

Suddenly, a Multitude

By Rev. Karl R. Alden

“Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: you will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger” (Luke 2:10-12).

One angel had told the shepherds this; one solitary herald from the unseen world had broken into their vision and announced to them a truth of supreme importance. But, as the shepherds contemplated this one angel—gazing upon his shining countenance, their hearts burning with a new fire, their minds flooded by a new light—suddenly and without warning “there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!”

Here we see a picture of the growth of truth, from one angel to a multitude of the heavenly host. Angels represent truths, truths which are messenger to our minds. Now, it is a fact that when a person sees and perceives one truth, holding it in the mind and meditating upon it, there comes a time when that one truth, if rightly understood, fills the mind with a whole multitude of truths. “Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host.”

The one truth that is central to all our thinking is that the great God of the universe—He who created worlds from His love and men from the dust of the earth—that this great and marvelous God bowed the heavens and came down into His creation. He took upon Himself human nature and was born as a little babe on Christmas Day. He grew up in this world and showed His God-like aspect to His creatures. And now He has made His Second Coming in a new revelation of Himself in the spiritual sense of the Word. The One God of heaven and earth did not need to come in person the second time, for everything that could be accomplished by such a coming, He had accomplished. The need in our day is for a revelation that explains the mysteries of faith and makes the purposes of life clear.

So, to us in the New Church, the solitary angel says: “Fear not, the Lord has come again. He has come surrounded by the truths of the Word, wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in the manger which will feed the understanding of the Word of God.” As this truth sinks in, as we begin to see the glory of the internal sense in the cloud of the letter, then—where before we only saw one truth—now in the light of the spiritual sense we will see a multitude. The heaven of our mind will be made resplendent by a new vision; we will see multitudes of truths where before there had been only one.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!” (Luke 2:13-14).

Amen.