

PERSONAL FROM



God's Invisible Agents

As our readers know, my new book titled *Mystery of the Ages* is appearing serially in *The Plain Truth*. This issue carries chapter 2—"Mystery of Angels and Evil Spirits."

In my book I give some personal experiences with the very real, but invisible spirit world. I think our readers would benefit by reading about these experiences in this "Personal."

Angels serve a great function in carrying out God's purpose for humanity. They are his invisible agents often ministering in ways few understand to us poor humans who are heirs of salvation.

Personal Experiences

My wife, Loma, and I have both experienced this in personal incidents.

When our elder daughter was a baby, Mrs. Armstrong was sleeping with the child beside her on the inside of the bed against a bedroom wall. She heard a voice calling out, "Move Beverly." She thought it was a dream and without waking continued in sleep. She then heard the same voice again, a little louder. She half awakened, saw nothing, again thought it was a dream, turned over and was once again going to sleep, when the voice a third time was heard, this time loud and emphatic: "MOVE BEVERLY." Bewildered, she moved the child to the other side of her, and a second or two later, a heavy framed picture that hung on the wall immediately over where the child had been lying crashed down on the bed. It

might have crushed the child's head or severely injured her. The only explanation was that God sent an angel to save Beverly's life.

In the early days of my ministry, about 1934, I was driving a car one very stormy night in a downpour of rain on a highway south of Eugene, Oregon. I was driving about 40 miles an hour on a very winding road. As I approached a sharp curve in the road, the steering wheel of my car suddenly turned sharply to the left, as if wrenched out of my hand by some invisible force. Directly ahead of me was a wrecked truck. I just missed it, passing on its left. It was dark, and a wrecked car was standing just ahead of me. The steering wheel of the car was suddenly wrenched out of my hands, and the car turned sharply toward the right. My car passed between the northbound car and the southbound truck back onto the right lane, with not more than a single inch to spare between the wrecked car and truck. I had never experienced anything like it. The steering wheel of my car was turned by some force out of my control and against my hand holding it straight forward.

A previous time, late in 1927, within the first year of my conversion, I encountered a similar experience.

Experience of the Crooked Spine

After my wife and I had made some little progress in gaining biblical understanding on the subject of healing, Aimee Semple McPherson came to Portland.

She held an evangelistic campaign in the Portland Auditorium. My wife and I attended once, and then I went alone another time. We were "checking up" on many religious teachings and groups. Unable to gain entrance, because of packed attendance, I was told by an usher that I might be able to slip in at the rear stage door if I would hurry around. Walking, or running, around the block to the rear, I came upon a sorry spectacle.

A woman and child were trying to get a terribly crippled elderly man out of a car near the stage entrance. I went over to help them. The man had a badly twisted spine—whether from arthritis, or deformity from birth, or other disease I do not now remember. He was utterly helpless and a pitiful sight.

We managed to get him to the stage door. Actually, I should never have been admitted, had I not been helping to carry this cripple in. He had come to be

healed by the famous woman evangelist.

We were unable to gain contact with Mrs. McPherson before the service. And we were equally unable, after the service. I helped get the disappointed cripple back into their car.

"If you really want to be healed," I said before they drove off, "I would be glad to come to your home and pray for you. Mrs. McPherson has no power within herself to heal anybody. I have none. Only GOD can heal. But I do know what he has promised to do, and I believe God will hear me just as willingly as he will Mrs. McPherson—if only you will BELIEVE in what GOD has promised, and put your faith in HIM and not in the person who prays for you."

They gave me their address, just south of Foster Road. The next day I borrowed my brother Russell's car and drove out.

I had learned, in studying the Bible on the subject of healing, that there are two conditions that God imposes: 1) we must *keep his commandments* and do those things that are pleasing in his sight (I John 3:22); and 2) we must really BELIEVE (Matt. 9:29).

Of course I realized that many people might not have come into the understanding about keeping all of God's commandments—he does look on the *heart*. It is the *spirit, and willingness* to obey. And therefore some who really BELIEVE are healed, even though they are not strictly "commandment keepers." But once the *knowledge of the truth* comes, they must OBEY. In this case I felt sure that God wanted me to open the minds of these people about his commandments, and that SIN is the transgression of God's LAW.

Consequently, I first read the two scriptures quoted above, and then explained what I had been six months learning about God's law—and particularly about God's Sabbath. I wanted to know whether this cripple and his wife had a spirit of WILLINGNESS to obey God.

They did not. I found they were "Pentecostal." They attended church for the "good time" they had there. They talked a good deal about the "good time" they enjoyed at church. They scoffed and sneered about having to obey God. I told them that, since they were unwilling to obey God and comply with God's written conditions for healing, I could not pray for him.

Was This an Angel?

This case had weighed heavily on my mind. I had been touched with deep compassion for this poor fellow. Yet his mind was not impaired, and I knew that God does not compromise with SIN.

Some weeks later I had borrowed my brother's car again, and happened to be driving out Foster Road. Actually at the time my mind was filled with another mission, and this deformed cripple was not on my mind at all. I was deep in thought about another matter.

Coming to the intersection of the street on which the cripple lived, however, I was reminded of him. Instantly the thought came as to whether I ought to pay them one more call—but at the same instant reason ruled it out. They had made light of, and actually ridiculed the idea of surrendering to *obey* God.

Immediately I put them out of mind, and again was deep in thought about the present mission I was on.

Then a strange thing happened.

At the next intersection, the steering wheel of the car automatically turned to the right. I felt the wheel turning. I resisted it. It kept turning right. Instantly I applied all my strength to counteract it, and keep steering straight ahead. My strength was of no avail. Some unseen force was turning that steering wheel *against* all my strength. The car had turned to the right into the street one block east of the home of the cripple.

I was frightened. Never before had I experienced anything like this. I stopped the car by the curb. I didn't know what to make of it. It was too late to back into traffic-heavy Foster Road.

"Well," I thought, "I'll drive to the end of this block and turn left, and then back onto Foster Road."

But, a long block south on this street, it turned right *only*. There was no street turning east. In getting back onto Foster Road I was now compelled to drive past the home of the cripple.

"Could it possibly be that an angel *forced* the steering wheel to turn me in here?" I wondered, somewhat shaken by the experience. I decided I had better stop at the cripple's home to be sure.

I found him stricken with blood poisoning. The red line was nearing his heart.

I told them what had happened.

"I know, now," I said, "that God sent an angel to turn me in here. I believe that God wants me to pray for you—that he will heal you of this blood poisoning to show you his power, and then give you one more chance to repent and be willing to obey him. And if you will do that, then he will straighten out your twisted spine and heal you completely.

"So now, if you want me to do so, I will pray for you and ask God to heal you of this blood poisoning. But I will *not* ask God to heal your spine unless and until you repent and show willingness to obey whatever you yourself see God commands."

They were now desperate. He probably had about 12 hours to live. They were not joking and jesting lightly about the "good times" at "Pentecostal meetin'." They wanted me to pray.

I was not an ordained minister, so I did not anoint with oil. I had never yet in my life prayed aloud before others. I explained this to them, and said I would simply lay hands on the man and pray silently, as I did not want any self-consciousness of praying aloud for the first time to interfere with real earnestness and faith. I did have absolute faith he would be healed of the blood poisoning. He was.

I returned the next day. The blood poisoning had left him immediately when I prayed. But, to my very great sorrow and disappointment, they were once again filled with levity, and sarcasm about God's law. Again they were jestingly talking about having a "good time" at "Pentecostal" meetings.

There was no more I could do. It was one of the great disappointments of my life. I never saw or heard from any of them again. □