

Fundamentals of the New Church - A Series of Addresses

By Hugo Lj. Odhner

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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
I. God The Creator	5
The Existence of God	5
God's Essence, Quality, and Power.	9
The Creation of the Universe.....	11
II. The Lord The Redeemer.....	13
Sin, Truth, and Prophecy	13
The Divine Incarnation.....	14
Some Laws, Implied in the Advent	15
The Lord's States of Humiliation and Glorification	17
The Divine Trinity	18
III. The Nature And Destiny Of Man.....	20
What is Man?.....	20
Immortality	20
Man's Equipment for Eternal Life	21
Death, the Gateway of the Spiritual World	22
The World of Spirits.....	23
The Nature of the Spiritual World	24
Judgment and Instruction	25
The Hells.....	26
The Heavenly Kingdom	27
IV. The Word - The Means Of Salvation.....	29
Primeval Revelation	29
The Need for a Written Revelation	29
The Inspired Scriptures	30
Accommodations of Truth	32
The Uses of Correspondences	33
The Spiritual Sense of the Word	33
The Word is in its Fullness in the Sense of the Letter	34
Revelation of the Spiritual Sense	35
V. Heredity, Moral Growth, And Repentance	37
Man's Evil Heredity	37
Man's Moral Development.....	38
The Functions of Remains and Natural Good	39
Repentance	40
VI. Reformation And Temptation	43

Reformation: a Preparation for Regeneration	43
The State of Reformation	45
Temptation	47
VII. Regeneration, And The Life Of Charity	50
The New Birth	50
The New Life of Charity	52
VIII. The Conjugal Life 1 of 2	57
The Holiness of Marriage	57
The Love of the Sex	59
The Meeting of Souls	59
Marriage and the Wisdom of Life	61
IX. The Conjugal Life 2 of 2	63
Husband and Wife	63
Courtship and Betrothal	65
Conjunction in Marriage	66
The Love of Offspring	67
The Preservation of Marriage	68
X. The Divine Providence And Its Laws	71
The Lord's Government	71
The Laws of the Divine Providence	73
XI. The Successive Dispensations And The Last Judgment	79
The Racial Man	79
The Preparatory Dispensations	80
The Necessity of a Church	81
The Judgment on the Churches	82
The Consummation of the Age	85
XII. The Second Advent And The New Church	87
The Spiritual Advent of the Lord	87
The New Church at First Among a Few	89
The External Church	90
The Church Universal and the Church Specific	91
The New Church as the Crown of the Churches	94

Introduction

Certain fundamental doctrines enter into all religious instruction in the New Church. Yet it is of value from time to time to set forth these general teachings in a systematic fashion, so as to give to all a proper balance and weight. It is also useful to review our doctrines to test our understanding of their truth and consistency and to see them in contrast to the opposite falsities.

In attempting such a review we are immediately faced with the question, What are the fundamentals of the New Church? The Writings give the doctrines in differing order and series. The essentials of the New Church are given as two, the acknowledgment of the Lord or the worship of Him in His Divine Human, and, a life according to the precepts of the Decalogue (@AR 491, 529, etc.). Sometimes the acknowledgment of God, and repentance are classed as the two universals of religion (@DP 340[2]). The two essentials are also mentioned as (1) that the Human of the Lord is Divine, and (2) that love to the Lord and charity towards the neighbor make the church (@AC 4723).

There is also mention of four essentials of the Church: the knowledge (cognition) of God, the knowledge of the goods of charity, the knowledge of the truths of faith, and a life according to them (@Canons 24[1.7]).

These essentials enter into all the doctrines of the Church. The doctrines themselves are the fundamentals or foundations of the New Church, and are symbolized by the foundations of the New Jerusalem, fashioned of twelve kinds of precious stones. So far as these basic doctrines are founded in a man's affections, they will rise into mighty walls of salvation and give entire protection against the influx of evils and falsities from hell.

I. God The Creator

The Existence of God

The first of the church is the knowledge that there is a God and that He is to be worshiped. His first quality to be known is that He created the universe and that the created universe subsists from Him (@AC 6879).

The acknowledgment that there is a God is as old as religion itself. It is not original to the New Church. Admittedly, it pervades human thought, as far back as there are any surviving records. It is taught in the Ancient Word, in the Hebrew Scriptures, and in the Christian Gospels. It is present as a vague echo among the most primitive peoples, and is elaborated into pretentious systems with many races of the pagan world.

The Writings are a Divine revelation addressed primarily to Christians at a time when the teachings about what God is had been contorted and perverted, and the real meaning of the Word of the Old and New Testaments had become confused and lost. The Christian world still had the knowledge that there was a God. But the mind of man had attributed so many strange characteristics to God and so twisted the fundamental ideas of Revelation that they were difficult to understand and actually so warped that they defeated the ends of charity. Indeed, human reason had begun to overstep its bounds and to set itself up as the judge of final truth, questioning even the existence of God, and challenging Religion and Revelation to prove that there was a God - prove it by logic founded on observation, by proofs incontestable and so obvious that the human mind would be compelled to bow to them and be convinced even against its own confirmed wish to deny.

The Writings, given with a view to the establishment of a New Church, do not take up the challenge of furnishing external proof of the existence of God. Instead they say that there cannot be a purely natural theology; that is, human reasonings cannot by themselves discover God. The knowledge of God must come by God's self-revelation, and with us, through the Word. In the affirmative light of Divine revelation, which gives the knowledge of God, man's rational mind can see its truth.

If God had wished to compel men to acknowledge Him, it might have been otherwise. He could then have proved His existence forcibly by an open interference in human affairs, and by such perpetual miracles as could not be explained away. This would instill conviction in every heart, would compel obedience. But it would not inspire love, but only fear. It would take away all sense of human freedom in spiritual things. Love can grow only where there is freedom. Fear brings with it a slavish, craven, hypocritical, obedience, while within are harbored a growing resentment and a smoldering hate. Happiness could not thrive in such a state. Heaven itself would become a hell.

And human reason would become utterly unnecessary to beings which had no freedom to use it. If the rational mind were such that it would be compelled to accept ultimate realities without recourse to doubt, or without freedom to invent and choose alternatives of its own, it would be only an elaborate adding machine and lack all those human factors of joy and surprise, of achievement and selected purpose, which make for the satisfaction of living. As a matter of fact, the human reason is so free that

it cannot only doubt the existence of God, but its own individual existence also. It cannot prove, in any absolute sense, that there is an external world about it, or that its body is not a mere part of a dream. It can pretend that there is no substance as a basis reality behind our experiences - but that all things are a mere stream of events. It can deny the soul, the mind, and even its own consciousness, and contend that all is matter. But it does not know for certain what matter is. There have been, and are, renowned philosophers who have, each with equal seal and seriousness, defended some one of these alternatives. Whatever other profit they may have found in these flights of the intellect, they have at least demonstrated that the human reason is free in its choice of final explanations. It is free to reason correctly, and it is free to err. It is free to lay down its own rules in the game of thinking, or to seek to follow the laws, which by creation were inscribed upon it.

The object of Divine Revelation is to give the knowledge concerning God and also to tell something of how the mind is intended to think. This leaves man free to accept, to doubt, to follow the Divine precepts, or to refuse to do so. If there is no knowledge concerning God, man is of course not free, nor can he exercise any responsibility. He is then like a babe in spiritual things. But if he knows - and so far as he knows - he is in freedom. And his choice is not an intellectual weighing of arguments. It is a moral choice. For the acceptance of the truths of religion is the choice of a way of life, a way of thinking and willing. The acknowledgment of God means a renunciation of self-love as the mainspring of one's actions. It seems a humility of spirit, a desire to subordinate oneself to a law of love and charity, a belief that the good and the true are higher than oneself. But the denial of God is also a moral choice. For the falsity of atheism coheres with evil and regards nothing as sin. The atheist may indeed regard certain evils as ugly, distasteful, and foolish because of their awkward consequences. Perhaps he concludes that it would be more pleasant to live in a world where there is no crime, and for the sake of reputation and recompense performs uses and kindnesses to others. But still his benevolence would spring from self-interest. Atheism is simply the philosophy of self-love (@DLW 350). It is chosen to defend one's freedom from responsibility to anything but self-interest, one's right to do one's own will. It is the denial of any higher law than that of force or power.

But it should be noted that even the atheist believes in a god, although he would not admit it. By god we here mean an ultimate authority, a final court of appeal, a thing held as above all else and loved beyond all else, the arbiter of good and evil. This god is man's own will. Intellectually he may hail the powers of nature as God. But actually, the atheist worships himself, idolizes his own power, wealth or cleverness. His every act is a ritual of self-adoration.

Revelation gives the knowledge of God's existence. And human reason may then, if willing, perceive this truth and also see it as if it was its own conclusion. For it may confirm the existence of God from many things. The Writings point to some of those indications, which the rational mind accepts as confirmations (@TCR 12).

For the evidence of God's presence and operation in the universe is no less clear than the evidence by which we unhesitatingly conclude that there are other intelligent minds than our own. We cannot actually touch or see the thoughts and affections of other men; but we see their minds revealed in their bodily actions or in their works, and conclude that we see intelligence and love at work. Even if we only see an intricate machine, we conclude at once that some intelligent being has produced it.

Similarly the Lord has revealed Himself in His works - in nature itself. The heavens declare the glory of

God and the firmament showeth His handiwork (Psalms 19:1). The consistent order and wondrous arrangement of the universe shows a design, both in the elemental world of the stars and in the organic forms of the earth. It speaks of a Designer, a Creator.

The atheist cannot deny the design, but seeks to explain it as a result of chance. Yet by the law of probabilities, the idea that a succession of chances could have cast the atoms together in such an order as to form the human body (to say nothing of the mind), is unreasonably remote as to make a chance creation a greater miracle than the Divine creation. The sameness of law and the similarity in the patterns of organic forms combine to suggest a One Creator of infinite intelligence leading toward a central purpose beyond human measure or comprehension.

It is also a known fact that the human mind demands a reason or cause for whatever occurs in nature and in the mind. It asks Why? It persistently demands to know the source and origin of things. For every change which it observes, it wants to assign a cause. In the finite world, one thing is the cause of another; and when the mind traces such a chain of causes indefinitely, it realizes that no infinite series of dependent causes is possible. Our reason is not satisfied until the final cause of finite things is traced to the Infinite.

But what is the essential quality of this Infinite which is the source and final cause of all created things? The fact is that man is endowed with intelligence and a moral sense. What is the source whence these spiritual qualities - this human love and wisdom - are derived? Surely their very existence testify that the Creator, the Final Cause, must be intelligent and moral, and thus in a sense a Divine Personality, or a Divine Man! For even as no stream can rise higher than its source, the Cause must be greater than its effect. God must not only be Human but infinitely Human, to be the origin of all potential human qualities.

This also leads us to the reflection that we observe in nature two contrasting tendencies. In inanimate or elemental nature we find a tendency of energy to dissipate or spread out evenly, like the heat of a stove when its fire has burnt out while warming the room. But in organic forms there is a certain guidance and control of energy, which is not dissipated but is held, economized, and directed by what we must recognize as a living purpose which circumvents and as it were upsets the physical law (the second law of thermo-dynamics). And in living things we see instances of spontaneous or free actions, which are not conceivable as results of past activities or of the state of the physical environment, but are novel, as if from a source outside of nature itself. We can account for this only by assuming that life inflows into the active substances of physical nature, and provides a soul which directs their energies for purposes of its own, and delays the dissipation of such energies until that purpose is accomplished.

If this be so - if Life can build up, hold, and dispose physical energy in such manner in the organisms that are before our eyes every day - why should not Life, the infinite Source of Life, govern and dispose the entire universe from within for a Divine and eternal purpose? And - to turn the question around - how could there ever be a universe in which life and freedom are factors unless there were a Divine Life holding it to its eternal purpose?

But human experience offers other confirmations. For all through history we find a universal acceptance of the idea that there is a God; just as we find that the universal opinion of men is that there is an external world about them. There are indeed doubters on both scores. There are of course

men who have abnormal minds just as there are those who are blind or have contorted vision. Even a geometrical axiom can be challenged, yet the normal mind will accept it as a matter of course. The Writings point out that there is no nation, possessed of religion and sound reason, which does not acknowledge a God, and that He is one (@TCR 9). Once the idea is presented, the normal man will accept it as self-evident and as explanatory of the main facts of life. Instances of atheism have indeed cropped up in China, in India, in Greece and Rome; but in past ages those who were inclined to this denial were usually satisfied to make an evil god, or many different gods, in their own image. In modern times this is hardly possible, owing to the development of critical philosophy; and therefore atheism is now the only logical loophole for those who are averse to an infinite Being deserving the name of God.

But those who acknowledge God are also confirmed by their reflections on the past. For they can see in the historic progressions of the human race and in their own individual lives the workings of a Divine plan and a Divine providence. They can see Divine laws of eternal justice which cannot be defeated by those who seek to abuse them. And in the revealed Scriptures of successive ages they can recognize the voice of God who seeks to redeem mankind from the results of its errors and its sins, and which speaks a wisdom beyond the shortsighted wisdom of man.

The Scripture and the Writings of the New Church are the means by which the Lord reveals Himself. It is not reasonable to suppose that the love of God could be satisfied to create a race of beings and leave them in entire ignorance of their purpose, use, and destiny, or of their relation to their Creator. For if they are ignorant of these things they cannot be spiritually responsible nor would they possess the means of conjoining themselves with God.

Self-revelation by God also involves the necessity of His accommodating Himself to man's state. And this accommodation in its final form was the Incarnation of the Divine in Human form, at His advent into the world.

The expectation of such an Advent may be seen in the prophecies of the Hebrew Word. In the actual coming of the Lord into the world, those whose minds are open can see the final confirmation of the existence of God, who is thus made visible in a Divinely Human Form such as reason must ascribe to God. Here then is the final knowledge of God revealed. And for the sake of the rational mind, the Writings were given in a later age, so that we may know not only the external Human of the Lord, but also the internal reasons for His coming and for His actions - in a revelation of His Divine Mind and His spiritual laws.

The universality of the belief that there is a God and that He is One, is explained in the True Christian Religion (@TCR 8). This teaches that there is an influx into the souls of men, that there is a God, and that He is one. This influx does not teach. But it pre-disposes man's mind to grasp the necessity of the existence and the unity of God, when man is so instructed. The influx is into the soul of every man. The soul is the spring of man's life and the unifying factor in his body; even as God is the final Source of life and the omnipotent Power which draws all the manifold things of creation together for one purpose and into one universe.

But although this influx of life through the soul pre-disposes men for the perception of the primal truth concerning God, nations and peoples have always differed as to how to conceive of God and of His qualities. For such knowledge is available only through Divine revelations, and these are given in forms which can be perverted and misunderstood and rejected whenever spiritual perception fails. The resulting ignorance concerning God's qualities is in itself a protection against further profanation. The intuitive idea of the unity of the Divine is preserved, however, even where many gods and demigods are worshiped; and the tendency is that a religion which teaches many gods will gradually give way to some philosophy which seeks to find a supreme Power behind them all (@TCR 11,12).

When the true knowledge of God has been so contorted by false conceptions that it cannot lead men to conjunction with Him, a new revelation is given somewhere on earth. When the Christian churches had divided God into three separate personalities having attributes unworthy of the Divine, Writings were given, through Emanuel Swedenborg. The sole purpose of these Writings is to reveal God as He truly is, and as He should be comprehended by men. And this is done not only by a clear revelation of doctrine concerning His real attributes, but by showing the nature of men and of the two worlds - the spiritual and the natural - which the Lord created for man to dwell in. Unless we understand the universe which the Lord had created, and the laws of Providence which rule it, we cannot have a spiritual idea of God. Every teaching on every page of the Writings - whether it speaks of the human mind, or of the spiritual world, or of the life of charity, or even more remote subjects - contributes something to our conception of God. The final confirmation of God's existence is in the spiritual seeing of Him as revealed in the Writings.

God's Essence, Quality, and Power.

As already indicated, there are those who believe that human reason unaided can arrive at the idea that there is a God. But actually, what reason can prove is at best only the existence of a First Cause or an unlimited or infinite something which is the origin of all finite things. And such reasonings by themselves end up by regarding this First Cause as an inexhaustible ocean of blind energy or as identical with the interiors of nature.

Only by Divine revelation can the essence of the qualities of God be made known. It is a doctrine of the New Church that God is the one and only Substance which exists in itself, or is by virtue of itself, or that is Being itself (Esse). The doctrine further shows that this Divine Substance is infinite and eternal, omnipresent in creation. But it also points out that there is nothing of space in God's infinity and nothing that partakes of time (or even changing states) in His eternity. For His substance does not consist of parts; infinite things are in His infinitely one though they can be perceived distinctly in their effects in the created universe.

Enlightened reason can see this infinity of God reflected as by a mirror in many things in the world. It can see that there are no two things alike, not even the least atoms; and no two minds alike, nor two thoughts. It can see the immensity of the starry heavens and the limitless expansion of the horizon of knowledge. It can see infinity and eternity reflected in the procreation of seed both vegetable and

animal. It can see the image of the infinite in the relation of the square to the circle and in geometrical and mathematical progressions. It can recognize also that there are infinite differences between discrete things or degrees, as between will and action. And in the spiritual world there are infinite wonders and varieties. How could eternal life be given, except by an eternal God?

But this infinity of God cannot be understood unless it is seen that His substance and form is Love and Wisdom in their own unbounded Being. His essence - the essential quality of the Divine Creator - is Love and Wisdom Itself united; or what is the same, Life Itself.

For Life - the original Substance - is not motion or energy, but is Love and Wisdom, the essential Human. All religion is based on acknowledgment that all that is truly human comes from God, who created man in His image and likeness. Without this idea of God we cannot understand creation. For Love alone can create. It is the essence of Love to give of its life to others and to create others in order to communicate to them the joy of life ever more fully (@TCR 43). The Divine Love was therefore the cause of creation - the creation of recipients of life - and the cause of the preservation of the universe by a perpetual creation, a constantly new outpouring of its sustaining life (@TCR 46).

But Love creates only by Wisdom. Love is wise. The thought may occur that love as we know it is not always wise, but is impulsive, unrestrained, blind, passionate, and floundering, reaching out for foolish satisfactions which end in disaster and destroy what it seems to create. But true love is not blind, nor is it impatient or ungoverned by wisdom. And the Divine Love is a one with its Wisdom. Wisdom is its form, its law, its mode of action; and thus Wisdom carries out what Love conceives. The Divine Wisdom may therefore be seen to proceed from the Divine Love as the creative law and order which forms all finite things, and rules them.

This is a fundamental idea about God the Creator; God is Order itself. He is also omnipotent: all-powerful to carry out His love. But, many have asked, how can God be omnipotent if He is tied to laws of order? Such questions spring from the absurdities of human concepts of love and of power. God is not an arbitrary tyrant who delights in fulfilling every fickle whim for the sake of the pleasant sense of His power, and who changes the laws to suit the moment. This is the way of disorderly love, an ignorant love which is flouted by its own plans. God is not ignorant. He is omniscient, all-knowing. He has infinite foresight of all things, all possible things, from eternity to eternity, knows all things (even the most trivial or minute) which are according to order, and thus also what is done or will be done contrary to that order (@TCR 60-62).

The Lord exercises His Omnipotence according to the laws of His Love, and thus according to the laws of His order, which (He foresees) will fulfill the end to which His Love looks. The Lord never departs from His own laws. He cannot do evil. He cannot act contrary to His own Love. Certainly this cannot be called a limitation on His Love. But there is one law of His Love which ordains that men shall be created in the likeness of God, in that man should have freedom in spiritual things, freedom to choose a love of his own, and act from it within the compass of the spiritual and natural laws of the universe. This law of the permission of evil may seem as a limitation upon the Lord's omnipotence. But it so appears only to those who do not comprehend the quality of love. For love does not use its power to compel except so far as it is necessary in order to protect the freedom of others. Order is necessary for freedom to exist. The laws of God within the whole structure of creation all look to the end that the Divine love may be returned in freedom, or not at all.

It was in order that he might be free to respond to the Lord's Love that man was created a form of Divine order, an image of the two worlds which the Lord brought into existence. There could be no freedom except within that order. And when, by the evils of mankind, that image was in part broken down within the minds of men, it was necessary that God the Creator - without interference with human freedom - should set to restore His order within men, and at length appear before them as the Lord the Redeemer.

The Creation of the Universe

In order that a just idea might be gained of the universe created by God, the Writings stress the following universal truths(*) as prerequisite:

(*) (@TCR 24,75)

1. There are two worlds - one for angels and spirits, the other for men.
2. In each world there is a sun. The Sun of the spiritual world is pure love from Jehovah God who is in the midst of it, and from it proceeds spiritual heat which in its essence is love, and spiritual light which in its essence is wisdom. The sun of the natural world is pure fire, and the heat from it is therefore dead, as is its light.
3. These suns are the source of their respective worlds. All things which are from the Sun of heaven are substantial and are called spiritual; while all things from the sun of nature are material and are called natural.
4. In each world there are three discrete degrees, called degrees of height, and thence three degrees of atmosphere, as well as derivative substances (or, in the natural world, matters) of three degrees (@DLW 302). In the spiritual world these three degrees are the planes for three discrete heavens; and these answer to the three degrees within every human mind.
5. There is a correspondence between those things which are in the spiritual world and those things which are of the natural world; so that spiritual things can inflow and vivify the corresponding natural things.
6. In all things of both worlds there is order, the order into which they are created by God.

It must also be understood that every created thing, whether spiritual or natural, is finite, or limited; and that the Infinite (i.e., the Divine) is present in finite things as in its receptacles (@TCR 33). The mode of creation is therefore described as a process by which God finited His Infinity through substances emitted from Himself, from which was formed that first encompassing sphere which makes the Sun of the spiritual world. From this Sun, by means of its radiations, spiritual atmospheres were formed, created one from another in three-fold order (@TCR 33,76). In the ultimate circle, the natural world was created by the medium of those spiritual atmospheres - and afterwards by means of the natural atmospheres which are from the sun of the world (Angelic Idea concerning Creation) (@DWis 12[168]). Thus the entire universe is a connected whole, continued from the Prime by successive discrete degree.

It is notable that in this creative process, space and time arose along with the natural world (@TCR 27,29). And although the causes, and thus the living endeavors which from within must sustain all forms in the material realm, are found in the spiritual world, yet no angels or spirits were created directly into the spiritual world. Here the New Church doctrine differs radically from the oriental legends in the light of which Christians have interpreted their Bible: legends about angelic hierarchies which were supposed to have filled the heavens before the earth was created; legends about a Satan or Lucifer who rebelled against God and became the ruler of a hell of demons; legends which make the creation of the natural world and of mankind only an after-thought - to make up to God for the power and prestige He had thus lost through the fallen angels.

The Writings, contrariwise, teach that the only immortal beings who inhabit the heavens are the spirits (or minds) of men born on an earth in the natural world. It was for their sakes that the universe was created. It was to provide a womb for their spirits that the earth was prepared - that it was covered with plant-life and provided with animals of eventual use to man, until mankind itself could be created into the image and likeness of God to take dominion over all things. In man the order of creation was completed. In his body were collated all substances and degrees of nature and upon it were focused all nature's forces. In his mind were present all spiritual degrees, and there all heavenly potentialities lay latent. He alone among creatures was endowed to think and will in such freedom that he could depart from the order of his creation and oppose the intents and purposes of God - and thus fall into sin. Man alone could receive life from the Lord and acknowledge its origin; and he thus had the faculty of being everlastingly conjoined with God through love, or being eternally disjoined from Him in spirit. Man alone - as to his soul or spirit - was created as an immortal being.

Such freedom of spiritual choice - given in order that from mankind there might be formed a heaven of supreme happiness - could be exercised only by a being born on earth, in contact with an unyielding natural environment of space and time; and time which would provide a basis for individual varieties and at the same time serve as a fixative for the fluent life of his soul. For the spiritual substance of the soul and mind can take no permanent or stable form except by reference to time and space. The mind can become individuated only in an earthly body.

Thus man's eternal destiny is determined on earth, for good or for ill. For ill, if, knowingly, he chooses to place the delight of his life in harming his fellow man and striving against the only spiritual order that can give him the happiness offered by the Lord his Creator.

II. The Lord The Redeemer

Sin, Truth, and Prophecy

The entrance of sin into the world came as a perversion of the Divine order. It came as an act of free choices by men, even as is described in the symbolic story of Adam and Eve who - tempted by the Serpent - ate of the forbidden tree. The Serpent was the symbol of man's sensual nature which rose into opposition against his reason and inner perception. And it is then said that Jehovah God cursed the Serpent, and foretold that the Seed of the Woman would bruise its head although the Serpent would bruise His heel. The Writings explain that this was the first prophetic intimation that the Lord would descend and be born on earth from a woman, and thus overcome the hells.

For the presence of sin, which by inheritance of its propensity, tended to accumulate with passing generations until it threatened man's spiritual freedom, required an immediate remedy. The Lord protects man's choice, even though it be of evil. He protects even the hells - for the devils also have a delight in life and prefer this delight to utter annihilation. He permits evil tendency to become hereditary, for unless evil could never progress nor could there develop those varieties of types and temperaments which make of human society an ever more perfect spectrum for new intelligence and new combinations of affections.

Yet the Lord controls evil, lest it destroy spiritual (or eternal) good. Evil is permitted only up to the point when it begins to take away spiritual freedom. It must be combated by a special weapon which does not take away from the wicked, that sense of self-life which makes for human freedom.

This special weapon against evil is Truth. There is no more powerful force in the world than Truth. Evil draws away from truth. For evil feeds only on phantasy; it seeks to deny the real universe created by God, and to create for itself a pretend-world in which it can rule by means of falsities; a world of illusion and deception in which self-will and evil pride and violence can bring happiness, and in which God does not rule. This world of phantasy and appearance can be so persuasively constructed and can seem so outwardly consistent that it may be taken for the only real world, and so far as man is in evil, so far is he immersed into its darkness. Its only enemy is Truth, or what is the same, Reality. When the light of truth is allowed to penetrate its deceptions, it is deflated like a pricked balloon.

The Lord therefore controls the hells by means of Truth. Yet that Truth is not received by the evil when they are in their evils. It is rejected and spurned if openly presented. Such was the state before the Advent of the Lord into the world. The light shone in darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not. Men loved darkness better than light because their deeds were evil (John 1:5; 3:19).

Truth can however be present even if it is not comprehended. The laws of nature operate even if man denies them; and it is the same with spiritual laws. Children (bad as well as good) accept many truths, many precepts and customs, although they do not understand them or discern their purpose. They are governed by symbols or representations. And it was so that the Lord controlled the hells, before His Advent. He gave the truth to mankind in such a form that its inner nature and meaning was discerned

only by those who were well-disposed. He disclosed His Will by correspondences and representations, in which the truth about Himself and about heavenly life was hidden. In external form, the Word of the Ancient and of the Israelites could be received and in a manner obeyed even by the evil - who read their own meaning and their own ambitions into it. The Scriptures and rituals of the Ancient and the Jewish Churches nevertheless served to control the hells, as well as to preserve a certain order among men. For when men on earth were in a holy external, spirits and angels in the other world could see the spiritual or internal sense therein, could see the spiritual laws of truth. And this was the reason that the Hebrew Scriptures were so inspired that they contained continuous prophecies concerning the eventual coming of a Redeemer who would liberate His people from their bondage to the hells.

The power of the Messianic prophecies was such that the roving hordes of evil spirits in the world of spirits were held under the threat of imminent judgment. Through prophecy, good spirits gain sufficient truth to protect them against the persuasions of the hells. Yet this could be continued only so long as there were human minds on earth who saw glimpses of genuine truth within the rituals and representations of the church and the Word. The Word had to be received by men in their minds, if the truths of prophecy were to have any power and meaning in the world of spirits.

