

DEATH OF A REPENTING SINNER

When God so willed to transfer me from the place where I grew up to St.Petersburg first and then to a blessed place near Novgorod, called Valdai, my wife and I met a local priest, who became our confessor. And once during a confession he said to my wife:

"Do you know, that even in our times some people get to see their guardian Angel!"

He did not tell any details to my wife and I decided to ask him about this as soon as I see him again. This is what I wrote in my notes about it:

Today (25th of April of 1907) I reminded to father X about my wife's confession and asked him:

"Father! You told to my wife during her confession that one of your spiritual children got to see his guardian Angel?"

"I did, – he said, – that did happened, but I know about it from a confession, and I can not reveal the details of confession".

I insisted:

"Is he alive, – I asked, – that spiritual child of yours?"

"No, he died already!"

"If so, – I said, – why would not you tell this story, especially if this story will serve good to the salvation of all of us, sinners?"

He thought a little and told me the following:

"I had a parishioner in our village, his name was Dmitry; he was a peasant and a man of a sinful life: thief, cusser, alcoholic, and adulterer – in other words, he seemed to be the last of the last ones. He was living like that for a long time and there was no hope that he'd ever change. Once he was fixing to go in the field to plough. Was exiting his house and suddenly felt as if someone hit him in the back of his head with a great force, and the hit was so hard that he fell down on his face and busted his nose to bleeding.

There was no one around. And Dmitry was absolutely sober. That scared and impressed him greatly.

"I came to a field, – was telling me Dmitry during confession, – my face all bloody. I washed it off in a creek but could not start working – thinking: what did just happen to me?.. I sat down and was remembering all of my wasted life. I spent a lot of time like that and decided to put an end to my old and sinful life and start a new one, Godly, Christian-like life. I kneeled down in the middle of the field, lamenting, crossed myself and cried out loud to God: I swear to You by Your Own Name that I won't sin no more!.. And I became a different person since then – I gave up all my old habits: stopped stealing, stopped drinking, cussing and committing adultery..."

"So, – I asked Dmitry, – have not you really had any temptations since then?"

"Of course I had and a lot, but God was helping me and I was withholding myself. One time though, I remember, I failed. There was a fair in celebration of a Great Feast in the nearby village – so I went there. I was walking on a road and saw that someone lost his wallet full of money, so I grabbed it and put it into my pocket right away, without even looking, I was afraid someone will see. The only thing I saw – there was a lot of paper money and silver in it. So I continued walking thinking that I would not give it to anyone even if I saw an owner. I was so happy to get rich so unexpectedly!.. Suddenly – boom! – and I found myself flat on the road with my face, as before, all in blood. I got up and saw a big rock in the middle of the road, which I tripped on. I swore with the worst

word that came to my mind and immediately, right over my head, I suddenly heard a noise, as if there was a huge bird. I looked up and froze: right over me there was an Angel face to face with me. "Dmitry! – he said to me threatening, – how about your promises to God? I heard them all, when you were saying them in the field in a prayer and I saw you there too. And what now – back to old life?..."

I started trembling with all of my body and then cried out:

"Who are you? Devil from hell or Angel from Heaven?"

"I am from above, not from below!" – Angel answered and disappeared.

"As soon as I came to my senses I took that wallet and threw it to a side far from me... I did not go to the feast after that, but returned home thinking of what I just saw".

"This, – said the priest, – I heard from Dmitry during confession. And this is what happened later: people started talking about Dmitry, how he changed to the good and turned into a completely different person... About ten years passed since Dmitry saw his Angel, but remained faithful to his promise. On the eleventh year someone came for me from Dmitry's village...

"Father! Dmitry is sick and asking for the last prayers".

I went immediately, came into Dmitry's house. He was laying on a bed with his eyes closed. I called his name... And suddenly he jumped off the bed waving with his hands!.. I startled and stepped back: I had Holy Gifts in my hands.

"Hey! Careful! – I said, – I am holding Holy Gifts! I almost dropped them!"

"Father! – Dmitry exclaimed very excited, – I saw an Angel right before you came. He said to get prepared because I am going to die tonight".

"How did he look?" – I asked Dmitry.

"I almost went blind from his light!" – replied Dmitry in his spiritual joy.

"Did you ask if God will forgive your sins?" – I asked him again.

"God will forgive what you absolve, – said Dmitry, – what you remit here will be remitted there!"

So we started a confession.

He partake Holy Communion and I, the sinner, did not see him very sick at all. He was not an old man yet and still very strong. I left being completely sure he'd get well but did not know what to think of an Angel.

Dmitry died the same night".

This is what I heard from a good priest of one of the churches in Valdai.