

A PLACE OF ECSTASY

by Father Émile Brière

What comes to your mind when you think of heaven? What kind of image do you have of life in eternity? What goes on in heaven? What types have “made it”? Those saints and angels, will they be interesting, fun to associate with? Our Lady, St. Joseph, St. Michael—will they have any use for the likes of me? Will it be fun to talk with St. Thomas Aquinas, or will I feel like an ignorant crumb?

Clear Vision of God

And the clear vision of God, what will that be like? To know as I am known—will that be delightful or frightening? Will I be able to look upon the face of the living God without dissolving into the dust from whence I came?

Heaven is full of delights, of wonders ever renewed, of magnificent discovery followed by more magnificent discoveries. St. Paul told us that “no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him.” (1 Cor 2:9)

Love Reigns Supreme

What heaven will be like exactly we do not know. But some things we do know. It will be a place where love reigns supreme, where we shall be loved and shall love perfectly, where we shall be delighted by the sight



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I LOOK ON GOD. JOB 19:26-7

Helen Hodson

of God and of all his people, and where we will delight others. It will be a place of ecstasy.

We shall be drawn out of ourselves, and that must be one of the greatest joys of all! We shall be in ecstasy over the beauty, goodness, and loveliness of God, of each person there, of the person next to you and me. And we ourselves will have the same effect on others. We will know the thrill of falling in love with God, with our Lady, St. Joseph, and the least “prominent” person there.

The Immense Lovableness of Each Person

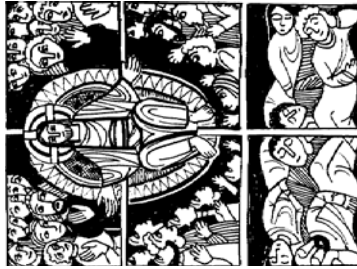
How do I know that St. Anthony, St. Therese, St. John the Evangelist, St. Francis—all these tremendous people—will be my friends? Because nobody can enter heaven who is not a lover. That’s what each person has become. He or she has obeyed Christ’s command to love God and neighbor. He or she has died to selfishness. They now see with pure eyes the immense lovableness of each person, so they can love me.

As a matter of fact, not only can they love me (if I’m there, that is, and I sure hope to be), but they can’t help loving me. Love is now at work completely in all of them. Each one of them is a throbbing heart radiating something of the God of love himself.

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Pass It On! #29



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Delighted by Each Other

But we don't have to wait. Today, right now, the angels and saints are our lovers. They've "made it," and they long to see us "make it" too. So even now they love me. Even now we can communicate, we can get to know each other, we can be delighted by each other. Even now the grace that is in me, by the mercy of God, attracts them and delights them. It is such a beautiful thing they see in the soul of each Christian who is living in the love of Christ, that they are eager for its growth, its full flowering, for the sight of its full beauty.

Saints are Lovers

No, saints are not boring or self-righteous, or critical. They are lovers. They love me even as I am—weak, inclined to sin, struggling with my selfishness. They enjoy my company. They even like me! And you, and all of us as we struggle with the selfishness in and around us, as we turn to the Lord for healing and strength.

Nothing Exists but Love

Heaven is a place where nothing exists but love. Heaven is a continual state of love. Heaven opens its doors to lovers only, people who have struggled to die to selfishness and who have, by the mercy of God, acquired the capacity of being thrilled by the goodness

and beauty of persons outside themselves. Everyone in heaven has been fashioned by God, whose name is merciful love.

Ecstatically Joyous

Yes, it will be ecstatically joyous. We will be filled with excitement by everything and everyone we see. We will appreciate that all this joy has come from the cross of Christ, and we will sing, uninhibitedly, praise to God.

Let's Practice Now

Heaven can begin now; in fact it ought to. Why not try and see now, with the eyes of faith, the goodness, beauty, and loveableness of the persons next to us? Let's "practice" now. Otherwise we may not be able to play the game when we arrive!

Why not believe now in the immense love of God which shall delight us for all eternity? He desires nothing more than that we begin to live right now—upheld by his transforming power of love—the life He has waiting for us for all eternity.

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