

# The Happiness of Heaven and the Happiness of Earth

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Adapted from the final chapter of *Thy Kingdom Come*

All the doctrines in the Word teach and confirm that genuine happiness comes from a true acknowledgment that the Lord Jesus Christ alone is God.

In explaining the key ingredients that make such a true acknowledgment, the following things are noted:

- There must be a knowledge of the Lord as defined and described in the Word.
- There must then be a willingness, and in time a desire, to obey and be led by the Lord by means of knowledge learned and understood.
- Finally, there must be an effort to bring the intellectual acknowledgment of the Lord into works and uses of life.

So faith, charity, and good works must come together as one for us to have a full and true acknowledgment of the Lord. And from this it follows that they must be together as one also if we are to enter those states of life which are truly happy and heavenly. It is indeed in this vein that the Word declares in the Psalms, “Happy are the people whose God is the Lord!” (Psalm 144:15).

We are conjoined with heavenly states from the Lord when we truly acknowledge Him, or what is the same, when we do the work of reformation and regeneration. For this reason it is stated as a law of Divine Providence that “The more closely a man is conjoined with the Lord the happier he becomes” (*Divine Providence* 37).

The Lord, of course, desires that every person should have the fullness of heavenly happiness. Yet for us to receive *any* heavenly happiness requires that the Lord leave us in freedom to determine what degree of life from the Lord we desire to receive. It is according to our free desire to receive or reject Him that the Lord can give us more or less of His Divine life and the happiness thereof. The happiness of angels in the natural heaven, therefore, who have only desired to receive a small part of the Lord’s life, cannot be compared to the happiness of angels in the celestial heaven, who desire nothing more than to receive everything from the Lord.

Because we on earth had lost a true idea of the nature of heavenly happiness, the Lord in His second coming has once more revealed something of its character and quality. He has given us this knowledge so that in our understanding, we can see that it must be so, and so that, in this delight, we can find a new source of courage and patience in striving for happiness and peace in earthly life. Besides this, the teachings concerning the source and nature of heavenly happiness bear an immediate relationship to our earthly lives, in that they give us the means to search for an earthly happiness and to defend ourselves from those pleasures and allurements of hell which parade before our natural senses, disguised as the true happiness of earth and heaven.

With an angel of heaven, two things spring from his acknowledgment of the Lord which make his eternal happiness possible; they are a state of peace and the love of use. In regard to the first, we read that “peace is the inmost of all happiness” (*Arcana Coelestia* 5662, 8722). The angels have a peace of mind utterly unknown on earth. Such a peace of mind is possible because they have a sure and abiding trust in the Lord’s Divine Providence. In the life and happiness of the heavens, they see before them the fullness of the Lord’s wisdom and love. No longer are they bothered and troubled by perverted inclinations from

heredity; no longer are they enmeshed in the wild imaginations which spring from the disorderly impressions of the natural memory. This heredity and this memory are now quieted by the Lord. And so the angels know a peace of mind that, while primarily concerned with the welfare and happiness of others, is not in the least burdened by states of doubt, fear, or despair.

But even such angelic peace of mind is not by itself sufficient to provide heavenly happiness and delights. The mind must also be engaged in an activity and a use. We need not be concerned that the happiness we may receive from our earthly employment and use will be taken away after death, for the Divine promise is that it will be increased beyond measure. What is of primary concern is that we are aware that such work and uses must be performed if they are to prepare and contribute to our eternal happiness. Here we come upon a teaching concerning heavenly happiness which perhaps shows more clearly than anything else how greatly different this happiness is from the happiness we know on earth. For the Word tells us that heavenly happiness lies in doing good without thought of recompense or reward. Concerning this we read:

At this day very few know that in doing good without the end of recompense there is heavenly happiness; for they do not know that there is any other happiness than in being promoted to honors, in being served by others, in abounding in riches, and in living in pleasure. They are deeply ignorant that there is a happiness above these things, which affects the interiors of man; thus that there is heavenly happiness; and that this happiness is the happiness of genuine charity. (*Arcana Coelestia* 6392:2)

Such is the manner in which the angels of heaven perform their uses, without thought of recompense or reward, but because of their desire to serve and contribute to the happiness of others. The more they love to do good to others without thought of self, the more can the Lord bring them into the fullness of heavenly happiness (*Arcana Coelestia* 3887).

Because this attitude prevails in the heavens, each angel is like a center for communicating happiness to others throughout the heavens. Each angel's use, love, and thought is somewhat different from those of all others. Therefore the varieties of happiness which can be communicated from one to another are unlimited. And what is wonderful is that every person who enters heaven brings a distinct quality and character that makes it possible for the Lord to introduce some new happiness to the entire heavens (*Arcana Coelestia* 2057, 2130; *Divine Providence* 39).

Such is the happiness of heaven. But what of the happiness of earth? We are taught that the inmost happiness we can have on earth is not comparable to the least happiness of the angels (*Spiritual Experiences* 314). Now, this statement is not made to discourage us from seeking true happiness on earth, nor does it imply that states of earthly happiness bear no relationship to states of heavenly happiness. This passage merely emphasizes the great distinction between the life of earth and the life of heaven, and the different purpose of each life. The life of earth is not the life of heaven, nor the happiness of earth the happiness of heaven, and the Lord never intended it to be so. For the purpose of earth is the creation, formation, and regeneration of the human mind, and the purpose of heaven is that there may be an eternal existence, happiness, and freedom, which could not be provided in a natural creation.

The purpose of life on earth is that we may be formed and prepared to become angels of heaven. The means of that formation must be through the strife of temptation. For this reason our earthly lives cannot know open and enduring heavenly happiness. At times, even the happiness of earth seems obscured and utterly dissipated under the confusions, troubles, and misfortunes which beset our natural life. In periods of frustration we are tempted to challenge the Divine love and wisdom by laying the cause of this world's unhappy confusion and disorder to the Lord, or if not to the Lord, then to everyone else but ourselves. If we are unhappy, we tend to reason, it is because someone has made us unhappy. And in the tumultuous upheavals and often chaotic conditions of this world, we find that there are always incidents to confirm

our wayward thoughts. And it is true that natural states of open disorder do interfere with the enjoyment of natural delights and pleasures, and thus rob us of something of natural happiness.

Yet the Word requires that we look beyond what is natural and temporal. Rather, we must look to purpose and use, and, in the sad and unpleasant chaos that often arise in worldly states, we must never forget the essential work that the Lord put us in this natural world to accomplish—our reformation and regeneration. From the new doctrine the Lord has given, we are instructed to fight to repel all states that would destroy peace—both spiritual and natural peace. We are to find ways to think and act on behalf of our neighbor without thought of recompense or reward. This is not an easy task in a world where the necessary requirements of life demand that we think of just recompense and reward for our employment and skills. Yet if we search well, we will find many such uses in the home, in society, and especially in the church, where we can exercise a just charity for the sake of use, without a dominant thought of self. This charity acts first because it sees what is right in the eyes of the Lord—and does it even if it does not give apparent delight or recognition or reward of any kind. It is through such effort that the peace and contentment of all natural happiness is born.

This is why we are instructed that a truly religious person is essentially a happy person. The activity of use, from the acknowledgment of the Lord and the purposes of His creation, brings something of spiritual peace and happiness down into the natural. It pervades the natural with a sense of well-being, trust, and contentment in the dispensations of the Lord's providence. This state in the natural receives the seeds of heavenly peace and happiness—the spiritual delight in truth, and good, and use for their own sakes. These are the internal treasures that are stored up in us by the Lord for our eternal use. These are the gifts of heavenly loves that neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor which thieves can break through and steal—“for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”