

THE ATTRIBUTES OF ANGELS.

It is not all angels that are created in the same manner. The Scripture teaches that they have appeared in human form. Some philosophers, especially those of the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, pretend that they were only pure spirits, which is a false opinion. The incarnation of the Son of God in the flesh, and the several passages of the Bible make mention of those supernatural operations, and particularly of the three angels who appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and the inhabitants of Sodom.

As the angels are incorporeal, how could they assume a body in human form? Assuredly by the Divine power which commissioned them they had condensed and transformed the air so as to make it resemble our bodies. They took their form not by their own power and will, but by the power and will of Him who sent them for our enlightenment and to give us a visible foreknowledge of His mercy and glory. Not finding any miserable creature in heaven to relieve the solitude, they took the valley of tears, where they shadow many in darkness and in the shadow of death. In fact, the Ancient Testament, which is full of parables and metaphors, relates many apparitions of angels in human form. The most striking representation of Jesus Christ's Incarnation.

Can the bodies assumed by angels act like living bodies? We cannot rationally suppose it; for the natural acts and functions of all animals depend on the will and knowledge of the soul. The act of an angel, however, proceeds from the nature of his faculties, and not from the body which he assumed, for this being composed only of condensed air, has no other power but that of inanimate bodies. It can certainly produce what is common to all human bodies, such as articulation, which is only the air in vibration by the tongue and lips, but it is incapable of doing what is naturally consistent to living bodies, because it has no real life according to the maxim, "Cujus est potentia, eius est actus."

Does the angel devote us in presenting himself in human form? No, but if his body had fulfilled any vital functions, it is that he could have. The reason that angels are called intelligences, celestial spirits, dominations, principalities, etc., names which are never given to the souls of men. Another important distinction is that human knowledge is partly intellectual and partly sensitive; that is, of a passive and active nature, so that the first receives an impression from external objects and represents them to the intelligent faculties which form the final judgment. But the angels, being pure spirits, do not receive any such impressions, but they are able to see the things of the world without the intervention of sensible images, because they are pure, incorporeal spirits.

By what means do the angels acquire their knowledge of things? They do not acquire it by their senses, but from their essence, but from natural ideas enlightened by divine grace. The essence of an angel is confined to gender and species, but his intelligence, whose object is the universal truth, is almost infinite. He knows all things which he has the faculty of knowing for the effect cannot go beyond the cause; it is by certain images or natural ideas; but these do not come to him, as in us, from known things, but from the act of his intellect, which is the angelic nature with celestial splendor. In his essence he has but the power of knowing, and it is the union of this active, intellectual faculty with the natural idea or specific form of a thing, that he knows it. He does not just as sensation is produced in us by the union of a sensible image with one of our senses. The angel knows himself in the light of truth (St. Augustine). It is as impossible for an angel to see himself as it is for a man. It is impossible for him to see the light of the sun with his eyes open. But the knowledge he has of other angels is different. All created things were before the creation in the Word of God, and the angels, being in the Word in the form of intelligible images after the creation; so that they acquired sufficient knowledge of them by the supernatural light of truth and grace. But they do not know each other until they are present in themselves in the images which the Divine Word reflects in them.

Does an angel know God by his natural faculties? The knowledge of a thing can take place three ways: by the act of the senses, by the subject, or by the intellect. The angel, being a creature, is not in the intellectual faculty, as the image of a stone, or any other object I see, passes to my visual powers; thirdly, I can know a man, if not in himself, at least by his image. In the first way, neither an angel nor any created being can by his natural faculties know God. The knowledge which an angel has of Him is of the second kind, and it is by the image of God in Him, impressed on the sense of angels, it is by it that they know Him, for it is His image; still they do not completely see all the Divine Essence, for no created image can sufficiently represent it. They see Him, as I see the universe, creation, the same as I can see another person in a mirror when his image reflects therein. In a word, it is God alone that can see all His eternal Essence; the angels can see the image of Him in Him, and man can see the Divine Essence in the whole creation.

THE ART OF ILLUMINATED WRITING IN IRELAND.

The marvellous excellence and perfection to which the art of illuminated writing in Ireland was attained in the schools of ancient Ireland may be inferred from the quotations and remarks which follow: "From Ireland, pre-eminently the 'Island of Saints and of Learned Men.'" "Of all the countries of the world, I have found nothing more wonderful than that marvellous book, written in the time of the Virgin, St. Brigit, and, as they say, at the dictation of an angel."

HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE LITERATURE.

Introductory.—This is but an extract from the poem of this name, the text of which may be read with advantage in the original. Purpose.—To praise the beauties of the spring season, especially in contrast with winter. Form.—This can easily be made out from a careful examination of the extract. Preliminary Study.—Describe from the poem the appearance of the woods in winter. What afforded him occasion for this season? What were the first changes noted in spring? How did the boy's spirit are then. What does he so admire in the birds? Give the meaning of: Stiff and stark, masked, cathedrals, alebed, flickering, arch, sound, streams, calendar, punctual, tropic, hard, hedge, weather-proof, generous, niche, lubber.

LETTER FROM THE RAMBLER.

Those who have deemed it worth while to waste time in reading these effusions which appear from time to time in The Register over my name do please to remember that the last of those lucubrations was hammered out in the county of Wick, and that the first changes noted in spring are then. What does he so admire in the birds? Give the meaning of: Stiff and stark, masked, cathedrals, alebed, flickering, arch, sound, streams, calendar, punctual, tropic, hard, hedge, weather-proof, generous, niche, lubber.

THE RITUALIST BOGEY IN EDUCATION.

In the House of Commons Mr. Balfour moved that the House at its rising should adjourn until the 14th of March. Mr. S. Smith said that he desired to enter his protest against the arbitrary way in which the Government had dealt with the rights of private members during the present session. He had a number of resolutions on a motion for which he had found a place on the following day, dealing with Ritualistic teaching in training colleges and public schools. He contended that the existing law in regard to the admission of Ritualists to the House of Commons was a gross violation of the rights of private members, and that the Government would never have been passed had it been thought the Act would hand over the education of nearly all the children to the Church of England. The religious teaching of the country would have been thoroughly orthodox, because there was no doubt that two different religions were being taught by the Church of England. He moved as an amendment that "The House on its rising do adjourn until to-morrow."

Mr. Balfour said the hon. gentleman had actually proposed that the whole system of voluntary schools, established under the Act of 1870, should be upset, and should be succeeded by a system which the hon. member himself denounced—namely, purely secular education. Anything more preposterous than such a suggestion on a motion for the adjournment of the House he could not believe in. It is possible to make. If the hon. member knew of cases where doctrines of religion with which parents did not concur were taught to their children he could only say that it was a gross dereliction of duty by the hon. member to bring such cases before the Education Department. No doubt such cases did exist, but he believed they were very few.