

## OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Rev. Kurt Horigan Asplundh

The Lord once entered the house of a man whose little girl had just died. Her mother and father were crying because she had been their only daughter, and they were very sad to have lost her. Children are a most precious gift from the Lord and good parents have a deep love of their children.

“Do not weep,” the Lord said. “She is not dead, but sleeping” (Luke 8:52). And, when He had sent away those that doubted Him, He took her by the hand and called, “Little girl, arise.” To the astonishment of her father and mother the girl came to life again. You can imagine how happy they were to see their daughter alive and well.

The Lord performs this same miracle for everyone who dies. The only difference is that the Lord brought this girl back to life in this world. Others He awakens into heaven. These, too, rise up from the sleep that falls upon them at death, and are alive again, but in the spiritual world, having left their earthly bodies behind. This is what the Lord meant when He said in the Word, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live” (John 11:25).

The Lord never wants children to become sick and die, but when they do, He takes them up immediately into heaven to be with the angels. They are taken into the home of an angel mother who has especially loved children. There, they grow up and are taught so that they may afterwards be introduced into their own place in heaven and become angels of the Lord (see *Arcana Coelestia* 2289; *Heaven and Hell* 329).

Children are precious in the eyes of the Lord, and every child that dies is certain to become an angel in heaven. This is because all children are endowed with a heavenly quality while they are growing up. Once, when people were bringing young children to the Lord so that He could touch them, and the disciples tried to turn them away the Lord was displeased. He said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God....” And He took them up in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them” (Mark 10:14-16). This is the very thing that happens to children who die.

Yet we still may ask, why? *Why* did this happen? Inevitably, family and friends feel a terrible loss. “It is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish” (Matthew 18:14). Why, then, does the Lord allow children to die? The Lord permits what He does not will. It is for the sake of human freedom and salvation. There is but one purpose of life on earth, and that is that there may be a heaven from the human race. The Lord, in His infinite wisdom, provides for this in ways we sometimes cannot understand. But of this we are certain: Nothing is permitted which cannot be turned to something good.

The Lord’s tender mercies are over all His works. The reality of eternal life can sustain and comfort us. Its hope should abide with us. “One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.... Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart...” (Psalm 27: 4, 14).

Adapted from a Memorial Address. For a complete version see “Memorial Address for Carol” by Rev. Kurt Horigan Asplundh.