

LITTLE CHILDREN IN HEAVEN

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Lesson: Mark 10:13-16

In the Word we are told that, when the Lord was here on earth, some parents wanted to bring their little children to Him, so that He might touch them. The disciples thought that this would annoy the Lord, and tried to keep the parents and their children away. But the Lord said they should let the children come to Him. And then He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them. From this story we can see how great was the Lord's love for little children. And, as He loved them, then, so He loves them now, tenderly caring for them, so that they may grow up to be good men and women, and afterwards become angels of heaven. In order that we may understand how the Lord cares for children on earth, let us first learn how He does so for little children in heaven.

All children who go from this world into the other are taken right into heaven, where the Lord gives them to angels to take care of for Him. They are trained and taught by these angels, so that while they are growing up they may be prepared to become angels themselves. They grow up to be young men and women, and they remain forever at that age, although always growing in love and wisdom. All angels are of that age. When people who are older than that, perhaps very old, go from this world to the other and then into heaven, they gradually grow younger until they are young adults too.

When babies come into heaven they are just as they were in this world, except that they now have a heavenly body instead of the one they left behind. They have the same lovely innocence and tenderness. They are given into the care of angel women of the very highest heaven, which is called the heaven of innocence. These angels love these children just as mothers on earth love their little ones.

What these angel mothers try to do is to have the little children come into what we call good affections, that is, good feelings, especially feelings of love to the Lord. So one of the things they often do is take the children into very beautiful gardens, which are made by the Lord especially for little children. As they enter such a garden, and while they are in it, all the flowers smile to them, as if they felt a great joy. And the angel mothers gather some of the flowers and make garlands of them, and with these they adorn the little children. And while the children are happy playing together in the garden, the Lord implants good things in their hearts, things of innocence and of love to Him, their Heavenly Father, who gives them all the beautiful things of heaven.

As they grow a little older, the children are taught from the Word of the Lord. The way in which this is done, especially at first, is by what are called representations, that is, the acting out of the stories of the Word. In many places something like this is done at Christmas, with tableaux and representations. Bible pictures are also something like such representations. But, of course, none of the representations from the Word we have here on earth can be nearly as wonderful or as wisely done as those which the angels make for the little children in heaven.

When the children grow still older they come under the care of other angels, not of so high a kind as those first ones. Then they go to school to learn about the Lord and the life of heaven. And finally, when they grow up, they become angels and begin to do the work which the Lord gives them to do forever, and in doing which they are very, very happy.

In all this we can see how the Lord loves the children who come into the other world, and how He cares for them. But His love is the same for children who remain in this world and grow up here, and He cares for them in much the same way. The same angels who take care of the babies and little children that come into heaven are also with the babies and little children that remain here. Once, when the Lord was on earth, He was speaking of little children, and He said that the angels of heaven who are with them “do always behold the face of the Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 18:10). They are the angels of the highest heaven, the heaven of innocence, of which we have already spoken. And it is these angels who keep babies and little children so sweet and innocent, so that the Lord may give them good affections, or good feelings, such as their love for their parents and other children, and also, when they begin to understand, love to the Lord Himself.

And when children grow older, then the angels that are with children in heaven later are also with the children on earth. And what these angels try especially to do is to cause the children to find delight in learning from the Word, so that, again, the Lord may give them good things of love. The only difference between the Lord’s care of children in heaven and children in this world is that here in this world parents and teachers help in that which the angels are doing, and they, like the angels, think of what they are doing as a use that the Lord has given them to do.

And so we can see that, just as the Lord, when He was in the world, took little children up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them, so He is now doing the same for all children in this world, although we cannot see Him doing it. He does this in His love, and His love is to make all His children happy forever.

Amen.