Pillar of Cloud & Fire

Level C

Ages 11-14

Exodus 25:1-8; 35:10,21; 40:1-38 - *selections*

Series Theme: The Lord leads and provides for us, and we can choose to follow Him.

Lesson Focus: We can trust that the Lord is leading and protecting all people, no matter what happens.

Reading Summary: The children of Israel followed the pillar of fire and cloud from the time they left Egypt. While the children of Israel were at Mount Sinai the Lord gave Moses directions for making a house of worship that could go with them on their journeys. It was called the tabernacle. It was made from precious metals, linens, skins, wood, oil and spices that people brought as offerings. People skillfully followed the Lord's directions to make the tabernacle and its furnishings. They made an ark to hold the Ten Commandments, a table of showbread, a lampstand, an altar of incense, an altar of burnt offering, a laver, hangings for the tabernacle, and garments for the priests. They set everything up as the Lord had commanded. When the work was finished the pillar of cloud and fire covered the tabernacle, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. When the pillar stayed over the tabernacle the people stayed where they were. But when the pillar was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel moved onwards in their journey, following the pillar.

Lesson 6		Materials Supplied	Materials Needed
1. Welcome Warm-up Activity (2-3 minutes)	**Experiment** discover what happens when a bar of *Ivory* soap is heated in the microwave	**Fun with "Clouds"** directions p. 2	a bar or two of *Ivory* brand soap, disposable plate, microwave ***Note*:** Other brands of soap *may* or *may not* work for this experiment.
2. Focus on the Word Use all activities (5-7 minutes)	**Read the Word and Talk About It**	see *Reading Summary* above *The Pillar of Cloud and Fire Readings* p. 5 discussion guide p. 2	
3. Learn by Doing Choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes)	**Make** frame a doorway with a pillar of fire and a pillar of cloud made from balloons	**Cloud & Fire Balloon Pillars** directions p. 3	50-60 round white and/or pale blue balloons; 50-60 red, yellow and orange balloons (some long-shaped if possible to look like fire); heavy duty tape such as clear packing tape; several pieces of string 6'-8' (1.8m-2.4m) long *optional*: balloon pump(s)
	Explore learn about how the Lord leads us through reading and discussion activities	**How the Lord Leads** directions pp. 3-4 *How the Lord Leads* p. 7 *How the Lord Leads Teacher Page* p. 8	pens or pencils
4. Wrap It Up (2-3 minutes)	**Take the Message Home** introduce the take home page	**I Trust the Lord** p. 9	

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1. Welcome Warm-up Activity

Fun with "Clouds"



Supplies needed: a bar (cake) of *Ivory* brand soap, disposable plate, microwave

Ivory soap expands to look like a cloud when it is microwaved. One hand-sized bar of soap is enough to do the experiment twice. This is a fun activity to spark interest in the lesson topic of the pillar of cloud and fire.

Cut the bar of soap in half. Place one half in the center of a disposable plate. Put the plate in the microwave and microwave for about one minute. You will be able to watch through the window and stop the microwave if the soap expands off the plate. If possible, let students watch through the window as well as the "cloud" will deflate fairly quickly once you open the microwave door.

Before starting the microwave, you might want to ask students what they *think* will happen to the soap. Were they right?

2. Focus on the Word

Read: Selections from 25:1-8; 35:10,21; 40:1-38 on p. 5.

The children of Israel were guided by the pillar of cloud and fire from the time they left Egypt. The pillar led them to Mount Sinai. What happened there? Moses went up the mountain, and the Lord gave him the Ten Commandments.

After the Lord gave the commandments, He gave Moses detailed directions for building a house of worship called the tabernacle. Since the children of Israel were traveling it had to be portable. The tabernacle was a special tent that could be set up when they made a camp and taken down and transported when they moved. It had a wood frame covered with beautiful fabrics and animal skins. (Show *Tabernacle of Israel Pictures* on p. 6.)

