

# *Each Child Has An Angel?* *In any case, theirs is the Kingdom*

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Children *are* angels—at least many of them. But do they *have* angels? Does each child have an angel? Did Christ teach us so? In St. Mathew's Gospel (18:10) our Lord warned his disciples thus: "See to it that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I assure you that their angels in heaven are constantly seeing the face of my Father in heaven."

The context was the dispute among the disciples as to who among them would be "number one" in the Kingdom of Christ. Christ's answer was to pick-up a child, put him in their midst, and to say to the disciples "if you do not turn around and become like children, you will not enter the Kingdom" (St. Mathew 10:1-3).

But what did our Lord mean about "their angels beholding my father's face?" Whatever he meant, there are two or three things which are clear:

1. Christ puts himself on the side of the child, just as he puts himself on the side of the poor. But poverty is a state which can be remedied by the poor inheriting the Kingdom. Childhood, on the contrary, is the desired state—something which adults have to change into, in order to enter the Kingdom.

2. We make a big mistake when we think or teach that children cannot be saved, because they are not old enough to have faith. What an absurd idea it is to think that only adults will enter the Kingdom! Christ says exactly the opposite. "Allow the little children to come to me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the Kingdom of God." Mark 10: 14. Our Lord taught then that to children belongs the Kingdom; adults can enter only when they become like little children. Those groups who insist on adult baptism and teach against infant baptism are teaching something contrary to Christ and the Bible.

Yes, the Kingdom of God belongs to the poor, to the meek, to the oppressed, but also to children. It is theirs by natural right, it seems. Children are important, not because of what they can become as adults, but as children. That is what our Lord taught.

Still, what did he mean about "their angels?" The obvious inference is that while children may not be consciously and articulately aware of God, their counter-parts in heaven do experience the presence of God continually. Each child has an "angelos" or a messenger or a 'counter-part' in heaven. When we become adults do we lose our angels because of our sins? I do not know the answer. But I know that children are important just as the poor are important— for theirs is the Kingdom.

If Christ has anything to do with who gets into the Kingdom, there will be lots of children, and lots of poor people (like Lazarus the beggar) there. And we better accept them both now, and do

all we can for them. For Christians are members of Christ's body and share his mind, his will, his purpose.

Let us try to see how our schools distort our children, how our society teaches them evil ways, how we let them suffer malnutrition, poverty, and disease. Let us build a society where children are respected, loved and cared for. And that kind of society will not come about merely setting up a few Balbhawans or Balwadis. *It is* our sinful society that makes sinners out of these angel-like creatures. Let us strive to build a society where angelic children can grow up to be more than angelic human beings.