

# WHAT'S UP?

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St. John the Baptist had tried to make it clear to the Jews that he could not be the Messiah because “He that cometh from above is above all. He that is of the earth, of the earth he is, and of the earth he speaketh. He that cometh from heaven is above all” (*John* 3:31).

One of the first requirements for eternal life is knowing up from down. These two basic orientations, immediately evident to our senses, not only regulate the Commandments, but everything that exists.

In a famous dialogue between human learning and divine wisdom recorded by St. John, Our Lord told the Sanhedrist Nicodemus who had come to question Him secretly by night, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

So radically beyond the flesh is the spirit, that “unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” And not just “again,” for the Greek word used by St. John was an adverb which also means *from above*. Met with polite derision on the part of His visitor, Our Lord asks him, “Art thou a master in Israel and knowest not these things? ...No man hath ascended into heaven but he that descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven” (*John* 3:3 ff.)

As Pius IX pointed out in *Singulari quadam*, human reasoning cannot be depended on to find truth on its own, especially since its light has been dimmed by original sin. Because pride particularly obscures the obvious, the radical difference between up and down would appear to be among those things hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed only to the Father’s little ones. Our Lord tells Nicodemus, “If I have spoken to you earthly things and you believe not, how will you believe if I shall speak to you heavenly things?” (*John* 3:10,12).

To us God speaks earthly things before speaking heavenly ones, because grace necessarily builds on the nature which cannot reach beyond itself. Although operating on different levels, earthly and heavenly things are intimately ordered to each other, like body and soul, and there are strong analogies between them. St. Paul said the pagans who affect not to know the truth of God have no excuse, because “God has manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made: his eternal power also, and divinity; so that they are inexcusable” (*Rom.* 1:19-20).

Creation is a parable. Because one of the functions of the cosmos is to lead men to their Creator, a star revealed the birth of Christ to the wise men and led them to Bethlehem to behold Him in the flesh.

God, who according to St. Thomas Aquinas loves to use intermediaries, constituted the material universe as a gigantic sacramental pointing the way to Him. Scripture tells us heaven is His throne and the earth His footstool (*Matt.* 5:35). Standing on that footstool, St. Thomas showed how God’s existence can be proved by human reason alone from environmental evidence, but actually reaching Him is another matter. To put Himself within reach of our earthbound senses, God became man so that, in the words of the beautiful Preface of the Mass for Christmas, “while we recognize God made visible, we may be rapt through Him into the love of the invisible.” God, who is everywhere, came down to show us the way up.

Because the spiritual life rests on a natural cosmology which underlies all created reality, a warped view of material creation inevitably distorts to some degree the perception of everything lying above and beyond it. At no time has science played a neutral role in man’s salvation, but after the Copernican Revolution it declared its independence from revelation and assumed an

importance exceeding all proportion. Reducing scientific truth found in the Bible to metaphor, science now presumes to be the sole reliable source of knowledge of the universe. If its data are trustworthy, in accord with revelation, they propel us upward to God; but if its data are false, at variance with revelation, they propel us downward and away from Him.

According to Scripture the earth on which we stand is the center of the universe and “immovable” from that position. It was created as a habitat for man who, standing midway between the macrocosm and the microcosm of all things great and small, is himself composed of all elements animal, vegetable and mineral. Ultimately the earth was to provide the central setting for God’s material revelation of himself at the heart of His universe, in the Person of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ. A star marked His birth with its brilliance, and the sun marked His death by withholding its light.

Redeemed by His divine Blood unto a final transfiguration when “the creature also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God” (*Rom.* 8:21), everything is destined to be placed under His rule, so that “In the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth and under the earth” (*Phil.* 2:10).

Like Noah’s Ark, God’s universe therefore has three levels: heaven, earth, and “under the earth,” better known to English-speaking folk as hell.

Traditional theology teaches that hell lies in the center of the earth, at the hard core of the material universe. The devils our Lord expelled from the demoniac at Gerasa, permitted to afflict mankind temporarily on earth, pled with Him not to “torment them before the time,” but to send them into a herd of swine (*Matt.* 8:29-31), so greatly did they dread being confined to hell. Its mysterious physical fire is especially intolerable to angels, whose purely spiritual natures were not intended to be acted upon by material agents, and it is reasonable to suppose that matter is found most oppressive at its core. The eternal subjection of pure spirit to matter which they will suffer executes perfectly the sentence pronounced by God on the Serpent in Eden when He decreed, “Earth shalt thou eat all the days of thy life” (*Gen.* 3:14).

