

DOCTRINE FOR THE YOUNG

“GIVING THANKS TO THE LORD”

*It is good to give thanks to the Lord,
And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High.*
(Psalm 92:1-2)

One way we can express our gratitude and thanks to the Lord for all the wonderful things He has given us is by singing “praises” to Him. For singing is the way our hearts can most fully express themselves. Songs are a very powerful way to tell others of our feelings for them. This is why so many of the Psalms—which we are told in the Heavenly Doctrine for the New Church “are nothing but songs” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 279)—are used to express praise and thanksgiving to the Lord.

In heaven, we are told, every day starts out with singing:

Every morning, songs of the utmost sweetness [are] sung by virgins and young girls...and the whole city resounds with them. Each morning, some special affection...is expressed in sound...[and]is perceived in the song as though [the affection] itself were the song. It flows into the souls of the listeners, stirring them into correspondence with itself. Such is heavenly song (Conjugal Love 17:2).

If you were in heaven today, you might have awakened to singing that expressed thanksgiving to the Lord for all the gifts of creation. The affection sung might be gratitude that the Lord has foreseen our needs and provided for them, and gratefulness for the rich variety of gifts for our bodies, our minds, and our eternal spirits with which we have been blessed.

The angels use songs in their celebrations for they know that not only the way we think, but also, more importantly, the way we feel can best be shown in music. For, we are told in the Heavenly Doctrines for the New Church that

gladness of heart is especially expressed by a song, because in a song gladness breaks forth as it were of itself into sound.... From this it is that the glorification [praise] of the Lord among the ancients...were performed by means of songs, psalms, and musical instruments of various kinds; for the ancients...had a joy [in praising the Lord] that surpassed all other joys (Arcana Coelestia 8261).

When we know these things—when we know that music and song are ways to express our love and appreciation to the Lord for all His gifts—then we can wake up like the angels in heaven, knowing with full hearts that “it is good to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High.”