

The Teaching of Children in Heaven

Adapted from *Our Children in the Other Life* by Chauncey Giles

Life in the spiritual world is a continuation of life in this world. The death of the material body is no more an interruption to our life than sleep is. When we rise in the spiritual world we begin where we left off here, just as we begin in the morning where we left off when we went to sleep at night.

All children enter the other world with the same forms, the same natures, and the same attainments, with which they leave this one. They need instruction and parental care in that world as much as they would have done if they had remained here. And the Lord does not leave them orphans. He provides a home and instruction for every one.

Little children are received into homes, where they are loved and cherished with the most tender affection. And such homes—so quiet, so orderly, so joyous, so full of beauty, so warm and sunny and bright, with light from without and light from within. They are perfectly furnished with every means for comfort, culture, and delight. They are free from all the contagion of evil example. The infant nature unfolds in them like flowers in a rich soil, and in the warm breath of spring. The freest play is given to every heavenly affection. There is the greatest freedom with the most perfect order. They live in an atmosphere of love, and are directed by a wisdom perfectly adapted to their states.

What are children taught there? To answer the question in one sentence, I should say, the angels teach our little ones who have passed to their care what we ought to teach our children who remain with us—to be useful. And to be useful is to love the Lord and the neighbor, and to carry this love into practical effect by doing everthing possible to promote the highest good of all.

One of the first things, therefore, that children are taught is that the Lord is their Father, and that every good thing comes from Him and is His gift to them. They are continually initiated into knowledge concerning Him, and their thoughts and affections are led to Him. At the same time they are taught that they must love their companions and teachers, and they are initiated into the exercise of the truths they are taught. Precept and practice go hand in hand, so they are taught and led into the constant practice of loving each other. They are educated together. And those of a genius adapted to be useful to each other, and none others, are brought into one family, and associate with each other.

Through giving to others we can receive more abundantly from the Lord. So heaven is a life of the most active use. It is the outflowing of heavenly affections into every beautiful form, into speech and act and deed. The more perfect the speech or the more lovely the deed, the more fully the love will be communicated and the more lively the joy. The activities of heaven will be the perfection of happiness because they will not be forced, but will be spontaneous—the play of affections rather than the labor of compulsion.

A common, delightful and most effectual method of instruction in heaven is by representatives. In the spiritual world everything which surrounds the inhabitants represents their state of love and intelligence. Their outward world is a perfect picture and symbol of their characters.

Suppose an angel wished to give the children he or she was instructing an idea of the nature of innocence. Instead of giving the child a description of innocence in words to commit to memory, or of explaining it in an abstract way, the teacher would create a living representation of innocence and cause it to pass like a vast panorama before the children. It may be a beautiful landscape through which they wander for hours. This landscape is filled with every lovely thing which is the embodiment of innocence in its various forms and relations. The most delicate and lovely flowers spring up around them wherever they go. Lambs, and every beautiful and harmless form of animal life, act out their natures in sportive gambols. Lovely birds fill the air with song. Groups of heavenly children, clothed in beautiful garments, singing heavenly songs and engaging in innocent sports, are seen on the lawns and in the groves. Their garments illustrate innocence. It speaks in the tones of their voices and is expressed in pantomime in their gestures. It shines in their faces and is shown forth in all the objects which surround them. After an hour or day of delight, they return to their homes with a perfect image of the nature and form of innocence indelibly impressed upon their minds.

The children are also instructed that these forms, which have so delighted them, come from the Lord, that the whole representation came from Him and was a partial and finite form of the innocence in Him. Thus they are taught to connect all things with the Lord, to look upon them as His gift, and tokens of His love. Seeing this, their hearts open more largely to Him. Their natures expand, their power to perceive grows more acute, they come into clearer light and are drawn nearer to the Lord. In this way, the chords of love which bind them to their Heavenly Father are continually strengthening.