If heaven is the height of “up,” hell is the depth of “down.” Any way out of hell in any direction is “up.” Scripture consistently speaks of “the depths of hell,”<sup>1</sup> and the damned as those who go “down into the pit.” At Fatima the Mother of God opened this abyss of perdition before the horrified gaze of three little children. According to the Memoirs of Sr. Lucy, when Our Lady opened her hands, “The rays of light seemed to penetrate the earth and we saw as it were an ocean of fire.”

She would tell William Thomas Walsh, “I saw those who were going down.”

This is not metaphor. It is an article of faith that our Lord “descended into hell” before His Resurrection in order to release the souls of the just who were detained “under the earth” awaiting their redemption. The Latin text of the Creed says our Lord descended *ad inferos*, “to the lower parts.” According to St. Paul, “He that descended is the same also that ascended above all the heavens, that he might fill all things... Now that he ascended, what is it but because he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?” (*Eph.* 4:9,10).

The English word “hell” usually denotes only the place reserved for the damned, but the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* locates Purgatory there as well, to whose occupants the liturgy assigns the sixth penitential Psalm *De profundis* which begins, “Out of the depths have I cried to Thee, O Lord.”

Among the many different abodes which the *Catechism* says are to be found there, is hell

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<sup>1</sup> *E.g.*, Is. 7:11

proper, “that most loathsome and dark prison in which the souls of the damned are tormented with the unclean spirits in eternal and inextinguishable fire.”

The souls of men, being spiritual, will endure suffering similar to that of the fallen angels when they too are subjected to material fire. There has been no lack of corroboration from mystics who were granted visions of this “everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels” (*Matt. 25:41*).

Well known is St. Teresa of Avila’s vision of her own place in hell had she proved unfaithful to her vocation. In our own day Sr. Faustina Kowalska, recently beatified apostle of the Divine Mercy, was also shown the damned in torment. Everything depends on a proper sense of direction, for heaven and hell are diametrically opposite, and between them, as Father Abraham told the rich reprobate in the parable, “there is fixed a great chaos,” so that no one can pass from one to the other (*Luke 16:26*). The destination, alas, is final.

But why labor the obvious? Isn’t the biblical terminology about up and down merely figurative? Isn’t the significance exclusively spiritual? Denigrators who find the vision of hell at Fatima tailored to children and not to be taken literally, would certainly have us think so. Theologians like Hans Küng have solemnly assured the faithful that very soon “what traditional theology understands by the name of ‘hell’ will no longer be a reality.”<sup>1</sup>

The prevalence of such opinions today proves the strategic importance of being able to tell up from down was not lost on the satanic intelligences who set the Great Apostasy in motion.

In a series of Lenten sermons delivered the year of his death in 1863, Fr. Faber had this to say:

The devil’s worst and most fatal preparation for the coming of Antichrist is the weakening of men’s belief in eternal punishment. Were they the last words I might ever say to you, nothing should I wish to say to you with more emphasis than this, that next to the thought of the Precious Blood, there is no thought in all your faith more precious or more needful for you than the thought of eternal punishment!<sup>2</sup>



Too cunning to attack head-on the “heavenly things” they intended to obliterate from our minds, the Luciferian forces began by readjusting the earthly. Lacking the power actually to modify the construction of the universe, the “spirits of wickedness in the high places” accomplished their purpose by changing man’s basic perception of it. To direct man away from God and send him down the slippery slope to the kingdom of darkness, a few major signposts need only be reversed or obscured, a bit of legerdemain made possible by separating science from religion. Separating Church from state would come later as a natural consequence.

The Great Apostasy did not begin with the aberrations of Martin Luther or John Calvin, or even those of William of Ockham. From the beginning heretics had been putting their own twist to the Bible inspired by God in the prophets and evangelists, but to discredit it entirely, that other Bible inscribed by God in nature had to be re-interpreted. The first modern apostates were therefore not theologians, but scientists. They would lead men to look upon God’s universe with new eyes by fitting them with new glasses.

