

Minor Prophets: Major Messages

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The Book of Obadiah

How To Use This Study Guide

1. A slow unhurried reading of Obadiah is essential. Read each chapter before you look at the related section of the Study guide. Read the chapter again while you are using the study guide, and read it a third time when you are finished. This process will give you a powerful sense of the series of events and meanings in each chapter. It is important to feel comfortable with all the names, places, and announcements in Obadiah's prophecy. When possible, some historical information will be included in the study guide to increase reading comprehension and enhance application.
2. Our reading of the one chapter of Obadiah will begin with quotes from a work of the Writings called *Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms* (hereafter referred to as *P&P*). This work has a verse-by-verse overview of Obadiah that summarizes the internal sense. Our research will help move us from this general summary to the particulars of the internal sense.
3. Another important reference tool is *Searle's General Index to Swedenborg's Scripture Quotations*. This reference shows where in the Writings a verse(s) of the Word is either explained specifically or used to illustrate a doctrinal point that we can use in our study. There is also another use of this work. As we study, each researcher will be led by the Lord's Providence in myriad of ways and according to specific needs or states. Knowing how to use this book will help us look up related passages that will add to our knowledge of the three-fold Word.
4. You will soon discover that not every verse, word, name, etc. is directly quoted and explained in the Writings, but there are often other references to the same name, place, or thing in the explanation of a different verse of the Word. The hope is that reflection on these other references and their associated doctrine will help us see possible applications to our full study of Obadiah. We will need to use "derived doctrine" often. Please don't run away from this maligned term. If we use it properly, admitting openly that it is derived, we bring no harm to the internal sense.
5. Keep a notebook handy during your study times. Write out insights, questions, and any summaries you find helpful in organizing your thoughts about each chapter. **The goal of this study guide is not to give a detailed summary of the internal sense but to start each researcher's quest for deeper insight.**
6. At the end of each chapter in the study guide, you will find a study review. The review includes a summary of each section to help you reinforce and build on your understanding of several of the key points.
7. Begin each study unit with a devotional prayer asking the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts. Studying in this sphere has the power to inspire and open our minds with a higher spiritual priority that will keep us in the company of the Lord's angels. As the Writings teach, we must seek to love truth for truth's sake. Such an approach will free each reader from preconceived ideas that might limit his or her ability to "see" the intent and message of the Lord's Word.

Introduction

Welcome to the study of **the shortest book in the Word**. Obadiah has one chapter and twenty-one verses. As brief as this book is, scholars raise many questions about it. They debate its author and date of composition, and they point to the striking similarity between passages in Obadiah and Jeremiah to question whether Obadiah actually witnessed the things he wrote about or saw them in a dream or vision from the Lord. As always, we need to briefly consider the interesting issues the scholars raise. Some of their observations wonderfully highlight things the Lord intended us to find in the Word that serve as a base or “containant” for the deeper spiritual things of the internal sense. On the other hand, we can set aside some of their debates because they are resolved when the spiritual sense is opened to reveal and explain the internal sense of the Word.

Let's consider a specific issue to illustrate this point. Biblical researchers note several similarities or parallelisms in Obadiah and Jeremiah. For example, the words “grape gatherers came to you” appear in both *Obadiah 1:5* and *Jeremiah 49:9*. Who, ask the scholars, wrote that prophetic sentence first? Jeremiah wrote it first, they have determined. Here is how they came to that conclusion: *Obadiah 1:10-14* seems to refer to the capture of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. by Nebuchadnezzar. They believe *Jeremiah 49* was composed following the battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. Ergo, Jeremiah said it first.

In its introduction to the book of Obadiah, the *Oxford Annotated Bible* suggests another explanation for the similarities: that both prophets borrowed these passages “from a collection of sayings transmitted orally by prophetic circles.”

At this point, it seems prudent to ask if these theories have any spiritual importance for us. Do we really need to determine who wrote these prophetic words first? Does a collection of “oral prophetic sayings” have anything to do with the internal sense? Isn't the repetition itself of greater spiritual significance than those who said it?

The Writings answer, as noted below, that repetition is good and intrinsically necessary for the message of the spiritual sense. Repetition is the work of the Lord and not individual prophets!

Repetition in the Word is not there because one prophet borrowed from another. So that we can better answer future criticisms that the Word is repetitious, let's consider these teachings:

- *Arcana Coelestia (AC) 435, 707, 734, and 1015* teach us that the Lord uses repetition to signify certain states people pass through.
- *AC 734* states emphatically that there is no such thing as repetition in the Word.

- *AC 1259* helps us to understand that if repetitions accidentally occurred in the Word, if phrases were creatively lifted from other sources, and if prophets plagiarized lines, it would cause the Word to lose its holiness.
- “It is common in the Word, especially the prophetic, for one thing to be expressed in two ways; and he who does not know the mystery in this, cannot [but] think it a mere repetition for the sake of emphasis.” (*AC 4691*)
- *AC 5888* states that repetition occurs to indicate the state of the will and understanding. See this concept explained also in *AC 6343/3*, *AC 7945*, and in *The Doctrine of Sacred Scriptures* 81, 84, and 86.
- *AC 9565* states that if something is repeated three times, each single thing has a plenary conjunction in the internal sense.
- *Divine Providence (DP) 193* gives reasons why repetitions occur in the Word.

THE AUTHOR

We have no direct information about Obadiah’s life and the dates of his birth and death. We know that his name means “a servant of the Lord.” Among the Jewish people, Obadiah was a popular choice for a name, so it is not surprising to find numerous Obadiah’s mentioned in important Old Testament events. There are some scholars willing to go out on a limb to identify one of the Obadiah’s mentioned in the Word as the author of this prophetic book. For those who would venture into such a pursuit, there are at least nine Obadiah’s in the Old Testament to consider.

- In *I Kings 18*, there is a steward in King Ahab’s household named Obadiah. This Obadiah was a friend to many prophets. He saved more than a hundred of them, hiding them from Jezebel, feeding and giving them water. For his devotion to the Lord’s prophets and his kindness to them, he was made a prophet. (*I Kings 18* tells of a time when Obadiah met and talked with the prophet Elijah.)
- In *I Chronicles 7:3*, an Obadiah who is a son of Izrahiah (four other sons are named) is called a chief man: “All five of them were chief men.”
- In *I Chronicles 8:38*, Azel had six sons, one of whom was named Obadiah. The lineage of this family can be traced to Saul, the first king of Israel.
- *I Chronicles 9:16* mentions an Obadiah whose lineage is traced to Elkanah, who lived in the villages of the Netophathites. Is this the Elkanah who was the father of Samuel?
- In *I Chronicles 12:9*, there is an Obadiah from the Gadites who joined forces with David in Ziklag.
- In *I Chronicles 27:19*, there is a prince of Zebulun named Obadiah.
- *II Chronicles 17:7* mentions a prince named Obadiah being sent by Jehoshaphat to instruct the people in the laws of the Lord.
- In *II Chronicles 34:12*, a Levite named Obadiah was appointed by King Josiah to be an overseer to repair the temple.

- In *Ezra 8:9*, a man named Obadiah accompanied Ezra on the return of the exiles from Babylon.

Whenever the Word withholds background information on one of the Lord's "chosen," I can't help but think it is the Lord's way of keeping us focused on the message of the Word and not the individual. Therefore, tying Obadiah's lineage to one of the nine Old Testament references seems superfluous. What's your point of view on this quest to find a historical connection?

AN OVERVIEW OF THE LITERAL SENSE OF OBADIAH

Obadiah's prophecy expresses the Lord's displeasure with the Edomites. What sin or evil had they committed that would cause their downfall? Their heritage goes back to Esau, so Jacob was their uncle. In other words, they were blood relatives to the children of Israel.

- The Edomites stood by when Jerusalem was invaded.
- The Edomites rejoiced over the captivity of the sons of Judah.
- They actively participated in the looting of Jerusalem.
- The Edomites set up roadblocks to prevent the people of Jerusalem from escaping the attack of the Philistines.
- They were callously indifferent, "un-brotherly," and lacking in charity to the neighbor.

Note how the Word uses correspondences to identify Edom's transgressions:

- They had a cruelty of feet (verse 11): "you stood on the other side."
- They had a cruelty of heart (verse 12): "...rejoiced over...the day of their destruction."
- They had a cruelty of tongue (verse 12): "...nor should you have spoken proudly."
- They had a cruelty of eyes (verse 13): "...should not have gazed on their affliction."
- They had a cruelty of hands (verse 13): "...nor laid hands on (Judah's) substance."

Let's take one last look at the outline of the literal sense of Obadiah. We can identify four major sections of Obadiah:

1. In *Obadiah 1:1-9*, Edom is about to be driven out of its land by a confederacy of nations selected by the Lord.
2. *Obadiah 1:10-14* describes the kind of punishment Edom will receive for its participation in the capture of Jerusalem.

3. *Obadiah 1:15-16* announces a day of judgment upon all nations. “As you have done, it shall be done to you.”
4. *Obadiah 1:17-21* tells that in that day Judah and Israel shall escape and shall regain the lands that the Edomites and other enemies took from them.

With this introduction and overview, let's enter this wonderful and helpful study of Obadiah as it announces and celebrates the birth of the New Church.

Chapter One

OBADIAH 1:1-3

"The vision of Obadiah.

Thus says the Lord God concerning Edom (we have heard a report from the Lord, and a messenger has been sent among the nations, saying, 'Arise, and let us rise up against her for battle'): 'Behold, I will make you small among the nations; you shall be greatly despised. The pride of your heart has deceived you. You who dwell in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; you who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to the ground?'"

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "Concerning those who are in self-intelligence, and who pervert the literal sense of the Word, who are Edom; that they are to be combated, because they imagine themselves more intelligent than the rest, vers. 1-3..."

AC 3322 [8]

- "In Obadiah (i: 1-10, 18, 19)...'Esau' and 'Edom' denote the evil of the natural man originating in the love of self, which despises and rejects all truth, whence comes its devastation."

Apocalypse Revealed (AR) 338

- "...they who have pretended before the world that they were in the good of love, and yet were in evil, hide themselves after death in caves; and they who have pretended that they were in truths of faith, and yet were in the falsities of evil, hide themselves in the rocks of the mountains." Obadiah 1:3 is cited along with other passages.

Posthumous Theological Works, Vol. 1, Invitation to the New Church 35.

- "[The 'rock' is spoken of in the Word] The 'fissures of the rock' mean falsified truths..." Obadiah 1:3 is cited along with many passages.

AC 10582

- "To dwell in the holes of a rock is [to be] in falsities of faith. The subject here is those who exalt themselves above others, believing that they are more

learned than the rest of mankind, when yet they are in falsities and cannot even see truths. Such in the other life dwell in the holes of rocks, and sometimes thrust themselves forth upon the rocks.... his is meant by holding the height of the hill, and mounting on high as an eagle...and yet being brought down." Obadiah 1:3-4 are cited.

Apocalypse Explained (AE) 410 [5]

- "In Obadiah (i. 3-4)...Edom, who signifies here the pride of learning which is from self-intelligence, and falsity therefrom destroying the church.... 'the clefts of the rock' signify the falsities of faith and of doctrine, because those dwell there who are in such falsities..."

Derived Doctrine

"The vision of Obadiah."

- DP 134 explains that there are two kinds of visions: Divine and diabolical. Divine visions are "such as the prophets had; who, when they were in vision, were not in the body, but in the spirit..."
- Obadiah's name means "servant of the Lord," so this helps us identify which kind of vision we are studying. It is a Divine vision received in a spirit of willingness to serve the Lord. It is a spiritual mission that is not limited to time and space but to eternal ends.

"We have heard a report from the Lord."

- Who or what are we to make of the "we have heard"? Does the "we" represent the will and understanding? The rest of the derived doctrine seems to validate such an assumption.
- AC 4674 helps us answer this question when it explains that a "report" or "news" signifies that which is from the divine truth. A report's purpose is to help us discern the quality of evil and falsity.
- The words "A report from the Lord" clearly makes this "report" more than a rumor or gossip. It is a report from infinite Love and Wisdom.

"...a messenger has been sent among the nations, saying..."

- AR 667 teaches that nations in the positive sense signify those who are in the good of love and charity from the Lord. Whereas in the negative sense, nations signify those who trust in their own selfhood. (AE 249)
- Which sense of nations is being used here? To find a possible answer, let's check the correspondential meaning of "sending a messenger."
- A messenger, or to send a messenger, signifies to communicate. (AC 4239) Near the end of AC 4239, it mentions that Jacob sending messengers to

Esau represents bringing conjunction between the “truth Divine of the natural (which is Jacob) and the good Divine therein (which is Esau).” The point being illustrated is that the Lord was forming a coalition of those who had a common spiritual interest. Uniting the “brothers” would bring an end to the haughty estrangement that the falsity of self-intelligence felt was invincible.

- Let’s not overlook that very last word, “saying.” In the internal sense, “saying” can represent the following things: to reveal; a new light is to come; to perceive; to think (and to do); and to predict.

“Arise, and let us rise up against her for battle.”

- *AC 2326* gives us this meaning of “arise.” It signifies having an elevation of the mind, or to enter a state of affection from charity.
- “Rise” in *AC 2028* signifies the elevation of spiritual truth to agreement with external truth. This process might give us a fuller mental picture of the meaning of “let us rise up.”
- The Lord is calling for a battle to be waged against Edom’s arrogance. Where does arrogance reside and draw its life? The heart or affections is where it (hides) lives. The affections correspondently are called she, her, woman, etc.
- To battle “her” represents to call on and use the Lord’s power against the affections of the hells. See *AC 1663-1664* and *AE 817 [7]* for illustrations of wars and battles.

“Behold, I will make you small among the nations.”

- Do we need derived doctrinal quotes to perceive this meaning? Do we not feel in our hearts what the Lord is predicting? Edom, with its smug self-assurance, will be brought into a low state. Like a giant balloon, its concealed air will be expelled in an instant. In the Lord’s presence, Edom cannot stand tall.

“You shall be greatly despised.”

- There is a law of the Lord stated in the literal sense of Obadiah. “As you have done, it shall be done to you.” (1:15) The Edomites despised good and truth and fervently loved falsity. What is loved becomes one’s life. Therefore, the enlightened, the nations called to do battle against Edom, will “greatly” despise the falsities of Edom’s way of life. In effect, the hatred the Lord’s army felt for Edom is not the ugly face of war but a shining face that reflects a holy fear to protect the Lord’s Word from those who would profane and mock it.

"The pride of your heart has deceived you..."

- Pride is called “the love of self.” (*AC 1306*) Pride comes about when the external man develops self-confidence bolstered and inspired by false reasonings. (*AC 1585 [4]*) Pride enjoys and attempts to have a dominating power over others. (*AC 8678*) Pride seeks to have its own way and tolerates others to the degree they favor its self love. (*AE 518 [34]*)

"You who dwell in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high..."

- This passage is well covered in the **Passages from the Writings**.

"You who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to the ground?'"

- Do we hear arrogance? Do we hear pride? Do we hear mental giants bragging about their reasoning abilities? This passage is dripping with contempt to and for the Lord and His Word.
- There is a challenge in these words that cannot be missed or excused. The Lord faced the most grievous temptations the hells could bring to bear. They mocked Him from the beginning of His ministry in the wilderness to the cross. “You saved others, now save yourself.” Hell is full of contempt and rebellion. Here in the literal sense, we see it clearly stated: Who will bring me down?

Putting It All Together

1. The passage in *P&P* pulls all of the above together beautifully. “...those who are in self-intelligence, and who pervert the literal sense of the Word...they are to be combated, because they imagine themselves more intelligent than the rest...” We are called to be brave soldiers in the Lord’s army. We need to despise the life of evil because it loves falsity and hates truth: it favors self and hates the Lord.

The choice is plain. It’s Edom’s way or the Lord’s way. The outcome is not debatable. Edom will be made low in spite of its pretentious bragging. No matter how cleverly Edom lays out its strategy, it will fall. Edom’s height on the mountain will not save it from the Lord’s presence. Wherever the Lord brings good and truth, evil and falsity cannot remain in His presence.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P* again.
Read Obadiah 1:1-3 again.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Have you ever met, read, or heard someone who imagines they are more intelligent than the rest of the human race? How does that person relate to other people? How do other people relate to him or her?
2. Did you try to wage a mental battle against their thinking? What was the outcome?
3. Hiding up in the mountain gives the person up an advantage on the one below who is climbing up the mountain. Those on top can cause an avalanche of stones to advance on the persons below. They can use poles, javelins, arrows, or hot oil to push people backwards. What does this tell us about hell's imagined defense against the truth of the Lord?
4. What about the other side of this issue? Is there confidence in these verses that the up-hill battle can be won with the Lord's help? Give examples.
5. The confederation of nations, the brotherhood of the will and understanding being called by the Lord, is a force to fight with against hell. What ways can you see this happening in the church? What about in daily life?
6. If a modern-day prophet were to give us a report on what we are doing to the literal sense, do you imagine we might hear some strong words of condemnation? How do we treat the Lord's Word as an organization? As individuals? What informs our choices about the Word?

OBADIAH 1:4-5

"Though you ascend as high as the eagle, and though you set your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down," says the Lord.

"If thieves had come to you, if robbers by night- Oh, how you will be cut off! – Would they not have stolen till they had enough? If grape gatherers had come to you, would they not have left some gleanings?"

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...That they defend falsities through natural light [lumen], but that they will perish, and the very falsities with them, vers. 4, 5..."

AC 10582 [8]

- "The subject here is those who exalt themselves above all others, believing that they are more learned than the rest of mankind.... This is meant by holding the height of the hill, and mounting on high as an eagle, and setting his nest among the stars, and yet being brought down."

AE 410 [5]

- “In Obadiah i. 3, 4...pride of learning which is from self-intelligence, and falsity...destroying the church...are compared to an eagle because the eagle from its lofty flights signifies the pride of self-intelligence; so, too, a ‘nest for habitation’ is mentioned, and ‘to set it among the stars’ signifies in the heights where those dwell who are in the knowledges of truth, for the knowledges of truth are signified by ‘stars.’ ”

AC 3901 [7 & 8]

- “In Obadiah 1:4 by ‘eagles’ signifies rational things that are not true...by ‘eagles’...is signified falsity induced by reasonings, which is induced from the fallacies of the senses and external appearances.

AR 649

- “Hence it is, that (to gather grapes)...by these things the Lord’s operation from the good of His love by the Divine truth of His Word is signified.” Obadiah 1:4-5 is cited among many other passages.

AE 920 [5]

- “In Obadiah 1:5... ‘Grape-gatherers’ signify falsities, and ‘thieves’ evils, which lay waste the truths and goods of the church; but ‘destroyers’ signify both falsities and evils; that ‘they would leave no clusters’ signifies that there are no goods because there are no truths. But ‘to gather the vintage’ signifies to gather for uses such things especially as will be serviceable to (the person’s) understanding ...”

AC 5135 [8]

- “...in Obadiah 1:5... ‘grape-gatherers’ denote falsities which are not from evil; by these falsities the goods and truths stored up by the Lord in man’s interior natural (that is, remains) are not consumed, but by falsities derived from evils, which steal truths and goods and also by wrong applications employ them to confirm evils and falsities.”

AC 8906 [3]

- “...a thief...is falsity, which will then take possession of the whole man, both of his will and of his understanding, and thus will take away all truth and good. The like is signified by a ‘thief’ in Obadiah 1:5.”

AR 164

- "...good without its truths is not good, only merit-seeking or hypocritical; but evils and falsities take it away like a thief. This is done gradually in the world, and completely after death, and also without the man knowing when and how.... Since the taking away of good and truth from them that are in dead worship is done as by a thief in darkness ...in the Word as in the following passages..." Obadiah 1:5 is among the examples cited.

True Christian Religion (TCR) 317

- "Priests who minister only for the sake of gain or attainment of worldly honor, and who teach such things as they see or may see from the Word to be not true, are spiritual thieves; since they deprive the people of the means of salvation, which are the truths of faith. Such are called thieves in the Word in the following passages..." Obadiah 1:5 is cited.

AE 193 [6]

- "In Obadiah 1:5...falsities and evils are called 'thieves,' and are said to 'steal'; falsities are 'thieves,' and 'robbers by night'; it is said 'by night,' because 'night' signifies a state of no love and faith."

AE 1005

- This passage explains "His coming and Last Judgment" are meant when the Lord is referred to as a thief coming in the night. Obadiah 1:5 is cited.

Derived Doctrine

"Would they [robbers and thieves] not have stolen till they have enough?" "Would they not have left some gleanings?"

- Might these questions serve to show that Edom's goal was to "steal till they had enough" but that as much as they wished to take it all, they couldn't help but to leave some behind? What was left behind? AC 5135 [8] has what appears to be the answer. The Lord stores up "remains" in each person's interior, and they cannot be consumed by self-love because they are kept in a secret place known only to the Lord. Hell is a robber and thief, but it cannot spoil what the Lord protects.
- "Remains, gleanings" will be left. That must drive the hells to a degree of distraction and despair. They cannot completely rid themselves of all connections with the Lord.

Putting It All Together

1. Building on the last point in the derived doctrine section might help us pull things together. Edom saw itself as smarter than anyone else in the world. They polished their external reasoning with such brilliance that it impressed their sensual nature. They were able to bend truth with “wrong applications.” Was there anything they couldn’t do? Couldn’t they rob people of the truths if they put their minds to finding just the right blend of falsity? Edom believed so!
2. Edom did plunder good and truth. They hurt the people to whom they should have ministered, but the Lord still had their “remains” in His control. Why? When the insanity in hell is almost totally out of control, the Lord brings the hells back into order for the briefest of moments. In that “sane” moment, they return to a degree of clarity and feel shame for their actions. But then they lapse (leap) back into the falsities of self-intelligence. What does the Lord touch within them? He touches their gleanings, their remains, or their soul. He touches what could have been their greatest individual and unique potential. They could not rid themselves of the delights of innocence that were impressed on their memories of childhood. Not the smallest of them is lost. (*AC 530 and 561*) Edom might have forgotten them, but the Lord does not forget them. He knows where they are. He protects them to eternity.
3. These verses, like a Divine beacon, tell everyone that Edom’s natural light and its falsities will perish. Edom cannot extinguish the light of the Lord. He will not be robbed. Edom is not wiser than the Infinite Mind.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Obadiah 1:4-5.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. *TCR 317* mentions priests preaching and teaching things they know are wrong and contrary to the Word. I wonder what contrary things might be taught in our day. I have tried to think how that might be true today. Can you identify with this portion of the prophecy?
2. If you were asked to share your views about the power of the soul, or remains, what points would be your favorite to highlight in your response?
3. Without feeling smug, is it not good to read that evil will be vanquished? The loud, bragging voice of the “intimidator” will be silenced. Its imagined strong defense in the caves of the mountains will be emptied of its arsenal.
4. Most of us have encountered bullies in our lives. How is hell like a bully? How do you vanquish a bully?
5. Our reading referred to the negative correspondence of eagles. In this case, eagles represent a pride in learning from self-intelligence. At the time I read

that, I wanted to quote *Isaiah 40:31*: "...those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." *AR 244* explains that eagles in this passage from Isaiah signify rising into knowledges of truth and good, and so into intelligence. This isn't so much a question as it is a reminder that "good eagles" study with a purpose to learn and apply the good and truth we receive from the Lord.

OBADIAH 1:6

"Oh, how Esau shall be searched out! How his hidden treasures shall be sought after!"

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...that they are haughty and conceited, ver. 6..."

Derived Doctrine

"Esau shall be searched out!"

- "There is frequent mention in the Word of Esau, and also of Edom; and by 'Esau' is there signified the good of the natural before the doctrinal things of truth have been thus conjoined with this good, and also the good of life from influx out of the rational; and by 'Edom' is signified the good of the natural to which have been adjoined the doctrinal things of truth. But in the opposite sense, 'Esau' signifies the evil of the love of self before falsities have been thus adjoined to this love; and 'Edom' signifies the evil of this love when falsities have been adjoined to it." (*AC 3322*)
- In this same number (*AC 3322 [7]*), we read "...by 'Esau' and 'Edom' are represented those who turn aside from good through the fact that they altogether despise truth, and are unwilling that anything of the truth of faith should be adjoined, which is chiefly owing to the love of self..."
- *AC 3322 [8]* tells us that "'Esau' and 'Edom' denote the evil of the natural man originating in the love of self, which despises and rejects all truth, whence comes its devastation."
- To be searched or to search represents an assessment by the Lord regarding the order of good in the spiritual man. If a person is receptive, the Lord helps order his or her natural. (*AE 434 [13]*)
- *AR 140* focuses on the meaning of *Revelation 2:23*: "I am He that searchest the reins and hearts..." This is said "that the church may know that the Lord sees what truth and good every one has."

"How his hidden treasures shall be sought after."

- It is interesting to read the *Revised Standard Version's* (RSV) translation of this verse. "How Esau has been pillaged, his treasures sought out!"
- Let's look at the correspondences for hidden gifts or hidden treasures. They signify the truth and good that were given without an individual's knowledge. (*AC 5664*)
- Treasure signifies divine truth contained in the Word. (*AE 840*)
- "Hidden" means to lose track of because good and truth were discarded. (*AC 222*) It also describes being hidden because of the protection of the Lord. (*AC 8764*) Hidden can mean a withdrawal of divine truth from those who are in falsities and evils. (*AE 329 [27J]*) Hidden can represent a defense against influx from heaven by those who deny the Lord's Divinity. (*AR 339*)
- This last reference to "hidden" needs to be seen apart from the list above. *AR 339* offers much to think about when we read that those who wish to be good "suffer a great deal at first," while those who confirm and cover up (hide) falsities, "suffer much less."
- We should also reflect on the meaning of the words "pillage," "plunder," "take away," and "empty" in this verse.

Putting It All Together

1. *P&P* sets the tone for what is at issue: it is a haughty and conceited spiritual state that the Lord visits. He comes to search out the reins and the heart of everyone. He visits the hidden treasures He gave us without our knowledge. These gifts were hidden for our protection. They do not remain dormant or passive. Like a vital power source, they contribute daily in thousands of secret ways. So the Lord also comes "to see." Have we lost sight of the treasure through neglect or because we put up a defense against the influx of heaven? Did we lose it because we denied the Lord's Divine Human? Did the treasure get layered over with a hardened heart?
2. In the parable of the talents, the one who buried his talent in the ground said he did so because he perceived the master as a hard taskmaster. Fear of his master led him to burying the talent lest it be lost. What happened to this man and his talent? It was taken from him and given to those who wisely invested their talent and earned a return for the Master.
3. There seems to be a bit of this parable in Esau's hidden treasure being sought after. The evil perceive the Lord as someone who wants to plunder the hidden treasure. What they forget is that the Lord is the owner of the treasure. The hiding place of these gifts is to be known by Him. They are the ones who want to put the treasure in harm's way through their haughty and conceited ways.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Obadiah 1:6.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Please remember that the Writings teach that each truth has a myriad of avenues to follow. The summary offered above is but one little side trip. You must find and trace the spiritual sense, too. What other avenues would you like to pursue? Are you pursuing your own questions and insights along the way?
2. What do you think about the meaning of those who come to seek out Esau's hidden treasure? Do they really represent the Lord's good and truth coming in to see our internal state? Do we notice when the Lord does this? How might we know He is present?
3. The Writings teach us that the angels greet us in the World of Spirits with a question: What have you loved? That question is so powerful that it begins the opening process of the 3 steps a newly arrived spirit passes through. How ready are we to have our hidden treasures looked at? What might we tell an angel about what we love?
4. "Oh, how Esau shall be searched out!" These words are filled with reality, forewarning, and certainty. What else comes to mind when you read them regarding the haughty and the conceited?

OBADIAH 1:7

"All the men in your confederacy shall force you to the border; the men at peace with you shall deceive you and prevail against you. Those who eat your bread shall lay a trap for you. No one is aware of it."

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...that they have no truths, ver. 7..."

Derived Doctrine

"...your confederacy..."

- The word "confederacy" implies that the Lord is forging an alliance, an allegiance, or confederacy that has a love for the Lord and genuine faith as its centerpiece. See *AE 102 [2&3]*. In the opposite sense, confederacy represents

that which hates the Lord and forges an alliance against good and truth.
Which sense is being expressed in this passage?

“...shall force you to the border...”

- The correspondence of “border” is interesting. Let’s look at some representative teachings.
- When worship is far removed from what is internal “it is said that they ‘removed them far away from their border.’” (*AC 1151 [6]*)
- In *AC 1211*, we learn that “...the borders to all cognitions that have regard to worship, whether external or internal, move in that direction, for all worship stems from faith and charity.”
- “In heaven every one has intelligence and wisdom, and has happiness, according to the sphere of extension.... From all this it can be seen what is signified in the spiritual sense by ‘in all thy border,’ that in good there must not be any falsity; for falsities are outside of the sphere...(falsities) begin where truths leave off...” (*AC 8063*)

“...the men at peace with you shall deceive you and prevail against you.”

- It appears that Esau felt at “peace” with his thinking, haughtiness, and conceit. In order to get into this mode of thinking, Esau needed “men” or an understanding that gave legitimacy or peacefulness to his life. That is, until the Lord visited his heart. Then his understanding and his consequent life were shown to be shallow, false, and self-centered. His “men” deceived him and in time were used to prevail against him.
- Consider what true peace is and what it does for us: “...when evils and falsities are removed and no longer infest, the Lord flows in with peace, in which and from which is heaven and that delight that fills with bliss the interiors of the mind...” (*AE 365 [14]*)
- “...peace signifies...the mind may not be borne hither and thither.” (*AE 365 [18]*)

“Those who eat your bread shall lay a trap for you.”

- Eating represents to communicate, to be conjoined, and to appropriate. See *AC 2343*.
- Bread signifies love. To eat bread represents to communicate, conjoin and appropriate love.
- To lay a trap signifies having a plan or desire to destroy the love of a spiritual life. See *AC 9348 [7]*.

"No one is aware of it."

- If a conscience is silenced; if a watchman fails to warn the city; if the heart and mind are deprived of the Lord's good and truth, then when the enemy comes, "No one is aware of it."

Putting It All Together

1. Imagine thinking that you are so right and everyone else is so wrong. Imagine believing you see things more clearly than anyone else. And then all of what you believed and did is exposed as not only empty but SO WRONG! Those who "appeared" to be your best friends are gone when you turn to them in your moment of need. They are not there to give approval. Instead, they are now on the other side providing incidents and intimate details proving what foolishness you participated in all of your life. No longer are you the trendsetter. On the contrary, you become the epitome, to eternity, of what not to be and what not to do.
2. Listen again to the words of *P&P*: "...*they have no truths...*" In effect, the Lord's revelation of what IS showed up their what is not. They were spiritually, morally, and ethically bankrupt. It is a sad commentary on the heritage of Esau. "For Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field ...and he sold his birthright to Jacob." A red stew or mass of pottage was the asking price. Not a good beginning for those who fell in love with their own wisdom and imagined they were wiser than all the people of the world.
3. So we have the story of Esau to awaken us, to alert our minds so we see the approach of the enemy and the traps set to snare us. More than that, we need to know that we do have someone to help us see and confront the enemy. The Lord will be with us, and He is aware of all things that hell wants to confuse us about.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Obadiah 1:7.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Going back to the first quote from *P&P*, what two major evils brought Esau to its spiritual demise?
2. How many times have we felt that we were all alone with, seemingly, no one alert to our plight? Does this have to be the case? The Writings remind us that we feel alone during temptation, but the reality is just the opposite. The Lord is near and fighting for us. Will we believe it is so? What can we do to remind ourselves?

3. Breaking bread with the enemy is something we need to avoid. Do you remember the story about Peter on the night of the Lord's religious interrogation? Where was Peter? He was outside warming his hands by the fire with those who were curious, neutral, or against the Lord. As finite beings, we find ourselves eating with those who would set traps for our spiritual life. How can we be better prepared to not be compromised with time/space values or antagonism regarding eternal ends?
4. Could this prophecy have another meaning about eating bread, falling into snares, and being alone? To the haughty and conceited, the Lord might be perceived as the One deceiving them. He seeks to share the bread of life with all. But those who reject Him and His Word see the Word as worthless and empty of help. Do you remember the words of Karl Marx? "Religion is the opiate of the masses." He saw religion as a means to dull and confuse the people. It appears that Marx saw religion as a cruel and heartless trap.

OBADIAH 1:8-9

"Will I not in that day," says the Lord, "even destroy the wise men from Edom, and understanding from the mountains of Esau?"

Then your mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that everyone from the mountains of Esau may be cut off by slaughter."

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...that they will perish in the day of judgment, because they have oppressed the church, vers. 8, 9..."

AE 448 [11]

- • destroy the wise out of Edom, and the intelligent out of the mount of Esau,' meaning those who from the letter of the Word have confirmed themselves in such things as favor their loves."

Doctrine of the Lord 4

- In this passage, quote after quote from all the prophets are cited where by "that day", "in that day", and "in that time," refer to the Coming of the Lord. Obadiah 1:8, 12-15 are used to illustrate this truth.

Derived Doctrine

"Then your mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed."

- What is the correspondence of Teman?
- *AE 400 [10]* reminds us that when we read of Edom and the inhabitants of Teman, we are not to think of inhabitants but “the evils and falsities that are opposed to the goods and truths of the celestial kingdom...”
- “Mighty men” signifies those who are strong in faith. (*AC 1179*) “Mighty ones” signify those who love good. (*AE 922 [2]*) “Mighty” signifies a power in captivating lower minds. (*AC 1179*)
- In the negative sense, it appears that the mighty men of Teman represent those who were powerful in opposition to the Lord’s Divine Human, His love, and a life of faith.

“...everyone from the mountains of Esau may be cut off by slaughter.”

- *AC 3322 [8]* explains the meaning of “the mountains of Esau” as the natural man, from self-love, rejecting and despising all truth.
- “Slaughter” signifies the Last Judgment, when the wicked will perish spiritually. (*AE 315 [15]*) Actually, this number uses “perdition and damnation.” Some strong words and bone chilling images.

Putting It All Together

1. We need to use a notebook or pad of paper for a moment. Let’s first put down the direct teachings from the Word about the wise men “**from** Edom and understanding **from** the mountains of Esau.” Then let’s write out the second prophecy about “your mighty men, O Teman...everyone **from** the mountains of Esau....” Before we begin making specific applications, circle every “from” you see in the two prophecies.
2. How are they being used? I am “from” Bryn Athyn, PA. The use of “from” in this instance helps to identify my place of residence. If I say I borrowed this book “from” the library, it helps to identify where I got the book and where it is to be returned. If someone runs away “from” home, that “from” indicates what they tried to leave behind—perhaps parental or jurisdictional control. If someone is tied down or blocked, we say they were kept “from” playing or completing their task. If someone changes, for better or worse, we note that they are long way “from” what they used to be. Again, in what sense is the word “from” being used in these prophecies?
3. In the positive sense, Edom represents wonderful things: the Lord’s human essence; His strength; His power or good of the natural principle. (*AC 3322*) If Edom operated “from” these spiritual things, the “from” would be significant and laudable. But that is not what happens here. There was

movement away from their good beginnings. Shouldn't we note this to see how far they had come "from" those principles? Instead of acknowledging the Lord's essence, power, and good in the natural, they were using the letter of the Word to get away "from" the jurisdiction of the Lord to confirm themselves and their loves. They were not "from the mountain of the Lord," but they were "from" the mountain of self-love.

Esau in the positive sense signifies the Lord's infancy; the celestial good in the natural principle. (AC 3599 and AC 4239) These principles can lift a person into the mountains of celestial splendor. But that is not where Esau's people stayed. They traveled from such beginnings, and now "everyone" from the mountains of Esau rejected and despised the celestial good in the natural principle. Could this be the reason their movement away from celestial good caused the words such as "slaughter, perdition, and damnation" to be used?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Obadiah 1:8-9.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Did you look up the word "perdition"? If you did, were you surprised with its meaning and application to our lesson? Where else have you heard this word used?
2. Loss of one's innocence, loss of solid foundational principles, is an issue in this prophecy. Growing up, maturing, moving from innocence of ignorance to innocence of wisdom is a step-by-step process. We move "from former states" into "newer states." The Writings give us a look at the steps of faith: Historical, Persuasive, Blind, Hypocritical, and Spurious. All of these may be passed through, but an end must be in view. True Faith is the goal. This faith is FROM the Lord. Can you identify with any of these?
3. Misuse of the literal sense is a prevalent topic of the Writings. We are not perfect in our thinking process. Errors in judgment and application will occur. How might we avoid the extreme of being fearful to apply the literal sense of the Word and being careless with applications? How can we guard against and correct any errors?

OBADIAH 1:10-14

"For violence against your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off that you stood on the other side- in the day that strangers carried captive his forces, when foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem- even you were as one with them."

But you should not have gazed on the day of your brother in the day of his captivity; nor should you have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; nor should you have spoken proudly in the day of distress. You should not have entered the gate of My people in the day of their calamity. Indeed, you should not have gazed on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity. You should not have stood at the crossroads to cut off those among them who escaped; nor should you have delivered up those among them who remained in the day of distress."

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...that they destroy the church still more, and that this their delight, vers. 10-14..."

AC 10287 [14]

- "Mention is also made of 'foreigners,' which is expressed in the original tongue by another word than 'strangers,' and by 'foreigners' are signified falsities themselves, as in these passages [Obadiah 1:11 is cited.] ...'to cast a lot upon Jerusalem' denotes to destroy the church, and to dissipate its truths."

AR 591

- "By leading into captivity is signified to persuade others and draw them over so that they may consent and adhere to that heresy...and thus to lead them away from believing and living well.... By captivity spiritual captivity is here meant, which is to be seduced, and so led away from truths and goods, and to be led on into falsities and evils. That this spiritual captivity is meant by captivity in the Word, may be evident from the following passages..." Obadiah 1:11 is cited.

AE 811 [16]

- "In Obadiah (1:11) 'In that day aliens led his strength captive, and strangers entered his gates and cast lots upon Jerusalem'...this is said of Edom, which signifies the truth of the natural man, but here falsity; 'the aliens that led his strength captive' signify the falsities of the church destroying its truths, 'strength' signifying truth, since spiritual strength rests in truths; 'the strangers who entered the gates' signify falsities of doctrine destroying the truths through which entrance is given into interior truths; 'Jerusalem, upon which they cast lots,' signifies the doctrine of the church from the Word thus dispersed, 'to cast lots' means to disperse."

AC 2851

- "...[by] the gates to the New Jerusalem and the gates to the new temple...nothing else is meant than the entrances to heaven.... Hence Jerusalem is called the 'gate of the people' (Obadiah 1: 13)."

Derived Doctrine

"For violence against your brother Jacob..."

- Let's look first at the meaning of violence.
- Violence signifies filthy lusts to which those of the declining church had degenerated. (AC 621 [3])
- Violence signifies that there is no longer any good-will. (AC 632)
- Violence signifies falsities and evils are against goods and truths. (AC 4502)
- Violence signifies the purposeful perversion of the truths of the Word. (AE 734 [17])
- Violence signifies the adulteration of the good of the Word. (AE 730)

"...your brother Jacob..."

- Brother signifies the life of faith which is charity. (AE 746 [2])
- Brotherhood signifies the conjunction of the goods and truths of heaven and the church. (AE 746 [20])
- Jacob "represents various things...in the beginning the Lord's natural as to truth, in progression the Lord's natural as to good of truth, and at the end the Lord's natural as to good. For the Lord's glorification proceeded from truth to the good of truth, and finally to good..." (AC 4537)

"Shame shall cover you..."

- In addition to shame, we need to consider the correspondences of these synonyms too: embarrassment, disgrace, disappointment, dishonor, guilt, shame and nakedness.
- Consider this quote from AR 705: "By walking naked is signified to live without truths. By the shame of nakedness, or the secret parts, filthy loves, which are infernal loves.... Ignorance of truth is signified by nakedness, and infernal love by the shame of nakedness....A man can indeed live like a Christian without truths; yet only before men, but not before the angels. The truths which they should learn are concerning the Lord, and the precepts according to which they should live."
- Who is doing the covering? Is it the Lord or is the Lord showing Esau's true intentions to mask, cover, or veil over evil with respectability? AC 4859 describes veiling as truth obscured while pretending to be from good. Doesn't this sound like a shameful cover-up plot being exposed by the Lord?

"...you stood on the other side -..."

- Is there any difficulty perceiving what is being said here? Standing represents obedience to the Lord's truth. It means getting a fix on a spiritual goal or objective. In this case, Edom (Esau) is fixed on opposite things. They want to be disobedient and contrary.

"In the day that strangers carried captive his forces...foreigners entered his gates..."

- To help us see what is at stake and involved in this prophecy, let's consider these teachings regarding strangers, foreigners, gates, and forces.
- Strangers are those within the church who do not acknowledge the Lord. (*AC 10169 [4]*)
- Strangers signify evils and falsities that will destroy a church. (*AC 10287 [5]*)
- "Concerning strangers, a law was delivered, that if they would receive peace and open their gates, they [strangers or foreigners] should be tributary and serve (Deut. xii.; I Kings ix. 21, 22)." (*AC 1097 [2]*)
- Gates signify the teachings that introduce a person to the truths of faith. (*AC 2943*)
- In a work titled *The Athanasian Creed*, paragraph number 97, we read the following about forces: "There are three forces inherent in every thing spiritual; the active, which is the divine love, or living force; the creative forces which produces causes and effects from beginning to end through intermediates; and the formative forces which produce (many things) from the ultimate substances of nature."
- In *AC 6343*, "forces' signify the power of truth..."

"...and cast lots for Jerusalem-even you were as one of them."

- To cast lots signifies to disperse (scatter) the truths of the church using falsity. (*AE 863*)
- What made this even more heinous is the fact that they appeared to scatter truths as members of the family. The Lord warned us about the enemies of the household.

"...you should not have gazed on the day of your brother in the day of his captivity..."

- The RSV translation of this verse reads, "you should not have gloated over the day of your brother in the day of his captivity."
- The message of the spiritual sense is reasonably clear. Esau enjoyed seeing Jerusalem seduced by falsity. Edom enjoyed pointing to the mistakes of Jerusalem but failed to "apply himself, and study [to find ways] to bend minds." (*AC 1949 [2]*) The bending of minds means finding ways to amend and return to the truth of the Lord. Instead, Edom enjoyed the seduction and captivity of his brother.

“...the children of Judah and the day of their destruction...”

- Judah represents the doctrine from the Word relating to the Lord’s celestial kingdom—the celestial of the church. (*AR 350*) More directly, Judah represents teachings that dealt with Divine Love. Why is this so significant? Where there is no will (love), there is no learning, retention, or application. Judah being carried off to destruction was a serious issue, and yet Esau mocked and did nothing to help.

“...nor should you have spoken proudly...”

- To speak signifies to both perceive and to will. (*AC 2965*)
- Pride signifies love of self. (*AC 2220*)
- Pride extinguishes and suffocates the light of heaven. (*AC 2959*)
- Pride glues falsities together. (*AR 421*)

“...nor laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity.”

- “Laying hands on” in the positive sense represents conveying blessings, inaugurations, such as when we anoint priests to consecrate the office or use.
- Here, they laid hands on their substance. Substance represents things pertaining to the will. The will is the very substance of a person. (*AC 808*)
- Hence Esau had no interest in blessing or passing on power. He wished to rob them of their very “substance,” their will.

“...you should not have stood at the crossroads to cut off [block]...them who escaped...”

- We have no correspondences for crossroad. We do for “the way.” “Way” signifies a desire to make a change of state. It means to abstain from some attitude toward truth and good. (*AC 2333*) “Way” signifies some doctrine by which one may be instructed or led into a deeper understanding of truth. (*AC 2231*)
- These teachings help us to see the gravity of Esau’s transgression. He offered discouragement when an escape plan came to mind, blocking the attempt with reasons why this or that doctrine would not work.

“...nor should you have delivered up those among them that remained in the day of distress.”

- Those who remained may easily be seen as the “remnant” or “remains.” When a church nears its end, the Lord always preserves a remnant upon which to establish the new church. Esau wanted or hoped that small core would fail as well. Because Esau was in the family, we can feel the betrayal. He must have helped the enemy look for every “brother” so as to eliminate the church.

Putting It All Together

1. Read the selection from *P&P* again. "...they will destroy the church still more, and that this is their delight." Can we review our notes and see that clearly? All of our references highlight the hellish glee Edom (Esau) had in watching and participating in the demise of Jerusalem and Judah.
 2. What is sobering is that we probably found ourselves thinking of personal examples of similar things happening to us. We all have had the experience of wanting to make amends, make a change, to improve. Before we get underway, a voice in our mind throws "cold water" on the intention. Past efforts to change are paraded before us. With glee the voice mocks and asks us, "Who are you trying to kid?" It reminds us many times of past failures. That voice stands in the crossroad of our intention, blocking our effort to make a change.
- Look back and notice how many times the Lord told Edom, "You should not!" Can we hear hell saying, "That is just like the Lord. He always expressed things in the negative. Negative phrases cause the mind to dwell on obsessive themes and ultimately retard our freedom."?
3. The Lord is saying "you should not" specifically to the hells and not to us. The Lord calls us to His presence. Take My yoke. My burden, He says, is light. The "you should not" is a phrase we need to use. We can say to hell, "You should not assume that you can take from me the power of regeneration." All that we have and receive from the Lord is freedom. It is hell that brings us the blockage. Hell stands in the way with its pride and tries to remove from us the light of heaven. Hell's pride is the thing that tries to glue all kinds of falsity together. Prayerfully, we need to say with the Lord to hell, "You should not..." because the Lord says so. That, with a loving heart, "should" send them off and out of our way.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Obadiah 1:10-14.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. The Introduction section of this study called your attention to the cruelty of feet, heart, tongue, eyes, and hands. Do you think that series (which we just looked at) might be helpful to remember what kind of delight Esau (Edom) had in the destruction of Jerusalem? How can knowledge of this delight help us?
2. Do you have any ways to push or fight off the boastful phrases hell uses to block or discourage us? Do you have a verse or series of verses that stand the

- test and trials of hell? If not, do you think any of what we just studied might become one of your verses?
3. Were you asked to memorize verses from the Word when you were in school? Have you ever found that you have something memorized simply because you have read or enjoyed it frequently? What purpose can be served by memorizing passages?

OBADIAH 1:15-16

"For the day of the Lord upon all the nations is near; as you have done, it shall be done to you; your reprisal shall return upon your own head. For as you drank on My holy mountain, so shall the nations drink continually; yes, they shall drink, and swallow, and they shall be as though they had never been."

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...that ruin will come over them in the day of judgment, vers. 15, 16..."

AC 10011 [3]

- "That by the 'head;' is meant the whole man, is...evident from many passages in the Word..." Obadiah 1:15 is cited as an example.

AR 706

- "Since it is the consummation of the age, that is, the end of the church, when the Lord's coming and the beginning of a new church take place, in many places therefore the end of the former church also is signified by the day of the Jehovah..." Obadiah 1:15 is cited among many other references.

Derived Doctrine

"All nations..."

- The word "all" gives us an insight into the extent and thoroughness of the consummation of the age that will occur prior to the beginning of a new church.

“...as you have done, it shall be done to you; your reprisal shall return upon your own head.”

- So there is no mistake thinking this is the Lord getting revenge or retaliation, let's look at a passage in *AC 8223 [3]*:
- It frequently happens in the other life that when evil spirits wish to inflict evil on the good...the evil they intend to others returns upon themselves. At the time this appears as if it were revenge from the good; but it is not revenge, neither is it from the good, but from the evil...they who are in heavenly love ought not to have delight in retaliation or revenge, but in imparting benefits....”

“For as you drank on My holy mountain...”

- To drink, in the good sense, means to investigate and inquire how a truth may be conjoined or appropriated into ones life. (*AC 1071 and AC 3089*) In the opposite sense, it represents to investigate and inquire how to abuse the truths of the Lord instead of conjoining and appropriating them to life.
- Esau and Edom in the good sense had drunk of these things on the mountain of the Lord. But with the passing of time, self-love entered the “drink” and added falsities. (*AC 3322*)

“All the nations drink continually; yes, they shall drink, and swallow...”

- The RSV has the following wording: “all nations round about shall drink; they shall drink, and stagger...” How are the words “swallow” and “stagger” similar in meaning? The RSV has a footnote indicating the Hebrew word for “stagger” comes from their word for “swallow.” So we are left with a temporary dilemma because the Writings teach that to swallow, or devour, signifies the extermination of useful knowledges by those (knowledges) which are useless. See *AC 5217 and 5258*.

“And they shall be as though they had never been.”

- Does this portion of the text give us a clue that “swallow and stagger” might be talking about the same thing? Could this be about the vastation process the church will go through prior to the birth of the New Church? Before a new church can be built, an emptying-out process must happen. Some false concepts in the church are swallowed “hook, line, and sinker.” Some ideas of the dead churches were staggering, and minds became quite unbalanced and “drunken.”
- This is an interesting point to ponder, but remember that it is a derived doctrine so we must remain open to the possibility that it is a wrong view of what the Lord meant by “swallow or staggering.”

Putting It All Together

1. There is a happy summation coming to Obadiah's prophecy. The Lord is rounding up His angels, and the great day of "right winning out over evil" is at hand. This theme comes back to us often. We need it. Otherwise the hells will try to convince us that we are alone. The Psalmist felt the mocking of hell: "...they continually say to me, 'where is your God?'" (*Psalm 42:3*) Our answer? "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save." (*Isaiah 59:1*) "With God all things are possible." (*Matthew 19:26*) Edom's end is at hand.
2. What happens to Edom is not the result of anger and retaliation from the Lord. It is a return of the evil and falsity Edom planted. It brings meaning to the literal sense when it says that we shall reap what we sow. For us, there is time to sow a new crop that will yield "some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." (*Matthew 13:23*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Obadiah 1:15-16.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. What "staggering" drinks or concepts of "faith" does the world offer us to swallow? What, in hindsight, would have been harmful in your life if you had swallowed it? Put another way, can you recall something you wanted (badly) but were not able to get – only to find out later that not getting your wish was a blessing in disguise?
2. We all have to go through varying degrees of vastations. Vastation is that great emptying out of concepts formed by self-intelligence and self-love. Do you think we ought to pray for that process to come about in our lives? Would it be best to let the Lord show us the right time to face vastation? What comes to mind is that parable about the enemy coming to sow seeds of darnel while the owner slept. The owner of the field told his workers to wait until harvest time. If they had pulled the tares out too soon, they probably would have pulled out the good with the bad. Good idea? On the other hand, procrastination seems to be a common weakness when it comes to doing painful things. I wonder what little push might get us started on the task of regeneration?
3. *P&P* reminds us that "ruin" will come to those who knowingly abuse the letter of the Word. It doesn't sound like much fun, does it? Hold on because the next section promises better news. Those who love the Lord will not lose but gain back all that Edom took away. Do you find your heart and mind refreshed with another "good" winning out over the bad story? Why is this

- comforting? How do we feel about regaining something precious that was lost? Think of real life examples.
4. The words in *Obadiah 1:15*, “as you have done, it shall be done to you,” remind us of the Lord’s Prayer. What do you think of when you reflect on these words? Are we subject to being treated the way we treat others? What motivations are in play when we act on this principle in real-life situations?

OBADIAH 1:17-18

“But on Mount Zion there shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame; but the house of Esau shall be stubble; they shall kindle them and devour them, and no survivor shall remain of the house of Esau,’ For the Lord has spoken.”

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- “...that a new church will arise, ver. 17, in place of the former church, which has been condemned, ver. 18...”

AE 448 [11]

- “In Obadiah (1: 17, 18) ‘Esau and his house’ mean those who believe themselves to be intelligent and wise not from the Lord but from self; for in the eighth verse of this chapter it is said ‘I will destroy the wise out of Edom, and the intelligent out of the mount of Esau,’ meaning those who from the letter of the Word have confirmed themselves in such things as favor their own loves. ‘The house of Jacob and the house of Joseph’ mean such as are in good of life according to truths of doctrine, ‘house of Jacob’ meaning those who are in good of life, and ‘house of Joseph’ those who are in truths of doctrine; ‘mount Zion,’ where there will be escape and holiness, signifies love to the Lord, by which is salvation and from which is Divine truth. ‘The house of Jacob shall be heir to the inheritances of the house and mountain of Esau,’ and ‘the house of Jacob shall be to him a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame,’ signifies that in place of those meant by ‘Esau’ there will be those who are in good of life according to truths of doctrine. In the spiritual world this so occurs, that those who have been in the pride of self intelligence, and have confirmed themselves from the Word in such things as favor the loves of self and the world, occupy certain tracts and mountains, and make for themselves a semblance of heaven, believing that heaven belongs to them more than to others; but when the time has been fulfilled they are cast out of their places, and those succeed to them who are in good of life according to the truths of doctrine from the Lord....this makes clear what is signified in the

internal sense by ‘the house of Jacob shall be heir to their inheritances, and shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble.’

AE 405 [26]

- “Since a ‘mountain’ signified the good of love, and in the highest sense, the Divine good, and from the Divine good Divine truth proceeds, so ‘Mount Zion’ was built up above Jerusalem, and in the Word ‘Mount Zion’ signifies the church that is in the good of love to the Lord....” Obadiah 1:16-17 are among the verses cited.

Derived Doctrine

“...on Mount Zion there shall be deliverance...”

- *AC 5899* uses these wonderful words to explain Lot’s “great escape”: “...the significance of ‘escape’ (is) deliverance from damnation, which deliverance is effected by means of remains, that is, by means of the goods and truths stored up with man by the Lord.”
- *AE 433 [8]* explains that Mount Zion signifies the advent of the Lord and the establishment of the church among those who love the Lord and among those who are in the good of love.

“And there shall be holiness...”

- What qualities bring one into a state of holiness? A clean heart and mind.
- *AR 666* gives us this standard of what makes holiness: believing the Lord is the Word, the truth, and the enlightenment.

“The house of Jacob shall possess [inherit] their possessions [inheritance].”

- A person will miss the spiritual realities “...unless one knows what is meant by ‘the house of Jacob’, ‘the house of Joseph’ and ‘the house of Esau’...” (*AC 4592 [11]*)
- “...‘the house of Jehovah’ is frequently mentioned as signifying the church wherein love is the principal; the ‘house of Judah’ as signifying the celestial church; and the ‘house of Israel’ as signifying the spiritual church. As ‘house’ signifies the church, the mind of the man of the church (wherein are the things of the will and of the understanding, or of charity and faith)...” (*AC 710*)
- *AC 5550, AC 8770, and AE 710 [3]* teach that the “house of Jacob” represents the external of the church.
- “Everyone recognizes that here ‘the house of Jacob’ was not to mean the Jewish nation or people, for the Lord’s kingdom included not merely that

people but all throughout the world who have faith in Him, and from faith have charity." (*AC* 3305 [3])

- The house of Joseph represents "the spiritual kingdom"; "the good of the church"; "the spiritual man." (*AC* 3969 [11, 12, 13])
- The "house of Joseph" represents the "celestial things of the spiritual." (*AC* 6521, 6526, 6554)
- "Possess," "inherit," "possession," and "inheritance" are correspondential indicators of the return to "the first love" of the church. The inheritance promised by the Lord was never withdrawn; the people of the church lost sight of it. So this prophecy announces that their spiritual paradise will be restored and reclaimed. How? The "house of Esau" will have no survivors. "For the Lord has spoken."

"...the house of Jacob shall be a fire...the house of Joseph a flame"

- "...a fire (in the good sense) signifies the good of love. (*AC* 2799, 2804)
- *AR* 48 tells us that a flame signifies spiritual love, which contains charity and love of the neighbor. *AC* 934 [2] tells us that a flame signifies the celestial spiritual.

"...the house of Esau shall be stubble..."

- To properly understand this verse, we must recall what the doctrines taught us about Esau. The "house of Esau" represented those who were in the pride of self-intelligence. They had confirmed themselves in such things as favored their own loves. Such spiritual attitudes are now likened to stubble.
- "Evil is like fire (infernal fire is nothing but love of evil) and it consumes faith like stubble, reducing all that pertains to it to ashes." (*TCR* 383)
- "...every worker of wickedness shall be stubble, and the oven shall set them on fire." (*AE* 540 [3])
- "The expression 'like stubble' is used because complete vastation, that is, devastation is meant." (*AC* 8285)
- *AC* 7131 explains why the Egyptians forced the children of Israel "to gather stubble for straw." Essentially, the Egyptians were forcing Israel to accommodate truth to fit memory-knowledge experiences.

"They shall kindle them and devour them..."

- Note that the word "kindle" expresses the same meaning as "inflame" or "burn." Look above at the quote from *TCR* 383 to capture the essence of this passage.

Putting It All Together

1. Let's begin with the goal of understanding two terms: the good of life and the truth of doctrine. Please don't turn away from these terms as "doctrinal talk." Look at ways these terms can come alive. For instance, try reading "love of life" where you see the words "good of life." Now we have "the love of life." Every love we have follows us to eternity. When the angels greet us in the spiritual world, they inquire or seek to find out what we loved most. Was it a love for the Lord and the neighbor, or was it a love for self and the world? Our loves will have varying degrees of application. Celestial love holds the Lord in the highest esteem. Spiritual love holds the Word and its truths in high esteem as the means for us to regenerate. There is a natural love that is essential for us to live and work within the world of natural uses. All three have a unified or common purpose: Eternal life. We want to live in heaven with the Lord as our source of joy and loving our neighbors more than ourselves.
2. Let's try some transposing on the "truth of doctrine," too. Doctrine is best seen or viewed as "that which points the way." If we plan to take a trip, we pull out a map and choose what route to take. If we have plenty of time, we pick a scenic way. If we are in a hurry, we pick the most direct way. Regardless, we need a map to find the way. The Lord's doctrine is a directional help. We need the "truth of doctrine" to point out our way.
3. On the other hand, the "house of Esau" works to ignore the good of life. In its place, it offers the "good of self." Me, myself, and I are the essentials in the "house of Esau." Others are accepted if and when they serve egocentric purposes. The doctrine of "the house of Esau" studies ways to take advantage of the neighbor.
 - Stubble is the way the Word pictures this for us. Stubble is the part of the stalk that is now void of fruit and is highly flammable and dangerous. Self-love, highly volatile, sparks when it is ruffled, and thus we have a kindling and destroying fire.
 - The Lord in the midst of this "stubble" calls us to calmness. Esau will have no survivors. Esau will not remain a troublesome force. How do we know this? The closing words of these verses say it clearly: "For the Lord has spoken."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Obadiah 1:17-18.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Did you make note of the "houses" of Jacob, Joseph, and Esau? Think about the quote from *AC 4592 [11]* and the issue of spiritual realities.

2. How did you do with the “good of life and truth of doctrine” exercise? Don’t become a literalist with doctrine. The Lord offers various ways to express “good and truth.” Good is called Love. Good is called Esse. Good is called Substance. Good is called the First. Good is called Heat. (How many more can you add to this list?)
- Truth on the other hand is called Wisdom. Truth is called Existere. Truth is called Form. Truth is called Middle. Truth is called Light. (How many more can you add to this list?)
3. What present things in life would you identify as stubble? Have you ever experienced the volatile nature of self-love? Have you ever felt that rush to judgment and said things that were hurtful and vindictive? What is our protection against this?
4. For those who would like to think that hell is not eternal, how would they explain the words “no survivors shall remain”?
5. “For the Lord has spoken” certainly puts things in perspective. The Lord is in charge. Esau, with its bragging nature, is not in charge at its own demise. It is kind of sad in one way, but positive in another way. What feeling came first, the sad or the happy? This might be a good time to talk about the expression “fear of the Lord.” Talk about the two sides of this “fear” and how it differs from other fears. Also think about the phrase, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (*Psalm 111:10*)

OBADIAH 1:19-21

“The south shall posses the mountains of Esau, and the lowland shall possess Philistia. They shall posses the fields of Ephraim and the fields of Samaria. Benjamin shall posses Gilead. And the captives of this host of the children of Israel shall posses the land of the Canaanites as far as Zarephath. The captives of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad shall posses the cities of the south. Then saviors shall come to Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom shall be the Lord’s.”

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- “...that the new church will have an understanding of the truth, and those who are in the church will be saved, vers. 19-21.”

AC 4592 [11]

- “In Obadiah (1:18, 19)...names signify things (and it) is very evident here, as in other places, for unless it is known what is signified by...the ‘Philistines,’ the ‘field of Ephraim,’ the ‘field of Samaria,’ ‘Benjamin,’ and Gilead,’ and

moreover what by ‘them of the south,’ by a ‘house,’ a ‘plain,’ a ‘mountain,’ and a ‘field,’ nothing here can possibly be comprehended; nor were the things done that are here historically related. But the man who knows what each expression involves, will find heavenly arcana therein. Here also ‘Benjamin’ is the spiritual from the celestial.”

AC 1197 [4]

- Philistia “signifies...no love and no faith...” in things that are spiritual and celestial. Obadiah 1:19 is cited.

AC 4117 [3]

- “Because Gilead was a boundary, it signified in the spiritual sense the first good, which is that of the senses of the body; for it is the good or the pleasure of these into which the man who is being regenerated is first of all initiated. In this sense is ‘Gilead’ taken in the Prophets, as in....Obadiah 1:19....”

AC 9340 [9]

- “In Obadiah (1:19)...the setting up of the church is here treated of; but real things are unfolded in the names; ‘they of the South’ denote those who are in the light of truth...‘the mount of Esau’ denotes the good of love...‘the plain of the Philistines’ denotes the truth of faith; ‘a plain’ also denotes the doctrine of faith...‘Ephraim’ denotes the intellectual of the church...‘Benjamin’ the spiritual celestial of the church...and ‘Gilead,’ the corresponding exterior good....”

AC 1458 [4]

- “...‘the south’ signifies a state of light...‘the south’...signifies the intelligence which is procured by means of knowledges. These knowledges are celestial and spiritual truths, which in heaven are so many radiations of light.... In Obadiah (1:20)...‘the cities of the south’ denote in like manner truths and goods; hence the very truths and goods of which they are heirs: the Lord’s kingdom is here treated of.”

Derived Doctrine

Please note that we have our work cut out for us in this section. AC 4592 [11] says, “unless it is known what is signified by [all the names in these verses]...nothing can possibly be comprehended...the man who knows ...will find heavenly arcana....”

The difficulty is that I can only find correspondences for some of the names, which prevents us from using derived doctrine to understand them. Here are the names for which I found no explanation:

- The RSV translation gives us “**Negeb** shall possess Mount Esau.”;
 - “those of the **Shephelah** the land of the Philistines...”;
 - “the exiles in **Halah** who are the people of Israel; and
 - “and the exiles of Jerusalem who are in **Sepharad**.”
-
- The NKJV presents us with “**the south**” instead of **Negeb**;
 - “the **lowland** possessing Philistia instead of **Shephelah** possessing it; and
 - “**captives**” instead of “**Halah**” who are the people of Israel.
-
- Add to these translation differences the fact that here are no correspondences for Negeb, Shephelah, and Halah in the Writings.
 - We can make some derived doctrinal applications for Zarephath when we read why Elijah was sent to the widow of Zarephath.

Question: What are we to do about this void of correspondential information? Will it take away our ability to comprehend these verses? Will we lack the heavenly arcana promised?

Answer: “Let’s roll.” We will do the best we can with what is given and pray for the enlightenment the Lord promises to sincere and active seekers.

“And the lowland shall possess Philistia...”

- *AE 449 [5]* explains that “lowland” signifies good and truth in the natural man. “Philistia” signifies those who are in a faith separated from charity. (*DP 326*) “Philistia” represents those who have false ideas and use these ideas to reason about spiritual things. (*AC 705*)
- To “possess” denotes purifying truths from falsity. (*AE 710 [16]*)

“...the fields of Ephraim...” and “...the fields of Samaria...”

- “Fields” represent the church as to good. The field of a church represents receiving the seeds of good and truth. (*AC 3766*)
- *TCR 247* shares with us the positive and negative meanings of Ephraim. In the good sense, Ephraim represents “the understanding of the Word, from which and according to which the church is.... the church is such as is the understanding of the Word in it; excellent and precious if the understanding is from genuine truths out of the Word, but destroyed, yea, filthy if from those that are falsified.”

- *AC 2466 [4]* explains that Samaria signifies the church (as to good) in the affection of truth. Think of the Samarian woman at the well and her conversation with the Lord.

"Benjamin shall possess Gilead."

- Recall that the word “possess” denotes purifying truths from falsity. Gilead represents the “first good,” “the senses of the body,” and the “first things initiated.” (*AC 4117 [3]*) Benjamin represents the “spiritual from the celestial.” Put another way, Benjamin is the truth one gets from the Lord (love). What a wonderful way for us to picture the Lord possessing the senses of the body, the first loves we had as a child. All of the things we were initiated into (remains) will be taken over by the Lord and made new and clean of falsities.

"...the captives of the host of the children of Israel shall possess the land of the Canaanites..."

- *AC 7950* explains that “captive” signifies a mind in darkness about good and truth. *AE 175 [12]* describes “captive” as signifying evils that possess. *AE 811 [27]* has yet another interesting description, noting that those who bar others from truth and good will themselves be captive to falsities. Isn’t that what Esau did to Israel?
- “Canaanite,” in *AC 1444*, signifies the evil heredity from the mother in the Lord’s external man. *AC 1573-4* explains that Canaanites represent evils and falsities in the externals of the regenerating person.
- Once again, start with the word “possess” as denoting purifying truths from falsity. How does this help us focus on the meaning of possessing the land of the Canaanites?

"As far as Zarephath."

- *I Kings 17:9-24* tell the story of the widow of Zarephath.
- The Lord directed Elijah to Zarephath, in particular to the home of a widow. We are taught that the “brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land.”
- A widow represents those who have good that is without truth. The widow represents those who desire truth, but for whom the “brook dried up.”
- *AC 9198 [2]* explains that this story illustrates how the Lord and Divine Truth were less “well received and loved in people’s hearts within the church than outside it....” Because He was born a human being, there was scarcely any acknowledgment of Him as God in the people’s hearts, and they believed His Humanity to be like their own.

- Can we not see why “possession” had to go as far as Zarephath? The Lord’s possession (purifying) of such spiritual apathy must go as far as it needs to correct the problem. Otherwise, a new church cannot come to fruition.

“The captives of Jerusalem...shall possess the cities of the south.”

- *AC 1458* describes the “south” as meaning a movement into a clear state of the interiors that comes about when goods and truths give a greater light.

“Then saviors shall come to Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau...”

- It is a curious thing that the plural, “saviors,” is used here. In most cases, we would expect Savior. Could this plural term refer to the trine of Love, Wisdom, and Use? *DLW 230* states, “For love and wisdom without use have no boundary or end, that is, they have no home of their own...”
- If the saviors are to judge the mountains of Esau, it makes sense that these three would be present. Esau was full of self-intelligence and a life of self-service. Listen to this quote from *AC 503*: “The life of love...[is a life in the performance of uses] from use, by use, and according to use...there can be no life in what is useless, for whatever is useless is cast away.” So we can picture the perceptive “saviors” present at mount Esau, judging the merits of Esau’s love, wisdom, and use (or the absence thereof).

“And the kingdom shall be the Lord’s.”

- One almost wants to say “Amen” following these words. Do we really need derived doctrine for this portion of our study? Not really. Our hearts feel the rightness and necessity of such a truth being stated before the forces of Esau.

Putting It All Together

1. “The new church will have an understanding of the truth, and those who are in the church will be saved.” (*P&P*)
 2. We often agonize over the size of our denomination. We equate size with rightness. The fact that other churches seem to be growing faster than the New Church bothers us. What really “hurts” is that some “doomsday cult” has a larger group of followers willing to gather on top of a mountain waiting for the final judgment day. How can such nonsense attract so many devoted (fanatical) followers in such a short time? We look at the Jones massacre in Guyana and the Waco Cult in Texas, and we wonder where we are missing the boat. How can anyone really believe what they say is the matrix of their doctrinal beliefs?
- In matters of doctrine, we can’t seem to agree on much between ourselves and other New Church organizations and offer a hand of cordiality to them. Is

there a sense of despair as we think of these things? I hope so. Let us use our knowledge of our church to focus on the Lord's promise of resolution.

- He says that He will "possess" and purify truths from falsities. He will return to our "Gilead" state and possess the "first goods" and the senses of the body and will pull forth remains of innocence.
- He will visit the "lowlands" to bring good and truth to the natural man. Next, He will possess and make the fields of the church productive again. The field of Ephraim will once again have an understanding of the Word; the fields of Samaria will have a thirst for the good of truth.
- Self-interests will lose their appeal and haughtiness. Uses that are idle will be judged and removed. The Lord's people will be "from use, by use, and according to use." The "new church" will have an understanding of the truth and will be saved. The kingdom will be the Lord's.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Obadiah 1:19-21.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. How much could we fill in the void of correspondences we had for names and places mentioned in the verses? Were we able to open some of the arcana in these verses? Did you feel a confidence building as we pushed on? What did you learn?
2. The stubble of Esau is still an issue we have to face every day. Television and magazine commercials tell us what we need. They tell us what the good life is, and they boldly tell us that "it doesn't get any better than this." Really? How can we take all of this with a degree of good humor and yet not buy into the "stubble" of it all?
3. To what degree should we become cautious of a "church family" member's view of doctrines if it sounds like "doctrinal heresy"? What is the best or most charitable way to resist falsity? What is the best way to confirm whether it is indeed false?
4. How do we look for our "saviors"—LOVE, WISDOM AND USE—and try as hard as possible to keep them as our unified trine? Idleness will not endure. At the mountains of Esau, the judgment of the Lord's saviors will perceptively sort it out. Do we wait for Providence to do this?
5. What is your feeling about this derived doctrinal view of the mountains of Esau?

Epilogue: A Summary of the Book of Obadiah

The following summary draws and expands on the outline given in Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms.

Those who are in a state of self-intelligence will pervert the Word. We need to be watchful and ready to combat such overt perversion. How will we know the intent of those perverting the Word? It will become known in the attitude they express. They will imagine themselves more intelligent than the rest, including the Lord.

The followers of Esau will cleverly defend the falsities they love with the light of the natural world. Some “apparent” truths will be used illustratively with human prudence as proof. But such natural lumen will pale in the heavenly light of the Lord and with Esau’s spiritual demise, all attending falsities will dissipate, too.

Even though the Word warns of their end, Edom remains haughty and conceited. With delight, those in an Esau or Edom state will point out the deficiencies of the literal sense. Their conceit works hard to do damage to the church. For those who are in self-intelligence, there is a glee or delight in their subterfuge. Harm will slip in among those who are not alert to their falsity.

Evil might rule for a time, but the Lord will rule in the end. A new church will arise. This church will have an understanding of truth. It will love truth for truth’s sake. Those within this church will be saved.

“And the kingdom shall be the Lord’s.” (*Obadiah 1:21*)

The Book of Micah

How To Use This Study Guide

1. A slow, unhurried reading of *Micah* is essential. Reading the chapter before looking at the notes, while working with the notes, and after finishing with the notes will give each researcher a powerful sense of the series of meanings within each chapter. It is important to be comfortable with all the names and places in the prophecy and to understand the announcements the prophet makes on behalf of the Lord. When possible, historical information will be included in the notes to increase reading comprehension and enhance application.
2. Our study of each chapter of *Micah* will begin with quotes from a work of the Writings called *Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms*. This work includes a verse-by-verse overview of all seven chapters of *Micah* that provides general information about the internal sense. Our research will help move us from the generals to the particulars of the internal sense.
3. Another important reference tool is *Searle's General Index to Swedenborg's Scripture Quotations*. This reference is used to find passages in the Writings where a verse(s) from the Word is either explained specifically or used to illustrate a doctrinal point that we can use in our study. There is also another use of this work. As we study, each researcher will be led by the Lord's Providence in myriad ways, according to specific needs or states. Knowing how to use this book will help each of us to explore relevant topics and look up related passages to increase our knowledge of the three-fold Word.
4. You will soon discover that not every verse, word, name, etc. is directly quoted in the Writings. But there are often other references to the same name, place, or thing in the explanation of a different verse of the Word. The hope is that reflection on these other doctrinal explanations will help us see possible applications to our study of *Micah*. We will need to use "derived doctrine" often. Please don't run away from this maligned term. If we use it properly and admit openly that it is derived doctrine, we bring no harm to the internal sense.
5. Keep some kind of notebook handy during your study times. Write out insights, questions, and any summaries you find helpful in organizing your thoughts about each chapter. **The goal of this study guide is not to give a detailed summary of the internal sense but to start each researcher's quest for deeper insight.**
6. At the end of each chapter in the study guide, you will find a study review. The review includes a summary of each section to help you reinforce and build on your understanding of several of the key points.
7. Begin each study unit with a devotional prayer asking the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts. Certainly, beginning in this sphere has the power to inspire and open our minds with a higher spiritual priority that will keep us in the company of the Lord's angels. As the Writings teach, we must seek to love truth for truth's sake. Such an approach will free each reader from preconceived ideas that might limit his or her ability to "see" the intent and message of the Lord's Word.