The Lord told Moses to make an ark in which to keep the Ten Commandments. Its lid, the 'mercy seat', was made from pure gold and had two golden cherubim on top. These cherubim were angels with large wings that stretched over the top of the ark. The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron from between the cherubim. The ark was placed inside the tabernacle in a place called the Holy of Holies.

Like Moses and Aaron, we can talk to the Lord. Where can we go to meet Him? To the Word—especially the Ten Commandments, because they contain all things of faith. **We can consult the commandments when deciding what to do because they can help us see if we are choosing to do what is right or what is wrong.**

What descended on the tabernacle? The pillar of cloud and fire.

Once the Ten Commandments were in the tabernacle the cloud settled over it and could be seen at all times. It continued to guide the children of Israel until they reached Canaan—just as the Lord guides us to His heavenly kingdom.

What were they supposed to do when cloud lifted or settled? Move forward or stay still.

The pillar of cloud and fire always led and protected the children of Israel. The Writings for the New Church say that the pillar was the Lord with a group or "choir" of angels (*Arcana Coelestia* 8195)**. The pillar is an image of the how Lord leads us through His Word. He is within the Word, always leading us, both when we can see and trust Him clearly (days) and when we are discouraged (nights). He never leaves us, no matter what happens.**

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3. Learn by Doing

Choose one or two activities

Choice Cloud & Fire Balloon Pillars



Frame a doorway with dramatic pillars of cloud and fire made from balloons. This project makes a great decoration to celebrate the final lesson!

This activity may require some advance planning depending on the size of your group. The balloons pictured in this photo took 3 adults an hour to inflate using 2 balloon pumps as well as their lungs. Larger groups could do this in less time. If you choose to do this with a small group, you might want to blow some of the balloons up ahead of time. (Putting the balloons into large trash bags will make them more manageable to move if you blow them up at home.)

1. Choose a doorway or wall space to decorate. Find a spot that allows you to secure string or yarn to the wall. These strings will serve as a framework for the balloons.
2. Blow up balloons. Note: long balloon will look more fire-like.
3. Attach 2 or more long strings to each side of the walls or doorway and tie the balloons on to the string. If using good quality balloons, you can also tape balloons directly to the wall or each other to shape the pillars.
4. Attaching the white or blue balloons to two or more strings will create more of a cluster for a cloud. (We knotted balloons on to 2 strings and then twined the strings of balloons around each other and taped the strings to the wall to create the cloud.)
5. ***Note***: *Remove the balloons from the wall the same day, after displaying them for a celebration. Promptly taking down tape reduces the possibility of the tape damaging paint or finish.*

Materials Needed

50-60 white and/or pale blue balloons; 50-60 red, yellow and orange balloons (some long-shaped if possible to look more like fire); heavy duty tape such as clear packing tape; several pieces of string 6'-8' (1.8m-2.4m)
optional: balloon pump(s)

Prepare in Advance

Purchase supplies. Choose a spot to set up the pillars. *Optional*: inflate balloons before class to save time.

New Church Concept
Cloud and Fire

The "cloud appearing by day, and the fire by night," represented the Lord's protection of heaven and the church. For "the day..." signifies Divine truth in light, and the "night" signifies Divine truth in shade. Lest they might be hurt by too much light they were guarded by a cloud, and from being hurt by too much shade they were guarded by a shining fire. *Apocalypse Explained* 504.10

Choice How the Lord Leads

The pillar of cloud and fire pictures the Lord's leading in our lives. He is with us at every moment, and in every detail of our lives. We are free to choose whether to behave selfishly, or to love the Lord and others.

