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The Angel in Life.

Without its angel, life loses its inspiration. All is cheerless—mere drudgery. Man needs the messenger from above to brighten his pathway. Burdens are lifted only as the divine enters into them. One's sky darkens where no bow of heavenly promise expands it, or no rays from the throne of God illumine it. Doubt, difficulty and sorrow overwhelm without the solace and support which the Christian religion affords, and without the brightness, gladness and upholding of a Father's love, of a Saviour's presence and of a Spirit's quickening and sanctification.

All may see and enjoy God's various messengers in life's vicissitudes, experiences and activities if they will. His angels come swift and fast, on flying wing and in radiant attire, and with sweet, precious words, and happy, helpful influences, and we must detain them long enough to get the benefit of their visits. They often appeared literally and visibly to the Old Testament and the New Testament saints, and became the medium of special visions and revelations on emergent occasions. It may not be our privilege to look upon them face to face, nor to talk directly with them, as Abraham and others did, but if our minds and hearts are in proper frame to listen to their whispers and suggestions through Providential and gracious revelations, and to get out of occurrences and quickenings the divine meanings and bearings, we will discover ministering spirits by our side at all times, rendering services of a most tender and comforting, as well as of a purifying and exhilarating nature. Amidst the sternest necessities will emerge impelling and sustaining voices. Out of pains and torments will come the presence of a sanctifying love and a sustaining energy. The angel of warning stands in our way in seasons of danger. The angel of consolation brings cordial in times of temptation. The angel of deliverance is present to open our prison doors and to unloose our chains! The angel of solace and support aids us in our Gethsemanes. The angel of victory approaches at the bodily dissolution and carries the departing soul to glory. The angel of the resurrection and glorification not only awaits the time of final service, but gives foretastes at times of the magnificent realization. Jesus, our Lord, had his angels at every turn in his career, and we may have ours if we will make use of them. Says Paul, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to wait on them who are the heirs of salvation?" God continually compasses us with his gracious and glorious agents who touch, move, animate, guide and aid his people in ways often little dreamed of or imagined.

The reason why they are not more enjoyed and apprehended is that we are either too unbelieving, or too philosophical, or too unconcerned. The holden eye cannot see the advancing angel. Cold philosophy attempts to analyze and dissect and solve the phenomenon that only faith can interpret and enjoy. Actual touch or physical contact is demanded, as when Thomas wanted

the ocular demonstration as to his risen Lord, whereas it is the spiritual perception that recognizes the heavenly presence, the divine disclosure, in every varying condition.

Many regard the angel in life as a figment of the imagination. They discount it in poetry. They cry out against it in history. When, then, we talk of angelic leadings and interventions, they become not only skeptical, but satirical. They regard the entire idea as delusive and fanciful, and as an evidence of a return to the days when men believed in unseen manifestations and were affected by ghostly revelations. They claim that this notion will never do for an age of scientific discovery, of enlightened reason, of philosophic research and of crucial testing. But those who rest upon the bedrock of the material and the real, lack the insight of the spiritual and the unseen. They have none of the perceptions and experiences of a divine environment. They miss the power, illuminations and overlappings of the other world. They are deficient in the sense of the leadership of unseen and co-operating forces which unite and bind earth and heaven in intimate and helpful connections.

On the other hand, those who have the largest and most spiritual contacts with God and the skies, who feel that the Lord is on their side, find his angels in the heart as well as over their lives. There are guests within who converse of the life that now is and of that which is to come. The angels of good thoughts, of love, of peace, of joy, of contentment, of grace, of patience, of sacrifice, of loyalty, of devotion, and of expectation, and of worthy action, are cherished, and work out their respective ministries to the soul's improvement and the life's sanctification and glorification. No one can doubt their divine origin and mission who enjoys in and through them an expanding heart, a restful mind, a joyous uplift, a contented spirit, a gracious activity, a patient soul, a self-sacrificing disposition, a loyal service, a thorough consecration and heavenly aspirations.

Evangelical Life in Germany.

Germany is generally regarded as the seat of Rationalism. On this account, there is a tendency to underestimate the power and extent of evangelicalism in the land of Luther. Others have fallen into the same mistake, because they have observed an inadequacy of church accommodations in many Germany towns. There is no doubt that there is a manifest want of appreciation of public religious ordinances there as compared with Great Britain and the United States, but there is danger of drawing wrong inferences from the fact that there are only so few church buildings in many large towns. For instance, Wiesbaden, with a population of 80,000 inhabitants, has only four places of worship. On its face this looks bad for the religious life of the people. But examination shows that it is far better than appearances indicate. The Germans go in for economy of

own infinitely wise and infinitely righteous and infinitely good will?

b. By explicit assertions. Our limits permit us to cite only two or three of these. Romans 11:7-8, "That which Israel seeketh for, that he obtained not; but the election obtained it, and the rest were hardened: according as it is written, God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this very day." Jude 4, "For there are certain men crept in privily, even they who were of old set forth unto this condemnation." 1 Peter 2:8, "For they stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed." Could we be taught more clearly that the divine purpose includes the lost as well as the saved? If any persist in disobedience, the ultimate reason is that God leaves them in the guilt and spiritual deadness of their own sins. That is, he passes them by. Less than this the strong word "appointed" can not mean. We make no mistake, therefore, in contending for the retention of the preterition sections. Not only, as we have seen, does logic demand them; the Word of God itself so requires.