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<sup>1</sup> See Br. M. de la Sainte Trinité, *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Immaculate Heart Publications, Vol. II, p. 24 ff.

<sup>2</sup> John Edward Bowden, *Life and Letters of Fr. Faber*, 1869, pp. 471-472

As they say, figures don't lie, but liars do figure. Using mathematics rather than mirrors to accomplish the trick, a "virtual reality" was created to convey a radically different perception of up and down. The sun, which according to Scripture was one of two "lights made in the firmament of heaven to divide the day and the night. ... for signs," was shifted mathematically out of its position in the heavens. Placed by God in conjunction with the moon "to shine upon the earth, to rule the day and the night, and to divide the light and the darkness" (*Gen. 1:14-18*), the sun was catapulted from its subordinate function as a satellite performing vital services to Earth and made the center of the whole universe!

While still conceding the moon's obvious course around the earth, scientists actually persuaded educated people (the "ignorant" were harder to reach) that the sun's revolution around the earth is an optical illusion. They dared pretend they had proved that the earth was in fact one of the planets circling the sun. In men's minds -- which for satanic purposes is all that matters -- what from the beginning of time had been a geocentric universe with the earth at its center became almost overnight a heliocentric universe with a luciferian, light-bearing sun at its center.

The luminous orb which God had designed to function as the earth's indispensable Figaro, had become the earth's ringmaster. We might say democracy had invaded the heavens in anticipation of its triumph among nations. Its absurdity as a political system should have been apparent then and there when viewed in physical terms, for to say that society can be ruled from below is tantamount to saying that the universe can be controlled by animals or sticks and stones at the lower end of the cosmological scale.

As it is, neither geocentrism or heliocentrism can be proved empirically, for all we can see is relative motion. With no way of standing outside the universe to see what really happens, both systems rest on faith, be it divine or human. Although geocentrism can be proved theologically and heliocentrism cannot, both must be "believed" as far as experimental evidence is concerned. First tolerated only as an interesting hypothesis, heliocentrism was eventually accepted and taught as true, without a shred of scientific proof, just as evolution and polygenism are being taught without proof today.

The fact that for practical reasons our space scientists use the geocentric model to launch their rockets is small consolation. Our earth no longer figures as the center of anything but its faithful moon. Demoted to circling the sun as one of several planets, it flies, who knows where, through limitless space in a "solar system" like countless others. Where centers are everywhere, up and down are irrelevant. Only cartoon characters would ask a silly question like "What's up, Doc?" and seriously expect an answer. Small wonder that Christians lost their sense of direction and began exhibiting significantly modified behavior. Before long, in their zeal for adjusting Christendom to their altered view of reality, they set to work dismantling it.



Galileo's contribution to scientific knowledge was minimal at best, having invented neither the telescope nor other devices attributed to his ingenuity. The major lines of his theory had already been worked out not only by Copernicus, but by Kepler and by Fr. Clavius and his Jesuits in Florence, all of whom, whatever their private opinions, taught it as nothing more than interesting hypothesis. Had Galileo been content to follow suit, he would have incurred no condemnation on the part of the Church. What alarmed churchmen like Cardinal St. Robert Bellarmine and the Holy Office was that he presumed to promote a dubious, unproven theory at

the expense of the Faith.

In a famous letter to his friend Don Castelli, Galileo had openly declared that Scripture used imagery adapted to the weak intelligence of the vulgar which was never meant to be taken literally, implying that the Bible's real meaning was known only to the educated. To the Grand Duchess Christina of Lorraine he maintained furthermore that the Bible intended only to convey those supernatural truths necessary for salvation and had no interest in merely natural phenomena. Because according to him scientific certainty could be attained by the natural sciences on their own without the help of revelation, he believed the obvious sense of Scripture must give way before scientific evidence to the contrary. In other words, the Bible's competence extended only to spiritual matters.

By maintaining that heliocentrism conveyed a true picture of reality, Galileo projected into man's consciousness a cosmology entirely different from the one the Church had always taught. Pretending to offer experimental proof that the story of Joshua stopping the sun in mid orbit was just a story, made up to illustrate moral truth, Galileo laid the foundations of what was in fact a new school of biblical exegesis which would supply the entry point of Modernism into theology. "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmarks" (*Deut. 27:17*), says Scripture. From the day that man was led to look "up" to the heavens only in a manner of speaking, any sign-post could be shifted to point in any desired direction.