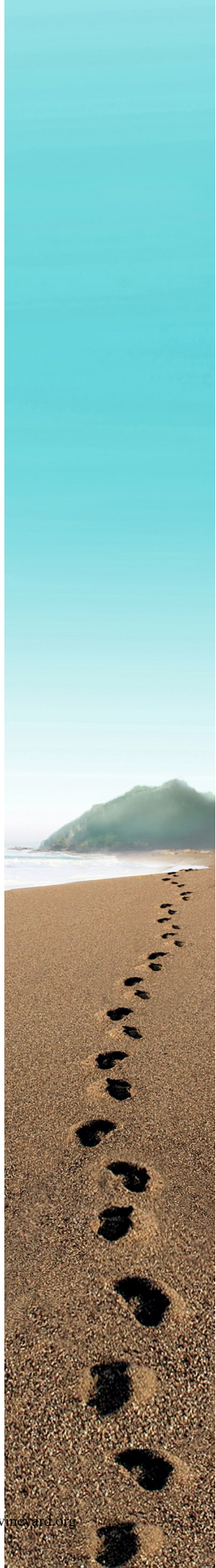


Materials Needed for Each Student

copy of *How the Lord Leads* p. 7, pen or pencil

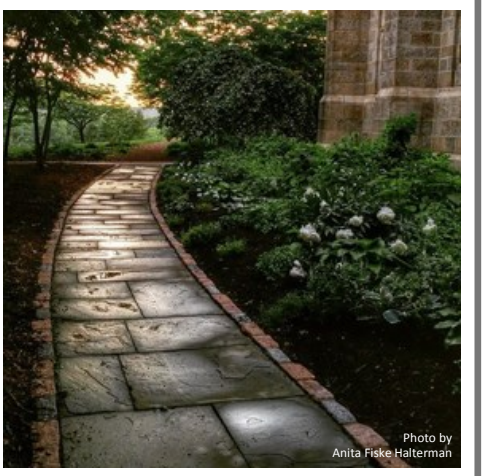
Prepare in Advance

Read through the lesson and print copies of the readings.



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How the Lord Leads *continued*



By repeatedly choosing to love the Lord and others, we are choosing to be led by the Lord on the path to heaven. Read passages on the Lord's leading, answer true-false questions and discuss their implications for our lives.

1. What does the Lord want for you—in fact for everyone He creates? (That all people should go to heaven after death. This is the purpose of His creation.)
2. Does everyone go to heaven? Why or why not? (We have free choice.) Could the Lord make everyone go to heaven if He wanted to? Why or why not?
3. The Writings for the New Church tell us a lot about this topic. Hand out *How the Lord Leads* (p. 7) and read the top part aloud.
4. Invite students to answer the questions on their own. When all have finished, discuss the answers together. Some questions may have more than one answer depending on what the students have in mind. Encourage students to provide reasons for their responses.
5. *How the Lord Leads Teacher Page* (p. 8) has the answers and relevant quotations to help you answer questions that may come up.
6. *Discussion Wrap-up:* The Lord leads us by means of His Word. He longs to bring each person into heaven, but gives us the freedom to choose to love and follow Him. He permits those who do not want to follow Him to choose hell instead.

New Church Concept
The Lord's Leading

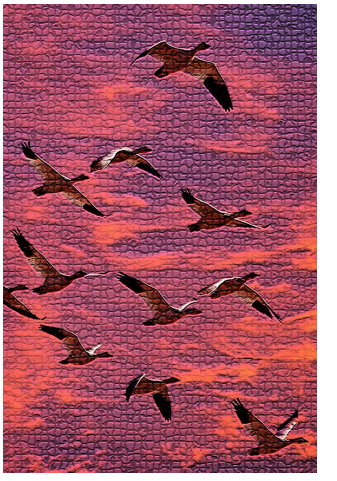
The Lord's foresight and providence are in the smallest things connected with a person, in things so small that it is impossible by any thought to understand as much as one out of a hundred million of them. For every smallest moment of a human being's life involves a series of consequences extending to eternity, each moment being as a new beginning to those which follow. See *Arcana Coelestia* 3854.3



4. Wrap It Up

Closing

The Lord led the children of Israel through the wilderness with a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night. The pillar told them when to move and when to stop, and which direction to go. It also let the people know that the Lord was always there with them, leading and taking care of them. We do not have a natural, visible way of knowing that the Lord is with us, but we can work on trusting that He is there, taking care of us everyday, leading us toward heavenly happiness.



Take the Message Home

Hand out a copy of *I Trust the Lord...* (p. 9) to each student. Read the quotation at the top of the page aloud together. Encourage the stu-dents to take the page home and think about it.