The time came when this was no longer possible; when there was not even any natural good from a spiritual origin, among men (@Ath 49; @AC 10355); when there was no reception of the Divine truth in the ultimate degree with any in the Jewish church (@Ath 177). The minds of men were closed to the Divine presence. Prophecy had lost its power. The Lord could not [?set?] by inspiring prophets. He could find a dwelling-place only in that lowest corporeal plane which is ruled not from the minds of men but from their inmost soul which is above their consciousness and their power to pervert. This we see as the final reason why the Word was made flesh - why the Lord assumed a body in the virgin womb of Mary, a Jewess of Nazareth in Galilee.

The Divine Incarnation

Thus, in the fullness of time, the Lord God - who was called Jehovah in the Scripture - assumed flesh and was born into the world and lived among men as Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God. The Father which begat Him was the infinite Divine Being, or, what is the same, the Divine Love itself.

This becomes of utmost significance when we note, as a fundamental concept of the New Church, that the soul of any human being is not derived from his mother but from his father; the soul of the offspring being an offshoot from the paternal soul. It is the soul thus derived from the father that constructs the body out of the natural substances offered in the maternal ovum and womb. In accord with the same law, the Lord's Soul was from the Divine itself, and (since the Infinite cannot be divided) was identical with the Father or the infinite Divine which dwelt in Jesus Christ (John 14:10).

Mary the virgin mother was indeed only the instrument which furnished the material clothing or embodiment for the Divine Soul. Yet, along with this physical body which was molded by the Divine Soul into its own image, she transmitted also, as of her own bestowal, the hereditary tendencies to evil which all flesh is heir to. It was necessary that this merely human heredity be present in the body of the Lord and in the sensual mind which developed in that body, in order that the Lord might thus bear

our griefs and carry our sorrows and be in all points tempted as we are, yet without Sin (Isaiah 53:4; Hebrews 4:15). Thus He could meet and overcome the hells while purifying the assumed human and putting off by degrees that perverse heredity and that finite nature which He had received from the mother; until His Human was fully glorified and made one with the Father whence He came.

It was of Divine order that the Lord as to His Human should grow up from infancy and be educated in the manner of men. What came from the mother was merely human and was therefore not Divine; nor could it be transmuted into what was Divine. But the Human form itself was derived from the Divine, and was the Son of God, the very embodiment of Divine order. And by the formation of a mind within this His body, the Lord entered ever more fully into the essential Human, by assuming the form of Divine truth. In this manner He expelled all hereditary evils and purified the organic substances or vessels of the Human Essence so that these also received of the Divine life (@AC 1603, 6872[*end*]), until He had rejected the finite nature and its life from the mother, and thus made His Human, conceived and born in the world, Divine (@LJCont 75). The Human of the Lord was then no longer an organ or recipient of life, but was Life itself, thus Jehovah (@AC 2658).

After this complete glorification and union with the Divine, the Lord was no longer the Son of God, but God made visible in His own Divine Human.

Some Laws, Implied in the Advent

The birth of the Lord into the world cannot be understood except in the light of certain universal laws.

1. The first is the law that all life tends by a continual endeavor to express itself in ultimates, or in the lowest and last things of creation. This is true of all degrees of the spiritual world, which is the Source of every soul, the plant soul, the souls of animals, and the souls of men. These souls are spiritual forms receptive of life, and their constant endeavor is to produce uses which ultimately represent the affection or spiritual conatus which is their origin and potentiality. The same is true of every affection and thought in a man's mind. It desires to clothe itself in deeds and words; desires to mold ultimates into its own image, in order to be received and to attain permanency and perpetuity.

If such is the case with finite states and forms of life, the origin of this endeavor is to be found in the Divine itself. The Divine created the world that there might be a reception of the Divine love and a revelation of the Divine truth, the Divine Human form. In mankind, this Divine Human found an image and a likeness, a reception and a representation, so long as the Divine order of creation was maintained. But when, on our earth, this order no longer could be found, the Divine had no [?basis for its section?], unless it followed the way of its own order and assumed flesh in the ultimates of the world and by this means expressed the essence of its Love by giving itself unstintingly for the salvation of the race, and by revealing itself as the Divine Man who showed men the laws of truly human life.

2. The second universal truth which assists us to grasp the significance of the Incarnation, is that which discloses that the human race on all the innumerable planets of the universe is in the Lord's sight, and thus truly a Grand Human Form, in which the inhabitants of each earth have their specific functions for the whole. Each race has its peculiar genius and potential uses. Any of these planetary

types of men may fall into evil and sin. Each is led, instructed, and protected in a different way, and has its own heavens and (if needs be) its own hells. Yet, because the spiritual world is not in space and time, there is a communion between all, and an interchange of influences. The mutual functions may be described as those of the organs or uses of one human being. The race on our earth - by the Fall - forsook its celestial function and its genius became such that it can serve only as the external senses that serve the body and mind of man. This earth therefore has assumed an ultimate use - its inhabitants being initiated into natural truths and natural sciences in a unique way (@SE 4663[11]). Therefore Divine revelation here took the aspect of a written Word, which by its correspondences passes even into the heavens, and by this means its truths of faith can be communicated to the angels of other earths. Those among men who bring with them into the other world the knowledges of truth and good from our Word can serve as ministries for the instruction of others in the vast spiritual universe who may come into a need for the knowledge of God as incarnate Truth - or as Divine Natural Truth. If the Lord's choice of our earth for His Incarnation was a sign of His love of this earth above others - on the principle that those are best loved to whom most is forgiven - then the Lord indeed has loved our earth more than others (@SE 1531). Yet this is said especially in view of the fact that our race can be in natural truths which are the ultimate foundation in which the spiritual and celestial truths of heaven can be enrooted that order may be perfect.

The advent of the Lord on earth was therefore His advent not only to those who beheld Him in the world, or only to the succeeding generations who learn of it through the Gospels, but also to the entire spiritual world of every earth. The advent of the Lord in every case is the coming of the Divine Truth about the Divine Human, as revealed in historical fact before the natural minds of men.

Nor is there any essential difference between the seeing of the Lord by the twelve apostles and the seeing of the Lord through the Word by our natural understanding. In every case it is the mind, not the body, that sees.

3. But if we are to grasp the meaning of the Incarnation it is also necessary to understand that the urgent need for its accomplishment depended on the conditions in the spiritual world at the time of the Advent. The object of the Lord's coming was to restore freedom among the spirits in that world, to subjugate the hells, and to order the heavens. For at that time evil spirits had gained dominion in the world of spirits and had established strongholds at the gates of heaven.

It might be supposed that the hells could have been subjugated by a direct act of Omnipotence or by the power of the angelic hosts entered upon the devils who had erupted from their hells and were establishing their persuasive rule over the spirits before the Advent exerted a powerful influence - protecting the simple and limiting the extent to which the evil could dominate over the world of spirits and thus over men. Yet the heavens also are from mankind and are not pure nor exempt from failure. And it was a question, not of actual power but of wisdom, in its use. The Lord might indeed exert His omnipotent agencies over the hells directly, but His mercy demanded that it be done in such a manner that the self-life of the devils was not annihilated but that their freedom also should be preserved; so that they might be convicted in their own eyes and that their choice of a life in hell be their own choice which they would prefer to any other even though it involved their eternal confinement. Only such a judgment could be decisive and permanent. And such a judgment could not come by mere exertion of force.

Therefore the alternative lay in following the normal course of human order: which is that evil spirits cast themselves into the hells when they throw off the cloak of pretense and the use of external subterfuges, and prefer to display their evils and false principles flagrantly in open passion and frank challenge. This is not accomplished by fear of a compelling force. Nor is it done so long as pious externals or evasions pay their dividends in gratifications of the lusts of power, fame, or gain. It is done only after their frauds and disguises are recognized as worthless.

In the normal course of events, evil spirits are judged and unmasked so far as the man whom they tempt resists their urgings and sees the evil and falsity behind their design. This implies however that the man must have something of spiritual truth so as to recognize evil for what it is. At the time before the Lord's coming the human race could not be in such spiritual temptations. Therefore the Lord Himself came, in human fashion, to perform man's work.

"Yes, truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil is accounted as mad. And the Lord saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no judgment. And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore His arm brought salvation unto him, and His justice it sustained him" (Isaiah 59:15,16; cf. 63:5).

The Lord's States of Humiliation and Glorification

The Lord - the Divine Spirit - was born as a man. His Divinity - His Divine conception - was not even recognized, except by a few, until years had passed. If immediate recognition had been His desire, He might have come down from heaven visibly, assuming a body from the elements; come with stupendous miracles to compel faith and obedience. But not so. He was born in poverty, in naked innocence. His life in great part was spent in obscurity. His public mission was one of teaching. What miracles of healing and of extraordinary power He performed were reserved for those in dire need and done before those who already had faith in Him.

And His work of Redemption was accomplished in solitude, [?the while?] He was employed in prayer and meditation. It is told that His eyes were opened to both worlds, seeing the hidden sources, in heaven and in hell, of every human emotion and thought. His human contacts were wide, yet He preferred the publicans, the sinners, the lowly; and His friends were those who listened to His words of life. He wept at human folly and He exhausted His body in His labors. But His zeal flared up when he found self-seeking, bigotry, sanctimoniousness, or sacrilege. In His temptations, such anguish was His that He sweated blood. Yet at His crucifixion He lifted neither hand nor voice in self-defense.

He was tempted like unto us, yet without sin. He carried our iniquities. With His human body born of the virgin Mary, He inherited the perversities of an evil race - the inclinations to evil and self. This was the only condition under which the hells could approach Him, so that He might - from His own power - discern their purposes which sought to insinuate themselves among his own thoughts; and, by shunning these as evil, might forever make clear their utter opposition to the Divine love.

For - as already stated - the Soul of the Lord Jesus Christ was the Divine love itself, the Divine Being

(Esse) itself, which in the Scriptures was named JEHOVAH. The Human Essence of the Lord was the embodiment of that Divine Soul, and in the Writings is called the Divine truth proceeding from the Divine Good. This was the Word which was in the beginning with God, the Divine law and the Divinely human order of life, which was now made flesh in the fullness of time. And this proceeding Divine truth, by which all things were made that were made, was life, and the life was the light of men. That light shone within the ancient Scriptures which it had inspired; and during His abode on earth the Lord made His Mind a fulfillment of this Word, and even fulfilled its prophecies literally in His bodily life, until His whole Human became a form of Divine Truth. Even so, the truth Divine in the assumed Human could be assailed by the hells so long as His heredity from the mother was not yet fully renounced and put off, and the Lord was as it were separate from the Divine Good which was His Soul or Father.

The appearance was inevitable, while the Lord was in the world, as if He was a personality distinct and separate from the Father - the Infinite and invisible Divine. He was therefore to be called the son of God - the Only Begotten of the Father. His consciousness of life within the assumed Human was held within the realm of finite appearances, in order that He might combat the hells as a man, whose mind is not conscious of what transpires in his inmost soul.

Nonetheless He was a Man conceived by God. His Soul was the infinite Divine love, omnipotent and omniscient. And thus there were continual revelations from this Divine Soul - Divine perceptions which by degrees, and recurrently, lifted His Mind out of the realm of finite appearance into an infinite comprehension, into states of glorification, or into a sense of union with the Father. These states of union were the result of an infilling of His Divine Truth with the Good itself of Divine Love. And at His Resurrection this union was accomplished in actuality so completely that even His body was made Divine and He rose from the sepulcher not as a spirit but as a Man complete as to flesh and bones.

It is told in the Writings that the Lord, by glorifying the Human in the world, entered into the Divine Natural Degree (@DLW 230, 233, 222). The Divine from eternity was Divinely Human. But before the Advent this Human revealed itself through angels, by representation, not in Person; or, what is the same, it was not visible in Person or in natural form, nor could it directly effect any enlightenment in man's natural mind. The Divine Natural, on the other hand, was the Lord in His glorified Human, perceptible in Person to the natural minds of man: God with us, made visible and approachable through the truth which He taught and which - in the Word - now reveals to us His Divinely Human Essence, His love and His wisdom, so far as we are willing to see that love and that wisdom in His redeeming laws of charity and spiritual faith.

The Divine Trinity

That the Lord God thus made visible was to be the object of our worship was never doubted in the early Apostolic Church. In Jesus Christ, the teaching was, dwelleth the fullness of Deity as in its Body (Colossians 2:9). Through Him the Divine is to be approached. He had said to Philip, He that hath seen the Father (John 14:9). In Him the Human Essence was made identical with the Divine Essence. But while He was yet in the world, before the Human was fully glorified, it was said that the Holy Spirit is

the Spirit of truth which proceeds from the Lord's glorified Human, revealing the Mind of God-Man to men and giving them enlightenment.

The trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is therefore not a trine of pre-existing Personalities, but a trine within the Lord who is one in Person and in Essence: a trine of three essentials which constitute His Divinely Human Essence and which make a one even as Soul and Body and Activity make one in every man. The Spirit of a man is determined by his mind, which is formed in a man's body by the power of the inmost soul; and which goes forth in the uses of his life expressing his whole personality. The Lord's Mind by glorification became the Holy Spirit, which proceeds from Him as the Divine truth, displaying in the Word the character of the Divine Human and effecting man's reformation and regeneration.

The Holy Spirit is present as the Spirit or spiritual sense within the Word. The pre-advent churches knew God as the invisible Jehovah, the Divine Esse which is later called the Father. The Christians know the Son of God, the Lord as He appeared in the world before men. But to the New Church, the glorification of the Lord's Mind is revealed through the opening of the spiritual sense of the Scripture; and thereby the Divine Spirit - displaying the character and qualities of God - stands forth perceptible and fully revealed, so as to affect our rational mind and our spirit.

To the New Church, the Lord comes in the Writings as the Spirit of truth which shall lead to all truth; of which He said, I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you (John 14:16-18).

III. The Nature And Destiny Of Man

What is Man?

It is fundamental to the thought of the New Church that man is an immortal being destined to live forever in the spiritual world. He is essentially a spirit clothed while on earth with a material body.

We use the term spirit rather than soul. For the soul (in its specific sense) is an inmost receptacle of life, which is present already in the paternal seed wherein it invests itself with lower spiritual and material substances in order eventually to reproduce itself in the mother's womb as another individual. In this sense, a human soul is something higher than man's spirit and prior to it; belonging to the sphere of life nearest to the Lord and above the ken even of the angels, the sphere called the heaven of human internals (@AC 1999). But by the spirit we mean man's mind - in which his consciousness and free choice as an individual are placed - and upon which his personality and specific characteristics, both hereditary and cultivated, are inscribed, here and in the hereafter.

Thus the soul is the primary agent by which the Lord's creative power forms the body through the parents (who act as a secondary instrumentality and a qualifying medium). In so doing, the soul first projects the degrees of the future mind, and through these builds the bodily frame. And only when the body with its organs of sensation and motion is perfected, can the mind be individualized and endowed with conscious life through birth into the natural world. Only at this point does the human spirit or mind emerge as an agent, which gradually takes over a certain control of the body.

This spirit, which discovers its powers by degrees and stages of growth, is the real man; the spirit which is clothed with a material body yet is destined to discard this garment of dust before it can enter its real heritage. For the formation of this spirit, all creation is serviceable. It is the only final product for which the universe exists. It is what enables man to be called the crown of creation.

The prolonged infancy of man is a significant indication of the real purpose of his life. Man lives indeed for natural uses. He must seek food, shelter, and protection for his bodily survival. But in so doing, his mental powers become developed and another set of needs, of which animals know not, becomes of paramount importance. He hungers not alone for bread but for knowledge, and becomes sensitive to the inner contents of all situations and experiences. He finds that natural uses, however perfectly satisfied, leave his real aspirations thwarted. He discovers a set of values which cannot be expressed in terms of the things of the body and the world. He enters upon uses which look to eternity, and seeks to discern what is of eternal justice, what is the final good. He sets out to look for the ultimate realities, the inner truth, the intended goals and purposes within creation. He enters, through his mind with its varied states and powers of reflection, into a spiritual world.

Immortality

The Writings teach that the end of creation is a heaven from the human race. Indeed, the most

primitive races of man have had the faith in survival after death. Every Divine revelation has taught - or taken for granted - man's immortality. "If it were not so, the Lord said, I would have told you!" (John 14:2). Even reason, if at all enlightened, rebels at the thought that the human mind should be dissipated just at the point where it has gathered the real fruits of the wisdom of life and recognized the deeper objective of existence. Reason admits that an unending life on earth could never answer the aspirations of man for a better life - even as Paul wrote, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 15:50). The mind beats its pinions of thought against the prison walls of the world, as if sensing a brighter, freer realm beyond the confines of space and time.

There have been those who imagined that the Divine justice would be served if the soul - released from the body - might be freed for a time and then be reincarnated repeatedly in other forms, either animal or human, until it has learned to despise its chains of mortal affections, good as well as bad, and finally forsakes finite and conscious life to merge again into the infinite Source. But such a philosophy is born of pessimism and belongs to defeated souls. It makes creation a purposeless Divine tragedy - redolent with unnecessary misery and leading at best to annihilation.

The only reasonable purpose in creation must be the formation of a heaven from the human race - an eternal heaven wherein the Divine life can be poured out to over-increasing numbers of spirits, who can receive it with a delight and gratitude which grows as it is shared with others.

Yet this spiritual world has been and is hidden from man's sight; and men complain that it is a [?borne?] from which no traveler returns. Time was, so doctrine tells, when this was not so: when men were so celestial that they could move mid angel throngs; and whom visiting angels spoke to them in their mortal tongues. And still, man's spirit does possess the eyes to see - if they were opened - the wondrous things of the after-life. When the Lord so willed, this was allowed to prophets and apostles; and in these latter days His servant Emanuel Swedenborg was even intromitted for twenty-eight years to an intimate and understanding knowledge of the spiritual world, such as none before him had enjoyed. To ordinary men, not prepared for such a high office, this would have meant disaster to body and mind. Unless the spiritual realm was hidden from us, our human freedom and reason would be endangered, since evil spirits would then have power over our persons.

This, then, is one of the reasons for a written Revelation being given on this earth, for the instruction of men concerning the spiritual world; and the reason why the Lord said, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

Man's Equipment for Eternal Life

Since heaven is man's intended destiny, his mind is so equipped that it may prepare itself while on earth for a life in heaven. Indeed it is ordered in discrete degrees, like a Jacob's ladder which reaches from earth even to the throne of God.

The part of this mind which he uses for his conscious thinking in the world is called his Natural Mind.

This mind develops by stages, from the sensual state of the infant to the wisdom of the rational man. It is furnished by gradual accumulations of knowledge governed from sense-experience and ordered by reason. The inseparable faculties of Rationality and Liberty are the two springs for everything human in him. Sensation and imagination he has in common with the brute animals.

Yet the natural mind, with its forming understanding and proper will, reaches not into heaven but only up to its portals, or into the world of spirits which is intermediate between heaven and hell. Within man's rational mind there must be formed a conscience from religious truth, and thus a new will which can respond to the will of God. By means of such truth, which teaches him to shun all evils as sins against God, man can become lifted above self and the world, and can eventually feel the spheres of love and charity inflowing from the heavens, as his own, and thus enter as to his love and motives - into that higher degree of life which is called the Spiritual Mind; and perhaps even the highest degree, the Celestial Mind, may be opened unconsciously within him, and endow him with a perception of celestial uses.

Such is the complete preparation for heaven - a process which the doctrine describes as Reformation and Regeneration. But in case man dies as an infant, the degrees of the mind just referred to are furnished after death, in a different manner. For innocence has an open mind for [?borrowed?] knowledge - in that world as well as in this. The opposite is the case where evils have been confirmed and the mind is shut to heavenly instruction and leading. Those who, in the world, have deliberately chosen to place their delights of life in evils, can never raise their will into the heat of heavenly loves. Their [?thought can be turns rose up?] to heaven; but their spiritual mind is shut up. The higher rungs of their ladder of life are never secured. Or, to describe it otherwise, they sink down into the hells, as they debase their mind into the delights of the body and the world, and center their life around themselves.

Death, the Gateway of the Spiritual World

Man's body of matter was never part of his real self, nor did it ever live. That which lives in the body is the spirit and within this the soul. The death which men fear so much is but the discarding of that material vestment which accommodated the spirit to the world of fixed spaces and times, and thereby compelled the spirit to continual necessities of being in contact with varieties not of its own choosing, limiting its greater freedom, that of a spiritual choice.

Death therefore, when it comes, is a release. And it comes to each man when his spirit is needed in the economy of the other world, and when earth has performed its service to his soul.

Death is a separation - a separation from earthly kin, it is true, but chiefly a separation of spiritual substance from the material substance with which the spirit was so intimately associated in the body. Everything vital, or living, is then drawn out by the Lord's resuscitating power of love as by a mighty attraction; and the spirit, whole and unimpaired, finds itself in the spiritual world, in the same bodily form to which it was accustomed. For the form of the material body and all its organs was due to the soul's form.

The separation of the spirit from the material body occurs when the heart stops beating and the interiors of the body grow old. And the resurrection of men into the spiritual world is immediate. Yet not sudden. It is a process which is completed on the third day after death. In order that the spirit may become adjusted by degrees to the life of the spiritual world, man's own ruling love is for a while lulled to sleep and he is environed by celestial angels. Afterwards he is attended by spiritual angels, and finally by good spirits of the natural heaven. The celestial no doubt arouse in him all his remains of love and tenderness; the spiritual give him the use of spiritual sight and some teachings about the things about the other life; and the good spirits offer him friendship, service, and companionship.

But on the third day, the risen spirit awakes into the world of spirits - returning into his own love and his own customary thoughts. The time elapsed since his death seems only as a sleep from which he now awakens into an environment like that of his place of death (@TCR 797; @HH 451-452; @5M 5). Death does not come as a shock, but as a gentle transition. Some newcomers are indeed frightened when they are told that they are now spirits; having had the idea that a spirit is only an unsubstantial echo of his former self. But as they examine themselves and their surroundings they are soon comforted; and some even harden their hearts and maintain that they are still men in the world, and set and speak as if they were.

Two things make this possible. One is that in appearance, the spiritual world is like the natural, as to all the objects of sensation. The second is that a spirit thinks from his ruling love and from its prejudices, by which he explains away the many evidences which testify that his new life is widely different from his life in the world. His memory of his former life fast fades, having nothing of physical sensation to suggest it or recall it. And spirits are not given to reflection on such differences as exist but which soon become accustomed and accepted.

But spirits who are rational, and endowed with common sense, readily receive instruction as to the new world in which they are, and soon commence with eagerness to explore its possibilities and to test the new powers which are theirs. As their natural memory after a few days becomes quiescent, they enter into the communal life of the World of Spirits.

The World of Spirits

The first discovery which they make is that in the innumerable communities of the vast World of Spirits there are parallels of every type of human activity. Man remains man after death. He has not only a similar human form, with all its organs and members, the same senses (now far more keen), and a similar outward environment with plants and animals, cities, lakes and mountains; but he also retains his former instinctive yearnings and desires. He has not lost his sex, nor his faculties and characteristics of mind, nor his special interests and loyalties. His former habits still drive him towards familiar routines. His faith is unchanged - and he naturally drifts into association with those of his natural or racial genius and his religious confession.

He also feels hunger and thirst. And if nothing else urges him to seek for some useful work, the necessities of subsistence compel him to change from the uncertain status of a guest or beggar to that of a stable citizen of his community.

These communities - villages or cities - strangely resemble his native haunts on earth. Yet they differ in many respects and change with their inhabitants. There is (for instance) a London in the spiritual world, Swedenborg relates. Yet there are really two cities that are so called: one in which the good predominate, and one which is inhabited by spirits who are interiorly evil. In these cities, uses of great variety are carried on, as to all appearance similar to earthly employments; and each city and each occupation is the external form of some natural affection for use, whether this be prompted by charity or by self-love. Common natural affections are what hold these social groups together. Order is maintained by governors set over the community with the consent or acquiescence of the governed. And the cities are continually purged of evil-doers who are expelled or judged in more drastic fashion. When a spirit leaves a city permanently, his house also disappears or is displaced with another!

It is a city of transients. For the World of Spirits is intermediate between Heaven and Hell. It is a place of judgment and of continued separations between the good and the evil. Both Heaven and Hell pour their spheres into it. Yet as long as they continue to live in the external order of moral life, the good spirits and the evil claim equal social rights, even as on earth. Except for confirmed criminals, most people on earth live in their externals, and keep their evil passions well in check for the sake of prudence and advantage. And this habit persists after death, during the first state of spirits which is called their state of externals.

The Nature of the Spiritual World

Here we must of necessity digress somewhat to consider briefly the nature of the spiritual world. The Writings assure us above all that it is a real world. It was created by the Lord Himself for a twofold purpose. It is - on the one hand - the creative cause of all natural things and the source of all spiritual things. On the other hand, it is the abode for the spirits of men. Let us not imagine, with the [?s. c.?] idealists, that the spiritual world, with all that it contains, is simply a projection of human thought or some sort of a dream in the mind of God. It is substantial. It is the framework and substance in which the heavens are laid in ordered degrees, from the Spiritual Sun, through the three atmospheres, down into the ultimates of heaven. It is the substance out of which the souls and minds of men are woven.

Our natural idea of substance and reality (and there is nothing real apart from substance) is derived from the matters of the natural universe, with their space and time. As long as we remain on earth, something of the idea of space and time, of earthly dimensions, clings to our idea of substance. Yet the Lord is Substance Itself, and has no time or space nor even states. And when we are taught that the spiritual world has neither space nor time, but, instead of these, has states which are apprehended in forms of spiritual dimensions, it in nowise contradicts the further teaching that the spiritual is substantial, and that the appearances of space and time in the other world are only apparently appearances of space and time and are really appearances of states of life, or of states of the reception of life from the Lord, and of the interrelations of such states.

What is seen and felt and touched in the spiritual world by spirits and angels is objective and real. The objects which surround spirits and angels are called spiritual creations. They are not material objects. But just as the mind of man senses material objects in terms of mental appearances of size and weight

and speed, so the minds of spirits sense spiritual things - the things which make up the substantial objects of their world - in terms of mental appearances of size and color and speed, etc. The appearances in both worlds are so similar that they cannot be told apart. For it is the same mind that saw natural objects in this world and that sees spiritual objects in the other. The processes of natural sensation and of spiritual sensation are utterly different. Yet their effects appear alike. The same mental imagery - visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, etc. - is employed to represent two different kinds of reality.

What spirits and angels sense around them is a spiritual situation and state, relating to the processing of life from God and its reception in their own minds and in the minds of their spiritual neighbors. They sense the active state of the spirits around them. Since there are no physical barriers of spatial distances in the spiritual world, the states of reception by men living on earth can also be sensed by spirits; i.e., spirits can sense the ideas of men and feel their affections and delights.

When a man dies, he is said to leave the natural world. He is never again to sensate any object in the physical realm. Yet the minds of men are never actually part of the natural world. And spirits can therefore dwell with men in common states and within the bounds of certain spiritual laws.

The spirits in the World of Spirits are - in varying degrees - in states which resemble the states of men. Natural and worldly affections are still active with them. For this reason they are able spiritually to be with men, and to serve as attendants, so that their mental states can inflow into men's minds and produce affections and motivations. Thus the life from God is as it were channeled invisibly through spirits to men. This presence of spirits is not sensed by men, neither are spirits aware of the men with whom they are. Yet the ideas of men's minds are communicated to spirits, who feel that they are thinking from their own minds although using only the knowledges from the memories of men on earth. At times a spirit may so immerse his thought into a man's memory that the spirit may believe himself to be the man by living himself into the man's whole personality.