4. Such is the teaching of our Saviour himself, and it is his teaching under circumstances like the present. We have the record of his action in the latter part of the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel. Our Lord has come to the crisis of his ministry. He has made a profound impression on the people. They are about "to take him by force and make him a king." It is the time of all others when it would seem to be most important to hold back every unpopular doctrine. What does our Saviour do? He says, "No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him." Could there be a more absolute assertion of divine sovereignty? But he goes further. The people murmur at his teaching. He is at once aware of it. He understands it. He perceives that it is rooted in unbelief. He knows that unless he removes the ground of offense many will "go back," as they did; and will "walk no more with him." Nevertheless, in view of the murmuring and the unbelief whence it sprang and because of them, he added: "For this cause have I said unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it be given unto him of the Father." That is, he expressly affirms that he had spoken the hard saying, not as a mere theoretical proposition, but with reference to the faith and the unbelief towards him, which was forming itself in particular persons. Could there be a more significant affirmation? Our loving and gracious Saviour, though he foresees that it will turn many away from him, declares twice that the ultimate reason why any do not truly come to him is that it is not given to them of God, that he passes them by and leaves them to perish in, and on account of, their own sins. Such is the importance which our infallible Teacher attaches to the complete statement of the divine sovereignty and, consequently, to the explicit assertion even of preterition. May we, then, emphasize it less? Who are we that we should be wiser than he who is our wisdom and the truth itself?

It remains that we should add only that, not our Confession, but our neglect of it, is what calls for criticism and amendment. The doctrine of God's sovereignty, however it may be stated or explained, if only this be

done honestly, will rouse opposition. It must do so; for "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God." Not, however, even in its aspect of preterition would this doctrine result in the outrageous caricatures of our Heavenly Father which are so common, were our ministers at pains to set it forth in relation to the scriptural truths that bear on it, and with which our Confession most beautifully correlates it: were they, for example, to teach, that the God "who cannot be tempted with evil, and who himself tempteth no man," the God who visits on the offender only the just "wages" of his own sin, the God who has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked," the God who yearns over those who perish with infinite compassion, the God who "is love," has passed over in his bestowal of saving grace such as persist in unbelief, for the manifestation of his supremely glorious character, the highest of all ends; that while the ultimate reason why the sinner does persist in unbelief is that he has been passed over by God in the bestowal of the grace of faith, the efficient cause of his persistence is his own sin; that, so far from the divine sovereignty hindering any one who honestly wills to come to Christ for salvation, this will is of itself the proof that in the exercise of sovereign grace the Father has already begun to draw him and will certainly "perfect this good work until the day of Jesus Christ;" in short, that while every one can and will be saved who wills to use the appointed means of grace, no one has power enough to keep God from so inclining him, if God so wills, and that he assuredly will so express his eternal will, in so far as it shall be consistent with his infinitely righteous love. In a word, it is not the revision of our Confession, but its uncompromising reaffirmation and its faithful exposition, that the cause of truth and the progress of the Church demand.

The United Free Church of Scotland.

By Rev. Wm. H. Roberts, D.D.

The movement for the union of two of the Scotch Presbyterian Churches, which began several years back, has at last reached a successful issue, and on October 31, 1900, the final legal and ecclesiastical steps will be taken which will consolidate into one body the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The strength of the uniting bodies is indicated by the following statistics of date of December 31, 1899:

United Presbyterian Church, ministers, 637; congregations, 594; communicants, 199,089; Sabbath-school scholars and teachers, 114,806. Free Church, ministers, 1,149; congregations, 1,112; communicants, 269,089; Sabbath-school scholars and teachers, 168,159. Total for the new organization, 1,786 ministers, 1,706 congregations, 405,178 communicants, 283,965 Sabbath-school scholars and teachers.

The name of the new organization will be The United Free Church of Scotland, and its General Assembly will meet, D. V., in Edinburgh, on October 31, 1900. This union, however, will still leave in Scotland three other Presbyterian Churches. The Synod of United Original Seceders, having 3,769 communicants; The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, with 1,040 communicants, and the Church of Scotland, which is the Established Church of the kingdom, having 1,560 ministers, 1,374 parishes, with 648,478 communicants and 248,286

Sabbath-school teachers and scholars. The United Presbyterian Church withdrew from the Church of Scotland in 1733, and the Free Church in 1843.