Introduction

Welcome to a rich, challenging, and wonderful study of *The Book of Micah*—one of the books of the Lord’s Word. This book makes clear from its opening verse to its closing verse that everything that is shared in this prophecy is from the Lord alone.“**The word of the Lord...came to Micah...”** The Lord indeed came to Micah. Micah did not have a retreat time to study, meditate, or write out insights he had while thinking about the Lord. He was not part of a special group called “the sons of the prophets.” The seven chapters are not about Micah, nor are they personal words arising from Micah’s deep concern about or sorrowful reflections on current or pending national events. Micah was a faithful servant who listened carefully to the Lord and then reported, without editing or altering, what was revealed to him. He did not sanitize the revelation for political correctness. The Lord called Micah to speak to the church about the serious decline of its spiritual health and to tell the church what was going to happen to it. Micah faithfully repeated the Lord’s declaration that the Jewish church was spiritually coming to an end. He had to tell the people that the Lord was going to make His advent so as to form a new church out of many people and other nations. Did the people of Israel want to hear these words? Would they be inclined to warmly embrace Micah for this message? As far as the Jewish church was concerned, this message was “nonsense.” They were the Lord’s favored people. Nothing—nothing!—could or would remove them from that special status. What Micah told them must have been a hard lesson and irritating for them to hear. Micah did not argue with the Lord, nor did he try to put “a positive spin” on the Lord’s words.

We would do well at the onset of this study to dedicate ourselves to a “Micahian” approach to the spiritual message of the Lord. Otherwise, we will be drawn into a series of natural, historical suppositions that could mislead and distract us. You might not have the time and academic resources to check out what biblical scholars do in this area, but believe me, they are sometimes “over the top” with their speculations and assumptions. Here are some examples: the dates of Micah’s life are uncertain, and some question whether Micah lived long enough to write the whole book, hypothesizing that some his followers finished his work for him; some scholars try to tie precise applications of “Micah’s words” to a particular king, perhaps an imposing neighboring king; others attempt personal speculations on what it must have been like when Micah visited Jerusalem, coming from his hometown in the farmland into the big, sophisticated city. In one section of *Micah*, scholars are amazed and amused with Micah’s “puns.” (*See Micah 1:10-15.*) They point to his “play on words.” Really, is that something the “Word of the Lord” would allow Micah to employ? Puns? Plays on words? There are many other examples of scholarly speculation that could be cited, but perhaps these will suffice for the time being.

The New Church teaches us that it is a sound spiritual principle of exposition to stay away from a preoccupation with the person and instead to focus wholly on the

substance of the Divine revelation. As interested as we might be in Micah, his lineage, his timetable in relation to other prophets, the kings ruling at the time of his prophecy, or what enemies were waiting to invade and conquer, these things are only secondarily important in relation to the correspondential representation and meaning of the spiritual sense, from the Lord, to eternity. The Lord's truth is not confined by time or space. His Word is infinite and eternal. We need to know about Micah to the extent that he was a faithful "scribe." He did obey, honor, and respect the truth of the Lord. We, too, need to be faithful scribes and adhere honestly to His Word. Will we avoid playing thematically popularizing games with the Word? The Lord will come to us when we are in a receptive state, willing to listen and obey. The all-pervading question is this: Do we want to learn the lessons in *The Book of Micah* to prepare and school us in the spiritual process of becoming a member of the Lord's new church? Are we willing to lay aside a "dead church" to take up a living church with the Lord at the center? If so, we want to go to the core of scriptural meaning and context and not to imaginative scholastically driven forms of speculation.

Having offered a cautionary note on scriptural study and application, let's look, with spiritual "balance," at some of the facts we are given in the Word about Micah. Our inquiry will strive to address the following questions:

1. What is said about Micah's name and lineage?
2. What was his timetable in reference to other prophets and kings?
3. What are some of the more familiar and loved passages in *The Book of Micah*?
4. What specific themes and passages challenge us to apply our hearts unto wisdom so that we can build up the walls of the Lord's new church?

WHAT IS SAID ABOUT MICAH'S NAME AND LINEAGE?

The name "Micah" means "Who is like the Lord?" Indeed, we must have awe and love for the Lord as our highest end. All other gods must fall down and leave His holy presence.

The Word informs us that Micah came from a town called Moresheth. Scholars are not sure where that town was, but they believe that it was about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem. That area is a productive agricultural area. Therefore, it is assumed that Micah, and his family, were "farmers" of simple heritage: no royalty, no prestigious pedigree, just farmers with a feeling of closeness to one another and nature.

Nothing more is known of his family. Did he have brothers or sisters? Did his family experience a "rustic" rural life on a farm? Let us state it again: Nothing is known about Micah except for his name, his hometown, and the kings ruling during his lifetime. Is his personal information omitted by Divine design? Is the implied message that we should focus not on the person but on the spiritual truth we are about to hear?

WHAT WAS HIS TIMETABLE IN REFERENCE TO OTHER PROPHETS AND KINGS?

Scholars state that Micah was “a contemporary of Isaiah and Amos and Hosea. Some have even speculated that Micah might have been a student of the prophet Isaiah...” (*Al Maxey, “The Minor Prophets,”* <http://www.zianet.com/maxey/Prophlst.htm>) The basis for this theory is a perceived similarity between certain passages of *The Book of Isaiah* and *The Book of Micah*. Why does Isaiah come off as the senior teaching prophet? (Note *Micah 4:1-3* and *Isaiah 2:1-3* for the similarity of messages.)

A check for similarities between Micah and other prophets provides an interesting study. *Micah* and *Isaiah* have fifteen or more passages with similar wording, *Micah* and *Jeremiah* about six. *Micah* is cited in *Matthew 2:5-6; Matthew 10:35-36; John 7:6, 42; and Luke 1:72-73*. Why mention this? The Word of the Lord comes to each prophet. There is no prophetic ownership of revelation. There are no schools or students who “said it first.” When it comes to the Word being written, the rule is simple: the Lord said it first. The Lord shared His insights and truths with His prophets. They did not make up the truths as teachers or preachers. They all heard it from the one inner source of truth—the Lord.

Concerning the kings mentioned in the passages of *Micah*, we are taught that Micah prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Jotham is thought to have reigned from 739-734 BC, Ahaz 734-728 BC, and Hezekiah 716-687 BC. Jotham and Hezekiah were “good kings,” but Ahaz was a bad king. Some scholars say that the time of their three reigns combined totals 61 years. I don’t follow their math, but I offer it as an example of what happens when speculations become involved in reckoning physical historical facts.

If these three kings reigned a total of 61 years, how old was Micah when he began to write the words of the Lord? Was he led by the Lord from the beginning of Jotham’s reign, and did he complete his work for the Lord near the end of Hezekiah’s reign? Would it be more of a help, spiritually, if we were to reflect on the spiritual significance of the number of kings (three) and the spiritual meaning of the word “king” and the uses of kings? This certainly could come in handy when we recall that two kings were good and one was bad. What makes for a good king, and what made the one, Ahaz, significantly bad? Is it of spiritual significance that Ahaz reigned between two good kings?

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MORE FAMILIAR AND LOVED PASSAGES IN *THE BOOK OF MICAH*?

Here are a few. I hope you will add your favorites to this list:

Micah 4:1-5 “They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks...they shall no longer learn war.”

Micah 5:2-5 “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, for everlasting...for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth; and this One shall be peace.”

Micah 6:6-8 “With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil...He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Micah 7:7 “Therefore I will look to the Lord. I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me.”

Micah 7:18-19 “Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage...He will again have compassion on us and will subdue our iniquities.”

WHAT SPECIFIC THEMES AND PASSAGES CHALLENGE US TO APPLY OUR HEARTS UNTO WISDOM SO THAT WE CAN BUILD UP THE WALLS OF THE LORD'S NEW CHURCH?

There are so many passages one could cite, powerful passages that warn us what will happen when priests and rulers misuse their offices. The Lord warns against the error of favoring self-intelligence. Pride, arrogance, and self-directedness will cause the church within to die. External ritual may go on, and the vestiges may be ornate, the rituals carried out in meticulous detail, but if the heart is not humble before the Lord, it is all for naught. If the shepherd is not vigilant and protective of the flock, they will be plundered by predators that stealthily lie in wait to attack in a vulnerable moment. Israel allowed the worship of other gods to enter into the Lord's temple. Unbelievable atrocities were being committed against the Lord's truth. Micah told the people the Lord called them “harlots.” They were receiving “the pay of a harlot.” (*Micah 1:7*) Things got so bad spiritually in the church that they had “no one to determine boundaries...” (*Micah 2:5*) “You have taken away My glory forever.” (*Micah 2:9*) Israel's prophets were chanting “peace” while chewing away at the flesh of the people. Therefore, they were in a night state “without vision.” (*Micah 3:6*) The church was no longer offering fairness, justice, or truth. The Lord lamented that there was not a single person among them who cared for honesty and integrity. They had “wicked scales...with the bag of deceitful weights...” (*Micah 6:11*)

As the narrative of this sad calamity unfolds, the Lord's report in Chapter 7 causes the glorious sun of heaven to break through the clouds of remorse. The Lord,

through the prayerful petition of Micah, tells everyone of His planned corrective action. **“In the day when your walls are to be built...shepherd your people with Your staff...as in days of old.”** (*Micah 7:14, emphasis added.*)

Are you moved to pray Micah’s prayer for our own church? Lord, build Thou the inner walls of Your New Church solidly. Please make our walls large, substantial, and secure so as to keep out the wiles of the hells. As Your sheep, we invite You to guide us with Your staff. In asking this, we will remember that a staff is used to guide, it is used to protect, and it is used to prod us along when we wish wrongfully to tarry.

“As in the days of old” is a wonderful part of Micah’s prayer. The Writings teach us that it is a petition to become like the Most Ancient Church. What does that mean? It means to become innocent, to trust completely in the Lord for all of our benefactions, and most importantly to return to seeing the Lord as a Divine Human. Having the Lord walking among us, talking to us, counseling, and “touching” us is a goal worth pursuing. One of the passages in the Word that still moves me as it did in the days of my youth is the story of the Lord taking the children up in His arms— touching them, kissing them, and blessing them. How I wished I could have been one of those children.

The Lord’s earthly ministry involved many forms of “touching.” He touched the widow’s dead son, and he arose from his funeral bier. He touched Jairus’ daughter, and she awoke from her death sleep. When Peter began to slip below the raging waves, He reached out His hand and immediately brought Peter to the surface again. The blind recovered their eyesight because He touched them. What about the lame, the deaf, the palsied, the lepers, and the maimed? They were restored because “He touched them.” Is it any wonder that Micah’s prayer was to recover the ways of the Most Ancient Church? It was a prayer for the Divine Human to touch lives in restorative ways.

I hope you read well the story of *Micah*. Don’t let the hells discourage you with their intimations that it dwells too much on gloom and doom. Instead, work through the prophecy with the knowledge that the Lord will come to the church’s rescue. He will build our walls sturdily. The enemy will not be able to plunder and intimidate those within the walls of His new church. He wants us to leave behind the “dead” church. He invites us to come into a living, vibrant, and bright church that deals in fairness with honest scales. It is a church that knows its boundaries and will not play or get the pay of a harlot.

The Lord, in *Micah 7:2*, observed that “...the faithful man has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among men.” Isaiah, when he heard the call from the Lord, said, “Here am I; send me.” Micah, too, heard the call. He went forth to tell the church the “straight” news. Did they listen? There is no way of answering that question except to say that the Lord always preserves a remnant to work with when

He builds again. The best we can do is to make sure we ready ourselves so we can say afresh: "Here am I; send me."

Chapter One

MICAH 1:1-2

"The word of the Lord that came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem. Hear, all you peoples! Listen, O earth, and all that is in it! Let the Lord God be a witness against you, the Lord from His holy temple."

Passages from the Writings

Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms (P&P)

- “The descent of the Lord from heaven, and His coming into the world.”

Arcana Coelestia (AC) 2921 [3]

- “...the name ‘Lord Jehovah’ is used especially when the aid of omnipotence is sought and implored...that...such aid is sought, may be seen...in Micah 1:2...and frequently elsewhere.”

Derived Doctrine

“The word of the Lord that came to Micah of Moresheth...”

- This superscription puts before us the true beginning, or origin, of this prophecy. We are told that the word of the Lord “came” to Micah. Thus, the prophecy we are about to study is from the Lord’s revelation and is not the result of Micah’s keen discernment or judgment, nor from any disciplined process of meditative reflection. The “word of the Lord” came to Micah.
- AC 426 explains that the “word of the Lord” is spiritual and not verbal.”
- AC 2015 teaches that the “word of the Lord” must be in the glory of heaven and none of [it in] the world’s glory.”
- The name **“Micah”** means “who is like the Lord?” This is a name clearly designated to inspire praise of the Lord above all other kings, prophets, idols, or gods.
- The exact location of Micah’s hometown, Moresheth, is uncertain. Speculation puts Moresheth some 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem, 1200 feet above sea level, overlooking the coastal plain. “The city was ringed by a circle of fortifications built first by King Rehoboam, the son of Solomon...and designed to protect Judah from attacks by the Philistines and major powers...thus Micah was probably not from a simple peasant background but was familiar with the civil officialdom and military authorities...” (*New International Biblical Commentary: Minor Prophets I*, by Elizabeth Achtemeier, page 292)

"...in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah..."

- Jotham reigned from 742-735 BC, Ahaz 735-715, and Hezekiah 715- 687.
- This indicates that Micah's preparation and delivery of this prophecy may have spanned some 55 years.
- What were the legacies of these three kings? **Jotham** was an able administrator. He subdued the Ammonites and built the upper gate of the Temple. **Ahaz** preferred playing international politics. Instead of heeding the Lord's advice, he scorned a sign from the Lord. Ahaz sought to buy the favor of other kings. He dabbled in idolatrous cults and weakened his country morally and financially. **Hezekiah** brought about reform. He ended the worship of pagan gods. He stood fast against the Assyrians. With the help of the Lord, a plague came upon the Assyrians and subdued them. Hezekiah built a tunnel through rocks to bring water to the people during the siege of the Assyrians. His reign constituted a "peak" in the history of the kings of Judah.

"...which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem."

- Why does the Word specifically mention these two cities in the prophecy of Micah? They were capital cities. Samaria was the capital of the Northern kingdom and Jerusalem the capital of the Southern kingdom. Together, they were centers that influenced the whole nation. The Lord gave Micah a message to help the church focus on the quality of leadership coming out of these important centers.
- *Apocalypse Explained (AE) 724* helps us understand what these cities represent: "**Samaria** means the spiritual church and **Jerusalem** the celestial church each in respect to doctrine." (Emphasis added.) We also have this teaching in *AC 2466*: "'**Samaria**' denotes the church which is in the affection of truth and '**Jerusalem**' that which is in the affection of good." (Emphasis added.)
- The negative meaning of "**Samaria**" is as follows. "**Samaria**" denotes knowledges of falsity. (*AC 6592*) "**Samaria**" denotes the church of perverted faith. (*AC 9156*)
- The negative correspondence of "**Jerusalem**" denotes a perverted church; to be cut off from the understanding of the things of the church; and the church which is in falsities from evils. (*AC 10283, 5354, and 9960*)

"Hear, all you peoples! Listen, O earth, and all that is in it!"

- *Apocalypse Revealed (AR) 87* explains that to "**hear**" signifies "...to perceive and to obey; because one attends [hears] that he may perceive and obey..."
- To "**listen**" means to accept. *AC 5467 and 5475* explain that "not listening" means "non-acceptance."

- *AC 10417* has this explanation of the word “people”: “People signify receiving influx from the Lord for the purpose of receiving mercy.” According to *AR 483*, “people” signify the church in falsities and those who are in evils.
- “...all you peoples” seems to represent an inclusive judgment or evaluation of the needs of the church. No one is above or beyond the need of the Lord’s mercy and of the primary truths of the Lord’s spiritual church.
- “Listen, O earth and all that is in it” seems to be a Divine call to the church to graciously accept the ways of the Lord, storing them up in the heart and in the mind. “O taste and see that the Lord is good.” (*Psalms 34:8*)

“Let [permit] the Lord God be a witness against you, the Lord from His holy temple.”

- These words, when said as a prayer, have a degree of softness to them. Self-examination requires the light of the Lord so we can probe the secret and dark places of the heart. He knows where sin lives. The Lord knows the intricate and stealthy inner connections of the roots of our propriums. The directions for the spiritual disconnection of these complicated bundles of evil come from the Lord out of His holy temple. What is the church’s part in all of this? We need to let, or permit, the Lord to be our faithful witness. The church needs to prayerfully implore His guidance and mercy.

Putting It All Together

P&P instructs us that the prophetic words given to Micah by the Lord refer to “the descent of the Lord from heaven, and His coming into the world.”

Micah—whose name means “who is like the Lord?”—brings us good news from the Lord. It is not a report of good news originating in the mind of a creative writer. Nor is it the culmination of tribal oral tradition. It is a message to the church coming from the holy temple of the Lord. Nothing of human self-intelligence composes or directs the prophetic words of the Lord. The Lord’s temple announces excitedly and lovingly the Messianic mission to save and establish His new church.

Those who “hear” Micah’s message need to do all they can to perceive and obey it, to change their spiritual attitude. The call to all within the church is inclusive; these words are not addressed to selected favorites. All are to “listen” to and accept the words of the Lord. Why? The spiritual condition of the church had fallen. Evil and falsity were at the center of the decision-making processes in the two kingdoms of Samaria and Jerusalem. The leaders of Judah and Israel were vacillating perilously. Their inconsistencies brought serious spiritual defects into the church. The people were spiritually lost and confused. Sadly, they were unaware of the consequences of the dangerous paths they were following. The conjugal principle, of joining the good and truth of the Lord into a holy union, was grievously lacking.

The Lord had to come to the rescue of the people. His mercy and love would not let the church go the way of destruction. How would the Lord go about saving the church? One way is mentioned in this prophecy: Let (or permit) the Lord God witness against the evil and falsity of all people. Let (or permit) Him to direct the process of self-examination. The truths from the temple of the Lord will remove—uproot—the vast tentacles of evil tendencies within the proprium. Will the combat against “the first root of life” (the proprium) be hard? *The Doctrine of Life* has this answer: “This combat is not severe except in the case of those who have given free rein...and have indulged them of set purpose, and also in the case of those who have stubbornly cast off the holy things of the Word and of the church. With others **it is not severe**; let them even once a week, or twice in a month, resist the evils they are inclined to, and **they will perceive** a change.” (*Doctrine of Life* 97, *emphasis added.*)

Spiritual hearing and listening are essential. These are the ways and means of perceiving and obeying and of receiving help from the Lord. Following the Lord always leads to spiritual victories. His way invigorates the hearts and minds of His people.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 1:1-2.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- May we think for a moment about perceiving and obeying? How does one learn to perceive? Perception is not something that is unique to the mind of a genius. Perception comes to those who are simple (sincere) of heart. Perception comes to the humble. As we desire to be enlightened by the Lord, He opens our hearts and minds so that we will see things that the proud and haughty will never see. Do any incidents come to mind wherein you were able to see things that previously had seemed obscure? Did the new insight come about because of your willingness to hear and obey the Lord?
- Obedience to the Lord does not arise from blind faith. Obedience starts with a strong belief that the Word of the Lord is true. Obedience is an effort to shun evils as sins. How did The Doctrine of Life say it? “Let them once a week, or twice a month, resist...evil...and they will perceive a change.” Are we willing to believe this teaching and obey the Lord by trying to cooperate with Him to uproot our unregenerate proprium?
- Micah’s name means “who is like the Lord?” Isn’t this a wonderful way to begin a prayer? No one can match His magnificent ways. So why would anyone want to reject His providential leading? We need to believe that the Lord will lead us in His way so that when it is good for us, He can show us what evils are to be shunned and help us overcome their controlling influences.

- Samaria and Jerusalem were powerful centers of religious life for the children of Israel. The leaders in these cities strayed and erred in their spiritual duties. Do you think it is necessary for us to pray for the church and its priesthood? Our church, like any other human church, is vulnerable to trends and mistakes. As the people of the church, we need to pray and involve ourselves in self-examination without being morose about it. Have you been successful in this endeavor?
- Our proprium is called the “first root of life.” The Writings teach us that this root needs to be plucked up and that we are to seek ways to let the Lord’s Proprium replace it. Can you identify with this concept? Do you think it will work? The human proprium is spelled with a small “p.” The Lord’s Proprium has a capital “P.” Is this a way we can distinguish the two in our minds and hearts?
- It is possible for the Lord’s Proprium to replace our proprium. It just doesn’t happen immediately. The question is, how patient and diligent will we be in a world that values instantaneous gratification?

MICAH 1:3-7

“For behold, the Lord is coming out of His place; He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth. The mountains will melt under Him, and the valleys will split like wax before the fire, like waters poured down a steep place. All this for the transgression of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? And what are the high places of Judah? Are they not Jerusalem? Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the field, places for planting a vineyard; I will pour down her stones into the valley, and I will uncover her foundations. All her carved images shall be beaten to pieces, and all her pay as a harlot shall be burned with the fire; all her idols I will lay desolate, for she gathered it from the pay of a harlot, and they shall return to the pay of a harlot.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “The state of heaven then became changed. Then all the representatives of the church, which had been totally falsified, will be destroyed.”

AC 1311 [2-3]

- “...‘the highest’ is predicated of Him, that is, He is said to be the highest...On the other hand, judgment or the penalty of evil takes place in lower and lowest things. This explains why He is said to ‘come down;’ ...to ‘come down’ denotes the penalty, or judgment, inflicted upon evil. In Micah...1:3, 4.”

AE 405 [42]

- “In Micah...1:3-5...The Last Judgment is meant by ‘Jehovah going forth out of His place, He cometh down and treadeth upon the high places of the earth,’ ‘upon the high places of the earth’ signifying upon those who were in the high places, that is, upon whom judgment was executed, for in the spiritual world, just as in the natural world, there are lands, mountains, hills, and valleys. The destruction of those who are upon the mountains and in the valleys, who are such as are in evils from the love of self and the world and in the falsities therefrom, is signified by ‘the mountains are melted under Him, and the valleys are cleft, as wax before the fire, as waters poured down a descent,’ ‘mountains’ signifying the evils of the loves of self and of the world, and ‘valleys’ the falsities therefrom; of these evils of the loves of self and of the world that are signified by ‘mountains’ it is said that they are melted ‘as wax before the fire,’ since ‘fire’ signifies those loves; and of the falsities that are signified by ‘valleys’ it is said ‘as waters poured down a descent,’ since ‘waters’ signify falsities.”

AC 9156 [2]

- “In Micah...1:5, 13...‘sin’ denotes what is contrary to the good of charity and love; and ‘transgression’ what is contrary to the truth of faith; for ‘Samaria’ denotes the church of perverted faith, and so does ‘Israel’ in this passage.”

AE 919

- “...that ‘vineyard’ signifies the spiritual church is evident from the passages in the Word where ‘vineyard’ is mentioned.” *Micah 1:6* is cited as an example.

AE 587 [15]

- “In Micah...1:6, 7...‘Samaria when it became idolatrous’ represented the church devastated in respect to the truths of doctrine and the goods of life, or destroyed by the falsities of doctrine and by the evils of life; devastation in respect to all the truths of the church is signified by ‘it shall be made into a heap of the field, and its stones shall flow down into the valley, and its foundations shall be opened;’ ‘the field’ meaning the church; ‘the heap of the field’ its devastation; ‘the stones’ the truths of the church, and ‘foundations’ the natural truths upon which the church is founded; the complete devastation of these is signified by ‘the stones shall flow down into the valley, and the foundations shall be opened;’ the destruction of the church by the falsities of doctrine is signified by ‘her graven images shall be beaten to pieces, and her idols laid waste;’ ‘the hire of whoredom which shall be burned up with the fire,’ signifies the falsification of truth by applications to favor the loves of self and of the world.”

AE 695 [24]

- “In Micah...‘Samaria’ means the spiritual church in respects to the truths of doctrine, here in respect to the falsities of doctrine; for their ‘graven images’ signify things falsified, which are from self-intelligence; ‘the rewards of her whoredom that shall be burned up with fire’ signify the falsifications of truth from a love of falsity from evil and the consequent infernal delight; and as that love is from hell it is said that ‘they shall be burned up with fire,’ ...‘and all their idols will I waste’ signifies the falsities that must be destroyed; ‘for she hath brought them together from the reward of whoredom’ signifies from the love of falsity that is from evil and from the consequent infernal delight; ‘therefore to the reward of whoredom shall they return’ signifies that all things of that church will be truths falsified, because they are thence...”

AC 10406 [8-9]

- “...falsity...is invented, and evil which falsity defends; for it is said ‘the maker of his invention,’ and ‘the teacher of a lie.’ Like things are signified by a ‘graven image’ and a ‘molten image’ in the following passages...” *Micah 1:7* is cited.

AR 459

- “By idols are properly signified the falsities of worship from one’s own intelligence.” *Micah 1:7* is cited.

AE 141 [10]

- “In Micah...1:7...‘Graven images’ and ‘idols’ signify falsities that are from self-intelligence; ‘the rewards of whoredom’ are the knowledges of truth and good that they have applied to falsities and evils and have thus perverted.”

Derived Doctrine

“Behold...”

- The word **“behold”** means to keep something in sight, to look at, watch, view, survey, and discern. (*Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*) The Lord is directing us to focus on the purpose of His coming. As we pause, watch, stop, and stand before Him, it is essential to keep within ourselves a heart and mind that desire to see things in their proper perspective. With humility and an affection for good, spiritual discernment will show us how small and unworthy self-love is.

"...the Lord is coming out of His place..."

- **“Coming out”** of the Lord’s **“place”** suggests a state of holiness proceeding from the Lord’s Divine Human. See *AC 6845*, where **“place”** is explained in these terms. In *AC 3210*, the most holy place, or the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle, signifies the veriest Divine Good and Truth in the Lord’s Divine Humanity. Thus, we need to picture the cleansing radiance of Love and Wisdom coming forth from the Lord to clear out, replace, and overcome the evil and falsity that filled the minds of the people within the church. The Lord’s coming will require a humble acquiescence to His authority, His commandments, and a complete commitment to His providential ways.
- *Isaiah 40:3-5* reminds us what things will happen in preparation for the Lord coming out of His holy place: “Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth; the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

“He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth.”

- *AC 10019 [4]* instructs us that **“tread”** signifies that the Lord will overcome evil and grant the faithful the power to destroy evils and falsities. Those who misused their good offices to gain power and prestige will be exposed and stripped of their authority. The “logic” of their sensual corporeal ways will not be defensible. They will crumble as a result of the Lord “coming down” to assume the Divine Human.
- As much as evil and falsity seek to intimidate us with their boastful statements of authority and invincibility, they will easily fall from their “high places.”
- **Note thoughtfully** the following examples from the Word about how easily hell and its legions of believers will succumb to the advance of the Lord from His holy temple. This is a story of evil’s demise and not a story of the Lord’s anger.

“The mountains will melt under Him and the valleys will split like wax before the fire, like waters poured down a steep place.” (Emphasis added.)

- “...‘mountains’ and ‘hills’ in the Word signify heaven and the church, where there exists love to the Lord and love to the neighbor, and, in the opposite sense, hell, where there exists self-love and the love of the world.” (*AE 410*)
- *Isaiah 13:7* pictures what will happen when the day of the Lord comes to fruition: “...all hands will be limp, every man’s heart will melt...” (Emphasis added.) The meaning of a melting mountain is quite clear. The haughty **“mountains”** of self-love and love of the world will **“melt”** away in the Lord’s

presence. The illusion of the enormity of self-love will vanish because it has no connection with **substance** and **form** from the Lord.

- “...the valleys will split...” A “valley” signifies the lower things of the mind, which are grounded in all things natural and sensual. See *AE* 376. When Israel journeyed toward the Promised Land, their periods of temptations (wars) often took place in valleys. Each enemy they fought represented a war against some serious, troublesome, natural or sensual evil and falsity.
- A “split” represents the breaking down of a lower natural system of thought. That which had seemed unified and cohesively bound together by the natural person had to be “split” by the Lord so the true inner dissimilarities could be seen. See *AC* 9606.
- *AC* 35 offers this insight about the necessity of exposing “split” minds (a split will and understanding): “...those who say they have faith, and yet live in contradiction to faith, then the one mind is divided [split] into two, one of which desires to exalt itself into heaven, while the other tends toward hell...”
- “...split like wax before the fire...” To help us understand the correspondence of “wax,” do we need to consider the many types and multiple uses of wax? There is bee’s wax. There is a plant wax. Wax is used by bees to store honey. Wax is used as a sealant to help preserve things. Wax is used in beauty products. “Wax museums” make and display figures replicating people. Candles are made with wax. Signet rings need a drop of wax to leave an identification mark. Or, are we to focus on the malleable characteristics and low melting point of wax when it is near a flame? Maybe all of these wax characteristics have accumulative correspondential relevance to our spiritual lesson. The fallen church certainly tried to put a seal on its man-made concepts, valuing them above the Lord’s commandments. The leaders of the church tried to make themselves look ornately beautiful and honorable in the sight of others. Like wax, the truths of the Lord were molded this and that way to please and satisfy human prudence. Idolatrous images were presented and preserved in the temples. Customs and traditions were made binding and oppressive as if by a signet sealing this or that human law. The Lord’s love, like a flame, will easily melt and split all of the superficial “wax” impressions of natural and sensual people. Self-love may look flexible and durable, but it “melts” easily in the light of the Lord’s heavenly truth.
- “...like waters poured down a steep place.” *AE* 405 [42] explains that the “waters” that are poured down represent falsity. Water pouring down the steep incline gives a picture of what rushing water (flooding falsity) can do to the minds of those in a devastated church. A torrent of false ideas can wash away our internal spiritual resistance. Does the pouring water down the steep incline illustrate what powerful popular opinion can do to our decision-making? With the emotional shouts of the crowd, many a spiritual principle has been eroded by compromises. Can we picture “waters” pouring down a “steep” place? Visualize the momentum, mud slides, force, chaos, ruts carving out imbedded stones so they tumble from their place causing an

avalanche. This phenomenon is a result of falsity, not of the Lord's truth. This prophecy illustrates the way self-love's mountain of falsity will "melt" and "erode" when the Lord comes down and treads on it.

"All this is for the transgression of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel."

- Note well: we must pay close attention to the wording and meaning of the "transgression" of Jacob and the "sins" of Israel. Why? Consider the explanation we have in AC 6563: "Mention is made of both 'transgression' and 'sin' because of the marriage of truth and good in every detail of the Word; for 'transgression' signifies evil against truth, which is less; and 'sin, evil against good, which is greater; hence it is that both are mentioned..." (Emphasis added.)
- "Israel" in the highest sense "means the Lord in relation to the internal of the church...'Israel' means the church with those who are interiorly natural, and have truths therein from a spiritual origin." (AE 768 [15]) From this we can infer that the "sins of the house of Israel" against the Lord's internal church had caused greater harm to the people and church than had the "transgressions of Jacob," which denote a pride that falsified external truths. This was a lesser transgression. The two together, however, had undermined the marriage of truth and good.

"What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria?"

- We are given a clue regarding the nature of the "transgression of Jacob." Consider the representation of "Samaria."
- "Samaria" "denotes the church of perverted faith." (AC 9156 [2]) "Samaria" "denotes knowledges of evils." (AC 6952 [7]) "Samaria" "means...the falsities of doctrine...from self intelligence." (AE 695 [24]) "Samaria" "means a church whose faith is perverted." (AC 9156) And as a last example, "Samaria" "signifies a church in which truths are falsified." (AE 355 [30])

"And what are the high places of Judah? Are they not Jerusalem?"

- There were well over 80 passages we could have chosen to explain what "Judah" signifies, represents, and means. The following choices seem to convey the meaning of our text. "Judah" signifies "truth from the good of love to the Lord..." (AC 3654 [2]) "Judah" signifies the will of good and, in the contrary sense, the will of evil. (AE 962 [3]) "Judah" signifies "the perversion...and adulteration of the Word that is brought forth from evils of life and falsities of doctrine." (AE 922 [2]) "Judah" signifies "celestial love, which is love to the Lord...and in the contrary sense diabolical love, which is the love of self, from which is all evil, [causing] the devastation of the church." (AE 653 [7]) "Judah" means "saving faith which results from love to the Lord." (AC 3881) Lastly, this quote: "Judah" "represents the celestial

element of love, and the celestial element of love resides in the will part of the mind." (AC 6367)

- The "**high places of Judah**," in the positive sense, represent the good of love from the Lord that would lift the will to exhilarating heights to see the saving power of His celestial love. The contrary sense points to the will of self-love perverting and adulterating the Word. This kind of love has no real height and leads to the devastation of the will.
- "**Are they not Jerusalem?**" This question, when studied in the light of doctrine, can open for us a picture of what the Lord intends the church to have freely. He wants us to experience the power of good and truth. He wants us to experience the exhilaration of good and truth. To appreciate the wholesomeness of good and truth, we need to see the contrast of an evil self-love that shuts down the power and potential of what the Lord perpetually endeavors to give us. What does the Lord want to give freely? Note what follows.
- "**Jerusalem**" represents "the new church in respect of the doctrine it derives from the Word." (*True Christian Religion (TCR) 217*) "**Jerusalem**...means the church in respect to doctrine." (AE 780 [7]) "**Jerusalem** represents those that are in the doctrine of genuine truth." (AE 612 [3]) "**Jerusalem** signifies the truth of the church wholly vastated by evils." (AE 401 [18]) (Emphasis added to preceding quotations.)
- AC 3858 calls our attention to what was intended: "**Jerusalem means the Lord's New Church.**"
- Putting these passages to use, do we see more of the meaning of what the Lord wanted to freely give to Jerusalem? "**Are they not Jerusalem?**"

"Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the field, places for planting a vineyard..."

- To begin the process of seeing and understanding the meaning of this verse, it appears we must first unlock the representation of the word "**heap**." AC 8286 teaches that "to be heaped up" represents the Lord **gathering together**, into a **one**, the **offending falsities** that were part of religious life, in this case Samaria's religious life. AE 223 [3] includes the word "vastations" when explaining "**heap**." Therefore, heaping represents a clearing out, within a straying church, of false doctrines.
- In the negative sense, "**Samaria**" (the Samaritans) represents the "false doctrine of those who reject the Lord..." (AE 223 [20]) Doesn't it make sense that, to renew the church, the **heap** of false doctrine must be cleared away to provide fertile ground to plant a spiritual vineyard? So, what does "**planting a vineyard**" represent? Simply, it means the beginning of the spiritual church "where the Word is." (AR 650) Where the Word is, the Lord is.
- The "**planting**" is to occur in the "**field**." AC 368 gives an expanded meaning: "a field signifies doctrine; whoever receives a seed of faith, whether a man, a church, or the world, is also called a field."

"I will pour down her stones into the valley, and I will uncover her foundations."

- In the positive sense, when the Lord acts to "**pour**," it means He is instructing His people in the things of truth. It also means He is giving intelligence to those who genuinely desire truth from good. See *AE 518 [7]*.
- But in our text, we have the Lord exposing the negative conditions within the church to root them out so that Divine Love and Wisdom can establish a much-needed corrective and restorative plan of salvation.
- The "**stones**" being poured into the "**valley**" represent truths in the lower (natural) mind that had been built up to appear high and mighty. These "**stones**" were, in reality, lower truths that were spoiling and polluting the church's worship with sensual and profane forms of self-worship. See *AC 1292*. In *AE 405 [23]*, the "**valley**" is described as a place where those who are in good will be separated from those who are in evil.
- The Lord's announcement through Micah that He would uncover Samaria's "**foundations**" pinpoints our attention specifically to the doctrines of the church that were erroneously derived from the literal sense. See *TCR 197* and *AR 876*. Why would the Lord need to uncover, or expose, these man-made spiritual "**foundations**"? Doesn't the reason relate to the meaning of stones being poured into the valley? That which was polluting worship; that which was from human tradition and human prudence that mislead the people, had to be exposed. These errors had to be methodically eliminated. To borrow from the Lord's parables, new wine cannot be put into old wineskins. New cloth cannot be sown with old cloth. New wine had to be put into new wineskins. Otherwise, the old skins would burst open and the new wine would be lost. New cloth had to be sown with new cloth to prevent the one tearing away from the other. The wise man built his house upon the rock, and the foolish man built his house upon the sand. Sturdy "**foundations**" are consistently mentioned by the Lord as goals to work toward. So let's courageously ask the Lord to help us uncover any faulty foundation we might have built from the literal sense.

"All her carved images shall be beaten to pieces, and all her pay as a harlot shall be burned with the fire..."

- *AR 107* has some important things to say about "**carved images**." "They who are in works alone and in no truths are like those who act and do not understand, and deeds without understanding are inanimate. They appear before angels like images carved out of wood; and they who have placed merit in their works, appear like those carved images, naked, without any covering whatever..."
- For the direct teachings of *Micah 1:7*, please go back and read *AE 141 [10]*, *AE 587 [15]*, and *AE 695 [24]* on pages 14-15.
- A "**harlot**" signifies the profanation of the holy things of the church "by the diabolical love of having dominion." (*AE 1083*) A "**harlot**" "signifies

everywhere in the Word falsified truth...A harlot signifies that doctrine that had previously been the doctrine of genuine truth has become the doctrine of falsified truth." (AE 887 [3])

- "**Pay**," in the positive sense, "signifies truth, by means of which...amendment is effected." (AC 9087) Therefore, "**pay**" in the opposite sense represents the means by which falsity resists the amendment of the heart to the end that it fosters spiritual deterioration.
- "**Fire**," in the negative sense, represents "the loves of self and the world, and all evils thence..." (AE 539) "**Fire**" "signifies the rejection of the whole of that religious persuasion..." (AE 1083) This shows us that those who love themselves and the world have a love that will burn itself out. This is not the Lord's doing. It is just the opposite. Self-love inflicts a harm that is tragic because it turns the "**harlot**" loose in the heart. The "**harlot's**" unfaithfulness to conjugal principles seeks to undermine and disconnect the powerful benefits the Lord would give freely to those who remain faithful to Him.

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes the first seven verses of *Micah 1* as a spiritual representation of the Lord's Advent: "The descent of the Lord from heaven, and His coming into the world. The state of heaven then became changed. Then all of the representatives of the church, which had been totally falsified, will be destroyed."

This is a prophetic message for those who intend to remain lovingly faithful to the Word of the Lord. This is a message for anyone who worries or wonders, "How long, O Lord, will You tarry in amending the wrongs of the world and the church?"

- The Lord promises that He will tread on the boastful concepts of the world. He will not be stopped nor influenced by the will or expectations of human opinion polls. *Isaiah 55:8-9* reminds us, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways...For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."
- All mountains of self-love will melt, split, and crumble before Him. The flood of falsity will undo itself. What, to evil, had appeared as impenetrable, invincible, and cohesive will melt in His presence.
- All transgressions and sins will be exposed and corrected by the Lord. This healing process will be performed thoroughly and with love, not anger. The foundations of evil will be uncovered so that all will see and understand the insidious nature of self-love.
- All idols, in whatever form they take, will be beaten to pieces. The unfaithfulness of the church to the doctrines of the Word will be exposed. Harlotry is the illustration used for the twisting and turning of the spiritual truth of His Word. The harlots "pay off," "bribe," and "curry favor" to "justify" their heinous actions.

- Will the harlot's tempting plan of seduction work in the presence of the Lord? The Lord announces that the harlot will be burned and all her idols will be made desolate. Is the Lord responsible for this burning? No, it is the fire of self-love from within the harlot that brings about this destruction. The harlot reaped what was sown. Those who live by the sword shall die by the sword.

AC 10406 [8-9] offers us some information to reflect on when we sum up these verses. The harlot and the idols represent a "...falsity [that]...is invented, and evil which falsity defends; for it is said 'the maker of his invention,' and 'the teacher of a lie.'" Our duty, as readers and believers in the Word, is to expose the inventions of falsity. With the Lord's help, we can uproot the evil and falsity that defend idols. Maybe we should include in our daily prayer life a petition for help exposing the inventions of falsity—"the teachers of lies." By exposing the lies and inventions of the harlot, we will have done a work that will be acceptable and honorable in the sight of the Lord.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 1:3-7.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- There is something comforting to the soul about hearing the Lord's plan to overcome the efforts and goals of self-love, hell, and destructive disorder. In the face of appearances that seem to offer evidence to the contrary, it is most satisfying to get the fuller picture. His coming down changed things in heaven and on earth. Can we, in our limited way, appreciate the magnitude of His coming down?
- Has this study helped you with your faith and patience in waiting for the day when hills and mountains will be trod on by the Lord and melted down? Waiting for and wanting the New Church to be the crown of all churches can provoke some forms of worriment. Does this impatience cause a sense of disillusionment about the growth and survival ability of the organized New Church?
- Can you remember some hill or mountain in your life that you got help in melting down? Were there only a few or many more than you expected to recall?
- Idols take on many forms. For a moment, recall and review things that you feel are dangerously distracting and harmful idols. Do these idols have well-defended support in our daily life?
- The melting down process, the crumbling of mountains, the stones rolling into the valley are quite illustrative in the literal sense. Can you now bring those pictures into the spiritual realm so they can give extra power in your fight against them?

- What inventions of falsity try to work a subtle seduction of your principles? Hellish spirits try to prevent us from thinking about their inventions. They exhort us, “Don’t fixate on guilt and sin!” “Loosen up!” “Be flexible!” “Roll with the punches!” “Everybody makes mistakes. Look at so and so. They are role models, and if they do it, why not you?” Or, I have heard this comment carried further: “If they are role models and they make silly and grievous mistakes you don’t make, relax! You’re ahead of them.” The point here is that hell wants us to ignore any principled effort to love and establish good and truth in our lives. Hell loves waffling and procrastination to exist in spiritual matters.
- Is there some example you can think of wherein self-love eventually destroyed itself? We really need to have examples to work with so that we are not duped by the invincibility illusions hell tries to maintain before the world.

MICAH 1:8-12

“Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked; I will make a wailing like the jackals and a mourning like the ostriches, for her wounds are incurable. For it has come to Judah; it has come to the gate of My people—to Jerusalem. Tell it not in Gath, weep not all; in Beth Aphrah roll yourself in the dust, pass by in naked shame, you inhabitant of Shaphir; the inhabitant of Zaanan does not go out, Beth Ezel mourns; its place to stand is taken away from you. For the inhabitant of Maroth pined for good, but disaster came down from the Lord to the gate of Jerusalem.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Consequent mourning and that it will extend even to those who were in celestial good.”

AE 695 [24]

- “...‘for this I will lament and howl’ signifies the grief of the angels of heaven and of the men of the church in whom the church is, and thus with them with whom the Lord is; ‘I will go stripped and naked’ signifies mourning because of the vastation of all truth and good.” *Micah 1:8* is cited.

AR 537

- “...by ‘the dragon’ are meant those who are in faith alone, and reject the works of the law as not saving, has been testified to me in the spiritual world...I have seen several thousands of them...when from a distance they have appeared like a dragon...”

- NB: the Writings' translation of *Micah* 1:8 is closer to the King James Version than to the New King James Version (seen above). In AR 537, we read "I will go despoiled and naked, I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning like the daughters of the owl." The King James Version reads: "I will go stripped and naked: I will make a wailing like the dragons and the mourning as the owls."

AE 714 [20]

- "In Micah 1:8...this treats of the vastation of Samaria, which signifies the spiritual church in respect to doctrine, here the church vastated; devastation in respect to truth and good is signified by 'going stripped and naked;' lamentation over it is signified by 'lamenting and howling,' lamentation over devastated good by 'making a lamentation like dragons,' and lamentation over devastated truth by 'making a mourning like the daughters of the owl.' The lamentation and mourning are said to be like that of 'dragons and the daughters of the owl' in a representative sense; also 'his going stripped and naked,' 'stripped' signifying, the like as the dragon, to be destitute of goods, and 'naked,' the like as the daughters of the owl, to be destitute of truths."

AE 1129 [2]

- "In Micah...1:8...'wailing' has reference to good, and in the contrary sense to evil, it is said, 'I will make a wailing like dragons,' 'dragons' being those who are in the lusts of evil; and because 'mourning' has reference to falsity it is said, 'I will make a mourning like the daughters of the owl,' 'daughters of the owl' being those who are in falsities and their pleasantness, 'owls' signify falsities, because they see in darkness and not in light."

AC 2851 [15]

- "...the gates to the New Jerusalem and the gates to the new temple are much treated of...by which nothing else is meant than the entrances to heaven...Hence Jerusalem is called the 'gate of the people' (Micah 1:9)..."

AC 2327

- "...roll yourself in the dust..." "...that, in former times, especially in the representative churches, they bowed themselves so low that they let down the face to the earth, was because the face signified man's interiors...and the reason they let it down to the earth was that the dust of the earth signified what is profane and condemned...For the same reason they prostrated themselves, pressing the face to the earth, and even rolling themselves in dust and ashes, and sprinkling dust and ashes upon their head (as may be seen from...Micah 1:10...)."

AC 7418 [3]

- "...in these passages...Micah 1:10...and also in the historical parts of the Word...by dust upon the heads, and also by the casting down of the body and of the head to the earth, and there rolling in the dust, was represented humiliation, which when genuine is such that the person acknowledges and perceives himself to be damned, but to be received from damnation by the Lord..."

AE 1175 [2]

- "Mourning on account of condemnation of evil is signified by 'dust upon the head,' and 'rending the mantle' signifies mourning on account of condemnation of falsity. The same is signified by...'Rolling themselves in the dust' (Micah 1:10)..."

Derived Doctrine

"Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked..."

- "**...I will wail and howl...**" signifies a sense of grief or sadness over the state of the church. It reflects a sense of grief over the absence of goods and truths in the worship services of the church. See AR 1 and 27. The same is expressed in AC 4060, AE 695, AE 406, and *Doctrine of Faith* 53.
- The meaning of "**stripped and naked**" was covered in AE 714 [20].

"Tell it not in Gath, weep not all..."

- **Gath** was a city of the Philistines. As a Philistine city, it represented the false doctrines of faith separated from charity. Therefore, the Lord directed the inhabitants to cease speaking of such doctrines and to not weep over their end. Listen again to the directions of the Lord: "**Tell it not...weep not all.**"

"...in Beth Aphrah roll yourself in the dust..."

- The name "**Beth Aphrah**" means "**house of dust.**" The location of Beth Aphrah is unknown, so we need to turn to the signification of "house of dust." The Lord was calling for a true sense of humiliation and repentance. He wanted them to lament over the lack of good and truth in the church and worship services. He wanted the interiors of their hearts and minds to be filled with the cleanliness of humility.

"...pass by in naked shame, you inhabitant of Shaphir..."

- The name "**Shaphir**" means "**beautiful**." The location of Shaphir is not known, so once again, we need to consider why the Word uses this place of inhabitants and calls them to be embarrassed for their "**naked shame**." Could it represent their turning what was beautiful, good and truth, into something that was empty and embarrassing? *AE 240* explains "**naked**" as signifying those who are without the understanding because they are without the will of good. *AC 9141* teaches that "**inhabitant**" denotes goods.

"...the inhabitant of Zaanan does not go out..."

- The name "**Zaanan**" means "**going out**." We do not know the location of this place. *AE 445* explains that "**going out**" signifies having a delight in all genuine truths and goods. *AC 3690* tells us that "**going out**" signifies living more remotely from doctrine. *AC 4638* teaches that "**going out**" signifies desiring good to be communicated by others so that one's own empty truths (hollow faith) might be strengthened. From these teachings, it seems the "**inhabitant of Zaanan**" represents those who have no interest in going out and finding what is from the Lord, no interest in filling their hollow faith with Divine substance.

"...Beth Ezel mourns; its place to stand is taken away from you."

- The name "**Beth Ezel**" means "**house of nearness**." The location of Beth Ezel is unknown. Turning to doctrine, we find the meaning for "**nearness**." *AC 9378* teaches that "**nearness**" means togetherness and presence, a place where there are similarities. *AC 8159* explains that to be "**near**" means to receive influx. *AC 5884* describes "**near**" as meaning interior communication. *AC 9375* teaches that "**near**" means to be joined to the Lord through the good of love and the truth of faith. The "**house of nearness**" in this verse is said to mourn. Its "place to stand" is taken away. Why? When any part of the body is not used, there is a risk of atrophy. Is this what is being communicated about the church? Because they did not strive to be near to the Lord, they were in a state of spiritual atrophy.

"...the inhabitant of Maroth pined for good, but disaster came down from the Lord to the gate of Jerusalem."

- The name "**Maroth**" means "**bitterness**." The Word teaches us that they pined for good. Is this a positive statement about them? If we look up the word "**pine**" in Webster's Dictionary, we read that "**pine**" means to "languish, to lose vigor, to have grief and anxiety...hence to wear away." *AE 633 /3* teaches that to "**pine away**" means to die out. *AC 10037* explains

that “pine away” means to be consumed with iniquity. *AR 463* identifies “pine away” with the ceasing (shutting down or disconnection) of the will and understanding. Although these passages do not use the word “atrophy,” it is certainly included in the meaning of pining. So we gain an insight into why disaster comes down and the gate of Jerusalem is mentioned. To “pine away in bitterness” is to lose the ability to enter through the gate of Jerusalem. The way, the gate, to heaven is lost when the will and understanding are disconnected and not functioning.

Putting It All Together

P&P explains the meaning of these verses with this teaching: “Consequent mourning and that it will extend even to those who were in celestial good.”

When a church diminishes and gives up on its covenant with the Lord, there is a sense of sadness that reaches far and wide. One of the direct teachings, *AE 695 [24]*, tell us that there was grief in the heavens among the angels over the sad spiritual state of the church. The church was despoiling things. The dragons and owls mentioned in the text represented the harm that faith-alone beliefs brought to the church. There was a heart-felt lamentation throughout the heavens over the disregard of good and truth. Angels were worried. They wondered how the damage would be repaired and by whom.

The Lord alone can save the church. Will His call for a state of genuine humiliation brought by rolling in the dust and bowing humbly before Him restore life to the church? Shouldn’t there be some more noble or dignified act of contrition? Dust and ashes are representative of the uselessness of the sensual person. Dust is worthless and therefore to be overcome and dealt with in a sincere act of remorse and contrition. This is a worthy task—especially when the Lord directs us to deal with the dust of the sensual person.

The Word illustrates what opportunities were being lost by the church, using the examples of various inhabitants:

- “Tell it not in Gath, weep not at all.” Gath was one of the five principal cities of the Philistines. As a city, it changed hands often. As a city, it was near Judah. When the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant, they sought to carry it to Gath. What is this prophecy about? *AE 652 [29-30]* gives us a clue. The streets of Gath represent doctrines in which falsities from evil reign. *II Samuel 1:20* mentions Gath. “Tell it not in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice.” In other words, the Lord is directing the people to cease from publishing the doctrines of falsity that were akin to the Philistines’ faith separated from charity. The Lord will not allow this message to be pronounced on the streets. “Tell it not.”

- Beth Aphrah (house of dust) highlights that the church wasn't willing to humble itself. Instead of bending before the Lord, they were stiff-backed and far too proud to fall on their faces in the dust.
- Shaphir (beautiful) lost its spiritual beauty and was empty, naked, and full of shame. Its people were naked because they were without understanding and without the will of good.
- Zaanan (going out) lost its delight in communicating and sharing genuine truths and goods. It was a hollow faith, void of the substance of the Lord.
- Beth Ezel (house of nearness) didn't desire to be near to or receive influx from the Lord. They didn't want the good of love and the truth of faith. Their place to stand was taken away from them. Where there is no substance, there is no form.
- Maroth (bitterness) pined for good. Because of the lack of sincerity, the church pined, languished, lost vigor, and wore away. Disaster came upon them. In their minds, it was the Lord's fault, so the text reflects their belief that the Lord did this to them. They lost sight of the gateway to Jerusalem. Spiritual apathy eroded their spiritual potential, and they lost their vision of what was to be.

The Lord and the angels of heaven lamented, wailed, and howled over the spiritual demise of the church. But that is not where the message ends. The Lord came down from His temple to restore, to open the way for Divine light to shine brightly in places where darkness hosted owls and where dragons snarled and brought fear into the hearts and minds of the church. The Lord's way and His church will win. His way is restorative and not destructive. The New Church will be the crown of all churches; its reign will be forever and forever. Amen.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 1:8-12.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Can you picture the Lord and the angels wailing and howling over serious mistakes we make? I can picture angels grieving better than I can picture the Lord grieving. I wonder why seeing the Lord doing these things is hard to picture. Is it because I want the Lord to be totally in charge and offering me a "controlled" message of hope and rescue? Or is my difficulty due to the fact that the Lord's grieving involves Infinite grief and that, for me, is a hard picture to comprehend? What is your thought on this point?
- Did the six "inhabitants" help you understand the issues that brought about the demise of the church? I found them enlightening. Taking a separate piece of paper to write out the message was significantly useful. Try it yourself. It helped me see and understand why they needed to roll on the ground and

- find their humility again. The beginning city of inhabitants, Gath, was told to do what? Stop talking false doctrine of faith separated from charity. Don't weep over this loss. It is the very thing that is killing your faith.
- For us: in what ways do we roll in the dust? How can we bow low enough before the Lord? This is not just a physical act. We are called to do it spiritually. How do we fulfill this spiritual act?
 - Do you sense the depth of all six messages? Can we "update" them to match issues in our time? What can we do so that we don't skip over such messages in favor of "fluff" and "feel-good" topics? This prophecy calls for alertness, dedication, and hard work. By joining together in this project of Word study, maybe we can inspire each other to obey the command to Zaanan: "Go out" and communicate with others. We need to share our faith so that it will become stronger.
 - Let's close by highlighting three of the six "inhabitants." Please do the same for the others so that we see present-day application.
 - Maroth, bitterness, pined for good. Their bitterness caused them to languish and be consumed. They lost sight of the gate of Jerusalem. Do you have a sense of how necessary it is to pray that bitterness will not be your pathway?
 - Shaphir, the beautiful, needed to be protected and honored correctly. Following the conjugal principal is the way to restore beauty. Hell tries every trick in its arsenal to make our finest ugly and tarnished. What, for you, keeps you focused on the "beautiful" aspects of life?
 - Beth Ezel, the house of nearness, is a worthy goal. We can find the way to be near the Lord. His Word stands ready to draw us to Him. What personal habits or devotional routines help you with your "nearness" to the Lord?

MICAH 1:13-15

"O inhabitant of Lachish, harness the chariot to the swift steeds (she was the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion), for the transgressions of Israel were found in you. Therefore you shall give presents to Moresheth Gath; the houses of Achzib shall be a lie to the kings of Israel, I will yet bring an heir to you, O inhabitant of Mareshah; the glory of Israel shall come to Adullam."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "Hence even these [those in celestial good] will begin to be perverted."

AR 612

- “In many places it is said ‘the virgin and daughter of Zion;’ by whom is not meant any virgin or daughter there, but the church as to the affection of good and truth...” *Micah 1:13* is cited among many other passages.

AE 850 [18]

- “‘The virgin’ and ‘the daughter of Zion’ are mentioned in many places, as in the following...*Micah 1:13*...and elsewhere. ‘The daughter of Zion’ signifies the spiritual affection for the Divine truth, which is the love of truth for the sake of truth, and the desire for it for the sake of the uses of eternal life.”

AC 4816

- “...genuine intellectual is from truths...but in the opposite sense it is one who is not intelligent, and consequently falsity. This falsity is represented by an Adullamite, for Adullam was on the boundary of the inheritance of Judah (*Joshua 15:35*), and hence signified the truth which is from good; as also in *Micah...1:15*...but as most things in the Word have also an opposite sense, so too has Adullam, and it then signifies the falsity which is from evil. That most things have also an opposite sense is because before the land of Canaan was made an inheritance for the sons of Jacob, it was possessed by nations by whom were signified falsities and evils; and also afterwards when the sons of Jacob went into what is contrary; for lands take on the representation of the nations and peoples who inhabit them, according to their quality.”

Derived Doctrine

“O inhabitants of Lachish, harness the chariots to the swift steeds (she was the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion) for the transgressions of Israel were found in you.”

- *AC 9141* teaches that the word **“inhabitant”** denotes goods—loves. The name **“Lachish”** is believed to mean “a team of horses.”
- *TCR 815* has a thought-provoking explanation of **noble horses with harnesses**. **People who are free** in spiritual matters are likened to eagles. **People not free** are like swans in a river. **People who are free** are like deer in the fields, groves, and forests. **People not free** are like deer kept in a park to please the prince. **People who are free** are like the winged horse of the ancients called Pegasus. **People not free** are like noble horses with beautiful harness accouterments in kings' stables.
- In the book *Intercourse Between Soul and Body*, number 9 notes that those who believe nothing but what their senses prove are like charioteers who “...yoke the horses behind the chariot and not before it. **It is otherwise** with

- those who distinguish between spiritual things and natural things, and deduce the latter from the former..." (Emphasis added.)
- So we must do some reflecting here to find an answer. Is a "steed" representative of people who are free or not free? Will the harnessing of the noble horses be done correctly or incorrectly? When a horse is harnessed, it is governed by the directions given by the rider. Does a harnessed "steed" represent that which is not free?
 - "Horses" signify the love of learning from the Word. *AC 2760* and *AR 437* teach that a "horse" signifies an understanding of the Word as to its interiors. In the contrary sense, "horses" signify the understanding as directed by false scientifcs. (*AE 654 [47]*) Which is it going to be? The understanding directed by the interiors of the Word or the understanding directed by scientifcs?
 - We have **four leads** to follow as we search for an answer. First, *P&P* summarizes this section by giving a cautionary message: even the celestial will begin to be threatened by the dying church. Second, the noble, swift horses are being harnessed to the chariot and will be under the control of the rider. That sounds like the inhabitants (goods) are not free. It also sounds as though the horses will be hitched backwards to the chariot. Thirdly, there is a charge that she (Lachish) was the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion. Fourthly, Lachish is admonished and held accountable, "for the transgressions of Israel were found in you."

"Therefore you shall give presents to Moresheth Gath..."

- In *Everyman's Bible Commentary: Joel, Obadiah and Micah* by Thomas J. Finley, we read, "The root of 'Moresheth' means 'become engaged,' and the term for 'parting gifts' can also mean a 'dowry.'" (*Page 127*) Finley also offers another translation, "You will give a dowry for the Fiancée of Gath." (*Ibid*)
- We need to consider the words "**virgin**" (**bride and fiancée**) and "**gifts**"(**dowry**) in order to discern the spiritual issues behind these words. Let's begin with the signification of the word "**virgin**" (**fiancée**). In *AC 6742*, we read that "a virgin signifies the good of the celestial church..." (Emphasis added.) *AR 620* instructs us that a "virgin signifies the church as a bride, who desires to be conjoined with the Lord, and to become a wife; and the church which desires to be conjoined with the Lord, loves truths because they are truths..." *AE 863*explains that a "virgin signifies the affection of genuine truth, and her defilement signifies falsification of Divine truth..." (Emphasis added.)
- Doesn't this last quote tie in with *P&P*'s summary of Chapter One of *Micah*? The church in respect to the doctrine of good and truth was being totally falsified, and that falsification extended even to those who were in the celestial good. The virgin, the bride, the fiancée, the church wasn't being protected and kept chaste.

- As a church (a bride), she did not desire to be conjoined with the Lord. The decline of the church and its unworthy worship took away the elements of anticipation and readiness to be a dignified, chaste bride for the Lord.
- A “gift,” a “present,” or a “dowry” signifies “an instillation.” (*AC 5671*) In *AE 1171*, we read “...anyone may see that...by ‘gifts’ and a ‘present’ are signified worships; but what these worships were, and of what quality, cannot be known unless it is understood what is meant...” *AC 4456* tells us that a dowry signifies a token of consent. “The dowry” given to the virgin represents “a token of mutual consent” as a “confirmation of initiation.” To accept the dowry was a sign of “reciprocity.” *AC 3960 [4]* explains the meaning of dowry as “...the truth of good and the good of truth” working together to make a heavenly marriage.
- *Exodus 22:16* offers this interesting teaching: “If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and he lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride-price for her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the bride-price of virgins.” (Emphasis added.)
- AC 9186 defines a “dowry” as “fifty pieces of silver given to the father of the girl.” “Fifty” signifies what is full and in agreement with good. See *AC 9186*. “Silver” signifies redemption by means of truth. See *AC 2934*. Thus, if the virgin, or church, was “enticed” and defiled, the offender was expected to make full restitution (redemption) for the offense. Is this what the Lord was teaching through His servant Micah? As the Father, is He telling those who defiled the church that they have violated the holy things of the church (bride) and must make full restitution for such an offense? Is this prophecy issuing a call for humility because they had desecrated the holy things of worship? Or is this prophecy telling them that He, as the Father, would not accept their unworthy “dowry” for the enticement and defilement of the holy things of the church?
- Are you somewhat awed at the depth and degree of meaning we have been able to extract from this passage? Is it any wonder that we are taught that the Word will be studied to eternity and its inner truths will never be exhausted?

“The houses of Achzib shall be a lie to the kings of Israel.”

- Let’s turn to three commentaries to get some help with the name “Achzib.” Charles L. Feinberg, in *The Minor Prophets*, page 156, calls attention to the belief that the name “Achzib” means “lie.” He bases that meaning on a passage from *Jeremiah 15:18* in which what came to be called “achzabim” are described as brooks that are dry in the summer, “thus deceiving the thirsty traveler.”
- Elizabeth Achtemeier, in *New International Biblical Commentary: Minor Prophets*, states that “Achzib” sounds like “akzab,” which means “deceitful” or “disappointing.” (Page 305)
- Thomas J. Finley, in *Everyman’s Bible Commentary: Joel, Obadiah and Micah*, says that “the name sounds similar to the Hebrew term for ‘deceptive’

(akzab)...” He therefore loosely translates this verse as “The town of Deceit will prove deceptive.” (Page 127)

- **“Houses”** signify the affection for good and the understanding of truth. (AE 675) **“Houses”** signify the things of the human mind, here the things of the natural mind separate from the spiritual mind. See AE 1146 [3]. **“Houses”** signify goods. See AC 2463.
- **“Kings”** signify truths that are from good, and many kings signify various truths that are from good. See AE 625. “Kings signify the truths of the Word and thus the truths of the church.” (AE 1063)
- “...the kings of Israel and of Judah, even the worst, represented the royalty of the Lord...” (AC 665)
- To draw near the spiritual meaning of this portion of the prophecy, we must start with the meaning of **“Akzib.”** The house of deceptive lies was pouring forth its deadly and voluminous deceit with the intent of destroying the “royalty of the Lord.” And what does **“royalty”** signify? “Royalty signifies the holy which is true.” (AC 1728) “Royalty signifies truth from good.” (Heaven and Hell (HH) 226)

“I will yet bring an heir to you, O inhabitant of Mareshah.”

- “I” is the Lord. He promises to bring an heir to Mareshah. Why?
- **“Heir,”** in the negative representation, signifies the unclean truths and falsities that belong to the natural mind. See AC 3301. **“Heir,”** in the positive sense, represents the good (the love) of truth. See AE 435 [7].
- Is it safe, then, to see this as a reminder from the Lord to the faithful remnant in the church that His Advent was nearing fruition? Minds and hearts being held in captivity were being cheered with a sense of good news. A Divine Conqueror, a Liberator, was coming who would restore spiritual freedom to those in natural and spiritual bondage.
- “Mareshah” is “partly similar to the Hebrew term for ‘conqueror’ (yoresh).” (Thomas J. Finley, page 127)

Putting It All Together

P&P explains to what spiritual conditions the prophecy of Micah called the church’s attention. The lies, deceit, and falsity of Israel’s leaders (Lachish) were fast blocking out the light of heaven. The connection between heaven and earth was impaired. When the Word of the Lord is held in low esteem, spiritual indifference blocks out the Lord’s influx into the hearts and minds of His people. AC 886 [2] gives a terrific example to consider. The celestial church is the love and charity of the spiritual church. It is “celestial things from which spiritual things radiate like rays of light...from a flame.” Using this image of the light and flame, we can say that the light of spiritual freedom was, at best, flickering and in danger of going out. Good and truth (love and wisdom) were being harnessed and directed by those who only believed in what could be proved by the natural senses. Scientifcics were leading

people, the bride, the virgin, and the spiritual church. The church was being forced and violated by an arrogant self-intelligence.

The Lord was calling for a spiritual restitution. He wanted spiritual dowries, gifts, and fifty pieces of silver to come out of the hearts and minds of the people. The dowry represented an initiation, a new covenant to be entered into with Him. Why?

The Lord, as promised, was coming. He was going to rescue the hearts and minds of those who turned to Him in humility and sincerity. The Lord was going to be the Conqueror—the Liberator—the Light Giver. He would reestablish the communicational flow of spiritual charity and wisdom between Heaven and earth. The light will shine for all to see, and its flame will not flicker.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 1:13-15.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- It has been said that repetition is an important part of the process of education. Is the oft-given prophecy about the coming of the Lord's New Church needed so that we will never forget it while fighting against evils and falsities? Or is it given often because our actions and choices indicate that our hearts worry about whether, or when, it will happen?
- When studying the rise and fall of Israel, have you noticed that the Israelites often were victims of the very things that the Lord helped them defeat earlier? Why did they succumb to idols and false gods? Why did they forget so quickly the spiritual benefactions of the Lord? Are we any different or just like them?
- Our study used many forms of imagery: a bride who was violated; a house that poured out lies; the need to offer a dowry to make restitution; a renewal through a new covenant; and a strong Conqueror to bring a steady light to overcome the darkness of falsity. In what ways can we use these examples to renew our spiritual being? Are we reading and studying the Word to get the facts straight? We must go to the Lord's Word often so that we don't let others think for us. The Lord warned His people not to make His Word of no effect with man-made rules. Do we have a way of nipping such tendencies in the bud?
- The prophecy of *Micah* warns us that the celestial is under attack. What is our celestial? *AC 4750* gives us some points to ponder. The celestial is where the Lord resides in us. The celestial is where good, love, innocence, and remains inspire us to live the higher life. The celestial embodies our love to the Lord and its derivative love to the neighbor. Is our celestial still under attack?

- When we sit back and reflect on each lesson, there has to be something positive involved in what we are doing because the Lord is directing our thinking. Hell wants us to desist from such a study. To this end, hellish spirits will try to overload us with negative applications. Did you sense their efforts while reading all of the verses? If so, please go back and pick up the thread of hope, victory, and success that the spiritual sense offers.

MICAH 1:16

"Make yourself bald and cut off your hair, because of your precious children; enlarge your baldness like an eagle, for they shall go from you into captivity."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "Consequently they also will suffer deprivation of all truth."

AC 3901 [6-7]

- "Almost all the books of...[the Ancient Church]...were written by means of significatives; but in process of time the significatives have become so completely forgotten that it is not even known that 'birds' in general denote thoughts, although they are so frequently mentioned in the Word...That in the opposite sense an 'eagle' signifies rational things that are not true, and thus false, is evident from the following passages. In Micah...1:16..."

AC 9960 [6]

- "As mourning represented spiritual mourning, which is mourning on account of the loss of the truth and good of the church, therefore when mourning they made bald their heads; as we read in the following passages...Micah 1:16...‘sons of delights’ denote Divine truths; their ‘going away’ denotes the loss of these (that ‘sons’ denote truths, see AC 9807)."

AR 47

- "...in Micah 1:16...the sons of delights are the genuine truths of the church from the Word."

AE 724 [12]

- "In Micah...1:16...Mourning because the truths of the church are destroyed is described by 'making bald,' 'enlarging baldness,' and 'polling themselves,' for

the 'hair' signifies truths in ultimates, and those who are without truths in ultimates are also without internal truths; for this reason those in the spiritual world who have no truths from good appear bald. That truths are destroyed is signified by 'the sons of thy delights have departed from thee;' they are called 'sons of delight' from love of the truths and the consequent delights."

De Verbo 10

- "...men who have loved the Word even in its ultimates, after death when they become spirits appear with becoming hair and angels likewise...But on the other hand all they who have despised the sense of the letter of the Word, after death when they become spirits appear bald. This is a sign also that they are without truths...Since baldness signifies truth...they of the Jewish church, when they left Jehovah and rejected the Word, are called bald..." *Micah 1:16* is one of the passages cited to illustrate this teaching.

Derived Doctrine

As we prepare to examine the spiritual sense in *Micah 1:16*, please note the following point: the New King James Version uses the words "**because of your precious children...**" The Writings use the words "**...sons of delights...**" Will our choice of translation be crucial in our pursuit of the spiritual sense? To prayerfully answer that question, let's pause for a moment to consider the similarities or differences between the words "children" and "sons."

- *HH 281*: "Children mean those who are innocent."
- *AE 430*: "Children signify all who are of the church that are in truths from good."
- *AC 489*: "Children signify the regenerate who have the understanding of good and truth."
- *AC 9960 [6]*: "...'sons of delights' denote Divine truths..."
- *AR 47*: "...the sons of delights are the genuine truths of the church from the Word."
- *AE 724 [12]*: "...they are called 'sons of delights' from love of the truths and the consequent delights."

"Make yourself bald and cut off your hair..."

- *AR 47*: "By the head of man is signified the all of his life; and the all of man's life has relation to love and wisdom..."
- *AR 47*: "...by 'hair' is meant love and wisdom in their ultimates...in the ultimates of the Word...in the sense of its letter."
- *AR 47*: "...'bald' signifies the Word without its ultimate...Therefore...to induce baldness was the greatest disgrace, and a mark of extreme mourning...For

- which reason, when the Israelitish nation...perverted all the sense of the letter of the Word, this lamentation was made over them..."
- To "**cut off your hair**" would seem to signify the act of purposefully ignoring or rejecting the Lord and His Word. It seems to imply choosing evil and falsity over good and truth.

"...enlarging your baldness like an eagle..."

- *AE 759* teaches that, in the **positive sense**, an "**eagle**" "signifies spiritual intelligence and circumspection which the Lord gives to those who are of [the] church..."
- *AC 3901 [7]* teaches us that an "**eagle**" in the **opposite sense** signifies "rational things that are not true, and thus false..." (Emphasis added.)

"...they shall go from you into captivity."

- *AR 567* teaches that to go "into captivity signifies that he who by means of...heretical doctrine misleads others from believing well and living well, will himself be drawn into hell by his own evils and falsities."

Putting It All Together

When we consider what was mentioned in *Micah 1:13-15*, that the bride or virgin (church) was not being protected, that the church was being lied to and defiled, and its teachings falsified, is it a surprise that we are told in verse 16 that the church was going bald? The literal sense of the Word was minimized, and the significance of its inner meaning was, in time, being forgotten. The hair, the literal sense, was *purposely being cut off*. Little by little, their baldness was enlarged. As spiritual ignorance grew, the "sons of delight," the "precious children" of Israel, were led into spiritual captivity. The eagle, the positive gift of spiritual intelligence and circumspection, was turned into its negative meaning of rational things that were not true. Thus, the people were being misguided by the priests of false intelligence and false circumspection. *P&P* summarizes the end of a defiled, bald church with these words: "Consequently they...will suffer deprivation of all truth."

The word "mourning" cannot be left unmentioned in our summary. *AE 1164* teaches that genuine "weeping and mourning" signify the grief of soul and heart. *AE 863* indicates that mourning needs to be present when Divine truths are no longer sought. As readers of this prophecy, wouldn't we do well to feel some of the grief of this story? Wouldn't it do the organized New Church some good to mourn over the possibility that we too could follow in their footsteps if we don't protect the virgin and bride of the Lord's church? Our course is to not defile, deceive, or mislead. In our worship, we need to call for the eagle of spiritual intelligence and circumspection. By studying the literal sense of the Word and following the correspondential meaning inward, we will avoid "cutting off" the "hair" of the Word.

De Verbo 10 inspires us to love the Word. Those who do so appear after death “with becoming (beautiful) hair.” The flowing, becoming hair is a spiritual sign that means, “Here is an angel who has a reverence and love for the Lord and His Word.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 1:16.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- • What kind of spiritual conditions or “trimmings” lead a church to become bald? What hairs did they begin cutting off first? I’m wondering, what doctrines were seen as needing cutting? Is any dangerous trimming happening today? How bald are things in religion world-wide?
- Obviously, they didn’t see themselves as the Lord saw them because they just kept cutting and cutting. Reflection, having a good eagle, and circumspection are essential for spiritual growth. If I read this verse correctly, the major priority for the church should be close adherence to reading the Word, a love for the literal sense, and alertness to the meaning of the spiritual correspondences. What do you get from this verse? Which do you get the most from—home study or doctrinal classes? I find I like both, but if pushed, I must admit a preference for studying on my own with study guides such as the one before you and working with the many resource tools we have.
- On the quote from *De Verbo* about “becoming hair”: Do angels have any feelings of personal merit in the amount of hair they have?
- Mourning is called for in our lesson. Can you relate to positive mourning? Feeling sorry for a loss of a truth, feeling sad over a mistake of selfishness, feeling mournful that we have been negligent regarding the study of and reflection on the Word all seem to be healthy forms of mourning and not morbid states. Mourning does sound like a useful experience to keep the soul and heart protected from spiritual baldness. What ideas can you add to this call for mourning?
- Enlarging baldness like “an eagle” represents enlarging rational things that are not true. Do we need to work on examples to make this correspondence come alive? Such an eagle, if not checked, will lead the church into captivity.