Judgment and Instruction

It is not of order that a spirit should remain long (or for more than a year) in the state of his externals, but that his externals should as soon as possible come to correspond to his internals. The spirit behaves in the other life as his mind did in this world. Yet as his ruling love comes to realize its freedom in the World of Spirits, it casts off the many mental inhibitions which training and prudence and heredity had imposed. The spirit then feels as if he had entered a new state of wakefulness, and as if he had passed from darkness into light. If he has endeavored to act from conscience and charity, he now is moved by interior affections and feels a profound blessedness. And he grows in bodily grace and beauty. A new understanding enlightens his tasks, which he sees as symbols or forms of spiritual uses that look to the promotion of charity and of spiritual insight.

With the evil, the liberation of the ruling love from the prudence and social restraints of natural life takes a very different form. For they then plunge themselves into open evils and lose all shame and all fear for their reputation. If good spirits or angels remonstrate with them or resist them, they break out into open attacks upon all things true and heavenly. And thus the judgment comes upon them, when

"there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known" (Luke 12:2,3). Even before this state, wise angelic examiners could indeed read the whole past of a spirit in his hands and face - for the spiritual body is the external of the mind. But now his evil flares out of its own accord, and he is impatient to rush into his hell, where he joins with those who are in like loves in orgies of evil delights. For a few times he may again emerge into the World of Spirits, but after he has been vastated of all his external goodness and apparent probity, this is no longer possible.

The good spirit, on the other hand, is purified of external evils, prides and vanities, as he passes into the state of his internals. With some, this is attended with keen sufferings, or vastations. But eventually, the spirit is ready to receive instruction at the hands of tutor angels in the laws of heavenly life and learns the spiritual truths which can open his mind interiorly to receive the purer and selfless delights of the kingdom of heaven. This instruction is based on, and accommodated to, the religious knowledge which he had previously received in the world. Pagans, Mohammedans, and Christians are differently taught. But the real source of the teaching is the spiritual sense of the Word, which is the Word as it is understood in heaven. And in the angelic societies of instruction, this heavenly doctrine is not committed to memory but is insinuated into the very heart and life. The pupils are such that they are animated by an affection of truth that looks to the uses of life. For each, the Lord provides uses that are loved, suited to his genius, and that love is exalted by his hope of becoming an angel (@HH 516,517).

The abode in the World of Spirits at this day may not last more than from twenty to thirty years. For after the Last Judgment the purification of that intermediate world is constantly going on. It is in that world - below heaven and above hell - that man's spirit is invisibly held by the Lord all during his life-time on earth; held in an equilibrium of influences from the heavens and from the opposite hells.

The Hells

By hell, the Writings do not mean a place of material fire- a lake of burning brimstone - where condemned souls are tortured eternally by a crew of devils presided over by the dread Satan, prince of the world. For Satan, or the Devil, is but a symbol of all the hells. But hell is the final abode of those spirits who on earth had confirmed themselves in the love of self and thus in the lusts of dominating and of possessing the goods of others. Such spirits make their own hell. For hell, like heaven, is within us. It is a state, not a place; a state wherein spirits delight to live in adulteries and thefts and deceits, in lying and envy, and in the insane phantasies that such lusts engender. It is a state of continual rebellion against God and of hatred towards all who are in good or in innocence, whom the wicked seek to seduce into evil, and mislead by falsities.

The punishments of hell do not spring from any Divine wrath. But the smoldering evils, the tormenting, insatiable lusts in the hearts of the devils, is the fire by which they are smitten. Their love of dominion leads to incessant revenges and mutual retaliations And, rejecting the light of heaven for the lumen of self-intelligence and cunning, they appear to the angels as if in thick darkness.

The devils, like men, live in societies. But their evil delights and disordered minds cause them to love their self-made filth and squalor, which they cover over with a surface of shams and pretenses, so that they come to prefer these mockeries to what is genuine. To procure the necessities of life they must

leave these phantasies and labor in vile uses, and thus earn their food and the right to enjoy a measure of decency, order, and rest, which is, as it were, a loan from heaven.

The Heavenly Kingdom

Hell is derived from self. But it is the Divine of the Lord which makes heaven. Those only enter heaven who gratefully accept the Lord's offered provisions for their happiness. The angels are of many kinds and classes. Some - indeed a large part - are infants or children who have died as such and have been reared in heaven. The rest are men and women who sought with sincerity to live according to the love of God as they know them - laws of mercy, charity, and justice - and who shunned evils as sins against God.

The Lord said, "In My Father's house are many mansions" (John 14:2). The doctrine of the New Church tells about these mansions - heavens adapted to the genius and state of different races and ages, and to three degrees of spiritual life.

In general, there are three heavens, each founded on a degree of ruling love. The highest heaven is characterized by a love to the Lord which brings with it a perceptive wisdom and innocence of life beyond description and a happiness which men can in no wise fathom. The middle heaven draws its intelligence and splendor of life from charity toward the neighbor which is born from a love of a spiritual truth. The lowest heaven is founded on obedience - obedience to the doctrines of faith, which gives to the good spirits of that heaven security from the hells and a delight in serving in the many uses of the Lord's kingdom.

The kingdom of heaven is a kingdom of uses. It is therefore called a Grand Man, a human form which is bound together by the Lord's Divine Human as a Soul. All its societies, all its heavens, work together for a mutual end, which is to realize the design of the Creator; that His love of His creatures might be received and returned in the form of mutual love among men. Therefore the delight of the angels lies in the performance of uses to each other, in instructing spirits and guiding them, and in guarding over men.

Only so far as we comprehend and perceive what love is, can we begin to see how this end of creation is accomplished through uses, and how the mute yearnings of man's soul are fulfilled in heaven.

But it may be perceived [?that since?] no two angels are similar in wisdom or love, and each one has limitations which to all eternity can never be transcended. And since the needs of all are different, there is an infinite scope for progress. New opportunities for ever new mutual uses constantly present themselves. For if on earth the bounds of natural knowledge and invention can ever be enlarged, and new uses found for human hands; how much more boundless are the paths of progress in the fields of the mind, for the adventures and discoveries which can unlock the hidden springs of joy in human hearts and spirits.

This call for eternal service in the realm of the spirit is the end of creation, the destiny of man.

IV. The Word - The Means Of Salvation

The end and object of creation is a heaven from the immortal spirits of men. But although this is the destiny appointed for every man, he is free to accept or refuse the means by which heaven is reached and by which conjunction with God, and an attunement of man's will to the Divine laws, are attained. No such conjunction is possible unless God in some manner reveals Himself to men and makes known the purposes of man's immortal life.

Primeval Revelation

There are those who believe that God has revealed His essential qualities in His very works; that is, in Nature and especially in Man who was formed in His image and likeness. This was indeed true in most ancient times on our earth, and is still true with untold races of mankind on distant planets. So long as men remained in the order of their first creation, they were aware of the presence of the Divine Creator, felt themselves as vessels receptive of His inflowing life, and saw in each other, and in human virtues, continual representations of His love and His wisdom. In Nature they saw reflections of the human form. It spread about them as a vast theater which depicted the manifold uses and states of a celestial life. The Divine law was written in their hearts, and their reason was the spontaneous and willing means to carry out the implications of the order in which they were born.

The knowledge concerning God was thus acquired perceptively, so long as men were content to remain in the order of creation. And it was possible for them - as is the case on many planets - to be in one intercourse with the inhabitants of heaven and thus to know many arcana of the after-life even while on earth. (For every man is equipped with spiritual senses, although they are opened with a few.)

It might be imagined that this state of spontaneous perception took away something of spiritual freedom. Yet there were, even in the Garden of Eden, two trees, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge, for men to choose between. Their rational minds were free to forsake the order of celestial life; which, eventually, they did, more and more, by consenting to their proprial will and desiring to develop an understanding which would favor self-love rather than the love of God and of their fellow-man. With some, this apostasy came about as a grievous profanation of the marvelous gifts of perceptive wisdom. With all, it resulted in a love of celestial perception and a gradual closing of their spiritual senses. The communication with heaven ceased. The race fell into a corporeal and worldly state, and into ignorance and spiritual phantasy.

The Need for a Written Revelation

Unless communication with heaven had been restored by some other mode, mankind would have destroyed itself utterly. Man's spirit - to be sane and wholesome - must somehow breathe the air of heaven and receive of its light. When his will became so corrupt by very birth that it was unmoved by the influx of heaven, there was no salvation for man unless the understanding could be instructed in spiritual truth and take over the government of his life from the evil will.

The most ancient race had received truth - the perceptions of the Divine order - in the will and thus without question or debate. Now the redemption of mankind depended on the development of an understanding which could be in a manner independent of the will. Truth had to be given from without, through the senses, and stored in the memory. And it had to be given by the Lord in such a way that it could be preserved intact from the evil imaginations of men; and given in an external form, more permanent and safe than the oral traditions which often suffered perversion at the hands of successive generations.

This new form of revelation was indeed possible on our earth because of the external nature of our genius - which inclined to artifices and inventions. Among such inventions was the art of writing, which commenced with pictorial ideographs and hieroglyphic representations on wood and stone and later on parchment and paper; and by degrees developed phonetic characters such as we now use, to denote words and, through words, express ideas.

Words originated from sounds which had come to symbolize the affections of man's mind and the objects and conditions of nature. Just as the Lord revealed Himself to the perceptive celestial race by means of the objects of creation, using them as significatives and correspondences of spiritual things, so He revealed Himself later by means of human language, which itself is composed of artificial symbols derived from nature with special meanings. By words He could approach men even in their gross ignorance - conveying His truth in the terms of their own knowledge. For with a fallen race, the understanding could not reconstruct itself into the order of creation; but the Lord Himself had to impress the order from without, so that man would be enabled to depart from evil and perversion if he so chose. Man was, through the written Word of God, presented with an alternative, and thus with freedom and a means of salvation.

Such a mediate revelation, as was provided through the written Word, surpassed - for the man of the spiritual church - the immediate revelations which he might receive through open speech with spirits and angels. For open intercourse with spirits would enter with persuasion and fear, thus by an external way which would compel; and, besides, it would be attended with dangers to his soul since man, in his fallen state, could not discriminate between evil spirits and angels. Mediate revelation, on the other hand, leaves man in freedom to be taught so far as he shuns evils as sins and receives good affections from the Lord (@DeVerbo 29).

The Inspired Scriptures

The Word was written from Divine inspiration. By this is meant that the Lord utilized the contents of the minds of certain men for the construction of a special series of ideas and words, a series which was so ordered as to reflect the order of heaven, which is the Divine order. The human writer of the sacred text was in each case specially appointed and prepared for his office. He may or may not have understood what he was writing. In no case did he understand more than the general meaning of it. His mind was but a storehouse from which the Lord drew forth the symbols - the ideas and words - needed to instruct men and angels, each according to their capacity. In some cases, the prophet might first be introduced into a partial vision of the spiritual world. In other cases, he was simply directed by

an unseen voice to write as if from dictation. At other times, he might write as if of his own choice, yet completely submissive to a Divine leading.

Without such inspired Scriptures, nothing of Divine truth could have been preserved on earth. Yet as we turn to examine these Scriptures, they seem to speak but partly of Divine things and to be concerned largely with the varying fortunes of men, describing especially one line of the descendants of Adam, traced through Noah and Abram to the twelve tribes of Israel who grow into a great nation which is finally defeated and scattered over the earth. Yet in everything said of these people, the Scriptures stress the government of God and the logic of the retribution for sin. The substance of the Bible is the tracing of the way of the Divine Providence and the display of the Lord's omnipotence. It is the story of the spiritual life of mankind, opening with the creation of the earth and with the serene life of paradise where man is as yet in the image of God. There sin enters, and its curse culminates in the destruction of the primitive race by a flood of waters.

A remnant is saved, out of whose descendants a chosen family perpetuates the vague promise of a future Redeemer. This family - during its Egyptian bondage - grows into a nation which, in its migration, receives a set of Divine precepts, and by miraculous aid, survives oppressions and hardships and gradually conquers its promised land of Canaan. Under its three great kings, Israel reaches the peak of its power. But then it is divided by intestine strife, and through disobedience and idolatry, the people squander their right to the land. Although the Lord's prophets seek repeatedly to restore the true worship, their country is finally overwhelmed by enemy nations, and the people are carried captive to foreign countries, while their grand temple is ruined. Again they show a belated repentance, and are permitted to rebuild their Jerusalem, gather together their laws, their prophets, scriptures, and holy psalms, and restore their ritual worship. But the Spirit of prophecy had departed.

Yet, after their prophets had been silent for centuries, the Divine Word became incarnate. The messiah, long awaited, is born of a virgin and is reared in poverty, unacknowledged by His people. By His miracles and by teaching the multitudes concerning a spiritual and moral regeneration, as well as by His final admission that He was the Son of God, the jealousy and fear of the Jewish rulers are aroused and He is put to a cruel death.

But, having been buried, He rose on the third day, to instruct His disciples as to the establishment of His Spiritual Church, and to promise that He will return, after the consummation of that age. In the final book of the Bible, John describes his prophetic visions of that time of consummation, when the seven seals of the book of judgment would be opened, and the Word of God be revealed in the clouds of heaven and all the dead would stand before the throne of God in the last great assize; after which the holy city, a New Jerusalem, would descend from heaven with a paradise restored, and become the virgin bride of the Lamb who is the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last.

This epic of Divine redemption, with its fulfillment of God's plan for mankind, all who read may plainly see as the obvious literal sense of the Bible. All may see the ten commandments as the necessary foundation of moral and spiritual life. All may see how the prophets rose far above the stature of their age in proclaiming the unity of God and voicing a higher concept of justice. All may see and marvel at the utterly new law of faith and forgiveness which was brought to earth with the Lord Jesus Christ and reached into the innermost depths of human hearts. The Word - which began to be written before human history emerges out of the mists - has had its clear and sufficient message to

every age and understand the simple elements of religion.

Accommodations of Truth

Yet it is a law of human life that truth cannot be received except by degrees and in forms adapted to the states and uses of men. A child cannot be instructed in all the matters of adult life, but is taught only gradually, as his knowledge accumulates and his reason matures, and so far as he can make use of the new knowledge. For new truth brings with it new responsibilities. Truth given to immature or unprepared or unworthy states is likely to be profaned and perverted or set to wrongful use. Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine. Truth is holy, and must be protected from misunderstanding and abuse. Interior truths are therefore not given to men until the general truths in which they are concealed are first accepted.

This is the reason why the Word was written in a symbolic language, wherein the genuine truths of the spiritual sense are mostly hidden in a veiling of correspondences and representatives, so that in appearance worldly things are spoken of and only some most general truths of religion shine through. Such general truths are: the unity of God, His omnipotence, His creation of the universe, the leading of His providence, His omnipresence and omniscience; His love, mercy, and justice; His advent, His temptation, glorification, and resurrection; His commandments; His teachings about love and charity, faith, obedience, freedom, repentance, and regeneration, and thus salvation; the existence of a life after death, and of a heaven and a hell, and a judgment after death. Such general truths are naked even in the literal sense. But the particulars, or the interior truths involved, are hidden.

Common experience confirms that our most intimate beliefs and tenderest emotions are seldom openly expressed. Our innermost reflections and perceptions are difficult to put into words that cannot be misunderstood, that are not ambiguous or obscure. Similarly, we hesitate to bare our hearts unless it be before close friends who share our own loves and interests. The lover - uncertain of the response he might meet and sensitive to any possible affront to his most sacred feelings - resorts to symbolism. He lets his behavior hint his admiration, he covers his ardor by courteous gestures, sends a flower, or writes verses full of significant allusions which none but his beloved can fully understand.

Truth finds protection in symbolism. Therefore the Word was written in correspondences taken from nature and human life. This use of correspondences and representatives was common with the ancients, and was among the wise developed into a science and an art. Spiritual truths were suggested in symbolic language and in ritual representations; were involved in the customs and modes of life and in the forms of tribal government. Everything was known to have a spiritual equivalent, a meaning relative to the spiritual life of regeneration. For mankind was in its childhood and youth when the Word was written, and rational or genuine truths had as yet no language to employ.

The Uses of Correspondences

Correspondential writing had three purposes. To those who had something of perception, from a love of truth and good, it was a means of conveying spiritual truths; for where love is, there comes also a perceptive understanding. This was the case when the Ancient Church was in its purity. On the other hand, the veiling of representatives protected the truth against profanation at the hands of the impious and the worldly, and also prevented those in simple, immature states from any deeper understanding than they could bear. Even the Lord, who spoke to the multitudes in parables, explained His meaning to the disciples in proverbs or similitudes; saying however, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. ... The time cometh when I will no more speak unto you in proverbs, but will show you plainly about the Father" (John 16:12,25).

The third use of the correspondences employed in the Scriptures was that the Word might thus serve as a means of conjunction with heaven. For the angels, who are present with men and to whom the ideas in the minds of men serve as a basic ultimate or plane, can perceive the spiritual meaning within the natural sense of the Word. When men read the Word, those angels come into the spiritual ideas which are figuratively represented in the material ideas (of objects and persons) which men receive from the literal sense. And however simple the man may be who reverently reads the Word in its letter, the things from the spiritual sense will then affect his spirit unconsciously and are felt as an affection and an affirmation which move his mind and conjoin him with heaven in a natural bond of love, and also give him something of enlightenment.

This takes place by means of correspondences. For the conjunction of love, although it begins from a kindred affection, is consummated, confirmed, and established through ultimates. Every covenant must be sealed by a solemn signature, a symbolic act or word, or by handclasp or a kiss. In such an act or word lies the unspoken promise for a future development of a closer consociation and a more intimate understanding. Thus the literal meaning of the Word is seen by the attending angels as containing inexhaustible truths that were implied therein from the time when the Spirit of God dictated its form from a fount of infinite wisdom.

The Spiritual Sense of the Word

The Wisdom of God which inspired the writings of the Word, still lodges in its pages. It is present there as a continuous prophecy of the heavenly life, and of the life of the incarnate Lord. "The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10). This internal or spiritual sense is what the Lord referred to when "beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto His disciples in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27); and when He said, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life" (John 6:63). Without that Spirit, the Scriptures would contain only the words of men, and would not have the power to conjoin mankind with heaven.

The genuine truths of this spiritual sense shine through the natural language of the letter of the Word only in scattered passages, which are more abundant in the New Testament than in the Hebrew

Scripture. The rest of the biblical Word is so couched in sensual symbols, in gross appearances and even trivialities and erudites, and so much concerned with the stories of men and the warfare of nations, that the sanctity of the Word has by many been questioned, and by many rejected, even while they admit the profundity of many of its teachings and the strange beauty of some of its poetry. Despite continuing to call the Bible the Word of God, men have asked themselves how God could so speak in language sometimes so crude, sometimes so obscure, sometimes in conflict with the very facts of nature. Wherein does its Divinity reside?

The question went unanswered until it was revealed for the New Church that the Word contained a continuous and consistent internal sense; a spiritual sense which vivifies the letter and therefore can testify concerning the holiness and Divine authorship of the Word, and convince even the natural man if he willing to be convinced! In ignorance of this test of Divinity, Christians have indeed inadvertently included in the Bible thirty-two books by human authors - useful books, it is true, yet not written in the Divine style and not containing a continuous spiritual sense. But the Writings now have determined the Divine canon of Scripture, which embraces the five books of Moses, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, the Psalms and all the Prophets, the Four Gospels and the Apocalypse (@NJHD 266).

The Word is in its Fullness in the Sense of the Letter

The books thus stamped with the mark of Divine authorship are so written as to be fully impaired and therefore holy in their very wording. Although the Writings reveal the spiritual sense of this Word and disclose the heavenly doctrine latent within its letter, and present this internal sense and this heavenly doctrine in complete and distinct statements Divinely inspired and authorized; yet they in no wise impugn or minimize the literal sense of the Word as the ultimate lodgment of the Divine truth. The celestial and spiritual senses are not the Word, we read, without the natural sense, for they are like spirit and life without a body (@TCR 214). The Divine truth is in its fullness, its holiness, and its power in the sense of the letter of the Word. The natural sense ... is the containant, the basis, and the firmament of its spiritual and celestial senses. And in the sense of the letter the superior senses are together in simultaneous order. Therefore there is conjunction with the Lord, and consociation with the angels, by the sense of the letter of the Word (@TCR 234).

Spiritually viewed, the Word is an inseparable unity. To separate the spiritual sense from its literal sense and to place authority in the sensual appearances of Scripture, results in all manner of heresies and misunderstandings such as have caused a creeping spiritual paralysis in Christendom. To deny the power and holiness of the literal sense and seek to build a New Church on the spiritual sense alone, would be to build a house without a foundation or a mind without a body to protect it (@TCR 213). Therefore Swedenborg was commissioned to teach the doctrines of the New Church through the Word, and he testifies that he received the things which pertained to these doctrines, not from any angel, but from the Lord Himself, and this while he read the Word (@TCR 779).

Swedenborg was indeed intromitted into the spiritual world, and learned its arcana from the mouth of angels as well as from his own exploration. The opening of his spiritual senses enabled him to observe the full workings of the law of correspondences by which the Word was written, and to see the actual

fulfillment in the other life of the prophecies about the last judgment, as well as to understand the spiritual states, the development of which are described in the internal sense of the Word. Yet his Writings were the product of a Divine inspiration, and the doctrine was given him while he read the Word and perceived its spiritual contents in their series. For every verse of the Scriptures, he found, communicated with one or more angelic societies.

The doctrine of the New Church is therefore drawn and constructed from the literal sense of the Word and is everywhere confirmed by it. But it is not drawn from the appearances of the literal sense but from the spiritual-natural truths which are nakedly visible as clear teachings amid the clouds of these appearances. For such naked truths are the genuine truths of the spiritual sense shining through the natural sense.

It must not be forgotten that the knowledge of the Lord and of His revelation as the Divine Human is given in the literal sense of the Word. It is there that we see Him as the Divine Man, in ultimates. If Christians had been able to see these and other naked truths and had gathered them together into a doctrine of genuine truth to serve them as a lamp in the study of their Word, they would indeed have entered increasingly into true faith. But because the love of many waxed cold, the eyes of faith become dim. What the prophet Isaiah said to the Jesus might now be said to Christians:

"The vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which a man delivereth to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed" (Isaiah 29:11).

Revelation of the Spiritual Sense

"The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life" (2 Corinthians 3:6). The Word cannot be understood except by doctrine drawn therefrom. The naked spiritual teachings of the Word can indeed be seen by all, but they are not connected into a doctrine of genuine truth, a doctrine of love and charity, except with those who are in an affection of spiritual truth. And isolated truths - as matters of knowledge - may be wrongly joined up so as to defeat the ends of charity and confuse the mind, leading into actual falsities wherever evil affections or merely worldly states become dominant. The love of self and the world, and especially the love of exercising power from self, generated such falsities in the Christian Church, and thus caused the Word to be sealed with seven seals. It is the evils and falsities of men that seal up the Word with seals that only the Lord can open.

The falsities which close the Word so that its spiritual significance cannot be understood, are especially the ideas that God is three Divine persons, that the crucifixion of the Lord was a vicarious atonement which constituted the whole of redemption, and that man is saved either by faith alone or by the merit of good works.

When no man in heaven nor in earth was able to open the book of the Word (Revelation 5:3) the Lord Himself revealed the doctrine of genuine truth in the Writings of His servant Emanuel Swedenborg. These doctrines are the Divine restatement of the open truths of the sense of the letter of the Word,

from which man must draw his doctrine of life. Whether this doctrine be drawn from the Old and New Testaments or directly from the Writings, it is the same spiritual-natural truth that is obtained.

The revelation of this doctrine was the Second Advent of the Lord, described in the Apocalypse when John saw heaven opened and beheld, mounted on a white horse, a glorious rider who was the King of kings, out of whose mouth went a sharp sword and whose name - which was The Word of God - no man knew but He Himself (Revelation 19:11-16). This was the Word as to Doctrine, the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven (Matthew 24:29-31). It was the internal sense of the Word, its inward heavenly doctrine, made visible to the natural minds of men.

The Word of God exists also in heaven. There it is seen only as to its spiritual and celestial sense, devoid of ideas of persons, times, and places, and adapted to angelic thought which man on earth is not capable of grasping with his conscious mind. In the Writings, this heavenly Word is expressed in a natural sense from the spiritual, or in a spiritual-natural sense, thus in doctrine form, as explanations of the natural sense and of its correspondences in terms of doctrine and rational ideas. And it is noted that, in contrast, the Word in its letter must be natural, in every particular of which the spiritual sense must be stored up; otherwise the Word would not serve the heavens as a basis; nor would it serve the church as the means by which it is conjoined with heaven (@AE 1061).

The doctrine which is drawn from the sense of the letter of the Word is the doctrine of the internal sense appearing as spiritual-natural truth. It is this which is now revealed in the Writings and is signified by the city New Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven, having a light like unto a stone most precious, clear as crystal, and having no need of sun or moon because the glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb was the light thereof. This holy city of Truth was founded on twelve foundations inscribed with the names of the twelve apostles and adorned with every precious stone; signifying all the things of doctrine from the sense of the letter of the Word, in their order. All states of the Church, however wise and however simple, are based alike on these sacred ultimates and are marshaled therein for a common progress.

V. Heredity, Moral Growth, And Repentance

Man's Evil Heredity

Among the truths which are openly taught and constantly stressed even in the literal sense of Scripture, is the truth concerning man's need of repentance. Isaiah the prophet exhorted his people, Cease to do evil, learn to do well. The Lord instructed His disciples to preach repentance and remission of sins to all nations. And the Writings state that repentance is the first thing of the church with man. But in the Writings these truths which make up the practical message in all former revelations are brought together into a doctrine which explains the reasons why repentance is so necessary, and the stages by which it can be accomplished.

The teaching of the New Church is, that at this day man is born to evils of every kind, and that, unless he begins to remove them by actual repentance, he remains in them and cannot be saved. Unless man performs repentance, he remains in the sins into which he was born (@TCR 520; @AR 224[6]).

The sins into which man is born do not mean sins in the sense of final guilt. It is indeed said that everyone has the guilt of evil from heredity, because guilt is predicated of the will; and the hereditary will is evil, and man feels it as his own (@CL 448, 493e). But the expression refers back to the old Christian dogma of original sin, which supposed that Adam's sin caused all his descendants to be cursed in the eyes of God, and to be held equally guilty for the trespass of their progenitor. To offset this belief, some Christians have instead insisted that every soul is born pure and innocent and [?undermined?undetermined?] towards either sin or holiness.

Between these two views the Writings take a middle ground which recognizes that no man is responsible for his hereditary nature nor condemned on account of it, but that nonetheless hereditary evils exist as tendencies or inclinations which are derived not from the transgression of Adam but from the evils which parents and ancestors have confirmed in themselves and made their second nature, and which have not been modified or [?received?] by repentance. These inclinations will persist and will even accumulate in their posterity unless shunned as sins. And they will be appropriated by a man and be made his own if the man sees that they are evils and yet defends them and does not resist them. Evils are imputed to a man as guilt only so far as he does them both from his understanding and from his will. And then these evils become actual evils.

At this day the race has become infected with hereditary evils to the point that the sensual and natural degrees of his mind are utterly perverse in their reactions, even from birth. But it is also true that the inmost soul and the unconscious interior or spiritual degrees of his mind are still in Divine order. These interior degrees with man are not opened unless he is regenerated, yet they give every one the faculty to think truth and to will good and thus to become civil and moral and rational and eventually to repent and become reformed.

Man's evil heredity lies hidden during infancy, being veiled by the charming innocence of ignorance. But gradually it manifests itself, sometimes to man's own surprise, as a delight which arises when evil befalls some one else. It is of heredity to love one's self in preferences to another, to wish evil to others

if they do not give honor to one's self, to perceive delight in revenge, and to love the world above the things of heaven (@AC 4317).