Once Holy Writ was disqualified as a source of truth in the natural order, the way was open to disqualifying it in the supernatural order. By the close of the nineteenth century Leo XIII was forced to rebuke in *Providentissimus Deus*

...those who, making an evil use of physical science, minutely scrutinize the Sacred Book in order to detect the writers in a mistake, and to take occasion to vilify its contents. Attacks of this kind, bearing as they do on matters of sensible experience, are peculiarly dangerous to the masses. It is absolutely wrong and forbidden, either to narrow inspiration to certain parts of Holy Scripture, or to admit that the sacred writer has erred.

By the same token he excoriates "the system of those who, in order to rid themselves of difficulties, do not hesitate to concede that divine inspiration regards the things of faith and morals, but nothing beyond, ..." and that "in a question of the truth or falsehood of a passage, we should consider not so much what God said as the reason and purpose which He had in mind in saying it."

He laid down that "inspiration not only is essentially incompatible with error, but excludes and rejects it as absolutely and necessarily as it is impossible that God himself, the supreme Truth, can utter that which is not true. This is the ancient and unchanging faith of the Church."

To ascribe error to the Bible as modern science dares to do, is to call the Truth himself a liar, for as God's Word, Christ was "pre-incarnate" in Sacred Scripture long before assuming flesh. In *Lamentabili* Leo's successor St. Pius X formally condemned *Proposition XI*, the notion that, "Divine inspiration does not extend to all of Sacred Scriptures so that it renders its parts, each and every one, free from error."

The same doctrine was reiterated in 1920 by Benedict XV in *Spiritus Paraclitus*. In 1943 in *Divino afflante Spiritu* Pius XII once more took to task those exegetes who persisted in restricting the truth of Scripture to faith and morals by disregarding its historical or scientific dicta as having no bearing on the Faith.

Decrees of the *Pontifical Biblical Commission* in 1915 and 1934 solemnly reaffirmed the three immutable principles which no exegete must question in regard to Sacred Scripture if he would remain Catholic: 1. divine inspiration, 2. absolute inerrancy, and 3. the Church as sole guardian and interpreter. Any "symbolic" or "scientific" interpretation supplied by experts

which violates these criteria is spurious. In plain language, the Bible was written by God Himself; it is entirely free from error; and it says what the Church says it says. In our post-conciliar days when even the Resurrection is being questioned as historical fact, these are points to keep in mind.

St. Augustine warned against making “rash assertions, or to assert what is not known as known.” Whatever is contrary to the Catholic faith, “we must either prove it as well as we can to be entirely false, or ... without the slightest hesitation, believe it to be true.” Cardinal Bellarmine asked nothing more of Galileo, and heliocentrism remains unproven to this day. The gullible might be led to believe that hard evidence for the heliocentric theory was eventually supplied by Isaac Newton, but such is not the case. An occultist whose so-called “law” of gravity is now seriously questioned, Newton devoted his life not to objective research but to alchemy, leaving behind him some 4000 pages of studies which have come to light only relatively recently.



Not that modern science requires hard evidence to reach conclusions, because it scorns them. Rapidly succeeding theories provide all the momentum needed to propel it forward. Back in 1887 the Catholic biologist Antoine Beauchamp (rival of Pasteur and probably the real discoverer of DNA) complained,

**We are always making assumptions, and from assumption to assumption, we end by concluding without proof.**

Leaping from one working hypothesis to the next, science today is not concerned with objective truth as such. If the relative proves serviceable, who needs absolutes? Whatever works for the time being is true for the time being, and what other time is there?

Once *up* and *down* were reduced to a manner of speaking, everything else became relative. In the twentieth century this gigantic heresy would be formulated into dogma as the Theory of Relativity by Albert Einstein, one of the great heresiarchs of the natural order in the line of Galileo, Newton and Darwin. Needless to say, there were enormous repercussions in the moral order as well, for the mechanisms of “situational science” served “situational ethics” equally well. Truth itself became relative. An increasingly subjective, perpetually shifting quasi-reality was substituted for the old certainties of daily life and accepted as normal by common consensus. Men accustomed to lifting their eyes to God and praying, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” no longer knew or cared where either area might be located in reality, for everything lost its place in the new phenomenology.