Chapter Two

MICAH 2:1-2

"Woe to those who devise iniquity, and work out evil on their beds! At morning light they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand. They covet fields and take them by violence, also houses, and seize them. So they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "Concerning thought with the intention of doing evil, that they also do it from the will."

AC 878

- "That by 'hand' is signified power, also authority (potestas), and the derivative self-confidence, is evident from many passages in the Word, as in...Micah 2:1..."

AC 4402 [9]

- "...in Micah 2:1...'A hand for God' denotes that there may be power."

AR 137

- "That 'a bed' signifies doctrine is from correspondence, for as the body rests in its bed, so does the mind rest in its doctrine. But by 'bed' is signified the doctrine which every one acquires to himself either from the Word, or from his own intelligence, for therein the mind rests and, as it were, sleeps. The beds, in which they lie in the spiritual world, are from no other origin; for every one's bed is according to the quality of his science and intelligence, magnificent for the wise, mean for the unwise and filthy for falsifiers..." *Micah 2:1* is cited as an example.

Derived Doctrine

"Woe to those who devise iniquity..."

- The word "**woe**" signifies grievous lamentations over calamity, danger, hardship, unhappiness, and destruction, either that such is present with the

church or as a warning of what will occur. See *AR* 769, 416, 441 and *AE* 531 [2].

- *AE* 844 describes the state of mind of those who “**devise.**” According to this number, devising means “doing evil to the good.” Devisors believe themselves to “be wiser than all others.” To themselves, they feel brilliantly ingenious, but to the angels, they are mad.
- To “**devise iniquity**” represents planning and scheming about ways to bring falsities and evils into the church. It means to plan to confuse people and lead them into living wickedly. See *AE* 684 [35] and *AE* 911 [6].

“...work out evil on their beds!”

- *AR* 137 indicated that a “**bed**” is either a place where the mind rests in the doctrine of the Lord or it is a form of self-intelligence drawn from the world. In this passage, we don’t have to wonder. We are told it is a “**bed**” of evil being supported by their self-intelligence.

“At morning light they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand.”

- “**Morning,**” in the positive sense, means a state of enlightenment. (*AC* 5221)
- “**Morning,**” in the positive sense, means, if the Lord is present, deliverance. (*AC* 6442)
- “**Morning,**” in the positive sense, means being raised to stronger proofs. (*AC* 703)
- It would appear that for the evil, “**morning**” represents just the opposite of the above. It would represent beds of ignorance, bondage, and weak proofs.
- So the evil, believing in the light of science and self, imagine they have a new state of light and that is what they practice **because** it is in the power of **their** hand. We have a clear distinction of powers. It is not the hand of the Lord at work. It is the work of evil’s hands to do that which appears powerful and right but which, in the presence of the Lord, is madness and wickedness.

“...they covet fields and take them by violence...”

- To “**covet**” means the presence of evil in the will and evil going out of the will. See *AC* 8910 [3].
- “**Fields**” mean the affections of the natural man. See *AE* 650 [6].
- “**Fields**” signify the church as to the implantation of the truth of doctrine. See *AE* 650 [49].
- “**Fields**” signify the affections for good in the natural man. See *AE* 1100 [4].
- “**Fields**” signify things voluntary which belong to the affections. See *AE* 513 [9].
- A “**field**” means the good of life that has its origin in matters of doctrine. See *AC* 3310.

- Pulling these teachings together, we get a picture of evil in the will going forth to possess and plunder the “**field**” of doctrinal implantation, the natural good, the voluntary, and the inclination to do good and to follow the Lord. The covetousness of evil urges them all to violence.

“...also houses, and seize them. So they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance.”

- “**Houses**” mean man’s interiors, thus the things that are of his loves. Evil wants to destroy these things. See *AE 315 [8]*.
- “...houses, signify the affection for good and the understanding of truth...” (*AE 675*)
- To “**seize**” has an interesting meaning. *TCR 380* says, “It is an astonishing fact that the more anyone believes himself to excel others in learning and judgment, **the more prone he is to seize on** and **make his own ideas about the Lord** being a human being and not God, arguing that because He is a human being He cannot be God.” (Emphasis added.)
- Evil wants to rob all people of their spiritual inheritance. “...inheritance’ signifies heaven where is the good of charity.” (*AC 8324*)
- Evil wants to take from us our inheritance, which signifies the church wherein the Lord is the all of good (love) and the all of truth (wisdom). See *AE 388 [15]*. In other words, evil wants to remove from us the marriage of love and wisdom; hence, it is willing the destruction of the conjugal principle.

Putting It All Together

Woe to those who devise, practice, and skillfully disguise their intention of doing evil to others. Why? *P&P* teaches that such intentions of doing evil destroy the understanding and will of the schemer. Hellish spirits want to destroy the neighbor. And who is the highest neighbor they plot against? They have a fiery passion to destroy the Lord and His church. In modern spatial terms, their plotting goes on 24/7. It is a morning, noon, and evening fixation. Their maniacal dream is to totally subjugate the Lord to their rule.

It is sad to think about anyone wanting to destroy the Lord. What kind of a heart would entertain such an idea? Where is this idea hatched? It is hatched in a bed of self-intelligence that holds fast to doctrines the Lord calls “unwise and filthy.” It is a bed created by self-intelligence that believes it is “wiser than all others.” Sadly, those who do this hatching feel brilliantly ingenious, but in the eyes of the Lord and angels, they are mad. Read again the quote from *AE 844* where all of this is revealed.

The pitiful end of the hellish schemers is self-destruction. They lose the ability to grow and become wise in and from the Lord. The light and warmth of the conjugal principle flickers and goes out. They huddle in a dank spiritual coldness. They have

their beds but no blankets. They have a night that is void of stars and moon. Can anything sooth the bleak existence of these hellish plotters? They only have fantasy and madness to give them comfort. The Lord speaks this one sobering word to all who intend to follow such a maniacal life—“WOE.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 2:1-2.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Did you find yourself taken with this section? Hearing about the plight of those who want to plunder, rob, and take away one’s inheritance is sad. The Lord calls out a warning. For those who join in with the plotters, schemers, and brilliantly ingenious, the end is not pretty. Did you feel the need to diligently amend the goals of each day?
- What kind of a mind loves to be in its “bed” plotting the demise of the Lord and His church? These plotters want the field and the houses. What does this represent?

MICAH 2:3-5

“Therefore thus says the Lord: ‘Behold against this family I am devising disaster, from which you cannot remove your necks; nor shall you walk haughtily, for this is an evil time. In that day one shall take up a proverb against you, and lament with a bitter lamentation, saying: we are utterly destroyed! He has changed the heritage of my people; how He has removed it from me! To a turncoat He has divided our fields.’ Therefore you will have no one to determine boundaries by lot in the assembly of the Lord.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Hence the church has become perverted.”

Doctrine of the Lord 4

- “...I shall in this first chapter merely adduce passages from the Word which contain the expressions ‘that day,’ ‘in that day,’ and ‘in that time;’ in which, by ‘day,’ and ‘time,’ is meant the Lord’s advent.” *Micah 2:4* is cited among many other passages.

Coronis 58 [3]

- “In like manner as the Lord foretold concerning the consummation of the present Christian Church...” *Micah 2:4* is cited.

AC 9854

- “...in the Word ‘cords’...signify portions of inheritance and of land, for the reason that measurements were made with cords...” *Micah 2:4-5* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

“Therefore thus says the Lord...”

- How many times have we read a statement like this in the Word? Familiarity with certain repetitive phrases has the potential to deaden our appreciation of what is really being said. **“Thus says the Lord”** needs to capture our thoughts so we remind ourselves that what is about to be revealed “is coming from the Infinite and Eternal.” The directive from the Lord is intended to carry us into the stream of Providence so that we might not be distracted by that which is finite and temporal. Eternal ends will be more satisfying than time/space ends. So, let’s concentrate now, with the intent that we will listen, hear, and obey what the Lord is about to say. *Matthew 13:15* reminds us of what happens to people who harden their hearts against what the Lord says: “...the hearts of this people have grown dull, their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.”

“Behold against this family I am devising disaster, from which you cannot remove your necks; nor shall you walk haughtily, for this is an evil time.”

- **“Behold”** calls us to enter into a state of “interior confession,” “humiliation,” and the “affection of good.” *AC 2329* explains the need of these things in connection with Lot entertaining three visiting angels sent to him by the Lord. Lot greeted them with the word **“Behold.”** This passage in the *Arcana* elaborates the positive sense of **“behold,”** that we cannot feign humiliation, we cannot feign affection of good. When insincerity says **“behold,”** it represents a confession being made with the lips when there is a “denial in the heart.”
- *AC 3154 [3]* explains what a **“family”** represents in the positive sense. A **“family”** “signifies truth which is from the Divine.” In the negative sense, a **“family”** would appear to be a discordant mixture of human affections that are not in agreement with the truths of the Lord.

- The Lord in His Advent will come to visit the “**family**” wherein profanation reigns. He does so with love and mercy. To those who are living in a spiritually evil “**family**,” His presence is unwanted, and it appears to them that He is devising a plan of disaster. This passage is written in the appearance of what the disorderly perceive. In reality, the Lord has no need to plot, devise, and plan revenge. These qualities are not in the Divine. Instead, the evil “**family**,” in the presence of the Lord, collapses and falls apart, all while trying to make it look like the Lord is out of control with rage and vengeance. In effect, even in their last moments of falling apart, the hells defiantly try to win converts to their cause by passing all blame on to the Lord.
- **“...from which you cannot remove your necks...”** *AC 6033* explains the spiritual meaning of “**neck**.” “...the ‘neck’ joins together the head and the body...the ‘neck’ denotes the conjunction of the interiors with the exteriors...and thus the communication of the interiors with the exteriors, and also of celestial things with spiritual...” What does this mean? The Lord’s visitation of the corrupted “family” will be such that the shame of their external glossy veneer will be exposed, and it will be made clear that their external sensual “proofs” have no basis or connection with interior spiritual concepts. Evil’s head and body will not have a living connection. The miscommunication of “facts” will be around the “**neck**” of the evil, and it is not the Lord’s fault—because in hundreds of millions of ways, He sought to give them new beginnings, but they steadfastly refused His help.
- **“...nor shall you walk haughtily, for this is an evil time.”** *AE 820 [7]* teaches “...‘to walk’ signifies to live according to truths...and walk...signifies to consider freely, and to see truths, and do them...” The haughty, on the other hand, don’t want to walk, or see, the Lord’s truth. “...the Lord flows with power into those who are humble; but not into those who are puffed up, because the former receive influx, but the latter [the haughty] reject it.” (*AC 9039*)

“...*for this is an evil time.*” (*Emphasis added.*)

- There seems to be little need to research the spiritual meaning of this passage. If anyone is haughty in their walk of life, evil times will befall their heart and mind. The Lord wants to call our attention to this fact. He calls out, “Behold.” “Thus says the Lord.” Listen, My family, and have none of this kind of spiritual life.
- Let’s consider the words of *Deuteronomy 30:19*: “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life that both you and your descendants [family] may live...”

"In that day one shall take up a proverb against you..."

- *Habakkuk* 2:6 has a similar prophecy. In *Habakkuk*, the wording is as follows: "...all these take up a proverb against him..." In this passage in *Micah*, "one shall take up a proverb against you..." Who is the one? The Lord is the only One who will judge His church.
- A proverb is a profound maxim. It is truth couched obscurely. But like a medicated time-release capsule, the truths within the epigrammatic saying release their spiritual antidotal remedies to overcome all the diseases of falsity that the proud and the haughty believe to be invincible or incurable. The Lord, as the One, will "take up a proverb against" them to expose their lies. He is announcing that truth will speak against the lies and that spiritual health will be restored to the Lord's New Church. How thorough, or effective, will the Lord's proverb be? Listen to the words of the evil family in this next verse:

They will "...lament with a bitter lamentation, saying: we are utterly destroyed!!"
(Emphasis added.)

- We need a picture to go along with this teaching from the Word. Imagine a person who thinks they are the sum total of their own authority. "This is my life, and I can do with it what I please." From their own "cleverness," this person thinks they can justify anything they want to achieve. But eventually, they will find themselves in the presence of the Lord and His Word. Can you picture the torment and lamentation they will experience? The bitterness they will feel will come from the discovery that the Lord's Word will rule over them to eternity. Like it or not, they will have to be ruled by the Lord's truths. To the evil, this will be a bitter reality to accept. They will howl and lament, crying out, "Oh no! Tell me it is not true. If I have to follow the Lord and His truth, it will utterly destroy me and all of my treasured (false) values." Is this intended to be a scary picture, or is it given so we can see and prepare ourselves for spiritual reality? Check out these numbers to see more on what it means to "lament": AE 435, AE 431, AR 411, AE 618, and AE 622.

"He has changed the heritage of my people; how He has removed it from me!"

- In the positive sense, we are taught, "heritage" signifies following the example of the Lord's life to eternity. (AC 7190) If we follow His example, we will be on a walk of life that will lead us to heaven. The converse of this is to walk the life of falsity as drawn up by the loves of the natural man, which leads to falsity. See AE 730 [21]. AE 650 [53] speaks of "heritage" as signifying the church.
- Can we, with confident conviction, say that the Lord has positively changed our heritage? He took on our human form and totally ordered (subdued) it and defeated the power and falsity of hell. Can we not join in and say the

Lord will remove falsity from us when we do the work of repentance and reformation?

"How He has removed it [my heritage] from me!" (Emphasis added.)

- These are words of amazement, awe, bewilderment, gratitude, and thanksgiving. When we look back to see what Providence has done for our redemption, it is truly wonderful. Those tendencies toward evil and our tendencies toward good are modified and uplifted by Him for our spiritual betterment. How great and wonderful are the ways of the Lord!
- Speaking of a changed heritage being "removed," will this prophecy also help Israel face its errant belief in its "favored nation" status? For years, even to the present day, Israel has staunchly lived with a confidence in their "favored nation" entitlements. Subtly, this belief has dulled their sense of accountability and spiritual reformation. Hidden below the surface of this "doctrine" is the notion that no matter what they have done, God will, in the end, forgive them because they are His favored people.

"To a turncoat He has divided our fields."

- Who are the "**turncoats**"? The traitors? The renegades? The evildoers? In *Micah 2:1-2*, we read about those who devised iniquity, worked out evil in their beds, and, in the morning light, practiced what they had schemed. They coveted fields and took them by force and violence. They did so without concern for a man or his family. Is this kind of person the "**turncoat**" being referred to? Hell seems to fit the role of a "**turncoat**" because a "**turncoat**" a traitor, a renegade, an evildoer, wants to purposely plunder and misuse our spiritual fields to leave them barren and void of any crop of usefulness.
- A "**field**" represents the affections of the natural man. See *AE 650 [6]*. "**Fields**" signify the church as to the implantation of the truth of doctrine. See *AE 659 [49]*. A "**field**" means the good of life that has its origin in matters of doctrine. See *AC 3310*.
- What, then, do we have at issue here? The "**turncoat**" seems to be that which wants to misuse and possess a "**field**" so that doctrinal unity might dissolve into chaos. The "**turncoat**" wants heretical distortions to enter the church and cause its people to blaspheme the Lord's truth.
- Did the Lord really give the "**fields**" to the "**turncoat**" so they might be divided? Or did He permit the "**turncoat**" to do this so that there would be an upheaval or breaking up of the hard and lifeless traditional thinking that had taken over the church? *AC 3316* seems to give some credence to this thought. We read that the Lord will allow states of "chaos" to enter into one's life or church. A state of confusion is permitted to the end that things will be reduced to order. He wants good works working within chaotic states so that a **new order** may return to every misdirected church.

"Therefore you will have no one to determine boundaries by lot in the assembly of the Lord."

- This verse is reminiscent of *Judges 17:6*: "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes."
- The word "**boundaries**," we are taught, signifies "truth scientifics." See *AE 654 [8]*. In *AE 739 [11]*, we read that "**boundaries**," in the negative sense, signify turning "to the world and thus receiving nothing of the Divine." In *AE 1156*, we read that a "**boundary**" signifies "the scientifics of the natural man [that are] administered to serving the rational man for the purpose of thought..."
- From these *AE* sources, we get a picture of minds in a twirling and tumbling state, a free-for-all. Disciplined thinking was perilously jeopardized. Issues were not decided by turning to the Word or the Lord. Instead, civil and moral decisions were based on the cleverness of the speaker's "truth scientifics." Can you picture shouting, arguing, intimidation, and bullying tactics settling what is to be believed?
- Why should the Word make such an issue about having the **boundaries of spiritual discipline**? What is wrong with free (independent) thinking? Does the Lord want us to stay as close to Him as possible when studying the Word? Is this the way to love Him? In the book of *Proverbs*, there is a passage that succinctly captures the necessity of loving and following the ways of the Lord: "...he that sins against Me wrongs his own soul; *all those who hate Me love death.*" (*Proverbs 8:36*, emphasis added). Of the choices—love the Lord and hate death or hate the Lord and love death—is there really a question as to which one is best for our eternal life?
- There will be "no one to determine boundaries by lot..." To work toward the spiritual meaning of the word "**lot**," let's look at the positive and negative spiritual significations. In *AC 3239 [2]*, we read that "...the Lord's kingdom is represented by land, which is distributed by **lots** among those to whom it is given to be possessed as an inheritance..." (Emphasis added.) *AE 727 [15]* speaks of the "**lot of the righteous**" as "truths from good, which the faithful have, and especially with those who are in love to the Lord..." (Emphasis added.) In the negative sense, "**lots**" and the "**casting of lots**" signify to "disperse the truths of the church by falsities..." (*AE 863 [10]*) See also *AE 376 [24]* and *AC 9942* for a similar meaning of "**casting lots**."
- When anyone excludes the Lord in their heart, there will be no one to determine their spiritual (inheritance) "**boundaries by lot**." Instead of Divine inclusiveness, instead of wholeness, there will be dissipation and destruction of good and truth. This is not of the Lord's choosing. This is the choice of those who hate the Lord.
- "**...in the assembly of the Lord.**" *AC 10727* helps us understand what the "**assembly of the Lord**" will involve. It is a gathering of all the truths and forms of good in their entirety. Such an assembly is for the purpose of enumerating them all. For the faithful, it is an assembly where there is a feast

of plenty. For those who hate the Lord, it is an assembly at which they will be starving in the midst of plenty because they refuse to come and “taste and see that the Lord is good.” *Luke 1:53* says, “He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.” The proud and haughty will be made low, and the lowly will be exalted because of their faithfulness and love.

Putting It All Together

What “red alert” message does the Lord unfold for us in these verses? *P&P* cuts to the core: **“...the church has become perverted.”** This is not a new message. Every Minor Prophet announces this theme. Why do we need to hear about the perversion of the church again and again?

Is the bottom line that we are a stubborn and stiff-necked people? Why can’t we seem to learn from the plethora of examples given to us in the Word? Is it because our proprium thinks it knows better than the Lord what we need for our soul? Could the fact that we don’t read the Word often enough be a contributing factor that causes us to repeatedly wander away from the Lord’s “narrow way” to seek the world’s “broad way”? The Lord taught us that He would give us the truth and that His truth would make us free. If we ignore the truth, don’t we invite disorder and self-love to become the blind eyes of our faith?

The prophecy begins with: “Therefore the Lord says...” These words clearly announce and establish what is Infinite and Eternal. The Lord wants everyone in His church to follow His ways and laws. We are not looking for a democratic system where it is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. In the long run, we do not get to vote and make policies that are binding on the Lord. Those who love the Lord will follow His leadership. He already has a doctrinal formula that will lead us to spiritual freedom and security. “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” (*Luke 12:32*) The Lord said that if we love Him, we will follow His commandments. So how will we answer the Lord? Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could commit to Joshua’s statement? “...as for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (*Joshua 24:15*)

Those who want to have their own way feel that the Lord has devised disaster for them. In a sense, the people who turn their backs on the Lord will “put their neck” in a noose that cannot be removed. Why? Their walking haughtily brings about evil times. It is not the Lord who devises and delights in their demise. Those who walk alone say bitter things against the Lord. They make the choices that separate them from the Lord. Their choices cause lamentation. The separated ones allow the “turncoat” to divide the fields of their mind, and when they separate from the Lord, there will be no protective spiritual boundaries. Every person will do that which is right in their own eyes. Their separation will keep them from enjoying the “feast of plenty.” Instead of being filled with good things, they will be sent away empty. In a

few words, the evil will be like those who starve in the midst of plenty. How sad and how foolish is the choice of this starving emptiness as an eternal path.

Have we answered our opening question: Why do we need so many lessons on the corruption of the church? Is the repetition of this topic not only necessary but essential for every church, age, and state?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 2:3-5.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Will we (the human race) ever find a way to keep perversions from harming the life of the church? *The Book of Revelation* and the Writings hold out the possibility that it will happen. The New Church will be the crown of all churches, whose kingdom will be forever and ever. My heart longs for that to happen. How about you?
- The literal sense gives the impression that the Lord devises disaster. Our doctrines teach otherwise. Why not put this openly in the literal sense so that no one will ever say such things about the Lord? Why allow others to draw on the negative aspects of the Word? I'd much rather have the literal sense of the Word tell it like it really is—hellish spirits devise disaster for those who will listen to them. Hell tries to put everyone's neck in a noose that cannot be removed. The Lord wishes only the best for everyone.
- Those who want to walk in a haughty way don't want the Lord to expose their sham. Of course, they will be bitter and will lament when their dark side is revealed. They want and need the adulation of others to bolster their as-of-self proprial love. They want to supplant the Lord. They want to be the ultimate god. Can we see their plot? Can we arm ourselves so as to escape hell's chaotic delusion? No boundaries, no accountability, no spiritual plan to carry into eternity.
- They were told about the turncoats in their midst. How do you picture the turncoats after reading about them in our lesson? They want to divide our fields. Doesn't this sound like a plan to "divide and conquer"?
- No boundaries—isn't this easily seen in the events of our world? The plan of laissez-faire is alive and well in our current events. In many contexts, we are encouraged to let everyone do their thing with judgment put aside. Can we freely speak to troublesome issues without someone putting a label on us to neutralize our point? Isn't it spiritually healthy to call out sin or disorder to keep our inner church from becoming perverted? That seems to be what this lesson is all about: we need to find ways to effectively protect the boundaries of our minds and hearts. The Lord has a plan that will work. How well do we know that plan? The Three-fold Word stands invitingly before us. If we enter

the Word with patience, consistency, and effort, we can and will be given protective boundaries by the Lord.

Micah 2:6-7

"Do not prattle,' you say to those who prophesy. So they shall not prophesy to you; they shall not return insult for insult. You who are named the house of Jacob: 'Is the Spirit of the Lord restricted? Are these His doings? Do not My words do good to him who walks uprightly?'"

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "There is no longer any use to teach any except those who obey..."

Derived Doctrine

"Do not prattle..."

- "**Do not prattle**" can also be understood to mean "do not chatter and talk nonsense." That is what the prophets were accused of by those in the perverted church. When the prophets spoke the words of the Lord's prophecy, they had a hostile audience.
- *Conjugial Love (CL) 232* has an interesting insight into the meaning of "**prattle**" or "**chatter**." Swedenborg met a group of men called the "reasoners." These people prided themselves upon being most learned. He posed a question to them: "What must the religion be whereby a man is saved?" They set out to break the question down into four groupings (beside others). After a period of time, Swedenborg asked them if they might have an answer by evening time. They responded that it could not be done "within a hundred years." Swedenborg remarked, "Meanwhile you are without religion." He continued, "You are anything but learned, for you are only able to think whether a thing is, and to turn it this way or that...is it not like arguing about [the size of] a cap which is never put on? Or [the size of] a shoe that is never worn?" This number ends with the observation that prattlers or chatterers cannot bring anything from reason. "They chatter [prattle] and talk nonsense." The perverted church perceived the prophets as prattlers. The perverted church determined that the prophecies of the Lord were nonsense. **The perverted church did not want to listen anymore.**

"So they shall not prophesy to you..."

- The perverted church got what it asked for. The Lord announced to them that He would cease giving them His prophesy. It reminds us of what He said to

the disciples when they confronted hostile attitudes while preaching and teaching. He told them: "...cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn and tear you in pieces." (*Matthew 7:6*)

"...they shall not return insult for insult."

- What do these words communicate to us? *AC 1844* speaks of the church being with "those who love the Lord, and who love the neighbor as themselves, who have a conscience, and are averse to...hatreds..." But those in the church are insulted and "treated with the utmost possible abuse and persecution, or else are regarded as being simple, mean, and of no account." Is the Lord commanding His church not to begin a life of trading insult for insult? Taking that route would be injurious to the very core of what we are taught the church is.

"You who are named the house of Jacob..."

- The spiritual significance of these words reveal why the church shall not return insult for insult. *AC 3875 [3]* teaches that the "house of Jacob signifies to be in the **good of charity**." (Emphasis added.) *AE 448 [11]* reveals that the "house of Jacob means those who are in **the good of life**." (Emphasis added.) Trading insults with hell is not an essential part of these attributes. *AC 1950 [2]* teaches: "Rational good never fights, however it is assailed, because it is mild and gentle, patient and yielding; for its character is that of love and mercy. **Yet although it does not fight, it conquers all, nor does it ever think about combat, or glory on account of victory**...For no evil can attack good; it cannot even continue to exist in the sphere where good is, for when this merely approaches, evil withdraws and falls back on itself..." (Emphasis added.)

"Is the Spirit of the Lord restricted? Are these His doings? Do not My words do good to him who walks uprightly?"

- Note the three questions. Do they go to the heart of End, Cause, and Effect? The Lord's Love (End) is not restricted. His love is limitless. His love wants to save all of His children. Is it His end that anyone should be lost or cast off? No! But sadly, there are those who refuse His love. Is that of His doing? Did the Lord cause hell to be filled with hatred and hurt? Does He want that hellish rebellion to be among any of His people? No! He causes not a single ripple of disorder. Together with the angels, He always rejoices over the one lost sheep being found. Those who listen, love, and follow His way will have the full effect of walking uprightly because they are doing the good of the Lord.

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes this section with these words regarding the perverted church: "There is no longer any use to teach any **except those who obey...**" (Emphasis added.) Do these words inspire us, as a church, to be among those who are committed to obey the Lord?

The perverted church doesn't want to hear from the Lord anymore. They count His Word as prattle. From their polluted secular temple, they utter hurtful insults. They count the Word of the Lord as babbling foolishness. The polluted church perceives the followers of the Lord as simple, naïve, and of no account. What do we do about their charges? Do we enter into a debate with them, meeting insult with insult? The Lord urges us not to enter into this fray. The believer will not gain from such exchanges. Instead, we need to hold on to the teaching that rational good never has to fight. The Lord's rational good wins, and the perverted loses. Evil cannot attack good—good conquers evil. Evil rushes away from good and falls back on its own faulty and hateful thoughts.

We need to reflect deeply on the three questions posed at the end of this section.

1. Is the Spirit of the Lord restricted?
2. Are these (disorders) His doing?
3. Do not My words do good to him who walks uprightly?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 2:6-7.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Have we heard, or said, the words "Do not prattle..." respecting the Word and doctrine? Have you ever tired of hearing the prophetic message of the Lord being preached at us? Being straightforward, I can recall some lectures and doctrinal classes that just wore my concentration out. I saw and felt no application of the presentation to my state. What I heard seemed every bit the part of prattle. Am I to be concerned about those times? Fortunately, I have heard some powerful and stimulating sermons and doctrinal classes as well. On the other hand, have you ever tired of the prattle the world lays on us?
- When someone berates you for being a Christian, or a New Churchman, are you tempted to return insult for insult? How about domestic insults? Do we turn back an insult with a soft answer? Remaining charitable in the face of insults is a hard thing to manage. How about the phrase "justifiable anger"? What is that all about?

- *AC 1950 [2]* has been, for many, a favorite quote. “Rational good never fights...it is mild and gentle, patient and yielding...**Yet although it does not fight, it conquers all...**” Is this passage a call for “pacifism”?” Rational” refers to our reasoning level. “Good” refers to our level of and capacity for loving. Together, “rational” and “good” refer to worldly issues being tempered and ordered by the Lord so that our internal spiritual delights will rule over our natural worldly delights. Rational good, if operational, helps us to choose that which leads to eternal ends and not proprial ends. Do any personal examples come to mind that might illustrate the term “rational good”?
- What insights have you gathered from the Lord’s three questions: “Is the Spirit of the Lord restricted?” “Are these His doings?” “Do not My words do good to him who walks uprightly?” The Lord’s Love leads to Infinite ends. His causes are not in disorderliness, and His providence will provide us with the effects of orderliness and uprightness.
- What other insights did you gather from these verses of Micah’s prophecy?

MICAH 2:8-9

“Lately My people have risen up as an enemy—you pull off the robe with the garment from those who trust you, as they pass by, like men returned from war. The women of My people you cast out from their pleasant houses; from their children you have taken away My glory forever.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “...therefore they do evils of every kind.”

AC 9942 [10]

- In *Micah 2:8* “...‘tunic’ is expressed in the original tongue by another word, which, however, signifies spiritual truth and good; ‘stripping the tunic from off them that pass by securely’ denotes to deprive of their spiritual truths those who live in simple good; ‘to hold any one as an enemy by reason of a garment’ denotes to do evil to them on account of the truth which they think, when yet no one is to be injured on account of what he believes to be true, provided he is in good...”

AR 328

- “‘Robes,’ ‘mantles,’ and ‘cloaks’ signify truths in general, because they are general coverings.” *Micah 2:8* is cited as an example.

AE 395 [10]

- “In Micah...2:8...These words do not mean that ‘the sons of Israel have set up the enemy for the sake of a garment, and have stripped off the mantle from those that pass by securely;’ but they mean that they held as enemies those who spoke truths, and deprived of all truth those who had lived well and had shaken off falsities, ‘garment’ meaning truth, ‘mantle’ all truth because it means truth in general; ‘to pass by securely’ means to live well; ‘men returning from war’ mean those who have shaken off falsities, ‘war’ meaning the combat of truth against falsity. Who cannot see that this is the spiritual meaning of the Word; and not that the people of Israel held some one as an enemy for the sake of a garment, or stripped off the mantle from those who passed by?”

AE 555 [8]

- “In Micah...2:8, 9...‘To draw off the robe from them that pass by securely, returning from war,’ signifies to deprive of truths all who are in truths, and who have fought against falsities; ‘returning from war’ those who have been in temptations, and who have fought against falsities. ‘To drive out the women of my people from the house of their delights’ signifies to destroy the affections of truth, and thus the pleasantnesses and felicities of heaven, ‘the women of my people’ meaning the affections of truth, and ‘house of delights’ the pleasantnesses and felicities of heaven, for these are the affections of good and truth.”

AC 5608 [8]

- “In the following passages also by ‘infants’ is meant innocence, but in these it was destroyed.” *Micah 2:9* is cited.

AR 434

- “By ‘women’ are signified the affections of truth, from which the church is a church, in many passages, as in the following...” *Micah 2:9* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

“Lately My people have risen up as an enemy...”

- The word **“lately”** means not long ago or recently. Can we determine how recently the people had become the Lord’s enemy? No, we can’t really determine this because we are not given a useable timeline. Perhaps the best advice we can follow is that given in *Psalm 90:4*. “For a thousand years in [the Lord’s] sight are like yesterday when it is past, and like a watch in the night.”

The turning against the Lord was a slow, steady, and unnoticed process. The people of the church “fell asleep on the watch tower.” Hell as the enemy sowed its seeds of discord while the people were asleep. The wheat and the tares looked alike. Spiritual discrimination was impaired. All of this provided fertile ground for hell to work with.

- To have “risen up as an enemy” signifies living the life of evil from falsity. See AE 601 [17]. In other words, the church moved away from the ways of the Lord into errant doctrines that were unbecoming and opposed to the Lord.

“*You have taken away My glory forever.*”

- At first glance, it sounds as if the literal sense conveys a tone of gloom and doom. The words “taken away My glory forever” can mislead us if we are not attentively careful. The Writings are consistent in forty-six explanatory references to the signification of the word “glory.” Let’s pick one of these references. AE 365 [11] teaches that “glory” signifies Divine truth proceeding from the Lord. If someone pushes the Lord away and chooses hell, what have they done to themselves if they die and enter hell? They have taken away from themselves what the Lord wanted to freely give them. He wants everyone to enter heaven. If people reject the Lord’s truth and choose hell’s falsity, they have lost the Lord’s glory forever. But hell cannot take the Divine truth proceeding away. The Lord is forever. In Him, there is no beginning or end. He is beyond time and space. He is our Alpha and our Omega. Hell can in no way threaten the Lord’s Love, Wisdom, and Use. In His presence, hell shrinks, flees, and knows that it is nothing.

Putting It All Together

Our lesson in *Micah* pictures for us the intention of a perverted church: it corrupts its mission of caring for the salvation of souls. Instead, it looks for every opportunity to rob and embarrass those who are in simple good (the external but innocent-minded worshippers). Those who are in a perverted church work to do evil to the truth that the “simple” want to think and speak. If the “simple” have worked at combating some falsity, the perverted church laughs and scoffs at their silly hope for reformation and regeneration. The cloak, the tunic, the robe are all representative of the efforts the “simple” use to protect their minds from destructive falsities. The perverted church, looking like a friend, snatches away their protection when the “simple” return from their spiritual battle. Instead of giving them congratulatory encouragement for their efforts, they rebuff, minimize, and snatch away their elementary care for fidelity.

To drive the women from their houses and to take glory away from the children conveys the evil intention of the perverted church to rid the “simple” of their affection and innocence. A perverted church wants to drive the thoughts, dreams, and aspirations of the “simple” from their houses of delights and from the

pleasantness and felicities of heaven. In the end, who loses? The evil do! The evil take away—from themselves—the Lord’s glory. How long will the perverted church keep the (glory) Divine truth proceeding away from themselves? The Lord’s Love speaks these words of truth to hell: “You have taken away My glory forever.”

All of the above exposes the efforts of a perverted church. Instead of caring for and feeding the “simple,” it offers that which is heartless, uncharitable, and unnecessary. This message seems unbelievable. And yet, isn’t that what *P&P* summed up for us? “...therefore they [the perverted church] do evils of every kind.” Are our hearts troubled with the theme being shared here? Being forewarned about what a perverted church does can be useful. It reminds us about the shallowness of hell. Hell is self-love out of control. Hell thinks constantly about obliterating the Lord and His church. What will it get for its efforts? Nothing! Hell brings about its own end. Hell deprives itself of eternal life and the power it could have had from the Lord. The potential to receive life, beauty, and reality is lost, and in its place are dust, dinginess, hovels, selfishness, and fantasy—forever!

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 2:8-9.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Can you visualize how sin and evil surreptitiously slip into people’s hearts and minds? Some small deviation from good and truth, like the tremor that starts an avalanche, leads to one deviation after another. At first, it seemed like a harmless change. Maybe it was viewed as creative and innovative. The Writings talk about the harm “innovators” can cause. The story of Elisha, the sons of the prophets, and the pot of stew comes to mind. The sons of the prophets were experiencing a famine. Elisha told them to put a pot on the fire to make stew. One of the sons of the prophets went out into a field to gather wild gourds. He cut them and added them to the pot of stew. What was his intent? Was it to add flavor? Was it to add “body” to build a stew? We are not told what his motivation was. But we do know the end results. Those who tasted the stew cried out that there was death in the pot. Elisha solved the problem to represent the way the Lord is our spiritual “purifier.” He is the one who corrects what “innovators” do. Apparently, our lesson from *Micah* tells of a time when no one recognized that there was death in the pot. So, in time, they “ate the stew of the innovators” and became an enemy of the Lord. What can we do to check our “innovations” so we don’t become an enemy of the Lord?
- How do you understand the stealing of the cloaks? What present-day examples can you envision that represent the women and children being

- chased from their houses? Do you see examples of the “simple” being abused by a perverted church?
- Did you have to correct your thinking about “You have taken away My glory forever.”?
 - If hell is self-love “out of order,” can a good and orderly self-love be of positive assistance in leading us to heaven?
 - What do you understand to be represented by the meal that Elisha put in the pot to restore its benefits so the sons of the prophets could eat it in the days of the famine?

MICAH 2:10-11

“Arise and depart, for this is not your rest; because it is defiled, it shall destroy, yes, with utter destruction. If a man should walk in a false spirit and speak a lie, saying, I will prophesy to you of wine and drink, even he would be the prattler of this people.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “They shall perish, because they cannot be taught.”

AC 6377 [9-10]

- “As ‘wine’ signifies the good of love and of faith...in the Word...As most expressions in the Word have also a contrary sense, so also has ‘wine’ in which sense ‘wine’ signifies falsity from evil, as in...Micah 2:11...”

TCR 156

- “In the concrete, man’s spirit means simply his mind; for this it is that lives after death, and it is then called a spirit—if good, an angelic spirit and afterwards an angel, if evil, a satanic spirit and afterwards a satan...That ‘the spirit’ signifies also such things as pertain to a perverse and wicked mind is evident from the following...” *Micah 2:11* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

“Arise and depart, for this is not your rest.”

- The call to **“arise”** “signifies the elevation of the mind.” (*AC 2695*)
- The call to **“depart”** denotes that “they shall not trust any longer in their own wisdom, but in the wisdom from the Lord...” (*AC 8185*) *AE 538* teaches that

“depart” signifies “the power that is added to reasoning by knowledges that are applied for confirmation...”

- The words **“...this is not your rest”** may best be understood when we reflect on a passage from *AC 8510*. We read “...he who acts from the truth...is not yet in the order of heaven...he who acts from the good...is in this order. For the order in which man is led by the Lord is by man’s willing, consequently by means of good, for this is of the will, and then his understanding ministers, consequently truth...When this state is attained, then is ‘the Sabbath;’ **for then the Lord has rest...**” (Emphasis added.) **“Rest”** is a sign of overcoming some disorder in the process of regeneration. **“Rest”** is a sign that the conjugal principle resides in the heart and mind of the one being regenerated.
- The Lord knew the hearts and minds of those in the perverted church. They definitely needed to **“arise”** and **“depart”** from their ways. The perverted church was nowhere near the point of relaxing and resting in their regeneration. Too much work needed to be completed. This was a time to spiritually fight for that which embodied the elements of good and truth. This was not a time for resting in the status quo! “Arise and depart...”

“...because it is defiled, it shall destroy, yes, with utter destruction.”

- This verse highlights what we were taught in the passage above. The church, in the eyes of the Lord, had become defiled. There were serious errors eating away at the heart of its doctrines. The hidden falsities were not in a state of remission. Instead, they were growing and multiplying. The Lord was sounding an alarm. The presence of deep-seated falsities would bring about destructive results. Is a hidden disorder a minor thing? The words “utter destruction” clearly spell out what was ahead if change didn’t come within the heart and mind of the church.

“If a man should walk in a false spirit and speak a lie...”

- *TCR 156* identifies what a **“false spirit”** is. The **“false spirit”** signifies “such things as pertain to a perverse and wicked mind...” A **“false spirit”** unashamedly and willingly speaks the lies of hell.

“...‘saying, I will prophesy to you of wine and drink, even he would be the prattler of this people.’”

- *AC 6377 [9-10]* explains that the **“wine”** in this verse signifies “...falsity from evil.”
- *AC 3087* gives us two ideas to work with regarding the word **“drink.”** “...drink signifies what is successive...Drink signifies initiation...” *AE 386 [6]*identifies **“drink”** as “...communication and appropriation...” (Emphasis added.)

- *AE 376 [31]* adds a dimension to our study with these words: "...‘the priest and the prophet go astray through **strong drink**, they are swallowed up of wine, they are gone astray through strong drink,’ signifies that such are those who ought to be in the doctrine of good and truth...‘**they go astray among the seeing, they waver in judgment,**’ signifies that they do not see the truths of intelligence.” (Emphasis added.)
- “...even he would be the prattler of this people.” We need to recall several things to grasp what is being revealed. The perverted church called Micah’s words “**prattle.**” They accused him of speaking words of nonsense. In disgust, they asked him to cease talking to them. They didn’t want to listen anymore. Now, we hear the Lord evaluating the teachings of the perverted priests. Their lies, their strong drink have misled the people. They are judged as “**prattlers**” among the people. It is their wavering in matters of judgment that has blinded them to the truths of intelligence. Consequently, the record is set straight: **it is the perverted church that speaks nonsense.**

Putting It All Together

P&P summarized these verses by saying: “They shall perish, because they cannot be taught.” What? Why is this so? Isn’t this a sad summation of the end of a church? Were they so stubborn and set in their ways that there was no hope for them? Couldn’t they have had some chance, slight as it may have been, to come to their senses? What about the possibility of a remnant coming out of this mess?

Maybe the clue to understanding why spiritual education could not work is found by focusing on the words “**strong drink**,” “**going astray**,” and “**wavering**.” Did the people become spiritually intoxicated with their falsity? Speaking of intoxication, strong drink affects people differently. There are those who, when drunk, will laugh at everything and act the part of a clown. Some drunks act as if everyone in the room is a friend. Others become pugnacious and want to fight anyone and everyone at the drop of a hat. Other drunks slip into a morose state wherein they feel sorry for themselves and feel badly done by, picked on unfairly, and they weep and wallow in self-pity. Some drink themselves into a stupor and have no idea who or where they are, or what they are doing. Intoxication causes some to fall into total denial. “I am not drunk.” “I’m able to drive myself home.” “My judgment has not become impaired.” I have heard of some who, when they drink too much, imagine that the alcohol has given them a more relaxed and comfortable range of flexibility and preparation to handle anything and everything.

The loss of balance and equilibrium is present in all forms of drunkenness. Teaching or showing a spiritual drunk the way of the Lord apparently is hopeless. They will laugh, fight, deny, feel self-pity, and black-out when steadiness, stability, firmness, and clear sight are called for. False priests and prophets will, in their drunken state, talk prattle among the people.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 2:10-11.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Maintaining spiritual sobriety is essential. How do we do this? Our lesson indicates that we need to welcome and want education by the Lord. We need to avoid “strong drink,” checking regularly to make sure we are not following along with the “strong drink” of popular opinions. The one way to sobriety seems to be remaining in close touch with the Word. Study, reflection, and application of the Word to life are essential. Also, it appears that we need to make decisions but stand ready to change and admit errors when we are shown them. How good are we at maintaining this openness to the Lord’s corrective ways?
- Did any of the patterns of intoxication strike home? Are we giddy, pugnacious, and prone to self-pity? Do we think that the Lord favors others more than us? Are we into self-denial? Are we wavering in our faith system? Have we listened to false priests and prophets and been blindly led by their persuasive prattle?
- My guess is that if you are willing to read and study the Word using a study guide, you will fare well with some of these questions. Is that your sense, too?
- One last point: Let’s turn our attention to the Lord preserving the “simple” within the church. Does “the simple” mean people who have a low IQ? Does “the simple” mean someone who trusts and follows the Lord with little proprium involved? The Lord, when dealing with the end of one church, introduces a new church from a remnant. What do you anticipate will happen when that remnant starts following the Lord’s directions?

MICAH 2:12-13

“I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together like sheep of the fold, like a flock in the midst of their pasture; they shall make a loud noise because of so many people. The one who breaks open will come up before them; they will break out, pass through the gate, and go out by it; their king will pass before them, with the Lord at their head.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Such things do not invade those who will be of the Lord’s new church.”

AC 2851 [14]

- "...when a man is of such a character as to admit goods and truths, and thus angels, the infernal spirits are then driven away by the Lord from the seat; and on being driven away, the gate of heaven or heaven itself is opened. This gate is also mentioned in the Word in various places; as in...Micah 2:13."

AR 899

- "By 'the gates' are signified the knowledges of truth and good from the Word...Knowledges of truth and good are...signified by 'gates' in these passages...Micah 2:13..."

Derived Doctrine

"I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob..."

- The Lord will in a sure manner, the Lord will indeed, the Lord will infallibly assemble all of Jacob. What does "**assemble**" signify? AC 6334 and 6338 explain that to "assemble" means that they should arrange themselves into order." In our verse, we need to note that the Lord does the assembling. The Lord is promising to return order to the abused and perverted church.
- "**O Jacob**" is mentioned for the following reason: "In general...'Jacob' in the Word...signifies what is external of the church." (AC 4286, *emphasis added*.)
- Why does the Lord announce that the assembling will begin with Jacob? AC 1083 and AC 7795 teach that "before a man becomes a church, that is before he is regenerated, man is in externals; and **when he is being regenerated he is led from externals to internals...**" (Emphasis added.)

"I will surely gather the remnant of Israel..."

- The "**I**" in this verse is the Lord. He is our action. We are the reaction. Read *Divine Love and Wisdom (DLW) 68* for additional insights into this concept of the Lord as action and people as reaction.
- AC 5897 [3] helps us with the words "**the remnant of Israel.**" "...in the Word, especially the prophetic Word, by 'Israel' was not meant Israel, nor by 'Jacob' Jacob, but by both the church and what is of the church, and this being the case, by the 'remains' [remnant] are not meant the remains [remnant] of Israel and Jacob, but the truths and goods which belong to the church." Later on in this same number, we are taught that **when the external man is separated from the internal** "...unless the Lord were to gather up the **goods and truths...into a man during the process of life, the man could not possibly be saved, for without remains there is salvation for none.**" (AC 5897 [5], *emphasis added*.)

"I will put them together like sheep of the fold, like a flock in the midst of their pasture."

- Note that the Infinite "**I will**" is a promise of Divine action. What is He promising to do? He will draw (put) the sheep together. *AC 4719* gives us a hint of the meaning of "**to put**" or "to place." These words relate to "state." The Lord will give His new church a new state. The Lord is promising a "state" of togetherness or unity. When the church ignored Him, the flock became scattered. The Lord is promising that He will correct that disorder.
- Why did the Lord use the word "**sheep**"? Why not "**lambs**"? "Sheep signify the goods of charity." (*AE 1154*) "...sheep' signify those who are in love towards the neighbor..." (*AE 314 [5]*) "Lambs" signify "...those who are in the good of innocence and the love of the Lord. Sheep signify those who are in the good of charity towards the neighbor." (*AE 9 [3]*)
- When the Lord said He would gather or put them together like sheep of the fold, was He drawing our attention to this distinction? "Man is His creation and the church is His **sheep-fold**." (*TCR 538*)
- By "**...like a flock...**" is meant "all those who are in good [love], thus those who belong to the Lord's church...by 'flock' are also signified doctrinal things." (*AC 3767*) In *AC 3795*, we read that by "**flock**" is "signified those who are led and taught, consequently churches..."
- In "**the midst of their pasture**" carries a sense of "Ah, this is the right place for the sheep." The pasture is a place where nourishing grazing can happen. The Lord is our shepherd. We will not "want" for anything. *AE 482 [3]* teaches that a "**pasture**" signifies instruction and a shepherd an instructor. *AE 632 [4]* says a "good pasture signifies all that which spiritually nourishes, **especially the Word**..." (Emphasis added.)

"...they shall make a loud noise because of so many people."

- Why is there a "**loud noise**" being made? *AC 8815* teaches that "**loud**" means celestial state." *AR 258* illustrates what it means when a "strong angel" proclaims the Word. The Word is full of power which will flow "deeply into the thought." The perverted church closed, or stopped up, the Word. That blockage is going to be removed. PICTURE how that which had been covered was now going to blast away the layers of falsity. In heaven, His Word is soft and peaceful, but when it comes to rescue the church, it will do so with a "**loud noise**" representing a tremendous increase of revelation in the minds of His "sheep." *AC 10457* says that "**noise**" means the essential nature of the interiors. Yes, the restructuring of our interiors and the increase of internal revelation is going to be "noisily" awesome. Such a message adds to our understanding of the command to be joyful and to make noise in *Psalm 98:4-6* and *Psalm 33:1-3*.
- The words "**a loud noise because of so many people**" require some thoughtful reflection. *AE 331 [9]* reminds us that there are numerous

passages teaching us that “**people** signify those who belong to the spiritual church...” *AC 5113 [8]* notes that “the remains of **people** denote truths stored up by the Lord in the interior man...” *AC 10227 [14]* says that “...**rich people** denote those who abound in truths and goods.” (Emphasis added to all three quotations.) Here’s what comes to mind, based on the teachings above: When the Lord opens and releases the Word from ages of man-made restrictions, there will be a loud noise of rejoicing and the “remains” within many people will acknowledge and praise the Lord for His loving faithfulness from the beginning of time. Many people will participate in this rejoicing.

“The one who breaks open will come up before them...”

- Do we need to search the Writings to see and understand the meaning of these wonderful words? The Lord is the one who will break open the blockage of hell. Just as the stone was rolled away from His tomb, so too will the wall of falsity be rolled away and broken open. The Lord comes **“up”** before us when we see His truth and love united in spiritual uses.

“...they will break out, pass through the gate, and go out by it...”

- The sacraments of Baptism and Holy Supper are described as two **“gates.”** The first gate, the gate of baptism, is called the gate of instruction. The second gate, the gate of Holy Supper, is called the gate of conjunction. When the Lord breaks down the blockage of good and truth, He will lead us to the gates of instruction and conjunction. Each gate serves as a means of empowerment, and both gates open to us the ability to “go out” and discover the freedom of the Lord’s truth. How wonderful will that be? Listen to the closing portion of this section.

“...their king will pass before them, with the Lord at their head.”

- A **“king”** signifies the Lord in respect to Divine Truth. See *AE 195 [9]*. A **“king”** signifies truth from good. See *AE 654 [46]*. A **“king”** signifies the truth of the church. See *AC 2906*.
- When the Lord calls His people to the New Church, they will pass through the gates with their banners held high. Each banner will have on it a truth, Divine Truth that will help them in their fight against the disorder of hell. And who will they meet on the way? The Lord strong in battle. The Lord strong in mercy. The Lord strong in peace and justice. Where will He be in the procession? **At its head!**

Putting It All Together

P&P offers a message of hope to those who care about and love the Lord’s New Church. The perverted church, the church influenced by the “strong drink” of falsity,

will not “invade those who will be of the Lord’s new church.” The words that should catch our attention in the quote from *P&P* are “**those who will be...**” These words draw us to the “intention” to be the Lord’s. If we will to be one of those, consider what this verse says will happen in the process of being ordered by the Lord:

1. The Lord will lead us from externals to internals.
2. The Lord will be our action. His action will cause a positive reaction within us.
3. There will be a gathering of our remains (remnant) to prepare us for the battle.
4. The Lord’s purpose is to give us a new state.
5. He will get His sheep, the goods of charity, into His sheep-fold.
6. The flock will be nourished, taught, and prepared by His vivified church.
7. When the Lord breaks open the barriers of falsity, there will be a loud noise. Love and Wisdom will flow deeply into our thought. There will be an increase of revelation that will joyfully pierce the walls of falsity.
8. New gates will be seen. As they stand—wide open—we will be able to walk through and find new exciting ways. Openness, wide expanses, and boundless freedom await those who pass through the portals.
9. We will be armed with fighting truths that are emblazoned on our banners.
10. As we march forward, our king, Divine Truth, will pass by, and at the head of everything will be the Lord.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 2:12-13.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- How powerful was this section for you? Did it inspire you to strive to be of the Lord’s New Church?
- The order of what the Lord promises He will do is impressive. How can we get ourselves into a state of preparation for these things?
- The order of regeneration is from externals to internals. Do we have to know the mechanism of this process, or do we allow the Lord to lead us through it, step by step?
- Was the “loud noise” teaching new to you? Can you “visualize” it? Hell has tried to block, insulate, and hold down the truths of the Lord. In the process, we have been unsure of what is true or false. Boom! The cap is blown off! How great is that?
- Were you clear on the many correspondences in this section? Which of them needs further study? Can you go to New Search for help?

Chapter Three

MICAH 3:1-3

"And I said: 'Hear now, O heads of Jacob, and you rulers of the house of Israel: is it not for you to know justice? You who hate good and love evil; who strip the skin from My people, and the flesh from their bones; who also eat the flesh of My people, flay their skin from them, break their bones, and chop them in pieces like meat for the pot, like flesh in the caldron.'"

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "They have destroyed all truths and goods even to the last things of the church."

AC 3812 [5]

- "...a 'caldron' signifies violence offered to good and truth...the 'pieces, the good piece, the thigh, and the shoulder...' are flesh, by which are meant goods...and also that these arcana can in no wise be known unless it is known what is signified in the internal sense by a 'caldron' or 'pot,' by 'pieces,' by 'thigh and shoulder,' by 'choice bones,' ...and by 'boiling.'"

Derived Doctrine

"And I said..."

- We need to remind ourselves that this is the Lord speaking through Micah and not Micah speaking as of himself. We get opinions from others, which, at best, carry some objectivity, but with their opinion(s) will come preconceived "as-of-self prejudices." When the Lord says, "I said," there is not one scintilla of prejudice. Instead, good and truth are perfectly blended and balanced for eternal ends. We, then, are at our best when we seek to stay focused on the "I said..." of the Lord.

"Hear now, O heads of Jacob, and you rulers of the house of Israel."

- To "hear" signifies to obey. See AE 14 and 443 [3]. How soon should our obedience begin? Now! Hell always tries to get us to obey later on, urging us to "Live life while you're young. Take up spiritual things when you are older." Now is the right time to hear the words of the Lord—the eternal "I said" and source of everlasting life.

- “**Head**” signifies intelligence and wisdom. See *AE* 577.
- “**Rulers**” over the house of Israel play an important part in the spiritual sense of this passage. *AE* 513 [13] explains what happens if a poor “ruler” takes over the leadership of one’s spiritual life. Such a “ruler” “makes man so natural that his knowledges are devoid of spiritual good [so that] both thoughts and affections are wandering and thus man is destitute of the intelligence that should lead and rule.”
- Note well that this passage speaks to both **Jacob** and **Israel**. Why? *AC* 4286 [6-7] can help us see why: “That ‘Jacob’ signifies one thing and ‘Israel’ another, is plainly evident from the Word, for in the historical parts and also in the prophetical, it is now said ‘Jacob’...and now ‘Israel’...But what ‘**Jacob**’ signifies...in general...is **what is external in the church**, and by ‘**Israel**’ **what is internal**” in the church. (Emphasis added.)
- Why is the Lord directing them, and us, to distinguish between the external and internal church? Read *AR* 398: The “internal [church] is with those who have studied its doctrines interiorly, and have confirmed them from the Word, and external with those who have not.”
- What we see and read in this section **will appear** repetitious. Repetition is a valuable learning tool. Let’s patiently consider repetition with some expectation that the Lord will give us clarity to hear and obey the call of our “I said” Lord.
- Jacob is addressed as “**heads of Jacob**” to represent **external** intelligence in the **external** church. Jacob’s head signifies a call for the external wisdom and intelligence to obey.
- Israel’s call from the “I said” is to the “**rulers of the house...**” *AC* 3654 helps us focus on the meaning of “**rulers of the house**” as **good in the church leading or ruling internal principles**. So, understanding the specific call to Jacob and Israel is important if the church is to be vivified by the Lord. **Obedience** within the **external and internal church** is what the “I said” wants. The great conjugal principle endeavors to wed love and wisdom in the external (Jacob) and internal (Israel) church. To what end is **obedience** important as a tool of guidance for the external and internal church? Is the answer to this question in the next verse of our text?

“Is it not for you to know justice?”

- The word “**justice**” has a wide range of meaning and application. Let’s consider, in general, what meanings of the word “**justice**” we might focus on from Webster’s Dictionary: “Conforming to spiritual law; righteous; impartial; the maintenance or administration of that which is just; the principle of rectitude and just dealing of men with each other...”
- The Writings offer us some 159 passages to read regarding **justice**. I diligently tried to check all of them. One passage, *AC* 6207, appears to beautifully fit into our topic of study regarding the **external and internal church**. “Conscience is twofold, interior and exterior. **Interior conscience** is

- of spiritual good and truth; **exterior conscience** is of justice and equity. At the present day, this latter conscience exists with many; but interior conscience with few. Nevertheless they who enjoy **exterior conscience** are saved in the other life; for they are of such a character that if they act contrary to what is good and true, or contrary to what is just and equitable, they are inwardly distressed and tormented; not because by so doing they suffer loss of honor, of gain, or of reputation; but because they have acted contrary to good and truth, or to justice and equity." (Emphasis added.)
- The question "Is it not for you to know justice?" is a call to conform to spiritual justice as revealed to us in the Word of the Lord.

"You who hate good and love evil..."

- Who are the haters of good and the lovers of evil? They are the hellish spirits and all who join them in hating the Lord. When such hatred exists, it manifests itself in wanting to strip away the "skin" of the believers. Why the skin? What is represented in this act of spiritual destruction?
- Our physical skin is made up of multiple layers of tissue that guard underlying muscles and organs. The skin's use is to protect and insulate what lies below it and to regulate body temperature. Our skin is a most important part of our body. Skin has been called the "largest organ of the body" because it covers all of our exterior human body and weighs more than any single internal organ. Consider now the representation of our spiritual skin.

"...who strip the skin from My people, and the flesh from their bones..."

- **"Skin"** "denotes the truth and good of the external man." (AC 3540, 9960 [20]) Therefore, those who love hell want to strip the truth and good from the external church and the external mind of humanity. Stripping our spiritual being of its **"skin"** will destroy us because we are then robbed of that which would protect, insulate, and regulate our vital internal organs.
- **"Flesh"** "...in the supreme sense [signifies] the Lord's Divine own [proprium], which is His Divine Human, thus the good of His love toward the universal human race." (AC 8409) What we get from this number is the picture of hell stripping the **"flesh"** of the external man so that he loses any sense of the Lord's compassion for the universal human race. "The Lord doesn't care about you," say those who **hate good** and **love evil**. "If there was a loving God, He would not permit atrocities to occur to people of all ages—especially to the innocent."
- **Bones** serve an important function, too, in that they give a fairly hard and yet lightweight structure and support to the body. **Bones** come in a variety of shapes and have a complex internal and external structure. Studying **bones** involves knowing about the function of marrow, nerves, blood vessels, and cartilage.

- Tearing the “**flesh**” from the “**bones**”—tearing away the Lord’s love for the universal human race—would expose our spiritual “**bones**” to infection and disease and would engender a dried up brittleness unable to support the external and internal rigors of our spiritual motion and uses.

“...who also eat the flesh of My people, flay their skin from them, break their bones...”

- Prior to our examination of the meaning of “**eat the flesh of My people**,” let us think of the meaning of “eating flesh” in the positive sense. In *John 6:52-56*, the Lord speaks of our need to eat of His flesh and to drink of His blood. Failure to do these things means “you have no life in you.”
- To eat the Lord’s flesh and to drink His blood means to appropriate to oneself Divine good and Divine truth, “...‘flesh,’ signifying the good of love, and blood signifying the good of truth.” (*AE 617 [24]*)
- Eating the flesh of My people, flaying their skin, and breaking their bones has its series of negative meanings. To love hell and to hate the Lord involves destructive consequences. Such intentions eat away at the good and truth of the external church. The external mind fails to see the Lord’s universal love for the human race; the skin of the church is removed, and the truth of the Lord will not protect, insulate, and regulate the essentials. Without the Lord, our spiritual bones collapse. They are crushed, and their form and substance crumbles in disorder.

“...and chop them in pieces like meat for the pot, like flesh in the caldron.”

- To “**chop them in pieces**” carries with it an ominous sense of how evil desires to bring about the extinction of good and truth. We use the expression “picking things to pieces.” Well, that is what hell loves to do to the Word. If *AC 9372 [9]* says that “**meat**” in the good sense represents spiritual nourishment, it makes sense that in the opposite sense, “**meat**” would represent spiritual malnutrition. To boil flesh in a holy place “means employing the truths of doctrine [as] seen in light received from the Lord [and] to make good ready for use in life...” (*AC 10105*)
- That is not what the literal sense teaches. It is just the opposite. Instead of making doctrine ready for use in life, to use a “**caldron**” signifies to offer violence to good and truth. Read *AC 3812 [5]* again because it covers much of the meaning of this verse.

Putting It All Together

P&P sums up this section with the words: “They have destroyed all truths and goods even to the last things of the church.”

Who are the “they”? The heads of Jacob: the rulers, the prophets, and the priests of the house of Israel are the “they.” Those who were in positions of leadership failed

as examples, guides, and watchmen of the night. Instead of hearing, obeying, and following the Lord, they turned against Him and sought to “skin alive” the people of the church. They chopped and pulled things apart. They did not value the ways of the Lord. One can almost picture the hells mocking truth by trivializing and demeaning it. The Psalmist repeats for us the sarcastic thoughts of haters of truth and justice: “How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?” (*Psalm 73:11-12, emphasis added.*)

Psalm 22:7 portrays hell and its snarling reproach and despising of the Lord: “All those who see Me ridicule Me; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!”

That which should have been “meat” to maintain nourishment for the spiritual body was put into a boiling caldron so violence would be offered to good and truth. The ripping of flesh, the breaking of the bones graphically illustrate and testify to the things the rulers did to the Word of the Lord. The motivation for all this was to destroy the external and internal church—the external and internal truth—in every least thing of the Lord.

The great “I said” calls for everyone to hear His eternal pronouncements. The rulers and heads of the church haughtily and purposely misled His people. The Lord calls for repentance. How soon should the church renew and restore the ways of the Lord?

Now!

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 3:1-3.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Has anyone ever tried to skin you alive? Picking things apart for the purpose of exposing and endangering something you value—that is the goal of hell. How can we protect ourselves when we are being picked on? The Lord said in the Beatitudes, **“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake...Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad...for so they persecuted the prophets before you.”** (*Matthew 5:11-12*) Do these words of the Lord help us endure the attempt hell makes to “skin us alive”?
- Reflect on the purpose of our skin: to protect, to insulate, to regulate our temperature, and to care for our internal vital organs. This representative

function speaks well for the uses of good and truth. Can we see why hell wants to skin these things away?

- Bones are a fascinating study, too. Thinking about their spiritual variety, their hardness to give shape and support, their marrow, and blood vessels, provides a trip into the meaning of the Grand Man. Does anyone have a copy of *Physiological Correspondences* by the Rev. John Worcester? Does anyone have a set of notes from their “Human Body” courses at the Academy? If you do, would you be willing to review the chapters on skin and bones and share your findings if you are studying in a group?
- Those who hate the Lord also hate justice. In place of spiritual order and form, they want chaos to exist. Instead of equality, they want to dominate and crush the order and fairness of the Lord. In what ways can we strengthen and nourish the internal church and mind to “stand tall” for the Lord?
- How completely does hell want to destroy the spiritual church and mind? “To the last things of the church.” We need to say, “No way! As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!!!”

MICAH 3:4

“Then they will cry to the Lord, but He will not hear them; He will even hide His face from them, because they have been evil in their deeds.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Then they are not heard by the Lord.”

AC 5585 [6]

- “...‘hiding the faces’ denotes not being merciful. These things are predicated of Jehovah or the Lord, although He is never angry, and never turns away or hides His faces; but it is so said from the appearance with the man who is in evil; for the man who is in evil turns himself away, and hides from himself the Lord’s faces, that is, removes His mercy from himself. That it is the evils in man that do this, may also be seen from the Word, as in Micah...3:4.”
(Emphasis added.)

AC 10579 [8]

- “...where Divine good is not in Divine truth, there the face of Jehovah is not; and it also follows that where there is evil in falsity, the Divine does not appear. This is meant by Jehovah ‘hiding and turning away His faces’ in the following passages...Micah 3:4.”

AR 939

- “In the opposite sense by the face of Jehovah is signified anger and aversion, for the reason that the evil man turns himself away from the Lord; and when he turns himself away, it appears to him as if the Lord turned Himself away and was angry...” *Micah 3:4* is cited as an example.

AE 412 [18]

- “It can be known...what ‘the face’ of Jehovah or the Lord signifies, namely, the Divine love, and all good in heaven and in the church therefrom; and from this it can be known what is signified by ‘hiding’ or ‘concealing the faces,’ in reference to Jehovah or the Lord, namely, that it is to leave man in what is his own [proprium] and thus in the evils and falsities that spring forth from what is his own [proprium]; for man viewed in himself is nothing but evil and falsity therefrom, and that he may be in good he is withheld from these by the Lord, which is effected by being elevated out of what is his own [proprium].” *Micah 3:4* is cited as an example.

Derived Doctrine

“Then they will cry to the Lord...”

- To “cry” denotes “interior lamentations.” (*AC 10456*) To “cry” signifies the lamentable state of the interiors. (*AC 10457*) To “cry” is used in the prophets to signify “that goods and truths have been vastated; and a term is there made use of by which in the internal sense falsity is described...” (*AC 2240*) To “cry” signifies the destruction of their doctrinals. See *AE 514 [13]*.

“He will not hear them...”

- To “hear” means to obey and to perceive. (*AC 5477*) Turning away from the Lord harms obedience and perception. Therefore, it appears to the evil that the Lord does not see, hear, or know of their plight.

“...because they have been evil in their deeds.”

- “...it is evident what is meant by the deeds or works, according to which every one will be judged, namely, the will and understanding; consequently that by evil deeds are meant the deeds of an evil will...” (*CL 527*)
- “...evils done with deceit are the worst, because deceit is like a poison which infects and destroys with infernal venom, for it goes through the whole mind even to the interiors...he who is in deceit meditates evil, and feeds his

understanding with it, and takes delight in it, and thus destroys everything therein that belongs to man...the good of faith and of charity." (AC 9013)

Putting It All Together

The rulers, prophets, and priests, as the heads of Israel and Judah, did evil deeds in the temple of the Lord. They practiced malice and deceit. Poison existed throughout their hearts and minds, and being deceitful, they longed to destroy everything of faith and charity.

The Lord visited their inner world, and His presence disturbed and threatened them. They cried out because they knew that their ways could not continue in His presence. So they turned their backs to Him. They closed their eyes and wished for Him to be gone from their presence. In effect, they wanted Him to leave them alone so that they could continue in their deprived state. The Lord would not listen to their request. He would not listen to and obey them. Their lamentable state had to come to an end. Sin and evil cannot remain in the presence of the Lord. The things being said by evil and sin "...are not heard by the Lord." (P&P)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 3:4.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Can you see why people believe the Lord gets angry, turns Himself away from His children, and is not merciful? The literal sense reflects what humanity does. Evil people want the Lord sent away from their sight. They do the turning and then blame the Lord for His absence. How can we tell others about the true story of the Lord's "rejection"?
- The Lord, not hearing evil requests, not complying with their cries, is a loving Lord. He must not ignore or refuse to see evil. He will call every disorder to accountability. Evil deeds must be thoroughly cleansed of their poisonous effects. What might happen if, for even the briefest of moments, the Lord ignored a sin and pretended it wasn't present? Wouldn't such a moment of the Lord's tolerance cause the destruction of heaven and earth?
- Look up the correspondences of rulers, prophets, and priests. Why? To really see and understand the crux of Israel's spiritual problems, we need the help of the spiritual sense. For instance, look at *AE 513 [13]*, where it says that to be without a ruler "signifies to make man *so natural* that his knowledges are *devoid* of spiritual good...[so that] both thoughts and affections are *wandering*, and thus man is *destitute* of the intelligence that should lead and rule." (Emphasis added.)

- What does a false prophet represent? What does a false priest represent? Putting together the effect of these false leaders, how dangerously low had Israel fallen?

MICAH 3:5-7

"Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who make My people stray; who chant 'Peace' while they chew with their teeth, but who prepare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths: therefore you shall have night without vision, and you shall have darkness without divination; the sun shall go down on the prophets, and the day shall be dark for them. So the seers shall be ashamed, and the diviners abashed; indeed they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer from God."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "Because they have perverted all things of the Word and of doctrine, they can no longer see and receive anything of truth and good."

AC 2353 [2]

- "...in Micah...3:5, 6..."Prophets' here denote those who teach falsities; 'night,' the being 'dark,' the 'going down of the sun,' the 'blackening day,' denote falsities and evils.

AR 53

- "In these passages by 'sun' is not meant the sun of this world, but the sun of the angelic heaven, which is the Divine love and the Divine wisdom of the Lord; these are said to be 'obscured,' 'darkened,' 'covered,' and 'blackened' when there are evils and falsities with man. Hence it is evident, that similar things are meant by the Lord's words, where He speaks of the consummation of the age, which is the last time of the church..." *Micah 3:5-6* is cited.

AE 401 [16]

- "In Micah...3:5, 6...What these words signify in the spiritual sense may be seen...This signifies that in the church, where the Word is from which it might be known what is good and true, there is nevertheless nothing but evil and falsity. 'To cause the sun to set,' and 'to darken the earth,' signify the evil of life, and the falsity of doctrine in the church; for 'the rising of the sun' signifies the good of love, which is the good of the life, and 'the setting of the sun' signifies the evil of love, which is the evil of the life; and 'the darkening of the earth' signifies the consequent falsity of doctrine, 'darkness' signifying

falsities, and the ‘earth’ the church; ‘at noon,’ and ‘in the day of light,’ signify when there might be the knowledges of good and truth, because they have the Word, ‘noon’ signifying where there are the knowledges of good, and the ‘day of light’ where there are the knowledges of truth. Such knowledges as are from the Word are meant, because it is the church where the Word is that is here treated of.”

AC 3693 [2]

- “In Micah...3:6...‘the sun shall go down upon the prophets’ signifies that they have no longer any truth and understanding of truth; ‘prophets’ denote those who teach the truths of doctrine...”

AR 8

- “It is evident...that the apostles and prophets would not alone exult at the Last Judgment, but all who have received the truths of doctrine, and have lived according to them. These, therefore, are meant by ‘apostles’ and ‘prophets.’” *Micah 3:6* is cited as an example passage.

AR 312

- “They who appear in the abominable kind of blackness are called devils, such holding truth in abomination...” *Micah 3:6* is one of the passages cited.

AE 372 [2]

- “That ‘black’ signifies what is not true is evident...from other passages in the Word, where it is mentioned. As in Micah...3:6...The ‘prophets’ here treated of signify those who are in the truths of doctrine, and in a sense abstracted from persons, the truths of doctrine; that those meant by ‘prophets’ would see evils and would divine falsities is signified by ‘it shall be night unto you for vision, and darkness shall arise to you for divination;’ that they would know neither good nor truth is signified by ‘the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall grow black over them;’ ‘sun’ signifying the good of love, and ‘day’ the truth of faith, and ‘to grow black’ signifying not seen or known.”

AE 624 [14]

- “In Micah...3:6...‘It shall be night unto you for vision’ signifies that there shall be the understanding of falsity instead of the understanding of truth; ‘darkness for divination’ signifies falsities instead of revealed truths; ‘the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day grow black over them,’ signifies

that light shall no more flow in from the Lord out of heaven and enlighten, but thick darkness from the hells which shall darken the understanding."

Derived Doctrine

"*Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who make My people stray...*"

- What did the prophets say or do that led the people astray? Did they purposely speak lies? Were they reprehensible and completely blameworthy? Or were they weak and unable to stand up against the disorderly wishes of the people? Did they say things to be crowd pleasers, conscious that if they said what was wanted, it would give them the approval and power to keep their office and authority?
- Being a wise parent means saying no to selfish lifestyles. It means following a higher view so that there is civil, moral, and spiritual accountability.
- *P&P* gives us a powerful insight into the results of "false prophets" misleading the people: "**They perverted all things of the Word and doctrine; they can no longer see and receive anything of truth.**" (Emphasis added.)

"...*who chant 'Peace' while they chew with their teeth...*"

- *AE 448 [12]* explains "**to chant...**" in *Amos 6:5* as meaning: "...those who **counterfeit** good affections in externals, and **bring together for confirmation many things from the Word, and yet are interiorly evil...**" (Emphasis added.)
- The reference to chanting "**Peace**" is couched in such a way that we are to alertly notice that there is a calculated deception involved. *AC 1852* has this teaching that seems to apply. "...'peace' signifies [a promise] that nothing of the goods and truths shall be harmed..." *AC 3774* says "**peace**" signifies affirmation. *AC 6391* relates to us that "**peace**" signifies the Lord, heaven, and the good which is from heaven. So the counterfeit chanting had the right words, the right look, but the wrong motivation. It was all for self and nothing for the Lord.
- Chewing with the teeth, in the negative sense, signifies the exterior understanding, natural truth, falsity wanting to destroy truth. See *AC 9052 [1-2]*.
- We would do well to note the meaning of this teaching: it is counterfeited, external, good affections deviously promising no harm to spiritual good and truth while their "teeth," from hatred, intend to chew to shreds those things from the Lord, heaven, and the Word.

"...*but who prepare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths...*"

- We need to put this passage in such a context that the Lord can rationally lift us toward the spiritual sense. The light of the Word is exposing the intent of

the false prophets. The Lord reveals that they (the prophets) spoke what the people wanted to hear—if they received something to “eat” in return. The prophets took bribes. But if the prophet’s needs (bribes) were not met and nothing was put into their “mouths,” they declared war on those who wouldn’t comply with their corporeal demands.

- **“War,”** in the positive sense, signifies the Lord spiritually fighting against “many kinds of cupidities of evil and of persuasions of falsity...” (*AC 1663*) In the opposite sense, **“war”** signifies those who insanely “seize on shadows instead of light, on fallacies instead of realities...” so as to “disperse the truths...” and do so with “the lust of attacking and destroying...truths.” (*AC 9391 [16]*)
- In “the spiritual sense ‘the **mouth**’ means thought, because thought speaks by means of the **mouth**...” (*Divine Providence (DP) 80*) The **mouths** of the false prophets spoke the things of falsity from self-love and not truth from the understanding of the Word.