The vicious cycle of selfish will must be broken if man is ever to obtain the lasting happiness of heaven. It can be broken only from a force outside of man; and this is the force of truth; truth which man learns by stages and degrees, and which build up in him an understanding of what is right and wrong. The whole process of education has for its object to enable man to develop a new will not derived from selfishness or from the native loves of what he at first regards as his proprium (own), but a will derived from truth. The understanding of the child gradually begins to restrain the selfish will.

This is the great marvel of human life. Animals have no power to change the ruling affections into which they are born. Even though they can be tamed and trained, they cannot lift themselves above their natural affections. The end of man's education is that he might willingly receive new affections from the Lord. But since these new affections are quite opposite to his hereditary inclinations, the processes of education and reformation are long and arduous, and are marked from the first by repeated inward struggles between evil and good, or between the perverse natural man and the developing of spiritual character.

Man's Moral Development

Man is born corporeal and sensual. The appetites and impulses of his body dominate him. And as long as this is the case, he is living an almost animal life, and would continue to do so unless he were taught and trained by others. But this training by which he is fitted for life in the human family is at first very superficial and does not change his will. It is effected by appeals to his self-love, by fears and penalties, by rewards, and by the promise of a gratification of his various instincts. He learns to compel himself from the love of rewards and the dread of punishment. He learns how to get along with others by falling in with the demands of customs and obeying those in authority, he becomes mannerly and orderly, and conforms to social disciplines. He does as others do, whether this be good or bad. He forms habits, and takes pride in them. He enjoys the praise and approbation of others, and grows in self-respect.

But as he advances in age and becomes less dependent upon others; he feels resentful of the bondage of customs, and seeks a greater freedom and greater authority at least over his own life. Since his understanding has also grown in knowledge and judgment, he seeks to think for himself and decide for himself what is best and most advantageous. He initiates habits of his own choice, and seeks for self-expression. This may lead him to become a social rebel and a criminal. But if he retains his own common sense, he will develop something of a sense of moral responsibility by which he will recognize his duties as well as his rights. Thus he becomes a moral man.

This is the story of the normal development of all men from infancy to adult age. And this gradual adjustment to society can be achieved apart from any recognizable religious influence. It can take place among pagans and unbelievers as well as among Christians. It does not involve any real repudiation of self-love or of the hereditary will. For it is to the advantage of everyone to become civil and moral, in order to enjoy the confidence and friendship and favor of others. [? The reasonable man

wishes to forego these advantages of the moral life. ?] Yet if self-love is the dominant motive within, the moral life is but a cloak - a veneer of civilization which is for this world only. Below the surface, precariously restrained, there surge still the passions of the proprium: the bitter envies, the lusts of revenge, the sensitive prides, the lingering hatreds, which would love to break forth into open evils, and do so from time to time so far as prudence permits, or so far as they can be indulged in secret or without severe social consequences. Inwardly, therefore, the evil man is not in delight except when in the fantasies of his imagination. There is no peace, saith the Lord, for the wicked.

The Functions of Remains and Natural Good

Yet even the attainment of superficial human good by the self-control of moral life is not from man's hereditary nature, but from truth. And truth, natural intelligence and reason, are gifts of God. They stem from the inborn faculties of freedom and rationality. And they develop on the basis of those secret states of infancy which the Writings call remains of good and truth - states of delight stored interiorly in the mind when the man is unaware and when he is surrounded by attending angels. These states of remains are the first beginnings of man's understanding, and are later reinforced by instruction in religious truths. They are, like all truths, loaned to man, and man thinks from them feeling as if he thought from himself. Therefore they give him freedom to resist selfish impulses, and to curb his evil will by rational and moral controls. Through them man can also receive, in the inmosts of his thought, an influx of the love of truth, which can serve as the seed of a possible regeneration, of a new motivation, a new will.

Yet remains by themselves are powerless to introduce truths into the mind. Fortunately, hereditary evils, during infancy and childhood, are usually covered over by many natural goods or apparent virtues which are also derived from parents or ancestors, and which are kindred to the good characteristics seen in many animals. Some persons are born gentle and meek, some courageous, some generous, some affectionate; some have more prudence or mere curiosity, or more modesty, or more perseverance, or more patience, than others. These traits are not virtues in themselves, for they can be turned to evil and falsity with great readiness. They may show up even in the worst cases. Self-love is concealed within. Yet such natural goods are useful in furnishing the external incentives for learning truths both civil and moral, and spiritual; and they also temper each other so that man may develop balanced moral virtues as his rational mind begins to take over control. They are therefore called mediate goods, since they serve as a means for acquiring spiritual truths and, through these, genuine goods, which are spiritual.

It is not to be thought that the mere learning of spiritual truths makes a man spiritual. Natural affection, such as curiosity or the love of knowing, introduces truth into the memory and perhaps into the thought. It may even cause a man to comply with all the external life of religion, like the rich young ruler who came to the Lord as to a notable philosopher and asked - as an academic question - how he was to obtain eternal life. He had obeyed the commandments pertaining to the moral life from his youth up. One Gospel tells that the Lord beholding him, loved him. Morality is in itself a beautiful and lovable thing. And the young man was a perfect example of the moral virtues, the ideal citizen of this world: honorable, accomplished, polite, loyal, responsible, amiable. Seemingly, he lacked nothing; nor

did he seem to know of any lacks. He went away sorrowful when the Lord told him to give away all his possessions to the poor and come and follow Him, and he would have treasure in heaven!

The moral life, without a spiritual good to inspire it, is but a purposeless, transient thing, a means without an end, a candle that has not been lit. They that are whole need not a physician. But the Lord came to heal the poor in spirit, and to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance. In a way, it is more difficult for a man of moral perfection or who is endowed with a good natural disposition to recognize his interior lacks than for those whose hereditary evils are more open or less under control to see their more obvious faults. Natural goods and moral training are unreliable indices to man's real character. They may hide an inward pride, a self-sufficiency, an unspoken contempt of others, a resistance to the leading of heaven. Natural amiability is fickle, like a feather in the wind, easily misled to approve of evil or evade the real issues of spiritual responsibility. Here we see one of many reasons why hereditary evils are permitted gradually to crop out as man grows up, so that he may be led towards repentance.

Repentance

Let it be clear from the outset that Repentance is not the mere suppression of evil. A merely moral man can suppress his evils because they offend others whose good opinion he courts and whose welfare is tied in with his own. Grosser evils are frequently shunned even by a wicked man because they are ugly, and go counter to his own particular natural goods or temperamental tastes. One's own more favored evils are often repressed from fear, and may lie for years under the surface of the mind, awaiting an opportunity to satisfy their lust. If they are disguised by pretended sincerity, cunning and duplicity, they turn into deceit or hypocrisy which eat out the inmost marrows of the natural mind and even violate the remains which were provided for man's salvation.

The only safeguard against such repressions is Repentance, which begins by the recognition of evils for what they are. And this cannot be done unless evils are seen not only as acts contrary to the laws of nations, nor merely as inconvenient faults of character, but as sins against God. Every nation has laws similar to those which are given in the Word of God. But in the Word the ten commandments were given to the chosen people of Israel with great miracles and were written by the finger of the Jehovah Himself as His law. The evils therein forbidden are to be shunned by the church as sins against Him. These commandments are thus the laws of religion which are to be obeyed for the sake of salvation. They are the covenant between God and man, the terms and conditions under which man can receive Divine protection. And the first of the two tables of the decalogue explicitly shows man's relation to the Lord who alone is to be worshiped, whose name must not be taken in vain, and whose Sabbath must be kept holy. The second table lists the general evils against the neighbor, evils which are also to be shunned as evils against the Lord.

The Lord makes this covenant with man because unless evils are shunned as sins against Him they are not removed from man's heart. It is a fundamental teaching of the new Church that every genuine good is a derivative from the love to the Lord, and that every evil has its source in the love of self. To love the Lord above all else and the neighbor as oneself, is the burden of all the law and the prophets.

"He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me", said the Lord. To love the Lord is to love His law, His truth, His way, His order. For therein does He manifest Himself. Love to the Lord and towards the neighbor is in reality a love of the good and truth which come from the Lord and which He has provided. It is a one with the love of uses. It includes a love of the Word, a love of truth, of goodness, sincerity, innocence, and justice for their own sakes, and a life according to them.

It is plain that no evil can be finally renounced unless it is held as contrary to these things - truth, justice, goodness - and as opposed to the Divine end in creation. If not so regarded, an evil is merely set aside as important, and may be restored when convenient.

Repentance can begin only after it has been learnt what sin is. This everyone is taught from childhood. Young people learn it from their parents and masters, and also from the decalogue, which is the first book for all in Christendom. Progressively afterwards it is learnt from preachings and doctrine, and from instruction at home, and in fullness from the reading of the word; and, besides, from civil laws of justice. For the evil of sin is nothing but evil against the neighbor, which is also an evil against God (@TCR 525).

But this knowledge of the meaning of sin does not become affective unless a man explores the acts of his life and sees whether he has done any such thing, in secret or in public. If he then becomes conscious of some sin, and abstains from it, even through fear of eternal punishment, his heart is opened for the first time to the instruction and edifying oratory of the clergy, which formerly fell upon deaf ears or lodged only in the memory (Ibid.).

Some are incapable of self-examination. The impious, those diseased in mind and body, those who are confirmed in the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, and also those who are as yet children or so very simple as to be unable to reflect, cannot explore their own motives. The Reformed Churches, in their doctrine, discourage self-examination as dangerous, and advocate instead that man should confess himself to be altogether mere sin; believing that salvation is an immediate act of Divine mercy in which man has no part, and that he has no free agency in spiritual things (@TCR 516).

The Writings, on the other hand, teach that man must separate himself from his evils, as of himself. It is true that man is, as to his proprium, wholly evil. But this acknowledgment - the oral confession that he is a sinner - even a devil can make if threatened by informal torments. For its only in the thought; and the contrition that man might then feel as an emotional wave soon passes away, and man returns into his former state. But besides, such confession has no real meaning to men unless he has discovered specific evils in himself. And if he is truly penitent, his anxiety then is to find strength to resist these evils and disown them.

Actual repentance is to examine oneself, to know and acknowledge one's sins, to make supplication to the Lord, and to begin a new life. Confession of sin induces in men the breakdown of his pride and self-reliance. His proprium is shamed and humbled in the light of the understanding of truth, and stands convicted of evil. Truth is put above man's own will. Yet man feels unable, by his own strength, to remove the evils which he has unmasked. It cannot be done by thought alone, or by truth alone, or faith alone. The power must come from the Lord. And for this power to desist he now supplicates the

Lord - the Lord who in His Human in the world fought all the hells and overcame them. This power can come only from love, love to the Lord, love of justice, mercy, truth and use; which then inflow into the truths that man has learnt and makes them active and strong. For power resides in truths only when these are vivified by love.

Love, inflows. From freedom, man procures for himself truths of faith, and thus learns of his inward state and can judge of it in the light of truth. But love is not thus procured. It comes as a gift, as a result of earnest prayer and entreaty. We do not need to ask the Lord for the remission of sins, but for the help and strength, the continued inclination and affection, to resist our evil and to do what is good. If our prayer is sincere, then to ask is to receive. The sin is then removed. Not abolished, but removed from the active sphere of our life, from our inner intentions and from the purposes of our mind.

True Repentance is to explore not only the acts of one's life, but also the intentions of one's will. Man's earliest efforts at repentance are aimed at breaking evil and immoral habits, desisting from acts of cruelty, from dishonest conduct, from lying words. Many can go no further than this which is called an easier kind of repentance. When they harbor an intention to do some evil, they bethink themselves and say, this would be a sin, I will not do it. The temptation then passes and its further entrance is prevented. All who do good from religion, avoid actual evils. Yet how seldom do they reflect on the interior things which are of the will, believing rather that because they do good works they are not in any evils; as if the good covered the evils and annulled them (@TCR 535).

But the first thing of charity is to shun evils. Evils are like poisonous weeds which must be pulled up by the roots. The roots are unearthed only by interior repentance, by exploration into the intentions of the will as these take form in the thoughts. The roots of evil are the love of ruling over all, and the love of possessing the goods of all. These loves are hidden, like alluring sirens or like hydras with a hundred heads. They are disguised with deceptive cloaks of justice and even piety. They may call more loudly to the little than to the great, and charm the poor more than the rich. But unless man explores the affections of these two infernal loves, and traces them to their origin, he cannot be elevated from the natural will, in which his hereditary and actual evils reside, into a spiritual will by which the Lord can reform and regenerate the whole man (@TCR 533).

Interior repentance is repugnant to the natural man. Those in the church who from childhood have thought little about eternal life and have plunged themselves into worldly ambitions, and then have performed only an external repentance, can be reformed, but not regenerated (AC; Exodus 21). Those who delay repentance, find it increasingly difficult. Those who neglect repentance entirely, at length are so hardened that they do not know what damnable evil is or what saving good is. But those who have begun to practice repentance find it easier with each attempt (@TCR 561,564).

Repentance is the beginning of the long process of reformation and regeneration. Yet in the progress of life, now and ever more interior states will arise which must be founded in the natural man. Each new state must therefore be introduced by a new repentance. Interior evils - evils in new and subtler forms - are thus brought to light, which must in turn be combated to give place for new natural affections which spring from spiritual loves.

VI. Reformation And Temptation

Reformation: a Preparation for Regeneration

The Lord gives the doctrine of Regeneration as a fundamental teaching of religion. Except a man be born again, He told Nicodemus, he cannot see the kingdom of God. But Nicodemus did not understand, and objected that this was an impossibility; a man could not enter a second time into his mothers womb and be born! Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?.... If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?" (John 3).

The Lord spoke to the Jews in parables, using earthly similes to describe spiritual things. The Psalmist had prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a firm spirit within me." The Lord compared this creation of a new heart and spirit to a new birth, the formation of a new ruling love, a new personality, an utterly different character, based not on self will but upon truth, which He symbolized by water and especially by the water of Baptism: "Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

The heavenly things involved in this comparison are now laid open in the Heavenly Doctrine of the New Church. It is shown that there are actually two states or two processes by which man's spirit is created anew. Both of them together are sometimes called Regeneration. Yet when considered separately the first state is to be called Reformation, and only the second state is to be named Regeneration. Reformation is described as a progress from a natural state towards a spiritual state, or an ascent by truths to the good of truth. In the second state, properly called Regeneration, the good thus formed descends into the natural man so that man becomes spiritual-natural, and thinks truths from good (@TCR 576). Reformation is thus primarily concerned with the understanding; Regeneration is primarily concerned with the will (@TCR 587).

Yet these two states are parts of one whole process. We are assured that a man who in this life commences a spiritual reformation, will after death be able to conclude the process by entering the state of regeneration (@TCR 571). It is noted that if a man, by combat against evil as sins, has in this world acquired something spiritual, be it ever so little, he is saved; and his uses afterwards grow as a grain of mustard seed develops into a tree (@DLove 17).

By Reformation is not meant a merely moral adjustment to society, or an external ordering of one's life whereby evils are suppressed as a matter of prudence. What is meant is spiritual Reformation, which begins with Repentance.

The state of reformation is thus the beginning of regeneration and will eventually mature into something of regenerate life, if not in this life, yet in the next. It is therefore said that since all mankind has been redeemed and given spiritual freedom, every man can be regenerated and saved, each according to his state (@TCR 479f). The Lord with His Divine good and truth is present with every man (Ibid). The means of reformation and salvation are provided for every one; for Christians, in the Word, and for the gentiles in their religions which all teach of a God and have precepts which in some

manner distinguish right from wrong. In whatever heresy a man may be as to his understanding, he may yet be saved if only he shuns his evils as sins, and does not confirm heretical falsities in himself (@DP 259[3]). Hence all may begin something of reformation, if they will; yet they are reformed and regenerated in very different ways. Within the church, the manner of regeneration depends on whether the man is simple or learned, what his occupation or office may be, whether he is inquisitive into the internals of the Word or only into its externals, whether he is born into natural good or into natural evil, and whether or not he has from infancy immersed himself into the vanities of the world. Still differently are those regenerated who die as children and are brought up in heaven.

All can be regenerated, each according to his state. This state must be one of willingness and cooperation. So far as it is not, progress is not only arrested or delayed as it can be through no fault of his own, but impeded. Whether the truth which man knows be much or little in extent, the quality of his response to it determines how far he can go in the way of regeneration. And this measure of response manifests itself already in man's reformation. After death it will decide into what degree of heaven he is able to enter.

The Arcana Coelestia describes the regeneration of a man of the spiritual church as follows:

He is first instructed in the truths of faith and then he is held by the Lord in an affection of truth. The good of faith, which is charity towards the neighbor, is at the same time insinuated into him, but in such a way that he is scarcely aware of it; for it lies hidden in the affection of truth, and this to the end that the truth which is of faith may be conjoined with the good which is of charity. As time goes on, the affection of truth ... increases, and the truth is regarded for the sake of the end, that is, for the sake of good, or ... for the sake of life, and this more and more. Thus is truth insinuated into good, and when this takes place the man imbues himself with the good of life according to the truth that has been insinuated; and so he acts, or seems to himself to act, from good. Previous to this time, the truth of faith was the principal, but afterwards the good of life becomes so. When this is the case the man is regenerate. But he is regenerate according to the quality and the amount of the truth that has been insinuated in good; and when truth and good act as one, he is regenerate according to the quality and the amount of the good... (@AC 2979).

This teaching shows that regeneration is essentially a marriage of good and truth in man's mind. Truth is received, first because it is truth, then because it has good as an end; this good then visibly shows itself in the truth and man acts and thinks from it. Man is regenerate not from truth, nor from good, but from these two so far as they are conjoined.

It has been shown that Repentance is the first state of the church with man; and Reformation and Regeneration are said to follow after Repentance. Repentance is a shunning of evils. But Reformation is a positive state - a building up of the understanding by means of truths; and Regeneration is a consequent creation of a new will and a unified personality. Yet in a certain aspect, Reformation and Regeneration are both involved in the idea of Repentance. For the first step in Repentance is to acquire an understanding of truth, to begin self-examination, and to refrain from willing evils; which things are also the signs of Reformation. And the second step in Repentance is to fight against evils and

remove them from one's natural life - which is also the very characteristic of Regeneration. Each general stage in man's progress requires a new repentance, a new reformation, and an eventual spiritual rebirth.

But although these two states - Reformation and Regeneration - are in a manner involved from the first in Repentance itself, they also show up as two quite distinct states which follow in order. Reformation may be compared to a state of instruction, training, servitude and humble obedience; such as that of children, pupils, or servants. Regeneration can be likened to the state of an adult or a master, who enjoys full independence and acts from his own will and understanding.

The State of Reformation

The state of Reformation is a state of instruction. Most of those who are connected with a church are indeed instructed in truths and goods of spiritual life in childhood, and begin to be reformed; but as soon as they reach adolescence they are likely to suffer themselves to be carried away by the world. Thus they may never reach the state of real Repentance (@AC 5280). There is no real Reformation unless the truths which man has learnt are elevated into something of the light of heaven.

It is indeed provided that every man, good or evil alike, shall have the faculty of elevating his understanding by means of truths almost into the light in which the angels of heaven are, so that he may see what he ought to will. Every man is also furnished with the germ or beginning of a new will, through the celestial states of innocence and love which are insinuated in tender years, and are called remains (@AC 1555). These shy and elusive states withdraw themselves as the child grows up, yet they remain as an unconscious plane through which the Lord can operate and which can be stirred up to favor truths and to vivify them with affection - thus producing an affection of truth from which man can act should he so wish (@AC 1050, 1906, 561, 5342).

This spiritual affection of truth is the essential thing in the state of Reformation. For it thirsts for spiritual truths. It rebuilds the rational mind, reconstructs it in a city of truth, a citadel of defense against the irresponsible whims of the man's conceit and the more formidable assaults of false doctrines, worldly principles, and sensual imaginations.

Without such an affection of truth, the rational mind is the prey to all the phantasies of the proprium. Man's self-will uses it as a tool for false reasonings which it may excuse its evil delights and evade the responsibility to view the states of the mind in the light of heaven and of truth.

It is said that man comes into the state of Reformation when he begins to think about God and eternal life and to ponder about the delights of heaven; not merely with a view to personal bliss, but with sobering reflection that there is such a thing as sin and a need for self-examination and preparation for spiritual life (@DP 83). If childhood and youth pass by without any earnest meditation about salvation, and man's thought becomes absorbed in worldly ambitions, then the spiritual affection of truth cannot be insinuated into him. He may lead a good moral life. He may accept the truths of the doctrine of his church, and may - because of his hereditary bent - come to study and even teach such truths. Yet his love of truth will be natural, and will have its relish from the honor or gain which it

brings. He is affected by the truths of faith principally for the sake of self, and only secondarily for the sake of the church (@AC 8981, 8977).

Such a man can indeed be reformed, in a more adult age. He can take his place in the church, can confirm himself in its teachings, and support its uses. And he can thus enter heaven after death, although he will remain upon its outskirts - or in the natural degree of heaven. But because his reformation was delayed, and many opportunities were neglected, no ground was prepared for a genuine regeneration. He had to be brought to the point of repentance by the pressure of external circumstances.

The Arcana Coelestia describes this state when explaining the laws about the Hebrew man servants. When the loves of self and the world have been enrooted and indulged from an early age, they prevent any spiritual good from being conjoined to the truths of one's faith, for those loves are repugnant to charity. Therefore charity can adjoin itself in such a man only when worldly loves are lulled - as in states of sickness, anxiety, misfortune, or disappointment. Man may then become broken-hearted and humbled, and begin to reflect on the futility of his life and on his own evils, and so turn to the church and its doctrine with a new resolution. He then comes to feel the sphere of charity and is affected by it sufficiently to confirm his faith. Yet as soon as his conditions improve, he is likely to slide back into a worldly state, as to his manner of thinking and willing. No spiritual love is established within him; yet from time to time he is brought back into the remembrance of spiritual goods, and as often as he remembers, he can act from an obedience to spiritual good (@AC 8981, 8989, 8990).

The quality of such obedience is imaged into the state of children, who have no established love for doing what they feel is their duty, yet - from the love which is called obedience, a love of the persons of their parents or an admiration of their masters - they obey, as often as they happen to remember! With the men of the external church, the same is the case. They see their duty, grudgingly, and when they do it, it is with something of pride, merit, and self-satisfaction, which makes them feel as if they did it from their hearts, or from freedom. They may indeed take the lead in benevolent works, yet enjoy little spiritual perception (@Char 210).

Obedience is the state not of free men but of servants. In the other life, those who are only reformed in this world are brought into combats, infestations, and perhaps temptations. It is then shown how far they have acted from their own freedom, and how far they can - as if of themselves, and of their own initiative - resist evils. If by worldly loves they have made further progress impossible, they remain servants, remain natural, remain in the state of reformation. In a sense, their vastations and the consequent unification of their personalities as they are prepared for the natural heaven, might be likened to a regeneration. But they are never truly regenerated; they never attain the spiritual good of truth, or the affection of spiritual truth and good. They become perfected more and more in obedience to faith and in moral life, although they remain forever spiritual dependents (@LJPost 343; @AC 8987, 8991). And in this they place their happiness.

The state of Reformation is not intended as an end in itself. If it is not arrested and delayed, but develops normally, the state of Regeneration will follow. The positive object of Reformation is that man may receive an affection of truth for the sake of truth, and thereby furnish his understanding with

spiritual truths.

It follows from this that no one can be reformed in states which do not spring from rationality and liberty (@DP 130-144). Man is neither free nor rational if possessed by fear or if his mind is diseased or excessively disturbed by sickness or misfortune, or if he is in ignorance or in a state when he is blinded by some passion. In such states he may indeed confirm the truths to which he has already assented, but he cannot enter upon reformation (@DP 142; @AC 8981).

Reformation requires not only knowledge of spiritual truth but an elevation of the thought into spiritual light. And this is possible only in a rational mind, and from an affection of truth. It is also taught that man is reformed by the admission of his thoughts into the societies of heaven, although neither man nor angels are aware that this occurs, since man's thought is natural and the thought of the angels is spiritual, and those make one only by correspondence (@AE 1093[e]).

Temptation

As reformation progresses, man is held by the Lord, as to his internal, in good and in truth. But as to his external, he is let into his evils and falsities, consequently among infernal spirits who wish to live in man's evil delights. For the knowledges of faith have usually been introduced into man's mind by natural and hereditary affections which stem from evil loves. Spiritual truth cannot be conjoined with such loves. Such truth, therefore, is withdrawn from the conscious thought whenever evil and corporeal loves are excited and begin to swamp the mind with all manner of falsities; and it appears to man as if his truths are taken away and exterminated (@AC 5270, 5280). The affections of truth (which man has from remains of innocence) are then aroused by the attendant angels, and he feels himself in great anxiety, and as if inundated by a sensual lumen in which truths do not appear.

This state is a spiritual temptation. It has nothing in common with the tribulations and sufferings which man may feel on account of worldly misfortunes, although it may be aggravated by such natural anxieties. Temptations occur when man's faith and love (in which he places his spiritual life) are assaulted, as by an influx of scandals against truths and goods, a shaking of his beliefs in the Lord and the Word, a drawing forth to remembrance of evils felt or committed, or of falsities which have been entertained. And this pain of conscience and this interior anxiety drives him toward a despair, because he supposes that the states which are aroused in his natural mind are from his own interiors, and because he is unable, at such a time, to think clearly from his own faith or to will from his own love (@NJHD 196).

Temptations are combats waged by spiritual forces of good and evil which are not perceptible to man. But so far as the man is concerned it is fought out between truths and falsities in his own mind. After the temptation is over, man's proprium is humbled and subdued, and the truths which man thought he had lost, return to greater effulgence, and have received a deeper meaning. They return adjoined no longer to those external, natural motives of pride and vanity which introduced them into his memory, but conjoined to their own spiritual affections; and thus the whole mind becomes suffused with a profound happiness and consolation. In this lies the reason why temptations are necessary in the course of man's reformation. Truths must be separated from his mind for a time, in order to be

divorced from the natural goods that are mixed with evils and falsities. Temptations are therefore likened to the fermentations by which the must of grapes is purified and the wine is separated from the dregs.

Temptations are thus one of the means by which man is reformed as to his understanding or rational mind, or as to the interiors of his natural mind. Such temptations are repeated at intervals until man becomes regenerate. They are permitted only with those who can be regenerated, i.e., those whose spiritual mind can be opened. It is through temptations that this degree of the mind is opened, and that man passes from the state of Reformation to that of Regeneration.

Yet no man is saved on account of temptations, for there are some who undergo temptations and who yield in them. He is certainly not saved by reason of temptations if he places anything of merit in them, or feels a preeminence to others because he has appeared to have conquered in them. The temptations in which a man overcomes, are attended with a belief that all others are more worthy than himself, and that he is infernal rather than heavenly; ... and if after temptations he comes into thoughts contrary to these, it is an indication that he has not overcome. Or it may indicate that more grievous temptations are to follow until he has been reduced to the wholesome truth that he has merited nothing (@AC 2273). In temptations man indeed fights against evils and falsities as of himself, but believing that he fights from the Lord. Unless he believes that the victory is the Lord's, he has only undergone an external temptation which does not cause faith and charity to take root.

Man may yield in temptations, and then would confirm falsities and evils. For never is man in more potent freedom, and never is the Lord closer to him, than during such trials. The temptations in which man succumbs, are those which he himself courts and invites. The Lord guards man's freedom, and as it were yields to man's insistence. Yet in a thousand ways He protects man against premature temptations, permitting only those in which man is able, if willing, to overcome.

For this reason few at this day are admitted into any spiritual temptation. Those who are not in any good of faith, or in any affection of truth, or in any charity towards the neighbor, would at once succumb. But these are not tempted, for there is no good love to be assaulted. A wicked man may suffer when his selfish ambitions and worldly loves are attacked; and all men feel sorrows or worries about natural wrongs, unjust punishments, hurts, or persecutions; yet the issue of eternal life is not there in question.