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The Pillar of Cloud and Fire Readings

Exodus 25:1-2,8; 35:10,21; 40:1-11,16-17,34-38 - *selections*

Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying: "Speak to the children of Israel, that they may bring Me an offering…. And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them…. All who are gifted artisans among you shall come and make all that the Lord has commanded."

Then everyone came whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing, and they brought the Lord's offering for the work of the tabernacle of meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments.

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: "On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. You shall put in it the ark of the Testimony, and partition off the ark with the veil. You shall bring in the table and arrange the things that are to be set in order on it; and you shall bring in the lampstand and light its lamps.

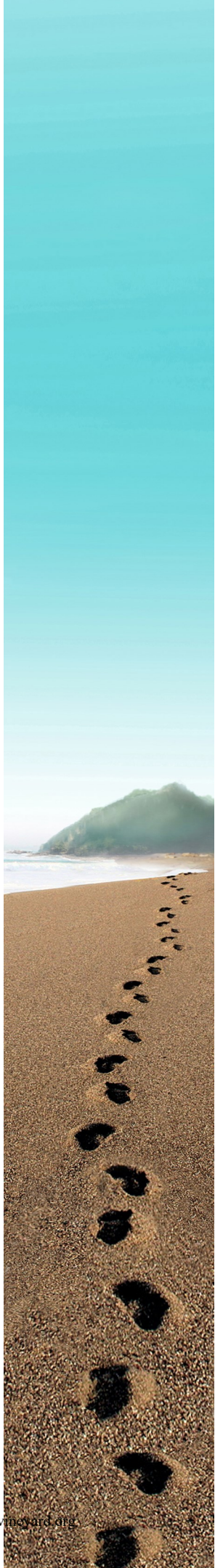
You shall also set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the Testimony, and put up the screen for the door of the tabernacle. Then you shall set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. And you shall set the laver between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. You shall set up the court all around, and hang up the screen at the court gate.

"And you shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it; and you shall hallow it and all its utensils, and it shall be holy. You shall anoint the altar of the burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar. The altar shall be most holy. And you shall anoint the laver and its base, and consecrate it."

So Moses did all that the Lord had commanded him.

And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was raised up. Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their journeys. But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