“...therefore you shall have night without vision, and you shall have darkness without divination...”

- The false prophets told so many lies (false reports) that they, and the people who believed them, were blindly unable to find the light, the truth, and the spiritual sense when looking for it.
- *AC 9188 [8]* explains that “‘diviners,’ ‘augers,’ ‘sorcerers,’ and the rest...in the internal sense [are] those who destroy the truths and goods of the church by means of memory-knowledges wrongly applied...from their own intelligence and through falsities from the love of self and the love of the world, consequently who learn and teach from the cupidity of profit and of honors, and not from any affection for the truth of faith and the good of life.”
- *AE 624 [14]* teaches that “...‘darkness for divination’ signifies falsities instead of revealed truths...”

“The sun shall go down on the prophets, and the day shall be dark for them.”

- In the positive sense, the **“sun”** signifies the Lord and charity toward the neighbor. (*AC 2495*) Turning this to the opposite sense, **“sun”** would signify that the false prophets lost their love for the Lord and the neighbor.
- **“Day”** signifies a state (the full extent) of faith or truth. See *AC 4175*. The **“day”** darkening represents what happens when prophets turn their backs to the Lord: they lose their faith and truth, and it “shall be dark for them.”

“So the seers shall be ashamed, and the diviners abashed; indeed they shall all cover their lips...”

- **“Seers”** signify the intelligent. See *AE 376 [32]*. **“Seers”** “were formerly called ‘prophets,’ and that ‘prophets’ denote those who teach, and also the truths of

doctrine..." (*AC 3863 [8]*) "Prophets signify those who teach truths, and are intelligent, and in the abstract sense, the doctrine of truth, and intelligence." (*AE 577 [7]*)

- To be shamed, or "ashamed," indicates the presence of innocence. Did the Lord touch the remains of these seers to bring them into a state of reflective shame? Something like this must have happened to them; otherwise, they would not have had any inkling of the devious and hellish quality of their ways.
- The word "abashed" means "To destroy the self-possession or self-confidence...to confuse or confound." (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*) In the presence of the Lord, the shams and pomposity of evil will fall apart, and there will be chaos.
- "Lips" signify doctrine. See *AE 279 [3]* and *AE 455*. "Lips" signify the doctrine of good and truth. See *AE 391 [8]*. *AE 580* adds that "lips" signify thought and affection or the understanding and the will. Therefore, in the presence of the Lord, the seers and diviners will cover their "lips" so that they will not speak the false things of the understanding and will. Their false doctrines will not openly offend or oppose the Lord. Why? Evil and sin in the Lord's presence are simply speechless and muted by His magnificent perfection.

"...for there is no answer from God."

- Did the Lord not have answers? Did He decide not to speak? Or was there no need to speak? The Lord's good or love never has to fight. His good has no need to defend itself. Evil will be ashamed. Evil will be abashed. The evil, and not the Lord, bring harm to their falsities. They will no longer misappropriate anything from His Word to prove or justify their egregious errors.

Putting It All Together

When the Word of the Lord is perverted "in all things" of doctrine, what happens internally to false "prophets" who allow their actions to be swayed by flattery and sensually prudent dictates?

1. They put on the air of being peaceful messengers. "No harm, no foul" is the message they cry out for all to hear. They try to convince others that the words of their mouth are really sound and necessary to deal with the issues of the day. So they play to the crowd. Instead of speaking the truth of the Lord, they cater to those who "bribe" and flatter them. The false prophets know what to say in order to increase their stature and position of authority. In other words, they sell themselves out to the highest bidder.
2. To those who don't flatter them, false prophets show a fierce side of their "prophetic" calling. They want to "chew" up those "who put nothing in their mouth." Isn't this a clear illustration of their deception? If anyone doesn't

- bribe them, that person becomes the enemy who must be fought. So they prepare war against those who fail to honor them in the name of “peace.”
3. False prophets become spiritually blind. Their darkness is like a night where there is not the tiniest speck of truth to guide them: A “night without vision.” How clear an example is this for us? Their internal blindness bars any message of hope from the Lord. “The sun shall go down on the prophets—the day shall be dark for them.”
 4. The Lord speaks “hard words” to the false prophets. False prophets, He says, will be ashamed and abashed. They will cover their lips because, in the presence of the Lord, they really have nothing of worth to say. When it comes to what is real and true, they have “no answers from God.” All the peace they simulate to cover themselves is for naught. They are blind; they are lost in their own darkness; their lips have nothing of worth to speak; and they are without Divine answers to the issues of eternal regeneration.
- These are the words of the Lord and not of Micah. Micah might have been inspired to hear, see, and record them, but we do well to remind ourselves to say aloud, “This is the Lord telling us what will become of false prophets!”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 3:5-7.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- This section is a wonderful lesson for us to consider. We need to create an orderly balance between our needs for creature comfort and our search for the higher spiritual needs of our soul. The Lord does not want us to take the path that is wide and more traveled by the spiritually disinterested. We do much better when we travel the road that is narrow and approach the Lord for His lasting peace and insights. Looking for the Word to confirm our finite wishes is totally wrong and short-sighted. We end up like blind people groping in total darkness. Now, how can we take this lesson seriously so we will not listen to false prophets who counterfeit integrity by twisting the Word to confirm outright lies and falsity? Falsity and hatred of the Lord deliberately strive to destroy the Lord in our hearts. They wish to prepare war and chew up the truth. How strongly do you feel about the necessity to avoid listening to or cooperating with such false prophets?
- Doing what seems to be popular—tailoring the Word to fulfill our wishes—is a perilous mistake. How can we stay alert and not follow the dictates of our sensual convenience and hellish desires? One way is to read carefully and reflect on what the Lord’s Word teaches us in this prophecy of Micah.
- Have you ever been taken in by smooth talkers? Does popular opinion hold a higher significance in your life than genuine doctrine drawn from the Word? Popular opinion doesn’t require much “study.” It is the easier, wider path to

- follow. Our proprium likes the easy way. The easy way doesn't require much internal amendment. The easy way rolls with the prevailing tide of human prudence. How much of "going along to get along" do you think we give in to?
- Did the message from the Lord about what happens to false prophets bolster your resolve to not put flattery in the mouths of the false prophets?
 - Do we need to be aware that false prophets don't like us? They will conjure up ways to war against us. Being prepared for their attack seems to be a good thing. Is that how you feel, too, or does it come across as a hard teaching?

MICAH 3:8

"But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "The Lord in respect to the Word which He will declare unto them."

AC 4281

- "...in the Word 'Jacob' denotes not only Jacob, but also all his posterity, as is evident from many passages in the Word..." *Micah 3:8* is cited among many other passages.

AC 9818 [20]

- "That in these passages [*Micah 3:8*, among others] 'the Spirit of Jehovah' denotes the Divine truth, and through this the life of faith and of love, is evident; that it flows in immediately from the Lord and also mediately from Him through spirits and angels..."

AE 183 [12]

- "That the 'Spirit of God' is Divine truth, and thence spiritual life to the man who receives it, is further evident from...*Micah 3:8*..."

Derived Doctrine

"But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord..."

- Focus first on the words "**But truly...**" The word "**but**" brings to our attention that something is going to be stated differently, objected to, or clarified. Some

exception is going to be brought forth. What exactly will be rectified? *Micah* 3:5-7 tells us that the prophets in Israel strayed from their spiritual uses. They chanted “peace,” but they were chewing up things with their teeth (representing the lowest natural things under the guise of justice; see *AC* 4424 [3]). The prophets were preparing war against anyone who didn’t pamper them with praise and power. Because of their self-love, spiritual darkness entered into the life of the church and the hearts of the people. The prophecy points to the shame that would come upon all false prophets. They would be abashed when the Lord’s truth was restored. In the meantime, there would be no answers forthcoming from God. **BUT** those who listen to and follow the Lord in word and deed will be **FULL**. **“Full,”** in the positive sense, represents a promise that the doctrines of the church will be restored and made powerfully full. See *AE* 280 [10]. To be **“full”** denotes being filled with spiritual food, that is, truth and good. See *AC* 492 [2].

- To be **“full of power”** signifies the merit and righteousness belonging to the Lord’s Divine Human and that from it is all Divine truth and Divine good and salvation. See *AE* 287 and 293.
- For the spiritually renewed person, who willingly receives the Lord’s power, the Lord will provide a dramatic rescue and escape from the tyrannical influence of the false prophets. Instead of darkness and silence, the Lord will provide light to such people, and He will give them fulfilling (stabilizing/balanced) answers.

“...and [He will give them] of justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.”

- **“Jacob”** signifies “perception in the natural where memory-knowledges are, concerning the general truth of the church...” (*AC* 6088)
- **“Jacob’s transgression”** “signifies evil against truth.” (*AC* 6563)
- “...justice in the Word is said of the good of love...” (*AE* 644 [15])
- “...‘might’ signifies that good...has its potency and truth has its first potency...” (*AE* 434 [17]) “...might’ signifies confidence; for knowledge (*scientia*) is of no avail if it does not serve the rational and the spiritual man...” (*AE* 357 [27])
- **“Israel”** means “those who belong to the spiritual church.” Put another way, **“Israel”** means “the interior church.” (*AC* 9404)
- Putting this passage together, what we have revealed is that Jacob, representative of the external memory-knowledges that brought evil against truth, and Israel, representative of the internal/spiritual church, were going to be cleansed by the Lord among the faithful with His advent. Justice and might would once again be the cleansing/refreshing tools for salvation within the church.
- What is the goal of the “Spirit of the Lord”? *Isaiah* 61:1-3 answers this question for us: **“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent me to**

heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord...to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn...to give them beauty for ashes..."

Putting It All Together

Hell loves to talk and shout (scream) a lot. As a matter of fact, Hell loves to turn up the volume of its noise so that it can drown out the still, quiet voice of the Lord. Hell's grandiose verbosity desires to intimidate those who want to serve the Lord. Hellish spirits call forth popular opinions drawn from the consensus of human prudence. Using false logic and twisted human facts, they construct philosophical webs to ensnare those who are ignorant of the Lord's Word.

The Lord announces in this prophecy that their reign of terror will come to an end. They will be overturned and exposed once and forever. For a time, it will appear that Hell's tactics are working. But when the Word is rightly opened and its wondrous truths shine through the darkness and confusion of Hell, good things will happen.

What are the good things the Lord promises will happen? The full power of the Spirit of the Lord will freely flow immediately and meditately from Him and the angels of heaven. The hearts and minds of the faithful will be revitalized. His "justice and might" will eliminate the legion of false conclusions drawn from the pool of external natural memory-knowledges. "Justice and might" will restore power within the spiritual church to care for the souls of the faithful entrusted to it. *Psalm 51:12* captures for us what the prayer will be when the Divine rescue comes sweeping in: "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation." (Emphasis added.) Can we say those words over again? The joy of the Lord's salvation will be felt and will empower all within the spiritual church. How long has it been since we felt the joy of the Lord's salvation? It will come. It will bring with it justice and might. How do we know these things will happen? The Lord says so. Let His prophecy turn off the noise and rabble of Hell. We, with the Lord's help, can invite the power of His salvation to come inside and warm our souls with joy! These encouraging words are spoken by the Lord. "And let all the people say Amen." (*Psalm 106:48*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 3:8.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- The Word persistently declares, especially in the books of the prophets, that the Lord's advent will occur. Along with that message, we are assured that

Hell will be totally defeated. The church will be restored. Joy will come in the morning. Why do we listen to Hell when it says that it is more powerful than the Lord? Why do we believe that it is easier to sin than to do what is good?

- The Lord's justice and might are at work now. Do we see any signs of them working?
- The prayer of the church is that we will see and feel the joy of the Lord's salvation. Why isn't this theme more forcefully included in our study and worship experiences? I don't remember hearing many of us sharing the expression "joy of salvation." Are we missing out on something vital? Are we neglecting to allow ourselves to experience the joy of salvation? Are we careful of using such expressions because they sound like something evangelical people would say?

MICAH 3:9-11

"Now hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, who abhor justice and pervert all equity, who build up Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with iniquity: her heads judge for a bribe, her priests teach for pay, and her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the Lord, and say, 'Is not the Lord among us? No harm can come upon us.'"

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "They falsify all the truths and goods of the Word, and yet they say that God is with them."

AR 612

- "...by 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem' are signified the inmost things of the church; and as the church in the heavens makes one with the church on earth, therefore by 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem' is meant the church everywhere, but by 'Zion' the church as to love, and by 'Jerusalem' the church as to doctrine from love." *Micah 3:10* is cited as one example.

AE 850 [18]

- "The devastation of the church by the Jewish nation, by this that they had falsified every Divine truth, is described throughout the Word by the vastation of Zion. As in... Micah 3:10..."

Derived Doctrine

"Now hear this..."

- These words call us to attention, to being alert. When? Right away—NOW!
- The Writings make it clear with numerous references that **hearing** signifies obedience. More precisely, in *AC 8361*, we are taught that **hearing** “signifies to perceive, to understand, and to have faith...hearing signifies **faith in the will and act, thus obedience.**” (Emphasis added.)

“...you heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel...” (Emphasis added.)

- Are we to assume that by the **“heads of the house of Jacob”** are meant only the kings, queens, and princes of the royal family? Or does this apply to the political and religious heads of the house of Jacob as well?
- Why does the prophecy call our attention to the **“rulers of Israel”**? Is there a spiritual difference between the words “heads” and “rulers”?
- It is essential, in answering these questions, to go back and read the Derived Doctrine section for *Micah 3:1-3*. This section is too long to repeat here, but it is essential to review it because it will help us understand why the use of the words **“heads”** and **“rulers”** is important to denote correspondential differences applied to Judah and Israel.

“...who abhor justice and pervert all equity...”

- The meaning of these words is clear with little research. The heads and rulers of Jacob and Israel despised justice and equity. Each of these virtues was for sale to the highest bidder. They made a mockery of justice and equity and cared little for what the Word taught about the poor, oppressed, widowed, and orphaned. Love of self reigned over the love of the neighbor.

“...who build up Zion with bloodshed...”

- *AC 4818 [4]* gives us a clue about those who love **“bloodshed”**: “These are they spoken of in the Word who are said to be ‘in bloods,’ for they are in cruel rage against the whole human race which does not adore their articles of faith, and thus themselves, and does not offer its gifts upon their altars.”
- What is the group of blood-shedders aiming at? *AE 325 [26]* teaches that **“Zion”** signifies the conjunction of truth and good. *AE 326 [5]* teaches that **“Zion”** signifies “the church where the Lord is to be worshipped.” *AE 328 [10]* teaches that **“Zion”** “signifies the church **which is in love to the Lord.**” (Emphasis added.)

- Those intent on bloodshed want to build up Zion with their own values and care naught for the harmony of good and truth. They definitely wanted Zion to be a place that was not in love with the Lord.

“...and Jerusalem with iniquity...”

- **“Jerusalem”** signifies the church in relation to doctrine. Here are but a few references to check this teaching: AE 253 [5], AE 355 [5], and AE 376 [23], which has this teaching: “Jerusalem signifies to draw the truths of the church from the Word.” Can we not see why the bloodshed occurred? Self-love does not hold the truths of Word with integrity. Self-love has a burning hatred for the church and for truth drawn from the Word.

“Her heads judge for a bribe, her priests teach for pay, and her prophets divine for money.” (Emphasis added.)

- Note the impropriety of the three classes (heads) mentioned, the judges, the priests, and the prophets. The judges took bribes, the priests took pay, and the prophets divined for money. The judges were making judicial pronouncements for bribes. The priests taught what their employers directed them to teach. The prophets were voices of magic and charlatanry. They heard not and served not the Lord “freely.” None of them came to the Lord for His revelation.

“Yet they lean on the Lord, and say, ‘Is not the Lord among us? No harm can come upon us.’”

- How tragic these words are. The children of God thought they could do anything, say anything, and behave in any disorderly way and still be free from the consequences of their actions. Sadly, tragically, they believed that as God’s chosen, there was nothing that would remove them from the “favored nation” category.
- How could the children of Israel have come to this belief? Had they not learned over the course of their history that their wayward actions always had consequences? Had they forgotten their years of bondage and estrangement from family and Jerusalem? Was their arrogance and ignorance causing them to be spiritually destitute of reason and freedom in matters of their spiritual state? The Word shows us that they were helplessly caught in the eddy of falsity. They were figuratively going down the drain in a vortex of spiritual death. “Hear Now” is a message of great importance from the Lord because their words of “no harm can come upon us” were perilously empty and totally false.
- **“...yet they lean on the Lord...”** The picture we get of this “leaning” is not one of positive assurance and dependence on the leading of the Lord. Instead, it connotes a demanding traditional expectation, whereby they felt they were

owed something because they were the chosen people. Like a spoiled child, they were saying, "You promised me. You said You would, so now You have got to give in." This was the wrong attitude and a foolish leaning on the Lord's justice and mercy.

Putting It All Together

When anyone falsifies the truths and goods of the Word, how can they possibly believe that the Lord will be with them, supporting their evil deeds? That is exactly what the children of Israel did and believed. Judges allowed their uses to be directed by bribery and not by order and fairness to all people. Their priests did not do the bidding of the Lord and His Word. Instead, they did what their employers asked. Their income meant more to them than humble obedience to the Word. Israel's prophets "divined" for riches as well. Instead of allowing themselves to be vessels or instruments of the Lord, they supplied pleasant "readings" to those who offered them riches.

Is any of this going on in the world and church today? Are there people (churches) who believe they are under a Divine protection and are especially blessed and chosen by the Lord? I know some who believe they are "right" because they can claim apostolic succession from Peter to the present. In their eyes, they are the true church. All other denominational faiths are not legitimately within the body of Christ. This is a strong statement which at times is questioned and denied, but in some quarters, it is believed fervently. Their faith teaches that sins can be absolved by the priesthood, and so confession is used as a way of excusing evils and sins. Confession is an easy out requiring little self-examination or making one's self guilty and no supplication of the Lord's help to work toward leading a new life.

Regeneration is a process of honesty with the Lord. It is offering up a broken spirit and a contrite heart. So twisting the Word, selling truth off to the highest (bribe) bidder will not be pleasing in the sight of the Lord. Isn't this goal truly what we have laid before us in this prophecy from Micah? May we hear and comply with what the Lord says to us. Our mission is to read the Word of the Lord with a promise that we will let truth be truth. Our commitment to the Lord, and His Word, must be strong and resolute. Read with me the closing paragraphs of *CL 233*: "...to be able to confirm whatever one pleases is not the mark of an intelligent [person], but to be able to see that the truth is true and that the false is false, and to confirm it is the mark of an intelligent [person]." The prophecy of *Micah* challenges us to read, reflect, and apply the things of the Lord and to put aside our own flawed prudence, no matter how many surveys of popular opinion weigh in against the teachings of the Lord's Word.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 3:9-11.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Do we really need questions to stimulate our reflection? The teachings here are pretty straightforward. How could we not see that the demise of the church occurs when its leaders (priests and laypeople together) sell out their offices? How can we fail to see the application to the state we are in when smugness moves us to think we are a chosen church and our promise is secured no matter what we say or do?
- This section is clear and open. “Now hear this” is what the Lord says. I hope we stop, listen, and reflect on the meaning and application of this section to our lives. It is time to put away arrogance and ignorance and take on humility and attentiveness before the Lord. He can do so much more for us in this state.
- Have we taken bribes in our working with the world? What is meant by this question? We deal daily with a world of changing standards. What at one time is agreed upon and accepted by a majority of people can in time change drastically. Look at how the world’s view of homosexuality has changed. What brought about those changes? Did we get “enlightenment”? Were our former views of homosexuality errant? Or did our views change because new popular opinions were generated by causes espoused by high-profile celebrities? Did we allow the Word to be “hushed up” because to cite the Word would bring charges of being antiquated or “homophobic”? Have we worked out compromises so that we “fit in” among members of the secular world? Probably many of us have let money do the talking in the sense that we acted in politically correct ways because our jobs required us to do so. Staying true to the Lord is not always easy. So we rationalize and fail to stand up for the teachings of the Lord. How can we be more principled in upholding the truths of the Lord so that we don’t sell out to convenient or expedient logic?
- What points stand out most for you following a careful reading and reflection on these passages from *Micah*? Were you mentally and spiritually touched by their message? Look again at the list (and professions) of those who sold out for their own aggrandizement. It’s kind of scary to think of the effect it had on the spiritual health of the church. Do you recall what *P&P* said about the church leaders? They falsified the things of the church, and yet they told themselves that “the Lord is with us.” Do we hear a warning bell within our heart and conscience?

MICAH 3:12

“Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the temple like the bare hills of the forest.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Therefore the whole church will be destroyed.”

AR 612

- “Hence by ‘Zion’ and ‘Jerusalem’ are signified the inmost things of the church; and as the church in the heavens makes one with the church on earth, therefore by ‘Zion’ and ‘Jerusalem’ is meant the church everywhere, but by ‘Zion’ the church as to love, and by ‘Jerusalem’ the church as to doctrine from love...That by ‘mount Zion’ is signified heaven and the church where the Lord alone is worshiped, may appear from the following passages...” *Micah 3:10, 12* are cited among many other passages.

AE 850 [18]

- “The devastation of the church by the Jewish nation, by this that they had falsified every Divine truth, is also described throughout the Word by the vastation of Zion.” *Micah 3:10, 12* are cited as examples of this doctrine.

AC 368

- A “...‘field’ signifies doctrine; ‘possessions’ and ‘treasures’ denote the spiritual riches of faith, or the things that belong to the doctrines of faith...It is declared concerning Zion, when destitute of the doctrine of faith, that she shall be ‘plowed like a field’...Micah 3:12...”

AC 5895

- “...in the opposite sense ‘plowing’ signifies the evil which blots out good, thus vastation; as in...Micah 3:12.”

Derived Doctrine

“Therefore because of you...”

- When any spiritual principles are purposely (and willingly) violated, it must be known who made the transgression. Why? Is it to give us a sense of low self-esteem? Does the Lord enjoy criticizing us? Spiritual failure lies in the hearts of the people and not in the Lord. This passage underscores the truth that the Lord always does His part. The people of the church failed to uphold the irrevocable laws of Divine Providence. Now the question lies before us: how can we make amends and get back on track with the Lord? Confession is

the single-word answer. We are to own up to our mistakes without blaming others or the Lord. “I made the poor choices.” Next, we need to acknowledge, “I need to supplicate the Lord for help.” And lastly, “I need to choose the way of a new life, uprooting the errant first root of life called the proprium.” (These quotes sum up what we need to say to the Lord in a prayerful manner. The Writings indicate that these words are well-suited to preparing for and receiving the Holy Supper.)

“...Zion shall be plowed like a field...”

- In the positive sense, **“plowing”** denotes **the restorative work** of (love) good. “Thus ‘plowing’ is preparation by good for receiving truths...” (*AC 5895*)
- **Plowing** serves the purpose of turning over the hard or encrusted surface of the soil. It removes the worthless stubble of the old crop or the beginning growth of weeds. It uncovers rocks and stumps that would deter growth.
- There are more than 37 numbers in the Writings giving us the signification of **“Zion.”** Here are but three of them that seem to capture its spiritual meaning. *AE 294 [10]* teaches that “Zion signifies the church in respect to the Word, the internal or spiritual sense of the Word in respect to good...” *AE 326 [5]*explains that “Zion signifies the church where the Lord is to be worshiped...her ‘desolation’ signifies a lack of truth and good from an absence of truths...”*AE 375 [26]* notes that “Zion signifies **the conjunction** of truth and good...and Zion signifies the church where the good of love is...” (Emphasis added.)
- *AC 3766* explains the signification of a **“field”** this way: “In the Word the church is signified by ‘land,’ ‘ground,’ and ‘field,’ but with a difference. The reason why ‘field’ signifies the church, is that the church as a field receives the seeds of good and truth; for the church has the Word, from which come these seeds; and this is the reason why everything in a field signifies that which is of the church, such as sowing, reaping, standing corn, wheat, barley, and other things, and this also with a difference.”

“...Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins...”

- *AE 253 [5]* and *AE 355* teach that “Jerusalem signifies the church in respect to doctrine.” When we read the name **“Jerusalem,”** we are to think about the quality and health of a church in relation to the genuine doctrines of the Lord.
- Consider the importance of the above teaching when we read that “Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins.” What is implied? The Lord in *Matthew 15:9* summed up what was going on in the church: “...in vain they worship Me, **teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.**” (Emphasis added.) All of these man-made teachings will be collected and placed in a pile of deadness. The Lord will rid (cleanse) His church of such uselessness.

"...and the mountain of the temple like the bare hills of the forest."

- In the positive sense, a “mountain” represents love. See *AR 403*. In the opposite sense, a “mountain” represents the love of self and of the world. See *AC 1687*.
- Reflecting on the meaning of “**the mountain of the temple,**” we need to remind ourselves that the Lord regularly (moment by moment) performs an “exploration of the state of the church in general.” See *AE 903* and *909*. Within the temple, Divine truth is to perpetually shine forth. In the mountain temple, the priests are to keep the eternal light of the Divine Human burning brightly. No strange coals are to be added as a substitute fire. In the mountain temple, the holiness of worship is to come forth from a deep and abiding love of the Lord and not from a love of self and the world.
- What are we to make of the words “**like the bare hills of the forest**”? Did some blight cause deforestation? Did some other growth, like a wild grapevine, climb and cover the branches of the tree so as to choke or smother its host? Did a crop of thorns and thistles win out over seedling trees in a competition for space, soil, and nourishment? “Bare hills” seem to indicate some kind of emptiness where growth and productiveness used to exist. What, then, is this passage teaching us on the spiritual level?
- *AE 388* teaches that a “forest signifies the sensual man, which is in absolute fallacies.” *AE 458* explains that a “forest signifies the natural...the natural separated from the spiritual.” In other words, the natural person with his absolute fallacies causes the bareness of the hills of the forest. When the natural mind breaks away and separates itself from the spiritual goals of the Lord, unproductiveness or barrenness appears on the mountain of the temple.

Putting It All Together

Our church, our internal church, needs to be alert and ready to fight against complacency and indifference to the ways of the Lord. To do less causes the words of *P&P* to ring true: “Therefore the whole church will be destroyed.” This may appear to be a one-on-one fight. The Lord fights with and for us. He wants to fight with us to wake us up, and at the same time, He fights for us so we can safely discover our spiritual potential. We can’t expect others to wage the fight for us. We may seek advice from friends and pastors, but it is our dedication that will carry the day in building our internal church.

I shudder to think of hearing the words of the Lord: “Therefore because of you...” My heart and prayer want to cry out, “No, no let it not be so. I don’t want any stubbornness or absolute fallacies to separate me from the love of the Lord. I’d rather have His restorative plowing turn over any hardness so the seeds of good can be planted and flourish. Lord, please assist me so I can get rid of the weeds, stumps, and rocks in my spiritual field. Heap the falsity in piles so I will see what ruination

they wanted to bring about. As for those bare spots on the hills of the forest, I pray that the forest of my life will produce mighty trees like the magnificent cedars of Lebanon that Solomon specially ordered to be used in the building of the temple dedicated to the worship of the Lord."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 3:12.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- *New Church Life* (2006) printed a three-part article by Don Rose entitled "Uncovering a Conspiracy to Keep People from Reading the Writings." Don speaks well of how hard Hell works to stir up problems within and without to keep us from reading the truths of the Lord. Hell wants to win. Hell seeks to discourage us from communicating with the Lord. Please read Don's article. What do you think about Hell's conspiracy? Is Hell working relentlessly to cause barrenness on the mountains?
- Do you welcome the "plowing" process of good (love) breaking up the soil of the mind? The Writings speak positively about this restoration that occurs so that seeds can be planted in a soil that welcomes them. Plowing might be hard for us if we have become comfortable with our ways. Change is sometimes difficult and unwanted. Do we pray, asking the Lord to fight with and for us?
- What do you think the people of Micah's time thought about this message? Did they hear it? Did they laugh it off? Did they launch a point-and-counterpoint rationalization defense?
- What tack do you think our times take with these teachings?
- How powerful were the words "Therefore because of you..." in your reflective time? Wouldn't we rather blame others—especially the Lord—for our problems?
- The work of repentance is easy. The process isn't hard, according to the Writings. The difficulty arises when we fail to, once or twice a month, root out the power of our proprium. Where did I get this teaching? Read number 97 of *Doctrine of Life*.

Chapter Four

MICAH 4:1-2

"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “A new church will be established by the Lord when He comes into the world, and it will be formed out of the nations.”

AC 6435 [5]

- “...the signification of ‘hills,’ is evident from the following passages...(Micah 4:1)...the ‘mountain of Jehovah,’ which is Zion, denotes the Lord’s celestial kingdom, thus the good of this kingdom, which is of love to the Lord; thus in the supreme sense it is the Lord Himself, for all the love and all the good in the celestial kingdom belong to the Lord.”

AC 10438 [3]

- “That ‘mountains’ signify the heaven where is the good of celestial love, is manifest from many passages in the Word, as from the following...Micah 4:1...”

AC 3305 [6-7]

- “...Israel will not be gathered together from wherever they have been dispersed, and will not be sanctified, and the sanctuary placed in the midst of them forever, as is said; but this is to be with those who in the representative sense are signified by ‘Israel;’ and who, as is known, are all of the faithful...In the supreme sense of all these passages by ‘Jacob’ and ‘Israel’ is meant the Lord; and in the representative sense the Lord’s spiritual kingdom, and the church which is a church from the doctrine of truth and the life of good. By ‘Jacob’ are meant those who are in the externals of this church; and by ‘Israel’ those who are in its internals...”

AE 405 [26]

- “Since ‘a mountain’ signified the good of love, and in the highest sense, the Divine good, and from the Divine good Divine truth proceeds, so Mount Zion was built up above Jerusalem, and in the Word ‘Mount Zion’ signifies the church that is in the good of love to the Lord, and ‘Jerusalem’ the church that is in truths from that good, or the church in respect to doctrine. For the same reason Jerusalem is called ‘the mountain of holiness,’ also ‘the hill;’ for ‘the mountain of holiness,’ likewise ‘hill’ signify spiritual good, which in essence is truth from good...”

Doctrine of the Lord 39

- “That the Lord is called ‘the God of Israel,’ and ‘the God of Jacob,’ is evident from the following passages...” *Micah 4:1, 2* are cited among many passages.

Derived Doctrine

“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days...”

- What shall come to pass in the **“latter days”**? The Lord’s advent. Why did He have to make His advent? *Doctrine of the Lord 3* teaches, “The Lord came into the world in the fullness of times, which was when He was no longer known by the Jews, and when, consequently, there was nothing of the church left; and unless He had then come into the world and revealed Himself, mankind would have perished in eternal death...The Lord came into the world in order to set up a new church which should acknowledge Him as the Redeemer and Saviour, and be redeemed and saved through love to Him and faith in Him.” **N.B. there are six points in this number. I have given but two of them. Look over all six reasons for His advent.**

“...that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills...”

- *AE 495 [26]* points out for us a very important doctrinal teaching in this verse. How so? Note first that the Lord’s house was to be established on top of the mountains. It was to be higher than the hills. Why did the Lord decree this? The answer is found by using the suggested doctrinal terms **celestial good and spiritual good**. What are their differences? Celestial good is the highest and purest form of love. It is the love of all loves. It is a love that comes only from the Lord. Angels and human beings make no contribution to the Lord’s Celestial good (love). It is above all other loves. Those who truly love the Lord and see Him as the highest good **are brought by the Lord to this celestial good by an internal way**. See *AC 4581*. Only the sincere and those who intend to keep the Lord in the highest position are gifted with

celestial good. Spiritual good, as represented by the hills, comes to a person by **external ways**. AC 5595 explains the difference this way: "Spiritual good is truth that has become good; for truth becomes good when the person lives according to it, for it then passes into the will, and from the will into act, and becomes of the life... Spiritual good is distinguished from celestial good in that celestial good is implanted in man's will..." by the Lord alone, whereas spiritual good involves learning ways to love the neighbor through various forms of charity. Celestial good loves the Lord and willingly accords Him the highest place—yes, above the hills.

"...and peoples shall flow to it..."

- Let's pause for a moment and consider the inclusiveness of the Lord's words. Israel is not mentioned specifically as the chosen people. "**Peoples shall flow to it...**" The Lord, in *John 10:16*, said, "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd." Isn't this a wonderful teaching? The Lord will draw all people unto Himself, and He will be their God.
- The words "**flow to**" have implications, too. Heaven flows into everyone's mind, bringing enlightenment. Like the Wisemen, people will come arduously seeking the birthplace of the Messiah.

"*Many nations shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob...'*"

- The word "**nation**" has a dual representation. In the negative sense, "**nation**" signifies the evils of love and life (see AC 139), and in the positive sense, "**nation**" signifies those who are in the good of love and of life (see AE 175 [2], AE 388 [28], AC 1159 [3], and AE 881). There are 35 other references we could cite, but the ones selected are quite representative of the others.
- I believe we can safely assume, then, that this verse is talking about the positive representation of "**nations**" because the "**nations**" are quite eager to draw near the Lord. They are seeking His counsel, inspiration, and direction. An evil life and evil good would not want to be in the presence of the Lord, nor would it want to be brought into the sphere of His enlightenment.
- The word "**come**," as explained in AR 629, signifies "...the acknowledgment and confession that every truth of the Word...is from the Lord, according to which every man will be judged..." AC 5999 teaches that "**'going up'** signifies elevation...[so that] the internal celestial [the Lord within a person's soul] shall [be vivified]..."
- The "**mountain of the Lord**" draws our attention to love. Whose love? The Lord's love (see AE 815 and AC 9420). The "**house of the God of Jacob'** signifies the Divine Itself, and the Divine Human, thus the Lord..." (AC 6838, *emphasis added*.) These teachings point out an important prophecy and promise by the Lord. That which had been lost and had become invisible to

humankind (the Lord) will once again become visible. This is the promise given in the books of the prophets, and it is heralded in the message of the New Church. Note in this next section how all of this shall come about.

“...He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.”

- *AC 9418* reminds us that it is self-evident that to “**teach**” denotes instruction. *TCR 308* adds the following: to “...teach’ signifies to observe, study, and judge from the things that the Lord Jehovah created...” (Emphasis added.) In the context of this passage, our teaching (learning) will not be oriented toward ourselves; we will learn only that which is from the Lord. “The Lord’s ‘ways’ signify all the truths of heaven and the church.” (*AE 938*)
- **“...and we shall walk in His paths.”** *AR 167* explains what it means to walk with God. “...to walk’ signifies to live and ‘to walk with God’ signifies to live with Him’...” (Emphasis added.)

“For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

- **“Zion”** signifies “...the church in which there is celestial love.” (*AE 504 [8]*) **“Zion”** signifies the unity of the will and understanding, conjoined in perfect harmony, because such unity comes from the Lord alone.
- Celestial love from the Lord is the only origin from which the law can come forth. Human prudence on its own (secularizing) cannot match nor approximate the purity and equality of the laws of the Lord.
- **“Jerusalem,”** in the positive sense, signifies “...the doctrine of the New Church.” (*AE 194 [4]*) “Jerusalem signifies the church where there is genuine doctrine.” (*HH 187*) “...‘Jerusalem’ signifies the church as to worship, and therefore also the church as to doctrine.” (*AR 880*)
- These two things, the Lord’s law going forth from **“Zion”** and the Lord’s word from **“Jerusalem,”** illustrate what the Lord promises with His coming. He will rule (lead) from His Celestial Love, and His laws will provide us with genuine doctrines that will amend (cleanse) the church and the lives of all the followers of “His new church.”

Putting It All Together

P&P summed up the meaning of this section with these words: “A new church will be established by the Lord when He comes into the world, and it will be formed out of the nations.”

Match this teaching with Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 111:

“As without the Word there is no knowledge of the Lord, and therefore no salvation, it pleased the Lord that when the Word had been wholly falsified and adulterated among the Jewish nation and thus as it were brought to nothingness, that He should descend

from heaven and come into the world, and fulfill the Word, and thereby repair and restore it, and again give light to the earth's inhabitants..." (Emphasis added.)

Without the Word, there is no knowledge of the Lord and there is no salvation: Isn't that a gripping thought? Left to our own ways, we would have been hopelessly lost, confused, and in utter darkness. But the Lord would not permit this. It pleased Him to come into our world. It pleased Him to repair and restore the Word. It pleased Him to give light again.

Our enthusiasm can be expressed in this way:

1. Let's go to the mountain of the Lord. We need to encourage one another to go and see the spiritual things which the Lord is bringing to pass.
2. In the presence of the Lord, let's announce (profess) that we have come so that He will teach us His way.
3. We need to make it prayerfully known that we are asking for His enlightenment so we can walk in His path.
4. Our mission is to learn His laws and the things from His mouth.
5. It is His church and His doctrine. We have no proprietary rights or exclusive ownership of the New Church.
6. May the words of our mouth and the meditation of our heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer!

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 4:1-2.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Have you ever taken notice (or notes) about how disorderly things got within the Jewish Church? How many mistakes can you recall them making? Were there any faithful souls left? Surely there was a faithful remnant set aside for the Lord to work with. I picture them quietly protected by the Lord so they could be of use in the restorative work of redemption.
- The quote from the *Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 111* is one to ponder. Even though it carries some bad news about the state of the church, there is within it a message of happiness. What are some of its uplifting words? It pleased the Lord; He came to repair and restore; He came to give light; He came to fulfill the Word among the inhabitants of the world. There are no words of anger or retribution. Can you hear, feel, His words of cheer and encouragement?
- The Lord's plan is to restore our vision of Him. No longer will He be hidden or invisible. He came that we might begin to worship Him in His Divine

Human. How is this going for us? Is the great Nunc Licet giving you a view of Him that is real and satisfying?

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Falsities and evils will no longer be there, but truths and goods...”

AE 403 [12]

- “...in Micah 4:3, 4...And as [in the Lord’s kingdom] such have truths inscribed on their hearts, and therefore do not dispute about them, it is said that ‘nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more,’ which signifies that in that kingdom there shall be no disputation about truths...That through the truths and goods in which they are, they shall be safe from evils and falsities is signified by ‘they shall sit under their own vine and under their own fig-tree, and none shall make afraid.’”

AE 734 [2]

- “That ‘war’ signifies in the Word spiritual war, which is the war of falsity from evil against truth from good, and of truth from good against falsity from evil, or what is the same, which is carried on by those who are in falsities from evil against those who are in truths from good, is evident from many passages in the Word, of which the following only need be cited...Micah 4:3.”

TCR 304

- “Heavenly peace, which, in respect to the hells, is that evils and falsities shall not rise up from them and break forth, may be compared in many respects with natural peace; as with peace after war, when every one is secure from enemies and is safe in his own city and home and living in his own fields and garden. This is as the prophet said when he spoke naturally of heavenly peace...Micah 4:4...”

Derived Doctrine

“He shall judge between many peoples...”

- Let’s focus for a moment on the word **“judge.”** The Lord is the Divine judge. What is He seeking to do? AC 7154 teaches us that to **“judge”** signifies “the Divine disposal.” The Lord wants to “dispose” the views of all the people. To “dispose” means to distribute and put things in their place; “dispose” means to arrange, to regulate, to adjust, to settle matters fairly.

- To say that the Lord “**shall judge between many peoples**” means He will cut through the man-made theories and the obfuscations of multiple conflicting views. His good and truth will unravel tradition and derived doctrines, and will, “from another source,” settle fairly every singular and particular issue.(AC 8696) What is that other source? His infinite love, His infinite truth, and His infinite uses.

“...and rebuke strong nations afar off...”

- To “**rebuke**” “signifies the desolation of all truth...” (AE 342 [8]) “**Afar off**” signifies the Lord’s desire to “save them although they are far from salvation.”(AE 811 [23]) “From afar” signifies those who are “apart and remote from, also opposed to, goods and truths.” (AE 403 [13])
- A “**strong nation,**” in the positive sense, signifies “the potency of the powers of combating...” (AC 6416; AE 448 [6]) The opposite sense would seem to denote a weakness, a deficiency of powers. These “**strong nations**” imagined they had their own power to combat evil and falsity. Strength apart from the Lord is a useless and foolish fantasy of unity and preparedness.

“They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.”

- We need the internal sense of the Lord’s Word to set the meaning of this text in its proper context. Without the spiritual sense, wrong applications will be made in the external sense. For instance: Placards and car bumper stickers bearing this quote are used to urge the end of all earthly warfare. Peace advocates, called pacifists, indicate that these passages teach that the Lord is against war. As noble as this cause may appear, is that really what is being taught? *Isaiah 2:4* and *Micah 4:3* use the same wording about beating swords into ploughshares, but *Joel 3:10* instructs us to do just the opposite: “beat your plowshares into swords and...pruning hooks into spears.” Which is it? To draw a correct answer from the Word, let’s slowly and carefully turn to the Writings so we can rightly understand the difference between spiritual warfare and earthly warfare.
- AE 644 [20] notes that to “**beat**” means “the contentions and combats of truth from good with falsities from evil...”
- “**Swords**” “signify such things as belong to spiritual warfare...” (AE 671 [3])(Emphasis added.) We read in AE 1145 [9] that “**swords**” “signify falsities destroying truths...” AE 315 [8] explains that “swords signify the destruction of truth by falsities...” Do we see a meaning emerging as to why we are instructed to beat our swords into ploughshares? The Lord is urging us to lay down our weapons of opposition and falsity that resist His truth. Putting down the sword and the spear—converting them into ploughshares and pruning-hooks—is explained in AE 734 [3], which states that “**ploughshares**” denote the church as to the good of life, and “**pruning hooks**” denote truths of doctrine. To help us focus, let’s highlight the

meaning of “**ploughshares**” and “**pruning hooks**” once again: **the church following the good of life and the church following the truths of the Lord’s doctrine**. We are directed by the Lord to surrender to Him our weapons of spiritual resistance and rebellious defiance.

- Now can we take this same doctrinal information and use it to understand why Joel’s prophecy turned the wording around? I believe Joel’s admonition is for us, as we regenerate, to take the good of life from the Lord and use it as a sword to fight against evil and falsity. He is also teaching us to take, and use, the doctrines of the Lord in the defense of the Lord’s doctrinal causes.

“...nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore...”

- The words **“nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom”** are explained in the following passages. In *AC 1846*: “...the non-existence of charity is meant by ‘nation being stirred against nation and kingdom against kingdom’...” In *AC 2120*: “...by ‘nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom’ nothing else is meant than evils against evils and falsities against falsities...” In *AE 48 [2]*: “...‘nations against nation’ is evil against good and ‘kingdom against kingdom’ is falsity against truth...”
- With the above passages, do we not see what is meant by “neither shall they learn war anymore”? When the Lord’s new church is established, charity will be at its core; there will no longer be conflicting evils and falsities; truth will be free of hellish assaults and ridicule.

“But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree...”

- Our ability to penetrate the meaning and understanding of the spiritual sense of **“to sit”** depends on some reflection on passages such as *AE 687b*. “...the expressions ‘to walk,’ ‘to stand,’ and ‘to sit,’ are used as following one another, for ‘to walk’ pertains to the life of thought from intention, ‘to stand’ to the life of the intention from the will, and ‘to sit’ to the life of the will, thus it is life’s being (*esse*).” In *AE 687 [14]*, we read that “...‘to sit’ signifies to be, and also to continue in one state and pertains to the will...”
- *AC 3552* states that “to ‘sit’ involves something of tranquility.” And lastly, let’s consider this quote from *AE 687 [17]*: “...‘to sit’ has reference to the being (*esse*) of man, which belongs to his will and love.”
- The word “intention” refers to our will, our love, and our desire. These things make up our “being” or *esse*.
- “...‘to sit under his vine and under his fig tree’...” is explained in *AC 5113 [13]*: “...in the genuine sense a ‘vine’ signifies the good of the intellectual part, and a ‘fig tree’ the good of the exterior man...”

“...and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.”

- Falsity and evil will no longer rule. Truth and good will reign. *AE 403 [12]* sums up the meaning of this passage with these words: “...through the truths and goods in which they are, they shall be safe from evils and falsities...” This is what is “signified by ‘they shall sit under their own vine and under their own fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid.’”

Putting It All Together

The Lord is offering some powerful encouragement in these verses. He wants us to “stay the course” by trusting and following Him and His Word. Evil and falsity may loudly boast that they are stronger than the Lord, but *P&P* tells us differently: “*Falsities and evils will no longer be there....*” What will be there for us? Truths and goods! They will be inscribed on our hearts. When the Lord’s new church comes to fruition, there will no longer be “disputation about truths.” Read *AE 403 [12]*. We will be safe from evils and falsities. The Lord will come and judge between many peoples. He will dispose, arrange, adjust, settle, and regulate all of the conflicting and confusing man-made issues and concepts. His infinite love, wisdom, and use will settle all matters fairly. Those who defiantly and erringly lifted up their spiritual swords to oppose Him will beat their swords into ploughshares and turn their spears into pruning hooks. In other words, those disputing will need and want to make peace with our Lord.

When the Lord institutes His church, fear will be gone. We will sit under our vines and fig trees and have love within our **intellectual parts**, and we will have love in our very **external being**. Truth and good will reign supreme. Evil and falsity will be banished. We will no longer be afraid of the hells. We will “sit” before Him in a being (*esse*) and state of tranquility.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 4:3-4.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Do you feel within you a sense of the coming victory over evil and falsity?
- The Lord as a judge will dispose, put into order, settle, and unravel things. Don’t you feel a kind of longing for that to happen? So many issues tire us out. There are so many views of what is right and wrong. I can’t wait for the Lord to settle things. When that happens, we will see through the clouds and darkness of human thought. His light will reach into every recess and dark place, and we will see the answer.

- Are we ready to beat our swords into ploughshares? Do we willingly come before the Lord to have our spears turned into pruning hooks? I can hear my heart saying “yes” to that question. How about you? Can we join hands and say with a loud voice, “Thy way and not my way O. Lord!”?
- The closing portion of this text says that no one shall know fear anymore. That is a message of tranquility that we can sit under with assurance. Why don’t we spend a few minutes basking in that promise from the Lord? It is especially comforting when the hells try to drown out this prophecy. We need not listen to them. Hell is weak and unable to withstand the Lord’s disposing judgment. “Amen and Amen,” said all of the people.
Read *Deuteronomy* 27 to gather the importance of saying “Amen” to all of the Lord’s commandments.

MICAH 4:5-10

“For all people walk each in the name of his god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever. In that day,’ says the Lord, ‘I will assemble the lame. I will gather the outcast and those whom I have afflicted; I will make the lame a remnant, and the outcast a strong nation; so the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on, even forever. And you, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, to you shall it come, even the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.’ Now why do you cry aloud? Is there no king in your midst? Has your counselor perished? For pangs have seized you like a woman in labor. Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in birth pangs. For now you shall go forth from the city, you shall dwell in the field, and to Babylon you shall go. There you shall be delivered; there the Lord will redeem you from the hands of your enemies.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “...under the Lord, those who are in externals, and those who from ignorance are in things not true and good, will draw near. Truths and goods with them will grow. Falsities will not enter and destroy.”

AC 4302 [4]

- “That ‘to halt’ denotes to be in good in which there are not yet genuine truths, but nevertheless general truths into which genuine truth can be insinuated, and such as do not disagree with genuine truths; and thus that the ‘lame’ are those who are in good, but not in genuine good because of their ignorance of truth (that is, in such good as are the Gentiles who live in mutual charity), may be seen from these passages in the Word where the ‘lame’ and the ‘halt’ are mentioned in a good sense. As in...Micah 4:6, 7 ...”

AE 405 [26]

- "...Jerusalem is called 'the mountain of holiness,' also 'the hill;' for 'the mountain of holiness,' likewise 'hill' signify spiritual good, which in essence is truth from good, as can be seen from the following passages..." *Micah 4:7* is cited among the many references.

AC 4599 [4]

- "In Micah 4:7, 8...the Lord's celestial kingdom is described; its inmost which is love to the Lord, by 'Mount Zion,' its derivative which is mutual love, by 'hill of the daughter of Zion,' which love in the spiritual sense is called charity toward the neighbor; its interior truths of good by the 'tower of the flock;' that from this comes the spiritual of the celestial kingdom is signified by the 'kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.'"

AC 2362 [2]

- "...in the Word the 'daughter of Zion,' and also the 'virgin daughter of Zion;' ...constitutes the spiritual church, and is called in the Word the 'daughter of Jerusalem.'" *Micah 4:8* is cited among other references.

AC 2362 [3]

- "That the celestial church, or the Lord's celestial kingdom, is called the 'daughter of Zion' from the affection of good, that is, from love to the Lord Himself, may be seen further in...Micah 4:10, 13..."

AE 685 [3]

- "In Micah 4:8... 'the daughter of Zion' signifies the celestial church, the essential of which is the good of love, 'dominion' is predicated of it, while 'kingdom' is predicated of 'the daughter of Jerusalem' because that signifies the spiritual church, the essential of which is the truth of doctrine."

AE 721 [12]

- "...Micah 4:8-10...treats of the spiritual captivity in which the faithful are when they remain in a church in which there is no more truth and good; their lamentation that they are in that church is signified by 'why doest thou shout in shouting?' also by 'that pangs take hold of thee as a woman in travail;' when yet they have truths of doctrine and also the understanding of them, which is signified by 'Is there no king in thee; hath thy counselor perished?' 'king' signifying the truth of doctrine from the Word, and 'counselor' the understanding of it. That with those who are in the good of charity and

thence in the truths of doctrine there will be a church is signified by ‘the daughter of Zion to whom the kingdom shall come,’ and by ‘the daughter of Jerusalem,’ ‘kingdom’ also signifying the church. The establishment of the church and reformation of those who are of the church is meant by ‘be in travail, bring forth, O daughter of Zion;’ ‘for now thou shalt go out from the city and shalt dwell in the field’ signifies that they will withdraw from a doctrine in which there is no longer any truth or good, and will abide where these abound; ‘city’ meaning the doctrine from which they will withdraw; ‘field’ meaning where truths and goods abound, and ‘to go out’ meaning to withdraw, namely, from doctrine, and to be delivered from spiritual captivity.”

AR 612

- “It is known, that by ‘the land of Canaan’ is signified the church, because the Word was there, and by it the Lord was known; also because in the midst of it was the city Zion, and under it the city Jerusalem, both upon a mountain. Hence by ‘Zion’ and ‘Jerusalem’ are signified the inmost things of the church; and as the church in the heavens makes one with the church on earth, therefore by ‘Zion’ and ‘Jerusalem’ is meant the church everywhere, but by ‘Zion’ the church as to love, and by ‘Jerusalem’ the church as to doctrine from love. It is called ‘mount Zion’ because by ‘a mountain’ is signified love. That by ‘mount Zion’ is signified heaven and the church where the Lord alone is worshiped, may appear from the following passages...” *Micah 4:7-8* are cited.

AE 850 [6]

- “In Micah 4:1-3, 7, 8...Any one can see that the coming of the Lord and of His kingdom in the heavens and in the earth are here described; therefore His kingdom, which is heaven and the church, is meant by ‘the mountain of the house of Jehovah’ that will then be established in the head of the mountains. And as ‘Zion’ means heaven and the church in which the Lord is to reign by His Divine truth, while ‘Jerusalem’ means heaven and the church as to doctrine from that Divine truth, it is said, ‘from Zion shall go forth the law. And the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.’ The instruction of all from the Lord is described by what then follows.”

Derived Doctrine

We are quite fortunate in the study of these verses to have an expanse of direct teachings that will open for us the empowering understanding of the spiritual sense. Most notably, we need to read with care *AE 721 [12]* and *AR 612*. Like a wonderful puzzle, many of the essential spiritual parts are given to us. Now we need to lay them out on the table of our mind and patiently scrutinize and prayerfully learn how to put them together. Providence will protect those who humbly ask for help. He will

help us so that we do not force the pieces together. Under His direction, let's assemble before the Word and watch the wonders of His good and truth take form. But before we begin the assembling process, it is prudent that we use some additional, helpful facts that were not covered in the direct teachings. A search and use of derived doctrine will be of great help, too.

"In that day, says the Lord..."

- In the positive sense, these words, "in that day," signify an acknowledgement of the Lord and of His Divine. See *AE 654 [9], AE 422 [16]* and *AE 548 [6]* teach that the words "in that day" refer to the coming of the Lord.
- In the negative sense, the words "in that day" point to a day of judgment for those "who trust in falsities..." "...they shall [in that day] be without any truth." (*AE 355 [26]*) (Emphasis added.) In a passage from *AE 357 [22]*, we read that "...he who trusts in himself because of an ability to reason from falsities shall [in that day] be deprived of all truth." (Emphasis added.)
- What we get from these teachings is a sense of the Lord's cleansing and expunging from His church the decay and harm of self-love and the falsities of evil. As *P&P* stated, "falsities will not enter and destroy."

"I will assemble..."

- The word "assemble" signifies that the faithful should "...set themselves in order" because truths and goods cannot be assembled unless they are set in order. (*AC 6338*) In *AC 7556*, we read that the Lord places in safe-keeping goods and truths—"even within the evil." "For goodness and truth which have not been linked to evils and falsities are not laid waste but are stored away interiorly by the Lord and at a later time are brought out for use." Picture the Lord calling for those hidden goods and truths to come out from their hiding places. In this day, of the Lord, they can now be assembled for use and order.

"I will gather the outcast..."

- *AC 4802* describes an "outcast" as one whose "faith is devoid of the life of faith." What does this mean? *TCR 347* teaches that truths do not actually live *until they are in deeds*. *CL 160* reminds us that "love must *go forth and be efficient* or it will perish." The same is true of faith. Faith is not something wispy, fluffy, or ethereal. Faith is not a leap of blind trust. Faith is the eye of love. *TCR 347 [2]* defines faith "as a complex of truths shining in the mind...truths [teaching us] not only [what] to believe, but also in whom [we] ought to believe..." So the Lord's Word is teaching us that He wants our "outcasts" to be gathered and put in order so we might receive His shining complex of truths. No more limping or halting spiritual progress. He

wants our faith to be a living part of our life by being practical, useful, and on the alert to see the things of spiritual reality.

"O tower of the flock..."

- *AE 922 [7]* defines a "**tower**" as signifying "interior truths from that good which looks to heaven."
- A "**flock**" signifies those who will be taught (guided) and instructed. To be called a "**flock**" is to receive a pledge from the Lord—He gives the "**flock**" His promise of conjunction. See *AC 4704*, *AC 6770*, and *AC 4863*.

"And to Babylon you shall go. There you shall be delivered; there the Lord will redeem you."

- "**Babylon**" signifies a tired external worship. (*AC 3708*) *Doctrine of the Lord* 65 describes "**Babylon**" as the "church corrupted by self love and the love of the world." *AE 374 [6]* identifies "**Babylon**" as the "profanation of good and truth." *AE 1021* pictures "**Babylon**" as the "love of ruling over heaven and earth through the holy things of the church."
- We need to remember that the Lord says that He will deliver and redeem us from these Babylonian states.

Putting It All Together

Let's return to *Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 111*. Remember we were taught that "...without the Word there is no knowledge of the Lord, and therefore no salvation..." *AC 5128 [5]* teaches us that there are two things "which not only close up the way of communication, but even deprive a man of the capacity of ever becoming rational—deceit and profanation. Deceit is like a subtle poison which infects the interiors, and profanation mixes falsities with truths and evils with goods..."

It appears that these issues of deceit and profanation were wreaking havoc in the Jewish church. Leaders and church officials were "selling" their offices. Bribes and not truth swayed decisions. The people in the faithful remnant were not able to find help from the church. They were crying out in pain and turmoil. They felt like cripples limping along.

Return for a moment to the quote from *Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 111*. We read there that it "pleased the Lord that when the Word had been wholly falsified and adulterated among the Jewish nation and thus as it were brought to nothingness, that He should descend from heaven and come into the world, and fulfill the Word, and thereby repair and restore it and again give light to the earth's inhabitants..." (Emphasis added.) This is the message the Lord gave through Micah. When things were at the darkest point, when each person walked in the name of his (own) god, the Lord came to put an end to disorder, sin, and spiritual death.

There was no king in their midst! There was no counselor! Did their counselor perish? These were Divine observations and questions posed by the Lord to cause His faithful to reflect and to long to have Him as their King and Counselor.

In the midst of this travail, the Lord speaks to their hearts. He musters their remains. His voice calls forth the hidden good and truth and tells them all to assemble. He announces that evil and falsity will no longer trouble them. Falsity and evil will no longer be among them. Falsity will no longer have the ability to enter and destroy. The inmost things of the church and the church in the heavens will make a one. Deceit and blasphemy will be gone, and communication with the Lord will be repaired and restored.

The tower of the flock will teach and instruct the faithful remnant about the ways wherein they should walk. The tower of the flock will show the way that conjunction will come about. The message ends with these words: "...you shall be delivered...the Lord will redeem you from the hands of your enemies."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.
Read Micah 4:5-10.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

Consider the Lord's pointed statement to His people, and us, that "all people walk each in the name of their god." It gives us pause to ponder and ask, "What god do I walk after?"

- I like the next part of this verse, beginning with the word **but**. "...but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever." That is our prayer, isn't it? I can't imagine an eternity apart from the Lord. I even hope and pray that He might visit and touch me the way He did the little children brought to Him by their parents. What things do you hope to experience in the Lord's presence?
- "In that day" refers to the coming of the Lord. "In that day" refers to the eradication of falsity and evil. "In that day" will mark the end of terrorism from the hells. "In that day," truths and goods will grow and falsity will not enter and destroy. That sounds so peaceful and tranquil. Is hell trying at this moment to take this reality away by calling it a fantasy?
- The Lord calls our attention to the fact that we have experienced "lameness." He notes our "halting" (hesitant) nature. He recalls to us that we have known temptation and affliction. But then He assures us that as "outcasts," we will be called to assemble. He promises us that the "outcasts" will become a strong nation. Is this a happy message? Where is there any gloom and doom in this prophecy?

- The Lord reminds us that on our own we will have no king. He also tells us that our proprial counselor will perish. We need to turn from this false counsel as quickly as possible. Can we, in this moment of reflection, pause long enough to invite the Lord to be our King and our Counselor?
- The “tower of the flock” was an interesting study. A tower gives us height. A tower gives us an early warning system when an enemy approaches. A tower gets our eyes looking upward. As a flock, we need the Lord’s steady promise that He will bring heaven and earth into conjunction. What do you see in the usage of the tower of the flock?
- Getting us out of Babylon—please do so, Lord, as quickly as possible. I long to rid myself of tired worship experiences. I long to allow spiritual things to be my guiding light and not a means to flatter self-love. What does the Lord promise us? He will redeem us from the hands of our enemies. Talk about giving us a voice of confidence—the Lord has loaded us up with a pep talk that can motivate us to reach out and take His hand.

MICAH 4:11-13

“Now also many nations have gathered against you, who say, ‘let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion.’ But they do not know the thoughts of the Lord, nor do they understand His counsel; for He will gather them like sheaves to the threshing floor.

Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make your horn iron, and I will make your hooves bronze; you shall beat in pieces many peoples; I will consecrate their gain to the Lord, and their substance to the Lord of the whole earth.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Falsities will be destroyed among them.”

AC 2362 [3]

- “That the celestial church, or the Lord’s celestial kingdom, is called the ‘daughter of Zion’ from the affection of good, that is, from love to the Lord Himself...” *Micah 4:10, 13* are cited.

AC 10303 [4]

- “...truths with man have been disposed into a series according to the angelic societies with the regenerate...The series into which truths have been disposed with the good, and the series into which falsities have been

disposed with the evil, are signified in the Word by ‘sheaves’ and ‘bundles’ ...” *Micah 4:12* is cited.

AC 7729 [6]

- “In Micah 4:13...what these words mean no one can know without the internal sense, thus unless it is known what is meant by ‘threshing,’ by the ‘daughter of Zion,’ by the ‘horn which shall become as iron,’ by the ‘hoof which shall become as brass, with which many peoples shall be broken in pieces.’ The ‘daughter of Zion’ denotes the celestial church; the ‘horn’ denotes the power of truth from good; ‘iron’ denotes natural truth which shall avail to destroy falsities; ‘hoof’ denotes truth from good in the ultimate degree; ‘brass’ denotes natural good which shall avail against evils.”

AC 7770 [5]

- “...in Micah 4:13...‘to break in pieces many peoples’ denotes to devastate them; the ‘gain which is devoted to Jehovah and to the Lord of the whole earth’ denotes the knowledges of truth and good. That David sanctified to Jehovah the silver and the gold that he had taken from the nations which he had subdued, from the Syrians, from Moab, from the sons of Ammon, from the Philistines, from Amalek, and from the spoil of Hadadezer...and that Solomon put the sanctified things of his father among the treasures of the house of Jehovah...involve the like.”

AR 206

- “They, who believe from themselves and not from the Lord through the Word, also believe that they know and understand all things. The reason is, that their spiritual mind is shut, and their natural mind alone open; and this mind without spiritual light, sees no otherwise...” *Micah 4:13* is cited among other references.

AR 270

- “‘A horn’ is frequently mentioned in the Word, and by it is everywhere signified power; therefore when ‘a horn’ is predicated of the Lord, it signifies omnipotence...That ‘a horn’ signifies power, and when applied to the Lord, omnipotence, may appear from the following passages...” *Micah 4:13* is among the numerous passages cited.

AE 176 [5]

- “In Micah 4:13...The ‘daughter of Zion’ is the celestial church; ‘horn’ is power in the natural man; ‘hoofs’ are the ultimates there, called sensual scientifics;

hence it is evident what is signified by ‘making the horn iron, and the hoofs brass.’ ...That ‘horn’ is the power of truth from good in the natural man...and that ‘hoofs’ are the knowledges of the sensual man, which are truths in the ultimate of order...”

AE 316 [12]

- “In Micah 4:13...‘Rise and thresh, O daughter of Zion,’ signifies the dispersion of evil with those who are of the church, ‘to thresh’ is to disperse, and ‘daughter of Zion’ is the church that is in the affection of good; ‘I will make thy horn iron’ signifies Divine truth mighty and powerful; ‘I will make thy hoofs brass’ has a like meaning, ‘hoofs’ meaning truths in ultimates; ‘that thou mayest beat in pieces many peoples’ signifies that thou mayest scatter falsities, for ‘peoples’ are predicated of truths, and in the contrary sense, of falsities.”

Derived Doctrine

“Now also many nations have gathered against you, who say, let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion...”

- Don Rose wrote a series of articles for *New Church Life* wherein he focused on “the great conspiracy” of Hell to destroy the Lord’s New Church. I recommend his series. Hell can’t stand the conjugal principle; Hell can’t stand a scintilla of innocence; Hell can’t stand anyone studying the Word. The greater the purity of a person’s love, the greater the influx of the Lord’s celestial church, the more Hell burns with a desire to defile this love and all of its derivatives.
- Hell is a place where self-love seeks to overcome anyone or anything that opposes its ends. Each hellish spirit wants to be “king of the mountain.” They will push, shove, and intimidate one another so as to be the “supreme” object of worship. But when it comes to fighting the Lord, they put aside their individual agendas to gather their bags of sneaky tricks and insanities to oppose Him.

“...many nations have gathered against you...”

- *AE 304 [17]* explains that “nations signify the goods of the church, and in the contrary sense, its evils...” (Emphasis added.)
- Which sense is being used here? Are the goods of the church gathering against the corrupted Jewish church to expose falsity? Or are evils drawing near the Lord’s church to oppose its repentance, reformation, and regeneration? Let’s hold this question in mind as we read the next portion of the prophecy.

“...who say, ‘Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion.’”

- It appears we have an answer here. It is evil, in the contrary sense, that's speaking. The goods of the church would not seek to defile and amend, change, rectify, or banish goods and truths. Nor would the good take delight in defiling.
- “...let our eye look upon Zion...” The **“eye”** signifies “the understanding of truth and the belief in it...but it is the reverse with the ‘evil eye,’ ...” (*AE 1081 [4]*) An **“evil eye”** is not seeking an understanding of truth. Instead, evil seeks to keep an eye out to find a way to believe in falsity. See *AE 1081 [4]*. The hells want to turn an **“evil eye”** on Zion because Zion signifies the church in which is celestial love. See *AE 504 [7]*. Why? The love, delight, and craving desire of evil is to attack celestial and spiritual love.

“But they do not know the thoughts of the Lord, nor do they understand His counsel...”

- Isn't the literal sense of this passage quite plain in its meaning? Hell doesn't know and hasn't a clue about the infinite thoughts of the Lord. His good and truth are far above any comprehension of the hells. **“Counsel”** represents being intelligent from truths that are from the good of love. See *AE 1100 [19]*.

“...for He will gather them like sheaves to the threshing floor.”

- In *AC 10303 [4]*, the meaning of **“sheaves”** is explained. “The series into which truths have been disposed with the good and the series into which falsities have been disposed with the evil are signified in the Word by ‘sheaves’ ...” (Emphasis added.)
- The **threshing floor** is a place, or basis, of separation or disposal. The chaff is separated from the wheat. In like manner, the **“threshing floor”** signifies the Lord bringing about the separation of falsity from truth. *AE 539 [12]* defines a “...threshing floor, by which are signified truths of good, and goods of truth...” The church must be shown what is good and true so it can be freed from evil and falsity. *AC 10303[4]* spoke of “series.” There is the series of good and the series of falsity. These series are like a bundle of sheaves that will be separated by the Lord.

“Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion...”

- **“Arise”** signifies “the elevation of the mind.” (*AC 2695*) “Arise signifies the union of the Divine and the Human of the Lord and His conjunction with heaven and the church...” (*AE 700 [10]*)
- **“...and thresh,”** as we noted above, has to do with the separation of good and truth from evil and falsity.

- “Daughter of Zion signifies the church which is in love to the Lord.” (*AE* 328 [10]) “Daughter of Zion signifies the spiritual affections for the Divine truth, which is the love of truth for the sake of truth...” (*AE* 850 [18])

“For I will make your horn iron, and I will make your hooves bronze...”

- “...a horn signifies Divine truth about to be revealed out of heaven.” (*AE* 55) “...a horn signifies the influx of Divine truth and the revelation of it.” (*AE* 611)
- A **“horn”** being made into **“iron”** “signifies truth in ultimate order.” (*AR* 847)
- *AC* 7729 [6] was cited earlier and explains that “hoof denotes truth from good in the ultimate degree; ‘brass’ denotes natural good which shall avail against evils.”

“...you shall beat in pieces many peoples...”

- *AE* 316 [12] explains that the words **“beat in pieces”** signify that they (the remnant, called to serve the Lord’s New Church) will be given the power to disperse or “scatter falsities...” The work of the faithful under the efficient direction of the Lord will be thoroughly successful.

“I will consecrate their gain to the Lord, and their substance to the Lord of the whole earth.”

- **“Consecrate”** means to make or declare something sacred or holy. **“Consecrate”** means to set apart or to devote something to the service or worship of the Lord. In other words, the Lord’s remnant will not foolishly ascribe victory or success to self-merit. The threshing or beating into pieces of falsity is rightly the Lord’s doing. The Lord is the one who brings good out of each and every evil Hell has manufactured to foil our spiritual successes.
- **Substance**, or love, is not the creation of humanity. We can be filled with the Lord’s **substance** to use. His substance is necessary to overcome the falsity of hell. We need to consecrate all our power and substance to the Lord.
- What is meant by **“the whole earth”**? Simply, it means that we are to diligently endeavor to “beat in pieces” or “thresh” evil wherever it might be found in our heart and mind to facilitate the growth of the Lord’s New Church. See *AE* 316 [16].

Putting It All Together

*“Falsities will be destroyed...” (*P&P*)*

Hell, in a state of delusion and illogical reasoning, thinks that it can gather together its many nations (thousands of devious tricks) to defile the intention the Lord has for His new church remnant. Hell casts an evil eye toward the “daughter of Zion,” the

affection for good, and assumes it will be easy to conquer its intended victims. Hell, as usual, underestimates the eternal and dynamic power of the Lord. So the voice of the Lord reminds them, and us, that they haven't a clue of what they are up against. "...they do not know the thoughts of the Lord, nor do they understand His counsel." The Lord states that He will gather the faithful remnant together and help them thresh or dispose of Hell's menacing evils.

The good news is given to the "daughter of Zion" that Divine truth with its accompanying good will come to the aid of the faithful so that they will have the power to disperse and scatter falsities. How thorough will this action be? Listen again to the words of the Lord: "*I will consecrate their gain...and their substance...*" (Emphasis added.) How extensive will it be? It will infiltrate and enliven the whole earth, or as the spiritual sense says, it will bring an end to evil wherever it seeks to hide to oppose the Lord.

These are not the words (or thoughts) of the prophet Micah. These are not the words and interpretation of this researcher. These are the words and the promise of the Lord. Therefore, what He says is true and eternal. Falsity will be destroyed. Hell will be conquered. The Lord's New Church will be forever and ever. Let the faithful feel and began to experience a sense of anticipatory excitement and happiness with the announcement of this news so they can cry out: "So may it be forever, O Lord."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 4:11-13.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Do we, in any sense, see examples in history, or the present, of the illusions and complete insanity of Hell? Can we picture their belief that they are more powerful than the Lord? Can we see or imagine the evil eye they have toward anything good?
- The Lord teaches us that Hell has no idea of what it is up against when it imagines the Lord can be defeated. I want us to say that phrase over and over, again and again. I believe saying—and believing—this will give us power over Hell. The more we believe this, the more Hell's power to confuse and frustrate us will diminish. We need positive thinking working within our hearts and minds. What are your thoughts on this subject?
- The Lord makes some positive promises to His new church in this prophecy:
 - He will "consecrate" our gain over Hell.
 - He will inflow into our lives and give us "substance."
 - He will enliven the whole earth (our minds).
 - Every nook and corner where Hell hides and lurks will be cleansed.
 - The Lord will help us thrash the armies of Hell.

Mull over these promises. Let the power surge in and bolster our resolve to stand toe to toe with evil and fight with the resources of our doctrine. The Lord will win. Because of Him, we will win, too.

- Hell will try to remove this soundness from us, seeking to exert their insanity and illusions over our daily lives. Will we, as a church, put aside our personal agendas and band together under the Lord's providence and leadership? I believe we ought to seek moments when we can pledge our allegiance wholly to the Lord so we can draw strength from the Lord and, in charity, encourage our fellow worshipers to join hands. Will we do this? What little doubt has been planted by the Hells to tell us this is an impossible human goal to achieve?

Chapter Five

MICAH 5:1

"Now gather yourself in troops, O daughter of troops; he has laid siege against us; they will strike the judge of Israel with a rod on the cheek."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "...however much they may infest..."

AC 9049 [8]

- "That...'to smite the cheek' denotes to destroy truths, is plain from passages in the Word where mention is made of 'smiting the cheek.' And because in the genuine sense this signifies the destruction of truth, therefore in the opposite sense it signifies the destruction of falsity...it occurs in these passages..." *Micah 5:1* is cited as an example.

AE 727 [7]

- "...in the spiritual sense...destroying the falsities of evil in the church...is signified by 'smiting..." *Micah 5:1* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

"Now gather yourself in troops, O daughter of troops..."

- To "gather" signifies "...that they [are to] receive the truths that are given by the Lord..." (*AE 294 [7]*)
- "The power of a faith formed from a multiplicity of truths, as opposed to falsities and evils, may be compared to...a **battalion [troops]** formed...where the soldiers stand side by side, and thus form and act as one force..." (*TCR 353 [2]*) (Emphasis added.)
- A "daughter" signifies "...the affection of internal good..." (*AC 6024 [6]*) A "daughter" signifies "...the affection of truth..." (*AE 195 [9]*) A "daughter" signifies the "...affection of interior truth..." (*AC 3774*) So if "troops" signify the multiplicity of truths, the Lord is instructing (calling for) those "troops" to be inspired, and united, by an internal affection for truths.

“...he has laid siege against us; they will strike the judge of Israel with a rod on the cheek.”

- “...to ‘lay siege to it’ signifies to distress the church by evils and falsities...” (*AE 633 [3]*)
- “...to strike’ signifies to injure...” (*AC 9065*) To **“strike the judge”** has an interesting meaning to reflect on. *AC 7154* mentions that a **“judge”** signifies the “Divine disposal.” *AC 8723* teaches that a “judge signifies the appearance of some particular and singular things as from another source...” In other words, the Hells try to distract and call into question the disposal of the Lord’s good and truth by meddling with the facts in particular and singular things. They call into question the Divine and try to ascribe His love and wisdom to other sources. *AC 6372* explains that a “judge denotes that [the Lord] acts from good. Hell strikes at this idea, trying to obfuscate the correctness of this truth.
- The **“rod”** signifies “that...doctrine, by the power of natural truth from the spiritual, will refute and convince those who are in falsities and evils...” (*AE 723*) Hell doesn’t want anyone to experience power from the literal sense. So they try to stir up our understanding and cause equivocations to surface. They offer nit-picking ratiocinations, blurring the literal sense to keep the spiritual sense from convincing us or refuting falsity and evil.
- **“...to smite the cheek”** with a rod, in a negative sense, denotes to destroy truths. (*AC 9049*) In the positive sense, “To smite the enemies upon the cheek” signifies “...to destroy interior falsities with those who are opposed to the goods and truths of the church...” (*AE 556*)

Putting It All Together

Notice how *P&P* phrased the meaning and summation of *Micah 5:1*. “...however much they infest...” Can you sense what the Divine ending of this sentence will be? Doesn’t this capture the futility of Hell? The Hells sensed a battle was coming their way. What do we say regarding an effective strategy of warfare? “The best defense is a good offense.”

