

## THE GATES AJAR.

[WRITTEN FOR THE CONSERVATIVE.]

Under the above caption, The Conservative of January 23d had an article of not a little interest. A lady of St. Louis was about to commit suicide, when her daughter heard the voice of her father warning her of the intended act, which the daughter prevented. The father had been dead for ten years. The St. Louis incident, true or false, brings to mind a number of incident of which I have knowledge, and I desire to present a few of them and ask that readers of this paper write me an explanation.

A little more than forty years ago, I lived on Wood river, eight miles west of the city of Grand Island, Hall county, Nebraska. West of me lived a man by the name of Smith and his neighbor, Anderson. On the 5th of February, 1862, on a cold morning, Captain Joseph Smith and his two sons and a son of Anderson went with two teams and sleds and six horses to the Platte river from Wood river, and were all killed by the Sioux. I saw them lying side by side after having been brought home. Anderson and his wife each dreamed the night before that they saw four coffins. They soon saw them, and in one of them was the sweet, pale face of their own dear boy. Who informed them of coming doom? I confess I do not know; do you?

I was the pastor of a church several years ago in the village of Cedar Rapids, Neb. In my congregation was a little girl, maybe six years of age—Mary Freeland—black-eyed, rosy-cheeked, an intelligent girl. She lay dying. Suddenly she brightened up and exclaimed: "O, kiss me, quick, mother. I see the angels!" Did she? If not, what was it?

I was at the village of Liberty, Neb., the first half of January of this year. Mrs. Olmsted, a lady sixty-five years of age, told me of the death of her daughter in Kansas a few years ago. While dying she saw standing at the foot of her bed her two children, who were dead, and asked others if they did not also see them. What did she see?

In this city, Lincoln, Harry Dean was dying. He said: "Mamma, if I send a little letter to Jesus Christ, will he get it?" "Yes," was the answer. "Dear Jesus," he dictated "if you will only lay your hands on a poor little boy and please give him rest." Then a few minutes after: "Jesus heard me, mamma, and I am better." Then again: "I see one, two, three angels; one is Jesus holding out his hands to me. Call papa, quick, before I go where the flowers are." Most of the afternoon he kept his hands folded as if in prayer, and

would murmur: "Forever and ever and ever. Amen."

He bade each member of the family good bye, and said to the nurse: "You have been so good to me; kiss me, please." Then at last, "Mamma, sing 'Nearer My God to Thee.' Good bye, mamma, good bye." What did this boy see? Anything?

Take the case of Stephen, the first martyr of the Christian church; he was about to be stoned. The account says:

"But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

"And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Acts vii, 55-56.

Or, take one more incident from early church history. Christ, with Peter, James and John, went up into a mountain, and there He was transfigured before them. Peter began to talk, and "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Matt. xvii, 5.

Did they hear "a voice;" what was it? Take a more recent case. Dwight L. Moody, who died so recently at Northfield, said: "This is my triumph; this is my coronation day! I have been looking forward to it for years." Then his face lighted up, and he said, in a voice of joyful rapture: "Dwight! Irene! I see the children's faces." His two grandchildren by these names had died within the year. Said he: "Earth recedes; Heaven opens before me; God is calling me, and I must go." What did he see and hear?

One more incident, and this I saw. An aged Christian was dying. With others, I stood by her bedside; the snows of more than eighty winters had given her the hoary head which was to her a crown of glory, because found in the way of righteousness. The dark waters of death were already laving her pilgrim feet. She was sitting upon her couch and, with a holy eloquence I never expect to hear equalled in this world, was asking her children to live Christian lives and meet her in heaven, when, suddenly, she paused, and looking upward, exclaimed: "What is that beautiful music I hear?" This she did twice. And, as the soft light of the Sabbath sun began to bathe the valleys and gild the hill tops with its golden splendor, her beautiful blood-washed spirit took its flight beyond the stars to her home on high. I confess that scenes like this have made me

feel that I want to "die the death of the righteous."

Bunyan, in his celebrated allegory, "Pilgrim's Progress," makes his hero, Christian, just before he crosses a dark river, to come into a beautiful place called Beulah Land. Here pilgrims could partake freely of the richest fruits in the King's orchards, and from this delightful place faint visions could be had of the city beyond to which they were bound, and sweet strains of music sometimes were wafted to them. Here is a clipping:

"Dr. Edward Payson, of Portland, Me., during a long illness and a few days before his death, wrote to a friend as follows: 'I might date this letter from the land of Beulah, of which I have been for some weeks a happy inhabitant. The celestial city is full in my view. Its glories beam upon me; its breezes fan me; its odors are wafted to me; its sounds strike upon my ear, and its spirit is breathed into my heart.'"

What do all of these things mean? I confess I do not know, but some way my heart tells me that God is in it, without resorting to spiritualism for an explanation, but may it not be that ministering spirits are about us to guard and help according to that scripture speaking of the angels:

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

When Elisha was surrounded, with his servant, in the mountain by the Syrian army and the servant began to ask, "What shall we do?" the prophet answered: "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them."

"And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

As we get older we become doubtful of many things, but of the care and love of my Heavenly Father, Mr. Editor, I can not doubt. I will give you, sir, my creed or persuasion in just a sentence, and I earnestly commend it to you and all who, with myself, are getting gray headed and are within sight of the judgment seat of our Lord:

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

"Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

BYRON BEALL.

Lincoln, Neb., Feb. 14, 1902.