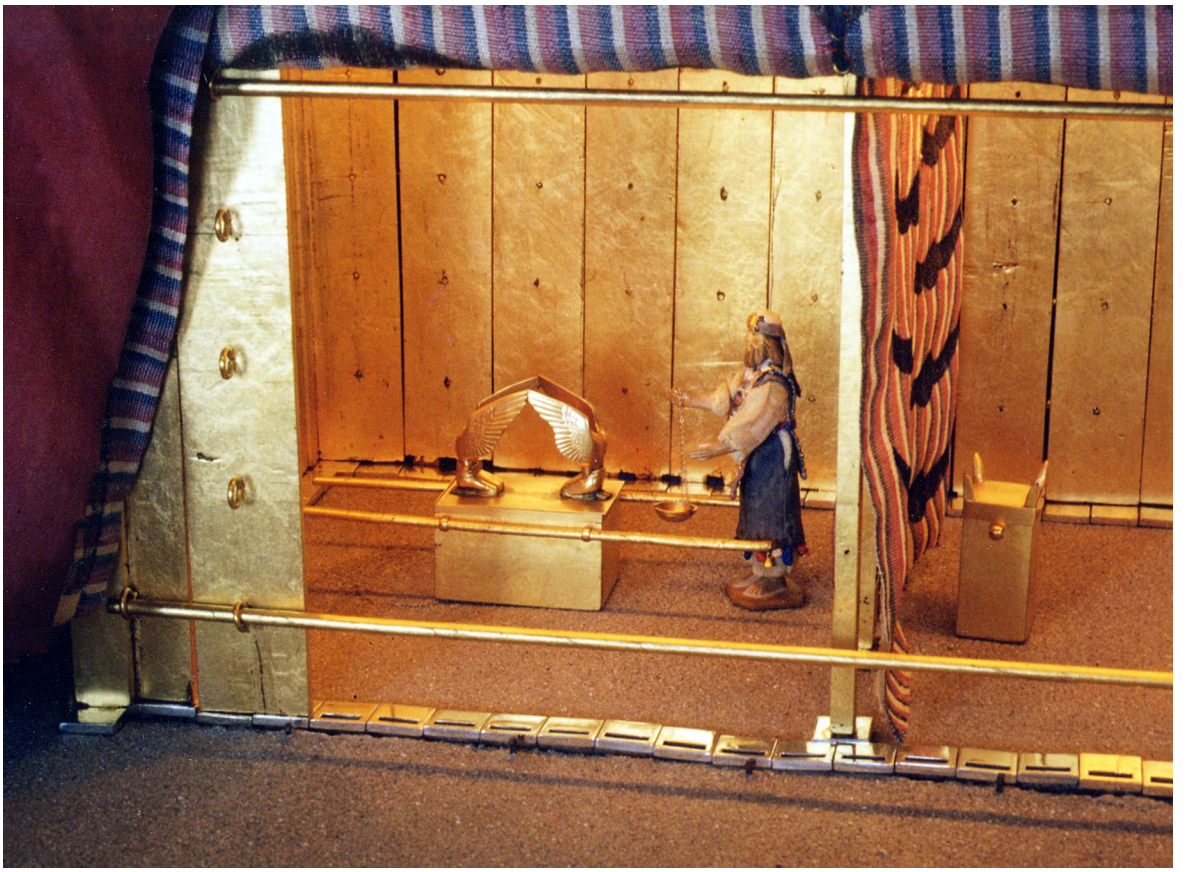


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The Tabernacle of Israel Pictures

Photos of Glencairn Museum's model of the Tabernacle. (See www.glencairnmuseum.org.)





How the Lord Leads

Read the following passages from the Writings for the New Church:

The Lord's foresight and providence are in the smallest things connected with a person, in things so tiny that it is impossible to understand as much as one out of a hundred million of them. For every smallest moment of a person's life involves a series of consequences extending to eternity. Each moment is like a new beginning to those which follow (see *Arcana Coelestia* 3854.3).

It is well known in the church that the Lord desires the salvation of all, and the death of no one. Any predestination, except to heaven, is contrary to the Divine Love (*Divine Providence* 330.3).

The Lord foresees the state of everyone after death, including the places in hell of those who do not desire to be saved and the places in heaven of those who do desire to be saved. He provides places for the wicked by permitting and withdrawing, and places for the good by leading. Unless this were done continually from everyone's birth to death, neither heaven nor hell would continue to exist. For without this foresight and Providence neither heaven nor hell would be anything but confusion (see *Divine Providence* 333).

All the future is present to the Lord and all the present is to Him eternal. In everything it does, Divine Providence has regard to the infinite and the eternal (see *Divine Providence* 333.3).

All things, even the least of all things, down to the least of leasts, are directed by the Lord's providence, even as to a person's very steps (see *Arcana Coelestia* 6493).

Read the statements below and decide whether they are true or false. Circle, then discuss your answers.

1. The Lord knows every detail about what my life will be like. **True** **False**
2. The Lord saves people whether or not they want to be saved. **True** **False**
3. Everything I do will have consequences to eternity. **True** **False**
4. If I make a bad choice, I am no longer going to go to heaven. **True** **False**
5. The Lord cares about each choice I make. **True** **False**
6. The Lord wants everyone to go to heaven, but He does not force people to go there. **True** **False**
7. After I die people I meet will find out about sins I've done that nobody on earth knows about. **True** **False**
8. The Lord is constantly bending my choices toward heaven. **True** **False**
9. I am predestined to follow the Lord's plan because He already knows my choices. **True** **False**
10. The Lord knows what I love, but He does not know whether I will go to heaven or to hell. **True** **False**
11. As long as most of what I do is good, I will probably go to heaven. **True** **False**
12. If the Lord knows the choices I will make, then there is no point in having free choice. **True** **False**

How the Lord Leads Teacher Page

1. The Lord knows every detail about what my life will be like. **True** **False**

   All things down to the least of leasts are directed by the Lord's providence, even as to [a person's] very steps (*Arcana Coelestia* 6493).