Hearing the Lord call for the “troops” to assemble, hearing the call for the “daughter of troops,” Hell launches the first wave of its desired heartless carnage. They lay siege, hoping to cause distress, panic, and uncertainty in the church. The plan involves calling into question (criticizing) the particulars and singular teachings of the Word. Most notably, they pick on the rigid, stern, and gloomy stories of the literal sense. Who, they challenge, is responsible for the formation of the Word? “Didn’t people write the words? People are human and fallible.” Hell loves to call forth “apparent inconsistencies” in the Word.

The Lord calls for the forming of the troops. He calls the battalions to stand side by side, and to “thus form and act as one force...” (*TCR 353 [2]*) He promises the

multiplicity of troops. The fighting corps will be inspired by an internal affection for truths. Falsity and evil cannot and will not prevail in the presence of the Lord's holiness. Like a ball of wax, they will melt and disintegrate in the heat of Lord's love. Wave after wave of their attack will end in dismal failure. However much they attack, belittle, and question the Word of the Lord and want to infest the New Church, it will not happen.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 5:1.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

The theme of hope and triumph continues in our study of *Micah*. Isn't it great to read good news? One of the criticisms heard about the Word is that it is full of gloom and doom. Don't you want to shout out what we are reading? "Here is a great and optimistic message from the Lord. Let's join hands and form a solid line of confidence and take in the Lord's message of justice winning out over evil."

- Are you personally familiar with Hell's war on the literal sense of the Word? Nit-picking, finding fault, ridicule of the literal sense, obfuscation of the facts, all in an attempt to slap the Lord on the cheek with the rod of falsity. Again, don't you want to shout out the good news that Hell's efforts will not work?
- How would you complete this quote from *P&P* after reading the spiritual sense of *Micah 5:1*? "However much they [Hell] may infest..."

MICAH 5:2

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "The coming of the Lord who is the God of the church..."

AC 2135 [4]

- "They who abide in the literal sense, as do the Jews, know indeed from this passage that the Lord should be born there; but as they are expecting a leader and a king who will bring them back into the land of Canaan, they

therefore explain the words found here according to the letter; that is, by the 'land of Judah' they understand the land of Canaan; by 'Israel' they understand Israel, although they know not where Israel now is; and by a 'Leader' they still understand their Messiah; when yet other things are meant by 'Judah' and 'Israel;' namely, by 'Judah' those who are celestial, by 'Israel,' those who are spiritual, in heaven and on earth; and by the 'Leader' the Lord."

AC 4594 [4]

- "In Micah...5:2...from these prophecies it was known to the Jewish people that the Messiah or Christ would be born at Bethlehem..."

AC 9485

- "...'Ephrathah' is Bethlehem, where the Lord was born (Micah 5:2...)..."

AC 9594 [4]

- "...'Ephrathah' where He was to be found, is Bethlehem, where He was born...Micah 5:2..."

AC 10248 [8]

- "That 'an age' is predicated in general of every church, but specifically of the celestial church, is evident from the following passages...where by 'the days of an age' is meant the time of the Most Ancient Church, which was celestial. And in Micah...5:2...where the sense is the same."

Doctrine of the Lord 37 [3]

- "That the Lord existed before His advent into the world, is evident from the following passages...Micah 5:2..."

AR 47

- "...'the Ancient of Days' is the Lord...Micah 5:2..."

AR 291

- In the words found in *Micah 5:2*, "...'the Ancient of Days' is the Lord from eternity..."

- “When [the Jews are told] that the kingdom of the Messiah, because He is the Son of God, will not be on earth but in heaven, they reply that the land of Canaan will then be heaven. When told that they do not know where Bethlehem Ephrathah is, where the Messiah is to be born, according to the prediction in Micah 5:2...they reply that the mother of the Messiah will nevertheless there give birth to Him; and some say that wherever she brings forth there is Bethlehem...”

Derived Doctrine

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah...”

- In order to extract and appreciate the deeper spiritual significance and meaning of **Bethlehem**, we must turn to the Word and consider first the literal meaning of the word **Bethlehem**. We need to recall that Rachel died in **Bethlehem** following the birth of her son Benjamin; therefore, Benjamin, Benoni, (son of sorrow), was born in **Bethlehem**. Also, David was born in **Bethlehem**.
- **Bethlehem** means **House of Bread**, and **Ephrath** comes from a root meaning of fruitful or plentiful.
- A **house** “signifies the church, the mind of the man of the church (wherein are the things of the will and of the understanding, or of charity and faith)...” (*AC 710*)
- **Bread** signifies love and charity.” (*AC 4211, emphasis added.*) “Bread signifies celestial things and refreshment from them.” (*AC 1727*) “Bread signifies the appropriation of good from the Lord’s Divine natural.” (*AC 4209*)
- **Bethlehem** was the birthplace of Benjamin. It was also the place of his mother’s death when she gave birth to him. Drawing on our correspondential derived doctrines, we get an insight that the power of truth can be gained through good when there is a series of “labors” and hard and painful struggles with the eventual death of our maternal inclination toward self-love.
- “Bethlehem’ signifies the Word in respect to its spiritual sense; and there He chose to be born because the Lord is the Word.” (*AE 700 [9]*)
- “[Things contained in the internal sense cannot be explained without adequate terms.]...In order therefore that those who desire to know may receive some idea of what the spiritual and celestial is...‘Bethlehem’...I will briefly explain it. In the supreme sense the subject is...the glorification of the Lord’s natural, and in the relative sense the regeneration of man as to his natural.” (*AC 4585 [4]*)
- “Ephrathah denotes...the spiritual celestial sense of the Word.” (*AC 9406 [4]*) The spiritual signifies “such as are of faith” (understanding), and the

celestial signifies “such as are of the will.” (AC 1203) The spiritual celestial sense of the Word represents “truth conjoined with love.” (AE 449)

“...though you are little among the thousands of Judah...”

- **“Little”** “signifies that there was little of truth...little in comparison to those who are in the affection of good.” (AC 2429)
- “Thousands’ signifies primary truths which are in the first degree under the truth immediately from the Divine...” (AC 8696)
- **“Judah”** “signifies the Lord in respect to celestial love.” (AE 433 [3]) **“Judah”** “signifies those who are in the good of love, with whom the church was to be set up.” (AC 10,327)

“...yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel...”

- In spite of their spiritual limitations, or the “littleness” of their truth, the remnant will be used by the Lord to bring forth His mighty plan of salvation. Their weakness is utilized and bolstered to become His strength.
- AC 5489 [2] has a wonderful description of what the Lord does for those who desire and intend the Lord to be the One ruler and reign in their lives. His plan to **“come forth”** is as follows: “...with the regenerate the memory knowledges which are truths of the church...are stored up by the Lord...and therefore when the Lord insinuates into such persons a zeal for good, these truths show themselves in their order; and when He insinuates a zeal for truth, this good is present and [He] enkindles it.”

“...whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.”

- Is this another way of calling our attention to the “Alpha and Omega” teaching? The Lord does not change. He has been the same from the beginning to the end. With Him, there is no “old.” He is everlasting, unchangeable, and cohesively true.

Putting It All Together

The Word is the Lord’s. The Word is from the Lord. The Word has “reference to the Lord, to His heaven, to the church, to religious belief, and to all things connected...”(AC 1)

Being that the Word is from the Lord, “it must of necessity contain within it such things as belong to heaven, to the church, and to religious belief, and that unless it did so it could not be called the Lord’s Word, nor could it be said to have any life in it.” (AC 2)

In *AR 224*, we are urged to “Read the Word and believe in the Lord, and you will see the truths which should constitute your faith and life...Everyone whose soul desires it is capable of seeing the truths of the Word in the light...”

The Word is indeed a Bethlehem—a house of bread. The Word is also Ephrathah, in that it is fruitful and plentiful. The Lord’s birth occurred in Bethlehem. As often as the Word is read and loved, His advent occurs again and again within the heart of the reader.

The Word has its literal sense, its spiritual sense, and its celestial sense. It has been carefully written by the Lord so as to tell us about His love for us. It is written to tell us how the Lord took on our human nature and fought to overcome inherited tendencies toward evil and falsity. He glorified His human and thoroughly (soundly) defeated the Hells. Every event of His life—even the least of things—is a significant detail in His redemptive plan. What He wants and seeks to implement for us is for us to give Him our hearts and minds. He wants us to diligently read His Word so that its spiritual celestial degrees can help us to “come forth” to Him so that He will be the “One Ruler” in our lives. The Lord promises to add a zeal for good; He promises to show us His truths in their heavenly order; and in the end, He promises to enkindle, emblazon, and enliven (refresh) our lives with His “House of Bread.”

Will His Word ever grow “old”? Never! It is a story that lasts. In the Lord’s plan, the Word is written to tell us of the past that will be relevant for the present, and it will apply to the things of the future. It will be read to eternity and never be exhausted. What other book could possibly match this eternal source? It is an everlasting love story that will always thrill our soul. The depth of His story will never be exhausted—nay, it is an eternal story we as angels will thrive on. The bread of heaven is plentiful, and it is spiritually satisfying.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 5:2.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Does this chapter challenge us regarding the absolute necessity of reading the Word? Are we ready to put aside our excuses for why we don’t read the Word daily?
- This is probably a long-standing debate in our hearts and minds. We try, but we can’t seem to get it together. We lapse in our effort. Well, will *AC 1&2* and *AR 224* provide us with answers of encouragement to help us stand up and bolster our fortitude to persevere? What methods have you used to read the Word?

- How about signing up to receive some daily inspiration? Use your computer to sign up for a free source. Type in www.newchurch.org. Then click on *News*, and you will see an opportunity to register to receive daily inspiration. Every morning, you will receive a thoughtful quote from the Writings. It is a short reading that one can meditate on. From there, you can slowly branch out to read other lessons from the Word. Something has to motivate us. Bottom line: Spiritually, we cannot afford to continue offering weak excuses. The Lord has written His Word in such a way that it will meet all levels of the mind. His Word has avenues that will open us to the fruitful and plentiful Bread of Heaven. There is a struggle involved in getting to use His truth—but what dividends it pays for the health of our soul! The Lord will enliven our effort. He will add the zeal. Don't let Hell talk you into procrastinating another moment or another day.
- The House of Bread waits. It has a plentiful supply of love and wisdom. If you feel unsure that you will be successful in reading, why not get a friend to join you? Ask them to join you in a daily reading time. It is worth the effort. The Lord's Word is not "old" or stale; it is fresh news each and every day you go to it for help and inspiration. Give it a try 5 days a week. If you miss one day, do not berate yourself. Go right back and pick it up with a positive feeling. In no time, you will be so dedicated you will look forward to (and protect) the reading and reflection time.
- No more excuses! Let's be done with our wimpy, pitiful, whining ways! Instead, hold to your promise. Let the one-to-five minutes a day be as important as lesser mundane chores. Can we do it? Yes, we can!
- There was a song I sang enthusiastically as a child called "*Trust and Obey*." Do you recall the first lines of that song? "When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word, what a glory He sheds on our way. As we do His good will, He abides with us still..." I passionately believe the words of this hymn. I still hum it today, recalling the positive message about the rewards one gets while reading the Word. What song or passage might inspire you to faithfully read the Word?
- Pause for a moment to reflect on the words of *Micah 5:2*. "Though thou art little...yet out of you shall come forth...One to be Ruler..." How often do we feel small or insignificant? Hell loves to tell us how futile our efforts are. Well, in the hands of the Lord, our little can become much. He is the ruler. He can bring to bear what is necessary to help us become an angel. We are little. In the Lord's plan of Providence, we can give birth to spiritual things that will let us reach upward to things eternal. The Lord's "goings forth are from of old—from everlasting."

MICAH 5:3-4

"Therefore He shall give them up, until that time that she who is in labor has given birth; then the remnant of His brethren shall return to the children of Israel. And He shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of

the Lord His God; and they shall abide, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- The Lord "...will gather the church together and teach those who are in it."

AC 6674 [4 & 7]

- "...the Lord as to the Divine Human is the 'name' of Jehovah, or His whole quality; hence all Divine worship is from the Divine Human, and it is this which is to be worshiped...Micah 5:4..."

AC 9422 [2-3]

- "...'sitting' signifies remaining in a state; for movements from place to place signify changes of state of the interiors...Consequently 'sitting' signifies a permanent abiding in the state of the interiors...it unfolds in the following passages...Micah 5:4..."

AR 81

- "...in heaven no other names are given but what involve the quality of any one and the quality of God is all that by which He is worshiped. He who does not know this signification of 'name' in the Word, can only understand name; and in this alone there is nothing of worship and religion..." *Micah 5:4* is one of many passages cited as examples.

AE 687 [15]

- "In Micah...5:4...[it] is said of the Lord and of the doctrine of Divine truth from Him, which is meant by 'Then shall he stand and feed in the name of Jehovah;' that men of the church will be in that doctrine is signified by 'they shall sit;' and that the doctrine of Divine truth will endure to eternity is signified by 'he shall increase unto the ends of the earth.'"

Derived Doctrine

"Therefore He shall give them up..."

- To understand the meaning of "give them up," we must look at the negative and positive usage of these words. In *AE 659 [23]*, we are taught that to "give them up" means to "release them to the devilish loves, and thence to evils

and falsities which are from hell." In the positive sense, *AC* 9642 [2] teaches, "**to give them up**" means to not withhold them. It is akin to elevating them from the pit of ignorance and the oppression of the hells.

- Since it is the Lord (He) "giving them up," we can focus on the positive meaning because He is talking about the vital roll the remnant will play when He calls them to His new church.

"...until the time that she who is in labor has given birth."

- The phrase "**until the time**" occurs in the Word more often than one might expect. Looking at the 34 citations given in the Writings, its usage seems to point to a period of spiritual latency with a glimpse, or mention, of the potency that will eventually bring about many corrective results. For instance, look at *CL* 416: "...the chick is latent in its seed...with every requisite **until the time** of hatching..." *AC* 407 mentions that "There always remains some nucleus of a church [in]...a remnant...**until the time**..." *AE* 632 [3] illustrates the latency (potency) of the new church: "...the total destruction of the church by evils of life and falsities of doctrine **until the time**...signifies until evil is consummated..." Evil and falsity, for a time, may appear to have made the Lord and His church ineffective **until the time** when the Lord calls out and enlivens His remnant; His chicks; His overcoming the disorders of Hell. Thus, "**until the time**" is an announcement that spiritual recovery and restoration are now underway. (Emphasis added to all of the above quotes from the Writings.)
- "**...she who is in labor...**" *AC* 4504 teaches that "'she' represents the affection for all truths, and so means the church itself..." *AC* 9278 [3] explains what "**labor**" and "**combat**" represent: "when a man is in external things he is in labor and combat...into which the hells flow from all sides, continually endeavoring to infest and even subjugate...but the Lord continually protects and sets him free." *AR* 531, explaining the spiritual sense of *Revelation* 12:1, the story of the woman travailing to give birth, tells us that "It treats...of the New Church and its doctrine: by 'the woman' is here meant the New Church, and by 'the offspring' which she brought forth, its doctrine: and it also treats of those in the present church, who from doctrine believe in a Trinity of Persons, and in the duality of the Person of Christ, likewise in justification by faith alone; these are meant by 'the dragon.' Then it treats of the persecution of the New Church by these, on account of its doctrine, and its protection by the Lord, until from a few it increases among many." (Emphasis added.)

"Then the remnant of His brethren shall return to the children of Israel."

- *AE* 746 [2] states: "That formerly all who were of one church called themselves **brethren** and that the Lord calls those **brethren** who are in love to Him and in charity towards the neighbor, can be seen from many passages in the Word..." (Emphasis added.) *Micah* 5:3 is cited.

- With this quote and two other quotes from the *Arcana*, we are given a possible meaning of the words **“...the remnant of His brethren shall return to the children of Israel.”** *AC 7975* teaches us that the sons of Israel represent “genuine goods and truths which are of the spiritual church...” *AC 1443* explains that “...the entrance of the sons of Israel represents the entrance of the faithful into the Lord’s kingdom.”
- To **“return”** signifies to give up the things of self-love (evil and falsity), returning to a useful spiritual state, becoming orderly (getting right) with the Lord and His church.

“And He shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God...”

- The word **“stand”** indicates a watchful, listening state in which one awaits further orders. Standing is a mental and physical attitude of attention and alertness. *AR 369* teaches that “to stand’ signifies to hear and do what He [the Lord] commands.” Our passage indicates it is the Lord who is standing. Are we to assume that the Lord is telling us about His ever-watchful, alert, listening care over His flock? Is He attuned to what we really need? Is He promising us that He “stands ready” to feed us in a prompt spiritual fashion?
- To **“feed”** signifies “to instruct in truths.” (*AE 482*) To **“feed”** signifies to instruct in the things of “doctrine.” (*AC 3787*)
- His **“flock”** signifies “those who are in the church...those who are in good...” (*AC 3767*)
- What is the **“strength of the Lord”**? It signifies His Divine truths fighting to free us and rescue us, with the arms of His salvation holding us. See *AC 9809 [4]*.
- What does **“majesty of the name of the Lord”** signify? Consider this passage in *AE 76*: “...man has two kinds of sight, one from cogitative faith, the other from love: when he has sight from cogitative faith only, his sight is unattended with awe before the Lord’s Divine majesty; but when this sight is from love, it is attended with awe at the Divine majesty: this is because man is then turned to the Lord, for love turns him, but cogitative faith apart from love does not [turn him in awe]...”
- “...the name of the Lord His God...”** signifies all those things by which He is worshipped...” (*AE 295 [13]*) The name of the Lord “signifies all the quality of faith and love by which He is to be worshipped, and by which man is saved by Him...” (*AE 815 [12]*)

“...and they shall abide, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth.”

- What is implied in the words **“they shall abide”**? Love, wisdom, and use are forever conjoined (wed). They are the essentials of the Lord. Hell, from the beginning, has endeavored to separate them. We are taught they are not to be separated. They can be looked at one at a time, but ultimately, they must be

put together. These words of the Lord assure us that, in Him, these essentials will abide forever. His church will endure because Love, Wisdom, and Use in Him are a one.

- The words "**He shall be great to the ends of the earth**" signify "to instruct in truths all those who belong to the church, and thereby to dissipate falsities." (*AE 316 [23]*) *AE 569 [11]* says these words signify "the extension of rational and spiritual things..." *AE 294 [8]* teaches us these words signify to "establish the church, thus to reform those who are therein."

Putting It All Together

P&P sums up this section with a powerful and positive statement: **The Lord “will gather the church together and [He will] teach those who are in it.**” (Emphasis added.)

The Lord is in a standing position. He is alert. He is watching. He is listening. He is prepared to feed His flock. This feeding of the flock will not come about without some painful resistance. Hell has no intention of ceasing its tormenting of the church and the people within it. So the Lord tells us the church (she) will labor and will be in travail in the birthing process. The dragon will seek to devour the child about to be born, but the Lord will provide for its safety. “Fear not little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” (*Luke 12:32*) The gift of the kingdom is a definite promise.

What are the key qualities involved in the successful gathering of the brethren? Love and dedication to the name of the Lord are one facet. Another is to be in “awe” of the Lord. How does that come about? When our sight comes from a deep and abiding love for the Lord, we are taught that love turns us in the right direction. Love opens our sight and gives to it an “awe” of His Divine majesty. Awe makes us appreciate the name of the Lord and all of the qualities of faith and love by which He is to be worshipped. This spirit of awe is not fear. Instead, it is a calming feeling of being special. We are brethren. We are His flock, and He stands ready to care for and feed us. We shall be great. We shall abide. The Lord will instruct us “to the ends of the earth.” Hell and its disorders will be dissipated. These teachings are a bold and positive promise of the majestic name of the Lord.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 5:3-4.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- The word “awe” has many meanings: profound and reverent dread; veneration and solemn wonder; respect. What other words come to mind

after reading the passage from *AE* 76? Awe comes when love turns our sight to see the majesty of the Lord. I don't hear fear and dread in these words.

Instead, I hear healing, calm, spiritual power and the dissolution of evil and falsity. Awe also brings to our hearts and minds the qualities that are to be loved and worshipped within the Lord. Any other insights come to mind?

- I like the repetition of the Lord's promise that His flock will be gathered together as brethren. The Lord's New Church will provide unity of thought and purpose. Picturing the Lord in the standing position, ever watchful and alert, is another important "touchstone" to carry with us. Hell loves to convince us of our estrangement from the Lord. Hell wants to separate all forms of love, wisdom, and use. But here, in this little prophecy of *Micah*, we are given a positive and bold promise of wholeness and success. How glad can we be with this prophecy? I hope it is a calming voice that tells and reminds us to "fear not, little flock."
- Just a reminder: The theme of each Minor Prophet comprises a message of hope and restoration. I am willing to offer this observation: Hell doesn't want any of us reading the prophets. The evil spirits would prefer that we be ignorant of the Lord's prophecies. The conspiracy of Hell is to discourage us. The plan of the Lord is to feed us and call us all together into His church. Can we join hands as brethren and have our eyes "turned" by the Lord to see and love Him?

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "He [the Lord] will utterly destroy reasonings from falsities."

AC 1186 [5]

- "'Asshur' here is reasoning concerning spiritual things...In *Micah*...5:5, 6 the subject here is Israel, or the spiritual church, of which it is said that 'Asshur shall not enter in,' that is, that reasoning shall not; 'the land of Nimrod' denotes such worship as is signified by Nimrod, in which the interiors are evil and false."

AC 9659 [3]

- "What is full and in every way is also signified by 'eight' after 'seven,' in...(Micah 5:5, 6); 'Asshur' denotes reasoning about the goods and truths of the church from man's own intelligence; total or complete deliverance from the falsity thence, is signified by the 'eight princes of men who shall destroy'; the 'princes of men' denote the primary truths of good."

Derived Doctrine

"And this One shall be peace."

- What is **peace**? AE 365 develops a wonderful word picture of what **peace** is and what **peace** is not. Let's begin with what peace is not: dissensions arising in the church when the "understanding of the Word is destroyed." With the destruction of the Word, "good" becomes a casualty. When good is lost, no illustration from the Lord and heaven can be given when the Word is read. "So far as a person is in good, the Lord flows in and gives the affection of truth, and thus understanding..." Unless there is good within the mind of a person, it cannot be opened, still less can it experience peace or conjunction with the Lord. **Peace**, on the other hand, is "in its first origin from the Lord; it is in Him...and by His conjunction with heaven and the church, and in particular from the conjunction of good and truth in each individual...'Peace,' in the highest sense, signifies the Lord..." In a word, **peace** is being in the "One" of the Lord's Love, Wisdom, and Use. **Peace** is adherence to the order and directions of the Lord's End, Cause, and Effect principle. To do otherwise causes **peace** to cease and dissension to enter the heart and mind of the church.

"When the Assyrian comes into our land, and when he treads in our palaces..."

- In Hosea 12:1, we read, "Ephraim...daily increases lies and desolation. Also they make a covenant with the Assyrians..." **Assyria's** association with Ephraim and their making a covenant with lies and desolation suggest that "**Assyria**" signifies something subtly destructive in the mind. AE 304 [26] refines for us that "Assyrian...signifies the reasonings from falsities against truth." AE 962 [3] teaches that "Assyrians...signify the rational perverted as to good and truth."
- The "**Assyrian**" coming "into our land" signifies reasonings of falsity entering into the church. See AE 365 [14].
- That the "Assyrian...treads in our palaces" is a significant statement about the intent of **Assyria**. AE 675 [14] talks about the meaning of "**palaces**" in the negative sense. In this sense, a "**palace**" is a place where the proud live. It is a place of embellishment in the external form to appear magnificent.

"...then we will raise against him seven shepherds and eight princely men."

- "...seven signifies what is holy..." (AC 716) "**Seven**" signifies the holy things of the Word. (AR 738) "**Shepherds**" signify all the goods of the church. (AE 601 [15]) "**Shepherds**" signify those who by truths lead to good. (AE 388 [17])
- "**Eight**" signifies the beginning of a new state. See AC 2866. "**Princes**" signify primary truths. See AC 5044 [5].

- Putting these pieces of derived doctrine together, we get a picture of the holiest things of the Word drawn together. Drawing them together to rise up against Assyria requires the guidance of the Lord's "holy" shepherds leading to the good of life. The Lord also brings His eight (new state) primary truths to the fore to enlighten the state so the people can see past the embellishments of the false reasonings and lies of the Assyrians.

"They shall waste with the sword the land of Assyria, and the land of Nimrod at its entrances..."

- In the story of Joseph saving Egypt in the time of the great famine, the Word (*Genesis 42: 13-26*) describes a series of things that were **laid to waste**. The people's *money* ran out (was laid to waste), and they came to Joseph for bread. In exchange for seed and bread, the Egyptians gave him their *cattle*. When their supply ran out, they gave Joseph their *land* in exchange for seed and food. The Word remarks that **the land was laid to waste**. The spiritual explanation for Joseph's saving series of exchanges and for the things **laid to waste** is quite positive: "...'the ground be not laid waste,' signifies that the mind must be cultivated with the memory-knowledges of the church; 'and Joseph bought all the ground of Egypt for Pharaoh,' signifies that the internal appropriated to itself the whole natural mind where memory-knowledges are, and placed it under general auspices...[the] subjection of all things which are of service to the church..."
- Is it a stretch, then, to view the **sword** as the "truth of faith combating" falsity (*AC 2799 [2]*), laying waste to all of the lies, desolation, and reasonings of Assyria and Nimrod that threatened the mind of the church? This passage illustrates the work of the Lord. He was saving the people during the famine times of the church. The Lord was emptying out the memory-knowledges of the desolated church and providing the basis for restoration and nurturing.
- Where did the **sword** do its work? "...at its **entrances**..." The **wasting** of the spiritual lies and evil and falsity was cut off right at the source. Check this reference to the meaning of "**entrances**" in *AE 540 [9]*: "...entrance means sensual knowledge, through which there is entrance into the natural man; it is by this that falsifications are made."

"...thus He shall deliver us from the Assyrian, when he comes into our land and when he treads within our borders."

- Can we not see the meaning of these words? The Lord, with His sharp two-edged sword, will lay to waste the twisted lies of Assyria. He will cut off the very source of their lies. The Lord knows when the enemy comes near our borders. He knows when Assyria wants to tread on the church. **Treading** is described in *AE 697 [5]*: "...to devour, to tread down...signifies to utterly destroy the church...[treading] is some evil and diabolical love..." directed toward the church.

Putting It All Together

P&P sums up this section with these words: “He [the Lord] will utterly destroy reasonings from falsities.”

How will the Lord do all of the above? He will do it featuring His many forms of unity—completeness. His “Oneness” will reflect the harmony of Love, Wisdom, and Use. He will act from the orderliness of His End, Cause, and Effect. With such a powerful, awe-inspiring alignment, the lies and false reasoning of the Assyrian and Nimrod nations will crumble and be laid to waste. How? The Lord outlines His plan with the mention of the seven shepherds and the eight princely men. The seven shepherds are the holiest things from the Word. Guiding principles, like caring and faithful shepherds, will lead to the “good of life.” These seven shepherds will stand in stark contrast to the fickle and self-serving lies of the evil and falsity Assyria and Nimrod offered. The eight princely men represent the beginning of a new state—new and fresh opportunities to serve the Lord under His Kingly leadership. We are His children. We, under His Royal leadership, will become princely heirs in the kingdom of heaven.

The sword of the Lord will waste (utterly destroy) the lies and false fronts of hell. He will cut them off at the very source of their attempted entrance into our minds. Our part in this wonderful plan is to actively long for the riddance of evil and falsity. We need to honestly confess our sins and make ourselves guilty for any evil and falsity we might have chosen to follow, and then we need to supplicate the Lord for His help while desiring to be made new. Atonement means to be at-one-moment with the Lord. He is the One, and He wants to draw us unto Himself. His plan of salvation is certain: He will keep the Assyrians and Nimrods away from our borders, and He will keep our enemies from treading on the holy things of the church.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 5:5-6.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- When you take the time to look at the teachings of the Lord, do you feel a sense of enlightenment happening? By that I mean that each word, each verse, and each paragraph opens new vistas for our understanding. Do what were once mere words become personal messages that are uplifting and practical? I guess I’m asking you, as a faithful student of *Micah*, what insights are you getting from this study?
- What makes for peace? What makes for that which is not peace? Peace ceases when dissensions regarding the Word remove “good.” When good is removed from the person reading the Word, sad things happen. The Lord sees the

absence of good, and “no illustration from the Lord and heaven can be given.” How can we remind ourselves to get into a peaceful state prior to and during our reflection time with the Word?

- When we reflect on the Oneness of the Lord, do we remind ourselves of the oneness of His Love, Wisdom, and Use? How about the unity of His End, Cause, and Effect? *DLW 187* reminds us that we must seek truth in its proper sequential order. Looking from effects to causes to ends is the wrong approach. Peace and illustration come when love stimulates wisdom and wisdom inspires use. Reversing this process brings one falsity after another and multiples them in harmful ways. Can we see why this is so?
- Do we have a strong belief in the spiritual meaning of “seven shepherds”? What is your understanding of the spiritual meaning of the “eight princely men”?
- The Lord’s announcement that He will totally destroy the evil and falsity must strike terror in the hearts of Hell. If we believe this message, the Writings teach that it causes the hells to flee from our presence. Do we utilize this teaching enough? If we say this often, with good in our hearts, we can be effective members of the Lord’s New Church. Can we, in a united way, begin practicing this teaching? Doing so puts Hell back into its place of squalor and maniacal disorder.

MICAH 5:7

“Then the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples, like dew from the Lord, like showers on the grass, that tarry for no man nor wait for the sons of men.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Then there will be salvation in that church...”

AC 468 [1-3]

- “...every church...in course of time...decreases, and at last remains among a few...for unless remains were preserved by the Lord in every one, he must needs perish eternally, since spiritual and celestial life are in remains...Of remains as existing in each individual as well as in the church in general, much is said in the Prophets; as in...Micah...5:7...”

AC 3579 [5]

- “...‘dew’ signifies the truth which is from good, or what is the same, the spiritual which is from the celestial, therefore also in the Word spiritual truth

is compared to ‘dew;’ for things which signify serve also for comparison with the same thing, as in...Micah 5:7...where ‘dew’ denotes the multiplication of truth from good, and the fructification of good through truth; and as the dew is that which every morning renders the field and vineyard fruitful...”

AE 278 [5]

- “In Micah...5:7...The ‘remnant of Jacob’ signifies the truths and goods of the church; ‘dew from Jehovah’ signifies spiritual truth; ‘drops upon the herb’ natural truth...”

Derived Doctrine

“Then the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples...”

- In the simplest terms, the spiritual meaning of this passage is the Lord telling us that He always protects (saves) a remnant in which the basic goods and truths are preserved and that He will ensure that information will be in the midst of **“many peoples”**. AC 9174 [5] speaks of the great abundance of good and truth stored away. “Many peoples’ denotes to abound in the goods of intelligence and wisdom, and to communicate them to others out of this abundance.”

“...like dew from the Lord, like showers on the grass, that tarry for no man nor wait for the sons of men.”

- AC 3579 [4] states, “In the genuine sense ‘dew’ is the truth of good which is from a state of innocence and peace...” AC 8455 is almost poetical in its description of the meaning of **“dew”**: “Dew’ signifies the truth of peace because in the morning it comes down from heaven and appears upon the herbage like fine rain, and has also stored up in it something of sweetness or delight more than rain has, whereby the grass and crops of the field are gladdened...” The words **“from the Lord”** signify “the Divine wisdom and Divine love...” (AR 240) In other words, the **“dew from the Lord”** signifies Divine truth and Divine love clothed in innocence and peace, gladdening the hearts and minds of His remnant.
- The showers on the **“grass”** signify “spiritual nourishment” for the “good affections of the natural man.” (AE 405 [30]) **“Grass”** “signifies the truths of the natural man...” (AE 650 [10]) Can we picture the meaning of these words? The Lord gently lets His dew (love and wisdom) fall on man’s natural mind so that it gets refreshed and nourished after a long period of “spiritual draught” in the church, caused by evil and falsity.
- These things will happen according the Lord’s timing (Providence). He will not “tarry” to meet man’s directive timetable. Doesn’t this sound like the teaching in the *Doctrine of the Lord* 3? “In the fullness of times...unless He had

then come...and revealed Himself...mankind would have perished..." The Lord didn't tarry. If He had, we would have died spiritually. The Lord knows precisely when to provide the dew and to bring His innocence and peace to the minds of His people. He does all things with a wonderful timing. Just when the grass and fields were about to lose their fruitfulness, He provided the dew to nourish and strengthen us spiritually.

- The "**sons of man**" signify those who are "intelligent in truths..." (*AE 684 [14]*) The "**sons of man**" signify the "truths of doctrine and of the church." (*AE 750 [17]*)

Putting It All Together

P&P sets the course of our thinking and understanding of this passage. "...there will be salvation in that church..."

In what church? It will be the Lord's New Church. How will He do it? His love and wisdom will come like refreshing morning dew. His innocence and peace will pervade the very core of the church's existence. He will call forth the abundance of all the good and truth stored away in the "remains" of His people. His "dew" will bring gladness, refreshment, and nourishment to the minds of His people. The doctrines will virtually sparkle in the light of His sunshine. The Word will be enlivened in the worship services. The people will be redeemed and saved from the wiles of Hell.

All of this will happen according to the Lord's plan. Human prudence will not influence when and how it will occur. The Lord will tarry for no man, nor will He wait for the sons of men. The angels of heaven and the forces of Hell will not aid or thwart the implementation of His plan. The words "...there will be salvation in that church..." have a powerful Divine ring to them. The Lord alone will bring all things to pass, and He will work through the hearts and minds of all who are willing to obey and follow His way. The plan is set. The "timing" of it is sure. Although it is not stated explicitly, the text contains a question: Will we come and obey the call of the Lord?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 5:7.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Isn't it wonderful to picture the Lord in total control of the things in His spiritual church? Boards, meetings, votes, and popular opinion will have no power over His decisions for our salvation.

- Did the Derived Doctrine section help you picture the wonderful meaning of “dew”? Could you see the morning dew glistening on the field of your mind? How about the gentle, refreshing, and enriching quality of the Lord’s innocence and peace?
- People often ask for positive teachings from the Word. They complain about the harshness of the lessons from the Word. Does this one verse present yet another “happy” theme? *Micah* has given us quite a few. Maybe we need to begin writing them down in a special file or notebook so we can share them with others. What do you think?
- Last question: Did *P&P*’s summary catch your attention? There is no chance of missing its definite and positive statement from the Lord. Let’s not let Hell take this one away from us!

MICAH 5:8

“And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles, in the midst of many peoples, like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among flocks of sheep, who, if he passes through, both treads down and tears in pieces, and none can deliver.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “...but in the church in the Jewish nation there will be nothing but falsities of evil.”

AE 278 [5]

- “In Micah...(Micah 5:7-9). The ‘remnant of Jacob’ signifies the truths and goods of the church...‘a lion among the beasts of the forest,’ and ‘a young lion among the flocks of sheep,’ and ‘treading down and tearing, and none delivering,’ signify power over evils and falsities...”

AC 5897 [6]

- “In Micah...5:8...are described remains in respect to their quality, and it is known that this quality never belonged to the people called ‘Israel.’ From this also it is manifest that by ‘remains’ are meant other things; and that these are goods and truths is clear, because these are what do no perversity, nor speak a lie, neither is a tongue of deceit found in their mouth.”

AC 6367 [7-8]

- “In Micah 5:8, 9...where the ‘lion’ and ‘young lion’ denote celestial truth, which are the ‘remains of Jacob.’ ...That in the opposite sense a ‘lion’ signifies the evil of the love of self in its power...”

AC 7051 [2]

- This passage is a rather important one in that it cites *Micah 5:7-8* to remind us that Israel and “even Christians believe that that nation will again be chosen and will be brought into the land of Canaan...this expectation is vain, and that the kingdom of the Messiah or Christ is not of this world, and thus that the land of Canaan, into which the Messiah will bring men, is heaven.” (Emphasis added.)

Derived Doctrine

“And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many peoples...”

- “...‘remains’ are not the remains of any people or nation...in the Word, especially the prophetic Word, by ‘Israel’ was not meant Israel, nor by ‘Jacob’ Jacob, but by both the church and what is of the church. And this being the case, by the ‘remains’ are not meant the remains of Israel and Jacob, but the truths and goods which belong to the church...That it has been unknown, and appears strange...[is because] the literal sense, especially where it is historical, withdraws and forcibly withdraws from thinking things like these.” (*AC 5897 [3]*)
- “...Gentiles...denote those who are in evils.” (*AC 4169*) Therefore, when the Word says that “remains” shall be among, or in the midst, of the “Gentiles,” we are to understand that at the beginning of the rebirth of the church, its goods and truths are surrounded by the enemies of the Lord’s church.
- Coupled with the threat of Gentiles (those who are in evils) is that of “many peoples.” What do “peoples” denote? *AC 6692* teaches that, in the negative sense, “people denote memory-knowledges [that] are opposed to the truths of the church.”

“...like a lion among the beasts of the forest...”

- *AR 241* teaches that “a lion signifies truth in its power...the Divine truth of the Word...lions in the spiritual world...are images representative of the power of Divine truth...”
- The “beasts of the forest” can have both a positive and a negative meaning. Consider both meanings as we examine the words “beasts of the forest.” *AC 775* explains that “The origin of all things (rerum) is in this wise: all things, both in general and in particular, are from the Lord; from Him is the celestial;

from Him through the celestial comes forth the spiritual; through the spiritual the natural; through the natural the corporeal and the sensuous. And as they all come forth from the Lord in this way, so also do they subsist from Him, for as is well known, subsistence is a perpetual coming into existence. **They who have a different conception of the coming into existence and the rise of things, like those who worship nature and deduce from her the origins of things, are in principles so deadly that the phantasies of the wild beasts of the forest may be called far more sane."** (Emphasis added.)

"...like a young lion among flocks of sheep..."

- "...the omnipotence of Divine good is compared to a 'lion,' and the omnipotence of the Divine truth thence derived is compared to a 'young lion'..." (*AC 6367 [3]*) In the opposite sense, "a 'lion' signifies the evil of the love of self in its power." (*AC 6367 [2]*)
- "...in general a flock signifies all those who are in good, thus who belong to the Lord's church in the universal world." (*AC 3767*) "...sheep signify those who are in love towards the neighbor, which love is charity." (*AE 314 [5]*)
- How do we draw the above doctrines to a point of useful application? The Lord is comforting those who are in His church with this promise: He will be in the midst of all who are in good. His Divine truth (the young lion) will assist the good (the flock) by showing them how the neighbor can be prudently loved so that true charity can rule in their hearts. This is, of course, the positive meaning. Hell has another plan. Hell's lion wants to foster, encourage, and empower the love of self to reign over the neighbor (flock).

"...who, if he passes through, both treads down and tears in pieces, and none can deliver."

- How are we to understand the words and meaning of this passage? Is it a message of futility? "None can deliver" sounds hopelessly foreboding. Treading down and tearing to pieces sound scary and destructive. Fortunately, we have the helpful assistance of *AE 278 [5]* to clear up this misconception. What really is being taught here is the truth that the Lord alone has the power to tread down and tear to pieces evil and falsity. Man's prudence and "as of self" strength can't independently defeat evil and falsity. On the other hand, this is a positive Divine message of deliverance and rescue. It is an encouraging word from the Lord to those who place their hope, trust, and confidence in Him; because of Him alone, we shall succeed in our eternal endeavors.

Putting It All Together

There are countless truths in the Lord's Word. Recall the church teaching that tells us the Word can be studied to eternity and it will never be exhausted. So when we say there are three basic themes to this section, we need to be mindful that as we study and grow spiritually, other points will come to view, too.

The first theme we glean from *P&P*: "...the church in the Jewish nation [was in]...nothing but falsities of evil." This is not a new statement in *Micah*. We have been reading this over and over. The priests of the church were "selling out" their office to the highest bidder. They were more interested in grandeur, pompous dignity, and their individual power than in caring for the people. As often as the Lord called them to repent and return to their uses as pastoral shepherds, they did not heed His call. As they ignored this call, the church languished in vitality and spiritual resources.

The second theme is found in the quote from *AC 7051 [2]*. Israel is not and was not a favored nation to the extent they believed. Israel, and many Christians, believed that eventually the Lord would call Israel out of their falsities to inherit the promised land of Canaan. In other words, Israel's belief resulted in an almost arrogant assumption that no matter what they did, they would still be, and would always be, the Lord's favorite people and nation.

The third theme expounds the truth that no nation, or any peoples, can find salvation through their own merit. The Lord's new church and His salvation tarries "...for no man nor [will it] wait for the sons of men." (*Micah 5:7*) In verse 8, the Lord uses three words to teach us about His eternal sovereignty: "none can deliver." These words remind all that the work of salvation is strictly His doing. You and I gain all of the gifts of the Lord when we humbly follow and live out the truths of His Word.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Micah 5:8*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Do we pray (work) hard enough to ask the Lord to keep our church free from falsities? Are we earnest in our prayers that the priesthood be guided and led by the Lord in the performance of their uses? Do we pray that the laity will stay involved and interested in the teachings of the Word?
- Do we, in subtle ways, fall into thinking that the external New Church is somehow "favored" among all of the other churches? I understand the terms "old church" and "new church," but do we ever use these terms in a harmful (snobby) way?

- How can we bolster the “as of self” while still keeping it humble and mindful of the Lord’s ways? Not one of us can “go it alone” without acknowledgement that it is the Lord alone who overcomes the power and falsity of the Hells. Without Him, we are nothing. Salvation belongs to the Lord alone.

MICAH 5:9

“Your hand shall be lifted against your adversaries, and all your enemies shall be cut off.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “...this church will have no power over the Lord’s church.”

Scripture Confirmations IX.5

- “Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries; all thine enemies shall be cut off. It shall come to pass in that day that I will cut off the horses, I will destroy the chariots, I will cut off the cities, also juggling tricks from thine hand, graven images, statues, groves, and cities. And I will execute vengeance in anger and wrath upon the nations, who have not obeyed (Micah 5: 9-14). He who is from Bethlehem Ephratah will do this, etc. (vers. 1-7).”

Derived Doctrine

“Your hand shall be lifted against your adversaries...”

- We must put this verse in its proper spiritual context. Israel had been taught that it must not put its trust in its army or any other imagined self-derived power. They were taught to follow the commands and ways of the Lord. The Lord provided them with the leadership of judges and prophets. Instead of appreciating their divinely inspired leadership, they chose to wander off, trusting in their own prudence. They followed the worship of Baal and the gods of neighboring nations. The consequences of these decisions were devastating. Their nation was plundered, their temple destroyed and desecrated, their families separated and carried off in servitude. It was time now for the Lord to put things straight. The remnant, under the Lord’s leadership, would be given spiritual values and tools so they could lift up their “hand” against the deceiving spiritual adversaries in their midst. A “hand” signifies power. The power of their understanding would be “lifted” up. Do we recall Moses having his arms and hands held up and supported in order to defeat Israel’s enemies? Something similar is

represented here as well. The adversaries of falsity and evil will be met and conquered. How thoroughly will the adversary be dealt with in this spiritual “hand-to-hand” combat? Let’s find the answer to this question in the remaining portion of this verse.

“...and all your enemies shall be cut off.”

- Is there any question, when the Lord is in charge, what the results will be when evil and falsity are faced? The enemy—evil and falsity—will be **“cut off.”** What does **“cut off”** signify? AE 433 [11] teaches that **“cut off”** signifies “...that evil shall be no more...” AE 684 [38] says that **“cut off”** signifies “that [the evil will] fall away from the Lord...”

Putting It All Together

P&P sums up this section with these words: “...this church [the spiritually lost church] will have no power over the Lord’s church.” Those who worship evil and falsity will try to resist and oppose the truths of the Lord, but they cannot and will not prevail. In the presence of the Lord, they will be “cut off.” They will fall back. Their life of falsity will not be able to stand in the presence of the Lord. Only the Lord has power, and all else is powerless and cannot lift a finger to hurt the good and truth of His order.

We need to hear messages like this from the Lord’s Word. Hell seeks to convince all that its power is unstoppable. Among its bag of tricks is the art of obfuscation. Evil spirits twist and turn things their way to convince the faint-hearted that the Lord’s church is neither substantial nor enduring. But for all of their deviousness and boastfulness, they will not prevail. The Lord’s church is unstoppable. His mighty truths will enable His strong and steady hands to defeat any and all of His adversaries. The desires of evil and falsity are delusional fantasies.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 5:9.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Have you found a way to “turn off” the obstinate boasts of the hells? Would you be willing to share these methods with others? What kind of faith system do you have in place to trust in the ways of the Lord?
- The messages of the Prophets are consistent—the Lord will allow evil and falsity to run their game plan for just so long. He will expose their vulnerability, and they will all fall back and will be cut off. Our prayer needs to be for patience and trust. The Lord will not leave or abandon us.

MICAH 5:10-15

"And it shall be in that day", says the Lord, "that I will cut off your horses from your midst and destroy your chariots. I will cut off the cities of your land and throw down all your strongholds. I will cut off sorceries from your hand, and you shall have no soothsayers. Your carved images I will also cut off, and your sacred pillars from your midst; you shall no more worship the work of your hands; I will pluck your wooden images from your midst; thus I will destroy your cities. And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury on nations that have not heard."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "...and it will perish with all its falsities and evils."

AC 7297 [3]

- "In Micah...5:10-12...From these passages it is evident that by 'sorceries' are signified the arts of presenting truths as falsities, and falsities as truths; for by 'the horses that were to be cut off' are signified intellectual things...by 'the chariots that were to be destroyed' are signified doctrinal things of truth...by 'the cities of the land that were also to be cut off' are signified the truths of the church (that 'cities' are truths, see 2268, 2451, 2712, 2943, 4492, 4493; and that 'land' is the church, 662, 1067, 1262, 1733, 1850, 2117, 2118, 3355, 4447, 4535, 5577); by 'strongholds' are signified truths in so far as they defend goods. From all this then it can be known what is signified by the 'sorceries that were to be cut off from the land,' namely, the arts of presenting truths as falsities, and falsities as truths; these arts also correspond to the phantasies whereby the evil in the other life present before the eyes beautiful things as ugly, and ugly things as beautiful; which phantasies are a species of sorceries, for they also are abuses and perversions of Divine order."

AC 9188 [5-6]

- "That 'sorceries' denote...falsities, is also plain in Micah...5:11,12; 'the cities of the land' denote the false doctrinal things of their church, which are called 'sorceries' because they destroy the truths of faith...'sorcerers' who have been taught by themselves, and trust in themselves alone to the extent of loving themselves and desiring to be worshiped as deities..."

AR 459

- "...the material of which idols were made, their forms, and their garments, among the ancients, represented the falsities of religion, from which was their worship: 'idols of gold' signified falsities concerning Divine things; 'idols of silver,' falsities concerning spiritual things; 'idols of brass,' falsities concerning charity; 'idols of stone,' falsities concerning faith; and 'idols of wood,' falsities concerning good works. All these falsities exist in those who do not do the work of repentance, that is, shun evils as sins against God. These things are signified in the spiritual sense by idols which were graven images and molten images, in the following passages..." *Micah 5:13* is cited among many other references.

AE 587 [15-16]

- "...the destruction of the church by the falsities of doctrine...signifies the falsification of truth by applications to favor the loves of self and of the world. 'Graven images,' 'molten images,' and 'idols,' have a similar signification in the following passages. In...Micah 5:10, 13..."

AC 2722 [4]

- "That the brazen serpent was holy in the time of Moses is evident; but when the external was worshiped it became profane, and was broken in pieces, for the same reason that worship on mountains and in groves was forbidden. These things are still more evident in the Prophets...In Micah...5:13, 14..."

AC 10643 [4]

- "...when these representatives began to be idolatrously worshiped, it was then commanded that such things should be overturned and broken...And as the Israelitish nation was at heart idolatrous, therefore lest they should set up pillars upon mountains and hills, and in groves, and should worship them idolatrously, they were forbidden to set up pillars and to plant groves, although among the ancients such things were holy things of worship. That this was forbidden to that nation is evident in...Micah 5:13, 14..."

Derived Doctrine

"And it shall be in that day, says the Lord..."

- The words "**in that day**" signify "the coming of the Lord." (AE 548 [6]) "**In that day**" points to the day of spiritual accountability or a day of spiritual reality. Those who trust in their own prudence when reasoning will find themselves naked (exposed) because they will lose their ability to reason and

cover up their blatant falsities, and they will be deprived of any semblance of truth. See *AE* 357 [22]. “...in that day’ signifies the acknowledgement of the Lord and of His Divine...” (*AE* 654 [9]) In other words, **“in that day”** is the moment when all the games and insanity and pretenses of the hells will end. It’s over for them. They will become naked and exposed for what they really are. And who says this will happen? Is it Micah? No way! **The Lord says so!**

“...I will cut off your horses from your midst and destroy your chariots...”

- In the positive sense, **“horses”** signify understanding the Word as to its interiors. See *AR* 437 and *White Horse 1*. In the negative sense, **“horses”** signify “the understanding perverted and destroyed.” (*AE* 573)
- **“Chariots,”** in the positive sense, signify the truths of doctrine. (*AC* 3708 [11]) “...chariots signify doctrine from the Word.” (*AE* 355 [15]) In the negative sense, **“chariots”** signify understanding doctrine in a perverted way, thus destroying the positive uses of human understanding. See *AE* 573.
- From the above, we get the message that the Lord and His new church will correct the perverted sense of the Word and any adhering doctrines of falsity that human prudence might have attached to the Word through tradition and finite mistakes.
- Please note the words **“cut off.”** They occur four times in this section. Is that repetition by happenstance, or some poetical writing style, or is the repetition a vital key to unfolding and understanding the spiritual significance of the Lord’s prophecy? We know the answer to this question. Every jot and tittle (every dot, comma) in the Word is of inestimable spiritual importance.
- **“Cut off”** signifies that evil shall be no more. (*AE* 433 [11]) Whereas **“four”** signifies what is in conjunction (*see AC* 9103); **“four”** signifies goods and the derivative truths that will support any conjunction (*see AC* 9740). **“Four”** signifies “union” (*see AC* 1686). Do we get the picture? Evil and falsity try to form a coalition. Hell believes it has a cohesive union with its “facts,” a union that is invincible, strong enough to defeat the Lord. Not so, says the Infinite and all-knowing God of heaven and earth.

“I will cut off the cities of your land and throw down all your strongholds...”

- “...the signification of ‘cities’ as being the interiors of the natural mind. In the universal sense ‘cities’ signify the doctrinal things of the church...but in an individual sense they signify the interiors of man where doctrinal things are, or rather where truths are conjoined with good...The signification of a ‘city’ is circumstanced as is that of a ‘house.’ In the universal sense a ‘house’...with its apartments, out-buildings, and courts, is a city in the least form.” (*AC* 5287)
- Remember that **“cut off”** signifies that evil shall be no more. (*AE* 433 [11]) Therefore, we are being taught that the false doctrinal things of the

church—the interiors of man’s mind, where falsity was conjoined with evil loves—would be thrown down.

- “...stronghold’ signifies doctrine from the Word defending; and ‘it is devastated’ signifies that there is no perception of it and thence no truth; for the same doctrinals from the Word apart from spiritual perception are not truths, for they are falsified by incorrect ideas respecting them.” (*AE 514 [5]*)

“I will cut off sorceries from your hand, and you shall have no soothsayers.”

- “‘Sorcery’ has nearly the same signification in the Word as ‘enchantment,’ and ‘enchantment’ signifies such persuasion as causes a man to have no other perception than that a thing is so. Certain spirits possess a power of persuasion that closes up, as it were the understanding of another, and suffocates the ability to perceive; and as the well-disposed...are compelled and persuaded to believe and to do whatever...it is here said that ‘they have been seduced by their sorcery.’” (*AE 1191*)
- About **“soothsayers”**: “By ‘diviners,’ ‘augurs,’ ‘sorcerers,’ and the rest...are meant in the internal sense those who destroy the truths and goods of the church by means of memory-knowledges wrongly applied; thus who do so from their own intelligence and through falsities from the evils of the love of self and the love of the world, consequently who learn and teach from the cupidity of profit and of honors, and not from any affection for the truth of faith and the good of life.” (*AC 9188 [8], emphasis added.*)
- It is the Lord who promises to cut off evil. He will restore humankind’s perception and will lead His people through freedom. He will destroy the people represented by the “hand,” those who are motivated by desire for power and self-gain to confuse and persuade others to believe whatever they say. Their hands will lose power, and their words will fail to hold any meaning or enchantment.

“Your carved images I will also cut off, and your sacred pillars from your midst...”

- “...the reason why ‘pillars’ were representative of worship, was that it was in use among the ancients to set up pillars and anoint them with oil and thus sanctify them...The pillars that were set up there signified Divine truth; for the pillars were stones, and a stone signifies truth. Therefore in respect to Divine truth the Lord is called in the Word ‘the stone of Israel.’ ...But when the representatives of the church...began to be turned partly into idolatry and partly into magic, then such things were abrogated...Hence it is that by ‘pillars’ is signified idolatrous worship from falsities. This is the case with all worship when man becomes external, as when he regards himself and the world as the end, and the Divine things of the church as the means...” (*AC 10643 [1-2], emphasis added.*)
- “They who are in works alone and in no truths are like those who act and do not understand, and deeds without understanding are inanimate. They

appear before angels like images carved out of wood; and they who have placed merit in their works, appear like those carved images, naked, without covering...inanimate and naked." (*AR 107, emphasis added.*)

- Once again, we must focus on the words "I will...cut off..." The Lord is announcing His intention to end showy merit and stop the heartless, loveless enactment of "religion" in place of worship of the Lord.

"You shall no more worship the work of your hands; I will pluck your wooden images from your midst; thus I will destroy your cities."

- "The work and doing of the hands' means in the nearest sense their molten images and idols; but in the spiritual sense the 'work of the hands' signifies all the evil and falsity that are from self-love and self-intelligence." (*AE 585 [4]*)
- To "pluck" has a positive sense and a negative sense. *AE 799 [18]* explains the negative sense of plucking as being "expelled from all the good of the church..." In other words, the Lord will see to it that the evil will be separated (removed) and prevented from doing harm to the good of the church. *AC 2701* explains what the Lord meant when He taught "If thy right eye causeth thee to stumble...pluck it out..." This means that "the affection is to be subdued if it causes stumbling..."
- Wood** corresponds, in the positive sense, "...to good, and in the contrary sense to evil..." (*AE 1145 [3]*) In *AC 3720 [2]*, we get a further clue in regards to the pernicious misuse and meaning of "**wood**." "...those who place merit in good works appear to themselves to cut wood...in that they have believed themselves to have been better acquainted with truth than others, and yet have lived evilly..." Thus, the Lord will "pluck" their wooden image of false thinking.
- The phrase "destroy your cities" in the literal sense makes the Lord appear vindictive and harsh. The spiritual sense softens and illuminates the meaning. The cities represent the natural mind and the quality of doctrinal things in the mind of the church. For the Lord's New Church to become established and vital, all evil, falsity, self-love, and self-intelligence must be removed. **Destroyed**, we are taught, represents the removal of all reasonings from falsities. (*AE 650 [56]*) That makes sense, doesn't it? The new, the living, and the vital require false reasoning to be destroyed (surgically/spiritually removed) so the New Church can be healthy and useful, not held back by the deadness of the self-serving natural proprium.

"And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury on the nations that have not heard."

- There are three words we need to clarify before we can be enlightened regarding this prophecy: "**Vengeance**," "**anger**," and "**fury**."
- Vengeance** signifies "a state of damnation." (*AC 488*) How does a state of damnation come about? *AC 7039 [2]* explains that "as soon as the things of

- faith or of truth are taken away [from those who reject the Lord]...they soon sink down like weights into hell." In *AC 8165*, we read, "when truths and goods are rejected and falsities and evils are confirmed...such come into a state of damnation..." *AC 7955* explains that a state of damnation occurs when a person falls into "...a state of nothing but falsity arising from evil..."
- The word "anger" is an interesting study. I suggest you start with *CL 363-368*, where we are shown the differences, and yet similarities, between "anger" and "zeal" (jealous and zealous). The Lord always has zeal to protect and further the conjugal principle, the zeal to effect the conjunction and marriage of love and wisdom. The quality described by the word "anger" is not something the Lord has within His Being. Instead, He has the "Zeal of Love." "...the zeal of good love, in its internals, conceals love and friendship; but...the zeal of evil love in its internals conceals hatred and vindictiveness."
 - Hell has a clever motivational subterfuge. Evil spirits try to blame the Lord for behavior that actually reflects what is in their own hearts. *AE 727* [16] reveals that their hearts are full of a desire to rule over all with maniacal infernal falsity. Therefore, when the Lord breaks their yoke, they feel His powerful presence and persuasion to compel to obedience. There is no way Hell wants to comply with His call for obedience. So they project their own feelings on Him and try to convince others that the Lord has a vindictive pattern, or nature, of "fury." We need to see and understand what the true dynamics are when the restoration of the Lord's church takes place. The Lord's motives are to clean up, restore, and return spiritual health to the church.
 - "...nations that have not heard" gives the impression that certain nations hadn't had the opportunity to hear the Lord's Word. Why would the Lord "execute vengeance in anger and fury" on them? Is that what is meant, or is the meaning closer to what the Lord said about the Scribes and Pharisees in the Gospels? "Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand." (*Matthew 13:13*) Consider these teachings as well: "...it follows that 'not hearing' means non-acceptance..." (*AC 5471*) "...not hearing [means] not to receive..." (*AC 7223*) To not hear "...means disobedience..." (*AC 7314*) Not hearing signifies "...to reject the truths of faith and the goods of charity...." (*AC 7418*)
 - "Nations" signify "the goods of the church and in the contrary sense its evils..." (*AE 304* [17]) "Nations' ...does not mean nations, but the evils of life and the falsities of doctrine." (*AE 388* [15])

Putting It All Together

Pulling all of these verses together necessitates the use of patience and mental alertness to methodically apply the doctrine of correspondences. Otherwise, we might rush to judgment about the spiritual meaning and order of this message from the Lord. The spiritual sense keeps the meaning alive and fresh for all earthly

generations and the eternity of the angelic heavens. We must not tie, or limit, these truths to a time-line of antiquity. So let's review and apply the essentials.

- "...in that day..." when the Lord makes His advent, the Lord promises that He will come to bring about a cleansing and revitalizing of His church. He promises to expose and eradicate the falsities and evils hidden within the veneer of the prudence of finite respectability. The mish-mash self-serving ideas and concepts of the church will be brought to an end. *P&P* clearly states that the falsities and evils of the church will "perish."
- The words "cut off" are used four times. Why? The number four corresponds to that which appears to have a "union" of solidarity. See *AC 1686*. "Four" signifies "conjunction." (*AC 9103*) "Four" signifies the goods and derivative truths that seem to support "the conjunction." (*AC 9740*) Therefore, when we read that the Lord will "cut off" various things, we need to mentally picture the Lord disconnecting, unplugging, and dismantling the evil and falsity within the heart and mind of the false and dangerously lost church. He announces that Hell's unions and conjunctions will cease with His coming. The strongholds, the sorceries, the soothsayers, carved images, sacred pillars, the wooden images, the work of their hands, and the destruction of the cities are all symbols of what will happen to the machinations of evil and falsity. The pride of self-love and its swaggering and pompous ego will not endure in the Lord's presence. Let's read again a portion of *AC 7297 [3]*: Hell has a propensity to follow the "art of presenting truths as falsities, and falsities as truths, these arts also correspond to the phantasies whereby the evil...present before the eyes beautiful things as ugly, and ugly things as beautiful..." Those "arts" will come to an end. Anyone seeking to be faithful in the ways of the Lord must read and ardently believe this important and accurate prophecy.

"...and [Hell] will perish with all its falsities and evils." (*P&P*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 5:10-15.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Repetition is a necessary tool in the learning process of life. But how often must we repeat things before significant and positive change takes place? "How many times must I tell you?" When will we learn from our mistakes? History records the impression that we don't seem to learn well from past lessons. War, pillage, prejudice, murder, rape, and cheating go on and on. In the face of these things, can we remain optimistic and hopeful for the success and enjoyment of the kingdom of heaven?

- Let's turn the above questions to the verses we just studied. Hell works hard at convincing us of the futility of living the good life. Hell tries to win us over to the side that says the Lord is ineffectual in balancing things so that everything is "fair and equitable" for the people of this world. But wait! Is all of this true?
- So far, this writer has completed workbooks about ten of the twelve Minor Prophets. Guess what the theme has been for all ten of these Books of the Word? The coming of the Lord will bring an end to the reign of terror of Hell. When the Lord comes, He will "melt," "cut off," "make naked," and "utterly destroy" all of the evil machinations of the Hells. This theme is repeated over and over throughout the Word. When will we hear this message? When will we learn that the Lord, not Hell, is completely in charge? The *Doctrine of the Lord* teaches us that "in the fullness of time," when it was almost over for humankind, the Lord came to rescue us.
- So now back to the question: "When will we learn this truth?" How many times must the Lord repeat and tell us this eternal truth?

Chapter Six

MICAH 6:1-4

"Hear now what the Lord says: 'Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. Hear, O you mountains the Lord's complaint and you strong foundations of the earth; for the Lord has a complaint against His people, and He will contend with Israel. O My people, what have I done to you? And how have I wearied you? Testify against Me. For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, I redeemed you from the house of bondage; and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.'"

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "The Lord offered every good to them."

AC 6435 [14]

- "Because idolatrous worship took place upon mountains and hills, by them are signified in the opposite sense the evils that belong to the love of self; as in...Micah...6:1..."

AC 9024 [3]

- "In Micah 6:1...'to dispute with the mountains' denotes to contend and defend against the exalted ones, and also against the evils of the love of self; 'the hills which are to hear His voice' denote the humble, and those who are in charity."

AR 336

- "...'mountains' and 'hills' in the Word signify heaven and the church, where there exists love to the Lord and love to the neighbor, and in the opposite sense, hell, where there exists self love and the love of the world." *Micah 6:1-2* is cited as the source of this teaching.

AR 589

- "By 'the foundation of the world' is not here meant the creation of the world, but the establishment of the church..." *Micah 6:1-2* is cited among many other verses from the Word.

AE 405 [40]

- “In Micah...6:1, 2...This...was said of the spiritual church, which was represented by the Israelites when separated from the Jews; and ‘mountains’ mean the goods of charity, and ‘hills’ the goods of faith; but here, the evils and falsities that are the opposites of these goods; therefore, it is said, ‘strive thou with the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice;’ ‘the strong foundations of the earth’ mean the principles of falsity in that church, ‘the earth’ meaning the church, and ‘foundations’ the principles upon which the other things are founded. It is said, ‘with His people,’ ‘with Israel,’ because ‘people’ means those who are in truths, or those who are in falsities; and ‘Israel’ those who are in goods, or those who are in evils.”

AR 902

- “The church...is founded upon doctrine, for doctrine teaches how we are to believe, and how we are to live, and doctrine is to be drawn from no other source than the Word...In the Word ‘foundations of the earth’ are sometimes named, and by them are not meant the foundations of the earth, but the foundations of the church, for ‘the earth’ signifies the church, and the foundations of the church are no other than what are from the Word, and are called doctrinals...” *Micah 6:1* is cited as an example.

AE 1057 [5]

-‘the founding of the world’ signifies the establishment of the church. For the ‘world’ has a similar meaning as ‘heaven and earth;’ and the expression ‘to found the earth’ is used because the ‘earth’ signifies the church on earth, and upon this heaven as to its holy things is founded. This also makes clear the signification of ‘the foundations of the earth’ in the following passages...” *Micah 6:2* is cited.

AR 503

- “Egypt signifies the natural man in conjunction with the spiritual, and thus the affection of truth and thus science and intelligence; but in the opposite sense, it signifies the natural man separated from the spiritual, and then the pride of one’s own intelligence, and thence insanity in spiritual things...and whence it is that Egypt is called ‘the land of bondage’ (*Micah 6:4*)...”

AE 328 [18]

- “And in Micah...(*Micah 6:4*)...in the sense of the letter that they [the children of Israel]...were led by Divine power out of Egypt, where they had been made bondsmen; but in the spiritual sense no such thing is meant, but it means that

those who are of the church, that is, those that are reformed by the Lord by means of truths and a life according to them, are delivered and freed from evils and from the falsities thence, for these are the things that make man a bondsman; this is the spiritual sense of these words, and in this sense are the angels when man is in the sense of the letter.”

AE 654 [75]

- The Word “...describes how the natural man is vastated, which takes place when he casts away from himself all the truths and goods of the church, and imbibes falsities and evils, until there is no longer any truth or good of the church remaining...”

Derived Doctrine

“Hear now what the Lord says...”

- Could the meaning of these words be any clearer? The Lord is advising us to make a choice: tune out, or down, the noisy and demanding finite schedules, ideas, and beliefs of human prudence and commit yourselves to the priorities of the Lord. To **“hear”** signifies a state of obedience. We are to prayerfully and willingly focus our attention on the words of the Lord. Influx from the Lord is directly proportional to the efflux from our hearts and minds. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. The Lord promises to fill us with the bread of heaven and to give us His living waters. Those who believe in the Lord will be given a heart out of which “will flow rivers of living water.”(*John 7:38*) We will have the hunger and thirst of our hearts and minds (our souls) satisfied.

“Arise, plead your case before the mountains and let the hills hear your voice.”

- To **“arise”** signifies “the elevation of the mind.” (*AC 2695*)
- To **“plead”** your case, or **“implore”** your case, typifies people “who are in humiliation of heart,” who are willing to implore or plead to the Lord for mercy. (*AC 598 [2]*) Pleading our case does not mean we are backing down from the hells or throwing in the towel. Instead, it means developing a plan to find restorative strategic help from the Lord. He is our spiritual counsel.
- How does one go about preparing and pleading a spiritual **“case”**? Who will hear our pleading case? The answer lies within our hearts. The Lord sits on His throne, and He adjudicates everything. His “courtroom” is the zenith of Divine justice, where, eventually, fairness, healing, and the restoration of order will reign.
- I’m not a lawyer, but here are some of the things I was able to glean while researching what it means to prepare and “plead a strong case” in the natural courts, and I tried to apply the same principles to our consideration of the

spiritual court. First, pleading does not mean falling all over oneself crying out “mea culpa” or engaging in self-deprecation before the taunting and belittling voices of the hells. Running oneself down or making inordinate excuses is not going to work in our development of a “strong case.” To build a strong case, we should work carefully on the logical presentation of relevant doctrinal facts as drawn from the Word. We should reflect carefully and gather provable spiritual data that will substantiate our case, and we should line up creditable witnesses from the Word to testify on our behalf. Are there any tested spiritual precedents that can be cited? In presenting a strong case, it will be necessary to mount an insightful cross-examination of any witnesses who have falsely testified against the facts of the Lord. And lastly, there is to be a prayerful request to the Lord, and the mercy of His court, for His Divine relief and vindication from the lies that hell has leveled against the timely and providential leading of the Lord. Mind you, we are to do all of these things while being totally honest before the Lord so as to not misrepresent the facts and validity of the Lord’s purity and all-knowing love and wisdom. This seems to be the way we are to plead our case. Note now the spiritual state we are to be in when we plead our case.

“...before the mountains and let the hills hear your voice.”

- The “**mountains**” represent being in the presence of the goods of charity, heaven, and the love of the Lord. The “**hills**” represent being in the presence of the goods of faith, the church, and the love of the neighbor. See *AE 405 [40]*. Letting the mountains and the hills “**hear our voice**” signifies speaking in a state of humbleness and charity. See *AC 9024 [3]*.

“Hear, O you mountains, ‘the Lord’s complaint...’”

- What “**complaint**” do the mountains need to hear from the Lord? Two quotes from the *Arcana* might help us see and understand the loving nature of His complaint. First, let’s look at *AC 1780*: “The Lord’s complaint respecting the church was that it was in externals only...” Secondly, *AC 1795* teaches that “The church is to serve as stewards or overseers...,” but a time came “when no internal dimension of the church exists, only in the external...” For this state, “...the Lord made complaint...”

“...and you strong foundations of the earth...”

- When a church (or individual) strays from following the internals of the Lord’s teachings, the people begin to construct ideas of falsity that multiply darkness and hide the light of the Lord’s Word. *AE 405 [40]* teaches us that “strong foundations of the earth” mean the principles of falsity...upon which other things are founded.” This passage calls us to consider what are the

beginning principles of our foundations. Hearing the complaints of the Lord is a good starting point.

"...the Lord has a complaint against His people, and He will contend with Israel..."

- The word "people" can have a positive and a negative signification. In the positive sense, "people" signify "those in the church who are in truths." (*AE 863 [6]*) "...people signify those who are of the church in which is the doctrine of genuine truth from the Word." (*AE 768 [19]*) "...by people and nations are meant those who are in truths and goods..." (*AE 331 [9]*) In the negative sense, "...'people' signify the falsities of religion in which they trust, and from which they fight against the truths of the church..." (*AE 734 [11]*, *emphasis added*.) In the context of this verse, it would appear the Lord wanted to lodge His complaint against those who turned and twisted the goods and truths of the church to fight against Him.
- Our most direct teaching regarding the meanings of "people" and "Israel" comes from *AE 405 [40]*: "...people means those who are in truths, or those who are in falsities...and Israel those who are in goods, or those who are in evils..." (Emphasis added.)
- Do we need to ponder why the Lord complains about the falsities of truth while He contends with those who are in love of evil? Is one of these more serious than the other?

"O my people, what have I done to you? And how have I wearied you? Testify against Me."

- Divine questions are for us to reflect on. The Lord knew perfectly the answers to these questions. He doesn't need our enlightenment to help Him see anything. No, His questions are for our sake, so let's enter into this dialogue with Him by reflecting on the three things mentioned. First, what have we done to the Lord? Second, How have we wearied the Lord? And third, we need to ask the Lord to testify against us.

"For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, I redeemed you from the house of bondage, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam."

- *AR 503* explains what is meant by being brought up and redeemed from the bondage of Egypt. It means becoming spiritual and not natural. It means being rescued from the pride of one's own intelligence and being released from the insanity of such a life. How does the Lord do this? "Moses" signifies the "doctrine thence from the Divine" (*AC 7052*) and "instruction about the law Divine." (*AC 7185*) He also signifies how things were to be done "according to the Word of the Lord." (*AC 7406, 7450*) "Aaron" signifies getting priestly "instruction anew from the law Divine." (*AC 7214*); receiving and sharing of priestly "influx and communication" (*AC 7287*); and "the influx

of the internal law into the external law" (*AC7379 and 7410*). "Miriam" denotes the "good of faith which proceeds meditately from the Lord." (*AC 8337*)

Putting It All Together

Two disciples on the road to Emmaus were deeply engrossed in a conversation, reasoning about the dramatic (horrific) events in Jerusalem. Jesus drew near them and asked them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" (*Luke 24:17*) Incredulously, they turned on Him and asked, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem..." They explained that their Savior had been killed. Their dreams and aspirations seemed to be coming to an end.

While all of this was going on, the Scriptures tell us, the disciples' "eyes were restrained so they did not know Him..." (*Luke 24:16*) Why were their eyes restrained? Could it have been they were so busy talking, worrying, and complaining about the end of their dream that they just couldn't see that the Savior was with them? They were talking fast, taking in the words of the Stranger, letting the meaning or significance of what He was saying and teaching slip by.

Isn't that just like us? We often talk and talk, assuming that we know the effect of things before having our eyes opened to see the end. We, too, can become morose and assume that the Lord is dead and overcome by the hells.

Our lesson tells us the first step out of this habit is to "Hear now what the Lord says..." Then *P&P* adds to this: "The Lord offered every good to them..." In other words, what looked bleak and empty was just the opposite. He was doing that which was good and full. What looks like an end to us may in fact be a significant beginning for the Lord.

Next, our lesson tells us that it is important to listen to what the Lord's complaint is about the church. The Lord does not want external superficiality within His church. He wants us to have internals that are strong and healthy flowing into our externals. Read again the words from *AR 902*. A healthy church "is founded upon doctrine, for doctrine teaches us how we are to believe, and how we are to live..." (Emphasis added.)

Instead of complaining about what the Lord should have or could have done, we need to turn our whole conversation around to "What have I done to You? And how have I wearied You?" These questions are not meant to lay a guilt trip on us. Instead, they are offered so that our eyes will not be restrained to prevent us from seeing the Master as He walks with us along our spiritual journey.