Those who are ignorant of spiritual truths, and thus children and pagans, cannot have spiritual temptations. Neither can those be so tempted who are in falsities of religion.

He who is tempted in the world is not tempted after death (@AR 185). But all who have lived well in the world according to their religion, yet have been in falsities of doctrine and therefore have not been admitted into temptations in this life, are instructed after death, and then in differing measure undergo temptations or vastations by which falsities or appearances are dispelled and genuine truths implanted, and thus may normally progress into their own degree of regenerate life. On the other hand, the wicked, who are in falsities of evil, are not tempted by evil or falsity but are drawn to the delights of hell like a bee to honey (@AE 474,452).

Temptations, in which men compel themselves to resist evil and its falsities, in time are displaced by an

internal aversion to evil. Evil then loses its power to tempt, and can only continue to infest through appearances and fallacies (@AC 7474). Only after man becomes regenerate can he rest from his labors. The life of heaven is called a Sabbath, for there the affections of truth and good keep evil at a distance (@AE 1164).

The result of the whole process of Reformation, with its struggles and fluctuations, is the establishment of the good of truth in man's rational mind, and its gradual conversion into spiritual good or the love called Charity. When the good of Charity - the welfare of the neighbor, the human race, and the Church - comes to be regarded as the end for the sake of which spiritual truths are loved, the entire state of man is reversed, and his point-of-view becomes that of heaven. He begins to think truths from good. He no longer acts as a servant, from obedience to the doctrine of faith which he has confirmed, but from a love of the good which the truth contains. This end of good is the new soul from which man is born anew, to become a new man.

VII. Regeneration, And The Life Of Charity

The New Birth

It is a universal truth that there can be no generation or birth of anything new, except from a marriage, or a conjunction. This applies also to man's spiritual life. The earlier stages of man's spiritual development - those stages which the Writings embrace within the term Reformation - all look forward to a marriage of good and truth within his mind. Reformation begins with instruction in the truths of religion and proceeds through states of temptation until an influx of good (which is made possible because of hidden remains) is received in the understanding and manifests itself there as a new purpose, an end of good. From this new purpose the truths of the mind are loved not only for themselves but for the sake of the uses which they promise and the new life which they make possible.

The love of truth for its own sake - which characterizes the state of Reformation - is the introductory conjunction of good with truth. It is a virginal state, a betrothal state, not yet a marriage. Truth is loved for its beauty and form, its sincerity and grace, its fair symmetry and selfless, innocent clarity. But when truth is loved for the end of good that is in it, there comes into being a marriage which has procreation as an end.

So far as good and truth have become married within a man's rational mind, so far the process of Reformation has produced its final result, and the process of Regeneration can commence. Yet man cannot perceive when his spiritual life has matured to this point. Repentance and Reformation are both states of which man can have some knowledge, for repentance is a deliberate effort and reformation involves the forming of a delight in truth and a conscious endeavor to live according to it. But Regeneration takes its rise in the depths of the rational mind, and what is there transacted is only most vaguely perceived. He can know something of its state only by attending to the ends which he proposes to himself. If he gives more care for himself than for his neighbor and the Lord, he can be sure that he is in no state of regeneration: but if he studies what he can do for the neighbor and the Lord more than what he can do for his own good, than there is hope (@AC 3570).

It is therefore said that the rational degree of the mind is the first to be regenerated; since it enjoys light from heaven and can therefore receive truths and goods sooner and more easily than the natural and sensual parts of the mind (@AC 4612, 5688, 3286, 3822, 3469, 7442). This can be confirmed by the fact that the understanding sees each of its objectives, and intends it and plans it, long before it can be carried out in its complete form. Similarly, in regeneration, that part of man which is closer to the body and the world is less easily constrained to render obedience to the internal man. Only after much stubborn resistance is overcome, after a considerable length of time and by means of many intermediate states into which man has to be introduced, will the old states of the natural man give way and allow the birth of the new man.

The new thing that is formed by the Lord in the rational is a new will and a new understanding. These are also called Conscience, and are compared to the cortical substances and interior nervous tissues which are first differentiated in the substance of the embryo before any other organs take form. But the doctrine assures us, if you are willing to believe it, that by regeneration man is not only furnished

with a new will and a new understanding, but with a new body for his spirit (@DWis 4). This is not surprising, seeing that the spiritual body of a man which he is to use after death, is actually formed in the material body, and is formed by the truths and goods or spiritual states that he receives within the civil and moral things of his natural life (@TCR 583).

It is noted in the Arcana that whatever in man's life is not born from the rational is devoid of the living human quality (@AC 3494). The regenerate life, from the rational, thus takes gradual form within man and the tender body of his new character is a new natural which is natural good from the rational. This is external good, obedient to the ends of rational good. It gradually displaces selfish affections and evil appetites in the natural man, and arouses a hunger for knowledge and doctrine and a delight in various spiritual uses. The embryonic body of the new spirit is being constructed by truths, as by a tissue of living fibers. It feeds upon the knowledges and serviceable affections of the natural mind as the unborn babe draws nourishment from the life-blood of its mother. But let us not imagine that this spiritual gestation can go on without temptations and anxieties - anticipations of the coming birth-pangs - and of the new responsibilities which men must assume.

In a sense - and to all appearances - the regenerating man is both father and mother, and both parent and offspring. His spiritual mind seemingly acts as the father and his natural mind serves as the mother. The analogies could be drawn even more closely. Yet in reality, man is but a medium through which the spiritual character is formed. The truth which serves as a seed for the new generation, is in reality derived from the Word of the Lord, and only its husks and imperfect clothings, and the appearances through which it is conveyed, are from man. In this truth, the prolific power for spiritual life is the good which comes from the Lord. The regenerate are therefore said to receive the power to become the sons of God, and to be born not of the will of the flesh or the will of man, but of God (John 1:12,13). Call no man father upon earth!

And while the natural mind of man seems to nourish and protect the incipient spirit and to bring it forth, it must be realized that the natural mind has nothing of its own to offer except resistance and perversity and evil. Whatever can serve to nourish the spirit comes from the doctrine of the Church which has been confirmed in the natural mind. Man's natural mind - as to all its contents - is a reflection of the state, such as it is, of the Church, and the world outside of him. All the knowledge of man's memory comes from others, or from without. The real mother of man's spirit is the Church, and particularly the doctrine of the Church, which other men have drawn and communicated by their teaching and conversation. The church is the spiritual womb in which the regenerating states of individuals are protected and nourished. It extends its guardian spheres of charity, and is concerned with feeding the spirits of its children with the fruits of its own gathering - with the life-blood of spiritual truth in forms of interpretative doctrine and traditional points-of-view, teachings of spiritual charity surcharged with the revealed truth as humanly received.

And in the beginning of regeneration, the spirit of man is most dependent on the Church's judgment as to what is true and what is false; what is useful for regeneration and what will prove a spiritual poison. This period of spiritual gestation is therefore sometimes classed in the Writings as a part of the process of Reformation. Man is not in real fact spiritually born anew until his faith is imbibed from the free air of heaven, that is, until he sees truths in the light of truth itself, sees them in the Word itself. His spiritual lungs must be opened; his own understanding must take over the work of purifying his

heart's desires as the lungs purify the blood.

The spiritual truth, or regeneration, involves therefore a certain separation from states which he has borrowed from the sphere of the church, and has used but never appropriated; truths which were misunderstood, because never perceived; traditional views which may be erroneous; practices which no longer serve the purposes of charity; or teachings which, though in themselves true, do not agree with his own specific loves and thus cannot as yet be part of his character. And besides, it is a birth into a sense of individual spiritual responsibility, which he thenceforth assumes ever more fully, even though he continues still to suckle gratefully at the breast of his spiritual Mother and later learns to walk by her side.

The New Life of Charity

So far, we have endeavored to picture how Regeneration comes about; using the symbolism which describes it as a new birth, which parallels the development of the states of man's spirit. But the Writings show that the new spirit seeks embodiment in the natural - seeks to express itself in the natural mind and in a new kind of life among other men in the natural world.

The natural mind, before regeneration, is under the sway of evil loves and is teeming with falsities and phantasies of evil and sensual passions. By regeneration, this natural mind is reordered, its evils, when shunned, are put away to give room for good natural affections. Yet the evils are not effaced, but are so removed as not to appear, and through love and wisdom the Lord forms new things in their place. The natural, and (with some few) the sensual, is reformed as to its voluntary or conscious reactions, so far as man consents and cooperates. The external of man then speaks and does what the internal man wills and loves (@DWis 4[e]; @TCR 533[e]; @AR 510).

Essentially, the reversal of state in the natural mind by regeneration has reference to the subordination of man's loves. For man from his birth is such that he can respond to three inflowing loves - the love of self, the love of the world, and the love of heaven. By the love of heaven is meant love to the Lord and love towards the neighbor, which both regard uses as ends. The love of the world is a love for all that delights the senses and makes life pleasant. The love of self means a hunger for fame and honor, and a desire to merit distinction and exercise power over others. If these loves are rightly subordinated, they all have something in common with charity and will regard uses as the end in life; the love of heaven, which regards spiritual uses, will make the head; the love of the world, which looks to civil or natural uses, will serve the spiritual as the body and its organs serve the brain; and the love of self, which performs domestic or corporeal uses for oneself and one's own, will serve as the feet, or a foundation for the rest (@TCR 394-405). It is only when the lower loves are made the ruling motive that they pervert man's life.

The life of charity, therefore, does not mean the elimination of all thought of the world of self. It does not mean an ascetic life which seeks to flee the world and its problems, nor a life devoted solely to prayer and contemplation. But it is a life which has respect to the revealed law that a man is not born for the sake of himself, but for the sake of others.

With this in view, the doctrine of charity teaches that every one must procure for himself and his family the necessities of life, provide food for his body and mind, in order to be in a position to perform uses to the neighbor. He is to show love to his neighbor, from charity looking to their real good.

But what is charity? Genuine charity, the Writings disclose, is to believe in the Lord, and from the Lord to love justice and do justice from judgment, acting justly and uprightly in all one's work (@TCR 459).

Let us note that justice must be exercised with judgment. Judge not from the appearance, the Lord said, but judge a righteous judgment (John 7:24). Judgment takes account of the neighbors' needs and considers consequences. Charity must be intelligent. It cannot act the same to all. A man without judgment may do evil by good deeds; and it is possible, by acts which appear as evil - as by punishing - to do good (@TCR 459). A man without judgment, may contract an [interior?] friendship for another without knowing his quality, and thus be seduced into a mental bondage which is difficult to break even after death (@TCR 446-449).

Therefore Charity regards every man as a neighbor, who is to be loved according to the quality of his good. Charity loves to promote good and truth, and this it loves in others. Hence there are kinds and degrees of charity. Only after death do the affections of a man's will and his consequent thoughts become clearly evident, yet here on earth the neighbor should be loved so far as he manifests good and acts sincerely in his uses. To love the good in others is to love the Lord who alone is the source of all good.

A child is loved for his innocence and obedience, youths and virgins for their moral virtues, a man for his justice and goodness. Each man is loved for the qualities which make him a form of use and thus of charity - for his judgment, learning, integrity and zeal, or for his courage, prudence, honesty and fidelity. Yet those can be loved spiritually whose virtues are seen to proceed from a spiritual conscience.

Since the love of the world and the love of self can [prompt to?] uses for society and family, therefore moral and civil good can be loved even where this is not from a love of the Lord. We can love our country for its civil and moral good even if that country appears to have no spiritual good that we can cherish; but this only so far as such external good is not directed to injure spiritual good (@Char 85-86). We can love other nations according to their religion and their customs, and according to their welfare, makes a one with that of our own land (@Char 87). To our own country we are tied by bonds of duty, and its good - its uses - must be consulted before any other, because it sustains the uses in which our charity finds expression.

Yet birth and kinship do not make a man the neighbor more than another; nor does proximity or education. For these relationships all spring from natural good (@Char 85).

Charity loves the spiritual good in a man - the good of religious life - above the moral good in him; and it regards his moral good above his civil good. For charity looks first of all to the welfare of a man's soul; and it knows that unless spiritual good is inwardly present within moral and civil virtues, the latter are merely of the external will and may be no more than animal good, and may indeed be evil, which cannot be loved (@Char 57ff).

Every individual, good or evil, is a neighbor, but each in a different sense and a different degree according to the good that is in him. But a society, community, or association of men, is a neighbor in a wider sense than an individual, and its welfare therefore must be consulted before that of the individual, in view of the fact that he who does good to a community does good to all its members (@TCR 412). The country is therefore the neighbor more than a society; and in the widest sense the human race itself is the neighbor that is to be loved (@Char 87ff).

The same distinctions are to be noted in the realm of spiritual good itself. Charity seeks above all to serve the welfare of the soul of the one who is loved. But how could this care of souls be served, except through the church and its offices by which the Divine Word and worship and instruction are maintained among men? The Church is therefore without comparison more the neighbor than even community or country, for on its welfare depends that of the whole human race. Still higher in the degrees of neighbor is the kingdom of the Lord, on earth and in heaven. The church as a human institution may at times depart from its high functions. But he who loves the kingdom of the Lord, loves the Lord above all things, and it is on such that the very life of the church also depends.

There has been much misunderstanding as to what the life of charity is and how a man should express his love for the neighbor. For frequently Charity is confused with the act of giving to the poor, or helping the needy. Such beneficence, when bestowed with prudence and judgment, and when it proceeds from a free and willing spirit untainted by any feeling of merit, may indeed spring from charity. But it is not in such acts that charity consists.

Charity itself is for a man to act justly, sincerely, and faithfully in the office, business or work of his calling, and with whomsoever he has any association (@TCR 422; @Char 158). This he cannot do unless he looks to the Lord and shuns evils as sins. For the first of charity is to shun evils, and the second is to do good. From love to the neighbor man has an interior affection of use which inwardly remains in him even when he is not in his uses, and which molds him into a form of charity.

This is charity itself, in which heavenly delight is being stored up. It is through his uses that he serves home and society, contributing to the common good and receiving from the community the rewards by which his uses can draw fresh life.

But there are, besides the duties of his office or work, many other obligations which all must fulfil of necessity, but which, by the regenerating man, are carried out with a willing heart, and therefore are felt as debts of charity. Thus there are public taxes and duties required by the commonwealth; commitments made to church or school, domestic duties to wife, or husband, parent, child, or servant; private debts, such as wages or rents, contracts and pledges, some being civil obligations and others moral obligations. In every case there are natural loves, such as patriotism, parental love, conjugal affection, friendship, and social amity, which support man in these duties and render them at least bearable. But with those who are in charity these debts are discharged in a happier state of mind, from the good will which they have for their fellow-men (@TCR 429ff).

To all appearance, the life of the regenerate man is therefore not very different from that of others. For a moral life, when lived from a spiritual conscience, is Charity. The life that leads to heaven is not any

harder than that of the worldling, and it is rooted in a spring of interior blessedness, because such a man sees the inward purpose of life. Nor did the regenerate man wait to perform the uses of life until he could feel that he was able to act from purely spiritual motives - from a pure love of God and without the aid of natural affections and without giving forethought for his own profit or support. For he knew that uses must be done, and that uses to the neighbor are more important than his own place in the kingdom of heaven.

Even those who love uses above self know that they must give thought to rest and diversion, lest their minds become dull and their bodies over strained. The life of charity need not be lacking in needful hours of recreation and social delights, when the mind descends and seeks pleasure in the harmonies of the senses, the graceful notions of the body or in the pleasant varieties of the imagination. But again, the mind imbued with charity chooses its pleasures accordingly. It may indulge in games or dances, in sports or reading, songs or theatricals, in jests and feasting, or in travel. Yet it does not wallow in unwholesome or degrading pleasures, does not seek the indecorous, nor glut itself until the body or mind is exhausted and unfit. Charity rests in its moments of recreation and is then filled with an interior sweetness, a fragrance which none but those who love uses can ever know; and before long this love of use is removed and urges the man back to his labors with greater zest (@Char 193).

The regenerate life has regard to use. Charity is to shun evil and to do good. Yet genuine charity comes from a love to the Lord, and therefore its life carries a sign which distinguishes it from a merely moral life which also regards the uses of charity.

This sign is Piety. For charity in the internal man is from love to the Lord, and this manifests itself in the externals of the mind by reflection upon one's evils, by thought and meditation concerning the Lord and eternal life, by an aversion to what is irreverent or unclean, and by that general mood and mental attitude of humiliation before what is holy, which leads to external worship. Worship is an attitude of mind, but also a correspondent state of the body, in that man kneels in prayer, gratefully receives the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, glorifies the Lord with songs, frequents public worship and listens with attention to sermons and instructions, reads the Word and seeks edification in the literature of the church, conversing with others on the problems of doctrine and spiritual life, instructing children and providing for home worship.

Such a life of devotion, even though it be begun by self-compulsion, marks man to be of the church, and represents the least that he can do for the furtherance of spiritual life among men, and for his own reformation. Such a life can of course be imitated by hypocrites, and is then insincere and false. But with the regenerate man, it is done from charity and love, and thus from an inward delight and an inner freedom.

The whole of regeneration looks to the purification of the natural man and the reduction of the natural into a correspondence with the spiritual and celestial things of the conscience of charity and the perceptions of love to the Lord. During the life of the body, the sensual resists and is seldom regenerated. But so far as a correspondence has been established by regeneration while on earth, the externals of the natural mind can in heaven be made more and more compliant and as it were transparent (@SE 2157f; @Dmin 4645f; @TCR 360). The regenerate man will then enter into the

enjoyment of the riches of the kingdom of his spiritual mind, and into the full sense of that interior and ineffable blessedness which on earth was never perceived because overshadowed by the confusions of worldly life.

VIII. The Conjugal Life 1 of 2

The Holiness of Marriage

It is a fundamental in New Church thinking to regard marriage as most holy. Marriages on earth are in the sight of the angels of heaven most holy because they are the seminaries (or nursery gardens) of the human race and thus also the seminaries of the heavenly kingdom; wherefore they must in nowise be violated, for thereby heaven is closed up to man. Marriages are holy also because they are from a spiritual origin, which is the marriage of good and truth (@HH 384,385).

In the Christian world, also, there is frequent use of the expression holy matrimony, and it is admitted that the institution of monogamic marriage was given a Divine sanction by the words of the Lord, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:5-6). Yet from the earliest Christian times - and especially through the influence of Paul - there was a trend toward an ascetic piety which looked askance at marriage as a carnal and temporal state, a permission rather than a Divine provision. It must be remembered that the first generation of Christians were in the constant expectation of the immediate return of the Lord, and the function of marriage would naturally seem relatively unimportant when the final judgment was at hand.

For to Christians, marriage was of the world worldly, to last (at best) until the death of the body. Had not the Lord said to the Sadducees, "The sons of this age marry and are given into marriage; but they who shall be accounted worthy to attain another age and the resurrection from the dead, shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, neither shall they die any more; for they are like unto the angels, and are the sons of God, being sons of the resurrection" (Luke 20:27-36).

That the Lord intended to convey to the Sadducees that there was no marriage in heaven, seems indisputable. They had wished to ridicule the idea that men would rise after death, and had posed the problem of what would happen to a woman who had been married successively to seven brothers. Which husband, they asked, would she have? The Lord's answer was a rejection of what was in the sensual minds of His inquisitors. What they meant by marriage does surely not exist in heaven. Actually, however, He did not deny that there was marriage in heaven, but said (if we translate literally) that there were no nuptials nor giving into nuptials there. The Jewish marriage was a legal bond looking solely to the procreation of the family. It was most frequently contracted without previous acquaintance, and was held together by no spiritual affections. The woman usually had no choice, but was given into marriage by others. That the woman might have some choice after the resurrection, does not seem to have occurred to the Sadducees; nor that there could be an eternal marriage of the spirit which needed no legal compulsion or nuptial contrast to bind it.

Inwardly, the Lord's words were concerned with the nature of spiritual nuptials, which are the conjunction of man with the Lord. Such a spiritual marriage is initiated on earth, and cannot be initiated after death.

The doctrine of the New Church states with positive clearness that there is marriage in heaven, and that each angel lives with his or her beloved eternal partner and finds in this the very bliss of heaven. It is even said, This is in heaven; for nowhere else are there marriages (@CL 192[e]).

It is clear, therefore, that the angelic marriages are the only true marriages, and of a kind which the gross imagination of the Sadducees and even the reason of the disciples could not grasp. There was undoubtedly a Divine providence in the fact that Christians have thought of man's spirit after death as sex-less and of marriage as an institution which in every case terminates at death. Yet poets and lovers have ever dreamt of a love that transcends the grave and finds in heaven a closer union impossible on earth.

It is this love which the Writings call by a new name - love truly conjugal. This conjugal love is the subject of one entire volume of Swedenborg's inspired Writings; and it is definitely stated that the subject therein treated of is not ordinary marriage love - not the common love which is also called conjugal and which with some is no other than a limited love of the sex. Love truly conjugal is with those only who earnestly desire wisdom and therefore, progress in wisdom more and more. ... For these the Lord provides conjugal love (@CL 98, cf. 203). It is further explained that the human conjugal and religion go hand in hand. Every step away from religion or into religion is also a step away from the conjugal or into the conjugal which is peculiar and proper to the Christian man (@CL 80). For conjugal love originates from the marriage of good and truth, which is the conjunction - in man's spirit - of the will of good with the truth of faith. It is this conjunction which makes man's conscience. And it is now revealed that all that the spirit of man does, it does from such a marriage of good with truth; and since the body acts from the spirit, this spiritual conjugal, so far as it is present, enters into the natural marriage which is of the husband and the wife, and makes this marriage truly conjugal (@CL 79). Hence it is that the angels regard marriages on earth as most holy. For conjugal love which continually inflows from the Lord through heaven is the spring or fountain of all other loves. And even when men, through their evils, pervert this love with themselves, the Lord acts through marriage into the very ultimates of human life and by it performs the work of maintaining the human race.

From its origin and its correspondence, conjugal love is celestial, spiritual, holy, pure and clean, beyond every love which is from the Lord with the angels of heaven and the men of the church. For it involves the giving of one's life into the keeping of another. If this love is received from its Divine author, holiness follows from Him and continually refines and purifies it. If then there is in the man's will a desire and effort to it, that love is made clean and pure from day to day, perpetually (@CL 64). It is also the fundamental love of all loves, celestial, spiritual, and thence natural: or what is the same, the fundamental of all loves which have regard to the Lord, to the neighbor, or to self and the world (@CL 67). For human life, on all its planes, revolves about this love; which therefore also comprises all joys and delights from primes to ultimates, since it is ordained by the Lord that delights shall follow uses, and the uses of conjugal love excel those of any other love (@CL 68).

The Love of the Sex

The cynics of this age would trace this noblest of all loves to the smoldering fibers of the flesh, to the inborn love of the sex which men have in common with animals. They say that men have but idealized the physical mating instinct, covered its crudities with a veneer of formality and courtesy, surrounded it with pomp and ceremony, legalized it with regulations and traditions, institutionalized it to meet the needs of society and state; but maintain that at bottom it is but a chemical attraction.

The Writings deny this charge. They show that the natural love of the sex is not the origin of conjugal love. The love of the sex is not refined or sublimated into conjugal love. But conjugal love is derived from the love of wisdom in the spiritual man and then descends into the love of the sex where it is implanted like a beautiful gem in its matrix.

It is to be understood that the natural love of the sex is also a result of the influx of the marriage of good and truth from the Lord. This influx proceeds as a universal sphere which fills the whole of creation, spiritual and natural, and manifests itself throughout nature as a sphere of propagation and fructification. Male creatures receive this sphere in the understanding, female creatures receive it in the will, and in both sexes there is an instinct towards mating. The inflowing sphere is received blindly by animals, and also in the bodies of men. Yet man can elevate his understanding above his natural loves, and can judge of them, control and chasten them, temper them and balance them, and thus amend them and remove them; which no brute animal can do.

Each species of animal is the form of some particular kind of natural affection, which dictates the instinctive order of its life. But man's natural mind contains every variety of inborn affections, which strive for dominance within him and must be ruled by his free decision, judgment, and reason, and subordinated to spiritual ends. If this is not done, the natural affections are perverted and are handed on to future generations as evil tendencies, rebellious against the wisdom of spiritual life, and tending to seduce man into a merely animal and selfish life.

This is the case with the natural love of the sex. It has become pervert and self-centered, and thus contorts the purpose for which it was given; it misappropriates the influx of life, looking to a selfish and sensual pleasure rather than to the uses of society, of the human race, and of heaven. And the only way by which it can be redeemed and restored is by descending spheres of the spiritual conjugal of good and of truth which looks to a union with one of the other sex, a legitimate and lovely companionship in the uses of life. When the love of the sex is thus centered in husband and wife, the other sex is looked upon by each as by both together. The husband regards women with the eyes of the wife, and the wife regards other men with the eyes of the husband. The love of sex remains, but becomes chaste and sweeter than before - as an interior spiritual friendship which does not partake of the flesh (@CL 99,44,55).

The Meeting of Souls

Conjugal love is the love of one of the other sex and it cannot be divided. No others can come into this

love but those who approach the Lord, love the truths of the Church, and do its goods. All marriages of love truly conjugal are provided by the Lord and foreseen by Him. It is not hidden from the Lord who shall become eternal partners in heaven. Therefore it is said in the doctrine that conjugal pairs are born and that they are emotionally educated for their marriage under the Lord's auspices, although they know it not. And when they then meet after their states have ripened - meet as if by chance - they come to feel (as if by a certain instinct or inner dictate) that they belong to each other. Love as it were meets love and makes itself known, and instantly conjoins the souls and afterwards the minds, and so leads them toward betrothal and marriage. For the Lord opens their internal similitudes so that they may recognize each other (@CL 229,44,316[3]).

Thus it may happen on earth, or if not here, in the other life (@CL 229). Yet on earth, this meeting of souls is more difficult. The internal similitude is hidden by the chance circumstances of the world and the flesh, by the absence of external attractiveness, by differences in manners and social station. Men and women are allured by wealth or outward charm; their internal perceptiveness of love is blunted by unchastities or confused by sudden bodily passions or infatuations. The marriage choice is often restricted within a narrow circle of acquaintances; so that earthly marriages at this day are for the most part external, and are dissolved after death when the character of each is disclosed. Only those who from early youth had prayed the Lord for a truly conjugal partner and had spurned and rejected wandering lusts as an offense to their nostrils, can hope to retain the perception by which spiritual similitudes can be recognized on earth (@CL 49).

Yet for the guidance of those who are poised before the choice of a life's partner the Lord provides the doctrine of Similitudes.

Obviously, it takes two to make a marriage. The greatest impediment to a happy marriage is where only one partner desires a chaste union while the other does not know chastity; or where one may love the things of the Church while the other turns the heart only to the things of the world. Thus one of the partners may have conjugal love, yet the marriage is not conjugal. The Writings confirm common experience when they point out that the causes of internal cold with the partners - states of mutual aversion and repulsion which, after the first infatuation has worn off, lead into dissensions and often to separation - are due to the rejection of the holy things of the church with both or with one of the partners. For there is no conjunction of souls except through spiritual things. Where one of the partners has a true religion, the internal cold may be dissipated by the reception by the other of religious ideas congruous with the partners. But with those couples who are in falsities of religion from ignorance of genuine truth, something of conjugal love is still possible; which is not possible where genuine truths have been falsified (@CL 240-243).