In the Christian dispensation harmony in both Church and state depended on everyone’s remaining at his post in a hierarchy reflecting the one in the heavens, but now the very notion of “place” in the old sense disappeared. If what the Bible taught about the universe could not be taken literally, there was no reason to believe any organization subsisting in it was fixed according to divine ordinance. Transferred to the political order, this meant that anyone might aspire to any position in human society. By the simple expedient of persuading Christians that anything might be anywhere, Christian government under God liquefied, and then evaporated.

When Revolution overturns the political order, it also capsizes the moral order on which it rests. In the democratic framework, pride and ambition become exalted virtues to be cultivated by all, whereas they are in fact death-dealing luciferian vices fatal to social organization of any kind. Revolution’s citizenry carry their own social disintegration as a genetically transmitted

disease. To paraphrase Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address*, no "nation so conceived or so dedicated can long endure," for "government of the people, by the people, for the people" must inevitably "perish from the earth."

In God's economy, not only celestial bodies, but everybody has a divinely ordained place, not just a place, but its place, his place, from which to carry on relations with God and everything outside itself. It is integral to vocation. Our Lord told His Apostles before He suffered that His Father's house contains many dwellings, and "I go to prepare a place for you. . . that where I am you also may be" (John 14:2-3). It is not a question of having a high place or a low place, but of having one's own place. Judas fell from the apostleship "that he might go to his own place" (Acts 1:25), the only place where he belonged. Predestination is a difficult mystery, but it is Catholic dogma.

Our Lord taught us to pray to "our Father who art in heaven," because even God has a Place. It is the Godhead itself, wherein the three divine Persons, in a homely manner of speaking, are hierarchically defined by the position each eternally occupies in regard to the other two. We are made in His image and likeness, and all due proportion kept, father, mother and child in the human family have each a place properly defining him, first in the domestic hierarchy, then in the community, and finally in the nation. "Leave not thy place!" said the Preacher (Eccles. 10:4). Identity itself depends on being "in place," for one is first known to others by the place he occupies.

Whereas place always conforms to the authority it exercises, it does not always conform to the intrinsic power and dignity of the person filling it. In the Holy Family the order of power and dignity is exactly reversed, where St. Joseph, the least exalted of its members, is head of the Son of God and His Mother. Our Lord was the first to put into practice His own commandment, "He that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger, and he that is the leader, as he that serveth. . . I am in the midst of you as he that serveth!" (Luke 22:26-7)

There is no remedy for disrupted society without a wholesale, humble return to place. To his spiritual son, suddenly elevated to the papacy as Eugenius III, St. Bernard wrote regarding reform of the Church, "Your consideration must begin with you and end with you. You must first consider yourself; then what is below you; next, what is around you; lastly, what is above you."

The saint told him that if he wanted to see a change for the better as new Pope, he must see to it that everyone remains at his post and fulfills his duties of state.<sup>1</sup>

The deep wisdom of our common idiom stresses the importance of "knowing one's place," inasmuch as being "out of place" may result in being forcibly "put in one's place" for not showing proper deference by "giving place" to its rightful occupant. If anything at all is to happen, it must first of all "take place." Cain and the Jews became fugitives and wanderers when they lost their places. The devils fell forever when "neither was their place found any more in heaven" (Apo. 12:8). There is heaven, there is earth, there is hell, and all three are places, not figments of the imagination. People go places. Sr. Lucy of Fatima said, "Souls go to hell in droves."

According to St. Thomas, at the Last Judgment,

...the good will not only be set apart from the wicked by reason of meritorious cause, but will be separated from them in locality. The wicked, who have withdrawn from Christ in their love of earthly things, will remain on Earth; but the good, who have clung to Christ, will be raised up into the air when they go to meet Christ not only by being conformed to

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Theodore Ratisbonne, *St. Bernard of Clairvaux*, Tan Books, pp. 282-3.

the splendor of His glory, but by being associated with Him in the place He occupies. . . 'Wheresoever the body shall be, there also shall the eagles (by which the saints are signified) be gathered together' (*Matt. 24:28*).<sup>1</sup>



After Galileo it was downhill all the way. Preferring to follow human equations rather than the clear evidence of their senses,

...men became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened. For professing themselves to be wise, they became fools... Wherefore God gave them up to the desires of their heart, unto uncleanness, to dishonor their own bodies among themselves. Who changed the truth of God into a lie; and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever ... For this cause God delivered them up to shameful affections ... And as they liked not to have God in their knowledge, God delivered them up to a reprobate sense ... being filled with all iniquity (*Rom. 1:21-29*).

