

## **WORSHIP IN HEAVEN**

by the Rev. F. E. Waelchli

“How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord. Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house; they shall be still praising Thee.” (Psalm 84:1,2,4)

From these words, and many other passages in the Word, we learn what great happiness there is in going into the house of the Lord to worship Him. All good people feel this happiness. Therefore, the angels of heaven have it also. For in heaven there are church buildings or temples in which the angels worship.

Just as it is with us, the angels have their Sabbath days when they do not do their everyday work, but instead go to church. They do this for the same reason that we do, which is that by prayer and singing they may let their hearts tell their love to the Lord for all His goodness to them, and ask Him to help them always to do His will. Also, they listen to the reading of the Word and to a sermon, so that they may learn how to become ever more perfect angels, growing in wisdom and love.

On the days between one Sabbath and another, which we call weekdays, the angels also worship the Lord, but in a different way. They worship Him by showing their love to Him in doing the daily work which He gives them, and doing it in the way He wants them to do it. But besides worshiping Him every day in this way, they also read every day from His Word, and pray to Him, just as we here on earth do in our homes.

Emanuel Swedenborg tells us that he sometimes went to church in heaven together with the angels. Some of these churches are built of stone and are very grand, and are called temples; others are built of wood and are plainer, and are called houses of God. He tells of one temple that was so large that it could hold three thousand people. The preachers give very wise sermons, much wiser than any minister here in the world could give.

In a heavenly temple there is a most holy place where the Word of the Lord lies open, just as in our New Church houses of worship here on earth. Indeed, we have such a place for the Word because it is so in the temples of heaven. Even where New Church people have no church building, and one or more families have worship on Sunday in a home, the opened Word lies on a table at the front of the room, making this the most holy place.

But there is this difference, that in heaven, because the Word is in that most holy place, the place is filled with a flaming and brilliant white light, which

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shines forth into the temple, and this light is far greater than any other light anywhere in heaven. This is because the Lord is the Word, and the Word is His light. In heaven this light from the Word comes to the eyes and to the mind; but in this world only to our minds. But we, too, try to have our most holy place filled with light; and so, in some of our churches there are lighted candles around the Word.

One of the things Swedenborg tells us, we ought to notice well. The angels never worship only with their lips, without thinking of what they are praying and singing. Nor do they let their minds wander to other things during the reading of the Word and the preaching. Instead, in everything of their worship there is their whole love to the Lord and thought of Him. For it is all very, very holy to them.

Sometimes many angels worship the Lord together without going to their temples. We are told of this in several places In the Word. And once this was heard by men here on earth. It was when the angel had told the shepherds that the Lord, had been born at Bethlehem, and then there was suddenly with this angel a multitude of the heavenly host—that is, very, very many angels, praising God and singing, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

Swedenborg once heard a great worship, or, as he calls it, a glorification of the Lord by the angels of all heaven. The angels in different parts of heaven were singing verses of the Word, and then all joining together in praising the Lord. The whole heaven was at that time filled with a wondrous light. The verses they sang were all about the Lord’s Second Coming and the New Church, because of which there was great joy in heaven (*Conjugal Love* 61).

The angels never have a thought of any other god than the Lord Jesus Christ, for He alone is the God of heaven. So it is that they worship Him alone. Here on earth this is done in the Lord’s New Church, and when we are having worship, the angels of heaven are worshipping with us. The angels are very happy, and they make us feel that happiness also, so that we may share it with them. Remember, then, when you worship, that the angels are worshipping with you.

*Texts: Psalm 84:1,2,4; CL 61*