hatred and violent fury.⁸⁰

According to Lactantius, the pagans do not recognize that they are the instruments of the demons. This insinuation of the demons into the minds of pagan officials is due to the fact that the demons are subject to the Christians in open attack. When a Christian recognizes the presence of a demon, by using the name of Jesus and making the sign of the Cross, the power of the demon is bound, and the demon himself is tormented. This enrages the demons. They wish to annihilate the Christians, but are unable to do so. Their direct attacks are repelled; for this reason they rely on human agents for furthering their designs. God himself does not permit the demons to afflict the Christians directly.⁸¹ For this is more than a struggle for superiority; it is the opposition of incompatible forces. Lactantius says: "Because they cannot attack the Christians directly they persecute them with public hatred. They consider them so important that they bring as great a violence to bear against them as they can; so that either by lessening their faith through suffering, or if that is not possible by taking them from the earth altogether, there may be no one to hinder them in their wickedness".⁸² In this more clearly

⁸⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 21, 2ff (CSEL 19, 471 Brandt): "Quid igitur existimabimus nisi nescire illos quid patientur? Pergitur enim caeco et irrationabili furore, quem nos videmus, illi nesciunt. Non enim ipsi homines persecuntur, qui causam cur irascantur innocentibus non habent, sed illi spiritus contaminati ac perdit, quibus veritas et nota est et invisa, insinuant se mentibus eorum et instigant nescios in furorem. . ."

⁸¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 15, 2 (CSEL 19, 165 Brandt); *Ibid.*: IV, 27, 8 (CSEL 19, 386 Brandt).

⁸²*De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 21, 6ff (CSEL 19, 471 Brandt): "Propter haec verbera et minas sanctos et justos viros semper oderunt. Et quia per se nocere iis nihil possunt, publicis eos odiis persecuntur, quos sibi graves sentiunt, exercentque saevitiam quam violentissime

than elsewhere does Lactantius bring out what the struggle of Christianity against paganism really meant. It is ultimately the struggle of the demons against God, the struggle of polytheism against monotheism. The Christians are linked with God; the pagans with the evil spirits.⁸³

Lactantius writes of the powerlessness of the demons against the Christians and yet at the same time that the persecutions are due to them; furthermore he also speaks of the rôle of the demons in providing the trials whereby the Christians are to attain perfection in virtue. These elements are not really opposed to the central thought expressed, nor does he recede from that view. Even a successful persecution resulting in the loss of life is not a gain for Satan. In fact the Apologists always looked on it as one of the means to defeat the demons. Martyrdom is a victory for the Christians and one of the means that Tertullian had suggested as a means to attack the power of the demons.⁸⁴ Even aside of that, persecutions are the cause of an increase in number for the Christians. God permits the demons to persecute the Christians for this purpose. "And there is this further reason why God allows persecutions to happen against his people. . . first of all many are turned away from the gods by their hatred of cruelty; then the

possunt, ut aut eorum fidem minuant per dolorem aut, si id efficere non quiverint, auferant omnino de terra, ne sint qui possint eorum nequitiam coercere"; also *Ibid.* IV, 27, 8 (CSEL 18, 386 Brandt): "...sed quoniam neque accedere ad eos possunt in quibus caelestem notam viderint nec iis nocere quos signum immortale munierit tamquam inexpugnabilis murus, lacessunt eos per homines et manibus persecuntur alienis. . ."

⁸³J. Lortz, *Tertullian als Apologet*, Münster, 1928, II, 44-45.

⁸⁴Tertullian *Apologeticum* XXVII (Oehler 117): "Itaque cum vice rebellantium ergastulorum sive carcerum vel metallorum vel hoc genus poenalis servitutis erumpunt adversus nos, in quorum potestate sunt, certi et in pares se esse et hoc magis perditos, ingratis resistimus ut aequales et repugnamus perseverantes in eo quod oppugnant et illos nunquam magis detriumphamus quam cum pro fidei obstinatione damnamur."

faith itself pleases many, while the hatred shown, as always happens, impels many to believe. . .".⁸⁵

This shows us that the immunity of Christians from the assaults of the demons as viewed by Lactantius cannot be taken too literally. It amounts to saying that the demons cannot overcome the Christians, that is they cannot harm them spiritually, although they can and do attack them bodily, particularly through the agency of men.

Furthermore, the demons also tempt Christians. This is a vital part of the teaching of Lactantius. Through temptation by the demons man has the means of obtaining immortality, of practicing those virtues that are the way to immortality.⁸⁶ The devil is the adversary with whom man must struggle, his eternal salvation is the reward for his struggle against the evil spirits.⁸⁷ As already pointed out, Lactantius held that there can be no virtue unless its opposite be there. Vices and pleasures are the weapons of the devil. With them Satan tests the firmness of souls.⁸⁸ He fits the temptation to the personal inclination of every Christian, so that Lactantius warns Demetrianus:

⁸⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 22, 18ff (CSEL 19, 476-477 Brandt): "Est et alia causa cur adversus nos persecutiones feri sinat, ut dei populus augeatur: nec est difficile monstrare cur aut quomodo id fiat. Primum fugantur a deorum cultibus plurimi odio crudelitatis. . .deinde placet quibusdam virtus ac fides ipsa. . .praeterea ultio consecuta, sicut semper accidit, ad redendum vehementer inpellit. . ."