Lastly, this section presents a powerful reminder that we are to build and plead a "strong case" in the court of the Lord. Hell will, without a doubt, be there to

discourage and attempt to defeat us in our spiritual efforts. But the Lord reminds us that if we come in humility and in love to Him and the neighbor, we will be survivors. His mercy will bring the Word to us and will cause us to remark, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, “Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?” (*Luke 24:32*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 6:1-4.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- How well do we listen to the “still, small voice” of the Lord?
- Do we consider how much we need to “plead” our case before the mountains and the hills?
- What about the Lord’s complaint against our church? Do we give consideration to the strength of our internals? Doctrine needs brushing up so that it is real and vital in teaching how we are to believe and how we are to live.
- The Lord never is frustrated or weary with us. But can we picture how we might cause these feelings in Him with our stubborn nature?
- Do we talk and talk about things—so concerned and wrapped up with our effects that we miss the ends of the Lord?

MICAH 6:5

“O My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab counseled, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, from Acacia Grove to Gilgal, that you may know the righteousness of the Lord.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “He protects them.”

Derived Doctrine

“O My people, remember now...”

- These words, **“O My people,”** when thought of as being directed affectionately to Israel only will lead us down a wrong path. Such thinking fosters the idea that Israel was and is the chosen people or favored nation.

But when we look from the spiritual sense, we get a more inclusive idea of what the Lord is saying. "...'...people' signify the intelligent and in an abstract sense the understanding of truth and good..." (AE 412 [26]) "**People**" signify "the truths and goods of the church." (AE 417 [11]) "...people signify those who are of the church in which is the doctrine of genuine truth from the Word." (AE 768 [19]) "**People**" represent "those in whom simple good is present." (AC 4968)

- To "**remember now**" signifies "...what is [to be] perpetual in thought...remembering...must not in any wise be forgotten..."
- The Lord, then, is directing all who read and love His Word to hold or remember perpetually His good and truth; to remember the genuine truths of the Word; and to remember to keep simple (plain) love present in the heart and mind.

"...what Balak king of Moab counseled, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, from Acacia Grove to Gilgal, that you may know the righteousness of the Lord."

- AC 1888 [3] reminds us that when a passage contains "nothing but names, from which no sense would appear unless all the names signified actual things; and if the mind were to abide in the names, this would never be acknowledged to be the Word of the Lord. But who will believe that in the internal sense they all contain arcana of heaven...?"
- "**Balak**" represents those who desire and long for the people of Israel to fail. Look again at the above meaning of the people of Israel. "**Balak**" represents those who want "to destroy the people of Israel by craft...leading them away from worship of the Lord to the worship of Baal-peor..." (AE 140 [2]) "**Balak**" represents those who want "to cast stumbling blocks..." (AR 114) "**Balak**" the king pictures for us an evil **ruling love**.
- "**Moab**" "denotes those who are **easily led astray**...and adulterate goods..." (AC 3242 [3], emphasis added.)
- Balaam is an interesting study. He had certain divination skills, honed from the remnant of knowledges from the Ancient Church. Balaam had conversations with the Lord. The Lord warned him not to aid or assist Balak in his wish to be a stumbling block to Israel. Balaam heard the Lord say "Thou shalt not curse the people..." And yet, the lure of wealth clouded his judgment and tarnished his ancient skills. The Word, noting for us that Balaam came from the land of Beor, gives us a possible insight into why he allowed himself to participate in the adulteration of good and truth. The name "Beor" in Hebrew means a "burning." The offer of wealth and position must have burned in his heart and mind because he turned away from the directions and warnings of the Lord and proceeded with his plan to adulterate all that was good and true.
- Balaam answering Balak from the "Acacia Grove to Gilgal" offers us an interesting series of meanings. **Acacia** was a place where the groves of Shittim wood were plentiful to harvest. Shittim wood was used in the

construction of the Ark of the Covenant. Shittim wood represents “the good of merit from the Lord’s Divine Human.” (AC 9633) Shittim wood signifies “the good of righteousness and consequent power...” (AC 9713) Shittim wood represents “the good of righteousness or of merit which belongs to the Lord alone.” See AE 391 [22] and AC 9462. What did the ark contain? It held the stones, or tablets, of the Ten Commandments, a golden jar with some of the manna in it, and Aaron’s budding rod.

- **Gilgal** signifies “the doctrine of natural truth which is serviceable for introduction into the church...” (AE 700 [14]) **Gilgal** means “rolling off” the “reproach of Egypt from all of you...” (AC 2039 [8])
- Can we see, from the above information, the range of Balaam’s intent to harm Israel? He was part of the conspiracy to destroy everything from celestial and spiritual things to introductory things. Balaam wanted to “roll off” the protection of the Lord and thus destroy the Israelites. How low and self-centered were his motives?
- The Lord wanted Israel to reflect on and remember these plans of Balak and Balaam so that they **may know the righteousness of the Lord.** (Micah 6:5, *emphasis added.*)

Putting It All Together

Once again, we have a wonderful story of the exposing of hell’s intent to destroy both things most holy and the introductory things that lead one to the church. But the Lord will not be thwarted. He knows the “burning” desire of self-love and its lust for riches and power. He will expose hell, and He will defend His church from such chicanery. As P&P says, “He protected them.” What a wonderful message to have and to remember perpetually. It must not be forgotten. Why? Because the Lord tells us so!

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 6:5.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- How did you do with the list of names in this verse and their meaning and spiritual representations? Did you use paper to trace the applications and meaning for your life? It is amazing how doing something like this opens and enhances our spiritual horizons.
- Balaam “burned” to do what Balak wanted, in spite of all of the Lord’s warnings. Why do you think Balaam chose to ignore the Lord and listen to Balak? Are there any examples that come to mind when something similar happened in the life of someone you know?

- The name “Moab” signifies those “who are easily led.” Are we easily led by some Moab states?
- The Lord will save us from the wiles of hell. Is this a “remembrance” that will be kept perpetually in your mind?

MICAH 6:6-8

“With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “The Lord is not approached by externals of worship, but by internals, which are of truth and good.”

AC 922 [3]

- “It is by internal things, namely, charity and the faith therefrom, that He who is represented is to be seen and acknowledged and believed, as is clearly evident in the Prophets...What is meant by ‘hearkening to the voice’ may be seen in Micah...6:6-8...this is what is signified by ‘burnt-offerings and sacrifices of clean beasts and birds.’”

AC 2180 [4-6]

- “As regards sacrifices in general, they were indeed enjoined through Moses on the people of Israel, but the Most Ancient Church, that existed before the flood, knew nothing whatever about sacrifices; nor did it even come into their minds to worship the Lord by slaughtering animals. The Ancient Church, that existed after the flood, was likewise unacquainted with sacrifices...sacrifices were first instituted in the...church...called the Hebrew Church, and from this spread to the nations, and from the same source they came to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and thus to the descendants of Jacob...the worship of sacrifices had become idolatrous with them, as it had with the Gentiles, and from this worship they could not be withdrawn...For what has once been implanted from infancy as holy, especially if by fathers, and thus inrooted, the Lord never breaks, but bends...This is the reason why it was directed that sacrifices should be instituted in the way described in the books of Moses. That sacrifices were by no means acceptable to Jehovah, thus were

merely permitted and tolerated...is very evident in the Prophets..." *Micah 6:6-8* is cited.

AC 10143 [6]

- "That external worship without...internal is not worship, is also signified by what is said of burnt-offerings and sacrifices in these passages..." *Micah 6:6-8* is cited.

AR 287

- "By 'number,' in the natural sense, is meant that which has relation to measure or weight, but by 'number,' in the spiritual sense, that which has relation to quality; and here their quality is described by their being 'myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands.' For 'a myriad' is predicated of truths, and 'a thousand' of goods. The reason why 'a myriad' is predicated of truths, and 'a thousand' of goods, is because a myriad is the greater number, and a thousand a less, and truths are manifold, but goods are simple...Since these two numbers have such a signification they are mentioned also in other places, as in...Micah 6:7..."

AE 336 [8]

- "In Micah...6:7...'rams' signify spiritual goods, and 'rivers of oil' truths proceeding from good, 'myriads' are predicated of the latter, and 'thousands' of the former... 'rams' signify spiritual goods...and as 'oil' signifies the good of love, 'rivers' of it signify what proceeds from it, namely, truths."

AC 519 [1-2]

- "To 'walk'...signifies to live...which has relation to truth, consequently to faith, or the doctrine of faith...In Micah...6:8...where to 'walk with God' signifies to live according to the things here indicated...to 'walk with God' is to teach and live according to the doctrine of faith..."

Derived Doctrine

"With what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the High God?"

- Please note that we will begin reviewing a series of questions. The questions have been inspired by the Lord to show that He never wanted sacrifices. He never wanted gory or grotesque forms of external worship. From the beginning, He has always wanted spiritual internal values and offerings from His children. So our text asks question after question, and then an answer is

given that points to what is really wanted: humility, affection, and dedication of the soul, heart, and mind.

- To bow oneself down to Jehovah “signifies gladness and joy...” Bending “and bowing down are gestures of humiliation, that is, they are humiliation in act...” (*AC 3118*) “...bending the knees signifies acknowledgement, thanksgiving, and adoration from spiritual good and delight in the natural.” (*AE 455 [14]*)
- Does it seem to you that we have answered the question “with what shall I come before the Lord?” We are to bow with joy and gladness, with humility, acknowledging the Lord with thankfulness and adoration. These qualities provide the essence of internal worship that will vivify our external worship.

“Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings...”

- “Burnt offerings signify the glorification of the Lord’s Human...” (*AC 10042 [6]*) In essence, this number also tells us, beasts signify goods and evils and also truths and falsities. The sacrifice of animals represents asking for atonement for the evils and falsities so that good and truths might remain and grow to help cleanse internal and external worship so that the worshippers might more ardently adore the Divine Human.

“...with calves a year old?”

- Why is a one-year-old calf mentioned? Let’s begin with the meaning of a **“year.”** *AC 2906 [2]* states “That a ‘year’ signifies the entire time of a state of the church from beginning to end, or what is the same, an entire period...in *Isaiah 61: 1, 2*...it is said of the Lord’s advent...the ‘year of Jehovah’s good pleasure’ [which] denotes the time of a new church.”
- Why are **“calves”** mentioned first and not rams? *AC 8937* and *AE 453 [9]* teach that “rams...signify interior goods and truths, which are spiritual goods and truths...calves...signify exterior goods and truths, which are natural truths and goods.” Are we to draw from this that the natural must first be examined and corrected (cleansed) before the internal is cleansed? The second law of Divine Providence certainly supports this idea. “It is a law of the Divine Providence that man should, as from himself, remove evils as sins in the external man; and thus, but not otherwise, the Lord can remove evils in the internal man, and then at the same time in the external.” (*DP 100.2, emphasis added.*)

“Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil?”

- “...in the Word a ‘thousand’ signifies much and countless, and when predicated of the Lord what is infinite...[in our common speech] where a ‘thousand times’ denotes numberless, as in which also a ‘thousand’ is used for many; as when it is said that a thing has been said a thousand times, or

done in a thousand ways." (*AC* 2575 [2-3]) The implied question here seems to be "Will I forever have to sacrifice rams—spiritual goods and truths—to please the Lord?"

- We need to be careful when working with the meanings of numbers in the Word. To focus strictly on the "numerical count" and not on the representation will cause us to miss the spiritual signification. For instance, consider this passage: "...a 'hundred' denotes all, much, and what is full...because 'a hundred' has the same signification as 'ten,' 'a thousand,' and 'ten thousand'..." (*AC* 9745)
- **...rivers of oil**—"ten thousand rivers of oil" signify "...truths proceeding from good..." (*AE* 336 [8]) Does the Lord want us to offer sacrifices for the purpose of "producing" truths from good? At the end of a day, can we gather specific truths and goods and produce a tangible object to put on display? Will we crawl up a set number of stairs on bloodied knees to meet a requirement of penance? Can we, at any age, say, "I have worked all my life for the Lord and now I can retire because I have paid my dues"? That sounds like working for merit or recognition. The Lord doesn't want us to sacrificially show off. Instead, He prefers love or good to flow out of our heart spontaneously. *AC* 4031 points out the value and necessity of the growing warmth and ardor of spontaneous affection: "...everything spontaneous or free is of affection or love." The gifts or sacrifices from this kind of internal worship are priceless and numberless. They are the substance, or fruits, of the heart that are wanted by the Lord.

"Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

- The words "**shall I give**" denote to make a promise. See *AC* 8055.
- In the positive sense, "**my firstborn**" in "the genuine sense...denotes the faith which is of charity," but "in the opposite sense the 'firstborn' denotes faith without charity." (*AC* 7871) Faith, the Writings teach, "is the eye of love." (*AC* 3863 [12]) In other words, charity/love needs to be our firstborn desire to see the Lord. Hell wants to slay the firstborn so as to extinguish our "faith without charity and the consequent devastation of truth." (*AC* 7022) Does the Lord want us to give, or promise, our firstborn? If our firstborn is a faith without charity, yes. If our firstborn is a faith with charity, no.
- The "**fruit of my body**" denotes what comes from the natural life. Fruit "signifies the good of life." (*CL* 135) Is this question asking the Lord if we have to wear a horse-hair shirt? Do we have to find a cave and shun all modern amenities? Should we take a vow of silence and live in cloisters? Is that what we must do to atone for the sins of our soul? *HH* 528 answers these questions beautifully with this heading: "It is not so difficult to live the life that leads to heaven as is believed." Shunning life and escaping from living in the world produce a sorrowful state that "is not receptive of heavenly joy..."

"He [the Lord] has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"

- Prior to this verse, there were four questions directed to the Lord. The Lord's response is beautiful and concise. He says "I have shown you, O man what is good..." Really? Where? Moses said in *Deuteronomy* 6:5 that the people needed to love the Lord God with "all your heart, with all your soul, and all your strength." Samuel told King Saul that obedience "is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams." (*I Samuel* 15:22) There are many other references from the Word that could be cited. The point is that the Lord did tell His people "what is good." They (like us) often chose not to hear, obey, and follow instructions. Modesty pays attention to the Lord, but the proud tend to listen only to themselves. They succumb to the lure of their own voice. To shake them out of their daze, He ends by asking three Divine questions. This is an important point to note because as many times as I have heard this passage read, it is often read as a statement and not as questions. The Lord asks questions so that we might do the restorative work of reflection. **Question one:** are we willing to observe and serve "*justly*"? The Lord is the only One who is completely fair, equitable, and just. He has no favorites, no behind-closed-doors wheeling and dealing for personal gain. Are we committed to following Him and His system of justice? **Question two:** are we willing to observe and serve "*mercy*"? The Writings define mercy as "a perception of the influx of love" (*AC* 3117), the Lord's Love. "Mercy signifies to do good to the needy from love." (*AE* 295 [4]) Mercy "signifies...to make a covenant of conjunction..." with the Lord. (*AE* 365 [24]) **Question three:** are we willing "*to walk humbly with your God*"? Humility and faithfulness mean caring enough about the Lord that we will have a "healthy fear" of doing anything that would hurt Him or dishonor His Word. *Psalm* 1 reminds us of the blessedness that comes to the person who walks with Him. Like Peter, who was sinking rapidly in the tempestuous waters, may we reach out and let the Lord take our hand and rescue us.

Putting It All Together

P&P gives us this summation: "The Lord is not approached by externals of worship, but by internals, which are truth and good." Isn't that what these verses are about? The Lord never wanted the children of Israel to offer sacrifices. He was not interested in the killing and shedding of animal blood. *Isaiah* 65:1-5 is worth a read in this summation. The Lord tells the children of Israel what He thinks about their rebellious ways. He explains that their sacrifices and burning incense (the smoke of their incense) are offensive "in My nostrils..." Instead, the Lord seeks humility, justice, mercy, and people who are willing to walk humbly with Him. External deeds are not preferred. Internal deeds are received and enriched and rewarded by the Lord.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 6: 6-8.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- This section of our study has a series of questions. Four are addressed to the Lord, and three are addressed to us. Would it be useful to write them out and then take time to get the issues clarified? Certainly, the last three questions should get a major portion of our attention because they are directed to us.
- Look back at the section called **Passages from the Writings**: there is a passage from *AC 2180 [4-6]* that gives us a history of how sacrifices came into the lives of the children of Israel. At one point, there was a hint that other nations picked up this practice from Israel. Why didn't the Lord put an end to it right away? Why did the Lord accommodate this practice to worship services?
- Looking at many passages in the Word (with hindsight and instruction), we can see that the Lord consistently told Israel that He didn't want their sacrifices and that they were repugnant to Him. Again, why didn't the message get heard and implemented in the temples? The worship of Baal frequently entered into Israel's religious preference, and human sacrifices (children) were part of that religion. Didn't something speak to their hearts about the horror and injustice of killing the innocent?
- After reading and considering the notes, didn't the lesson from *P&P* make more sense as a powerful summary? External worship is not acceptable. Internal worship with its loyalty to good and truth is what the Lord wants.

MICAH 6:9-11

"The Lord's voice cries to the city – wisdom shall see Your name: hear the rod! Who has appointed it? Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the short measure that is an abomination? Shall I count pure those with the wicked scales, and with the bag of deceitful weights?"

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "The life of truth and good should be loved, and not the life of falsity and evil."

AE 373 [5]

- “As a just estimation and exploration of good and truth are signified in the Word by ‘measures,’ it was commanded that the measures should be just, with no fraud about them...So justice, where it means the estimation and exploration of men in accordance with the quality of good and truth in them, is everywhere in the Word expressed by scales and balances of various kinds, and by ‘ephahs,’ ‘omers,’ ‘homers,’ ‘seas,’ ‘hins’...and injustice is expressed by ‘scales and balances of fraud and deceit’ as in...Micah 6:11.”

Derived Doctrine

“The Lord’s voice cries to the city – wisdom shall see Your name...”

- “To know and hear the Lord’s voice signifies to do His commandments.” (AE 864 [4]) “Everyone who hears the Lord’s voice and freely follows is brought by the Lord into conjugial love and into all its joys and happiness.” (CL 444 [3]) To hear “the Lord’s voice [is to be in] the truths of the Word, of doctrine, and of faith...thus [His] precepts.” (AE 249 [2])
- To “cry signifies grief...” (AE 393) “I will hear his cry signifies that they will be aided.” (AC 9195) “...to cry signifies interior affection.” (AE 459)
- Wisdom seeing **the Lord’s name** signifies comprehending in one complex “all things by which He is worshiped, thus all things of love and faith.” (AE 295 [13])

“Hear the rod! Who has appointed it?”

- “...‘to hear’ signifies both to understand truth and to will or obey it...” (AR 356)
- A **“rod”** signifies “the power of the Lord’s Divine Human...” (AC 6942) “...‘a rod’ signifies the power which belongs to truth...” (AC 9028)
- Interpreting **“Who has appointed it?”** requires some reflection. Is the Lord asking us this question so that we will look back to see who has the authority and right to the “rod”? Does He want us to acclaim and accede to that authority? If so, we can say with confidence and joy that the Lord has the right and authority to hold the rod. Such acknowledgement puts fear and trepidation into the heart of hell. In light of what follows, it makes sense to reflect on this very necessary beginning point.

“Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked...?”

- The word **“treasure,”** in a positive sense, “signifies the Divine truth that is in the Word.” See AE 840 [10] and AE 622 [3]. Therefore, in the negative sense, “the treasures of wickedness” represent the twisting and profanation of the

Lord's Word. We all know how easy it is to take several verses out of context to make the Word justify false and wicked concepts.

- *AC 3542* explains what it means to "smite the head out of the house of the wicked." It denotes destroying "the principles of falsity." So, putting this back in the context of what is said above, the Lord was exposing the church's practice of abusing and using the Lord's Word with the principles of falsity.

"...and the short measure that is an abomination? Shall I count pure those with the wicked scales, and with the bag of deceitful weights?"

- This is not the first time the church or the people have been called "short" for using dishonest scales to cheat. *Amos 8:5* talked about people making the bushel smaller and cheating others with dishonest scales to make themselves rich. The prophecy of *Micah* uses stronger words to expose this practice: a short measure that is an abomination, wicked scales presented as being pure, and a bag of deceitful weights.
- To "**measure**" signifies "to explore the quality of a thing and to designate it..." (*AE 629 [3]*) To "**measure**" signifies "to know and scrutinize the quality of a state..." (*AR 486*) To "**measure**" signifies "the quality of a thing in respect to truth and good." See *AE 130 [7]* and *AC 9603 [2]*.
- "...'abomination' signifies to be turned into infernal evil..." (*AE 827 [5]*)
- Let's pull the message together. Apparently, the church was not honestly exploring, analyzing, and measuring the quality of states in the light of the Word. They were not interested in deeper truths. They cut corners and satisfied themselves with quick and convenient answers. The people of the church were being cheated. Spiritual things fell into a state of abomination.
- The "abominated" scales of truth and justice were shamelessly being presented as pure, impartial, and honorable. In fact, decisions were handed out to the highest bidder and not according to spiritual laws or the equality of the Word. The Lord asks, "Shall I count pure those with the wicked scales...?"
- The voice of the Lord, accusing the church of using a bag of deceitful weights, carries with it a clear message of what He saw His people doing. But let's add a couple of quotes from the Writings that will aid and enlarge that understanding. "Forms of good and truth that originate in the self and not the Lord are meant by...‘a bag.’" (*AC 9942 [12]*) "...those who despise the Word and worship nature instead of God...fling faith and charity, as it were, into ‘a bag’ on their back..." (*TCR 146*) The heart and mind that are not with the Lord will pull out of their "bag" deceptive weighted arguments and facts to tip the scale in their favor, cheating the natural mind from seeing and loving spiritual goods.

Putting It All Together

The Lord wants integrity from His church. He requires “pure balances” that will not rob the heart and mind of spiritual goods. His church should be a studying church that explores and scrutinizes the Word respecting truth and good. These things are to be done with affection and application to life. Uses are to be dynamic, alive, and vital as opposed to the repetitive, boring, and tired acting-out tradition of “flinging good and truth in a bag on our back.” *P&P* explains these verses with this admonition: “The life of truth and good should be loved, and not the life of falsity and evil.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 6:9-11.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- My first inclination is to think about, and ask whether there are abominable scales that exist in the church today. Can I name any of the fake weights or scales? I am not sure how I can do that. Is there anything that comes to mind that you would like to cite?
- My concern lies in pondering whether we are a careful and faithful studying church. Do we explore the Word, scrutinizing it to find the internal sense in order to enliven our uses to the Lord and the neighbor? Attendance at Friday doctrinal classes is decreasing. How do we read this trend? Is it a sign that the classes are not interestingly prepared and presented? Or is it a sign that other things have increased in importance and we are being pulled away by “lesser things”? The Writings make a case that the Word provides us with doctrine. This doctrine is there from the Lord so that we might know what to think, how to live, and how to use it in service to the Lord and neighbor.
- The values of the world are telling us what to think and apply. I’m not sure that is good for us if we don’t have the values of the Word balancing things out. So if we are not studying the Word regularly, we will follow the thoughts of the natural world, “flinging” the good and truth of the Lord in a bag on our back.
- We need to reflect on things: examine, explore, and scrutinize without becoming morose and bitter. Any ideas come to mind of how we can do (or are doing) this?
- Hearing, remembering, the voice of the Lord and considering His corrective and protecting “rod” seems important. “Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.” (*Psalm 23:4*) Praying is necessary. **What kind of prayers should we offer?** We need to pray for the church; we need to pray for our priests; we need to pray for our laity. We ought to pray that our treasures will not be of wickedness, that our houses (the church and home) will not be found houses

of wickedness. Our prayer needs to be that we will give full measure and purity with our scales, and we need to pray that we will not carry bags of deceitful weights.

MICAH 6:12-13

"For her rich men are full of violence, her inhabitants have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. Therefore I will also make you sick by striking you, by making you desolate because of your sins."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “There is falsification of truth with them. They could not be brought back by punishments...”

AR 206

- “By the ‘rich’...are meant those who were in the possession of the knowledges of truth and good because they had the Word...as in Micah 6:13...”

AR 624

- “By a ‘lie’ in the Word, is signified falsity and false speaking; by ‘deceit’ is signified both from design; as in the following passages...” *Micah 6:12* is cited.

TCR 322

- “In the Word this kind of falsehood [bearing false witness] is called a ‘lie’ and the intent is called ‘deceit,’ as in the following passages...Micah 6:12...”

AE 866 [4]

- “...to speak a lie’ signifies to teach falsely from ignorance of truth; but ‘deceit’ signifies falsity that is not from ignorance of truth, but from deliberation, thus from the purpose of deceiving, as is the case with the wicked.” *Micah 6:12* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

"For her rich men are full of violence, her inhabitants have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth."

- We need to begin this study by paying attention to the choice of words: "her rich men" and "her inhabitants." A woman (her) signifies "the church as regards the affection of truth, thus the affection of the truth of the church..." (*AE 555 [2]*) Further, we read that, in the spiritual sense, **males and females** signify "truth and good." (*AE 725 [3]*) Hence, the Lord was telling His people about their purposeful (intentional) violence to the good, or love, of His Word. It is one thing to do violence to the Word while in a state of ignorance and another to do violence to the Word from a hateful heart. A hateful heart wishes to extinguish the presence and positive life-giving influence of the Lord.
- What made this such a sad case was the fact that the people and the church had much understanding and wisdom and were "rich" in potential. Why? They had the Word of the Lord. But the people, the inhabitants, were deliberately "lying" and doing "full" violence to the words and order of the Lord's Word. Instead of loving the ways of the Lord, they preferred the aberrations, or titillation, of their hellish choices. The statement that "their tongue is deceitful in their mouth" indicates that their lies were not accidental. Consider this teaching regarding the meaning of "mouth." A "mouth signifies thoughts and reasonings that have most power with them." (*AE 565*) From this, we see that the words of their mouth arose from the selfish intention and desire to destroy the holiness of Scripture and the "presence" of the Lord in their hearts and minds.

"Therefore I will also make you sick by striking you, by making you desolate because of your sins."

- Why did the Lord say He would make people sick? Was He announcing that He was going to involve Himself in revenge, payback, or retaliation? The words "by striking you" seem to indicate a form of Divine retaliation. We know better than that, don't we? The Lord is not driven by anger and retaliation. These words signify a totally different message when the spiritual sense is unfolded. The Lord desires to heal sicknesses. We are taught in *AC 10360* that "healing sickness means the purification of a person from evils and the falsities of evil." *AC 9042* explains that "striking" means "the formation of good and truth" to oppose evil and falsity. *AC 9081* teaches that "to strike the peoples denotes to destroy falsities by means of truths." So, really, the Lord was announcing that He would not allow evil to run amok. He would form up His truths to expose the blatant lies and the boastful deceit of the hells.

- Making the people “**desolate**” because of their sins denotes how impotent hell, falsity, and the proprium will be in the presence of His love and wisdom. None of this comes about by anger and retaliation. It is just an eternal fact: **Hell is not. The Lord IS.** Hell is desolate. The Lord is perpetually creating new beginnings and continually productive lives. So, this lesson is not about the Lord’s anger. It is about His healing zeal. True zeal is about love. True zeal wants to protect and preserve the integrity of truth so that His people might remain free from the bondage of hell. We need to recall the words of the Lord: “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (*John 8:32*)

Putting It All Together

P&P points us to the heart of the problem. The church and the people within the church were involved in the “falsification of the truth.” The falsification was not due to ignorance or a lack of understanding. The Lord said they were “rich.” They had the Word. They had the means to see and find truth. Instead of valuing truth, they pursued the great lie of self-love. Instead of protecting the Lord’s truth, they covered the Word in “deceit.” *AR 624* exposes the purpose of deceit. Read this passage again. Deceit comes about by “design.” The “lie” teaches falsity and brings about ignorance of truth. The goal of deceit is to deceive and enslave the hearts and minds of the people. *P&P* tells us that the people were so caught up in this pursuit that “they could not be brought back by punishment...” So the Lord marshaled His goods and truths to “strike” them. He had to minister to the sickness of the people and the church. In the end, the Lord’s good and truth will win. Evil and falsity cannot bear up under the presentation of His loving good and truth. When Hell purports that it is stronger than the Lord, we need to recall this lesson. Then we can stand tall and believe that the Lord will provide us with His truth and that truth will set us free.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 6:12-13.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

Can you think of a situation in which an individual or a church purposely became involved in “lying” and “deceit” so as to rob and make others poor?

- Can you recall a “rich” person making themselves poor because of their purposeful resistance to the Lord’s Word?
- Can we, or do we, take comfort in the fact that the Lord says He will marshal His truths to overcome the lies and deceit of the enemies of the New Church?
- Are there any instances in your memory wherein you can see the Lord “striking” the lying mouths of the Hells?

- I see a prayer in this lesson. We need to supplicate the Lord often to heal our inclination to lie and practice deceit. We need to be diligent in asking the Lord to heal our “sicknesses.”
- We have abundant riches. The three-fold Word is a precious gift from the Lord. Given its healing potential, we need to share it within and without our life. What keeps us from doing more of this sharing? Our reticence to speak up? Our insecurity about saying the right things? Our fear of being called odd or a cult? Or is it all about the abandonment of our calling because other things have crowded the mission out?
- Hold the answers to some of these questions for our next verses. See what happens when the heart and mind are resistive to, and in hatred toward, the Lord’s Word.

MICAH 6:14-16

“You shall eat, but not be satisfied; hunger shall be in your midst. You may carry some away, but shall not save them; and what you do rescue I will give over to the sword. You shall sow, but not reap; you shall tread the olives, but not anoint yourselves with oil; and make sweet wine, but not drink wine. For the statutes of Omri are kept; all the works of Ahab’s house are done; and you walk in their counsels, that I may make you a desolation, and your inhabitants a hissing. Therefore you shall bear the reproach of My people.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “...therefore it must needs be that this church, having been overthrown, should perish.”

AC 886 [2]

- “That the ‘olive’ signifies the good of charity, is evident from the signification in the Word not only of an ‘olive,’ but also of ‘oil.’ It was with olive oil, together with spices, that the priests and kings were anointed, and it was with olive oil that the lamps were trimmed...The reason olive oil was used for anointing and for lamps was that it represented all that is celestial, and therefore all the good of love and of charity; for the oil is the very essence of the tree, and is as it were its soul, just as the celestial, or the good of love and of charity, is the very essence or the very soul of faith; hence oil has this representation...this may be confirmed from many passages of the Word...”*Micah 6:15* is cited.

AC 9272 [5]

- “In Micah...6:13, 15...‘sowing and not reaping’ denotes to be instructed in the truths of faith, but without profit; ‘treading the olive, but not anointing one’s self’ denotes to be instructed about the good of life, but still not to live in it; ‘treading the must, but not drinking the wine’ denotes to be instructed about the truths which are from good, but still not to appropriate them to one’s self. That such things of the church or of heaven are signified by these words is plain from those which precede, namely, that they were to be laid waste in this manner ‘because of their sins;’ for the wicked and sinful man receives instruction, but merely stores it up among memory-knowledges, which he brings forth from his memory in order to get reputation, fame, honors, and wealth, thus to serve an evil use and end. From this the truths and the goods in which he has been instructed lose the life of heaven, and become dead, and finally deadly.”

AC 9277 [2]

- “Olive-trees...’ denote the goods of celestial love which are from the Lord through the Word in the whole church...like in Micah 6:15...”

AR 316

- “‘Oil’ signifies the good of love, and ‘wine’ truth from that good, therefore ‘oil’ signifies holy good, and ‘wine’ holy truth...That ‘oil’ signifies the good of love, will be seen...” *Micah 6:15* is cited as an example.

AR 779

- “...priests, the kings, and all other things of the church were anointed, and when anointed were called holy; not that they were holy in themselves, but because they thereby represented the Lord as to the Divine Human. Hence it was sacrilege to harm a king, because he was ‘the anointed of Jehovah’...” *Micah 6:15* is one passage cited among others from the Word.

AE 375 [23]

- “That it was a commonly received custom to anoint themselves and others with oil, to testify gladness of mind and good will, is evident from the following passages...” *Micah 6:15* is cited.

AE 638 [20]

- “In Micah...6:15...‘olive trees’ [signify] the goods of the church...”

Derived Doctrine

"You shall eat, but not be satisfied; hunger shall be in your midst."

- In the positive sense, to "eat" signifies "...to appropriate, because as natural food when it is eaten is appropriated to the life of the [person's] body, so spiritual food when it is received is appropriated to the life of [one's] soul." (AR 89) In another place, we read that to "eat signifies to be communicated, to be conjoined, and to be appropriated." (AC 3813 [2])
- However, our text indicates something was amiss with their "eating." Words, truths, insights were not satisfying their souls. Was it the fault of the Word? Was the soul rejecting the spiritual food of the Lord? No! The dissatisfaction was within the hearts and minds of those who practiced lying and deceit. They heard and went through the motions of saying things, but they had no wish to appropriate what they heard and be conjoined to the Lord.
- The "hunger" in their midst "signifies that they were expiring from a lack of delight and of good." (AC 8402)

"You may carry some away, but [you] shall not save them; and what you do rescue I will give over to the sword."

- In AC 1471, 1472, and 1474, we find an explanation of what is meant by the words "carry away." Summarizing all three of these numbers is relatively easy. "Carry away" signifies having no interest in celestial things. In place of celestial things, such people choose knowledges and memory-knowledges or cognitions.
- You "shall not save them" supports a well-known teaching of the church. Useless memory-knowledges, not loved or applied, are sloughed away. "Idle" memory-knowledges will not find a permanent grounding in a person's "remains" and, therefore, are removed.
- The meaning of being given "over to the sword" can best be understood by a full reading of AC 2799. We are taught that a "sword" signifies one, truth combating; two, the "vastation of truth; and, three, in the opposite sense falsity combating, and the punishment of falsity." AR 52 reminds us that swords are often mentioned in the Word to testify that a "sword" represents "truth fighting against falsities and destroying them..." Also, it is said that a "sharp two-edged sword" goes out from the mouth of the Lord. This signifies that the Word of the Lord will penetrate "the heart and soul" of evil and falsity and thus accomplish "the dispersion of falsities by the Word from the Lord..." NB: please read all of AR 52. It's worth the read and very helpful in understanding the meaning and use of the word "sword" in the Word.

"You shall sow, but not reap..."

- To “sow” signifies, in the positive sense, the process of the “good of charity and the truth of faith” being spiritually implanted. (*AC 6154*)
- Sowing and not reaping is explained in the direct teachings section above. *AC 9272* has a full explanation of what sowing and not reaping means and how it applies to life.

"You shall tread the olives, but not anoint yourselves with oil..."

- *AC 9272* tells us that treading the olive and not anointing oneself represents being “instructed about the good of life, but not living by that instruction.” (Emphasis added.)

"...make sweet wine, but not drink wine."

- This represents “to be instructed about the truths which are from good, but still not to appropriate them to one’s self.” (*AC 9272 [5], emphasis added.*) This is not repetition. Note that the prior verse talked about instruction that led to the good of life and the next teaching talks about instruction about truths from good (love). The sweet wine that comes from a sincere worship of the Lord He finds pleasant and acceptable. Read *AC 924* and *AC 925*.

"For the statutes of Omri are kept; all the works of Ahab's house are done; and you walk in their counsels..."

- Who was Omri? He was one of the “bad” kings of the Northern Tribe of Israel. Omri came to power by way of a bloody and brutal ascent. He reigned from 885 to 874 BC. Omri was the father of Ahab. Ahab was another “bad” king of the Northern Tribe, and he reigned from 874 to 853 BC. Between the two, that amounts to about 34 years of bad leadership. *I Kings 16:25* describes Omri this way: **“Omri did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and did worse than all who were before him.”** Together, Omri and Ahab did evil in the sight of the Lord for 34 years.
- We need to pay attention to a hidden or implied contrast in our text between the statutes of Omri and all the works of Ahab’s house and the statutes of the Lord. The statutes of the Lord were given so that all things of the church would be ordered and the people would willingly and lovingly serve and worship the Lord. The statutes of Omri were given that he might rule over the people and that they might serve him. Israel apparently acquiesced to Omri and Ahab’s (and Jezebel’s) decrees and wants and forgot or ignored what the Lord decreed for the spiritual health of His people.

“...that I may make you a desolation and your inhabitants a hissing...you shall bear the reproach of My people.”

- What is signified by “a reproach”? AE 654 [66] gives us an insight: a “reproach signifies all things belonging to damnation...that nothing of the church shall be in them any longer.”
- What does the Word mean when it says the Lord will make the inhabitants “a hissing”? AC 10409 [6] gives us a possible answer to the meaning of “hissing” that we can reflect on. Those who loved “machinations and cunning devices communicate with hell. Their speech falls between the teeth like a kind of hissing...the light of their understanding is there obscured even to foolishness. I have seen some cast in there who in the world had been accounted very superior in intellect.”
- They, the hissers, will bear the reproach of the Lord’s new church. This is not a mean-spirited reproach but a reproach meant to give an example of what not to do. The choice of the hissers needs to be shunned. Following their machinations and cunning devices will cause an emptying out of the eternal things of the Lord.

Putting It All Together

“...it must be that this church...should perish.” (P&P, emphasis added.)

What kind of “this church” is the Lord telling us must perish? The answer: it’s a church that sows and doesn’t reap; it’s a church that has been instructed in the truths of faith but has made no effort to return a profit from that instruction; it’s a church that has been made aware of its need to seek the good of life but doesn’t care enough to seek it; it’s a church that doesn’t bother to appropriate the goods (love) of the Lord; it’s a church that stores up things in ostentatious memory-knowledges, seeks reputation, honor, and wealth for selfish reasons and pledges these assets to evil uses and ends; and lastly, it’s a church that prefers to follow the statutes of Omri and Ahab instead of following the statutes of the Lord.

In a moment of spiritual reflection, we can understand why the deficiencies of the above churches should cause them to “perish.” They were superficial, artificial, and completely self-centered entities. When these conditions are present within the heart and mind of a church, it will not welcome nor make room for the Lord. Its members make the sound of “hissers,” and where there is a void of the things dedicated to the Lord, there is no extension to eternity. DP 46-69 gives us a valuable “rule of thumb” to consider and adopt: everything in the Lord is Infinite and Eternal. In turn, when the Infinite and Eternal looks to the finite, It looks for uses that are “reflective” of infinite and eternal values thriving within the being of the finite. If a person or church rejects infinite and eternal things, there are no “reflective” qualities in them. In a way, they are transparent, empty and dead. They have not wanted or tried to make life into an act of love for the Lord and the neighbor. CL

160 reminds us that “love must go forth and be efficient or it will perish.”
(Emphasis added.)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 6:14-16.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Whenever we hear the question “why do we have to study the Word and learn doctrine?” maybe this lesson ought to come to mind. This question has a poignant answer. A church, that altar and holy center in all of us, requires study of the Word. We need to sow and reap; we need to be instructed in matters of faith and work toward a state of useful profitability. The need to find the good of life is not theoretical. We need to ask the Lord to show us the way wherein we are to walk in service to Him and the neighbor. Our study and reflection should not be an act of rote memorization. We are to use everything we can to come to love the ways of the Lord. Here’s our first question: can we commit to these things so that the Lord will commend the work of our individual church? How encouraging it would be if, as we struggle to bring relevance to our spirituality, we could hear the Lord say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.” Wouldn’t that be special?
- Hissers—do we want to be one who talks with a spiritual hiss?
- Omri and Ahab were two evil kings of Israel. Omri traveled a horrible trail of murder and deceit to the throne. He was power-hungry and ruthless. Who would want to follow his statutes? Ahab was a weak “henpecked” husband who turned his back on the way of the Lord and allowed the worship of Baal to flourish. Who would want to follow his statutes? And yet, the Word says that the people and the church followed them to the exclusion of the Lord. Why? Are we as guilty as they? If so, can we see why the Lord says “this church” must perish?
- Love to the Lord and His Word must live. We must seek after infinite and eternal things so that we can reflect them and extend these things into eternity. How did Joshua say it? “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Can we resolutely commit our spiritual intentions to a similar pledge?
- Would you be willing to read *DP 46-69* and *CL 106* in a weekly devotional study? I believe it will strengthen our resolve to work for the Lord and His New Church.

Chapter Seven

MICAH 7:1-4

"Woe is me! For I am like those who gather summer fruits, like those who glean vintage grapes; there is no cluster to eat of the first-ripe fruit which my soul desires. The 'faithful' man has perished from the earth, and there is no upright among men. They all lie in wait for blood; every man hunts his brother with a net. That they may successfully do evil with both hands—the prince asks for gifts, the judge seeks a bribe, and the great man utters his evil desire; so they scheme together. The best of them is like a brier; the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge; the day of your watchman and your punishment comes; now shall be their perplexity."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "There is no longer any truth or good in the church: therefore the last time has come upon it."

AR 623

- "...'the first-fruits' signified that which is born first, and afterwards grows, as an infant grows up to a man, or as a young plant grows up to a tree, and hence they signified all the subsequent stages even to the completion of the thing, for all that is to follow exists in the first, as the man in the infant, and the tree in the tender shoot: and as this first exists before its successions, in like manner in heaven and in the church, therefore 'the first-fruits' were holy unto the Lord, and 'the feast of the first-fruits' were celebrated." *Micah 7:1* is cited.

AE 919 [5]

- "In Micah...7:1...as the gatherings of the vintage, there is no cluster to eat,' signifies such devastation of the church that there is no longer any good or truth."

AC 1071 [2]

- "That 'grapes' in the Word signify charity and what is of charity, and that 'wine' signifies the faith thence derived and the things that belong to it, is evident from the following passages...In Micah...7:1...'cluster' denotes charity, or what is holy; 'first-ripe fig' faith, or what is right."

AC 5117 [6]

- “In Micah...7:1...the ‘cluster to eat’ denotes the good of charity in its beginning; ‘the first-ripe,’ the truth of faith also at that time.”

AC 9223 [3]

- “...‘grain’ denotes the good of faith, and ‘wine’ the truth of faith...that the first fruits were to be given to Jehovah, signified that it is the first of the church to ascribe all the goods and truths of faith to the Lord, and not to self. To ascribe to the Lord is to know, to acknowledge, and to believe that these things are from the Lord, and nothing of them from self...everything of faith is from the Lord. The ‘first fruits’ have this signification because they were offerings and gifts, which were thanksgivings for the produce of the earth, and an acknowledgment of blessings from Jehovah...and in the internal sense, an acknowledgment of the goods and truths of faith...” *Micah 7:1-2* is given as an example of this teaching.

AR 649

- “...the Lord’s operation from the good of His love by the Divine truth of His Word...that ‘grapes’ and ‘clusters’ signify the goods and works of charity, may appear from the following passages...” *Micah 7:1-2* is cited.

AE 918 [5]

- “In Micah...7:1, 2...grief because of the vastation of good and of truth therefrom in the church is meant and described by ‘Woe is me, I am become as the gatherings of the summer, as the gleanings of the vintage.’ That there is no longer any spiritual good or natural good from which the Lord is worshiped is signified by ‘there is no cluster to eat; my soul desireth the first-ripe fruit;’ that there is no longer any spiritual or natural truth is signified by ‘the holy one has perished, and the upright one among men;’ that the truths and goods of the Word and thus of the church are destroyed by falsities and evils is signified by ‘all lie in wait for bloods.’”

AE 746 [6]

- In *Micah 7:2*, “...in the spiritual sense ‘man’ signifies any one who is in truths, then also any one who is in falsities; ‘brother’ signifies any one who is in the good of charity, and in an abstract sense that good itself, and ‘companion’ any one who is in truth from that good, and in an abstract sense that truth itself; and in the contrary sense these signify the evil opposite to the good of charity and the falsity opposite to the truth from that good. Both terms, ‘brother’ and ‘companion,’ are used because there are two things, namely, charity and faith,

that constitute the church, as there are two things that make up the life of man, will and understanding; so there are two parts that act as one..."

AC 1178 [3]

- "In Micah...7: 2, 3...what is meant by 'hunting' is...to lie in wait for the sake of self, or to call the false true, and utter perversity, and distort, and thereby to persuade."

AC 4843 [3]

- "In Micah 7: 3, 4, 6...the subject treated of is the falsity from evil in which the church is in the last time, when vastated, and in the proximate sense that in which the Jewish Church was."

AC 2242 [5]

- "In Micah 7:4...it denotes the vastation of charity..."

Derived Doctrine

"*Woe is me!*"

- *AE 918 [5]* explains that the words "**Woe is me**" represent the grief the Lord feels when anyone vastates, empties out, wastes, and depreciates His good and truth. How does that come about? When people inwardly hate and ignore the Lord's love and wisdom, they invite great spiritual harm to come to them. Those who desire and choose hell are void of infinite and eternal values. They have chosen lesser, self-serving, finite love and wisdom. As a loving and perfect Father, the Lord grieves over that choice. The Lord offers heaven to everyone. He actively strives with us to help us choose the higher pathway leading to salvation. But if we purposely ignore His efforts, He truly feels sorry for us. "**Woe is me**" represents a chance for everyone to reflect on the Divine grief that exists when anyone chooses to empty out the Lord's good and truth. "**Woe is me**" are words of love and sorrow.

"*For I am like those who gather summer fruits...*"

- *AC 679* explains that the meaning of "**gather**" "...is predicated of the things that are in [a person's] memory, where they are gathered together. And the expression further implies that both goods and truths should be gathered in [a person] before they are regenerated; for without goods and truths gathered together, through which as means the Lord may operate, a [person] can never be regenerated..."

- “**Summer fruits**” indicate what the Lord desires from everyone cooperating with His gentle providence. *AC 4180 [3]* helps us to understand the spiritual meaning of “**summer fruits**” with these words: “If a [person] is like spring or summer, [they receive] the good of love and charity, and produce fruits; but if [they are] like autumn and winter, [they do not receive nor produce the fruits of] the good of love and charity...” The Lord comes to everyone wanting to find and receive “**summer fruits**.” I almost used the words “expecting to find the fruits of summer.” Isn’t that what is implied in His Word? Those who keep their souls in a spring and summer state will produce fruits. What we need to watch out for is a prolonged and comfortable stay in an autumn and winter state. In *Matthew 24:20*, the Lord advises us to “Pray that your flight be not in the winter...” We see the meaning of this, don’t we? Regeneration is to produce succulent and healthy fruits. Fruits thrive best in the spring and summer state of regeneration.

“...like those who glean vintage grapes...”

- Is there a spiritual difference in the meanings of the words “**gather**” and “**glean**”? To “**gather**,” we were taught, represents the **gathering of memory-knowledges**. It is the gathering of goods and truths **in the memory**. Gleaning, on the other hand, has an important distinction. Let’s examine the definitions Webster’s 1913 dictionary offers us. First, to “**glean**” is “to gather grain that was left behind by reapers. Gleaning is to collect the scattered or fragmentary from parcels, as the grain left behind by a reaper, or grapes left after the gathering.” Lastly we are told that “**gleaning** means to collect with patient and minute labor; to pick out; to obtain.” Gleaning and “remains” seem to go together. Remains are defined in *AC 661 [2]* as “...all things of innocence, all things of charity, all things of mercy, and all things of the truth of faith, which from his infancy a man has had from the Lord, and has learned.” The Lord alone stores up our remains. Only the Lord knows where scattered remains are hidden. Love hides and protects remains. What we need to picture here is not the gathering of memory-knowledges in the mind but the gleaning by the Lord of remains **within the heart** of each person. Piece by piece, the Lord conducts a patient and minute labor of gleaning the remains we forgot, overlooked, or missed as being valuable in our spiritual assessment of harvesting. The Lord gathers and gleans the whole spiritual story of what we loved and kept active in our mind and heart.

“...there is no cluster to eat of the first-ripe fruit which my soul desires.”

- “...‘to gather the vintage’ [in the positive sense] signifies to collect for uses those things that will be serviceable to the understanding and which will give intelligence and wisdom.” (*AE 919*) Our text, however, tells of a sad

- assessment. “...there is no cluster to eat” because there was a devastation of good and truth in the church. (AE 919 [5])
- How important is the gathering of the vintage? The Lord wants us to “eat of the first-ripe fruit which my soul desires.” The soul asks not for temporal things. The soul asks for infinite and eternal sustenance.

“The ‘faithful’ man has perished from the earth, and there is no upright among men.”

- TCR 145 teaches that a “faithful man” is one who has “faithful thoughts and intentions...” AE 1068 teaches that “faithful” signifies those “who are in love to the Lord, in love toward the neighbor, and in the faith of charity.”
- The faithful man perishing from the earth signifies, or gives us a picture, of what was going on in the church regarding the Lord, the neighbor, and charity. We are taught that the word “earth” signifies the church. See AE 1047. But AC 625 gives us a fuller story of what was going on spiritually in the church. When the flesh, the sensual natural person, gains control over the life and decisions of a church, there is no doubt about it: corruption will occur. “...the corporeal nature of man” will destroy all the understanding of truth. Decay and death are the end results of a corporeal mind that is out of control and out of touch with truth and love for the church, the Lord, the neighbor, and charity. With the demise of these essentials, no upright people will be found.

“They all lie in wait for blood; every man hunts his brother with a net.”

- Listen to and consider the meaning of lying in wait. To “lie in wait” signifies “to call the false true, and utter perversity and distort, and thereby to persuade.” (AC 1178) To “lie in wait” signifies to slyly seek to prevent any truth from coming forth and being received. See AE 730 [18]. To “lie in wait” signifies intent to suppress and destroy “truths and goods of the Word and thus of the church...” by a presentation of falsities and evils. And, lastly, to “lie in wait” signifies that the evil will “try to worm their way into a person’s inward thoughts and affection.” (AC 1983) This last reference indicates that they put on a front that looks gentle, helpful, and cordial. It is a façade because they intend no such charitable things. They do so to win over a person’s trust and confidence so that they might warp and destroy his or her understanding of the Lord’s Word.
- “Brother” has a wonderful positive meaning. It means feeling conjoined with the Lord in a union of the will and understanding. (AC 1594) But that is not what is being said here in the spiritual sense. Instead, it is a negative meaning, an evil that seeks disunion, discord, and separation. Hell wants the external man “to recede from celestial love...” (AC 1591)
- How will evil bring about this separation and discord of union? A “net” is constructed of a system of interwoven strings. Each string, in the negative sense, is a false thought or idea that is connected with another false thought.

It is a whole system of false ideas intended to catch (ensnare) a prey. Of course, a “net” can be a positive thing as well as a negative thing. In our verse, evil intends to hunt, gather, and trap so as to destroy good and truth. “Hunting” signifies the desire to teach and persuade. (*AC 3309 [3]*) What kind of hunting is being exposed for our edification and use? Look at the answer given to us in the verse that follows this question. They do evil with both hands!

“That they may successfully do evil with both hands...”

- To get some insight into the meaning of “**both hands**,” let’s turn to *AC 10241*. “...that the ‘hands’ denote the interiors is because the higher things of the body extend into the hands, and there terminate, consequently by the ‘hands’ is signified whatever pertains to man, and also his power...” Since we have both hands involved in this text, it seems to imply that the evil have totally committed their inner potential to misuse the power of higher spiritual things. Isn’t this a sad commentary on evil’s deadened interiors?

“...the prince asks for gifts, the judge seeks a bribe, and the great man utters his evil desire; so they scheme together.”

- Those who were in positions of leadership were intended, in the spiritual sense, to be prudent caregivers to the needy. In this verse, the prince ignored this use to others and sought instead to fatten his own possessions. A “prince” signifies one who was to care for the basics, essentials, and primary truths. (*AE 236 [4]; AC 3448; AE 29*) *AC 6766* remarks on the signification of “a man, a prince,” as being one who is in primary truths, thus who has been pre-eminently enlightened in the doctrine of truth.”
- Asking for gifts has a manifold meaning. When priests accepted **gifts** from the people, they were to accept them on behalf of the Lord. In turn, those **gifts** were to be offered up to the Lord seeking “...expiation from sins...” (*AC 9938 [3]*) A **gift** “consociates, for it produces love, causes friendship...and mutuality.” (*AR 508*) Spiritual **gift**-giving must arise from a sound philosophy, as noted in *AC 9209* (Elliot’s translation): “...thus with gifts such as are beneficial to spiritual life, and that the outward aspects consist in aiding the external man...But care must nevertheless always be taken to ensure that when aid is given to the external man, it is at the same time beneficial to the internal.” This last point seems so essential in our understanding of what the Lord is teaching. The prince wanted to be honored for himself only. The prince wanted gifts for himself and not the Lord. The prince was not interested in helping the people to receive expiation of sins. The prince was not interested in sharing the gifts of love, friendship, and mutuality between the Lord and the needy. The princes were seeking gifts that ended with themselves and had no bearing on what would be beneficial

to the internal of those to whom they were to offer (essential) primary truths.

- Judges are to settle, fairly and equitably, issues of conflict and confusion. But in this case, the judges were neither fair nor equitable. They were swayed by partiality. The Lord, in *Psalm 15*, describes what it takes to “abide in His tabernacle.” “He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart; he who does not backbite...nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend...nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.”
- What makes for a “**great man**”? Is it political, educational, corporate, or military standing? What makes an intelligent person? Is it based on academic standing or number of degrees? The Writings are consistent in answering this question. A person’s greatness is determined by his or her skill in distinguishing between what is true and false. *CL 233 [7]* extols what is the mark of an intelligent man. *DP 250* reminds all that greatness is within those “who do not set their hearts on [dignities, riches as the highest forms of happiness] but on the uses or the goods in the performance of which dignities and wealth are of service as means.” A great person is someone who loves the Lord and the neighbor with a desire to render them service without thought of recompense.
- So the prince, the judge, and the great man, “**scheme**” together. What things do they scheme? *Spiritual Experiences 1257* reveals what delight schemers have in their hearts and minds constantly: They do “nothing but plan evil plots and devise deceits.”

“The best of them is like a brier; the most upright is shaper than a thorn hedge...”

- Anyone who has done any clearing of a neglected and wild growth area in the hopes of cultivating a garden surely has encountered briars and thorns. They are formidable foes. They cut skin, stick to clothes, and when you try to pull free, they hold fast and tear away at clothing and skin. Briers and thorns compete against other forms of vegetable life. Survival of the fittest is their motto. Is it any wonder, then, that they correspond to falsity and evils in the church? See *AE 730 [6]*. Briers and thorns stand for “falsity and evil desires.” (*AC 2831 [9]*) If a person seeks to regenerate and cultivate a useful spiritual garden, these forms of evil and falsity will not give up without a fight and inflicted pain. They are “sharper than a thorn hedge.” But they must be uprooted and eliminated. They cannot be allowed to define the borders of our regeneration and the field of our spiritual growth.

“...the day of your watchman and your punishment comes; now shall be their perplexity.”

- In *Ezekiel 3:17-19*, the Lord outlines the duties of a spiritual “**watchman**.” In brief, if the watchman alertly warns the wicked to amend their iniquitous

- ways and they do not heed his warning, their “blood” is not on the watchman’s hands. But if the watchman does not sound a warning and the enemy kills those under his care, their “blood” will be required of the watchman. The Lord is telling the watchmen of the church that they failed to lovingly and prudently care for the souls of the people placed in their care. “Your punishment comes” sadly announces the results of their indifference.
- *TCR 15 [2]* provides an insight into the meaning of **“perplexity.”** When a church is not in harmony with the Lord and divides Him into three, or the church “declares that each person by himself is God...From this arises a disintegration not only of the unity of God but theology...and still further of human thought...And what can follow from this but **perplexity and incoherency in things of the church?**” (Emphasis added.) Is this what happened in the Jewish church when they allowed the worship of Baal and other gods to enter the temple dedicated to the worship and love of the Lord?

Putting It All Together

The Lord wants His church to succeed and be like a ripening and succulent summer fruit. But is that the case? “Woe is me!” The Word and *P&P* sadly report that there was no longer “any truth or good in the church: therefore the last time has come upon it.”

Just as any earthly parent longs for and works to help their children achieve and realize a productive life, so does the Lord, with an even greater longing, work for the good of His people. His Soul desires a union and conjunction with every person. To make this happen would be easy for the Lord, but then we all would pay a price. Our freedom and rationality would have to be laid aside. The Lord permits people and His church to reject and fight against His wishes. On the surface, a facade of compliance gave an appearance of uprightness. But the Lord said the faithful person perished from the earth. There were no upright among humanity. Treachery was lying in wait to snare anyone who wanted to receive and use the things of the Lord. Nets of falsity worked on strengthening the cords to easily catch the innocent and simple. Their plan was not a half-hearted attempt. Both hands worked at perfecting the effectiveness of the net-like snare. The prince, the judge, and the great man longed for gifts, bribes, and manifest chaos. They schemed and plotted to remove the things of the Lord from the hearts and minds of the people. Like briars and thorn hedges, they sought to entangle, snare, cut, hurt, and choke out any rival. Like a thorn hedge, they wanted to drain the life and growth from the vines and trees to ensure that there would be no productivity of summer fruit.

Consequently, the church lost sight of its mission. The church was to be a faithful watchman. From its tower of enlightenment, it was to cry out a warning regarding the approach of spiritual enemies. A call for repentance might have converted the people. But silence, ignorance, and contempt for the things of the Lord stole away

the hearts of the vintage, the fruits of summer, and a punishment was well on its way. "Woe is me!" Now the choices of the church plunged them into a great perplexity and incoherency regarding spiritual matters. "Woe is me!" That is not what the Lord desired for His people. So He will rectify it all with His coming and establishment of a new church.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 7:1-4.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Does this lesson from the Word help you see how great a compassion the Lord has for His people? The message "woe is me" is a cry of (pity) sadness that we need to hear and feel so we can rectify things in our own lives.
- Can you picture the hells stealthily lying in wait for our blood? Can you think of some illustration of the nets they use to try to snare our innocence and simplicity? I used the words to try because if we trust the Lord, they will fail in their scheming plot to snare us.
- How do you see a prince, judge, and great man scheming to mess up things in your own life? To answer this question, we have to recall the correspondences of these entities.
- Is there a watchman in our hearts and minds calling out to us regularly? Does it warn of the approach of a spiritual enemy? If not, what can be done to create an active and alert watchman to give us better reports?
- Perplexity and incoherency regarding spiritual matters are signs of the end of the vastated church. Can you picture any examples of these things happening in the past and in the present?
- If the whole church was spiritually "dead" and in great perplexity, who is left to hear and accept this prophecy? Is it a message that came to fruition with the Lord's advent?
- How are we to view the message of *Micah*? Is its message sad and depressing? Or is it the pain that one must feel and experience, like the pain of a surgical operation in a hospital? A diseased, cancerous organ threatens one's life, and to remove it is necessary but painful. But with rest, rehabilitation, and medication, such a procedure may give us back the activity we thought was lost. What do you think? Is this a sad or hopeful prophecy?

MICAH 7:5-6

"Do not trust in a friend; do not put your confidence in a companion; guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your bosom. For son dishonors father, daughter

rises against her mother, daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own household."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "Then falsities and evils will combat amongst themselves, and against truths and goods."

Derived Doctrine

"Do not trust in a friend; do not put your confidence in a companion..."

- The word "**trust**" can also mean "confidence." Consider this teaching in *AC 4683 [2]*: "...all confidence derives its being from the life's purpose, and that genuine confidence **is impossible except in good.**" (Emphasis added.) Add to this the following teaching from *Doctrine of Life 45*: "...he, who does not shun evils as sins, has not faith because he is in evil, and evil inwardly hates truth. Outwardly indeed he may act as a *friend* to truth, and suffer [allow] it to be in the understanding, may even love to have it there; but when what is outward is put off, as is done after death, he first casts out truth his *friend* in this world, then denies that it is truth, and finally feels aversion for it." (Emphasis added.) Please read also *TCR 446-447*, where the topic of "friendship of love" is discussed. In essence, these numbers warn us of the detriment of the "friendship of love" that is "contracted with a person without regard to their spiritual character." (Emphasis added.) Such a friendship is termed "harmful." What the Lord is telling us in this verse is critically important. **1.** We are to shun evils as sins. **2.** We are not to hold truth in the external as a friend unless we look at its inner importance and love it because it is a good thing from the Lord. **3.** Anything else will fail us and will be cast aside as unimportant in the spiritual world.

"Guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your bosom."

- *AC 2356* instructs us that "In the Word a 'door' signifies that which introduces or gives admission either to truth, to good, or to the Lord." In *Revelation 3:8-20*, the Lord speaks of a door. "See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it..." And in verse 20, He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." What a wonderful contrast! The Lord's door is always open and will not be shut. No one and no thing is strong enough to shut His door. Our door is closed and must be opened to His knock. The literal sense advises us to guard the door. Be careful what is admitted. Why?

- The “**mouth**” is mentioned as what has to be guarded. Why is the **mouth** mentioned specifically? In *Matthew 15:11*, the Lord taught, “Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.” A person does not become defiled from the thoughts which pass through the natural mind, but from set intentions, motives, and purposes which form our heart, and which come out in our thought and speech. For more insights into the “power in their mouth,” read *AR 454*. This passage illustrates what misguided power there is in those who get carried away in zeal to confirm whatever they please.
- The “**bosom**” signifies “...the appropriation of truth.” (*AC 6955*) The “**...her who lies in your bosom**” signifies our affections. Affection (her) looks for truths that can be appropriated and conjoined. I think it is important to note that the Lord is cautioning us to proceed with the appropriation of truth with great reflective prudence. He is telling us to keep our affections from running away with our decision-making. Invite the Lord in. Let Him dine with you and willingly give Him control over that which is to “lie with you” in your bosom. For that which comes forth out of the mouth can either redeem or defile us. Guard the mouth well. Sounds like good advice, especially in these days when we hear scurrilous remarks being made openly and regularly on the political and social scene.

“For son dishonors father, daughter rises against her mother...”

- This section needs a thoughtful—foundational—doctrinal explanation to help us understand why family members are singled out. As we have come to know from our studies, things mentioned in the Word have a positive and negative representation. Let’s begin with this passage from *AC 1424*: “...in the Word ‘families’ signify goods and also truths.” These goods and truths are not strangers nor are they unrelated foreigners. There is a “family” relationship between good and truth. There is a vital “family” connection between good (love) and truth (wisdom) that makes up our faith of love and the faith of love of the church. So, as we read the words “father,” “mother,” “son,” “daughter,” “daughter-in-law,” and “mother-in-law,” something of the deeper inner meaning must be seen and drawn into our spiritual application so that it will relate to our life and the life of the church.
- Why does the Word teach that a son should not dishonor or bring shame on his father? What does that mean? A “**son**” signifies truth and the doctrine of the church. (*AE 724 [3]*) A “**son**” represents love to the Lord and charity towards the neighbor. (*AE 724 [2]*) In essence, it would appear that a son honors his father by keeping faithful to the covenants of the Lord. To “**dishonor**” the father would be to bring shame on the commandments, thus dishonoring the laws of the Lord.
- A “**daughter**” rising against her “**mother**” indicates a degree of unloving rebellion and rejection. “**Mother**,” in the internal sense, signifies the church’s nurturing truths. (*AC 6306 [3]*) In another reference, *AC 9017*, we read that if

any child curses “father and mother it means complete rejection of the Lord and of His kingdom by those belonging to the church, and so profanation of the church’s goodness and truth.” *AC* 3962 offers us another possible insight. A “daughter,” in the positive sense, signifies the affection for the *general truths of the Word*. All positive learning begins with generals. When generals are loved, a foundation is provided so that we can move on to build with deeper particulars. A “daughter” rising up “against her mother” indicates a challenge and possible rejection of the Word’s general truths so as to prevent a deeper understanding of the particular truths of the Word.

“...*daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law...*”

- *AC* 4843 teaches that a “daughter-in-law” against her “mother-in-law” signifies “...that the affection of falsity is opposed to good.” Let’s turn this teaching around so we can state its positive meaning. A loving “daughter-in-law” would be the affection of truth supporting and loving good as represented by the “mother-in-law.”

“...*a man’s enemies are the men of his own household.*”

- *Matthew* 10:36 quotes the Lord using this text from *Micah*. The purpose of the Lord’s lesson is to remind us that we can’t blame someone else for what we love and choose to honor as important for our lives. Our inclinations toward hereditary evil are the enemy of every household. We have a tendency to love ourselves and the world more than the Lord and the neighbor. The love of self and the world is always an enemy of the spiritual life. Shunning evils as sins against the Lord doesn’t come easily to us. Confessing our sins and making ourselves guilty for them is a hard task. We want to make excuses, rationalize, and blame others for our errors in judgment. The Lord says that we are to humbly confess our evils as sins against Him. He reminds us to supplicate Him for help. And, lastly, the Lord charges us with the necessity of beginning a new life. Plucking out the “first root of life,” the proprium, appears to be hard work. But then the Lord reminds us that it is not a hard task if we practice repentance once or twice a week. Living the life of religion is not as hard as one thinks. We need to know who the enemy is and where the enemy lives. It resides in our “own household” (the mind and heart). The name of the household enemy is “our inherited tendencies toward hereditary evils.” Doctrinally, the enemy has another name: “Proprium.” The proprium is a false belief that I am my own authority. It is an “as-of-self feeling” that is spiritually unhealthy and out of control.

Putting It All Together

The summary given to us in *P&P* says that this lesson from *Micah* depicts a sad ending of the Jewish church, where “falsities and evils combated among themselves and against truths and goods.” That sounds like total mayhem. I can’t imagine what it would be like to be in a conflict in which everyone around you is out for themselves. No one is a friend. Everyone is an enemy. It is survival of the fittest, a condition that is a hopelessly lost cause for the self-centered spirit. Doesn’t it sound lonely and scary? How did the church get itself into such a predicament?

Let’s review how the prophecy of *Micah* sums up the spiritual condition of the church:

1. “Woe is me” expresses the Lord’s sorrow for the choices the people made.
2. Chapter 6 calls the church a house of wickedness that was short-changing the people with wicked measurements. They had “wicked scales, and...a bag of deceitful weights.”
3. The inhabitants of the church spoke lies. “...their tongue is deceitful...”
4. Those in the church were eating “but were not satisfied. Hunger was in your midst.”
5. They sowed, but did not reap; they could not anoint themselves with oil; they made sweet wine, but did not drink the wine.
6. There was a horrible (derisive) hissing noise of reproach among the people of the church.
7. Chapter 7 of *Micah* teaches that within the church, there was no summer fruit; there were no grapes to be gleaned; the faithful people had perished—there was no one upright among humanity. Instead, everyone hunted his brother. They lay in wait for their brother’s blood. They used nets to catch up their brothers.
8. Trickery and deceit were employed with both hands. Bribery, scheming, sharp briars, and thorn hedges angrily limited and tore away at the flesh of the people.
9. Their spiritual watchmen were not attentive; instead, they were in a state of spiritual perplexity.
10. They had no trust in their friends, no confidence in companions, and combativeness reigned within the family structure.

AC 8788 gives us a picture of the spiritual demise of the Jewish church thusly:

1. There are three basic things that make a church. “...there must be with the man of the church faith in the Lord, and also love to Him, and likewise toward the neighbor. These make the church.”
2. “But these were not with the people which was called ‘Jacob,’ for it did not acknowledge the Lord, and thus was not willing to hear about faith in Him, still less about love toward Him, nor even toward the neighbor...”

3. "...for it was in the love of self and the love of the world, which loves are utterly opposed to love to the Lord and love toward the neighbor..."
4. "The Israelitish people above all others...adored external things, and made holiness, and even what is Divine, consist in [external things]..."
5. *AC 8788* teaches that when these conditions live within the heart and mind of the church, internal things are veiled over, and although the church thinks it is involved in the holiness of faith, it really is in a chaotic mixture of deadened externals.

With what is given above, can we not see, appreciatively, why the Lord needed to come and make His advent? He, and only He, was ready and prepared for the work of salvation. None of the tricks of the corrupted church will work against Him. He has prevailed and has provided the truth that will set us free from the wicked weights, the deceitful tongue, the nets, and the perplexity of the watchmen. Having said this, we must learn from the mistakes of the prior churches so we will not repeat them. Our faith in the Lord's New Church depends on our "...faith in the Lord, and also love to Him, and likewise toward the neighbor. These make the church." (*AC 8788*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 7:5-6.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- How well did our study prepare us for the understanding of the spiritual sense?
- Did the description of falsities and evils fighting amongst themselves take a form that you can work with? Is there any comfort to be gained from our knowledge of this teaching?
- The description of the family feud—son against father, daughter against mother, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law—tells us of the feud of falsity against evil. Now, are we ready to consider the meaning of *Luke 12:51-53*, where the Lord says that He "has come to give division..." among family members? Is there a difference of meaning and application? The Lord says that He "...came not to give peace on earth...not at all, but rather division." Doesn't this teaching of the Lord point to the necessity of us going through the process of vastations? There needs to be an overturning, an emptying out, the desolation of falsity and evil. Once these things are poured out and cleansing occurs, we can fill the vessels of the mind and heart with good and truth. So the Lord doesn't come to give nice words. He comes to help us get rid of those things that hold and contain the love of self and the world.
- A man's enemies are of his own household. Any examples of this truth that are worth talking about?

- Did you note and think about the contrast of the “doors” the Lord mentions in the verses from *Revelation*? The Lord’s doors are always open. No one can close them. Our doors are closed and must be opened for the Lord to come and sup with us.
- The prophecy of *Micah* urges us to guard the door of our mouth. Is this a worthwhile concept to reflect and speak about? Some people pride themselves on their ability to speak their minds. Is it really a virtue to always say what we think and feel? How many times have we had an outburst and then wished we would have thought more before speaking? Guarding the door of the mouth and watching who sleeps with us in the bosom are two spiritual gems worth considering and reflecting on.
- We read and considered some hard teachings in this section. While reading about falsity and evils fighting against everything, while reading about no just men, bribes, trickery, snares, briars, thorns, etc., my heart and mind longed for some words of encouragement. Ah, don’t despair, dear reader. Just wait for our next section. The beginning of hope, restoration, and redemption are just a few lines away. Isn’t that the way the Lord operates? When we are at the depths (last limits) of despair and we feel inadequate and lost, the Lord comes to our rescue. In a last moment, He swoops in and takes us up in His arms and gives us hope and comfort.
- How did the Psalmist say it? “...weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.” (*Psalm 30:5*) A new state, a new beginning, a new light to remove the hellish nighttime monsters of ignorance.

MICAH 7:7-9

“Therefore I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me. Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; when I fall, I will arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him, until He pleads my case and executes justice for me. He will bring me forth to the light; I will see His righteousness.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “Then the church will come, which will be in the light of truth, from the Lord.”

AR 413

- “That falsities of various kinds are signified by ‘darkness,’ is evident from these passages...” *Micah 7:8* is cited.

AE 526 [15]

- “In Micah...7:8...‘darkness’ signifies the falsities of ignorance, such as existed, and as exist at this day among the upright Gentiles. These falsities are altogether distinct from the falsities of evil, which have evil stored up in them because they are from evil, while the former have good stored up in them because they have good as an end. Those, therefore, who are in these falsities, can be instructed in truths, and they also when instructed receive truths in the heart, for the reason that good, which is in their falsities, loves truths, and also conjoins itself to truth when it is heard. It is otherwise with the falsities of evil; these are averse to all truth and cast it off because it is truth, and thus is not in agreement with evil.”

TCR 51

- “...in the Word justice [or righteousness] is predicated of love, and judgment of wisdom, I will cite some passages to show that it is by means of these two that God’s government is carried on in the world...Elsewhere it is said that judgment and righteousness ought to be done, as in...Micah 7:9...”

Derived Doctrine

“Therefore I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me.” (Emphasis added.)

- What does it mean to say **I will look to the Lord**? We can’t see Him with our physical eyes. AE 585 [7] teaches us that to **look to the Lord** means valuing the Lord’s good and truth so that “...everything of doctrine will be from the Lord and not from man’s self (proprium) which is the case when man is in the spiritual affection of truth, that is, when he loves truth itself because it is truth, and not because it gives him reputation and a name.”
- To **wait** for the Lord does not mean to sit with arms at one’s side. Instead, this waiting is more active and dynamic. AE 514 [11] likens waiting to “a desire to know and understand...” and notes that we wait for “food” that signifies “knowledge and intelligence; for man does not desire these from himself, but from those things that are with him from the Lord...” AE 526 [11] teaches us to wait for truth expectantly.
- The **God of my salvation** should have some kind of representation that will touch our hearts and minds. *Isaiah 61:10* speaks of the Lord clothing us “with the garments of salvation; He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.” AE 395 [12] explains that “to clothe with the garments of salvation’ signifies to instruct and to gift with truths; and to ‘cover with the robe of righteousness’ signifies to fill with every truth from good...” **Salvation** is the continual operation of the Lord in human beings for

the reformation and regeneration of all. It is the work of the Divine Providence. See AR 798.

- “**My God will hear me**” is a profoundly personal and loving acknowledgement of how much the Lord cares for and wills to save everyone. The Lord knows each one of us personally. “...in the supreme sense ‘to hear’ signifies providence...for the Lord’s foreseeing is the seeing from eternity to eternity...the Lord’s providing is the directing that it be so...” (AC 3869 [3]) Isn’t this a wonderful promise? He “**will hear me**.” There is nothing tentative about this Divine statement. Nothing distracts Him from being with us. There is nothing more pressing that would cause Him to forget a one of us. The Writings remind us that if the Lord should forget us for the least of a second, we would cease to be.

“Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; when I fall, I will arise...” (Emphasis added.)