Those who are in a love truly conjugal look at what is eternal in marriage, and love to think that their union will survive death. If they should sometimes lapse from this thought they begin to grieve. We must however face the fact that being of the same religion is not any guarantee that they are internal similitudes. Internal disparities may not become apparent to the partners themselves until after they have lived together for a long time. Yet those who have conjugal love, love marriage and seek to maintain it and to protect its many uses, regarding it as a holy bond. They labor to minimize their interior differences and make their marriage a true one. And they rejoice in the teaching that by means of the things of the Church a conjunction is effected of similitudes inwardly distant (@CL 227-

The clear inferences of the doctrine are expressed, in the work of Heaven and Hell, as follows: Conjugal love is not given between two who are from diverse religions, since the truth of the one does not concord with the good of the other, and the dissimilar or discordant things cannot make one mind out of two; wherefore the origin of their love does not derive anything from what is spiritual. If they live together in harmony it is only from natural causes. And this is why in the heavens only those who are in the same society ... are united in marriage, because such are in like good and truth (@HH 378).

These, and many other teachings which warn against marriages with those of a different religion, do not imply that it is the duty of the Church to implement the teachings by ecclesiastical regulations. Marriage as an institution is under the civil law; but conjugal love is under spiritual law, and is a one with regeneration, which can never be enforced. The duty of the Church is to present the doctrine in all its phases without fear or favor.

Marriage and the Wisdom of Life

Internal similitudes is not the only indication which influences the marriage choice. There are also external qualities which bring partners together, common tastes and habits, common standards of culture and manners, educational background, and complementary virtues and abilities which make for a perfection in the mutual life. Where differences of inclinations amount to dissimilitude and consequent antipathy, no marriage is likely to ensue. But many external diversities due to heredity, companionship, education, and imbibed opinions, can be tempered and in time conjoined by various means: by a mutual desire on the part of married partners to leave the other in freedom; by accommodation to the desires of the other; by mutual help and confidence; by courtesy, by faithfulness, by a common love of infants and care of children; and (above all) by conformity in the things of the Church (@CL 228).

The happiness of the married life is (like every thing that is of worth) purchased at a price by the sacrifice of less important things. When the Writings say that love truly conjugal is only with those who earnestly desire wisdom and therefore progress in wisdom more and more; and when they say that the wife is to be the love of her husband's wisdom; the meaning of wisdom is the discernment and proper subordination of the various things of life according to their real values. Unless we see things in true proportions, we cannot be wise. And where is human life presented in a greater complexity of values than in the home? Where are we called upon to exercise discrimination and charity and patience and zeal and judgment under constantly shifting circumstances and on more varied planes than in the life of the family, where the light of the eternal truths of our spiritual ideals are refracted by the clouds of a necessary worldly prudence and the pure flames of celestial love contend against the creeping fires of proprial passion, anxiety, and discontent?

The answer to these problems lies in the search for wisdom, an answer which men in the world are increasingly unwilling and unable to give. But in the Writings we are shown the road to this wisdom of life, if we be but willing to seek it out. It is not gained by a mere reading of the doctrine; we must walk the road to gain our goal. Yet the directions are now given, and therefore it is promised that love truly

conjugal - in the life of which all the issues of human existence merge and are brought into focus - will be restored in the Lord's New Church.

Wisdom means the seeing of life as a whole, with no part left out. There is no wisdom where the concern of the family is centered upon this world alone, nor where the uses and responsibilities of this world are spurned. There is no wisdom where so much importance is placed on intellectual or even doctrinal pursuits, that the celestial things of love and tenderness and human sympathy are left to flicker out like a fire untended. Nor can wisdom dictate a merely emotional life which is never inspired and uplifted into the realms of spiritual and rational enlightenment. Neither is there any wisdom in a home which lives for itself alone, in a strangle-hold of family pride or family affections, and feels neither its duties to society and neighbors nor its need for the freer air of outside opinions; any more than there is wisdom in a home without a center, without a hearth, and without the balance-wheel of recognized standards, family feeling and tested traditions - the modern home, a mere boarding house where no one feels any obligations to any one else.

Wisdom is not an airy abstraction. It is not knowledge, nor is it intelligence, though these may lead to wisdom. But wisdom is predicated solely about life: the art of living. There is an abstract sound about the statement that wisdom is from good through truth, or from love through intelligence. But in the home, wisdom takes on substance and form. It becomes embodied and personified, not in one partner alone but in both. For the man becomes a husband through wisdom and the woman becomes a wife through the love of that wisdom. Wisdom is therefore called the parent of love truly conjugal (@CL 145[3]).

Such wisdom depends on the perception of human states and human needs, on a maturing judgment and a love that is elevated and purified more and more. It cannot be crammed into any set formulas which can be learnt by rote. And yet, when a father and a mother from mutual love invite the sphere of wisdom into the home, it becomes the greatest educative force in the world, the most precious influence under which any child could be reared.

And wisdom dwells in ignorance - that is, in the acknowledgment of ignorance. Wisdom does not turn to self, or rely on its own sufficiency. For wisdom stagnates when it is not constantly renewed: first of all from love and secondly from an ever new influx of truths from the Lord through the revealed doctrine and through the perceptions of others.

For this reason wisdom - as the parent of conjugal love - cannot come into existence from a man alone or from a woman alone. The two sexes have separate functions in bringing wisdom into being among men. And the conjugal life, in the bosom of which the new generations are reared, gives the only full opportunity for the exercise of these functions by the spiritual conjunction of husband and wife.

IX. The Conjugal Life 2 of 2

Husband and Wife

Neither man nor woman is a complete being. The Lord created the race male and female, to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. It must in no wise be thought that sex is any physiological accident. Nothing is accomplished in the universal world without the cooperative action of an active and a passive, and all things therefore have reference to good and to truth, or to the male principle and the female principal, or to heat and to light.

The very essence of God is Divine love and Divine wisdom. And from God the good of love and the truth of wisdom proceed even as heat and light proceed from our natural suns. In that procession from the Lord, good and truth go forth as one; but when received in human minds as in receptacles, this good and this truth are distinguishably two - the good being felt as affection or love, the truth being perceived as thought or as wisdom. Truth is received by the understanding; good is received in the will.

But we are taught that good - unless it has become joined with the truth of wisdom - is only apparently good; and that truth - if it has not been conjoined with the good of love - is only truth in appearance. Each becomes real by a union with the other. And it is the end of the Divine providence to bring about such a marriage of good with truth and of truth with good. Inmosty, each good longs for its truth and each truth longs for its good. There is a longing for a re-union.

This is the real origin of marriage and of conjugal love. For while both man and woman enjoy understanding and will, still the understanding predominates in the male sex, and the will predominates with the woman (@HH 369). And what thus predominates in a person is impressed as a quality upon all and single things of his soul, mind, and body. The man responds to truth with all the fibers of his nature. The woman responds to love to the very core of her being. Each has affections and thoughts. But with the man, the affections tend to be led by the thoughts; whereas with the woman, her thoughts tend to follow her affections.

Undoubtedly these characteristics of the sexes prevailed since first creation. But in the golden infancy of the race, will and understanding in both men and women were conjoined in a perfect marriage; and this made possible a truly conjugal union with married partners. The minds of the partners were joined in the inmost things of life, without reticence or reservation, and without any such rivalry between the sexes as our modern age exhibits. Originally, the husband was in the wisdom of life, which is the good of life; the wife was in the truth of that good - in the perception of her husband's wisdom - and thus gave form to it by the knowledge of those goods and truths which make for the grace and beauty of living (@AC 8994, 4843). But this was true only with the celestial race, before mankind fell into sin and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When men began to place wisdom in mere knowledge, in the sciences and in the pride of reasonings, and women come to trust the corporeal and sensual affections of their proprium, a new way of restoring conjugal love had to be found.

The search for some sort of wisdom is ingrained in the nature of man - as the eternal masculine instinct. But the masculine mind has two loves - both founded in his understanding. The first is a love of growing wise or of acquiring the truths of wisdom. This is indeed from the Lord, through the soul, with each man, and builds up his understanding. The second love is a love of the wisdom thus acquired. If this love were received by man through heaven, it would become in him the good of truth, or a love of the truth for the sake of good and thus for the sake of uses to others, and would make him a form of charity. But at this day, man's native will, with all the affections of his proprium, is perverted. His love of the wisdom which he may have gathered will thus spring from his proprial will and is turned into self-admiration, into a pride in his own intelligence - an intellectual proprium commonly called self-conceit; and this by degrees contorts whatever truths he has, and obscures his initial love of wisdom (which is his true manhood), so that he views with disdain any truths which he has not himself discovered or which do not agree with his selfish interests.

The Heavenly Doctrine discloses that by Divine mercy this destructive love of one's own wisdom can be taken away from man, and be transcribed into women, so that it might become a conjugal love which may restore him to integrity (@CL 88). This can be done if man seeks genuine wisdom, the wisdom of life, which is to shun evils because they are hurtful to the soul, hurtful to the commonwealth, and hurtful to the body, and to do goods because they are beneficial to the soul, the commonwealth and the body (@CL 130). For such genuine wisdom can be loved by woman and can form an inmost or a center around which her life can turn. This is not possible so far as the man loves his own self-intelligence, for then the wife has only external virtues to love in him; or else she builds up for herself an imagined ideal to love, and ideal which must in time fall like a broken idol.

It is clear from these considerations that the function of the woman is to recognize and love the things of wisdom in the man, to prize, encourage, and treasure what is true and genuine in his character, and - by this appreciation - turn his thoughts away from himself and to herself and through herself to the uses and responsibilities of the family and society and to the church and heaven. Obviously, if she focuses his love upon herself as a person and no farther, she is not assisting in the restoration of his integrity. She would then not desire to be conjoined with his wisdom but would merely flatter his conceit and take a vicarious pride in his knowledge or station or wealth for the sake of fanning her own vanity in having made a conquest. But if she brings him to see herself as a partner in the uses which are the objects of civil, moral, and spiritual life - as a partner through whom the ends of creation, with all its happiness and delight, can be realized - she conjoins herself with what is most worthy and most enduring in his visions of life, and makes this doubly important in his eyes, exalting his interior purpose to be led by the Lord. Man has understanding of truth; but it is not until the sphere of conjugal love from the other sex affects him that the practical value of his wisdom is disclosed and his motivations for carrying it out are strengthened.

By conjugal love the man's love of his own wisdom is thus as it were transferred to the woman and is, with himself, converted into a love of her; thereby who also is created anew, into a wife. This is not an observable process, but is affected secretly, unbeknownst to either husband or wife (@CL 193). It is affected by the Lord, through the love of the wife, by an instinctive prudence implanted in womankind, the hidden ways of which no man can follow and no woman rationally explain. It is not done by crude methods, as when the wife deliberately and directly challenges the man's conceits, or as when the husband attempts forcibly to dominate his wife's opinions. Rather is it said in the book of

Genesis that the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and then took one of his ribs and built it into a woman. The rib signifies man's proprial wisdom which is next to his heart but which becomes vivified and spiritual when it is taken away from man's self-love and becomes the inmost about which the wife centers her life (@CL 194).

Whether a man finds his partner or not while on earth, it is the sphere of the conjugal from the other sex - the sphere of social responsibility, moral purpose and spiritual idealism which find their firmaments in marriage - that makes possible his regeneration. But conjugal love is similarly the saving element for woman. For by the entrance of evil, the affections of mankind were by heredity turned into cupidities, which in the female sex reign more than understanding. The male sex is equally pervert as to the will, but in mercy it is so formed that intellect or reason rules, that is, it can be dissociated and elevated above the cupidities, and see truths in rational light. Therefore it is provided that women should be born to be the love of masculine wisdom, or created as forms of the love of the understanding of men (@CL 90, 187). It can also be said that a woman is born with a natural inclination to unite herself with a man; or that conjugal love, or love to one of the other sex, is implanted in every woman from creation, together with a love of procreating (@CL 173,409). For without such an inclination to depend on the rational intelligence of the man, the woman cannot elevate her thought beyond her established affections. The perpetuation of truth, of doctrine, and of knowledge from generation to generation depends on the masculine intellect, which is cold and hard, yet firm and less easily swayed by sentiment. But the perpetuation of conjugal love - its reception from the Lord and the transmission of it both as love of the sex and as conjugal love - depends on the feminine sex. To each sex, therefore, salvation comes not through its own powers but through a love of something outside of itself.

Courtship and Betrothal

The fact that woman is born a form and receptacle of conjugal love (which is directed only to one of the sex) inclines her to the virtue of modesty which makes it unbecoming for her to speak of love or declare her love until it is earnestly solicited. Choice, or the initiation of courtship, belongs to the man, who from understanding and judgment must recognize the partners suitability if he is to feel free in the choice (@CL 296). But to women belongs the right of free consent, and also a prudence which secretly and modestly invites the addresses of their favored suitor. Yet daughters, as they come into marriageable age and even later, are wise to consult their parents before consenting to their ardent suitors, not only because this is their protection against men of whose character they cannot judge, but also because it is a protection against themselves; for their love as yet waits upon the longings of their senses rather than upon desires springing from a chastened mind (@CL 299).

It is necessary that the early states which lead up to marriage should be protected by orderly procedures which reason and experience both dictate. For conjugal love can develop only where its tender flame is guarded like an altar-fire. It must be protected against the unchastities of the love of the sex as well as against the imprudence and impatience of ignorance. The social life which precedes the time of the marriage choice must be surrounded with the proper formalities which allow wholesome friendships between the sexes, without improper intimacies that would break down

mutual respect, or [?conceit?] a couple prematurely to a final choice. Youth has many problems and temptations which can be mastered by the help of simple courtesy, deference, modesty, reflection, and common sense.

And to safe-guard the order by which conjugal love - when it has reached the stage of open choice and consent with two partners - may rightly progress from its first tender heat to the nuptial flame, it is provided that the consent is to be confirmed and strengthened by a solemn Betrothal, consecrated by a priest. For this solemnity marks the acknowledgment that conjugal love is not the natural love of the sex but draws breath from heaven; that it has a spiritual origin and is essentially a marriage of minds and spirits; that it must begin by a progressive revelation of interior affections in a joyful recognition of common loves and ideals. In this state of Betrothal the minds of the bride and bridegroom are elevated into spiritual light, and conjugal love labors powerfully to open their spiritual minds to receive the innocence and chastity of the heavens. And so far as this love has ascended, so far can it descend chaste and lead to a chaste marriage as to body as well. For into the states of the future marriage there will inevitably inflow whatever chaste or unchaste states which have introduced it (@CL 301-305, 21, 322).

Conjunction in Marriage

Throughout married life, there must be continual returns to the betrothal state, in that there are continually new and more interior openings of the minds of the partners, and new elevations of conjugal love, which must be nourished and replenished from within. This is possible in marriage as nowhere else. For here man and woman each contribute the special functions for which their minds were created: the man, by rational wisdom can see new truths in superior light, and the woman, by an elevation of her love into spiritual heat, can feel its delights in his light, and move his intelligence with her warmth so as to ripen it into moral and spiritual wisdom (@CL 188, 198).

It is notable that the wife recognizes the external will of her husband, adjusts herself to it and sometimes playfully favors it. Yet it is not with his more or less fickle and feigned external wishes that the wife conjoins herself; but with the internal will, which is the moral wisdom that is being formed in his understanding. For this internal will is his wisdom of life, and contains his spiritual and moral virtues. These virtues she knows better than he does himself, and since they are for the most part akin to similar virtues in women, she conjoins herself with them quite consciously and thus from without. But to his rational wisdom - which pertains to matters of judgment, and to reason and to his knowledge of his own masculine use - the wife cannot conjoin herself except by an inward and unconscious way, and by acquiescence (@CL 195, 163-165). And even so the husband (even though he were an angel!) could never partake of the wisdom of his wife, which is a perception of the sates of her husband and a prudence in secretly moderating them (@CL 166-168).

Thus each partner remains individual and distinct, and in each there are regions which eternally remain a source of mystery to the other. The more they are conjoined by their mutual love, the more the wife becomes a wife and the husband a husband. This formation is affected by perpetual conjunctions of souls, minds, and bodies, by applications to mutual states, by the sphere which goes

forth from their spirits and bodies, by the actual appropriations of the propagations of the husband's soul, by mutual uses and mutual states of delight.

A conjugal marriage is an alternate conjunction, in which the life of one is in the other alternately (@AC 2740). One is active, the other is passive, by an alternate reciprocation. Thus the duties of man and woman differ in character. It is an error to suppose that women can rightly perform the duties of men by being trained into the exercise of them, for the inward form would be totally different. Love directs both partners to seek to lighten the burdens of the other and to understand his or her problems, and leads to cooperation and mutual appreciation. But the duties of men and women are and should be distinct in order that the friction of sex-rivalry be avoided and the illustration of each be kept clear in their own fields. The general teaching is that these duties in which the understanding predominates, and especially forensic or public uses, are proper to men; while those duties are properly feminine, where love and affection are particularly called for, as is the case in the home (@CL 90-91, 174-176).

The Love of Offspring

That which more than anything else consociates and gathers into one, the souls and lives of married partners, is the common care of children. This is the most powerful bond of partners even where conjugal love has vanished. The wife has responsibility especially for the rearing of young children and for the instruction of daughters up to the age of marriage, while the husband must instruct his sons from childhood through puberty and up to the time that they become their own masters. But these duties cannot be divorced but require the mutual counsel and support of both parents. Where there is disagreement between them, the respect of the children may be lost and the moral and domestic order may be shattered. The realization of this danger has saved many a home from being broken up, and has led to new and successful efforts on the part of the parents to turn a waning love into a fruitful friendship which survives the critical years of middle age and paves the way for tranquility in their declining years.

The Writings make perfectly clear that the first end of conjugal love is procreation of offspring, the maintenance of the race (@CL 385,254). Procreation is the end, and marriage is the mediate cause by which it is affected (@CL 387). All delights, from first to last are gathered into the conjugal love, in order that men should be induced to enter these uses, which excel all others. For this reason, also, the love of offspring is indelibly inscribed upon conjugal love so as to make one with it. For love desires to multiply the image of his beloved.

All the disorders of an evil world originate from man's desire to enjoy the delights or rewards of uses which they have not performed. Yet the laws of the Divine providence cannot be thwarted; and the delights that are stolen will eventually be turned into weariness, grief, or torment. The frequent endeavor manifested at this day to enter into marriages wherein offspring is not desired, shows how far the human race has traveled away from the ancient wisdom of life, and from the first command of God to man, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

But marriage is not only for this world. Procreation of new human beings is possible only on earth. But

marriage truly conjugal is for eternity. Even on earth, procreation of children usually ceases in middle age; and there are many couples who are denied children. Certainly conjugal love and the eternal purpose of marriage does not cease because of the absence of natural offspring. A lovely companionship of souls and minds continues and increases even after natural usefulness is drawing to an end. And those who are spiritual look to union as an end, and, in that union, to spiritual rest and pleasantness, and to the beginning of new states of wisdom and love in which the life of the Lord can be received in ever-greater measure (@CL 368).

The Writings speak of such new states of perception and illustration as spiritual offspring, born from the conjunction of the thoughts and affections of the partners. New concepts of use and wisdom in angelic minds are new vessels receptive of the Lord's life as truly as new born babes on earth, and are indeed new centers into which heavenly happiness can be poured by the Divine love.

The Preservation of Marriage

It is said of the conjugal of one man with one wife, that it is the ornament of human life and the shrine of the Christian religion (@CL 457). The true home is the nursery of all that is precious and good and tender in human life, and is the center of all virtues. If religion does not there find its shrine, it will soon perish from the earth. But the home is also the unit and beginning of society with all its uses. Every commonwealth therefore in some measure recognizes the need to surround the institution of marriage with laws which shall preserve the rights and responsibilities of the family, and prevent the disruption of the home.

It must be admitted that marriage is not a magical formula for happiness. Yet marriage, by its very nature, must be a covenant for life, and this even where the love which led to the marriage is not a truly conjugal love. Marriage involves an irrevocable change of state in mind and body, and leaves marks and memories which can never be expunged. It means assumption of responsibilities for partner and for children that cannot be shaken off. More important and fruitful than any chosen lifetime profession, marriage is an honorable state in which two human beings lay down their inner defenses in confidence of the others pledge of loyalty and cooperation. The laws of most states, which permit divorce only where there is proof of gross marital infidelity or sexual evil. For it is of common perception that the looser the bonds of marriage are made, and the less risk mismating involves, the more readily will people rush into unfortunate and thoughtless unions, and the more will marriage be deprived of its dignity, of its humane emotional depth, and of its value as a stabilizer of the social conscience. And the Writings therefore state: It is from the Divine law that it is not lawful to put away one's wife and marry another except on account of scortation; and it is from rational law because this is founded upon the spiritual... (@CL 276). Rational law comes from common sense which flinches at the prospect of such human wreckage as bestrews the path of divorce.

It is easy, through one's sympathy for the mismated, to be led away from the recognition of the fundamental necessity that matrimonies in the world are to continue to the end of life. But the Writings show the necessity, usefulness, and truth, that conjugal love, where it is not genuine, is yet to be affected, so as to make it appear as genuine (@CL 276). Indeed, there is no love with men or even

with angels, which is so pure that it is utterly untouched by the shadows of selfishness and unchastity. Where love fails or cools, duty and honor and justice must take its place, and prudence and judgment must stand on guard. Prudent simulations of conjugal friendships may spring from charity and differ entirely from hypocrisies. But in extreme cases a marriage may be preserved by a temporary separation, which looks to a change of state and an eventual reconciliation. With married partners, their resourcefulness in restoring the ravages of wounded pride or headless actions, of conflicting tastes and opposing opinions, goes hand in hand with the growth of their moral wisdom and their spiritual regeneration. And however deep the love of truly conjugal partners, we must admit of situations in this world where the pressure of cruel circumstances, the failure of health, and the limitations of human understanding, may require the utmost patience and tolerance before the partners can surmount the distressing walls which hide their minds from each other even while their souls may be in an inner communion.

Conjugal simulations, which seek to preserve friendship even when the proprial affections ride high, are necessary especially for the sake of children who judge of their parents' mutual love by superficial appearances (@CL 286). It is however noted in the Writings that almost every wife loves the bonds of marriage if only the men love those bonds (@CL 217). And the wife is therefore careful to dispel the clouds of intranquillity in the home, where her husband seeks an asylum from the worries of his daily occupation. In this, a man is at the mercy of his wife, who can wilt his spirit with a hard look, or endanger his very health with domestic confusion. The special incentive for every man to establish a home of his own and to preserve a decorous friendship with his family is his peculiar need for a tranquillity of mind which can be offered nowhere else (@CL 285).

The evils which pray upon wedded partners and disturb the felicity of marriage and destroy its use, are the same evils which have ever been the source of men's miseries, both here and in the hells. We refer to the love of power and the love of the world. The only way by which a man and a woman can reap the cooperative benefits of married life, is to shun these evils in all their varied forms.

Conjugal friendship, dignity, and equality, perish where one of the partners seeks - or where both seek - to reduce the other into servility: the man, by demanding obedience and brutally asserting authority; and the woman, by the subtler feminine wiles of alternately making herself pleasant and indispensable, and alternately coaxing or scolding (@CL 291-292). But the love of the world - with its greed, its vanities, its whirl of meaningless routines, its sophistications and its show of superficial culture - is likewise an ever present menace to the real uses of the home. When too much value is assigned to the external tools of living - to money, luxuries, pleasures, and conveniences - time and strength are invested in things which perish.

In this world we have ever with us the rival interests of Martha and Mary. We are careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful, essential. And in marriage this essential is conjugal love which the Lord alone can give, and which He gives according to the states of the church with men.

Conjugal love, with its companion love, the love of offspring, cannot come into its own where the care for the morrow and the anxieties of the world are dominant. For heavenly conjugal love exists when a man, with his wife which he loves most tenderly, and with his children, lives contented in the Lord. From this he has in the world interior delight, and in the other life heavenly joy (@AC 5051). Such love unites them as to souls and minds. And the states of this love are innocence, peace, tranquillity, inmost

friendship, full confidence, mutual desire of mind and heart to do to the other every good; and from all these there is blessedness, happiness, delight and pleasure; and from their eternal fruition comes heavenly felicity (@CL 180).

X. The Divine Providence And Its Laws

The Lord's Government

Belief in God as Creator would be a barren and meaningless unless we had the faith that this our God is continually present in His universe, maintaining it and ruling it, and that He provides with infinite foresight for every one of His creatures.

It is therefore a fundamental doctrine of the New Church that no angel, spirit, or man could move hand or foot except from the Lord, and that he rules the thoughts, intentions, and wills of all everywhere, in most particular as well as in most universal things; that He guides not alone the courses of the numberless stars and their planetary offspring, but also the spin and glow of every least atom; that He not only provides the necessities of life for the inhabitants of the earths, until ages before their birth, but also weaves the patterns of their lives together, molding out of a confused mass of clashing human wills a harmonious whole, a kingdom of human uses which can image and receive his Divine love and wisdom, and fulfil the purpose of blessedness which is the end in creation (@AE 726[1]).

Finite minds falter before the idea of such infinite wisdom and power as would be adequate to rule the universe. Indeed, our minds cannot grasp even the marvelous wisdom with which the soul is [?instinct?] in its government of the body. For the soul, without being taught, knows how to form the body and cause it to grow, and seems to possess from the first a foreknowledge of all the needs of its future life. What then of God, who anticipates the needs of all mankind even to eternity? With the psalmist we are constrained to say, Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

Nor does it simplify our problem to imagine that the Lord only set the universe going - like a clock wound up - and then has left it to itself. Not only is this incomprehensible: since when our soul leaves our body, the body dies. But it is also contrary to the very essence of that love of God which was the cause of creation. Love seeks for conjunction, and does not forsake its object. Nor can we be satisfied to say that Providence rules only in universals - is concerned only with large matters and intervenes only in great issues such as obviously shape the history of our race. For actually, when we analyze the [?looms?] of destiny, we find that the decisive events are shaped by the cumulative power of the little things of life - the small neglects, the trivial happenings, the persistent attention to details, the day by day routines. There is no universal government unless it enters into every single thing. There can be no universal Divine Providence if at the same time there is what men call chance and accident and fortune.

The Writings therefore show that the causes of so-called luck are hidden in the spiritual world, and are dependent on man's states. And it is declared that fortune or accident are of Providence in the ultimates of order where, by things constant and inconstant, it deals wonderfully with human prudence and still conceals itself (@AC 6493f; @DP 212). That the Divine providence operates through calculable laws of averages and probabilities as well as through the fickle whims of men does not make it any less effective, or less omnipotent. But the presence of law even in these apparently random

events is in itself a testimony to a higher government than that of man's will.

But what place, then, has man's will in a universe ruled by physical laws? What becomes of his vaunted freedom, his aspirations to fill the earth and subdue it, if both his body and his spirit are under the total government of an omnipotent God?

Parenthetically, it must be admitted that if mankind is inescapably circumscribed by such a government of laws, natural and spiritual, it has - to date - not done so badly for itself. Man has turned the physical laws, one by one, to his own visible advantage; has tamed the fire, compassed sea and land, called forth power from the water and strength from the rocks. He surpasses the birds in flight and mimics in the laboratory the complex processes of nature. He is brought to the point of fearing his own potentialities. The laws to which he is subject have become the means of carrying out his own will rather than preventing it.

And as to spiritual laws - the laws of the mind - even these are for his use. In restricting and limiting his thinking and willing, they also direct his mind so as to be an efficient tool for the uses of his life. We cannot conceive of either a finite universe or of a human mind without laws of order, for it is subjection to law that limits, confines, and makes a thing finite. It is into this universe, limited by natural and spiritual laws, that God has placed man, so that man may act in freedom but according to law. What is contrary to law, is impossible. The laws of God - taken in this universal sense - cannot be broken.

