

JOYS ACCOMPANY USES

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When a person first leaves this world and goes to the other world, they first come into a place called the world of spirits, where they are made ready to go to heaven if they have been good, or to hell if they have been bad. Now we are told in the Word that once an angel came down from heaven into this world of spirits, and gathered together the people there who had just come from this earth who were supposed to be very wise; and asked them to tell what they had thought in the world about the joy of heaven, and the happiness in heaven which would last forever. There were six companies, and each of them gave a different answer of what they thought heaven was like. Some thought that it was a place where everyone spent all the time sitting about in a paradise, in a beautiful garden; some thought that the joy of heaven came from sitting around talking about interesting things; and some others thought that heavenly joy came from feasting every day with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve apostles of the Lord.

Well, because they thought these things about what heaven was like, they were allowed to experience them. For instance, those who thought that the joy and happiness of heaven came from feasting all the time with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and having said that joy was the delight of “doing something that is useful to ourselves and to others” (*Conjugal Love* 5). He also explained to them that unless there was this sort of happiness, the happiness which comes from doing something for others, all other delights and joys will fade and become uninteresting and boring. In heaven there are feasts, there are sports and plays; but these are only enjoyed by the angels after they have done things for others.

Now if we think to ourselves, “What do I think heaven is like? What would I most want to be able to do in heaven?” We might find that we, too, have a rather funny idea of what heaven is. Maybe we think that heaven is a place where we will be able to do exactly what we want; maybe we think that it is a place where everyone else will do things for us, and we will not have to do any work, but just play, and have fun all the time. Maybe we have also thought that it is a place where we can eat all we want all the time. But, as the angel pointed out to those spirits who thought this way, these are not the things which are really going to make us happy. Like those spirits, if we were given everything we wanted, as much food as we wanted, we would enjoy it for a while, but then we would get so very bored with it, that we would never want it again. No. This is not the sort of happiness that we can find in heaven. In fact, we cannot be happy on earth either if we look for pleasures like this all the time. If we say, “If I could get that thing, that would bring me real happiness,” then we are looking in the wrong place for happiness. The Lord taught us that

it is not *things* around us that make us happy, but it is a love inside of us that makes us feel the joy of heaven; for He said: “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:20, 21; see *Arcana Coelestia* 29:2; *Heaven and Hell* 33).

That love which is inside of us that will make us really happy, and will make us ready to become angels of heaven, is a love of doing things for other people. If we can learn to really enjoy doing things for others, to feel happy just because we see someone else happy, then we will come to know what the joy of heaven is like. Then, when we get to the other world, we will be ready to go to heaven, and when we get there, we will feel at home with the angels there. We will be one of them; for they love, more than anything else, to serve the Lord, and to serve their neighbors, and this is how they get their happiness. *Amen.*