It is suggested that the union so soon to be effected be made the subject of praise and thanksgiving to God in our congregations. The appended correspondence containing the letter to our General Assembly, announcing the union, and the answer of the officers of the Assembly thereto will be of general interest:

Edinburgh, July 5th 1900.

To the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America:

Dear Sir:—It has doubtless been in the view of the Presbyterian Churches in America that the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church have, for some time recently, been conferring together on the question of union. We are glad to inform you that, under the gracious guidance of our Covenant God, the negotiations between the Churches have been brought to a prosperous issue. The arrangements necessary for entering into union have been completed, and the Supreme Courts have agreed, subject to the approval of their respective Presbyteries, to meet together in Edinburgh on October 31st next, for the consummation of the union. A result so eminently desirable in itself, and pregnant with blessing and higher spiritual power to the United Church, will, we are sure, occasion genuine satisfaction in Presbyterian Churches throughout the world. We can count on their hearty congratulations and their prayers.

It would be an additional satisfaction if ministers and elders belonging to the American Churches, who are likely to be in this country at the time, would favor us with their presence. Their association with us will be prized as an evidence of the oneness of the Presbyterian Churches, and of their living interest in each other's welfare.

Yours very truly,

Robert Rainy,

Commissioner of Free Church Committee.

Thomas Kennedy, James Orr, Joint Commissioners of United Presbyterian Committee.

To the above communication the following reply was made:

Philadelphia, Pa., October 12, 1900.

To the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland:

Beloved Brethren in Christ:—The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America tenders to you most cordial congratulations upon the union now happily effected between the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. We rejoice greatly that these two Churches, with their honorable history, their large resources, their remarkable achievements, their heroes of the faith, and their high spirituality, have been led of God to unite as one body for the welfare of our holy religion in the chief historic motherland of the American Presbyterian Churches, and for the extension of the Kingdom of Christ throughout the world.

We recall with sincere thanksgiving to God our vital relation as a Church to the Churches of Scotland, a relation which has continued through many generations, and binds us together, as in the past so in this present, by the ties both of faith and blood. With tender and sympathetic memories we think of the blessings vouchsafed us through the labors in our midst, of such leaders of the hosts of God as the Rev Dr. James McCosh, and of others both ministers and laymen, who served Christ faithfully in their day. We know that your union will be the cause of praise and thanksgiving in many of our congregations, and also in numerous Christian homes in our land.

We are led to this heartfelt expression of sympathy with you not only by the high fraternal regard and sin-

cere affection which are cherished among us for the two great Churches now so happily united, but also by our own history. It is now some thirty years since the Old School and New School Presbyterian Churches in the United States, after a separation enduring for a generation, were again brought together into one household of the faith. The blessing of God upon that union, has resulted in an unexampled growth for our united Church both in membership, ministry, gifts and usefulness for service. It would not be proper for us to enter into any detail of the divine blessing which has been our happy lot since the reunion of 1869, but the mercies of God enjoyed by us deepen within us interest in the union now consummated by you, and lead us to invoke upon the United Free Church of Scotland, the outpouring of that rich heavenly benediction which is the unfailing source of spiritual life and prosperity.

May "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory," who gave His Son to be the Head over all things to the Church, "give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling and what the riches of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe." May "the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever."

In behalf of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

Charles A. Dickey,

Moderator of the General Assembly.

John H. Converse, Vice Moderator.

Wm. Henry Roberts, Stated Clerk.

"Lost Sorrows."

Rev. George Jackson. B.A., in *Christian Work*.

Is there not something infinitely pathetic in the continual going back of one generation after another to the old, sad mystery of pain? There is, I suppose, nothing new to be said about it, there is no fresh light to be cast upon it; yet still men wait and watch and hope, still the poor brain busies itself, and the torn heart cries aloud, "My God, my God, why—?" Other questions we answer, or they answer themselves, or we are content that they should remain unanswered; but this question is always with us. And, indeed, how should it be otherwise, since on every man, soon or late, the dark mystery thrusts itself? "Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble;" the words are very old, they are never obsolete. The generations come and go, but sorrow and pain and death abide. In the cathedral at Carlisle there is a memorial to five little children of the late Archbishop Tait. In one terrible month, March 10 to April 10, all five were carried off by death and laid in a single grave. "I have not had the heart," wrote their stricken father, "to make any entry in my journal for above nine weeks. When last I wrote I had six daughters on earth; now I have one." Not often, indeed, do the blows fall in such swift and awful succession; sometimes it may seem as if we were to escape altogether; then comes the inevitable hour, and we are mourners with the rest.

How powerless are the strongest when the day of trouble dawns! Wealth can do many things; but when Death notches his arrow on the string, wealth is only a pasteboard helmet.