This fact - which reason spontaneously recognizes - has led many to assume that the course of man's life is predetermined and his fate fixed beforehand: that he is but a cog in a gigantic machine; that he is, as to every affection and thought, every word and act, driven by an unavoidable necessity which was involved from the beginning, by laws of cause and effect. It is even thought that the Lord is bound by that necessity since He proceeds only according to the most perfect order. But the Writings show that man's life is placed among indefinite contingencies which occur within the framework of laws; and that man, with entire freedom, selects the alternatives that are of his choice. From this scattered material of man's selection, the Lord builds up the house of man's life to be as perfect as the man will allow. The Lord, from infinite wisdom and mercy, foresees the form of man's choice, and provides what is lacking to maintain it. And so it may be said that even as man's free choice is not from necessity, so the things provided by the Lord do not follow in order from necessity, but in application to the freedom of man (@Dmin 4692; @AC 6486-6487).

The end of the Divine providence - the goal of the Lord's omnipotent rule of the world - is the formation of a heaven from the human race. And the only thing that produces heaven for man is a conjunction of man with the Lord. For in order to be in heaven, man must become a heaven in least form, or an image of the Lord; or - what is the same - an affection of good and truth (@DP 27ff, 67). Further, the heavens are described in the Writings as a collective Human Form, or as a Grand Man in which every society of angels answers to some use, function, organ or part; so that the inmost end of the Divine providence is to lead man to his own specific place in that spiritual economy of eternal uses. Yet man - within his limitations - is free. And if he refuses to be led by the Lord into heaven, and cannot

with his own consent be withdrawn from hell, it is the inmost end of Providence to allot him a place opposite to that good affection which he has rejected and turned into evil. The hells are therefore - by opposition - likened to a grand monster or a diabolical human form; and are so ordered to the intent that there shall be no affection of evil or falsity which is not directly counteracted and ruled through some society in heaven (@DP 68, 69).

God is Order itself. His providential government acts not only by the physical laws of the natural world but also by the spiritual laws which order all the things in the spiritual world. To man it may seem that these two sets of laws would conflict. But in the Lord's sight they set in perfect attunement, and natural law becomes the instrument of spiritual and eternal ends.

It is by spiritual laws that the heavens were created from the spiritual Sun by means of successive degrees; and by the same laws, the life of spirits and angels is ordered in every detail. All creation in the heavens and the hells follows these spiritual laws of influx and correspondence. It is by a spiritual gravitation that those of similar affection are attracted to each other and those whose ruling loves differ are separated. Hence the three discrete heavens appear as distinct spheres or expanses one above another and the hells in a region far below. Thought from affection makes for presence, while disinterest or opposition repel. All physical laws have a spiritual counterpart in that world which is beyond apace and time.

The Laws of the Divine Providence

Yet, under the heading of the Laws of the Divine Providence, the Writings list certain principles or standards of Divine action whereby the Lord endows man with freedom and also protects man in its exercise. These laws have hitherto been hidden in the wisdom of angels, but are now revealed to the New Church.

The first law of the Divine providence is that man should act from freedom in accordance with reason.

It is recognized by common sense that a man is not truly free merely by a release of all restrictions. A child is not free simply by being left alone, unattended. A man is free only when he knows the way in which he walks or knows the consequences and character of his proposed action. The Lord stated the matter concisely, saying, "Know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). But truth is more than mere knowledge. It is understanding. Therefore a man cannot be really free except in the measure that he becomes rational. What one does from ignorance is not really his, and he is therefore not fully responsible for it.

To act from freedom is to act from one's own love. Man has natural freedom from inheritance - in that he feels free when he acts from his natural loves, which are evil and selfish. And if he confirms these evils by reasonings, he does evil in freedom in accordance with his reason. But as he desires to appear as a moral man, from a love of reputation and gain, he is wont to curb his natural freedom, and begins to act from rational freedom, or from self-compulsion and prudence. If, however, he comes by repentance into a love for eternal life, he enters into a state of spiritual freedom. And this liberates him from the loves of his proprium and gives him interior delights. Spiritual freedom is therefore from a

spiritual love, and as this accords with true reason, it becomes confirmed as his own. Any one may come into this freedom if he is but willing to think that life is eternal and that the temporary enjoyment and bliss of life in time are but as a fleeting shadow when compared with the never-ending enjoyment and bliss of a life in eternity (@DP 73).

To enable man so to think if he pleases, the Lord endows man with the two faculties of rationality and liberty. These are the Lord's continual gifts to men and are preserved as sacred and inviolate even with the devils in hell. They are the Lord with him - are due to a constant Divine influx. As faculties regarded, they are Divine, in the evil man as well as in the good man. Yet the use or abuse of these faculties are what constitutes human life. It is by virtue of these faculties that man can, as if of himself, respond to the Lord's love and become reciprocally conjoined with the Lord. The reciprocal in man is this that the good which he wills from freedom and the truth which he thinks in accordance with reason, seem wholly his own. Yet there is no reciprocal conjunction unless he acknowledges that this good and this truth are from the Lord and are not his (@DP 92).

Man's feeling of responsibility, and his ability to receive life, rest on the sensation and perception that life is in him and that he acts as of his own power. Therefore it is also a law of Providence that man should not feel how good and truth inflow from the Lord, or how evil and falsity flow in from hell, nor perceive from any sensation how the Divine providence operates within him (@AE 1153). He cannot at this day even see beyond the veil that separates this world from the next, lest he loses the sense of freedom. Nor is he allowed to see the future, or observe the leading of Providence, except from the past (@DP 175-190).

There are many other things that are hidden to man. Even as he has no conscious part in the processes by which the food is digested in his body and by which his blood is constantly being purified, so neither does he know what goes on in the interiors of his mind. His responsibility is confined to the shunning of evils that present themselves as intentions in the conscious mind, or in the externals of his thoughts. If man puts away evils as sins in the external man, the Lord is able to cleanse man from the lusts that lodge unconsciously in the internal of his thought. This, too, is a law of Providence (@DP 100ff).

Another law is that man should not be compelled by external means to believe and love the things of religion. For no one is interiorly reformed because of miracles and signs, or by visions of the dead, or by threats and punishments. These induce only a temporary and external effect; they compel by creating fear or irrational persuasion. Reformation cannot take a start in states which do not spring from rationality and liberty - as in states of emotional stress and panic, of misfortune or disease, of ignorance and mental blindness. But self-compulsion is necessary for reformation; and in this man reaches the summit of freedom, for he then begins to act from his interior man.

In repentance and reformation, man acts as-of-himself. Yet it is really the Lord that reforms a man. But lest man's feeling of living as-of-himself should be disturbed, the Lord leads and teaches him from heaven by means of the Word and by means of doctrine and preachings from the Word. This order the Lord provides so that man may not be compelled by an obvious leading or be overpowered by a blind faith. Every man is taught from the Word, according to the understanding that belongs to his own love; and what is beyond this does not remain except in the memory. In the world, man's study of the Word and of the Doctrine gives him but relatively few truths. Yet if he is in an affection of truth, he is also in

enlightenment from heaven and is being taught by the Lord Himself. And then numberless truths - from the interiors of the word - are being implanted in his interiors and these are opened to him in heaven after death and endow him with ineffable wisdom. That the Word must needs be taught by means of books and teachers, does not take away the fact that man is taught immediately by the Lord alone. For these instrumentalities bring truth only before the understanding. The Lord alone can impart it to the heart.

Human instruments are thus employed in the Divine government. And man ascribes to his prudence and wisdom the dominant share of the world's work, admitting at times that Providence has had something to do with it. It is indeed a law of Providence that while man's prudence is nothing, but merely appears to be something, it should so appear. For while Providence is in all particulars, the appearance that human prudence is effective to provide for human needs, is preserved by the Lord so that man should have a use and from use a sense of responsibility and also the delights and rewards of uses. Prudence therefore is nothing if separated from an acknowledgment of Providence. Such prudence is the tool of self-love, and the solace and pride of man's proprium. But if it is acknowledged that all wisdom and prudence with man are from God, then prudence may be seen as an instrument of Providence and a steward in the household of the Lord (@DP 191,210).

Man's prudence looks to time, the Divine providence looks to eternity. Man, in his natural uses, is concerned with earthly life, and with the dignities and honors, the acquisitions and the wealth, of this world. He measures his success or failure, his happiness or misery, in terms of these temporal things, and counts them as Divine blessings of Providence. Yet honors and possessions may be curses instead of blessings. For one man they may be blessings. For another they may prove to be stumbling blocks, especially so far as he puts his heart upon them. They may seduce man into the loves of self and the world. And therefore the Lord taught, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust do corrupt and thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. ... For where your treasure, is there will your heart be also." (Matthew 6:19-21)

Spiritual treasures are states of love and wisdom, which are eternal. Worldly honors and possessions perish with the material body, and the spirit who possessed nothing else appears after death like an actor in royal robes after the play is over (@DP 214ff, 217). There are dignities and graded offices in heaven also, and business transactions and consequent wealth; but honors and rewards are there awarded according to the love and wisdom that are present in the spiritual uses of the angels.

Man's uses, even though they be from charity, are temporal, since they look to definite accomplishments and concrete results visualized within a compass of time. All that proceeds from man is finite. But the Lord, in His providence, sees the eternal results, and therefore He conjoins temporal things and eternal things. And when natural things have served their Divine purpose, man is released from the chains of the body and his spirit puts on the spiritual and eternal things (@DP 218-220).

Providence is thus in the constant endeavor to lead men out of natural into spiritual things. Yet one of its laws of mercy specifies that man is admitted interiorly into the truths of faith and into the goods of charity only so far as he can be held in them until the end of his life. This law explains the reasons for the prevalence of human ignorance, and for the persistence of all manner of false religions. The knowledge of truth - which is mental or intellectual wealth - is not always a blessing, any more than worldly wealth. Knowledge, like riches, carries with it responsibilities and obligations for which all are

not equally ready, and which all are not willing to assume. Truth is therefore not disseminated evenly, to all nations and races, or in all ages. And even where the genuine spiritual truth exists, as in the Church, it enters first as knowledges and gradually accumulates in the memory. From a natural love of truth, it will with many ripen into rational wisdom. For every man has the faculty to be raised as to his understanding into a wisdom almost angelic, in order that he may become reformed. But he is not spiritually reformed by thinking truths from a merely natural love. For even a hypocrite can do the same.

The Lord leads every man by such good as man has, even if it be only civil and moral good, or the appearance of something spiritual good. Every man, be he evil or good, is in both good and evil; nor could he live unless he were in both; for whatever man thinks, says, or does from his will is appropriated to him and remains. Yet the Lord from His providence and foresight continually arranges that the good and evil in man should be separated, lest the good and the evil be so mixed together that the good be profaned.

Such profanation occurs if man receives the truths of faith into his very heart and life and then withdraws from them and denies them; whereby good and evil would both be in man's interiors together. Man's state would then be such that his inner life was in a continual conflict in which no human delight could survive. He would be neither in heaven nor in hell. Lest this should happen, it is provided that good with its truth shall not be brought into man's interiors by the Lord except so far as evil and the falsity of evil have been removed; or, in other words, the Lord by His Divine providence takes the greatest care that the will shall receive from the understanding only so fast and to such extent as man, as if of himself, removes evils in the external man (@DP 221-233).

All the laws of Providence have respect to the spiritual freedom of man, and therefore imply a permission of evil. Those who deny a Divine providence point to the existence of evil as a confirmation that God is not omnipotent, or even infinite, if He exists at all. But they fail to perceive that creation would be futile and without significance if the Creator had made all His creatures into precise machines which, devoid of any will of their own, simply repeated a foreordained and faultless routine like so many marionettes. Such a purposeless universe could offer no satisfaction to God who is Love itself. Love disdains to compel. It offers of its life freely, and must be freely received or freely refused.

Even in the beasts of the field there is an image of freedom, for each animal is in the freedom to follow out the instincts of that love with which it was endowed by creation. But only man has been given the freedom to receive life in such a way that he may consciously determine the character of the love that shall rule in him. Man alone can therefore freely return the love of God and intelligently cooperate with the ends of the Divine providence; or else freely refuse to do so and instead appropriate the gift of life for his own selfish sins and ambitions.

Such free agency, or free choice, would be but a parody, unless evil were permitted to exist and come forth into acts and words which manifested its character and its unhappy results. It would be only a pretense unless a man could choose for himself that love and those delights which to him make life eternally worthwhile - something to desire even after the death of the body. Therefore it is impossible to suppose that God could give man free choice, yet would eventually prevent his choosing to remain in hell eternally. For this would mean that the gift of free choice would be of no actual value, but be a figment and a fraud.

But it is also provided that no man should have his spiritual freedom taken away by the choice of other men. The evils which men do must have their evil affects even on the innocent, and will injure the natural minds of those around them and those who live after - delaying spiritual progress and hampering their uses. Yet the Lord protects the inner choice of every man's spirit, and keeps it free. No man is ever predestined to hell, but every man born is such that he can be saved, and if he is not saved he has himself to blame (@DP 322-330).

Evil is said to be contagious. And the evils confirmed by ancestors also accumulate in their offspring; which is one cause for the decline of the successive churches, until religion on earth is corrupted and its truths are falsified. But even in that consummated state of the world, there is granted to every man after death ample means of amending his life if that be possible (@DP 328). Hereditary evils as such do not condemn him. If we should ever question the justice in the Lord's permission that the evils of parents should reappear as tendencies in the children, let us reflect that the goods of parents are also hereditary (@CL 202); and if there were no hereditary transmissions of acquired or confirmed characteristics, the race would stand still, and choice would be narrowed into a deadly monotony without variety. And if we were born devoid of natural affections - be they good or evil - in common with our families, what bonds of sympathy would hold us together during the years of tutelage and training? And how then could the love of truth be nursed into existence and the wisdom of past revelations, on which the progress of man depends, be preserved from generation to generation?

Although the Lord never fights evil with evil, yet He turns evil conditions also into some unforeseeable good for mankind. The evil which tempts man, involuntarily causes his good to be strengthened. The falsity that misleads him is turned into contrasts which bring the truth into sharper relief.

The Lord does not condemn man for the evils of his heredity. Nor does He impute to man either good or evil. For the truth is that man has nothing of his own. He thinks and wills from others, and is made of borrowed stuff. All that he has as his own is a certain quality. His proprium is only what he is in respect to reception (@DP 309-308). If man takes credit for his good and truth, he falls into the evils of merit and conceit. If he takes the evil and falsity (which the hells infuse) as coming from himself, he appropriates them as inseparably his own. Therefore Providence labors to teach man the celestial law that good is from the Lord and that evil is from hell, and that whatever is more than these cometh of evil. Man is truly free and truly redeemable only so far as he believes that he does not live from himself.

But Divine providence operates unceasingly with the evil as well as with the good. The Lord leads the wicked by their natural affections away from the deeper hells towards which they gravitate and into lesser evils and into something of external order.

Man cannot follow these secret workings of infinite Wisdom. But he can acknowledge them when he reflects, and can recognize and confirm the laws which are now revealed. They are revealed so that we may have full trust that the Lord, in His love for every human soul, does not respect the person of any man and does not act arbitrarily from either wrath or favor, nor from any predestined selection of those who are to be saved or from any immediate acts of mercy apart from means. The Lord acts omnipotently, but only by means of the laws of His providence, which can never be evaded or thwarted by the evils of mankind. The Lord does not act apart from those laws, for so to do would be to act against His own love and mercy.

To account and love these laws of His providence and to cooperate with them is therefore to love the Lord. For they are His rational commandments to His New Church.

XI. The Successive Dispensations And The Last Judgment

The Racial Man

In the eyes of the Creator, all mankind on all the earths of the universe constitutes one collective Man. In this universal Grand Man the various races on the numberless globes of creation each have a function or use, as do the various organs and parts in the human body. For it is not external shape, but living functions, that make up the human form. And even as nature, with all its varieties, is the same in greatest and least, so a society of men, be it great or small, is in the human form, when spiritually regarded. As to spiritual uses, all men on all the earths are parts of one spiritual economy, one spiritual world where there are no boundaries of physical space such as separate the planets of the natural world.

Yet each planetary race is most distinct and has its own racial genius. The human race on our earth is therefore a Grand Man which is passing through a spiritual development of its own, a growth like that of an individual. The individual repeats or recapitulates during his life-time the successive states of the racial man, and these appear in him as infancy, childhood, adolescence, young manhood, and maturity. No man can be born an adult, nor can he omit or evade one of the stages of his growth. Each age also makes a fundamental contribution to his personality, a contribution which is permanent, even though it may seem to vanish from sight.

It is the same with the racial man. It has passed through its infancy, its childhood and adolescence, and is now entering a spiritual maturity. Yet all its past states are still stored up in the heavens, and also in the hells. And as every man advances through the stages of life, the various heavens which were formed in ages past find their ultimates in his life, and furnish the protection and inspiration needed in each corresponding state.

Even as the Divine providence of the Lord leads every individual through the years of his life, so the Lord, by the same laws of Providence, has led the human race through the aeons of time (@AE 641). The spiritual aspect of this leading is recorded in the Holy Scripture, where mankind is described as taking its rise in a lovely garden of innocence and, after falling into sin, being threatened with extinction by a terrible deluge from which only a remnant was saved by means of an ark. The story then follows of how the earth was repopulated, how the nations of the earth fell into corruption and dissension, how a chosen people was prepared from which a Redeemer was to be born in the fullness of time. The New Testament continues by relating the life and teachings of the Savior and prophesying the consummation and judgment of the age of Christianity and the final descent from heaven of a new Jerusalem in which the design of God for mankind could at last be accomplished.

The Preparatory Dispensations

The Writings explain that this record of Scripture begins in allegory, which was the usual style of writing among the ancients; continues mainly as historical narrative; and ends up in prophecy. In its spiritual sense it traces the rise and fall of four great preparatory dispensations or churches which have existed on this earth and which represent the development of mankind's religious life; and also the up-building of the heavens from our earth into their full and mature form. With respect to the heavens regarded as a whole, or as a Grand Man, this growth marked a constant progress towards completion - like that of a man who is conceived and born, educated and taught, until he comes into intelligence and wisdom and begins his regeneration (@AE 641). But with reference to the church on earth, it is a story of the Lord's efforts, renewed again and again, to lead a backsliding race towards a more abundant spiritual life.

Briefly it may be said that when mankind was created, they were in order of heaven; and their posterity was in immediate intercourse with their kindred who had passed into heaven. They gradually developed a peculiar wisdom springing from innocence. The period of this celestial race may be likened to a Golden Age and is described by the life of Adam and Eve in paradise. Nature to them was an open book in which they read of the spiritual gifts bestowed by the Creator. Their understanding and their will acted in unison. Their ruling love was a love to the Lord.

Yet they had freedom to rebel. And no doubt at every stage of their progress there were some who did; and thus arose not only evil and disobedience and violence, but also (eventually) terrible profanations. At last these evils became general and generated gigantic phantasies and surging passions which destroyed this Most-Ancient Church as by a suffocating flood.

The second Church - signified by Noah - was a spiritual or intellectual in genius, since the salvation of man thenceforth depended on the up-building of a Conscience in the understanding; for the will and heart of man had become utterly corrupt by inheritance. The Lord instructed this spiritual church by doctrine, and a written Word was inspired through chosen prophets; which is known as the Ancient Word. The knowledge of correspondences - by which the celestial church had seen natural things as symbols and representations of the things of heaven - was now revived and became a means by which they could be enlightened, so long as they cherished a love of truth for the sake of charity. This Ancient Church spread over many continents, and was at its summit called the Silver Age.

But the love of the neighbor eventually perished. The science of correspondences was turned into idolatry and magic, and as the nations of antiquity emerge into historic times, the silver of spiritual truth had been squandered and lost.

Yet many of their traditions and rituals, although emptied of their original essence, were still correspondential in form. And thus the heavens could still recognize in them the features and intentions of celestial life. Therefore the Lord set apart a people - the Sons of Israel - to form the representation of a church. They were led by the Lord to adopt certain externals, certain rites and ceremonials, of the Ancient Church; by which a provisional conjunction could be maintained with heaven. The Church of Israel was charged with the spirit of prophecy and - although unregenerate and idolatrous - they became the medium by which the Divine law and the knowledge of the unity of God

could be preserved among men.

Even this trust they violated, in spite of worldly rewards and open miracles, and in face of repeated warnings and punishments. The Age of Brass came to its end when even natural good - the good of external obedience - was no longer available as a tool of the Divine providence. And in fulfillment of the Divine promise, the Messiah or Redeemer was born among the Jewish people, only to be rejected and crucified because He proved a barrier to their evil ambitions.

With that remnant among the Jews who recognized the Lord as the Christ, the Son of God, a new church was then established called the Christian Church. It spread widely among the gentiles. It was genuine church, founded on the laws of charity and faith, and in this it resembled the Ancient Church. But the Lord had given these laws as clear spiritual-moral precepts, and did away with the need for a complicated system of sacrifices and ritual ceremonials. He had come in the flesh and revealed His Divine Humanity in natural fact. Hence the Christian Church is called the Iron Age; for iron signifies truth in the ultimate of order (@AC 10355). In this church men were to have spiritual truth and the knowledge of heavenly life by means of the Word directly, and by the Word a conjunction with heaven was henceforth to be sought by those who were in the good of love and charity.

The Necessity of a Church

There have been many religions and many churches and cults in the world; and there still are. Yet all derive their origin and character from one or more of these four specific churches or dispensations. For these four stem from Divine revelations, by which Divine truth was given in variant forms adapted for reception by men in differing states. It is neither possible nor necessary for men's salvation to have all the world receive the same religious faith; for whoever there is, something of an acknowledgment of a God and of a life of kindness or charity there, are the means of salvation for men in simple states; and only by the permission of ignorance and of falsities can men be protected by Providence from a responsibility which they cannot bear or from the evils of profanation. On the other hand, it is also of imperative and essential importance that at all times there be on earth a church which has the truth of Divine revelation; a church Divinely commissioned and in possession of knowledge concerning God. For only if there be at least a nucleus or a remnant of such a church - where God is known and where there is a life according to His commandments - can the communion of the Lord and heaven with the human race on earth be maintained. And without such communion the race would perish in a maelstrom of violence (@AC 407, 468, 530, 931, 4423; @AR 533; @AE 665).

This statement may appear as an unintelligible exaggeration unless we consider the close dependence of mankind upon the spiritual world. For just as truly as the currents of life which course through our bodies are directed from the soul through our minds and are there determined as to end and quality; so the life of mankind is directed and qualified from the spiritual world. All affections which men entertain are from the world of spirits. These affections inflow through the active spheres of good spirits or evil spirits, and man's own mind or spirit is in a state of freedom in their midst and can choose in which sphere to linger. Yet this freedom of man is dependent on the order that prevails in the world of spirits. If evil spirits fill that world and remain in unchallenged possession, they also rule

unchallenged in the minds of men, so that man is unable to exercise his freedom as long as such spirits hold the power and the authority. Man's freedom is held in abeyance, his choice is misdirected. And when men die and pass into the spiritual world they remain still the pawns of these spiritual usurpers. Vast multitudes of spirits who, on earth, have been under the persuasion of false religions, are therefore oppressed in the world of spirits also like spiritual captives, unable to shake off the bonds of ignorance, helpless in their search for a road to heaven.

It is revealed in the Writings that it was to release such captives and restore order in the world of spirits that the Lord deigned to descend into the world of men. He came to teach Divine truth, which shatters falsity and pierces the pretenses by which the [?which?evil?] gain power over the souls of men. But He came also to establish His church which should disseminate and maintain that truth among men, and prevent men from becoming slaves to the price of this world or followers of false prophets.

All the saving power associated with the Church lodges solely in the Divine truth of the Word of which it is the custodian; for it is through the Word that the Lord exercises His redemptive power. And, for the sake of the freedom of all concerned, the Lord orders the world of spirits not through the Word spoken directly from heaven but through the Word as it is received in the church, or on earth. This is the reason why the Lord Himself came on earth to fight the hells. This is the reason why He gave, from time to time, a new revelation to men. And when men of the church come by death into the spiritual world, knowing the Divine doctrine, the Word in their minds becomes as it were a touchstone of judgment. For evil spirits cannot persist in their deceptions or exercise their false authority against such truth when this is clearly perceived and presented. Instead, this truth invites the influx of the heavens into the world of spirits, and provokes a continual judgment upon the evil so that the world of spirits will be kept free from their domination.

From these considerations it may be seen that it is of imperative need that there shall always be some church on earth wherein Divine truth in some form is received, cherished, and understood. For when there is a true church on earth, even though it be only among a few, there will also be a true church in the world of spirits. Those who pass into that world from here will continue to propagate their faith; and in a world where natural boundaries of space no longer hamper, and where the natural affections (which cause men's minds and hearts to cling to accustomed rites and prejudices) are gradually rendered quiescent, the message of the Church will be more readily received by all who have an affection of spiritual truth (@AE 732[3]).

The Judgment on the Churches

Quite contrary are the conditions in the spiritual world when and if a church on earth no longer carries out its functions of spiritual judgment. This occurs when men cease to examine their own evils and to shun such evils as sins against God. For by the neglect of repentance the minds of men are dulled to the understanding of the Lord's revealed doctrine and instead turn the Word ingeniously to confirm their own opinions and to condone their evils. The result is that ambitious men, in the name of religion, seize the reins of power in the church; and, after death, as evil spirits posing to be angels of

light, they begin to establish strongholds at the very gates of heaven and marshal a horde of their own like to exert influence over simple spirits whom they mislead with false doctrines and control by fear or false promises.

When this takes place, human freedom being endangered, the Lord performs a judgment, which simply means a separation of the good from the evil. Normally, every man is judged shortly after death, within about twenty years (@AR 866). But when the church on earth is no longer capable of sustaining spiritual temptation, evil spirits may be able to maintain their position in the world of spirits for many centuries, in false heavens of their own making it is then that the Lord must come to judgment on the consummated church.

The Writings reveal that there has been a last judgment on each of the four preparatory churches. The last judgment upon the Most Ancient Church is described as the Deluge. The Ancient Church suffered many partial judgments, signified by the confusion of tongues at Babel, by the destruction of Sodom, by the plagues on Egypt, and by similar events; yet the last judgment upon that church did not finally occur until at the Lord's Incarnation, for the Israelitish Church was in a sense a continuation of the Ancient Church. The last judgment on the Jewish Church was effected by the Lord when on earth, as may be seen from His saying, "I beheld Satan fall from heaven" (Luke 10:18), and "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31); and it was indicated also by the destruction of Jerusalem's temple after the Advent and by the scattering of the Jews over the world. The last judgment upon the Christian Church came about in the year 1757, when it was witnessed and described by Emanuel Swedenborg.

These last judgments take place in the spiritual world, and cannot be observed or noticed on earth, where events take their course as before. Their effects upon men are mostly internal and secret, and consist mainly in an increased spiritual freedom which is followed by man's cultural and political repercussions. But this does not change the dispositions of men and does not prevent hereditary evils from accumulating in the people of the consummated church. The chief observable result is the establishment of a new church on the basis of a new revelation of truth from the Lord's own mouth.

The judgment at the end of each church thus involves, first, the separation of good spirits from evil spirits in the other world; secondly, the formation of new hells from these evil spirits and of new heavens from the good; thirdly, the inauguration, by means of the new heaven, of a new church on earth, which takes place by means of a Divine revelation by the Lord out of His Word and by inspiration.

Such events could not be accomplished except by a Coming of the Lord. And the Lord makes His Advent by means of Divine truth. At the time of the Flood, He came to Noah (i.e., to the salvable remnant) by a new revelation in which the surviving truths derived from the perceptions of the Most Ancient Church were gathered into doctrinal form and these Divine remains became the ultimates by which a judgment was accomplished on the race that had been celestial.(*). To the Jewish Church the Lord came by the Law given through Moses and the prophets. At the end of the Jewish Church the Lord came in personal form, yet it was said of Him that the Word was made flesh, for it was essentially a coming of Divine truth, and this truth, as preserved in the New Testament, was the source and foundation of the Christian Church. When the Christian Church could no longer serve its spiritual use as a [?ferment?] of judgment, the Lord came again in a revelation of His truth, for the sake of

disclosing the hidden evils which rules in the world of spirits, and with a view of establishing a new church, which would be truly Christian and which would fulfil the prophecy of a kingdom of the Lord to which there should be no end.

