

God Can Never Die

Hans Christian Andersen

It was a Sunday morning. The sun shone brightly and warmly into the room, as the air, mild and refreshing, flowed through the open window. And out under God's blue heaven, where fields and meadows were covered with greens and flowers, all the little birds rejoiced. While joy and contentment were everywhere outside, in the house lived sorrow and misery. Even the wife, who otherwise always was in good spirits, sat that morning at the breakfast table with a downcast expression; finally she arose, without having touched a bite of her food, dried her eyes, and walked toward the door.

It really seemed as if there were a curse hanging over this house. The cost of living was high, the food supply low; taxes had become heavier and heavier; year after year the household belongings had depreciated more and more, and now at last there was nothing to look forward to but poverty and misery. For a long time all this had depressed the husband, who always had been a hard-working and law-abiding citizen; now the thought of the future filled him with despair; yes, many times he even threatened to end his miserable and hopeless existence. Neither the comforting words of his good-humored wife nor the worldly or spiritual counsel of his friends had helped him; these had only made him more silent and sorrowful. It is easy to understand that his poor wife finally should lose her courage, too. However, there was quite another reason for her sadness, which we soon shall hear.

When the husband saw that his wife also grieved and wanted to leave the room, he stopped her and said, "I won't let you go until you have told me what is wrong with you!"

After a moment of silence, she sighed and said, "Oh, my dear husband, I dreamed last night that God was dead, and that all the angels followed Him to His grave!"

"How can you believe or think such foolish stuff!" answered the husband. "You know, of course, that God can never die!"

The good wife's face sparkled with happiness, and as she affectionately squeezed both her husband's hands, she exclaimed, "Then our dear God is still alive!"

"Why, of course," said the husband. "How could you ever doubt it!"

Then she embraced him, and looked at him with loving eyes, expressing confidence, peace, and happiness, as she said, "But, my dear husband, if God is still alive, why do we not believe and trust in Him! He has counted every hair on our heads; not a single one is lost without His knowledge. He clothes the lilies in the field; He feeds the sparrows and the ravens."

It was as if a veil lifted from his eyes and as if a heavy load fell from his heart when she spoke these words. He smiled for the first time in a long while, and thanked his dear, pious wife for the trick she had played on him, through which she had revived his belief in God and restored his trust. And in the room the sun shone even more friendly on the happy people's faces; a gentle breeze caressed their smiling cheeks, and the birds sang even louder their heartfelt thanks to God.