⁸⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* VI, 15, 5 (CSEL 19, 537 Brandt); W. Harloff, *Untersuchungen zu Lactantius*, Borna-Leipzig, 1911, p. 27.

⁸⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 1, 11 (CSEL 19, 197 Brandt); *De Opificio Dei* I, 7 (CSEL 27, 5 Brandt); *De Divinis Institutionibus* VI, 22, 2ff (CSEL 19, 564 Brandt).

⁸⁸*De Divinis Institutionibus* VI, 22, 2 (CSEL 19, 564 Brandt): "At enim saepe jam dictum est virtutem nullam futuram fuisse, nisi haberet quae opprimeret. Itaque fecit omnia deus ad instruendum certamen rerum duarum. Ergo inlecebrae istae voluptatum arma sunt illius cuius unum opus est expugnare virtutem justitiamque ab hominibus excludere. His blandimentis et suavitatibus titillat animas".

For you know our enemy and adversary, how astute and how violent he now is (through persecutions)! He has as snares, all those things that can entice us, and indeed so subtly that it escapes the eyes, and that provision cannot be made against it. It is necessary to walk prudently and to proceed step by step because his snares are all around us and his stumbling blocks are placed secretly for our steps.⁸⁹

The devil uses things that appear true in order to deceive⁹⁰ and in temptation he uses a great diversity of ways to ensnare the Christian.⁹¹ But there too the struggle of Satan and his fallen angels ends in a defeat for themselves and a victory for the Christians. It is the means whereby mankind obtains a glorious reward which the evil spirits themselves have forfeited.

4.

The Counter-Attack of the Christians

One aspect of the counter-attack against the evil spirits has already been seen. It consists in bearing the punishment which the demons inflict. Martyrdom⁹² and virtue. the struggle against the public and private attacks of the

⁸⁹*De Opificio Dei*, I, 7 (CSEL 27, 5 Brandt): "Nam ille conlucator et adversarius noster scis quam sit astutus et idem saepe violentus, sicuti nunc videmus. Is haec omnia quae inlicere possunt, pro laqueis habet et quidem tam subtilibus, ut oculos mentis effugiant, ne possint hominis provisione vitari. summa ergo prudentia est pedetemptim procedere, quoniam utrobique saltus insidet et offensacula pedibus latenter opponit".

⁹⁰*De Divinis Institutionibus* VI, 7, 3 (CSEL 19, 505 Brandt): "Quomodo enim praecursor eius viae cuius vis et potestas omnis in fallendo est, universos in fraudem posset inducere, nisi veri similia hominibus ostentaret. . ."

⁹¹*Ibid.* VI, 7, 6 (CSEL 19, 506 Brandt).

⁹²H. Frhr. von Campenhausen, *Die Idee des Martyriums in der alten Kirche*, Göttingen, 1935, p. 144ff; E. Lucius (G. Anrich) *Die Anfänge des Heiligenkults in der christlichen Kirche*, Tübingen, 1904, p. 75ff.

evil spirits are such counter-movements against the powers of the evil spirits.⁹³ These attacks are carried out in the name and strength of Christ. Christ has broken the power of the demons. Where Christ or his followers are, there the demons tremble.

The attack against the demons takes a different form yet. The conviction that the demons are powerless against the Christians is centered particularly in the practice mentioned so often by early writers, namely Exorcism.⁹⁴ The demons on being adjured in the name of God or of Christ, leave the bodies they have inhabited. They fear "the true worshippers of God by whose words they are beaten as with whips; they not only confess who they are, but they also give the names by which they are adored in temples. Nor can they lie when they are abjured in the name of God or tortured by the voice of the just".⁹⁵ Lactantius speaks in a general way of this power of abjuring the evil spirits. He does not restrict it to any class of persons, but simply speaks of it as pertaining to the just. It is necessary to recall how Lactantius appeals to exorcism as a means whereby Christianity is increased.⁹⁶

The means used in the attack against the demons primarily were the name of Christ and the Cross.⁹⁷ Lactantius

⁹³P. G. Frotscher, *Des Apologeten Lactantius Verhältnis zur griechischen Philosophie*, Leipzig, 1895, p. 45.

⁹⁴F. J. Dölger, *Der Exorzismus im altchristlichen Taufritual*, Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums, III, Heft 1-2, Paderborn, 1909, p. 17ff.