- Is it a surprise that hell, our troublesome enemy, wants to rejoice over us? AE 578 [4] reminds us of hell’s “direful and cruel love of destroying all the truths and goods of the church...” Hell has a “cruel lust for destroying the goods of innocence...” When hellish spirits hear of “one of the truths of the church and perceive its goods, they are inflamed with a frenzy for destroying and extinguishing them.” Mistakes we will make. But mistakes can be overcome. If we are sincere in our quest to be with the Lord, He will pick us up and put us back on our feet. We need this kind of confidence in the Lord. Hell quakes in its boots when we trust in the Lord and have full confidence in His restorative and corrective ways. “**When I fall, I will arise...**” When I err, I will honestly confess my transgressions to the Lord so that I can be lifted up and grasp a new beginning He lovingly offers me.

“When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me.” (Emphasis added.)

- “**Darkness**” signifies ignorance and falsity. My finite darkness is ever present and mindful of my limitations. But if I supplicate the Lord for His help, He will not ignore my sincere request for enlightenment. He “**will be a light to me.**” Once again, we have a promise from the Lord that is in the active case and not passive/maybe case.

“I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him...” (Emphasis added.)

- Does the Lord have indignation? Listen to how AC 5798 [3] answers this question. The Word describes the Lord as having “indignation, anger, and wrath...” But with the Lord, “...it is quite the contrary, namely that the man who is in evil is indignant, angry, and wroth, and sets himself in opposition to good and truth.” This verse is a prayerful confession. “I have sinned against the Lord. I felt indignation, and the Lord mercifully put up with me. In spite of

my momentary anger and wrath, He worked to pull me out of the pit I had fallen into.”

“Until He pleads my case and executes justice for me. He will bring me forth to the light; I will see His righteousness.” (Emphasis added.)

- Our life is a confusing and complicated mixture of harmony and discord. Humility favors and fosters our harmony. Self-love favors and fosters discord. Reformation and regeneration are works dedicated to ridding ourselves of discord. The second law of Divine Providence says that if we work to resist and remove evils as sins in our externals, the Lord will go inward and remove internal connecting links of discord while also helping us to disconnect discord in our externals. The Lord is pleading the case of the humble. He does execute justice for those who value humility.
- Please note how many times the word “will” is used in verses 7 to 9. Do you count eight? Why call attention to this word “will”? Well, for one thing, it is a powerfully positive word. Secondly, it is a word of command. More accurately, it is a word of Divine command. The Lord, when we give Him charge over our lives, will put into place certain dynamics that will reshape and rebuild values and doctrinal concepts that had not yet been forged into a practical eternal reality. Prior to the “will,” there were perhaps “airy,” “wispy,” “vague” doctrinal statements we repeated in monotone voices. But when the Lord gets hold of them and activates the “wills” in our hearts and minds, they become “positive commands” to fight against the hells. Let’s say together all eight “wills”:

1. “I will look to the Lord”
2. “I will wait for the God of my salvation”
3. “My God will hear me”
4. “I will arise”
5. “The Lord will be a light to me”
6. “I will bear the indignation of the Lord”
7. “He will bring me forth to the light”
8. “I will see His righteousness.”

Do you feel the positive assurance of the Lord’s total (will) Divine command? Hell does, and they are in great trepidation that we will believe and follow the Lord and allow Him to form the inner core of our spiritual life.

Putting It All Together

What has been written above is offered as a “putting it all together” summary. But in closing, please note that our *P&P* lesson also contains the important theme of the word “will.” “Then the church will come, which will be in the light of truth, from

the Lord. With this *P&P* summation, one is inspired to say, “Amen—so may it ever be, O Lord!”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 7:7-9.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Were you inspired by the sequence of the eight “command wills” used in the text? If you add our lesson from *P&P*, we have ten in all to consider.
- How badly do you think the hells are shaken with this positive report in *Micah*?
- Are we inspired to give up using the words “I can’t”? We know how hard it is to teach ourselves or someone else if they don’t try because they want to say “I can’t do it.”
- Did you ever deal with a child who was convinced they couldn’t do something?
- What technique(s) did you use to swing the child around to a positive learning attitude?
- Did some of those lessons work for you as well?

MICAH 7:10

“Then she who is my enemy will see, and shame will cover her who said to me, ‘Where is the Lord your God?’ My eyes will see her; now she will be trampled down like mud in the streets.”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “The old church will be destroyed.”

AR 501

- “That ‘streets’ signify truths or falsities of doctrine, may be seen from the following passages...” *Micah 7:10* is cited as one example.

AE 632 [10]

- “...‘to trample down’...signifies to destroy by means of the corporeal-sensual all truths of heaven and the church...” *Micah 7:10* is cited as one example.

AE 652 [29]

- “As ‘street’ signifies the truth of doctrine leading, and in the contrary sense falsity, ‘the clay of the streets,’ ‘the mire,’ and ‘dung’ signify the falsity of the love of evil, in the following passages...” *Micah 7:10* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

“Then she who is my enemy will see...” (Emphasis added.)

- The “she” here is the spiritually dying Jewish church. “She” was dying, but “she” did not know or believe it. Her streets, the falsity of her doctrines, were mired in the “mud” of love of self, hence the term “my enemy.” The Lord announces that His enemy will see. See what? Does the Jewish church really see that it defiled the covenants of the Lord? In many quarters of the religious world, the Jewish church is still being heralded as the Lord’s favored people. To make their views square up with their beliefs, they render this verse by employing “two women.” One (she) woman is Israel, and the other (she) woman is Israel’s enemy. In the end, they reason, Israel will be redeemed and rewarded with its rightful status as a favored church and nation. The other “she” will feel the wrath of the Lord for oppressing His people.
- Does “she” believe that the Lord has made His advent and thus supplanted her? The question is when will “she” see? A second question is when will the world see that the Israelite church is dead and has been replaced by His New Church?

*“And shame **will** cover her who said to me, ‘Where is the Lord your God?’ My eyes **will** see her; now she **will** be trampled down like mud in the street.” (Emphasis added.)*

- AE 652 [13] explains “shame” as signifying “that there were as many kinds of worship as there were false doctrines, ‘streets’...signify the falsities of doctrine.” AE 994 explains that “shame” signifies “filthy loves.” Indeed, the Old Testament testifies that Israel played the harlot regarding worship. She adopted and incorporated in her temple of worship the many gods of the surrounding peoples. Baal was one of Israel’s favorite gods, and the Lord challenged them to leave such a shameful worship. How long will you limp between Baal and God? To say that “her” shame was complete is not a stretch. The Israelites transgressed the ways of the Lord and sought out many kinds of worship; hence, they were confused and followed many false doctrines.
- To “cover” has both a positive and negative signification. In the positive sense, to “cover” represents protecting one’s soul with the truths of the Lord. In the negative sense, to “cover” signifies to guard or hide evils with falsity. See AE 283 [6].

- *Psalm 14:1* tells us that “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” (Emphasis added.) Is this what was in the heart of the people of the dead church? Had they wandered off so far that they knew not nor loved the Lord any more? In many ways, Israel lost a love for Him. And when the light of love goes out, it is almost impossible to love what you can no longer see or understand. *Psalm 14* continues, “They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good.”
- **“My eyes will see her...”** *Mark 4:22* and *Luke 8:17* remind us that “...nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light.” *Isaiah 29:15* says, “Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the Lord. And their works are in the dark; they say, ‘Who sees us?’ and ‘Who knows us?’” The Lord answers solidly, “I do.” To the Lord, night and day are alike. He sees all and knows all of our works.
- **“Now she will be trampled down...”** *AE 632 [3]* explains that **“trampled down”** signifies “the destruction of the church in respect to doctrine.”
- **“Like mud in the streets...”** *AE 652 [29]* notes that “...in the spiritual world...in the cities there in which falsities from evil reign, the streets appear full of dung, mire and clay.”

Putting It All Together

1. What does it take for a church to become an enemy of the Lord?
 2. What brings shame to a church?
 3. How is a church “covered”? What kind of coverings will it employ?
 4. And lastly, how is a church trampled down like mud in the streets?
- A healthy church is characterized by its sincerity, vitality, and dedication to “the good of love and the truth of faith...” A church is destroyed “...by falsities from self intelligence...” (*AE 304 [4]*) The vaunting of “man’s own intelligence” causes a church to “see falsity instead of truth...” (*AE 376 [31]*) A church is “a noble church if it is in genuine truths, an ignoble church if it is not in genuine truths, and a church destroyed if it is in falsified truths...” (*Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 77*) When a church chooses to become an ignoble church, it automatically hates the Lord and sees Him as an enemy.
 - When a church turns its back on the Lord, it brings **shame** into its court of worship. Instead of offering clean things, a self-centered church offers inferior and tainted qualities of the heart and mind.
 - *AR 421* reminds us that “...the confirmation of falsity is the denial of truth; therefore when they [a church] hear any spiritual truth, which is a truth of the Word serviceable to those who are of the church for doctrine and life, they keep their minds fixed in the falsities” and “**they either veil over the truth**...or reject them as a mere sound, or **yawn** at it and avert themselves; and this in the degree in which they are in the pride of their own erudition; *for pride glues falsities together*...Therefore the **Word is hidden from them**, as a book **sealed** with seven seals.” (Emphasis added.)

- The unhealthy church can no longer defiantly stand in the presence of the Lord. An ignoble church with its vaunted doctrines will become like mud. Its falsified truths will end. The Lord's truth will outlast self-intelligence. Like those of a person who has walked in muddy streets, the shoes, clothes, and health of such a church are soiled by the mire of uselessness. The glue of falsity cannot hold the vaunted self-intelligence together. The reign of a false church is over.

P&P sums up this section with the words: "The old church will be destroyed."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 7:10.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- How strongly do you (we) want to be a friend of the Lord's? If we want to be a true friend of the Lord, what care and uses must we take seriously?
- A healthy church is dedicated to the good of love and the truth of faith. What do these words mean? "Good of love" is a phrase used to represent the highest qualities of love, a kind of celestial love that honors and respects the conjugal principles of uniting the Lord's love and wisdom. The truth of faith honors and respects loving and following truth for truth's sake. No games. No shams. No twisting of the Word so as to get our own way. Let the Word be the Word with our pledge and loyalty to obey.
- If we do anything that brings shame to our church, do we have a plan or a way to bring about reparations? We need to look at the Lord with a clear conscience and with open, child-like spontaneity and innocence.
- The passage we read from *AR 421* urges us to get rid of self pride. The vaunting of our own intelligence is harmful. Pride glues falsities together. Humbleness and honesty unseal the glue of falsity. Could we pray that the Lord will have His way with us? We don't want to cover up things. The Lord knows everything. Why not say that, instead of pretending that the darkness has covered up our indiscretions?
- A dead church will be destroyed. A dead church will have its falsities trampled down like mud in the streets. Love and wisdom will win out. We need to pledge our allegiance to the ways of the Lord's New Church. Are we up for such a "noble" commitment?

MICAH 7:11-12

"In that day when your walls are to be built, in that day the decree shall go far and wide. In that day they shall come to you from Assyria and the fortified cities, from the fortress to the river [Euphrates], from sea to sea, and mountain to mountain."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “A new church will be established, gathered from every nation...”

AC 120

- “As by ‘Egypt,’ so also by ‘Euphrates,’ are signified memory-knowledges, and also the sensuous things from which these knowledges come. This is evident from the Word in the Prophets, as in Micah...7:10-12...So did the prophets speak concerning the coming of the Lord who should regenerate man so that he might become like the celestial man.”

AC 1186 [7]

- “...where Asshur is named, it signifies the rational, either true or false, as in...Micah 7:12...”

AC 9341 [2]

- “...the signification of ‘the Euphrates,’ which is here ‘the river,’ as being the good and truth of the rational...as in...like manner in Micah 7:12...”

AR 444

- “By ‘Euphrates’ are signified the interiors of man’s mind bordering upon the spiritual things of his church...That the Euphrates was a boundary, see...Micah 7:12...”

AR 503

- In the Word, “Egypt...is the natural [man], Assyria is the rational, and Israel is the spiritual; these three make the man of the church...Thence, also, the land of Canaan, by which the church is signified, is described as to its extent...”*Micah 7:12* is cited.

AE 569 [13]

- “In Micah...7:12...This describes the establishment of the church by the Lord among the Gentiles, ‘this day’ signifying the Lord’s coming; the extension of the church among them from one limit to the other is signified by ‘they shall come from Assyria to the cities of Egypt and from Egypt to the river;’ the extension of truth from one limit to the other is signified by ‘from sea to sea,’ and the extension of good by ‘from mountain to mountain.’” (Emphasis added.)

AE 654 [11]

- “In Micah...7:12...This is said of the establishment of the church by the Lord with the Gentiles, and these words describe the extension of that church from one end to the other. One end of the land of Canaan was the river Euphrates and the other was the river of Egypt. The extension of truth from one end to the other is signified by ‘from sea to sea,’ and the extension of good from one end to the other by ‘from mountain to mountain.’” (Emphasis added.)

Derived Doctrine

“In the day when your walls are to be built...”

- **In the day** or “in this day” is an expression used in the Word to signify “the Lord’s coming.” See *AE 569 [13]*. Thus, we are learning what will happen following the death of a corrupted church. The Lord will not abandon His people. He will initiate and extend a new beginning with His advent among a faithful remnant. Without His corrective initiatives, it would have been all over, spiritually, for the church and humankind.
- The prophecy about building new walls signifies that the Lord will put into place spiritual **walls**. These new walls denote giving “the truths of faith which defend...‘walls’ denote the truths of faith that protect the church...” (*AC 9863, emphasis added.*)
- To **build the walls** signifies “to restore the church by leading it into the good of love and by instructing it in the truths of doctrine.” (*AE 391 [17]*)

“In that day the decree shall go far and wide...”

- With the advent of the Lord, “in that day,” a Divine decree will be sent forth. A **decree**, or statute, signifies the establishment of “a law of order...” See *AC 10248*. Doesn’t that make sense? With the establishment of a new church, a “law of order” must go forth from the Lord “far and wide” so that all will hear and obey and will be drawn to the laws of the Lord.

"In that day they shall come to you..."

- “**In that day**” signifies the advent of the Lord. “**They**,” the Gentiles, shall come inquiringly to the Lord’s new church. Gentiles are those who “are in the good of life and that receive truths and are thus in the conjunction of good and truth, and in combat against evils and falsities...” (*AE 447 [5]*)

“...from Assyria and the fortified cities, from the fortress to the river...” (Emphasis added.)

- *AE 1029 [13]* gives an interesting contrast to consider and to use in our effort to understand the meaning of this passage. Assyria signifies the rational mind. What kind of rational? Is it a positive or a negative one? “...in the New Church there shall spring up no reasonings from falsities against truths and goods.” Therefore, it is important to note that “they” shall **come from** Assyria. Can we assume that this means that the corrupted rational (Assyria) that had used false reasonings must be left behind? Follow this “derived” application one step further with this quote from *AE 911 [14]*: “...the ‘fortified cities in which they trust’ signify doctrinals from self-intelligence...” When the Lord makes His advent and forms (calls forth) a new church, those who heed the call must not carry with them former “reasonings” from falsities. There will be no doctrinal carry-overs from Assyria based on self-intelligence. They must be left behind. Those called to the new church must come out of the Assyrian state and its fortified falsities.
- In *AC 8581 [2]*, using John Elliot’s translation, we get an interesting view of the word “**fortress**.” “The reason why a ‘rock’ means the Lord in respect of the truth of faith is that ‘a rock’ is also used to mean **a fortress** that withstands falsities. The **actual fortress** is the truth of faith, for this is what the battle against both falsities and evils is waged from.” (Emphasis added.)
- “...from the fortress to the river...” We have some work to do on identifying what the spiritual sense intends us to understand. Let’s begin with what we are given in the literal sense of our text: “**In the day when your walls are to be built...**” This is a call to rebuild an effective defense system against falsity. Walls protect. Walls keep out intruders and “withholds falsities on all sides.” See *AC 8206*. A “**fortress**” signifies acquiring truths from the Lord that will help us withstand and fight against falsities and evils. The Writings tell us that the river mentioned here has a name: **Euphrates**. See *AC 120*. The “**Euphrates**” signifies memory-knowledges and the good and truth of the rational. See *AC 9341 [2]*. “The Euphrates...signifies the interiors of man’s mind bordering upon spiritual things of his church...” (*AR 444 [2]*) Together, these things, when given to the Lord, are powerful sources of regeneration. They are the means by which our spiritual recovery occurs: the “Lord who should regenerate man so that he might become like the celestial man.” (*AC 120*)

- In summary, what we have here is a promise—a covenant—offered by the Lord. If we spiritually come out of Assyria (self-intelligence and its false reasoning), He will become our “rock,” and He will work a work that will restore, renew, and revitalize our spiritual priorities and values. “In the day when your walls are to be built...” (*Micah 7:11*), the Lord will lead us **to the Euphrates “river.”** What is the meaning of the word **“river”**? A **“river”** means a plan of the Lord’s that we might become like celestial people. A celestial person is one who loves, obeys, and intuitively listens to the voice and governance of the Lord’s order. Can you quietly listen to your soul say “Amen” to this promised covenant? “So may it ever be” is a suggested interpretation of the meaning of the word “Amen.”

“...from sea to sea, and mountain to mountain.”

- These words describe the extension of truth from one limit to the other and the extension of good from one limit to the other. In simpler terms, the Lord is promising us the extension of our spiritual borders. We will grow in our knowledge of truth and the extension of our love. As we grow, Hell shrinks. As we grow, our borders are enlarged.

Putting It All Together

Whenever we work on solving a problem, we must always take the time and care to get our facts straight. Jumping to conclusions or listening to distorted “facts” hinders and prevents our resolving issues. Hell offers us information that is totally “bogus.” Hell wants to convince us that we are hopelessly weak and beyond help. Obviously, hellish spirits lie to us to keep us from hearing and accepting the healing truths from the Lord. Hell knows that if we pursue rebuilding the walls of our spiritual church, we will successfully wall out falsities on all sides. Hell doesn’t want to relinquish its grip on and domination of our hearts and minds. Anyone who listens to and obeys the Lord will begin to alter and repair spiritual mistakes. The first significant repair begins with reliance on the Lord and less dependence on the proprium and self-intelligence. Trusting the Lord and His Word will be the rock that will become our fortress. Trusting and relying on the Lord will bring us to the Euphrates River of great potential. When we give ourselves over to the Lord, He is able to enrich the contents that feed our soul. He will endeavor to enliven our innocence. His goal is to raise us progressively to a higher level. How do we know this is so? He reports to us in the prophecy of *Micah* that He desires to give us the blessings of the celestial level. But we have to invite and desire this to happen; we have to cooperate with Him.

When the Lord walked among us, He taught us, “You have heard it said of old...but I say unto you...” Could He have been any clearer about the errors and falsity of self-intelligence and its misguided traditional ways? He told us, “And you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.” (*John 8:32*)

We have a blueprint in the prophecy of *Micah*: build new walls; walk away from Assyria; leave behind Assyrian-like falsity; focus on the rock, the fortress, the river of freedom. Our borders—our potential—will grow and will be fruitful. This doesn't sound like hopelessness. This is solid information we need to tenaciously hold to so we will allow the Lord to push out of our lives the lies, deceit, and decrepit conditions of Hell.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 7:11-12.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Did this reflective passage help and encourage you to extend your borders of faith? Did it inspire you to focus on a realistic plan to rebuild the walls of your spiritual church? Let's start out with a look at the use and meaning of walls.
- Walls are necessary things. They protect and provide us with a sense of security. In the spiritual sense, we are told walls protect us from falsity on all sides. Each truth, each stone, each bonding of the walls of truth is essential. Can you picture the walls being rebuilt as you read and have affection for the Word?
- The Word always intends to give us the facts. It is a source of straight talk if we allow the Lord to open the spiritual sense. More than ever, we need to daily read and reflect on the Word. Can you mention some of the things that are said that frustrate and retard our reading of the Word? In order to see, and meet, the enemy, we have to name them. In doing so, we can mobilize the fighting and supportive truths of the Lord that will help set us free.
- How does a false self-intelligence get started? Does it start out with an experience in which we seemed to work out some apparent and necessary facts? Hell, when it tempted the Lord, tried to defeat Him by quoting scriptures. They actually took the time to find a reference that seemed easy to twist and mold to their end. The Lord saw behind their intent and told "Satan" to get behind Him. Is this a good model for us to follow as we do battle with such mental manipulation of truth? Getting the facts—getting the Divine perspective—is crucial. Is there any other way of doing this apart from reading and loving the Word of the Lord?
- One last thought: how hard is it to get out of the Assyrian state? Get away from it! Look to the rock and the fortress! Find the river! These are the words and advice of the Lord. In effect, your reading and studying of *Micah* with this study guide could be a beginning as you work toward these goals. The Word first, reflection and application second, will open the deep resources of the scriptures.

MICAH 7:13

"Yet the land shall be desolate because of those who dwell in it, and for the fruit of their deeds."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "...when the old has been destroyed."

AC 348

- "In Micah...7:13...That such 'fruit' is no fruit, or that the 'work' is dead, and that both fruit and root perish..."

AC 3934 [4]

- "...he who makes profession of the good of faith, and denies works, and still more if he rejects them, is devoid of faith, and yet more of charity. Such being the nature of the works of charity and faith, and as man is never in charity and faith unless he is in works, for this reason 'works' are so frequently mentioned in the Word; as may appear from the following passages..." *Micah 7:13* is cited.

Coronis 56

- "From all these passages [*Micah 7:13* and *7:16* are mentioned among others.] it may be seen what 'vastation' and 'desolation' are; and that it is not a vastation and desolation of the peoples of a land, and of cities, but of the goods and truths of the church, whence there is nothing but evils and falsities."

Derived Doctrine

"Yet the land shall be desolate..."

- *AE 304 [10]* teaches us that "**land**" signifies all things of the church. So we must think of the state of a church and not a physical place, country, or state. The word "**desolate**" signifies the lack of spiritual truth and good which are of faith and charity. See *AE 650 [38]*. Pulling these teachings together, we get a picture of the spiritually dying state of the church of Israel. The church was sadly empty of faith and charity. One gets the picture of a church going through the motions with emptiness and little warmth.

“...because of those who dwell in it...”

- Whose fault was it that faith and charity were desolate in the church? It was not the Lord’s fault. Those who dwell, or live, within the church are to blame for its empty or desolate state.

“...and for the fruit of their deeds.”

- **“Fruit”** signifies, in the positive sense, the “good of life.” (*AE 403 [4]*) In the negative sense, the destruction or devouring of **“fruit”** “signifies the consumption of good...” (*AE 727 [3]*) And what will consume the fruit of a church? The deeds or actions within the person or church.

Putting It All Together

The Lord wants the best for His church. He has every intention and aspiration for a church to succeed. A church is called to have an active faith and life of charity. A church is to enjoy the fruit of accomplishment or success as its reward. But that is not what the people within the church were achieving, nor was it something they longed for. Consequently, their faith, their charity, and their works shriveled up. The Lord had to remind them that it was their actions that caused this desolation. They were spiritually dying on the vine.

This message had to be said. Excuses would not hold up in the light of the Divine Love and Wisdom. Did the church want to hear these words? Would they change their ways? Once again, the word comes back: **“...the old has been destroyed.”** (*P&P*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 7:13.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Have you ever read *I Corinthians 13:1-10*? These verses make a poignant statement about the importance of love. Great things might be done, thought, or preached, but without love, they all are for naught. Such is the case regarding the church in our lesson. Their deeds lacked love and sincerity. Death came to them.
- As always, we need to do some spiritual inventory. Do we do the works of faith with charity attached? Do we shun evils as sins against God?
- If we don’t do these things and we fail (die as a church), whose fault is it? Failure and death are certainly not what the Lord wants for His church. They come because we fail to obey His Word.

MICAH 7:14-15

"Shepherd Your people with Your staff, the flock of your heritage, who dwell solitarily in a woodland, in the midst of Carmel; let them feed in Bashan and Gilead as in days of old. As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “It will be taught and led.”

AC 4117 [3]

- “Because Gilead was a boundary, it signified in the spiritual sense the first good, which is that of the senses of the body; for it is the good or the pleasure of these into which the man who is being regenerated is first of all initiated. In this sense is ‘Gilead’ taken in the Prophets, as in...Micah 7:14...”

AC 5201 [4-6]

- “The reason why ‘feeding’ is spoken of in the Word from its signification, is that when instruction or doctrine from the Word is spoken of in heaven, then in the world of spirits, where spiritual things appear naturally, there are represented to the sight meadows green with grass, herbage, and flowers, with flocks therein; and this with all variety, according to what is being said in heaven about instruction and doctrine...” *Micah 7:14* is cited in subsection 6.

AC 9011 [7]

- “Who does not see that in these passages by ‘a forest’ is not meant a forest, and by ‘Lebanon’ and ‘Carmel’ which are ‘forests’ are not meant Lebanon and Carmel, but something of the church? Yet what of the church is meant has been hitherto hidden, because the internal sense lies hidden...when yet this knowledge existed among the ancients in Chaldea, in Assyria, in Egypt, in Arabia, and thence in Greece, in whose books, emblems, and hieroglyphics such things are still to be met with. But the reason why such knowledge has perished, is that there is no faith that the spiritual is anything.” *Micah 7:14* is one source quoted.

AR 383

- “‘To feed’ is to teach, because the church, in the Word, is called ‘a flock’ and the men of the church are called ‘sheep’ and ‘lambs,’ hence ‘to feed’ signifies

to teach, and ‘the shepherd’ one that teaches; and this in many places, as...Micah 7:14..."

AR 485

- “A staff’ signifies power, because wood, of which staffs were made among the ancient people, signifies good...it is manifest that by ‘a staff’ power is signified...” *Micah 7:14* is but one of the many passages cited.

AE 482 [3]

- “...‘to feed’ signifies to instruct, ‘pastures’ instruction, and ‘shepherd’ an instructor, a few passages only in which ‘feeding’ and ‘pasture’ are mentioned shall be quoted...” *Micah 7:14* is among those cited.

AE 727 [6]

- “In Micah...7:14...‘Feed Thy people with Thy rod’ signifies the instruction of those who are of the church in Divine truths from the Word; ‘to feed’ signifying to instruct; ‘people’ meaning those who are of the church in truths, and ‘rod’ where the Word is because it is Divine truth. ‘The flock of heritage’ signifies those of the church who are in spiritual things of the Word, which are the truths of its internal sense; ‘they shall feed in Bashan and Gilead’ signifies instruction in the goods of the church and in its truths from the natural sense of the Word.”

Derived Doctrine

“Shepherd Your people with Your staff...”

- These words form a prayerful petition—a request directed to the Lord—to instruct the few but faithful with powerful truth. Can we rightfully sense a degree of urgency in this prayer? A staff is an instrument used by a shepherd to guide, prod, to offer stability, and to defend. Therefore, the request for powerful instruction makes sense in light of the dying Jewish church. Restoration and revitalization of the church were paramount.

“...the flock of Your heritage...”

- Who or what is the **“heritage”** of the Lord’s flock? *AC 5897 [2]* gives us a possible answer to this question. It is more than a pocket or remnant of protected people who remained faithful to the Lord and His Word. More importantly, “remains” or “remnant” in the spiritual sense **“signify the goods and truths stored up in the interior man by the Lord...”** (Emphasis

added.) So the prayerful request is to awaken and strengthen the goods and truths in the **"heritage"** stored up by the Lord in the internal being.

"...who dwell solitarily in woodland..."

- Consider this teaching about the meaning of **"dwell alone"** (solitarily), found in AC 139: "In ancient times those were said to 'dwell alone' who were under the Lord's guidance as celestial men, because such were no longer infested by evils, or evil spirits. This was represented in the Jewish Church also by their dwelling alone when they had driven out the nations. On this account it is sometimes said of the Lord's church, in the Word, that she is 'alone,'..."
- The word **"woodland"** has a most interesting usage in the Writings. Chadwick's translation of TCR 259 says that "the Word is like a garden, which may be called the heavenly paradise...and the garden is **surrounded** by **woodland trees**. A person who through doctrine has possession of Divine truths is in the middle of this garden, where the trees of life are and in fact he enjoys the...delights. A person whose knowledge of truths is not from doctrine, but only drawn from the literal sense is on the circumference and sees only the woodland. But one who has been taught a false religion, and has convinced himself of that falsity, is not even in the wood, but outside it in a sandy plain, where there is not even grass." (Emphasis added)

"In the midst of Carmel..."

- It is of great importance that we begin our study by asking the question why Carmel (Mount Carmel) is mentioned in Micah's prophecy. Mount Carmel is in the Galilean area. It begins on the Mediterranean Sea and runs some 12 miles inland. Mount Carmel's height is approximately 1800 feet. The mountain splits this section of Israel in half, making parts of Carmel somewhat "solitary" with a lush woodland and vineyards. The name "Carmel" in Hebrew means "vineyard of God."
- Carmel was subject to many important spiritual events. Perhaps the most dramatic and memorable occurrence was Elijah's "stand-down" challenge issued to the priests and prophets of Baal. It was on Mount Carmel that the people of the church of Israel were challenged by the Lord when He asked them, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him."
- The Lord told Elijah to call the false priests to Mount Carmel. This signifies lifting one's mind into a state of illumination in which the worship of the Lord might be the source and inspiration of a fruitful life. See AE 601 [15]: "'The head of Carmel' signifies the truths of the church, because in Carmel there were vineyards, and 'wine' signifies the truth of the church." AE 730 [7]teaches that "'Carmel' signifies the spiritual church, which is in truths from good." AC 9011 [6] explains for us that "Carmel signifies the church as to the knowledges of good."

- Are we beginning to get a picture of why Carmel is so significant to our understanding of the spiritual sense? Please go back to the quote from *TCR* 259 regarding the meaning of “woodland.” Do we, once again, hear the Lord’s challenge on top of Mount Carmel? Do you want to be in the midst of His woodland and vineyard? Do you want to be on the edge, or do you want to be outside? The Lord and His new church are in the midst of His woodland. Will we try to limp between two opinions? No way! The Lord is to be the center. Baal is to be on the outside in a “sandy place where there is not even grass.” (*TCR* 259)

“Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old.”

- *AE* 727 [6] explains that to “...feed in Bashan and Gilead signifies instruction in the goods of the church and in its truths from the natural sense of the Word.”
- *AE* 163 [8] says that “...by ‘Bashan’ the external of the church, thus the natural, was signified, for Bashan was outside the land of Canaan where the church was.”
- *AE* 654 [44] explains that “Gilead signifies reasoning from the sense of the letter of the Word...since Gilead was not far from the Euphrates, and wax, balm, and myrrh were from it...” *AC* 4739 says that “...Gilead’ signifies those who are in simple good, such as the Gentiles are in.” *AE* 434 [17] notes that “Gilead signifies the natural man...”
- Surprisingly, the words **“as in the days of old”** are used by the Prophets Amos, Isaiah, Malachi, and Micah, and in Matthew’s advent message. *AC* 2906 [6] explains that **“the days of old”** stands for the days or state of “the Most Ancient Church.” What is one significant thing about the Most Ancient Church? The people of that Church saw and spoke with the Lord directly. He walked among them. To the Most Ancients, He was in the form of the Divine Human. To them, the Lord was real, and they had full trust and confidence in His guidance and attentiveness. In contrast, the later churches worshipped an “invisible” Lord. They knew Him not, and doubts and confusion over doctrinal things spawned debates and clouded thinking. This invisible concept of God contributed significantly to Israel’s “limping” between the Lord and other gods like Baal. This call for a return to the **“days of old”** is not a poetical moment of reminiscence about the good old days. This is a call to return to the “now it is permitted to enter understandingly into the mysteries of faith.” (*TCR* 508 [3]) The New Church will once again “see” the Lord in His Divine Human. That is a “mission statement” of the New Church. The doctrines of the New Church herald the news that what had become invisible (the Lord) will become visible again.

"As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders."

- Israel's time in the land of Egypt was a long and hard state of bondage. It would be overwhelming to summarize in this section all of the wonders the Lord performed for Israel when they came out of Egypt. Think of just a few wonders, beginning with the dividing of the Red Sea, then the manna and quail for 40 years, the pillar of fire at night and the shade of the clouds during the day, clothes and sandals that did not wear out for 40 years, water out of a rock, the sun standing still so that they could defeat an enemy, the gift of the ten commandments, the Ark of the Covenant, the collapse of the walls of Jericho, etc., etc.
- What wonders can we point to as we, too, come out of our state of bondage to Egypt? If we take some quiet time to reflect, I'm sure we will see the wonders of the Lord.

Putting It All Together

"It [the new church] will be taught and led." (*P&P*)

The Lord will shepherd (teach) His flock. He will feed them with His essential and vital good and truth. His shepherd's staff will guide, prod, and support them in their learning process. There is a "solitary" protected garden place that is a heavenly woodland. The "flock" will be surrounded by the "vineyard of God." It is a verdant woodland. Hell and its legion of detractors will be kept outside His solitary garden in a sandy, barren place that has no grass or vegetation.

The Lord's re-education of the church will begin with the basics of the literal sense of the Word, called the Bashan and Gilead state. The goal, however, is to gradually move the education of the flock to "the days of old." Like the people of the Most Ancient Church, His flock will come to see and lovingly obey the ways of the Lord from an inner perception. In this state of innocence, the Divine Human will walk among the flock. He will speak to them of heavenly things that will make Him visible in everything that is within and surrounding them in His woodland.

The Pharisees asked the Lord to rebuke and silence the enthusiasm of His disciples. He replied to them that should the disciples be silenced, "the stones would immediately cry out" and testify of Him. (*Luke 19:40*) In other words, the correspondential order of the world has the "days of old" story indelibly imprinted in everything to tell those who have a pure heart, mind, and eyes a true celestial story. For them, the Divine Human will come alive and will be thrillingly visible.

The Lord promises He will show us magnificent wonders. Egypt seeks to keep us in a state of bondage. Our schedules are demanding and restrictive, and we don't always make time to learn about the Lord. If we allow ourselves to be spiritually

rescued from this bind, the wonders will unfold, and they will be as countless as in the “days of old.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 7:14-15.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- One of the things I love about doing this study is the ongoing process of discovery. In my experience, passages and words that seemed confusing and remote come clear with a sense of awesome enlightenment once the spiritual sense is unfolded. A deep sense of peace comes in and offers me comfort and assurance. Is this happening to you as well? I surely hope so, and I would ask that you share these things with others so that we (together) can grow in our daily reading and meditating on the Word.
- This section reminds me of *Psalm 23*. “The Lord is my shepherd...thy rod and staff, they comfort me...” “Shepherd your people with Your staff...” Are there any other words in the two lessons that tie together for you?
- Carmel was a significant place for the prophets Elijah and Elisha. Can you recall other miracles that happened in this protected and “solitary” place?
- The *TCR 259* passage was significant and picturesque. Seeing the verdant garden, the woodland, and the vineyard as the “Lord’s vineyard” helped me. The three choices of positioning, in, near, and outside, were clear. There also was a call from the “Shepherd” to choose the center. Were there any other points in that quote that you found usable for your reflection time?
- Returning to the days of old—how did that challenge you in your thinking about the return to the Most Ancient Church concepts? Was seeing the Lord in His Divine Human one of the points you picked? When we study the five churches, we notice that one of the notable changes that occurred to each church was “seeing” the visible God. Sadly, for the Jewish church, the Lord became invisible. He became a name, a being to be feared, but not one to be kept as a center of worship. Happily, the New Church will see Him as a Divine Human.
- Coming out of Egypt—how many studies, sermons, and meditations on this topic have you heard and thought about? Can you attest to the many wonders that the Lord has performed for us in providing an escape from this state of spiritual bondage?

MICAH 7:16-17

“The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might; they shall put their hand over their mouth; their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent; they shall

crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth. They shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of You."

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "Infernal things will be removed from it."

AC 249

- "That to 'eat dust all the days of its life' signifies that their sensuous part became such that it could not live from anything except that which is of the body and the earth, that is to say, that it became infernal, is evident also from the signification of 'dust' in the Word; as in Micah...7:14, 16, 17...The 'days of eternity,' means the Most Ancient Church; the 'nations,' those who trust in their Own, of whom it is predicated that 'they shall lick the dust like a serpent.'"

AC 7418 [4]

- "By the 'dust'...is signified what is damned, of which we read...in the following passages..." *Micah 7:14, 16, 17* are cited.

AR 455

- "Noxious serpents, which are of many kinds, signify the sensual things that depend on the evil affections which constitute the interiors of the mind with those who are insane from the falsities of evil; and harmless serpents signify the sensual things that are dependent on the good affections, which constitute the interiors of the mind with those who are wise from the truths of good. Sensual things dependent on evil affections, are signified by serpents in these passages..." *Micah 7:17* is cited.

AE 581 [10]

- "Because the craftiness of the evil is diabolical those who are in it are said 'to eat the dust.'...And in Micah...7:17...'dust' signifying what is damned, and 'to go upon the belly' signifying the sensual, which is the ultimate of life in man; and as this is the ultimate of life, it is in no intelligence or wisdom, but in craftiness and cunning, which are contrary to intelligence and wisdom."

Derived Doctrine

"The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might..."

- AC 249 teaches that "nations" in Micah 7:16 signifies those who trust in themselves. To "see" signifies to perceive. The Lord will show the conceited and proud the folly of trusting in themselves. Will it be easy for them to see these things? They will be "ashamed." What is involved in this feeling? AC 165 teaches that shame comes about when integrity and innocence are missing. AE 401 [20] adds that shame is present when there is no longer any reception of Divine good and truth. AE 734 [18] says that "shame" signifies a sense that everything of self-intelligence will succumb. This last passage also sheds light on why they were "ashamed of all their might." In the Lord's presence and with His opening of their eyes, they saw all of their imagined power of self-intelligence succumbing before the presence and light of the Lord.

"They shall put their hand over their mouth; their ears shall be deaf."

- We need to focus on the three body parts mentioned: "hand," "mouth," and "ears." And while we consider their correspondences, we need to hold to a key word: "deaf." In the positive sense, these three parts of the body represent having the power to put uses into our daily living (hand), the ability to express thoughts and ideas from the intellect of the understanding (mouth), and the sense of obedience to the truths of faith (ears). But this verse offers a sense of the opposite of these things because of the word "deaf." The hand over the mouth indicates unwillingness to express the intellect of understanding in the uses of one's daily life; and the deaf ear signifies to be "without the understanding of truth, and thence in no obedience..." (AE 455 [21])

"They shall lick dust like a serpent..."

- To "lick dust" signifies to love the sensual things which are the "lowest of the understanding and will, being in close contact with the world." (AR 455 [2]) Putting this in different words, to say someone is licking dust is a correspondential way of saying a person is so earthly minded they are of no heavenly use.
- The meaning of a "serpent" was well explained in AR 455. Please read that number again.

"They shall crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth."

- To "walk" signifies to live according to the doctrine of faith, but to "walk with Jehovah" is to live the life of love." (AC 519) To "crawl" signifies inability

to “look upward to the things of heaven, but only downward to those of the body and the earth...” (AC 247)

- The meaning of **“crawl from their holes”** is not directly explained. However, AE 410 [2] states that those who hide themselves in caves (holes) signify those who prefer to live in the evils of life. When a person sensually lives in the evils of life, “the goods in them” have been destroyed. They prefer not to live in the “light of daytime” but in a “thick darkness” of the falsities of evil. Could this possibly shed some light on the words “crawl from their holes”?

“...like snakes of the earth...”

- From *Genesis* to *Revelation*, the snake has been the emblem of a force that is opposed to the Lord. A **“snake,”** in the negative sense, represents the sensuous self-love that desires to separate a person from conjunction with the Lord. The **“snake”** wishes to invert a person. Snakes encourage speaking truths with the lips only, with the intent to turn “heavenly wisdom into infernal insanity...”(AR 455)

“They shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of You.”

- Is there any doubt about the meaning of these words? Hell shall tremble at the presence of the Lord. Because He Is and they are not, there is no chance of them winning. The hellish spirits will be embarrassed and ashamed that they even thought they could defeat the Divine Human.

Putting It All Together

Remember that *P&P* summed up this section with these words: “Infernal things will be removed.” Our text does not leave us wondering what **evils must go:**

1. The evil of trusting in self (one’s self-intelligence out of control).
2. The evil that thinks it is invincibly mighty.
3. The evil that exerts its power (hand) to cover the mouth so that spiritual uses will be blocked and the understanding suppressed from expressing itself.
4. The deafness meant by the desire to keep obedience to the Lord and His Word quiet and unresponsive.
5. The evil of licking the dust. The soul does not want to lick the dust of sensual things. The soul does not want to crawl on its belly looking downward. The soul wants to be fed by the Lord by looking up to Him.
6. The evil of living in dark holes. The soul does not want to live in a confining hole of darkness. It wants the light of heaven.
7. The evil of the serpent. The tricks, cunning, and craftiness of the sensual snake will end. Intelligence, wisdom, and innocence will replace evil and flourish within the Lord’s church.

8. The evil that fears the Lord. A healthy fear of the Lord will replace arrogance and deceit.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 7:16-17.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- When we read that “those who trust themselves” will be proud, conceited, and full of folly, does that clarify what the Lord says will be “evicted” from His new church?
- The evil of trusting in oneself seems to be at the root of the problem. Are we in total agreement with this point? It seems to be a “yes, but” kind of statement. For instance, having confidence in our ability, believing in our training and expertise, is important. Without a degree of confidence, doubts would cause our enthusiasm to be siphoned off. Having confidence seems like a good thing. Where does a healthy dose of self-confidence stray off and become full of folly and evil? The state of a whining, scared “rabbit” who is hesitant to try anything seems to be fraught with as many problems as that of the over-confident egotist. How does someone learn to achieve a healthy spiritual balance to build the right kind of confidence?
- Our lesson exposes the plan of the evil to implement their power (hand) over the mouth to stifle any positive expression of faith and obedience to the Lord. Can you identify or cite examples to support this teaching? The second example exposes evil efforts to block our “ears” so deafness occurs. This deafness seems to comprise turning a deaf ear to the Lord, not wanting to hear what the Lord says so that we can get what we want and not be bothered with a nagging (warning) conscience. Has anything like this ever happened to you?
- Did you note the different kinds of snakes (serpents) identified in the reading? Sensual things conjoined with insane falsities of evil are the harmful serpents. Whereas harmless serpents are sensual things conjoined with and dependent on good affections. Reflecting on this, do any examples come to mind that might help to illustrate and clarify this distinction?
- Serpents that lick the dust are identified as sensual things that are in close contact with the world. How might we see this so that we can shun this as a sin against the Lord?
- Serpents in their holes indicate hiding, love of darkness, and self-preservation. Evil prefers darkness. It doesn’t like close supervision in the light of the Lord. Is this “derived doctrine” too harsh an interpretation of the meaning of the serpents in their holes?

MICAH 7:18-20

"Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will give truth to Jacob and mercy to Abraham, which You have sworn to our fathers from days of old."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “The Divine compassion will be there.”

AC 8279

- “...as soon as [the evil] have been devastated, that is, deprived of truths, it is as if their wings were cut off, and then they sink down like weights, and the deeper in proportion as their falsities from evil are worse. From this it is that by ‘depths,’ equally as by ‘abysses,’ are signified the hells...as in these passages...” *Micah 7:19* is cited.

AC 9937 [9]

- “...by bearing iniquities...is signified to cast evils and falsities into hell, from which they are; and they are cast thither when they are removed so as not to appear, which is effected when a man is withheld from them by being kept in good by the Lord...The like...is signified by ‘casting them forth into the depths of the sea,’ as in Micah...7:19.”

AE 538 [7]

- “In Micah...7:19...‘the depths of the sea,’ ...mean the hells where and from which are evils and falsities, it is said ‘He will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.’”

AC 3122 [3]

- “In Micah...7:20...where ‘Jacob’ denotes the Lord’s external man, and ‘Abraham’ the internal, as to the Human.”

Derived Doctrine

"Who is a God like You...?"

- Do we need to remind ourselves that Micah's name means "who is like the Lord?" This is a reminding, reflective truth that the Lord has no equal. He alone possesses all love and wisdom. He is our very life. The Lord alone is the Substance and Form out of which all creations draw their being. We need to acknowledge, see, and feel, that only the Lord IS. All else is dependent on Him. If the Lord for the least of a moment were to forget or withdraw from anything, it would cease to exist. "Who is a God like You?" are words that bring everything into a proper and orderly perspective.

"...pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage..."

- *AC 10629* (Elliot translation) explains the words "pardon our iniquity and our sin" as "...being so in order that things on an interior level in them, which teem with falsities and evils, may be shifted away...a church cannot be established among any people unless their interiors are open, through which contact with heaven is effected; and those interiors are not open except in the case of those who are guided by truths of faith grounded in goodness of life, derived from the Lord."
- *AC 7878* explains what is meant by the Lord "**passing over**" us. "...this signifies...namely, the damnation which is from the hells will do so...Moreover, the sphere of damnation which flows forth from the hells, flees past those who are in truth and good from the Lord; for damnation flows in with those who are in evil and falsity, because there is a state of reception there; but not with those who are in truth and good, for these are opposites, one of which flees from the other."
- "In the Word evils are sometimes called sins, sometimes iniquities, and sometimes transgressions; but what the specific meaning of each of them is, is not evident except from the internal sense. The word transgressions is used for deeds contrary to the truths of faith, the word iniquities for deeds contrary to the good of faith, and the word sins for deeds contrary to the good of charity and love. The first two kinds of deeds [transgressions and iniquities] spring from a perverted understanding, the last [sins] from a wicked will..." (*AC 9156, Elliot translation; emphasis added.*)
- "...the remnant of His heritage" conveys a powerful meaning in the spiritual sense. Let's look first at the word "remnant." The Writings use this word in various ways. It can be "remnant" or "remains" or "residue." Each of these terms signifies "truths stored up by the Lord in the interior man." See *AC 5113 [8]*. These truths are stored up by the Lord, protected by the Lord; the whereabouts of the "remnant" is known only by the Lord. He does

this so that we, or the Hells, cannot alter them. They are wrapped up in loves and kept in a state of innocence.

- The word "**heritage**" "signifies those of the church [the remnant] who are in the spiritual things of the Word." (*AE 727 [6]*)

"He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy."

- The Writings are clear and consistent on the teachings about God's anger. God is never angry. His zeal, His care for and protection of good and truth, are eternal ends, but these Divine ends are perceived by the evil as anger. Listen to and consider these words from *AR 658*: "...evil is angry with God, and because it appears to man, when he is punished and tormented for it, as is the case after death in hell, as if it were from God, therefore, in the Word, anger and wrath, yea evil, is attributed to God..." Those who are against God feel and burn with anger because they can't get away with the full fury of their gross hatreds. In due course of the unfolding of Providence, evil people will come before the Lord, and their evil intentions will be subdued and defeated. The Lord will not remain forever silent. His mercy will bring about order. This will be a moment of "loving" delight for those who have trusted and obeyed the Lord and His Word. It will be perceived by the evil as a moment of anger, fury, and punishment. Hell knows not what delights there are in the Lord's mercy.

"He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities."

- Does the Lord ever stop having compassion for us? Not for the least of a moment. If He ever ceased offering compassion to us, we would disintegrate into a pile of ashes. No, what really is being taught here is that the faithful remnant will once again see and recognize how loving and powerful the Lord is. As a "man of war," He has always fought for us. We will see the "millions" of things He has done to give us continually those moments of "new beginnings." Read *AC 3854 [3]* slowly and reflectively, and you will see the completeness of His compassion and hear convincingly about subduing our iniquities.

"You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

- To "**cast**" or to sink "into the depths of the sea" signifies, in the negative sense, "to be cast down to hell." (*AE 1182 [3]*) The Lord will remove the nagging, negative, hostile ideas of hell that have plagued us, and He will cast them back to the place of their origin. Hell is where they belong. Hell is where they will be bound so they cannot hinder the birth and growth of the new church.

"You will give truth to Jacob and mercy to Abraham which You have sworn to our fathers..."

- This verse from *Micah* is going to require some thorough reflection time. OK, let's return to *AC 3122 [3]*. This passage from the Writings says that "**Jacob**" denotes the Lord's external man. "**Abraham**" denotes "the internal, as to the Human." Why do we need to know this? It is all about the Lord's wonderful glorification. He took on the human form and put off all of the inherited tendencies toward evil from His mother Mary. Hell tempted Him in every one of them. He never gave in to a single inherited tendency toward evil. On the cross, when the Lord uttered the words, "It is finished," He was announcing that His Human was now going to be united with the Divine from which it was begotten. He now was the Divine Human. Glorification happened as promised in the Word. Through this process, He ordered both the heavens and the hells. His glorification, intended and prophesied, was now completed.

"...from the days of old."

- *AC 2906 [6]* explains that the words "**the days of old**" speak of the days or state of the Most Ancient Church. Why is it so important to spend some time breaking out the meaning of this closing meditation? Why end this book of *Micah* with these words? Do you remember a teaching of the church that says the last things said in a series from the Word sum up the things that proceeded?
- If you turn to the section of this workbook called **Epilogue**, you will note how the whole series of messages in *Micah* follow one another and are summed up in the very last things said in Chapter 7. For now, let's look at the series as recorded in Chapter 7:
 1. The last time has come upon the Jewish church. Why? Good and truth were no longer a priority for them.
 2. Total chaos reigned in the church. Falsities and evils fought amongst themselves and against good and truth. This state caused the spiritual collapse of the church.
 3. The Lord acted prudently. His light of truth, He told them, would come to the rescue. The Lord would institute a new church with a higher obedience and loyalty to His values and priorities.
 4. The old church would be destroyed to make way for the new church.
 5. The new church would not be a "favored" people but would be gathered from every nation.
 6. When the old church had been destroyed, the new church would be taught and led.
 7. Infernal (hellish) things would be removed.
 8. The "days of old," the state of the Most Ancient Church, will return and the Lord will be seen as a Divine Human. He will no longer be invisible. Instead,

He will walk among and talk with the people of His church. Innocence and perception will abound within the new church. The Lord will bring Divine compassion upon all who are within His new church.

Can we follow the spiritual progression of the seventh chapter of *Micah*? Isn't the last thing said important as a binding and useful summary of all that preceded it?

Putting It All Together

"Who is a God like You?" These words carry a sense of reverential awe and thanksgiving. Without the Lord, it would have been all over for humankind. We were hopelessly lost and spiritually confused. The Lord assumed our human nature and took on the full fury and hatred of the hells. He vanquished their diabolical purposes. Through His restorative redemption, we will find pardon if we shun evils as sins against the Lord. The Lord took the burden of evil and cast it into a deep sea. He cast evil, falsity, and excessive self-confidence back where they belonged. Hell is a place of misery because its inhabitants don't want the Lord near them. They refuse His delights and mercy. They project on the Lord anger, retaliation, and indifference, when, in fact, that is really what they have in their own hearts against the Lord.

But be of good cheer. The Lord will subdue all of our iniquities. He will gently lead us out of a cold and unresponsive church into the warmth and clearness of light in His new church.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Micah 7:18-20.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Do you recall some of the exchanges the Lord had with the Pharisees and Scribes? He told them that He came to save the lost. He told them that there were many other sheep from other folds that would be called to the great feast. But they would not listen. Nor did they adhere to what the prophets said about the call of people from many nations. They would not hear of such teachings. They believed they were and would be the favored nation and church. Isn't that a sad stance? Why not let the truth be truth and obey the words of the Lord?
- As in many of the Minor Prophets we have studied, the details of self-love are exposed and condemned in *Micah*. We looked at some pretty hard teachings in this study. But in the case of so many of the Prophets, the last chapter brings hope and restoration as a closing theme. Is it important to look at the "spiritual cancer" that has to be eradicated? Isn't the light following the

darkness so much brighter when we see what kind of rescue the Lord brought about for us?

- Have you ever done a thorough study of the Most Ancient Church? The state of their innocence before the fall of Adam and Eve was wonderful. They trusted and relied on the Lord completely. They all spoke one language. The Lord visited and guided them in all of their ways. Innocence and peace thrived among them. Can we picture that state returning to the church? Do we have it as a prayer request? Are we ready to abandon our own self-intelligence for this to come to fruition?

Epilogue: A Summary of the Book of Micah

The following summary draws and expands on the outline given in the "Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms" (P&P).

CHAPTER ONE

"The word of the Lord came to Micah..." What was the message Micah was to hear and report? The Lord was about to make His advent. The descent of the Lord would be from heaven to earth. The Messiah's message would be hard for the church of that day to hear because the state of the church had been totally falsified. The Lord came to tell them that the church's falsity was so perverse that it had to be destroyed. Things were so bad on earth that "the state of heaven" was even being changed and affected. The mission of the Lord's advent was restoration because "mourning" or spiritual disorder was touching even the highest celestial good. People were deprived of all truth.

CHAPTER TWO

The church had become spiritually rigid and set in its spiritual errors. What brought about this spiritual condition? Their intention, as seen by the Lord, was to do evil. This intention was not only in their thoughts but also reigned in their hearts, their wills. The Lord cited this state as the main cause of the perversion of the church. "...there was no longer any use to teach" these things "except [to] those who obey." When a church participates in evils of every kind, it will perish. The hearts of its people will not admit the light of truth to probe into their disorder. Only those who long to be part of the Lord's new church will allow such light to "invade" their minds and hearts.

CHAPTER THREE

A perverted church has to be destroyed. Why? Because it has destroyed all truths and goods even to the last things of the church. When that happens, the Lord does not hear its people and they do not hear the Lord. When the Word of the Lord and the doctrine from the Word are perverted, "sight" can no longer see or receive anything of truth and good.

As the church perverted all the truths and goods of the Word, its people deluded themselves with the belief that God was with them. Once again, the Lord revealed that this condition of mind and heart had to be destroyed.

CHAPTER FOUR

When the Lord makes His advent, a new church will be established. It will be formed out of the nations. There will be no falsity or evil in the new church. In place of falsity and evil, truths and goods “will flourish.” Those who were in externals from ignorance will be drawn into the church, and “truths and goods with them will grow.” The Lord promises that falsities will not enter and destroy His new church. Instead, falsities will be destroyed among those who steadfastly refused to obey.

CHAPTER FIVE

No matter how much hell wishes to oppose and infest the new church, the Lord who is “the God of the church...will gather the church together and teach those who are in it.” The Lord will utterly destroy reasonings from falsities. There will be salvation in the new church. In the church of the Jewish nation, there will be nothing but falsities of evil. This church will have no power over the Lord’s church. It will perish, and with it, all of its falsities and evils will be destroyed.

CHAPTER SIX

The Lord offered every good to the Jewish church. He protected them. The church failed because they wanted to offer externals of worship. External worship was full of pomp and circumstance. That’s not what the Lord wanted. He wants internal worship. From internals, the life of truth and good is loved. The church had wandered off so far “they could not be brought back.” Punishments no longer worked. Therefore, this church “having been overthrown, should perish.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

We are given a summary of why the Jewish church was in the last time of its spiritual existence and what things would bring it to an end. First, there was total chaos going on in the church. Their falsities and evils were at war with one another. They also fought against the truths and goods of the Word. The Lord’s advent would establish a new church. That new church would be in the light of truth “from the Lord.” The old church would be destroyed. A new church will be established—gathered from every nation. It will be taught and led. Infernal things will be removed from it. The Divine compassion will be there (in the new church) as it was “from days of old,” as it was in the days of the Most Ancient Church. What was so special about the people of the Most Ancient Church? Their innocence, their complete trust in the Lord. They saw Him as the Divine Human; He walked and talked among them; everything within the garden spoke and testified of the value and validity of the Lord’s love and wisdom. In a nutshell, the Lord

was visible and not invisible. What will be the hallmark of the Lord's New Church? It will possess the gifts from the days of old!

The Book of Amos

Preface

The book of Amos is one of the books of the Word. Not much has been written about it in the New Church. Since I started working on this study of Amos, I have searched our library holdings with the hope I would turn up a hidden or forgotten study by some New Church scholar. Although there are sermons using a verse or part of a chapter of Amos as a text, I have found no detailed study of Amos or other books of the Minor Prophets. Why not? Is there a perception that the Writings lack a verse-by-verse explanation of these Prophets?

So far, my research has uncovered several thorough New Church books on the Major Prophets, such as Isaiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel. The absence of similar books on the Minor Prophets motivated me to undertake a study guide approach to filling this void. I hope this first study guide will prove helpful to others and that additional study guides will follow this one. Ultimately, I want the Minor Prophets to be accessible and hope to contribute to their study and use in the church. Most of all, I'd like this effort to be a challenge so that others will be encouraged to build on and improve this pilot project.

How To Use This Study Guide

1. A slow, unhurried reading of Amos is essential. Read each chapter before you look at the related section of the Study guide. Read the chapter again while you are using the study guide, and read it a third time when you are finished. This process will give you a powerful sense of the series of events and meanings in each chapter. It is important to feel comfortable with all the names, places, and announcements in Amos' prophecy. When possible, some historical information will be included in the study guide to increase reading comprehension and enhance application.

The book of Amos is not an easy work to read and understand. Unlike some of the prophets—Jonah or Hosea—Amos doesn't tell a story that is easy to remember. He brings prophecies against neighbors of Israel, mentioning names and places one can only recognize with the help of maps and reference books. One has to wade through many historical facts to catch a glimpse of the message in Amos, so it is important to balance history with solid research of the spiritual sense. Researching can require a table full of books and hours of comparing and contrasting meanings that can be drawn from the internal sense. This study guide intends to help the researcher by including a full set of quotes so that he or she may spend less time juggling books and more time reflecting on the issues the internal sense presents. My hope is that the reader will concentrate on the process of applying doctrine to life.

2. As you read Amos, there are several resources you will want to use with this study guide. The first is a book of the Writings called *Summaries of the Internal Sense of the Prophets and Psalms*.¹ This work includes a verse-by-verse overview of each of the nine chapters of Amos. The overview gives a general statement about the internal sense. Our research will move us toward the particulars of the internal sense.
3. Another important reference tool is *Searle's General Index to Swedenborg's Scripture Quotations*. This reference shows where in the Writings a verse(s) of the Word is either explained specifically or used to illustrate a doctrinal point that we can add to our study. There is also another use of this work. As we study, each researcher will be led by the Lord's Providence in myriad of ways and according to specific needs or states. Knowing how to use this book will help us look up related passages in the Word that will add to our knowledge of the three-fold Word.
4. You will soon discover that not every verse, word, name, etc. is directly quoted and explained in the Writings. However, there are often references to the same name, place, or thing in the explanation of a different verse of the Word. The hope is that reflection on these other references and their associated doctrine will help us see possible applications to our study of Amos. We will need to use "derived doctrine." Please don't run away from this maligned term. If we use it properly, admitting openly that it is derived, we bring no harm to the internal sense. Think about it for a minute. The Writings give us a verse-by-verse explanation of Genesis, Exodus, and Revelation. Do we stay away from the other books of the Word because the Lord didn't reveal them in the Writings in the same way He did Genesis, Exodus, and Revelation? I think not. We must look for, find, and wisely use "derived doctrine" with a humble acknowledgment that we have tried to apply doctrine with a degree of human prudence.
5. Keep a notebook handy during your study times. Write out insights, questions, and any summaries you find helpful in organizing your thoughts about each chapter. **The goal of this study guide is not to give a detailed summary of the internal sense but to start the researcher's quest for deeper insights.**
6. There is a wonderful explanation of Amos, chapter 8, in the *Dole Bible Study Notes, Volume 4*. There you will see an example of historical and spiritual information corroborating one another. It is well worth your time to read and reflect on this explanation. You might also enjoy looking at the *Sower Notes, Volume III, Chapter 58*.
7. At the end of each chapter in the study guide, you will find a study review. The review includes a summary of each section to help you reinforce and build on your understanding of several of the key points.
8. Begin each study unit with a devotional prayer asking the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts. Certainly beginning in this sphere has the power to inspire and open our minds with a higher spiritual priority that will keep us in the

company of the Lord's angels. As the Writings teach, we must seek to love truth for truth's sake. Such an approach will free each reader from preconceived ideas that might limit his or her ability to "see" the intent and message of the Lord's Word.

Introduction

Before we begin our study, it will be helpful to learn some background information about the books of the prophets and their approximate dates.

MAJOR AND MINOR PROPHETS

Let's begin with a brief description of what the terms "Major Prophets" and "Minor Prophets" mean. In the Old Testament, there are 16 books referred to as the books of the Prophets. Biblical scholars have divided the 16 books into two categories. Augustine was the first person to use the terms "Major" and "Minor" to indicate the size of the books, not their relative importance. The Minor Prophets contain fewer chapters than those of the Major Prophets.

Scholars do not agree on the timeline of the prophets. I found at least ten different timelines. None of them agree completely on dates. If I were to simplify the research information I would say there are essentially two timelines that seem to have the acceptance among the scholars. So I offer both for your consideration.

THE MINOR PROPHETS

Amos	750 BC *	Obadiah	840-830 BC
Hosea	745-734 BC *	Joel	830-750 BC
Micah	701 BC	Jonah	780-740 BC
Zephaniah	628-626 BC	Hosea	765-725 BC
Nahum	614-612 BC	Amos	760 BC
Habakkuk	605-600 BC	Micah	740-700 BC
Haggai	520 BC	Nahum	640-620 BC
Zechariah	520-519 BC	Zephaniah	640-609 BC
Malachi	460 BC	Habakkuk	680-605 BC
Obadiah	400-350 BC	Haggai	520 BC
Joel	350 BC	Zechariah	520-480 BC
Jonah	300 BC	Malachi	420-400 BC

THE MAJOR PROPHETS

Isaiah	742-687 BC *
Jeremiah	627-580 BC
Ezekiel	593-563 BC
Daniel	605-536 BC

WHO WAS THIS MAN CALLED AMOS?

Amos was a shepherd in a region called Tekoa, about six miles south of Bethlehem. Commentaries describe the area as somewhat rugged, rocky, and with sparse grazing fields. Shepherds in that region had to make extensive trips to feed their flocks.

In the book of Amos, we find two uses Amos performed: he kept sheep (Amos 1:1), and he cultivated sycamore trees (Amos 7:14). One translation says that he was a “pincher” of the sycamore tree blossom. This means he was a pruner. The sycamore tree in that region produced a low quality fig. Its taste was not as exquisite as that of other fig trees, so it was called a poor man’s fig tree. When overwhelmed by hunger, the poor availed themselves of the sycamore tree’s abundance.

Unlike the “sons of the Prophets” or the priests, Amos had no training or preparation prior to his call to bear a message from the Lord to the ten Northern Tribes of Israel. Amos appeared to the people, spoke the message, and then departed, never to be heard of again. It is interesting to note that his name is not mentioned anywhere else in the Word except for Luke 3:25 and most biblical scholars think that this verse actually refers to Amoz, the father of the prophet Isaiah.

Amos’ name means “burden bearer.” That seems quite appropriate for the task at hand. When we study Amos, our burden is to think from essence and not person. Rather than getting caught up in Amos himself, we need to get caught up in what his prophecies represent. How can we find ourselves in his text? Where does each lesson challenge us as members of the New Church?

We can learn more about who Amos was in the Word by considering his two uses—shepherd and pruner of sycamore trees. In Arcana Coelestia (AC) 343, we are told that a shepherd represents a person who exercises charity. Someone who leads and teaches is called a shepherd, and those who are led and taught are called a flock. This shepherd tended sycamore trees, the “poor man’s fig trees.” A sycamore tree denotes external truth, and a fig tree represents external good (AC 7553).

Putting the two uses of Amos together may help us understand why he was chosen to go to the Northern Tribes. They had fallen on spiritually hard times. The people as a flock, and their priests as shepherds, were in a wilderness state, and their external

lives were about as tasteless as the figs on the sycamore tree. Genuine obedience to the Lord was at a low point. The Lord always seeks to improve, or lift, the quality of His children. He sought to help the people shun evils as sins so they might do the work of repentance. Until the external part of a person is willing to be put in order, the person resists the ways of the Lord. Because the Israelites in the Northern Tribes were in this state, hard prophecies had to be spoken to them. The Lord chose Amos to reveal serious spiritual disorders.

Fear, predictions of doom, and hard sayings about spiritual disorder are not topics people enjoy. We prefer happier themes. But when the Word says the Lord “roars from Mount Zion,” we need to remember the “roaring” speaks of His zeal and love, not anger. The Lord doesn’t get angry. He holds up a mirror so that His people may see what they are doing to themselves. He wants us all to shun evils as sins to keep from losing our souls. “For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?” (Matt. 16:26)

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPHETS?

To learn more about prophets, read AC 2534. Essentially, the Writings teach us four things about the prophets in the Word.

1. They delivered the words of the Lord and not their own.
2. The messages they gave to the people often came to them in dreams or visions.
3. Often, the prophets had no idea what the prophecies meant.
4. The prophets had to memorize or write down their prophecies in order to pass them on.

Biblical scholars think that Amos wrote his prophecies down.

WHAT CONDITIONS IN THE NORTHERN TRIBES MADE AMOS’ PROPHECY NECESSARY?

The *Oxford Annotated Bible* prefaces the book of Amos with a useful summary, excerpted here:

During the long and peaceful reign of Jeroboam II (786-746 BC) Israel attained a height of territorial expansion and national prosperity never again reached. The military security and economical affluence which characterized this age were taken by many Israelites as signs of the Lord’s special favor toward them which they felt they deserved because of their extravagant support of the official shrines.

Amos...was called by God...to the difficult mission of preaching harsh words in a smooth season. He denounced Israel, as well as her neighbors, for reliance upon

military might, and for grave injustice in social dealings, abhorrent immorality, and shallow, meaningless piety.

This description highlights the main problems in the Northern Tribes:

1. They were experiencing a “smooth season”—things were going well for everyone, and people felt a comfortable spiritual laziness.
2. They gloried in their territorial growth and wealth.
3. They thought they were a favored people, that life owed them this prosperity.
4. Their military security allowed them to trust more in their own power and less in the Lord’s protection.
5. They committed serious injustices in their social interactions with one another.
6. Their behavior was immoral.
7. Their worship became shallow and meaningless.
8. They saw their financial support of the shrines as merit worthy of special status with the Lord.

All of these problems show us why the Lord needed to “roar out of Zion.” The Northern Tribes had failed to pursue eternal values. Instead, they longed for the things that thieves, rust, and moths could take from them. We can also see why many of Israel’s neighbors received warnings in the prophecy of Amos. The Lord wanted Israel to see in others what was so deeply involved in their hearts.

Israel thrilled at hearing the prophecy against others but resented the prophecy when the Divine light exposed their own dark motives. The Oxford summary continues:

Amos’ forceful, uncompromising preaching brought him in conflict with the religious authorities of his day...A priest named Amaziah (complained and accused Amos of treason and) sought to have him expelled...from the royal sanctuary at Bethel and (Amos was) commanded not to prophesy there again....

With this information in mind, let’s begin the study of Amos. Remember to use a notebook. Write out impressions, questions, and insights for your own reflection or to share in the group with whom you are studying.

Chapter One

AMOS 1:1-2

"The words of Amos, who was among the sheep breeders of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake. And he said:

*The Lord roars from Zion,
and utters His voice from Jerusalem;
The pastures of the shepherds mourn,
and the top of Carmel withers."*

Passages From the Writings

Prophets and Psalms (P&P)

- “The Lord concerning the Word and doctrine thence...” (verses 1, 2)

Arcana Coelestia (AC) 3995[3]

- • “For this reason spotted is expressed in the original language by a word that also means lambs (as in Isa xl. 10, 11); and speckled by a word that also means a herdsman (as in 2 Kings iii. 4; Amos i. 1).”

Apocalypse Revealed (AR) 612

- “...therefore by Zion...is meant the church everywhere...It is called Mount Zion because by a mountain is signified love...That by Mount Zion is signified heaven and the church where the Lord alone is worshiped, may appear...” Amos 1:2 is cited along with other references.

Apocalypse Explained (AE) 601[15]

- “In Amos (i.2)...roaring from Zion signifies grievous distress, and the voice from Jerusalem lamentation; the mourning of the habitation of the shepherds, and the drying up of the head of Carmel, signifies because of the vastation of all the goods and truths of the church; the habitation of the shepherds signifying all the goods of the church; the head of Carmel signifies the truths of the church, because in Carmel there were vineyards, and wine signifies the truths of the church.”

AE 601[16]

- "...the roaring like that of a lion...signifies grief and lamentation over the vastation of Divine truth in the church by the falsities of evil."

AE 850[15]

- "In Amos...(i.2) to roar and the roaring of a lion, when predicated of Jehovah, signify an ardent zeal for protecting heaven and the church, and for saving those who are therein by the Divine truth and its power, which is done by destroying the evils and falsities that rise up out of hell..."

Derived Doctrine

Tekoa

- We are not given the correspondence of this town. We do know that it lay 6 miles south of Bethlehem. Bethlehem represents "the Word in its spiritual sense; the Lord willed to be born there because He is the Word." (*AE 700[9]*)
- • The word Bethlehem means "house (place) of bread" or food. Might Tekoa's southerly distance from Bethlehem represent the way that the children of Israel, in their minds, were moving away from relying on the Word as the house of bread?
- "South represents intelligence, which is acquired by knowledges of spiritual and celestial truths." (*AC 1458*) Is this geographic representation there to remind us that the Lord is going to return the church to intelligence about spiritual and celestial truths?

The Lord's Concerns

- "Israel in the days of Uzziah, one of the good kings of Judah...signifies the Lord's royalty, or some aspect of His kingdom." (*AC 1409[4]*) "Royalty of the Lord signifies heaven and the church." (*AR 664*) These quotations indicate the range of the Lord's concern for His heavenly kingdom and the church. He is concerned about everyone in His kingdom, not just the ancient Israelites.

The Reigns of Joash and Jeroboam

- Jeroboam the son of Joash: The Writings do not provide the specific significations of these two kings. However, when we look at the history of their reigns, we can see a spiritual decline from moderate "piety" and acknowledgment of the Lord by Joash to brazen disorder under Jeroboam's leadership. During their reigns, the quality of worship declined: worship of "strange gods" and use of temple prostitutes were permitted in the temple. Spiritually wise and prudent kings and priests would never have allowed

- these practices to enter the temple of the Lord. The kings and priest became “people pleasers” instead of pursuing spiritual wisdom. The consequent co-mingling of holy and unholy things was abhorrent to the Lord and a degradation of all that gave Israel its distinctiveness and representation.
- Although the people looked and acted happy with their lives during this time, the Lord saw within their hearts the seed of spiritual death, and He needed to expose its deadliness.

The Earthquake

- The end of the church (or its perversion) is described in the Word by concussions, overturning, and sinking of the earth. Consequently, earthquakes signify changes of the state of the church. (AR 33, 711.)

Two Years

- In the internal sense, a “year” does not refer to a year of time. “...angels, who are in the internal sense of the Word, cannot have an idea of any year...therefore instead of a year they have an idea of what is full in respect to states of the church, and what is eternal in respect to states of heaven...” (AC 2906[10]) Our verse sets its time as “two years before the earthquake.” Why? When the Word refers to “two” of anything, it is often a reference to the will and the understanding. Considering the meaning of an earthquake (see above), could “two years” represent the state of the will and understanding in the process of being falsified or emptied out?

Putting It All Together

1. Amos represents the Lord. The Lord is our Shepherd, and He is most concerned with His flock. We learn from the Writings that our knowledge of the Word is “speckled” with falsity. When we allow that speckled quality to grow out of control instead of shunning it as sin, falsification of the Word enters our hearts and minds.
2. The roaring of the Lord from Zion and the uttering of His voice from Jerusalem teach us several things about Him in this context:
 - He has grievous distress for His church and people.
 - He laments.
 - He mourns.
 - He has an ardent zeal for protecting heaven and the church.
 - He warns of coming vastations.
 - He points to the drying up of our “Mount Carmel” and the effects this will have on our “vineyards.” (AE 601[15])

3. The book of Amos is not about anger, revenge, and a loss of the Lord's patience. Instead, it is a love story, a story of the Lord's great love and concern for both heaven and earth. This is a book of promise: The Lord will triumph over hell's quest to dominate us and destroy the gift of salvation. This victory is not an occasional interest of the Lord's; He has an "ardent zeal" to protect us and the angelic heavens. The book of Amos also talks about the coming of the New Church.

Read and Review

Please go back and read Amos 1:1-2.

Next, review the passages from the Writings, beginning with what we read from *P&P*: "The Lord concerning the Word and doctrine..."

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. What parts of this opening prophecy do you think set the tone for all that will follow?
2. Look back at "Putting it all Together." Can you see ways to apply these ideas to our church and lives?
3. Is there a specific challenge to our church in what you learned in this section? What makes it simple or difficult to apply this information to the New Church?
4. Can we compare our outlook and experiences with those of the children of Israel at that time? Have we, like Israel, become overly content or comfortable with the way things are in matters of life? Why or why not?
5. Do we, like Joash and Jeroboam, close our eyes to co-mingling ideas of idolatry and unfaithfulness (in all forms)? Is this something that happens to groups, or only to individuals?
6. In what ways can we think about listening attentively to the "roaring of the Lord from Zion?"
7. Do we hear the "roar of the Lord" as care, concern and an ardent desire to save and protect His people? What might keep us from hearing it this way? How can we change our hearing?
8. The book of Amos is a love story: will we hold this idea throughout the 9 chapters? It will be a theme we need to revisit often. Think about ways to hold this idea in your mind as you continue your study of Amos.