2. The Lord saves people whether or not they want to be saved. **True** **False**

   The Lord never does anything contrary to order, because He Himself is Order. The Divine Truth that goes forth from the Lord is what makes order. To save people as a result of immediate mercy is contrary to Divine order, and what is contrary to Divine order is contrary to the Divine (*Heaven and Hell* 523).

3. Everything I do will have consequences to eternity. **True** **False**

   Every smallest moment of a human being's life involves a series of consequences extending to eternity, each moment being as a new beginning to those which follow (see *Arcana Coelestia* 3854.3).

4. If I make a bad choice, I am no longer going to go to heaven. **True** **False**

   We are born with a tendency toward evils. The only thing that breaks the tendency toward evil is the new birth from the Lord that is called regeneration (see *True Christianity* 521.2,3). We are to examine ourselves, recognize and admit our sins, pray to the Lord, and begin a new life (see *True Christianity* 530).

5. The Lord cares about each choice I make. **True** **False**

   All things, even the least of all things, down to the least of leasts, are directed by the Lord's providence, even as to [a person's] very steps (*Arcana Coelestia* 6493).

6. The Lord wants everyone to go to heaven, but He does not force people to go there. **True** **False**

   The Lord desires the salvation of all (*Divine Providence* 330). The Lord foresees and sees all things and every individual thing...though some things arise from His permission, some from His concession, some from His consent, and some from His good pleasure, and some from His will (*Arcana Coelestia* 1755).

7. After I die people I meet will find out about sins I've done that nobody on earth knows about. **True** **False**

   In the second state after death spirits become visibly what they had been in themselves while in the world…. What they have said and done secretly they now say and try to do openly, having no longer any fear of loss of reputation, such as they had in the world. Thus are hidden things laid open and secret things uncovered (*Heaven and Hell* 507).

8. The Lord is constantly bending my choices toward heaven. **True** **False**

   In every present moment the Lord foresees evil, and provides good. This He does from the moment the person is conceived even into eternity (*Arcana Coelestia* 9296).

9. I am predestined to follow the Lord's plan because He already knows my choices. **True** **False**

   It is a goal of Divine providence that a person act in freedom in accordance with his reason. The Lord guards the freedom in a person as a person does the pupil of his eye (*Divine Providence* 97).

10. The Lord knows what I love, but He does not know whether I will go to heaven or to hell. **True** **False**

    The Lord foresees and sees all things and every individual thing (*Arcana Coelestia* 1755).

11. As long as most of what I do is good, I will probably go to heaven. **True** **False**

    It is not so difficult as some believe to live the life that leads to heaven…. When anything presents itself to a person that he knows to be dishonest and unjust, it is simply necessary for him to think that it ought not to be done because it is opposed to the Divine precepts (*Heaven and Hell* 533).

12. If the Lord knows the choices I will make, then there is no point in having free choice. **True** **False**

    It is a goal of Divine providence that a person act in freedom in accordance with his reason. The Lord guards the freedom in a person as a person does the pupil of his eye (*Divine Providence* 97).

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I Trust the Lord...