⁹⁵*De Divinis Institutionibus* II, 15, 3 (CSEL 19, 165 Brandt): "Iustos autem id est cultores dei metuunt, cujus nomine adiurati de corporibus excedunt; quorum verbis tamquam flagris verberati non modo daemones esse se confitentur, sed etiam nomina sua edunt, illa quae in templis adorantur. . ."

⁹⁶*De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 22, 23 (CSEL 19, 477 Brandt) cf. note 22; H. Achelis, *Das Christentum in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, II, 136, and 144, Leipzig, 1912.

⁹⁷*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 26, 1ff (CSEL 19, 384-385 Brandt): "Nunc satis est huius signi potentiam quantum valeat exponere. Quanto terrori sit daemonibus hoc signum, sciet qui viderit quatenus adiurati per Christum de corporibus quae obsederint

refers to a case in which one of the Christians attending his pagan master seeking an augury, prevented it by merely making the sign of the Cross. It was this restriction of the power of the demons which was the cause of one of the persecutions according to Lactantius:⁹⁸ "When certain of our servants stood by their masters sacrificing to the gods, by making the sign they put to flight the gods so that they could not foresee the future in the entrails. Which when the diviners learned, they instigated the rulers to expiate this sacrilege with a persecution. . .".⁹⁹ The persecution referred to is that of Diocletian, according to Achelis.¹⁰⁰

This power over the demons is exercised visibly in the abjuration of the devil and in exorcisms.¹⁰¹ The struggle against their invisible foe in the ordinary practice of the virtues is likewise stressed. In the practice of virtue the Christian has means to overcome the power of the demons.¹⁰² Furthermore, the struggle is carried on through the use of many of the sacramentals. Lactantius mentions

fugiant. Nam sicut ipse cum inter homines ageret, universos daemona verbo fugabat hominumque mentes emotas et malis incursibus furiatas in sensus pristinos reponebat, ita nunc sectatores eius eosdem spiritus inquinatos de hominibus et nomine magistri sui et signo passionis excludunt. Cujus rei non difficilis est probatio. Nam cum diis suis immolant, si adsistat aliquis signatam frontem gerens, sacra nullo modo litant. . . et haec saepe causa praecipua iustitiam persequendi malis regibus fuit. Cum enim quidam ministrorum nostri sacrificantibus dominis adsisterent, inposito frontibus signo deos illorum fugaverunt, ne possent in visceribus hostiarum futura depingere. Quod cum intellegerent haruspices, instigantibus isdem daemonibus quibus prosecant conquerentes profanos homines sacris interesse egerunt principes suos in furorem, ut expugnarent dei templum seque vero sacrilegio contaminarent, quod gravissimis persequentium poenis expiaretur. . ."

⁹⁸*Ibid.*

⁹⁹*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 27, 4ff (CSEL 19, 385 Brandt); cf. note 97.

¹⁰⁰H. Achelis *Op. cit.* I, 141; cf. *De Mortibus Persecutorum* X (CSEL 27, 184 Brandt-Laubmann).

¹⁰¹*De Divinis Institutionibus* V, 21, 5 (CSEL 19, 471 Brandt).

¹⁰²*De Divinis Institutionibus* IV, 25 (CSEL 19, 376 Brandt); E. Overlach, *Die Theologie des Lactantius*, Schwerin, 1858, p. 24.

the power of the Cross and the name of Christ, and as he puts it, the voice of the just. He does not speak of the other sacramentals which were in use at the time; those whose works he used, mention them.¹⁰³ Thus, not only the cross, but water and oil, were in use at the time.¹⁰⁴ Tertullian and Minucius Felix mention prayer. This was recommended to persons entering the baths, which were choice places for the demons.¹⁰⁵ Fasting too was recommended.¹⁰⁶

The demons can use vices and pleasures as weapons to attack the Christians, but the Christian is safe. He can fight back. He can be confident that he will overcome every attack of the demons, because he does not fight alone, but with the power of God Himself.

¹⁰³H. Achelis, *op. cit.* I, 144.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.* I, 139.

¹⁰⁵Tertullian *De Corona* III (Oehler 226); J. Zellinger *Bad und Bäder in der altchristlichen Kirche*, Eine Studie über Christentum und Antike, München, 1928, p. 10ff.; Campbell-Bonner, *Demons of the Bath*, Studies presented to F. L.L. Griffith, 203-208; J. Quasten, *Monumenta Eucharistica et Liturgica Vetustissima*, FLP Fasc. VII, Bonn, 1935-1937, p. 122ff.

¹⁰⁶J. Schümmer, *Die altchristliche Fastenpraxis* LQF Heft 27, Münster, 1933, p. 23ff; L. Bieler *Θείος Ἀνήρ Das Bild des "göttlichen Menschen" in Spät-Antike und Frühchristentum*, I, 63; J. Quasten, *op. cit.*, p. 122, 188, 263.

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