The heliocentric deception is rightly called the Copernican Revolution, not so much for being named after its formulator Nicholas Copernic, as for the reversal of the natural order it inaugurated. As late as the beginning of the nineteenth century, writes Pearce Williams in *Album of Science*,

Just to consider the earth a planet like the other planets in the solar system was to be a bit daring. ... There was, after all, an account of the origin and basic geological nature of the earth which was central to Western civilization, enshrined by tradition and literally sacred. The book of Genesis provided a sufficient account of the origin and development of the earth, and to challenge this was to strike at the very foundations of religion. When those foundations were sapped, it was widely believed upheavals such as the French Revolution occurred. ...<sup>2</sup>

Actually it lay at the bottom of the Renaissance and ushered in one after the other the Reformation, the Industrial Revolution, Democracy, Communism and now the New World Order, all utopian movements presuming to re-create God's universe according to designs other than His. Not in any sense isolated phenomena, they are successive phases of one on-going revolt which assumes different forms as it advances and whose *modus operandi* never varies. Following the fail-safe formula of the occultists, "*Solve et coagula*," the existing order is first upset, then leveled, then re-cast. Occasional retreats serve to concentrate energy for the next stage.

The Revolution never lacks for momentum because the direction is always "down," and for human nature down is easy. Today's rock and roll music illustrates perfectly the mesmerizing power of the downbeat and the forces it unleashes. Man, standing on earth between spirit and matter and composed of both, capitulates all creation in himself. His body wedded to an immortal soul created in God's image, into which God has infused a spiritual principle, man is endowed with an intellect made to know truth, and a will which is free. From the earth as fulcrum he is empowered to go "up" to God and His angels the hard way or to go "down" to

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<sup>1</sup> *Compendium*, Ch. 244.

<sup>2</sup> L. Pearce Williams, *Album of Science - The Nineteenth Century*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1978.

Satan and his devils the easy way if he chooses.

As that great sufferer Job said, “The life of man upon earth is a warfare” (Job 7:1). In the unremitting tug of war between the two directions, when he isn’t “up and doing,” he is “down and out.” Not only does he not enjoy the full dominion his father Adam once exercised over the earth and its creatures, but his command of himself is severely limited. Created to rule the world, he is unable to control so much as his sneezes and hiccups, let alone his thoughts and concupiscences. Weakened by the effects of the first fall in Eden and weakened even further by his own sins, his whole nature pulls his soul down to the earth whence his body came. Going “up” entails so much suffering, his degree of virtue can very nearly be measured by the pain involved. It is no accident that our Lord’s descent into hell and His Resurrection from the dead are conjoined in the Creed, for the Redemption had to be accomplished from the bottom up.

“Therefore,” says the Apostle, “if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above; where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God; mind the things that are above, not the things that are on the earth” (*Col. 3:1-2*).

St. Paul is no Manichaeian. He is not saying that matter is bad. He is saying that matter belongs “down,” always subordinated to spirit if the order God established is to be maintained. Never are we commanded to love anything below, but only to use it properly and keep it where it belongs. We cannot even “covet” anything below us or equal to us without displacing something. “Every best gift and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.” (*Jas. 1:17*),

says the brother of the Lord. One doesn’t go down to truth or excellence. Eve was the first to take direction from below when she stooped to the advice of the Serpent. Following her fatal example by listening to her, Adam suffered the consequences.

Since then God’s grace alone makes it possible to get off the ground. “And I,” said our Lord, “if I be lifted up from the earth,” first on the Cross and finally at His Ascension into heaven, “will draw all things to myself” (*John 12:32*). Since that time, whether aware of it or not, every soul in the state of grace benefits from a constant supernatural upward pull to eventual Transfiguration. Prophesying the last days, our Lord tells the man on the housetop not to come down for any reason, and to stay out of the basement. As for those in Judea, “Let them flee to the mountains” (*Matt. 24:17, 16*). Never did He say to flee to the beach. God is everywhere, but the way to Him is always “up.”