(*) See @AC 3432; @AE 723[2]; @Ath 49.

That the New Church, called by the name the New Jerusalem, should endure to eternity, is not because of any exclusive human virtue in those who profess her Heavenly Doctrine, but is due to the inherent quality of that Doctrine itself, which closes the cycle of successive Divine revelations by opening the spiritual sense of the Word to rational apprehension and thus by instructing the rational which is the highest conscious degree of man's natural mind. We are taught that inmost Divine truths were revealed to those who were of the Most Ancient Church; more external Divine truths were revealed to those of the Ancient Church; and most external or ultimate Divine truths to the Hebrew Church and afterwards to the Israelitish. ... But interior Divine truths were revealed by the Lord for the Christian Church, and now still more interior truths for the church to come. These interior truths are such as are in the internal or spiritual sense of the Word. All this makes clear that there has been a progression of Divine truth from inmosts to ultimates, thus from wisdom to mere ignorance; and that there is now a progression of it from ultimates to interiors, thus from ignorance again to wisdom (@AE 948[3]).

Since we must regard the race as one man, the wisdom of its infancy may be difficult to define except in terms of that innocence which brings a complete trust in the leading of the Lord. This innocence comprises the essence of wisdom, because it acknowledges the utter ignorance of men; and to this wisdom the New Church also must aspire if our race - after choosing to eat the bitter fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil - shall ever return to taste of the tree of life which is in the paradise of God.

The four successive churches were represented in king Nebuchadnezzar's dream-image by a head of gold, a breast of silver, a belly of brass, and legs of iron. It is said that the feet were of iron mixed with miry clay. And the king saw a stone (not cut by human hands) smite the feet of the image into dust and this stone grew until it filled all the earth (Daniel 2). The stone represents the Divine truth. The judgment [?have?] described was final and conclusive upon all the evils and falsities of the preparatory churches.

This was the last judgment predicated in the book of Revelation, wherein John tells of the opening of the seven seals of the Lamb's book and the consequent downfall of the powers of evil in the spiritual world - the destruction of Babylon and the chaining of the Dragon. There it is told how all the dead, small and great, stood before the great white throne of judgment and were judged, every man according to his works; how the false heavens passed away and a new heaven and a new earth were created; and how a new Jerusalem descended from God out of heaven upon that new earth, and the voice out of the throne said, Behold, I make all things new... I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

The Consummation of the Age

For the understanding of such prophecies it must be known first of all that a last judgment does not involve the destruction of the earth or of the visible world. The Scripture in the original tongues speaks often of the foundation of world but never of any end of the world; the phrase erroneously so rendered in the King James version(*) is instead to be translated (as in the Revised Version) the consummation of the age.

(*)Matthew 13:39,40,49; 24:3; 28:20.

The Writings show that the destruction of the physical world would not only stop the procreation of the human race and thus limit the Divine work of providing new souls to people the heavens; but would also deprive the angelic heavens of their basis and foundation. For the life of the angels is intimately connected with the mental life of men, and rests therein as upon an ultimate plane. The very purpose of a last judgment is therefore to avert any threatening condition which might endanger the human race. And this danger that the race might destroy itself by evil is averted by the establishment of a new church on earth.

Yet the consummation of the age, the period at the end of a church when a general judgment is impending, is described both in the Old and the New Testaments in symbolic language which suggests almost universal destruction. It is even said that then the sun would be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, that the stars would fall from heaven and the earth would tremble; and that the mountains would melt as wax before the coming of the Lord. These symbolic pictures are used by the prophets and were cited by the Lord to the apostles, and are elaborated in the dramatic picture of the last judgment given in the Apocalypse or Book of Revelation. And in the spiritual world these prophecies of destruction were actually fulfilled even as to appearance and sensation: mountains were moved and valleys were lifted up, the earth yawned and whole cities sank into the deep, false heavens which were the haunts of evil spirits were cast down. But this was the objective representation of the changes of state which a spiritual judgment causes among spirits in the world of spirits. In a lesser degree we experience somewhat similar states in our minds here on earth, if the faith on which we built our hopes should suddenly begin to totter and we see our false illusions break and our own heart turn into the agonies of temptation and the world we knew seems to pass away. We are left desolate, bewildered and stunned, compelled to face realities and to go forth into an alien world and humbly commence anew.

The Lord came not to send peace upon earth, but a sword: the sword of truth by which spiritual peace can be gained. Unless man takes up his cross daily and while on earth combats his evils with the power of the Lord's truth, he must face the judgment after death. And if a church loses its integrity, corrupts its doctrine, and seeks other goals than those of love and charity, it can no longer conquer in spiritual temptations. It will then kill its own prophets and "shut up the kingdom of heaven against men" (Matthew 23:13).

The Writings testify that this occurred in the Christian Church. The charity which had ruled in apostolic times waxed cold. The church was rent asunder by heresies. Scarcely was it released from the era of persecutions before it adopted the infamous creed concocted at Nicea, by which it divided God

into three persons. Soon after, the love of dominion over the souls of men flared out in the Roman church and a brood of fantastic falsities were hatched to confirm the power of the Popes. The thoughts of Christians were held bound in ignorance and superstitious fears. The Word was made subordinate to man-made traditions. And when the Reformation came, in the 16th century, the Word was restored only as a dead letter which was made to confirm the idea that faith (in a vicarious atonement made by Christ) was enough to save the sinner.

Such falsities, proclaimed as saving truths, gave to evil men the prestige and power in the church and took away its spiritual defenses. Naturalism and atheism rushed in together. And in the spiritual world, the societies ruled by such evil spirits interposed themselves like black clouds between the world of spirits and heaven. No genuine doctrine of truth and no genuine charity remained in the churches of Christendom. Hypocrisy and false pietism displaced religion. The abomination of desolation was set up in its holy places.

It was to dislodge these evil spirits and their false prophets from the seats of the mighty in the spiritual world that the bolts of Divine judgment had to fall. To these, it meant the last day and the end of the world. Not a passing temptation that ends in a new dawn; but a final vastation of all the truths that they had borrowed and abused, and a complete end to their ambitious dominion. Their external morality was shed like a cloak. Their evils, exposed, flared into the open, and their only refuge was found in the fantasies of the hells - away from the piercing rays of truth.

Judgment is wrought by truth. The Lord came to judgment as the Son-of-Man, as the Divine truth. This was His second advent.

XII. The Second Advent And The New Church

The Spiritual Advent of the Lord

It is a fundamental acknowledgment of the New Church that the Lord has made His Second Advent.

This proclamation meets with astonishment in the Christian world. For since the time of the first century, pious Christians have been in the patience and expectation of Jesus Christ, thinking that His coming to restore His kingdom would be a personal appearance in the clouds of the sky, amidst signs and wonders and angelic hosts. Many sectarians have sought to fix the exact time for the literal fulfillment of the prophecy: "when all the tribes of the earth shall mourn and shall see the son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30). Yet such predictions were ever doomed to fail. For the Lord was to come again at the end of the age in the form of the Spirit of Truth, which would reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment and guide men in all the truth (John 14:18; 16:8, 13). Hence the Lord said, "I judge no man, yet the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" [?(John 16:25)?(John 12:47-48)?].

The second coming of the Lord is not an advent in Person, but is a coming in Divine truth which is the Word, by the revelation of Himself in the spiritual sense of the Scripture, like the glory which bursts through the dark clouds of misapprehension with which the literal sense has been invested by men (@TCR 3, 776). This Advent was therefore effected by giving a new revelation of truth; by the preparation and appointment of a man whom He filled with His Spirit to teach the doctrine of the New Church through the Word from Him (@TCR 779).

This man, who served as the Scribe of the Lord in His second advent, was Emanuel Swedenborg (under the Lord's guidance), the explorer not alone of the arena of the Scripture but of the thither to unknown reaches of the spiritual world. His spiritual senses were opened so that he could live amongst spirits and angels as well as among men. He was given to see the heavens and the hells and to perceive the Sacred Scripture as it is perceived by angels. Yet he testifies: From the first day of that call, I have not received any thing which pertains to the doctrines of the New Church from any angel, but from the Lord alone, while I read the Word (@TCR 779). And no one of the books which he has Divinely commissioned to publish by the press, he was commanded to write, This book is the advent of the Lord (Eccl. Hist.).

The prophets of old had written in a state when spirits from the Lord dictated to them with audible voice. But Emanuel Swedenborg received the Heavenly Doctrine with his understanding in a fully rational state of writing as of himself was not taken away. The prophets in their visions saw only the externals of the spiritual world. But Swedenborg not only could observe and record the external phenomena of the other world but could also understand the laws underlying angelic life. In his Writings, a comprehensive knowledge of the life after death is given to mankind, so as to strengthen men's faith in their immortal destinies; but also to make foolish and unnecessary the childish attempts of men to court open intercourse with spirits; for such intercourse - unless commissioned by the Lord for His purposes of revelation - is disorderly and fraught with spiritual and even physical dangers.

Without such a new Divine revelation there can be no hope for the formation of a new religious conscience among man which can lead them to look to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Divine Human and as the one God, and cause them to recognize themselves as spiritual beings and as responsible units within the vast organism of humanity. And [?conscious?conscience?] alone can inspire and maintain the moral self-control needed in this new age of mankind, when men hold in their hands the power to destroy whole continents.

The churches of the modern world have grown in numbers but have lost their faith and lost their power to rebuild the spiritual conscience of mankind. Apart from the Catholic hierarchy which still maintains its pretenses to ritual salvation, and a number of frenzied Protestant sects which play upon the emotions of the simple, the Christian churches, by and large, have turned from doctrinal teaching of a purely social gospel and a false tolerance born from disillusionment and indifference. The faith of the Protestant world was based on a belief in the historical inerrancy of the literal sense of the Holy Scripture. And when the advance of the natural sciences in modern times opened up new horizons for human knowledge about the physical world, it became more and more difficult to preserve such a blind faith. If the Bible was manifestly inaccurate in its assertion that the world was created in six days and that all the species of animals could be accommodated within Noah's ark; if it was in error in speaking of the four corners of the earth and failed to note the diurnal rotation of the globe; wherein then could its holiness and inspiration consist? If faith was to be restored, a new revelation was essential which could demonstrate that the letter of Scripture was but the crude garment for an internal, spiritual sense containing infinite Divine wisdom. And if faith in the supernatural was not to be discarded among the many superstitions which ignorance had bred throughout the ages, there was need for a rational revelation of the secrets of the after-life, a dispassionate disclosure of the laws which govern the communion between the two worlds. The answer to these spiritual needs of our race was given by the Lord in His second advent - through the intromission of His servant Emanuel Swedenborg into the spiritual world.

The doctrines revealed through Swedenborg were designed as the foundation of a New Church, and were called the Heavenly Doctrine or the Doctrine of the New Jerusalem. For by the prophecy that a holy city, New Jerusalem would descend out of heaven from God (Revelation 21:20) nothing else is meant than the revelation of a consistent structure of Divine doctrine such as is received in the angelic heavens; a doctrine which yet rests upon the spiritual truths that shine out from the pages of Holy Writ. Hence the New Jerusalem is called a city of truth and is described as built of transparent jasper upon twelve foundations of precious stones, on which were written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

But of this city New Jerusalem it is also said that it was prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. It is not merely a cold structure of doctrine. It is a virgin bride, suffused with love for her Maker and Redeemer, the means of conjunction between God and mankind. It descends not merely as a revelation printed in cold type, but as living truth received in the hearts of men.

The New Church at First Among a Few

The New Church exists wherever the new Divine revelation is received in mind and life, and thus with those who recognize that in this heavenly doctrine the Lord is present in His second advent, teaching and leading for the establishment of His kingdom.

As was the case with the Christian Church, which started with a remnant of the Jewish Church before it was later spread more widely among gentile races, chiefly those in Europe; so also the New Church was received by a small remnant from the former church, that is, among Christians. The Writings indicate that it is of the Divine Providence that the New Church at first should be confined to a few, and that its numbers should successively increase and so at last arrive at its full state (@AR 547; @AE 732). Nor are there any prophecies as to what this full state might mean as to numbers, or what length of time is meant by the thousand and two hundred and sixty days during which the New Church is to be like the celestial woman who was nourished by God in the wilderness while protected from the dragon (Revelation 12). It is merely noted as a parallel that the Christian Church did not attain to its fullness until an age had passed by.

Elsewhere we are told that the interior truths of a new revelation are not immediately received, but only after a considerable lapse of time, or not until all things in the spiritual world had been reduced to order, so that men - whose states depend on that order - could understand and perceive the goods of love and the truths of doctrine (@AE 670).

The reason for the slow growth of the church is also stated when it is said that the falsities of the former church must first be removed, for truths cannot be received and implanted until falsities are removed (@AR 547). Moreover, the doctrine of the New Church, which is the doctrine of love and charity, cannot be acknowledged and received except by those who are interiorly affected by truths, and thus by such as have not destroyed their intellectual faculty by the loves of self and the world. Finally, the New Church on earth grows only according to its increase among spirits in the world of spirits, spirits of various religious creeds who have on earth been in the spiritual affection of truth (@AE 732).

As was pointed out previously, the spiritual function of a church can be carried out even though its number are few, so long as those few are faithful to their trust. The most obvious of the uses of the New Church is to receive, cherish, and maintain the Heavenly Doctrine which is its Divine charter and the reason for its distinct existence. And since the Word does not make the church, but the understanding of it, it may be said that the church is such as is the soundness and purity of the doctrine that is taught in it (@TCR 243, 245). This distinctive mission of the New Church implies that the first danger which threatens it is the admixture of the falsities which destroyed the former church with the doctrines revealed to the New Church. The New Church descends from the new heaven, not in a moment but so far as the falsities of the former church are eradicated. And this can be done only by the raising up of a new clergy and the establishment of a church-body dedicated to the preservation and promulgation of the doctrine in its integrity. No one putteth new wine into old bottles; as the bottles break and the wine is spilled (@TCR 784). And if the faith of the New Church is commingled in the mind of a man with the faith of the old church, such collision and conflict ensue that his spiritual life is endangered. It is as when owls and doves are hatched in the same nest (@BE 102).

A new Divine revelation necessarily effects a spiritual judgment in both worlds. And such a judgment looks to a separation between good and evil. In the spiritual world this separation is sudden and conclusive. It occurred during the year 1757 when the spirit-hordes which had accumulated in the world of spirits during the Christian era were judged and sent to their final abodes. Since that time there have been continual judgments, purifications, separations, and re-orderings in that world, since false religions still persist on this earth, and men from here continually pass into the other life with ambitions to dominate and mislead. But here on earth the spiritual judgment can occur only so far as the truths of the Heavenly Doctrine are known. It has been said with justice that the influence of his New Church has been far out of proportion to its numbers. The direct and indirect affect of the Writings - broadcasted in edition after edition over the Christian world - has indeed been decisive in making untenable the cruder falsities which the former church once insisted upon in every pulpit and which are still retained in the written confessions of the orthodox churches. But the separation of those who are in good from those who are in evil cannot be done in this world with any finality, since the interior reception of the Divine truth on the part of a man cannot be estimated by men. It is nonetheless true that the New Church is intended as a haven and a home for those who desire to shun the evils of the former church and to do the goods of spiritual charity. The acceptance of the Heavenly Doctrine, which is a doctrine of love to the Lord and charity towards the neighbor, implies the willingness to be led by the Lord into the ways of regenerate life. Those who are openly evil therefore scorn the New Church; and those who are secretly evil are not likely to have much desire for any prolonged or active association with it.

The External Church

One of the grave falsities of the consummated church is the belief that man is justified and saved by faith alone, without the works of charity. This falsity cannot be eradicated except by a life according to the Lord's commandments, or according to His truths of doctrine; a life of daily repentance and usefulness.

This principle - that our religious confession must be carried out in life - necessarily means that the Church itself must be not only an internal church but at the same time an external church. It must have not only a soul, but a body, an external organization for the performance of those common uses of worship and instruction by which it may become an instrument of the Divine providence for the salvation of souls. The essential structure of such an external church (or organization of the church) is indicated in the Heavenly Doctrine. The office called the priesthood should govern those things with men that relate to heaven, and thus be responsible for ecclesiastical affairs; and among priests as among civil magistrates there must be subordination, lest any one from caprice or ignorance should permit evils which are contrary to order. Priests should teach the people and by truths lead them towards the good of life, but ought to compel no one to believe, nor claim any authority over the souls of men whose interior states they cannot know (@NJHD 311-318). They should teach according to the doctrine of their church, but place the final authority of truth in the Word. They and their people alike should not put their trust in the decisions of any council or on any man-made creed, but seek enlightenment from the revealed truth of the Word where the Lord Himself speaks to men (@NJHD 315; @TCR 489,621).

Beyond these fundamental teachings respecting the order of the external church, [?such?much?] is said in the Writings which throws light on how the cooperation of the laity with the clergy can be organized, how the worship of the church can be conducted, how the church can care for the instruction of its children, further the advance of its people in the understanding of the Word, and labor in the promulgation of its message. In the application of the doctrine to these uses, practical experience and the wisdom and illustration which the performance of such uses bring, are necessary; and as history has already shown, the receivers of the Writings have organized widely different types of church-bodies and have in different states and times conceived their duties in various ways and with different degrees of visible results.

Yet the work of the Church cannot be measured by visible results. It is right that we should do the work before us, searching the Writings for all the knowledge they can furnish, employing the judgment and prudence of experience, laboring for the progress of the visible church with all the zeal and hope of our hearts and with a prayer on our lips. It is meet that we should be gladdened by whatever progress our human institutions may seem to bring about, delight in every new truth that is perceived, and rejoice whenever a new soul awakens to the light and joins our ranks. The welfare of the New Church as it is visibly actualized in uses which are ours to support and carry on, must be the first of our concerns. We must see the New Church as the Crown of all the churches, as an indispensable level in the world, and as the only hope for the future of mankind: to be placed above all lesser matters, yea, above the destinies of nations. But we must also humbly acknowledge that the Lord seeth not as man seeth. The visible New Church is only a part of the Lord's kingdom. He has also other sheep which are not of this fold. Them also must He bring and they shall hear His voice; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.

The Church Universal and the Church Specific

In the Lord's view there is only one fold. For all the angelic heavens are before Him as one Grand Man; and the Lord's kingdom on the earth is conjoined with that heavenly Man as the externals of the body are conjoined with its interiors.

The Lord's kingdom on earth is dispersed through the whole world and consists of all who have lived in the good of charity according to their religion (@HH 328; @AC 10765). All such are conjoined in the Lord's sight into a human form and are ordered into societies according to their communion with the societies of heaven (@AC 7396[2]). They constitute the Lord's universal church.

In this church universal are also those who are of that specific church where the Lord is known and acknowledged and where the Word is. All through the ages, there has always been such a specific church. The Most Ancient Church, the Ancient Church, the Israelitish, and the Christian, each served in turn as a specific church; and now this function has been given to the church called by the name the New Jerusalem. It must be understood that all are not necessarily of the church who carry the name; but those only who at heart acknowledge the Lord's Divine and who learn truths from the Word and do them (@AE 388).

Within the body of the church universal, those of the specific church serve as the heart and the lungs;

for upon their activity, their spiritual uses, depends the vital connection of mankind with heaven. It is through the specific churches of the past that all the religious knowledge of the nations of the earth has been transmitted. Whatever of religion the gentile races possess, has stemmed either from the perceptions of the celestial church, or from the doctrines and the symbolism of the Ancient Church, or from the Hebrew Word or the Christian Gospels. And although it is explicitly shown in the Writings that all the pagan religions are utterly corrupt; and although Swedenborg, referring to Christendom, wrote, "At the present day there are none other than false churches; yet we are also assured that in every religion there are not only teachings concerning a God but also precepts distinguishing good from evil, enough to build up something of a conscience and lead to external charity" (@Inv 38; @TCR 580[e]).

It is not difficult to discern from history what a tremendous influence the great dispensations have had upon the world, and particularly how Jewish and Christian thought has permeated the web of human culture during the centuries. But it may prove more of a strain upon our faith to demonstrate that the New Church has now taken over the task of serving as the throbbing heart which shall send a new spiritual pulse throughout the Church universal and as the lungs which shall examine, judge, and purify the blood-stream of the world's thought.

The answer to our difficulty is found in the teaching that this use of the specific church is carried on largely in the spiritual world. For there the light in which the angels from this earth are, comes from the Lord by means of the Word; and this light is greater in proportion as the Word is understood. In the world of spirits those societies with whom the Word is read are arranged in the midst, and thence spiritual light extends towards all sides, and finally to the region of gentile spirits, bringing with it a perception of truth (@DSS 104-107; @LJPost 178; @AE 313[3]; 351; @HH 308). And from the Christian heaven and from the heavens of former specific churches there is a continual influx into the heavens drawn from gentile nations. The effect of a last judgment is to increase the light among spirits; but also with men in the world who are associated with such spirits, for men have the faculty of thinking from the spiritual sphere with which their affections have associated them. A man on earth cannot think otherwise about spiritual things than the spirits and angels who are with him think (@AE 757[5]). The light of truth from a new revelation must be spread first in the spiritual world; and millennia may pass before the Church on earth which is the custodian of that revelation can actually disseminate its truths to the corners of the earth. Indeed no religion of the past has been worldwide. Nevertheless the specific church, through its heavenly societies, serves as the vital center and inmost of the church universal, and as the means by which the world of spirits, with its innumerable newcomers, is kept in constant enlightenment from heaven and thus is continually purified and ordered.

It would be an error to think that the New Church is in any sense to serve as the heart and lungs for the body of the old or consummated church upon which the judgment fell. The old Christian Church, it is revealed in the spiritual world, has expired - has lost its soul. It has estranged itself from its own heavens. It will remain in its externals of worship, as the Jews do in theirs. But through the evils of the love of self and the world every doctrine which the Lord gave to that church has been perverted, so that [?not only?nothing of?] Divine truth remains in it but what has been falsified or rejected. No genuine faith and hence no true charity remain in it. Its leading falsities have forced all its truths out of connection, until it lies a prey to doubt and naturalism and atheism. The original stones of its structure - the eternal truths of the Word - are still there; but there is not one stone upon another, even as the

Lord foretold of the old Jerusalem. This is the Divine verdict not only upon the Catholic Church but upon all the various churches of the Protestant or Reformed world; upon all that are founded on the rubble of human traditions and have rejected the cornerstone - the acknowledgment of the Divine Human, the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ as the one God. They have lost the proffered key to the kingdom of heaven - which is the doctrine of the conjunction of charity and faith.

There is indeed, within the Christian world, a remnant of such as are in the life of good, with whom a New Church can be eventually instituted. Where these are, the Lord alone can know. But in the Christian world there will be few (@AC 3898). The angels - so Swedenborg records - have slender hope of the men of the Christian world, who despite the Word and its light have rejected their opportunities. It has been among gentiles that previous new churches have been set up. And in the spiritual world the angels saw signs that the church now perishing among Europeans would be established with gentiles and especially among Africans - who are described as the best among the gentiles (@SE 4777).

It would be a false concept of charity to refuse to accept this Divine disclosure of the spiritual desolation that reigns in Christendom. The Writings reveal the evils and falsities of the old church in order that we may recognize them and shun them in ourselves. But it is also noted that the Lord does not disclose the hidden truths of His Word until the former church becomes so vastated that it will fail to acknowledge these truths interiorly; thus indifference and opposition remove the danger of profanation (@AC 3398, 3898).

Even so, it is among the remnant in Christian lands that the New Church is first received, and this despite the degeneracy of hereditary evils which infest the races of Christian stock (@AC 2910). How the present gentile races will be prepared to receive the Lord in His second advent, lies hidden amongst the arcana of the Divine providence. Yet the Heavenly Doctrine has power to heal the fevers of hereditary evils even in our race; and in a sense our children, in their formative years, are gentiles as to state, and can, by wise guidance, be protected against the confirmations of the falsities that are devastating the spiritual life of the world. And it may be surmised that during the course of centuries even the Christian nations may become so externalized and paganized that nothing of internal worship will remain, and thus nothing of interior evil and falsity such as now prevent their reception of spiritual truth. They will then return to a gentile state, and - like fields that have lain fallow - may become again virgin soil, receptive to the seeds of heavenly doctrine (@AC 1366, 2986).

In the meantime, the New Church, although its earthly organizations be small and its first state external, will suffice to serve as the vital organs of the Lord's universal church, which nearly expired because of the failure of the former Christian Church (@AR 476). The New Church is called the New Christian Church or a New Church truly Christian. By its establishment as distinct from the old, the Christian Church ... which is now at an end, may be said to rise again and as it were revive and draw breath through heaven from the Lord (@Coro 1; @CL 532). For with the revelations of the Second Advent, Christianity itself is only now beginning to dawn (@TCR 700).

And because the New Church in the spiritual world will draw to itself all those from Christendom who approach the Lord and perform repentance, it may be said that these constitute a universal New Church; which is signified by the seven churches in the Apocalypse (@AR 69, 87, 88). In the sight of heaven, all those from whom a New Church can be formed - and who are thus potentially of the New Church - belong to the universal New Church; even as our own children are prospectively of the New

Church.

Yet no man or spirit can perform the functions of the specific church until he comes to acknowledge the Lord in His Second Advent, and by the power of the Heavenly Doctrine renounces the evils of his heredity and the falsities of the former churches.

The New Church as the Crown of the Churches

The New Church struggles for survival in a sinful world as amidst a wilderness, protected from persecution because of its apparent insignificance.

Yet the oasis will widen. The desert shall rejoice and bloom as the rose. Despite the weakness of men and the fragile nature of human institutions, the Lord will make the New Church the Crown of the Churches (@Coro 0[52]). The quality of the New Church depends not on men, but on the Heavenly Doctrine wherein the Lord has opened the Word and revealed divine truths in abundance. The ideal quality of the New Jerusalem is described in the Writings, not as a fleeting vision that is beyond man's attainment, but as a gift offered for our use even here on earth. The New Church will not and cannot be established by any outward miracles which persuade. Instead, the enlightened reason can see in the revelations of the spiritual world and of the internal doctrinal sense of the Word a supreme spiritual miracle. So far as man really receives the holy city of truth into his mind and heart, the Word will become translucent from the internal sense and spiritual light will inflow from the Lord and his natural or rational light will become devoid of the confusing pride of self-intelligence but full of the delights of the uses of mutual love (@AR 932, 919, 940). The Church will then become conjoined with the New Heaven; and there will be in it no external separated from internals, nor any faith divorced from charity (@AR 918).

In this New Church there will be a spiritual peace - which is the glory of spiritual victory - and an internal blessedness of life such as can be found nowhere else (@Coro 0[53]). There will be restored in it the love truly conjugal through which heaven may descend and from which there is power and protection against the hells (@CL 534; @AE 999).

Therefore this New Church is that state of mankind, on earth and in heaven, which was foreseen from the creation of the world, and towards which the human race is being led by the unseen currents of Providence through the aeons of time (@Coro 0[52]). All other things are transient and instrumental. The Divine assurance is given that the New Church shall endure to eternity as the kingdom of the Son of Man which Daniel beheld in prophecy:

"To Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, and all people, nations, and tongues shall serve Him. His dominion is the dominion of an age that will not pass away, and His kingdom one which shall not perish" (Daniel 7:13-14).

It shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day

that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem ... and the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one (Zechariah 14:7-9).