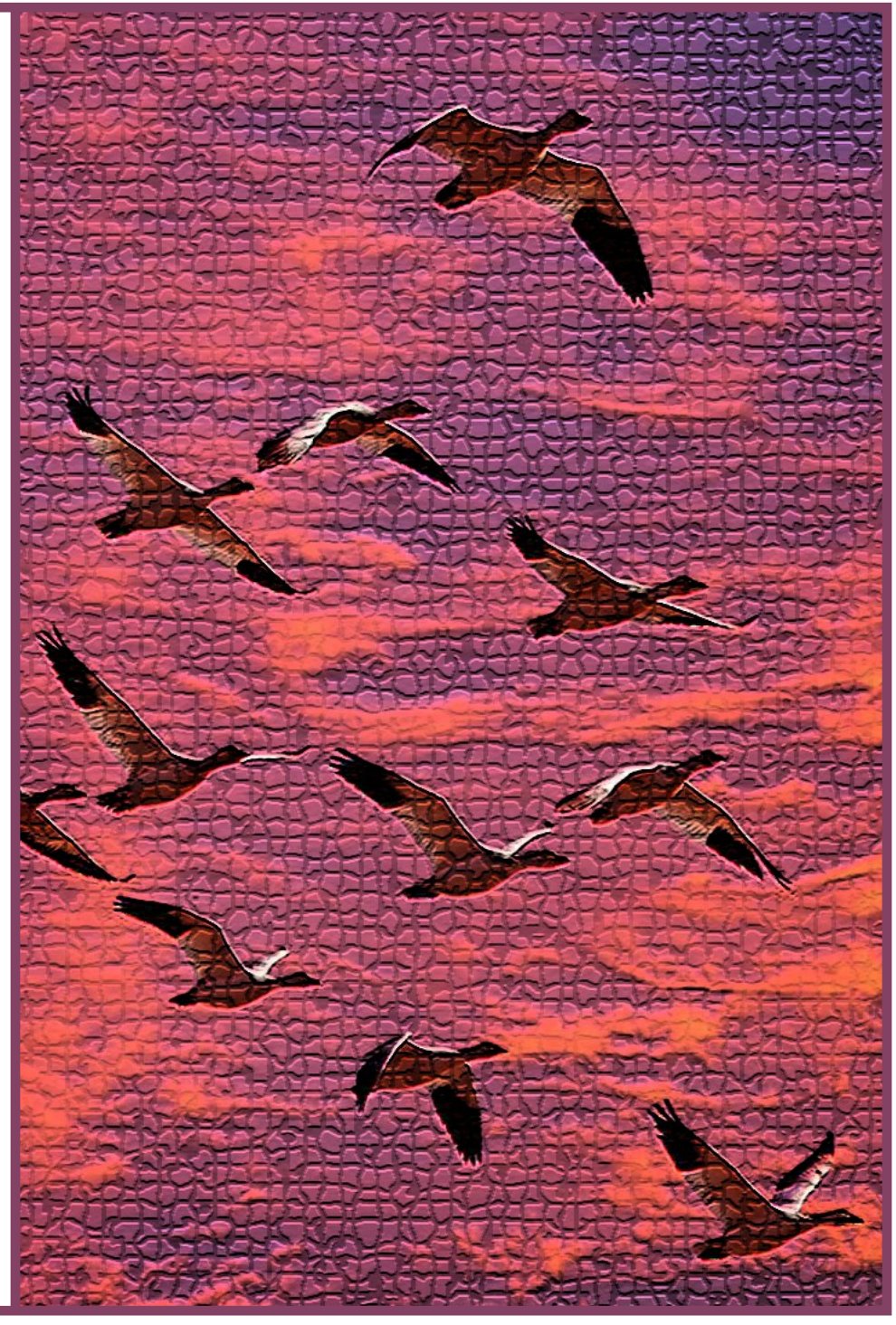
When the Lord is with someone He leads them and makes provision so that all that happens, whether sad or joyful, may bring the person to what is good (see *Arcana Coelestia* 6303).

1. The Lord loves us and wants us to be happy now, but He cares most about our *eternal* happiness. He works to use everything that happens in our lives to help lead us to heaven if we are willing to trust and follow Him.

   We often think of trust as a feeling, but it is also a choice—a decision. We make a decision about whether or not to trust another person based on all kinds of things. What are a few of the reasons that lead you to decide to trust someone?

2. We can make a decision to trust in the Lord as well. It's OK if we don't always feel sure about our trust. If we keep trying, the Lord will help us.

   Write down one or two things that you trust the Lord to do for you. For example, "I trust that the Lord is leading me to heaven," or "I trust that the Lord loves me."



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