AMOS 1:3-5

"Thus says the Lord:

*For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four,
I will not turn away its punishment,*

*Because they have threshed Gilead with implements of iron.
But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael,
Which shall devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad.
I will also break the gate bar of Damascus,
And cut off the inhabitant from the valley of Aven,
And the one who holds the scepter from Beth Eden.
The people of Syria shall go captive to Kir,
Says the Lord.”*

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- “...concerning those who pervert the knowledges from the Word which serve for doctrine, who thus turn aside also the good of these knowledges; that they shall perish, vers. 3-5.”

AE 532[12]

- “The third and fourth generation signifies all who are in falsities from evil... three in the contrary sense signifying falsities, and four evils.... Like things are signified by three and four transgressions in Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, & 2:1, 4, 6.”

AC 9496

- “As the staves by which the ark was carried signified power, so also did the staves or bars by which they fastened the gates of cities, as is evident from...Amos 1:5.”

Derived Doctrine

Damascus

- Damascus, the capital of Syria, is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities of the world. Damascus was once a city where the “...remains of worship as practiced in the ancient church (existed) and from whence came Eber or the Hebrew nation.” (AC 1769)
- Sadly, Damascus degenerated from a city of strength for the people of the ancient church to a place of perversion and became a chronic enemy of Israel. The Writings remind us of what the Lord said about the enemies of the household: the members of a household can represent “...the affection of falsity opposed to good; and...in [a] man who is in temptation [his] evils and falsities are within or are his, [so] they are said to be of his household....” (AC 4843[4])

Transgressions

- “In the Word, evils are now called ‘sins,’ now ‘iniquities,’ and now ‘transgressions’... Those called ‘transgressions’ which take place contrary to the truths of faith...” (AC 6563)

Gilead

- They threshed Gilead with the implements of iron.
- Gilead has a series of representations:
 - "...the first good, that of the bodily senses and their pleasures." (AC 4117[3])
 - "A state of good in remote conjunction" (AC 4129)
 - "...the sensuous good by which a man is first initiated when being regenerated." (AC 4255[4])
 - "...the good of the church, which is charity, and the good and truth of faith." (AE 328[17])
 - "...reasoning from the literal sense of the Word in confirmation of falsities." (AE 654[44])
- Gilead represents that first state of enthusiasm in people for the things of the church, a time when they give some thought to ways of using or applying the truths. In this state, people believe that they know all that is necessary, but they may easily be misled because they are not yet able to distinguish between friendship and charity; shunning evils as sins and the as-of-self; zeal and anger; and other important distinctions that spiritual maturity would teach them. All of this leaves “Gilead” vulnerable to the “threshing” of Damascus.

Implements of Iron

- The “implements of iron” refer historically to a barbaric Syrian custom of using machines with sharp, iron blades to thresh the bodies of their enemies following a battle. It mattered little to them whether their helpless victims were dead or alive during the threshing.
- “Iron signifies truth in ultimates, which is called sensual truth; which, when it is separated from the rational and spiritual truth, is converted into a falsehood.” (AR 847)

Fire Sent into the House of Hazael

- Hazael became a ruler of Damascus through a strange series of events. Ben-Hadad was stricken with an illness. He sent Hazael to Elisha to ask what the outcome of his illness might be. Elisha, seeking ways to bring haughty, irreligious Israel to its knees, secretly anointed Hazael king. Hazael returned

- and murdered Ben-Hadad, embarking on a long reign of terror and invasions within the divided tribes of Israel and Judah.
- Fire represents some kind of love. It is either a good love or a destructive self-love.

Devouring the Palaces of King Ben-Hadad

- Note this quote from AC 9434. “The Lord appears to the evil as a ‘devouring or consuming fire’...” A king denotes ruling truths. Fire in the palace, in an evil sense represents “the punishment of the profanation of what is sacred and holy.” (AR 748) “Palace (Amos iv. 3) signifies the Word, consequently, the truth of doctrine which is from good.” (AC 4926)

Breaking the Gate Bar of Damascus

- A gate signifies the passage to the rational mind. (AC 2943)
- A gate of a city signifies doctrine by which there is an entrance into the church. (AC 2943)
- A gate signifies introductory knowledges of what is good and true, out of the literal sense of the Word. (AR 899, 901, 904)
- Could the breaking of the gate of Damascus represent the Lord’s exposing, opening (unlocking), or defeat of the false principles within the rational mind?

Aven

- Aven represents “...the things of falsity and the reasonings therefrom of those in worship, which, regarded in itself, is interior idolatry, or extreme self-love.” (AC 273)
- The valley of Aven: “A valley is lower than mountains; so it signifies what is lower or external in worship...it signifies falsities and reasonings which falsify worship, and at length profane it.” (AC 1292)

The One who Holds the Scepter from Beth Eden

- “...scepter signifies divine truth as to government....” (AE 431)
- “Beth” means “house.”
- “Eden” means “love.” The two words together mean “a house of love.” What kind of “house of love” is being cut off?

The People of Syria shall go Captive to Kir

- What help do we get from correspondences?
- Syria signifies the church as to knowledges of truth and good. (AE 195)

- Kir "...denotes those who possess the knowledges of good and truth, but pervert them." (AC 9340)
- Combining the meanings of these two verses can give us a hint that the Lord is going to remove the perversion of good and truth. This verse describes the captivity of those who pervert the truth, and the previous verse shows the Lord removing the "scepter" from the house of self love, a place where perversion of good and truth would take place.

Putting It All Together

1. As you read the first and second chapters of Amos, you will notice how many times the "three transgressions...and four..." occur. That phrase is in Amos 1:3, 6, 9, and 11, and Amos 2:1, 4, and 6. It occurs seven times. Please consider why the Lord would repeat this phrase to six nations around Israel. The final "three transgressions...and four" is spoken to Israel. Why seven times? Why does it end with Israel?
2. Damascus in a sense reminds us of our connection with innocent remains. Gilead represents a sense of discovery, a time when we feel alive with the beauty of the senses. We love to touch or feel things to know them. How often do we want to take "things" in our hands, or smell the wonders of the world? The use of the five senses opens our mental world. These gifts at the beginning are filled with innocence. From remains, we have a kind of "mediate conjunction" with the Lord. Idealism abounds and being good is a way of getting approval and recognition.
But at what point does the good beginning become the enemy of the household within? When do the sensuous, bodily pleasures become the "instruments of iron" that thresh our Gilead states? Probably, it happens when we learn to cover up our evil intentions with what appears reasonable and right, or when we put an emphasis on being right for the wrong reasons.
3. Damascus, in its prime, had a full amount of truth, but it perverted that into falsity. We are taught that the "three transgressions...and...four" represent turning truth to falsity, and "four" represents turning the natural and spiritual understanding and will into evil. The literal sense gives the impression that it is the Lord who will not turn away punishment, but it is really unrepentant self-love that brings on the punishment and misery.
4. This truth is drawn from the correspondences of the fire in the house of Hazael, the devouring of the palaces, the gate bar of Damascus, the valley of Aven, the scepter of Beth Eden, and the people being carried off to Kir. Every one of these references deals with the results of perverting the Word.
5. Appearances mislead the rational mind. The sensual seems so much more alive and adaptable to human needs. In this way, what was so promising and vital at first becomes the enslaver. Appearances turn the mind, which could have drawn doctrine from the Word for good, to rationalizations, lies, and cover-ups, and the wayward proprium becomes the "implement of iron."

Read and Review

Read Amos 1:3-5.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Can you think of some current perversions of the Word in the world around you? Are there times when we attempt to change or correct things of the church and doctrine for personal convenience? When this occurs, do we do so with a thorough study of the Word, or are we influenced by "modern" consensus?
2. Can we identify with the "Gilead" state of misguided sensual enthusiasm turning us away from the Lord? When does this happen? What can we do to turn ourselves back to Him?
3. Are there things which you do that you know are wrong, but you seem unable to over throw them? Do you feel carried off to captivity?
4. Can you believe and find solace in the Lord's promise to break the "gate bar" so that the rational mind can find freedom again? How can you see this working in your life, or in the life of a church?
5. How do you understand the fire entering in and devouring the palaces? Can you think of any examples of the things this represents?
6. Is it of any spiritual significance that Damascus is known to be the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world? Do we hear "remains" in this teaching?

AMOS 1:6-8

"Thus says the Lord:

*For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four,
I will not turn away its punishment,
Because they took captive the whole of captivity
To deliver them up to Edom.
But I will send in a fire upon the wall of Gaza,
Which shall devour its palaces.
I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod,
And the one who holds the scepter from Ashkelon;
I will turn my hand against Ekron,
And the remnant of the Philistines shall perish,
Says the Lord God."*

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- “Concerning those who apply the Word to a heretical falsity, that they shall perish, vers. 6-8.”

AE 532[12]

- Remember that this passage teaches that the phrase “for three transgressions...and for four...” refers to falsities and evils interfering with the natural and spiritual understanding and will.

AC 1197

- The Philistines were part of the Ancient Church. In *AC 1197*, we are given a broad sweep of the Philistines’ history with a glimpse of their sad, perplexing heresy and its effect on Israel: “...they (the Philistines) sold the sons of Judah and the sons of Jerusalem signifies that they had no love and no faith...which was removed far from their borders.” Heresy removes love and faith far from their borders. Amos 1:8 is cited in *AC 1197*.

Derived Doctrine

Gaza

- “That by Gaza are signified the things that have been revealed concerning charity....” (*AC 1207* and *AC 1210*)

Captivity

- “Captive signifies being seduced, and so led away from truths and goods.” (*AR 591*)
- Question: could the phrase “they took captive the whole captivity” represent a complete seduction of truths and goods?

To be Delivered up to Edom

- Edom, in the good sense, signifies the Lord’s human essence; also, strength, power, or good of the natural principle. In the opposite sense, “the natural man originating in self-love, which despises and rejects all truth, whence comes the devastation...” (*AC 3322[8]*).

Fire upon the Walls of Gaza and the Devouring of its Palaces

- Gaza signifies “things revealed concerning charity.” (AC 1207) We can see that if the heart of charity is seduced and self-love rules, there will be a fire of destruction from within that will wreck or destroy the walls of our defense. Self-love defends no one. It is a choice of the heart that takes for itself and gives nothing back. Charity that has been “burnt out” destroys or devours one’s palaces.

Cutting off the Inhabitant from Ashdod

- Ashdod was the site where the Philistines kept Dagon, their god. “Their religious principle was...represented by their idol called Dagon...[who] according to their description, was formed like a man from the head to the navel, and like a fish from the navel downwards; its being like a man...represented the understanding derived from truths; and like a fish...represented the natural destitute of the good of love....” (AE 817[10])

Ashkelon

- Ashkelon was one of the five cities of the Philistines and the only one on the seacoast. Ashkelon bragged that Joshua or David could not take its city. The Lord said in these verses that its scepter (divine truth that governs) would be cut off.

Ekron

- When the Philistines captured the ark of the covenant, they carried it to Ekron. While that city had the ark, they experienced painful physical problems that caused them to get rid of the ark as fast as they could. The city of Ekron and the Philistine god Dagon represent “the god of all falsities.” (AE 740[10])
- The god of all falsities could not stand or prevail against the Lord. Isn’t that a powerful truth?

Ahaziah

- Ahaziah, a son of Ahab and king of Israel (circa 850-849), became ill. Rather than calling on the God of Israel for help with his illness, he preferred to go to Ekron so that he could consult Beelzebul. In AE 740[10], Beelzebul is called the “...god of flies...the falsities of the sensual man...thus falsities of every kind.”

Heresies

- Heresies are ever attendant upon the true church, and the ground of heresies is fixation upon some particular article of faith. (AC 362-363.) In AC 10402, we read that heresies arise from "...the literal sense of the Word being separated from its internal sense."

The Remnant of the Philistines shall perish

- The Lord's truth will defeat all heresy even when that heresy prides itself on its seductive power.

Putting It All Together

1. These verses tell us about the workings of heresy. Heresies are ever attendant upon the true church. What a necessary teaching for us to consider. We of the New Church need our watchmen upon the walls of the Holy City New Jerusalem to be alert. They need to warn us of the approach of heresy. Heresy is seductive. It is self-love creating and justifying what it wills. Perhaps it comes to us as a "popular" article of faith, but if it has been drawn out and separated from the internal sense, it is a heresy. Noticing the defense of that heresy is crucial. Heresies are defensive. They are sensitive. They perceive anyone as their enemy who speaks against them and will pursue such an enemy with a fervor that imitates religious zeal. The Writings tell us that heretical zeal is really anger directed against the Lord.
2. The god Dagon refers to an understanding that appears human but is actually a natural idea that is destitute of the good of love (charity).
3. The god of flies (those things that thrive on decaying and foul sources) is a god some seek out instead of the One and only God of Heaven and earth. Why would anyone choose decay over what is wholesome? Why would anyone choose darkness over light? Insanity is the only possible explanation for the creation of a god that was half man and half fish.
This portion of the prophecy tells us that the Lord will remove the scepter from the hand of him who brags about his power to resist Joshua and David. The Lord will remove and defeat heresy because it is devoid and destitute of true charity.

Read and Review

Read Amos 1:6-8.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

Questions to Stimulation Reflection

1. What kind of safeguard do we have that will help us find and expose heresy?
2. If we find a beginning or well-entrenched heresy within ourselves, how can we remove its roots from our love?
3. Heresies are ever intent upon destroying the Lord's church. Do you see this as a truism, or a problem that needs our careful and thoughtful attention? The enemies in certain parables did their harm while people slept. Falling asleep mentally is a lifetime nemesis, and we need the Word to wake us up. Do we seek to be roused, or do we find it bothersome?
4. What forms of the god Dagon or Beelzebub exist today? The god Dagon represents the understanding derived from human truths and Beelzebub the natural destitute of the good of love.
5. Why do so many surrounding nations of Israel represent former remnants of the Ancient Church? Why do they provide so much trouble for "their relatives"?

AMOS 1:9-10

"Thus says the Lord:

*For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four,
I will not turn away its punishment,
Because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom,
And did not remember the covenant of brotherhood.
But I will send fire upon the wall of Tyre,
Which shall devour its palaces."*

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...concerning those who pervert the knowledges of good and truth, and thereby do violence to the external sense of the Word, vers. 9, 10."

AC 367

- "...both faith and charity are the offspring of the church. Faith is called a man...and charity is called a brother...the union of faith and charity is called the covenant of the brethren." (Amos 1:9)

Derived Doctrine

Tyre (in a positive sense)

- "...signifies those who possess spiritual and celestial riches." (AC 425[2])
- "...represents those who possess the knowledges of things celestial and spiritual." (AC 1154)
- "...interior knowledges..." (AC 1201)
- Since the Lord is speaking to Tyre in a corrective manner in these verses in Amos, we must assume that all of the above have an opposite representation.

Edom

- In the good sense, Edom represents the Lord's human essence (love); also, the strength, power, or good of the natural principle. "In the opposite sense, the natural man originating in self love, which despises and rejects all truth, whence comes the devastation..." (AC 3322)
- AE 746[19] teaches that the universal heaven is in the good of charity toward the neighbor. The universal hell is in anger, enmity, and hatred against the neighbor. We need the covenant of brotherhood to keep our worship and study of the Word in a conjunctive state with the Lord's Divine Human.

Delivering up the Whole Captivity to Edom

- When hatred, enmity, and revenge possess the mind, one can use the literal sense of the Word to justify almost anything wanted. A person in this state can make slavery, stealing, lying, incest, and many other disjunctive concepts appear to be sanctioned by the literal sense. Such an approach will deliver up the captives to Edom.

Fire upon the Wall of Tyre and the Palaces Devoured

- "He who loves himself, hates all who do not render him service...." (AC 760[2])
- "They who are so delighted with hatreds...are not content with destroying the body, but also wish to destroy the soul." (AC 815)
- Palaces represent the understanding in which truths are in a beautiful form. Truth is not able to remain beautiful when it is twisted and abused in the literal sense by self-love.

Putting It All Together

1. The integrity of the literal sense has to be protected. It would appear that we have public pressure for scholars to make newer translations of the Word more readable. To do this, some translators who are not familiar with the

spiritual sense have focused on using simplistic words to the exclusion of important series of words. If they substitute simpler words without a full study of the original texts, what harm or damage is done to the Word? How much simplifying of the Word can be done without altering the internal sense? Some, little, or much?

2. Are new translations of the Word easier for you to read? Do you find your remains fight to hold on to the King James translation, or whatever translation you read as a child? What do you like or dislike about different translations? Are there changes you find upsetting or refreshing? The Word needs to remain as close to the original Hebrew as possible in a translation. How do we get help guarding the literal sense of the Word? What might a New Church translator be able to offer this effort?
3. Those who delight in hatred are not content with destroying the body, but also wish to destroy the soul. The hells will use every possible excuse to discredit the literal sense of the Word and the teachings of the Writings. They hope to work toward the destruction of the soul of Divine Revelation.

Read and Review

Read Amos 1:9-10.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. How many disorders in the world do you think can be made to look “reasonable” with quotations inappropriately drawn from the literal sense? Have you ever heard this happen? What was the result?
2. Since many of us are not “translators,” how do we protect our minds from being carried off as captives with errors of doctrine that may result from inaccurate translations? Does the Lord protect those who follow the persuasive leaders of the church so that their palaces are not devoured?
3. What other avenues of thought can we follow using these passages?
4. The Lord has written the Word in such a way that it promises to reach the states of all people. Do we give up too easily and expect the Word to give us all the answers without our having to work for insights? If the Word was so plain that it left no doubt about its meaning, who could stand if the Lord’s teachings were willfully disobeyed?
5. This section seems to tell us that we need to develop an attitude that says, “I may not understand this passage now, but I will prayerfully ask for the Lord’s help so that when it is time for me to see and understand, I will be ready to be led by the Lord’s Word.”
6. Faith is called a “man,” and charity is called a “brother.” Together, they are the offspring of the church. How strong and healthy would you say the church’s “offspring” are today? How do we benefit from that strength? What can we do to support and increase it?

AMOS 1:11-12

"Thus says the Lord:

*For three transgressions of Edom, and for four,
I will not turn away its punishment,
Because he pursued his brother with the sword,
And cast off all pity;
His anger tore perpetually,
And he kept his wrath forever.
But I will send a fire upon Teman,
Which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah."*

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...concerning those who pervert the literal sense of the Word through falsity, whereby doctrine perishes, vers. 11, 12."

AC 4171[3]

- "Edom did pursue his brother with a sword....his anger did tear perpetually...." (Amos 1:11) "...if a person who has lived in a life of good suffers himself to be so persuaded, and then becomes careless regarding life, and even treats it with contempt, he is said to be torn; for torn is predicated of good into which falsity is insinuated, and thereby the good becomes no longer living."

Derived Doctrine

Edom

- This is the third time in this chapter that we have had the mention of Edom: (1) Gaza delivered up to Edom captives - the whole captivity, which represents the enslavement of Charity; (2) Tyre delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, which represents the enslavement of knowledges, celestial and spiritual; and (3) now, Edom is pursuing his brother with a sword, casting off pity, and showing perpetual anger, a wrath forever.
- Who is the brother? Remember Edom's lineage goes back to Esau. Is the brother mentioned in the lineage of Jacob's seed?
- "Brother delivering up brother to death, signifies that the false shall destroy good; specifically, that faith shall alone destroy charity." (AE 315)

Sword

- In the Word, a “sword” signifies (a) the truth of faith combating; (b) the vastation of truth; (c) in an opposite sense, the false combating; and (d) the punishment of the false. (AC 2799)
- “Mention is very often made in the Word of ‘sword’...by them nothing else is signified but truth fighting against falsities and destroying them....the dispersion of falsities by the Word from the Lord....” (AR 52)

Pity or Compassion

- Pity or compassion “...signifies the inflow of charity from the Lord.” (AC 6737)
- It also signifies “...the influx of the Lord into those who are ignorant of truths and yet desire them.” (AC 9182[7])

Anger

- Anger represents “...a departure from charity.” (AC 1010)

Wrath

- Wrath represents “...a turning away from truth which was confirmed.” (AC 6359)
- It also refers to “...the fury of lusts, and their endeavor to inflict violence.” (AC 8284)

Teman

- Teman “...signifies the Lord’s Divine Human as to celestial love.” (AC 2714)
- “...the change in the church brought about by the evils and falsities from which they perished.” (AE 400[10])

Bozrah

- Bozrah has respect to the divine truth, and Edom, to the divine good of the Word.” (AE 922)

Putting It All Together

1. Self-love, out of order, can enslave charity. And self-love wants to enslave the knowledge of good and truth. What can you expect from self-love but that it will “tear” at all that is from the Lord? Self-love will pursue the Word so as to reject it, despise it, and hate it. Hell maintains anger and wrath toward anything (brother) that seeks to remove it or oppose its values.

2. Hell seeks to persuade whomever it can to become careless in regard to life. If we treat life with contempt, it will tear the spiritual fabric and vitality of life. Inappropriate anger will eat away at the charity that is needed to love the Lord and neighbor.
3. The Lord is willing to show pity and patience to those who are in ignorance. But Hell attempts to tell us that the Lord is angry with us and that we are beyond help from the Word of the Lord. What passages from the literal sense would they use to back up this argument? What passages could we use to refute this argument?
4. We need to take on the challenge to “think clearly” regarding the Lord. The Writings put it this way: “Of how great importance it is to have a just idea of God may appear from the consideration, that the idea of God forms the inmost of thought with all who have any religion.” (Divine Love and Wisdom [DLW] 13) So, our doctrinal knowledge must grow and improve with our changing states. We need to comfort ourselves with the solid belief that the Lord loves us and will never leave us. His arms are not too short, and He never sleeps. Such a faith stands us in good stead when hell tries to inject its poisonous lies. The Writings assure us that the Lord anticipates the tricks and motives of hell and gives us the strength to resist and win. The sword of the Lord will win the battle for us.

Read and Review

Read Amos 1:11-12.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Inappropriate, or unhealthy, anger and wrath will attempt to tear things apart. Have you experienced this? There must be a period in all of our lives when hell has pulled some passage up from the literal sense and mocked it, and without checking things, we carelessly accepted hell’s criticism. Think of a time when this happened to you. How did you fight back so as to overcome this spiritual tearing? Are some past or present “torn” issues still bothersome?
2. What helps you remain positive about the things of faith and charity? When Hell tries to tell us how worthless or pitiful we are, how do we turn that message off?
3. Tiredness, frustration, worry, or obsession over something in our lives can cause us to err in our thinking. When we are vulnerable, hell urges us to quit trying. Hell wants falsity to reign. If falsity is given any credence, it will try to pervert the Word. Hell wants doctrine to perish. Why do you think this is true?
4. The Lord urges us to be strong and courageous. The Word teaches us, “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the

strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1) How can we use this verse to its fullest potential?

AMOS 1:13-15

"Thus says the Lord:

*For three transgressions of the people of Ammon, and for four,
I will not turn away its punishment,
Because they ripped open the women with child in Gilead,
That they might enlarge their territory.
But I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah,
And it shall devour its palaces,
Amid shouting in the day of battle,
And a tempest in the day of the whirlwind.
Their king shall go into captivity,
He and his princes together.
Says the Lord."*

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "Concerning those who falsify the truths of the literal sense of the Word, that in the day of combat they do not resist, but corrupt the truth of doctrine, vers.13-15."

Derived Doctrine

Ammon

- Ammon represents "...those who falsify truths and live evil lives." (AC 6405)
- It also means the "...profanation of the celestial and spiritual things of faith." (AC 576[2])

Ripping Open the Women with Child in Gilead.

- That striking a pregnant woman a blow "...signifies the injuring of the good which is from truth, is evident from the signification of to strike, as being to injure; and from the signification of a pregnant woman, as being the formation of good from truth...because the regeneration of man, which is the generation of the spiritual life in him, is meant in the internal sense of the Word by the generation of his natural life which is from his parents. For

- when a man is born anew, he is then first conceived, afterward carried as in the womb, and finally born." (AC 9042)
- As we learned earlier, Gilead signifies "...the first good, that of the bodily senses and their pleasures." (AC 4117[3])
 - Gilead also represents "The good of the church, which is charity, and the good and truth of faith." (AE 328)
 - "...the woman with child (are) those who receive truths, and she who is bringing forth those who do them." (AE 721[10])

That They Might Enlarge Their Territory

- I found only one reference to the word "territory" in the Concordance and almost didn't use it because it was in the Spiritual Diary. However, it may be a good reference for our study. See what you think.
- "It has been shown how it befell those from the Christian world. The leaders, who endeavored to destroy the kingdom of the Lord and heaven, were principally of those who were in faith alone....at length, all such...were cast down and dispersed....[they] delight in the sufferings of others, and devised unheard of contrivances for torturing others, by inflicting pain on body and mind, and holding the thought continually upon the pain, and sending those who also infused desperation: likewise, those who inflicted weariness of life and the continual desire of liberation from the pain...which two [classes] inflict such suffering and torture as cannot be described....[they were] outside their own territory. For these were in the disposition of ruling and leading others, but did not attend to their own affairs." (SD 5758[2]; 5759; 5759[1&2])
- Those who oppose the Lord and His kingdom want to enlarge the scope of their control [territory]. Hell delights in planning the theft of the kingdom the Lord wants to give freely to His children.

Kindling a Fire in the Wall of Rabbah

- Historically, Rabbah was the capital city of the Ammonites. When the Ammonite kingdom ended, Rabbah was destroyed and was not rebuilt until 259 BC, when it was renamed Philadelphia.
- Rabbah "signifies affections of truth in the natural man." (AE 435[7])
- Rabbath of the Ammonites "...signifies the falsifications of truth." (AE 163[8])

Wall

- A wall "signifies truth in the ultimates." (AR 132)
- In a quotation explaining the walls of the Holy City New Jerusalem, we are taught that "by its walls nothing else is meant but the Word in the literal sense, from which doctrine is derived, for that sense defends the spiritual

- sense, which lies concealed within it, just as a wall defends a city and its inhabitants...." (AR 898)
- The fire in the wall...shows the destructive quality of self-love and how it removes a protective quality from the inhabitants of the city.

The Devouring of the Palaces

- The beautiful structure of the understanding is likened to a palace when the mind takes the truths of the Word and applies them to life. Self-love causes the structure of the palace to fall into disrepair, leaving what was once regal and beautiful in shambles.

Amid Shouting in the Day of Battle

- To shout or to cry "...is said of every affection that breaks out from the heart..." (AR 885)
- "As a cry also is an act, which corresponds to a living confession or acknowledgment from faith....when confession and acknowledgment from faith are treated of." (AC 5323)
- Crying in a good sense has respect to truths, but in a bad sense to falsity. (AC 2240, 2243)
- The "day of the battle" refers to a state when people believe themselves to be "...attacking from the understanding of truth from the Word..." The negative sense of "battle" refers to falsities fighting the truth of the New Church." (AR 431, 704)

Whirlwind

- In two references, the Writings comment on the meaning of a "whirlwind," strong winds and tempests springing up. "It has at different times been granted me to perceive these tempests and also the east wind by which the evil were dispersed and cast into the hells...." (AE 419[22])

Their King and Princes Going into Captivity

- "A king denotes truth itself, and prince a principal truth." (AR 548)

Putting It All Together

From the very beginning of these passages, we are given a clear picture of what state this is speaking to: "Those who falsify the truths of the literal sense of the Word, that in the day of combat they do not resist, but corrupt the truth of doctrine..." (P&P)

In Psalms 78:9, we read, "The children of Ephraim being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle." Instead of fighting with honor, they turned and fled. Notice once again the problem of Ephraim. They were "armed," but their weapons never got used in the battle. Loyalty, fidelity, courage, and dedication to the Lord and His Word were present in potential, but they were not used. As a result, the falsifiers were victorious, and they rip the potential of spiritual birth from the fledgling religious idea planted in the mind.

Tired, impatient feelings give the hells the foothold they want so they may advance their cause and spoil the land that could and should be preserved for the Lord. We need to see and hear the prophecy of Amos so that we will not turn in the day of battle. We need to be armed with the bow and aim our arrows at the center of falsity so that truth can be victorious and keep its place of great esteem.

A new day, a new tempest of an east wind can blow away the stagnant air of hell. East is representative of the Lord Himself and His love. An "east wind...in a genuine sense, denotes love to the Lord, and love towards the neighbor..." (AC 5215)

Our battle cry? "The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." (Judges 7:24)

With the daily reporting of news, we are exposed to a wide scope of tragic and frightful events. Each grievous, uncharitable act seems to outdo the prior. Gradually, we can become so jaded that nothing shocks us anymore. The result is that we accept these things as normal events in the lives of people. Perhaps we need to review a teaching in AC 1740[2]: "The more horror there is contracted for evils and falsities, the more love there is insinuated by the Lord for goods and truths: also, the more horror there is of evils and falsities, the less dare evil Spirits approach, because they cannot endure aversion and horror for the evils and falsities in which their life consists; sometimes they are seized with terror at the first approach of it."

Read and Review

Read Amos 1:13-15.
Read the summary from *P&P*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Can you feel any sympathy with those who have little care or concern about the literal sense of the Word? Does a mental warning go off when you hear someone ignore a teaching by saying, "This was an issue back then, but it is not appropriate or applicable for our times."?
2. How can we stay sharp with our warfare against the lethargy of spiritual cowardliness?
3. Hell waits for us to become bored, tired, and impatient with life. Then the evil spirits infuse weariness with suffering and despair that cannot be

described. This is not just a morbid idea. Millions of dollars are spent each year for medications to help people cope. Without judging individual cases, it is clear that we fight mental and physical suffering and despair every day. We have powerful examples of how fragile our minds are in the presence of troubles. We need the Lord's help to comfort our hearts and mind. What insights can be brought to this issue in our discussion time?

4. What about that teaching about having a horror for evil? Do you believe this teaching, or is it ivory tower fluff?
5. We are not finished yet with the pronouncements against Israel's neighbors. Have you looked at a map yet to see where they once lived? Might the fact that Amos addresses them from north to south be significant? In what way?
6. How do you choose which issues to fight for and which issues to let slide by for the time being? We certainly don't like appearing negative and angry. Those who seem overly concerned with issues are told to "lighten up" or "get a life." People tell us to "relax" and not let things bother us. What do these words of admonition do to, and for, our willingness to stand up for the right?

Chapter Two

AMOS 2:1-3

"Thus says the Lord:

*For three transgressions of Moab, and for four,
I will not turn away its punishment,
Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime.
But I will send in a fire upon Moab,
And it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth;
Moab shall die with tumult,
With shouting and trumpet sound.
And I will cut off the judge from its midst,
And slay all its princes with him,
Says the Lord."*

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- “Concerning those who adulterate the good of the literal sense of the Word, that they corrupt the good and truth of the church, vers. 1-3....”

AE 315[10]

- “In Amos...(ii.3) Moab in the Word, means those who adulterate the goods of the church; the judge who will be cut off and the princes who will be slain, signify the good which is adulterated, and the truths which are thereby falsified, judge meaning good, and prince truth.”

AE 532[12]

- “...the third and fourth generation does not mean the third and fourth generation, but that which these numbers signify. Like things are signified by three and four transgressions in Amos (i. 3,6,9,11,13, ii. 1, 4, 6). From this it can be seen how great arcana lay hidden in the Word merely in numbers, which no one can know without the internal spiritual sense.”

Derived Doctrine

Moab Burned the Bones

- "...[burnings] are predicated of evil lusts, especially of those which are derived from self-love." (AC 1297)
- Burning "...signifies damnation and punishment of evils arising from earthly and corporeal loves." (AE 1173)
- Burning "...signifies injury or extinction of the good of love." (AC 9055)
- The nearest I could come to "burning bones" was this quotation about "boiling bones." In AC 3812[8], we read that harming bones "...signifies violence offered to truths."
- Also, there is a reference to spreading out the bones of kings as "...signifying infernal things that control in idolatrous worshipers." (AC 2441[9])
- Bones correspond to external truths, the natural, corporeal truths as facts in fixed forms on which all higher truths may rest for support. If these external or natural facts fail to exist, spiritual facts will have no basis on which to rest or grow.

The King of Edom

- "Edom and Moab, in many passages are named together, because they signify those who are principled in good; but the difference is, that Edom denotes the good of the natural principle, to which are adjoined the doctrinals of truth; whereas Moab denotes natural good, such as has place with those, with whom such doctrinals are not conjoined. The former and the latter appear alike in their external form, but not in their internal." (AC 3322) Once again, we have to note that Edom and Moab in this lesson are not representative of good but of evil.

Lime

- Lime represents those who are studious in exploring justification by faith. Faith, to them, is the all of religion, and religion is nothing else but faith. In the spiritual world, these people live in huts constructed of reeds and rushes "plastered over with lime..." (AR 442)
- Those who indulge in the lusts of the flesh and those who satisfy the desires of the spirit are compared to: beasts and angels; shriveled grapes and dried grapes (wild grapes), and juicy and delicious grapes; and "...limestone and silver...." (True Christian Religion [TCR] 328)
- AE 391[14] likens the destruction of the church to the stones of an altar falling down and being scattered because the chalk (lime) is not capable of holding the truths together. Therefore, lime signifies "...falsities which do not cohere."

Sending Fire upon Moab

- Please note that there is no mention of “fire on the walls of Moab” as in the previous pronouncements. This fire comes upon Moab itself. Is it because Moab represents natural good with which doctrinal things are not conjoined?

Kerioth

- Is this city also known as Ar? Many scholars think so, and they believe this is the city Amos was referring to in Amos 2:2. The Writings have no reference to Kerioth, but they do mention Ar. The city of Ar, as it is mentioned in Numbers 21:15 and Deuteronomy 2:18, “...signifies those who are in general natural good.” (AC 2468[4]) “Ar (Isa.15:1) signifies the doctrine of those in truths from the natural man.” (AE 652[21])

Moab Dying with Tumult

- Tumult “...signifies the dismay of those in the church when visited by a Last Judgment and their evils are disclosed.” (AE 659[22])
- Panic (tumult) “...signifies the last state of the old church, involving a great change; and combat against the love of evil.” (AE 650[12])
- Tumult “...signifies the disputations and reasoning of those beneath heaven who are natural and sensuous.” (AE 706[23])

Shouting and Trumpet Sound

- “...shouting, as being the quality of the interiors of that nation...as being the hanging of the combat between falsity and truth, and no decision.” (AC 10456)
- Trumpet “...signifies to announce that the intellectual of the church has been laid waste.” (AC 4592[10])

Cutting off the Judge from the Midst

- In general, a wise judge is one who fairly and evenly seeks to adjudicate what is right and just for all people, regardless of their station or position. A judge needs to uphold civil, moral, and spiritual laws. Like end, cause, and effect, the spiritual needs to flow into the moral and the moral into the civil. Because of Moab’s representation, we can assume that the Moabites did not base their natural justice on anything spiritual. Therefore, Moab was to be remanded and its central position of selfish, unwise, and biased judgments exposed.

Slaying all the Princes with the Judge

- As cited previously, a prince signifies a principle or leading truth. When judgment is faulty, its leading principles will be faulty. Therefore, both have to die when faced with the real spiritual principles of the Lord.

Putting It All Together

1. When the Word is adulterated and the good of the Word is corrupted, nothing of spiritual quality holds together. Like the lime not holding together the stones of the altar, our spiritual life and our judgments are scattered. When the natural man rules and twists everything to favor his proprium, his decisions will not look to being of use to the Lord and the neighbor. Self-love will do only that which gives it praise. Self-love will do good to those whom it can use later. The Moab faith will try to hang between falsity and truth in a state of no decision. This is done so that it will appear liberal, nonjudgmental, and politically correct; it will seek to seem accepting of all lifestyles when there is an opportunity to receive honor, gain, and reputation as the reward.
2. The Lord did not find the lukewarm pleasing. He stated that He would have preferred hot or cold. The lukewarm were to be spewed from His mouth. (Rev. 3:16)
3. These verses remind us not to choose what seems convenient to us or to place the Word in unchaste conditions and decisions. The “bones” of our belief system must have integrity so that our framework will support the spiritual things we draw from the Word. The natural part of us will seek to compromise, burn, or boil the bones of our spiritual soul. At times, the natural mind feels that the act of compromise is most prudent. Is that true, or is it an appearance? With these verses, we need to reflect on how easy it is for us to have our bones burnt or turned into lime. If we do, the Word tells us that we will find ourselves unable to hold spiritual things together. The Lord calls us to face the hellish temptation to adulterate the Word by saying these words:
“Forever, O Lord, thy Word is settled in the heavens.” (Psalm 119:89)

Read and Review

Read Amos 2:1-3.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. There are times when we know what we should do, and we don't do it. There are times when we know what we are doing is wrong, and yet we continue to do it. How can we break through these spiritual lapses?

2. The Writings talk about the power of good intentions. Each time we reinforce these good intentions, an inner good is strengthened that will eventually help us defeat the things we intend to overcome. Do you remember the old adage that says the road to hell is paved with good intentions? See AC 9334[2], Divine Providence (DP) 152[2]. Even though we sometimes slip, the fact that we dislike our mistakes, feel embarrassed about them, and intend to resist them is a positive step. For more thought on the power of intention, please read Conjugial Love (CL) 453. Suppose there are two men who look exactly alike and enjoy the same foods and entertainment. One intends not to laugh at an inappropriate comment, and the other man intends to laugh. Which man's actions are excused by the Lord and His angels, even if both men laugh? What do you think?
3. The theme of Chapter 1 and the beginning of Chapter 2 focused on the care and importance we must give to the Word. What can we do in our notes to keep a focus on this series as given to us by the Lord? Are we able to see first things said tying into last things said?
4. Do the abuses of the Word, as illustrated by each nation, sound more and more direful as we move toward the prophecy regarding Israel?
5. There is an interesting point to consider when thinking about Kerioth: One of the Lord's disciples came from that city. Which one? He was a person who cared for the meager finances the disciples had. He worried about the wasteful use of perfume used to wash the Lord's feet. Judas claimed that they could have sold the perfume and used the money for more practical things. Judas Iscariot was a man from Kerioth. Is this just a coincidence?

AMOS 2:4-5

"Thus says the Lord:

*For three transgressions of Judah, and for four,
I will not turn away its punishment,
Because they have despised the law of the Lord,
And have not kept His commandments.
Their lies lead them astray,
Lies which their fathers followed.
But I will send a fire upon Judah,
And it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem."*

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- “Concerning those who destroy the celestial things of the Word; that they destroy both its celestial and its spiritual things, vers. 4, 5.”

Derived Doctrine

Representation of Judah

- “From these and many other passages...it may be seen what is signified in the Word by Judah; and that it is not the Jewish nation, because this was very far from being a celestial church, or the Lord’s celestial kingdom; being the worst of all nations in regard to love to the Lord and charity toward the neighbor, and also in regard to faith; and this from the days of their first fathers, the sons of Jacob, down to the present time. (That such persons were nevertheless capable of representing the celestial and spiritual things of the Lord’s kingdom... [is] because in representations the person is not reflected upon, but only the thing that is represented.)...But when they did not remain in the ritual ordained by Jehovah or the Lord, but turned away from them to idolatries, they then no longer represented celestial and spiritual things, but the opposite, that is, infernal and diabolical things....” (AC 3881[10])

Judah Despised the Law of the Lord

- In various passages of the Writings, we are taught that to despise means to look with contempt. It means “...that the rational lightly esteemed the truth...adjoined to good.” (AC 1911) In another passage, it says that despising “...signifies that the good of life considered its priority of no account.” (AC 3336)
- Putting these quotes next to the word “Lord” seems to indicate they held the Lord as of little esteem and His priorities as of no account. (AC 3882)
- How sad it is to read that Judah turned its heart away from its intended representation.

Failing to Keep the Commandments

- In the Doctrine of Life 64 and 65, we are given a picture of the cycle of failure regarding the Commandments. Teachers and parents teach the commandments to their children, but within their own hearts, they think that they are unable to keep them and therefore find a way to excuse themselves by saying the Commandments are “humanly” impossible to keep. The children pick up this attitude, and when they become adults, they carry the same sphere. Thus, they pass on the cycle of failure. The only way to break this cycle, we are taught, is to care more about pleasing the Lord than pleasing and impressing people. If this last statement is not clear, please read Doctrine of Life 64 for yourself.

Lies

- The lies they told themselves and the lies they learned from their fathers:

- The belief that they were the favored people.
- The belief that nothing would remove them from that favored position.
- The belief that they deserved prosperity and success for external gestures with little substance behind them.
- The stiff-necked resistance to the leading of the Lord's Providence.
- The necessity to have a king like other nations.
- The belief in everyone doing what was right in his or her own eyes.
- What really brought on the lies was the people's failure to value the conjunction of truth to good and to make the good of life a priority. They did not make themselves accountable for what the Lord would value.

The Fire on Judah and the Palaces of Jerusalem Devoured

- We can probably feel the tension this prophecy must have brought to the nation of Israel. Conceivably, they nodded their heads in approval when Amos told them of the doom of their lifelong enemies. But now Amos dared to speak of the demise of Judah and the holy city Jerusalem. With angry voices, they must have hurled jeers and threats at this shepherd prophet. Their self-assurance and prosperity, their significant military might, and their victories of conquest made all that Amos said seem preposterous and insulting.
- All of these possible reactions can illustrate how the fire of self-love came on Judah and how shabby the mental palaces of Jerusalem had become. Her understanding was not conjoining itself with love, and worship of the Lord was all lies and death.

Putting It All Together

1. The celestial things of the Word most deeply involve the Lord. How we feel in our hearts about Him is important. Are we open and honest with Him, or do we pay lip service? Do we quote what we learned from the understanding without involving the will? The Lord would prefer an active love seeking truths, mirroring the conjugal principles. Are we telling ourselves lies? Do we perpetuate the lies of the past? Do we teach the commandments (in our actions) as if they are impossible to keep, and then excuse ourselves as being only human and therefore not expected to keep them? Can we accept the challenge to break this cycle of failure so that we can follow the laws of the Lord to the best of our ability? Many questions are posed in these verses, and they are worth considering.
2. Just as Judah failed to live up to its representative role, could we as a New Church organization lose sight of our important representative role? What do we represent? How can we support that representation?
3. Again, let us reflect on the attitudes that hurt Judah:
 - a. They lightly esteemed the conjoining of truth to good.

- b. They held the good of life, as a priority, of little importance.

Read and Review

Read Amos 2:4-5.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Reflecting on the mistakes of Judah would probably help each of us avoid duplicating their attitudes and lies. Think of an example from your own experience when someone made a decision that was influenced by one of these lies or attitudes. How did it change their decision? What was the effect?
2. How effective is it to look at the mistakes of others to make improvements on our life? What makes this technique effective or ineffective? How can it be used wisely? How can it be abused? How is charity a part of this technique?
3. Do we come down harder on the mistakes of others because we see their mistakes from our understanding? Truth is hard, but when we look at our mistakes, we tend to look at them from the will. The will tends to offer excuses from affections. "I did this because..." The understanding, on the other hand, judges from a more legalistic stand point. What's your view of this? What do these two approaches have to offer? What happens when you separate them, or use them together?
4. How effective is it for an organization to look at the mistakes of other organizations to improve its own life? When is this useful, and when is it not useful? How is charity a part of this technique?

AMOS 2:6-8

"Thus says the Lord:

*For three transgressions of Israel, and for four,
I will not turn away its punishment,
Because they sell the righteous for silver,
And the poor for a pair of sandals.
They pant after the dust of the earth which is on the head of the poor,
And pervert the way of the humble.
A man and his father go in to the same girl,
To defile My holy name.
They lie down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge,
And drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god."*

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- “Concerning those who destroy the spiritual things of the church, that in consequence of this they depart into falsities of every kind, vers. 6-8...”

AC 6377[10]

- “As most expressions in the Word have also a contrary sense, so also has ‘wine’ in which sense ‘wine’ signifies falsity from evil, as in....Amos ii. 8....”

AR 316

- “Holy truth is also signified by...‘wine’ in other parts of the Word....Amos ii. 8.... [This] may also appear from its opposite sense, in which it signifies truth falsified and profaned....”

AE 376[30]

- “That ‘wine’ signifies the truth of the church...Amos ii. 8....”

Derived Doctrine

Israel

- “Israel denotes those who are in divine truths from the Lord.” (AR 96 and 350)
- Israel “...also denotes the internal spiritual church, for that church is a church by virtue of spiritual good. Spiritual good is truth that has become good; for truth becomes good when the man lives according to it, for it then passes into the will, and from the will into act, and becomes of the life; and when it becomes of the life it is no longer called truth but good.” (AC 5595)

Selling the Righteous for Silver

- To sell “and to be sold signifies to alienate truths, and to be alienated from them, and to accept falses for truths, and to be captivated thereby.” (AE 840)
- Righteousness “...is predicated of what is good.” (AR 173)
- A principled person is someone who is in the Lord.
- Silver represents “...truth acquired from the proprium.” (AC 9039) It can also mean “scientific truth.” (AC 6112) Further, we are told that silver “...signifies truth, and in the opposite sense, the false.” (AC 1551)

Selling the Poor for a Pair of Sandals

- The poor signifies "...one who is not in truths, also those who are ignorant of good and truth, but desirous of instruction." (Heaven and Hell [HH] 420)
- Sandal or shoe "...signifies the lowest natural truths by which one lives (walks)." (AC 4677[9])
- "The shoe is what clothes the sole of the foot and the heel signifies the ultimate natural...thus the corporeal itself." (AC 1748)

Panting After the Dust of the Earth

- Is panting or breathing fast a form of excitement, anticipation, or shortness of breath? Is panting a way of gasping for air? Let's look at gasping for breath because I can only find one reference for that and nothing for panting. "Gasping for breath signifies sorrow because of falsities that extinguish spiritual life." (AE 315[17]) In this context, it would appear that Israel did not worry about the extinguishing of spiritual life and had no regrets.

Eating Dust

- "...eating dust...signifies that their sensuous part became such that it could not live from anything but that which is of the body and of the earth...it became infernal." (AC 242)
- To understand the dust on the "head" of the poor, we need to look for help from the doctrines. Dust represents what is "damned" or "infernal." (AR 788) It also corresponds to the lowest things of the sensual principle of man. (AE 1145)
- We can look up "head" and see that it means the dominion of evil in general, and self-love in particular. (AC 250) The head also can represent self-exaltation (AC 1307) or the insanity from unmitigated falsities, especially the denial of the Divine Human. (AR 568) So, how do we understand what is being taught here? It appears that this prophecy is intended to show the baseness of their attitudes toward the Lord and the neighbor. The "dust on their head" represents the lowest of motives lived out in their daily activities. Me, myself, and I are the greatest. All others are of little importance in comparison to self.

Perverting the Way of the Humble

- When there is no love for the spiritual things of the church, as represented by Israel, it follows that the way of the humble (those wishing to rid themselves of pride and self-love) would be deceived and not helped. This would be like a doctor, with the knowledge and medication to cure or help the sick, callously withholding medication from those who need it the most.

A Man and His Father being Intimate with the Same Girl

- "...it is common in the Word to call things of the church conceptions, births, offspring, infants, little ones, sons, daughters, young men, and so on." (AC 339)
- A girl "...signifies fresh goods and their affections and the derivative gladness..." (AC 2348)
- Using our information about the correspondences, we can deduce that a father and his son going in to the same girl signifies that they made their rational good unchaste. There was a willingness to spoil and make light of holy things. They were not chaste in thoughts and deeds. All delights of conjugal love, even in the ultimates, are only present when there is a love and respect of chastity. "To lie with signifies to pervert and adulterate what is true and good." (AC 3399)

Defiling the Lord's Holy Name

- The possibilities of doing this are myriad. It happens when we allow the hells to convince us that they are stronger than the Lord; when we feel that living the life of religion is impossible; when we feel the Lord requires too much of us; when we feel or say we don't care what the Word says about something we want to do. We defile the Lord's name when we calling truth falsity and falsity truth. Perhaps these few suggestions will help you to think of other examples.

Lying Down by Every Altar on Clothes Taken in Pledge

- According to the literal meaning of this, apparently the church (priests) was extracting money from the people. The greater the importance of the cases they heard and rendered decisions on, the greater would be their payment. Justice was not always the end. Reward and wealth tainted their decisions. Payment might come in the form of ornate and expensive garments. But the heinous thing about the tribute money was that the priests collected it in the name of the Lord. They approved and sanctioned it by rabbinical laws, so they were blatant with their demands for payment for services rendered.
- Lying down beside every altar speaks of their disrespect of worship. It does not say kneeling, standing, or being watchfully attentive. Lying down seems to connote carelessness. They did this beside every altar. It sounds as if they served whatever god or idol was called for. This is eclectic religion at its worst.
- On the spiritual side, the clothes of a priest speak of the office, or use, being served. It is the office that should be respected, not the individual wearing the clothes of the pledge.

Drinking the Wine of the Condemned

- This was given to us as representing truth falsified and profaned. Instead of passing through the gate of Holy Supper or the door of conjunction, the people chose to pass through the gate of disjunction and separation from the Lord.

Putting It All Together

1. From these verses, we get a clear message. Seek first the kingdom of heaven and all else will follow. Let that truth become good. Truth becomes good when we live according to its leading. Let a truth pass into the will and from the will into act. When this happens, truth becomes part of our life.
2. We need to welcome truth and not alienate it, to see caring for the spiritually poor in us as a necessary process. We need truth to ward off ignorance, to protect the feet of natural day-to-day functions and to desire something more than the sensual, corporeal demands or “panting for the dust of the earth.”
3. In the same degree as the world glorifies the sensual and makes the unchaste appear “normal,” we need to keep our minds focused on love truly conjugal.
4. We never know who watches us and sees us as role models. Are we humble? Are we caught up in the clothes of a pledge? Do we look tired and bored with our worship? Do we withhold a concept of truth from those who need and want direction? Do we make conquering the insanity of “unmitigated falsities, especially the denial of the Divine Human” a priority? The Divine Human is to be drawn from a genuine appreciation of the Word.
5. Are we so accommodating with our thinking that we can lie next to “every altar...”? Some pride themselves on saying things like: “We all worship the same thing, so it doesn’t matter what church we belong to.” Can we really trust this saying?
This section contains a significant challenge for us to reflect on. Can we do it?

Read and Review

Read Amos 2:6-8.

Read the summary in *P&P*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

The summary we worked on carries enough questions to get us started. I will not add any others at this time, but please use the space below to work on your own questions as you read these verses. We need the questions to help hold these verses before our minds.

AMOS 2:9-11

*"Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them,
Whose height was like the height of the cedars,
And he was as strong as the oaks;
Yet I destroyed his fruit above
And his root beneath.
Also it was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt,
And led you forty years through the wilderness,
To possess the land of the Amorite.
I raised up some of your young men as Nazarites.
Is it not so, O you children of Israel?
Says the Lord."*

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “That the Lord had thoroughly removed the falsities of evil, when the church was instituted among them, and they were instructed, vers. 9-11....”

AC 6306[4]

- And in Amos...(ii. 9, 10) "...here the ‘Amorite’ denotes evil, for the evil of the love of self is described by the ‘height of the cedars and the sturdiness of the oak.’ That the ‘Amorite’ is evil in general, is because the whole land of Canaan was called ‘the land of the Amorite;’ for it is said, ‘I lead you in the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite.’"

AC 1857

- This passage includes the same statement regarding the Amorite and that “the whole land of Canaan denotes evil in general.”

AC 9489[3]

- Height "...signifies the evil of the love of self, thus self-exaltation of mind; as in...Amos ii. 9."

AC 348

- "...works of faith devoid of charity are works of no faith, being in themselves dead, for they are solely of the external man....That (in this state) both fruit and the root perish, is thus declared in...Amos ii. 9."

AE 633[7]

- “The vastation of the church and also full temptation are signified by the tarrying of the sons of Israel forty years in the wilderness, which is spoken of in...Amos ii.10.”

Derived Doctrine

Reminding Israel

- Why does the Lord have to remind Israel so often what He did for them? Are their memories so poor that they can't keep their facts straight? Could it have been that their oral tradition left out the part about the Lord's deliverance and highlighted human effort? Or had they gotten so used to His miracles they took them for granted?
- There is an interesting quote in the Arcana that says: "...Divine remembrance (or reminiscence) is salvation; and by non-remembrance, or forgetting is signified damnation." (AC 8620) The Lord's effort to remind Israel what He did for them was not divine impatience or irritation but the action of His love to keep them in a state of remembrance or a state of salvation. The story of salvation gives hope and consolation to those who find themselves in a state of despair and temptation. If the Lord had wanted to damn them, He would have allowed them to forget.

Preparing Israel

- The passages under study tell us of the preparation the Lord provided for the children of Israel. The Lord thoroughly removed the falsities of evil and gave them instruction. What does this mean? Can we get a small glimpse of what the Lord did for them?
- The following passages may help us see some ways:
 - AC 677: "Before man can be regenerated, he must be instructed in all those things which can serve as means; in goods...in truths...and in things confirmatory...Before a man has been instructed in such things, he cannot be regenerated."
 - AC 3155: "...instruction precedes, with good, concerning truth; and with truth, concerning good."
 - AC 4538[3]: "When the Lord makes a man new, He first instructs him in the truths of faith..."
 - AC 6879, 6881, and 6883 give us three specific kinds of instructions Israel received through Moses:
 - The first instruction: Moses is told that God (I AM WHO I AM) Himself is to be worshiped.
 - The second instruction: Divine truth, which is from the Lord, must be received.

- The third instruction: The sons of Israel represented those of the spiritual church, for whom that instruction was intended.
- The great Passover, the parting of the Red Sea, the tumbling of the walls of Jericho up to the present lesson of the Amorite's fruit and roots being destroyed were all forms of instruction that told the children of Israel that pride, conceit, and self-love would not survive in the Lord's presence.

Cedars and Oaks

- Cedar trees "...signify rational or intellectual truth." (AC 119)
- Oak trees "...signify exterior conceit of those who boast from knowledges." AE 410.
- The Lord, by citing this, to Israel was saying: Remember Israel, resist the way of the Amorite. Remember Israel, the Amorites thought they were strong oaks, and yet their fruit and roots died. The Amorites were not the mental giants they thought they were.

"It was I who brought you up from the Land of Egypt..."

- Egypt in the opposite sense "signifies memory-knowledge which from itself enters into heavenly mysteries, thus perverting, denying, and profaning divine truths." (AC 4735[15])
- The Writings describe this as a period in their lives when the Israelites went through full temptations and a period of vastations in the wilderness. Look at the meaning of "forty" in this context: "By their journeying and wanderings in the wilderness forty years, all the state of the combating church is described-how of itself it yields, but conquers from the Lord." (AC 2708[6])
- Temptation "...is a combat between good and evil, therefore each strives for the domination, that is, whether the spiritual man shall rule over the natural...or the contrary...." (New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine [NJHD] 199)
- Vastation has many descriptions in the Writings. Words such as "devastate," "desolate," "despair," "laid to waste," or "emptying out" may appear in these quotations. Essentially, the word "vastation" indicates that a process of preparation must occur within the will and understanding so that spiritual ignorance and falsity are removed, or emptied out, to make way for an internal worship of the Lord that will be as free of profanation as possible.

The Wilderness

- When we hear the word "wilderness," what image comes to mind? Some people picture a desert with miles and miles of sandy dunes. A wilderness is more than that. It is an untamed wild habitat, with no smooth roads or paths. Cracks and crevices abound. Scraggy trees, thistles, and briar bushes grow wherever they can find enough soil to outdo some other rival weed.

- For a lamb, danger would abound in a wilderness. There would be predators lurking in wait for the frail or unsuspecting prey. Truly, a wilderness is a place where the survival of the fittest is a way of life. A spiritual wilderness lacks order and discipline.
- So the question, “do you remember the full temptations and period of vastations you went through in the wilderness?” is there to signify “the obscurity of faith, for a wilderness is uninhabited and uncultivated.” (AC 6904)

I Raised up Young Men as Nazarites

- The Nazarites put themselves under a vow to abstain from wine, from cutting their hair, and from having contact with anything unclean or dead.
- Probably, the Nazarite we think most about is Samson.
- “...the Nazarites in the Israelitish church represented the Lord as to the Word in ultimates, which is the sense of its letter. For Nazarite in the Hebrew language is hair, or lock of hair; hence Samson, who was a Nazarite from the womb, had power in his hairs.... By reason that hairs signified that holiness of the Word it is said of the Nazarite that: ‘they should not shave the hair of his head....’ Num. vi. 1-21...” (AR 47)
- “As the Nazarite represented the celestial man, who is regenerated through the good of love, and not through the truth of faith like the spiritual man, and who consequently is not regenerated as to the intellectual part, but as to the will part...therefore the Nazarite was forbidden to eat anything which came forth from the vine, thus was not to drink wine....” (AC 5113[16])
- “...there is spiritual death when there is a lack of truth.... As death signified damnation, the people of the representative church were forbidden to touch the dead, and if they touched they were unclean, and were to be cleansed....” (Num. vi. 6-12 was referenced regarding why a Nazarite was not to touch the dead.) (AC 6119 [4])

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. The Lord reminded Israel of what He had done in preparation for their calling. This point reminds one of a parable in Matthew 21:33-43. In that parable, we are told of all the owner did prior to turning the vineyard over to husbandmen and going into a far country. He planted the vineyard, hedged it, dug a winepress, and built a tower. When he sought his share of the crop, they maltreated his servants, and when he sent his son, they killed him. The Lord is the owner, and mankind is the husbandmen in this parable.
2. The Lord prepared His people. He fought for and delivered them. He instructed them in the truths of faith and gave them Divine Truths. He gave them shelter in the wilderness state. He gave them the ultimate sense of the literal sense — the holiness of the Word so they might find their way out of spiritual deadness.

3. He always lifted up a strong leader, a prophet, or a Nazarite so they could see the power of the Lord in the ultimates.
4. When their pride finished its foolish surge and their downfall occurred, the Lord wanted the Israelites to see where and how they walked away from the preparatory work done for them. They killed the servants, and they killed the son. They wanted the vineyard for themselves. They lied to themselves that they had done all the work and that it was unfair that the Lord should expect any returns while He was off in another country.
5. Would the prophets' words about the drying up of the Amorite fruit and the death of the oak tree root awaken their sense of spiritual reality? It would only work for the person willing to look within the spiritual sense of the prophecy.

Read and Review

Read Amos 2:9-11.

Read the summary in *P&P*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. Would it be worth our time to reflect on all that the Lord has done for us? Why? Although we can't speak of all things, are there some specific or significant events that stand out as most important?
2. We probably have witnessed someone in a position of importance losing their job and the respect of their followers. Something comes out regarding a clandestine disorder that embarrasses them publicly, and they seek the shelter of seclusion in shame. What are we reminded of by such events?
3. Have we ever had hell tempt us to think that we are "the captain of our ship and the master of our fate?" The hells say things like: "I was the one who faced the heat of the sun to pull out the weeds. Where was the Lord? I was the one who carried the water to nourish the seedlings and vines. I was the one who picked the grapes and crushed them in the wine press. I was the one who went up in the tower to watch for the approach of the enemy or the wild animals that would have eaten the vines. Where was the Lord all this time?" Such thinking assumes that self-intelligence did it alone. Why might we listen to the hells? What makes us vulnerable to this temptation? What helps us to ignore them?
4. The power of the literal sense comes to our attention again in this section. Yet there are times when our lack of understanding of the Word may give us the false impression that it is "bald" or empty of meaning and relevance for our life and times. Can we think about certain passages we had assumed meant nothing, and then think of a time when we experienced an opening of our spiritual eyes? What we thought was obscure eventually helped us through some trying time.

5. I am still considering the series of things the Nazarites were told to forgo.

How do they apply in our lives, literally and representatively?

Avoidance of the products of the vineyard?

- Not shaving or cutting hair?
- Avoidance of touching dead things?

What spiritual significance are we able to apply to ourselves regarding these prohibitions?

6. Vastations. This word has the sound of something one would like to avoid, but we know there has to be an emptying out of falsity, ignorance, self-love, etc. Our prayer life may have to be that we not run away. Trusting in the Lord's Providence tells us what? No temptation will come until we are able to resist and no evil will befall us unless some good may come from it. Hell tests us on this. It throws a host of situations before us, and asks: "How come this person had to go through this horrible thing? She was innocent and blameless. How could God permit such horrible things to occur if He is so merciful?" We have doctrinal answers, but for some these answers may seem insufficient. How do you deal with these questions and answers?

AMOS 2:12-16

*"But you gave the Nazarites wine to drink,
And commanded the prophets saying,
Do not prophesy!
Behold, I am weighed down.
As a cart full of sheaves is weighed down.
Therefore flight shall perish from the swift,
The strong shall not strengthen his power,
Nor shall the mighty deliver himself,
He shall not stand who handles the bow,
The swift of foot shall not escape,
Nor shall he who rides a horse deliver himself.
The most courageous men of might
Shall flee naked in the day,
Says the Lord."*

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "That nevertheless that church has perverted all things; and that hence it has become like one who is in the possession of the truth and yet is without truth; and thus at the time of judgment it perishes, vers. 12-16."

AC 10303[4]

- "...truths with man have been disposed into series according to the angelic societies with the regenerate.... The series into which truths have been disposed with the good, and the series into which falsities have been disposed with the evil, are signified in the Word by sheaves and bundles (as in...Amos ii. 13...)."

AE 357[22]

- "In Amos: He that holdeth the bow shall not stand, nor shall the swift of foot deliver himself, nor shall he that rideth upon the horse cause his soul to escape, but he that is stout in his heart among the mighty shall flee naked in that day (ii. 15,16). This describes self-intelligence, and thus confidence from an ability to reason from falsities against truths; 'he that holdeth the bow shall not stand, nor shall the swift of foot cause himself to escape', signifies that one who knows how to reason readily and skillfully from the doctrine and from the memory that belongs to the natural man, cannot provide for his salvation, nor stand in the day of judgment; the like is signified by 'he that rideth upon the horse shall not cause his soul to escape; he that is stout in his heart shall flee [naked] in that day' signifies that he who trusts in himself because of an ability to reason from falsities shall then be deprived of all truth; the 'stout in heart' meaning him who trusts in himself on that account, and 'naked' signifying deprived of all truth."

AE 783[3]

- "...those who are in falsities are called in the Word powerful, vigorous, mighty, strong, heroes, rulers, terrible, dreadful, and wasters, as can be seen from various passages, as from the following.... Amos ii. 14, 16...."

AE 355[26]

- A passage in AE 355[26], which explains Amos 2:15-16, has almost identical wording as AE 357[22].

Doctrine of the Lord 4

- "...passages from the Word which contain the expressions 'that day,' 'in that day,' and 'in that time;' in which...is meant the Lord's advent. In...Amos ii. 16..."

Derived Doctrine

Giving the Nazarites Wine to Drink

- If you recall, the reason the Nazarites were prohibited from eating or drinking anything from the vine was because of a Divine representation. The Nazarites were to be regenerated "...through the good of love...and not regenerated as to the intellectual part..." (AC 5113[16]) The Nazarites represented the will and not the understanding. The Israelites got them to drink wine, which tells us they got them to emphasize or involve themselves in the intellect and not the affectual. This was a reversal of their uses. The rational is more argumentative, debating, legalistic, analytical, and forensic, and it is different from the involuntary, affectual, and spontaneous uses. With a regenerating involuntary, there is a worship and love of the Lord that flows from the heart (will) spontaneously.

They Commanded the Prophets not to Prophecy

- When a person allows his or her integrity to be compromised, that person's credibility will be called into question. When the Nazarites drank the wine, they severed their representation with the Lord and lost standing among the people. Their words of prophecy sounded empty and not worth hearing. The prophets were speaking, but they were not touching the hearts of the people. We might say they started talking about things they didn't know much about. Their true calling was in the realm of the will, and they lost themselves in the realm of the understanding.

The Lord Weighed Down by Them

- When the joy of serving the Lord is lost, everything seems meaningless, slow, tedious, and bothersome. The work of regeneration seems hard and unfair. Our sense of the Lord becomes buried in a sense of obligation that suffocates the mind and "weighs us down." Although this verse says the Lord is weighed down, it is just the opposite. The obliged, duty-bound worshiper is the one with the weighing-down problem.

Cart

- The "new cart" the Philistines used to send the ark of covenant back to Israel signified "...doctrine untouched and unpolluted by the falsities of their evil..." Whereas, a cart "...signifies the doctrine of natural truth..." (AE 700[23])
- Therefore, a weighted-down cart full of sheaves represents the series of falsities that were disposed in the doctrine of natural truths of the evil. We need to recall the two choices: One is to have the series of truths disposed so as to keep us in contact with angelic societies, and the other is to have a

series of natural truths in contact with the evil. Israel had chosen the second series.

Flight Shall Perish from the Swift

- There is an interesting number in the *Arcana* where flight is explained this way: "No faith, and faith without love, are also compared by the Lord to winter where He foretells the consummation of the age, in Mark: - Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, for those be days of affliction (xiii. 18, 19). Flight means the last time, and also that of every man when he dies...." (AC 34)
- The swift are those who prided themselves with their mental agility. They were fascinated with their intellectual ability to adapt to changing popular opinions. The ones who seem to have all the swift answers will not escape Divine accountability. The speed of their rationalizations will not change the direction of their "departing flight."

The Strong, the Mighty, the Powerful, etc.

- Please read again *AE* 783[3] where we are taught that these terms, when used in the Word, represent those who are in falsities.

He Who Handles the Bow

- When we use the term "archer," there are at least four quotations worth noting to add to our consideration of this verse:
- "The man of the spiritual church was formerly called a 'shooter of the bow,' because he defended himself by truths, and disputed about truths; differently from the man of the celestial church, who is secure by means of good, and does not dispute about truths..." (AC 2709)
- "...the shooter of the bow...[describes the church desolated in respect to truths]...false doctrinals." (AE 411[19])
- "...a bow signifies doctrine combating, or doctrine by which one fights against evils and falsities...[but when a church is being vastated, a bow]...signifies that there would be no longer any truth in the doctrine nor any understanding of truth, and thus no combat or resistance against falsity...." (AE 357)
- "That a 'bow' here denotes the doctrine of truth, is evident from its signification. Wherever wars are treated of in the Word, and wherever they are mentioned, no other wars are signified than spiritual ones...." (AC 2686)

Swift of Foot

- "The 'foot' signifies what is lower, and thus more obscure, in the Lord's kingdom." We, as humans, are quite prone to make evaluations of what is

most important in life. How often are we right? "To the man whose mind and heart are set (the doctrine of charity and faith) appear as unimportant, and perchance as of no advantage to him; yet to the angels...these same things are precious..." (AC 2540) This number also says that what is important to men is often unimportant to the angels. So the swift of foot shall not escape because their wisdom is not able to keep up with the Lord's.

The Rider of a Horse Shall Not Deliver Himself

- "By horse is signified the understanding of the Word...horses in the opposite sense...signify the understanding of the Word and of truth falsified by reasoning, and likewise destroyed; as also one's own intelligence..." (AR 298) This series of numbers in AR deals with the "riders of horses." The spiritual meaning of the four horsemen described in Revelation is to show the effect our heart and mind can have on the Word, as illustrated in the colors of the horses: white, red, pale or black.

Fleeing Naked in That Day

- To get a glimpse of this meaning, let's turn to Genesis and the story of Adam and Eve recognizing their nakedness. "By knowing that they where naked is signified their knowing and acknowledging themselves to be no longer in innocence as before, but in evil...for where there is no innocence, nakedness is a scandal and disgrace.... For this reason nakedness is used in the Word as a type of disgrace and evil, and is predicated of a perverted church..." (AC 213)
- In this passage of Amos, it appears that they didn't know they were naked. The Lord had to tell them how void of innocence and truth they were. Their nakedness was a disgrace.

Putting It All Together

1. The Israelitish church perverted all of its divine gifts. They possessed the truth, and it was sufficient unto the day, but they didn't use it. In the day of judgment, what they thought were their greatest attributes turned out to be useless acquisitions.
2. Their self-intelligence and ability to reason from falsities against truth hurt the Israelites. The doctrines they had to fight against evil (the archers) couldn't stand (or couldn't shoot straight).
3. Because they were devoid of truth, the Israelites had nothing to clothe their minds. Vulnerable, exposed, they couldn't hold their heads up. They were a scandal and disgrace to those spiritual things they were to represent, and they perverted the church.

4. Cutting off the message of the prophets, telling them to not prophesy, and switching the uses of the will and understanding brought a spiritual insanity that obfuscated truth and reality.

Read and Review

Read again Amos 2:12-16.

Read again the summary in *P&P*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Have you noticed how the Word gives us examples of the will and understanding trying to usurp one another? Let's look at just two examples for now: Cain's slaying of Abel and Jacob supplanting Esau. In the Jacob and Esau story, the Writings mention how often, from the beginning of mankind, people have argued which is the most important: good or truth? See *AC 3289*. Why do we persist with this debate? The Writings make it abundantly clear that both are needed for a balanced spiritual life. So what is the problem? Why do we need to argue this point over and over again?
- How often do we question the ways of the Lord and imagine that we know a better way of making the choices of life? People still get angry with the Lord. We continue to live with the illusion that it is our prudence that gets us by. We have to be quick on our feet to sort things out. In the Word, the answers we seek to some troubling issues are not always clear. We imagine it all would be simpler if the Word were more direct in its applications. Why do you think people feel this way? What causes this anger or frustration? How do we resolve it?
- Taking our flight in winter. This has been a helpful teaching for me. It reminds me to come out of a coldness or indifference to spiritual things so that the spring and summer states are in my heart. What about you? Is there a useful state in the snow and cold of a spiritual winter? What brings us back to spring and summer?
- The idea of mental nakedness reminds us of the need to choose things that are important to angels and overcome the temptation to choose our unimportant things. In hindsight, one has to admit that unimportant things appear to be wrapped in interesting packages, and spiritual things appear to be in plain wrappings. Hell tries to remove our states of innocence by offering us seemingly attractive options. When their deception works and we finally see what shallowness we chose, they mock us for our poor choices and vulnerability. We need to pray for a discernment that will help us learn from our mistakes so we can move with spiritual haste to the state of innocence of wisdom. If ever we lapse into a state of spiritual "nakedness," there is a ray of hope offered to us in this lesson: With the Lord's help, we need not suffer too long in the disgrace and embarrassment of spiritual nakedness.

Chapter Three

AMOS 3:1-2

"Hear this word that the Lord has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying:

*You only have I known of all the families of the earth;
Therefore I will punish you for all of your iniquities."*

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "That the church was established only with the Israelitish nation, wherefore evils and falsities will be examined there, vers. 1, 2...."

Scripture Confirmations

- Verse 2 is quoted verbatim in a Posthumous Theological Work called Scripture Confirmations, but no explanation is given.

Derived Doctrine

Our work on these verses will require more application than we have done so far. There is one reference in the whole of the Writings, and it gives a summary of the two verses with little regarding specific representations. But this is a wonderful experience, so let's enjoy it.

"Hear this Word that the Lord has Spoken..."

- In AC 3869[2-8], we are given a series of meanings for hearing. It signifies obedience, the understanding, to know the things contained in the Word, and to have faith in the will.
- "By hearing is signified both to perceive and to obey; because one attends that he may perceive and obey; that both these are signified by hearing is evident from common discourse, in which one speaks of hearing and of hearkening to anyone; the latter signifying to obey, and the former to perceive." (AR 87)

The Lord Speaking to Anyone

- "The Lord speaks with every man, for whatever a man wills and thinks that is good and true, is from the Lord...With those who suffer themselves to be led

away by evil spirits, the Lord speaks as if absent, or from afar, so that it can scarcely be said that He is speaking; but with those who are being led by the Lord, He speaks as more nearly present...." (AC 904)

The Lord Speaking Against Anyone

- When the Lord speaks the truth and we find it threatening, or when the Lord speaks a "hard truth," there is an appearance that the Lord is against us. But this is only an appearance. The Lord's love for mankind is consistently soft, caring, concerned, and zealous to protect. Truth seems harsh and unbending, as it should be, when our actions are being turned to disorders and our minds are not open to receive spiritual sustenance from heaven. The first act of charity is to shun evils as sins, and if we are not doing that work of charity, the Lord must speak against us.

"O children of Israel, against the whole family"

- We need to consider the order of the wording in this portion of our text. Children represent innocence. They represent the birth of truths of the church. Children, when rebellious, represent a form of corruption in the understanding of the church. Might one or more of these representations have some application?
- Israel represents the spiritual good. Could the call of the Lord to the children of Israel represent the Lord appealing to the remains of the spiritual good in Israel? If any productive hearing or obedience is to occur, the listener's remains must be revitalized.
- "...families, when said of the sons of Israel, by whom is represented the spiritual church, as being the goods of truth...families denote the things which descend from good through truth, and are the goods of truth." (AC 7916)
- The whole family: The Concordance suggests looking up the word "integrity" for "whole." "For the sake of making anyone blessed and happy, the Lord wills a total submission; that is, that he should not be partly his own, and partly the Lord's....the whole heart, the whole soul, the whole mind, and all the forces, being recipients, must be the Lord's, consequently there must be a total submission." (AC 6138[2-3])

Being Brought up out of the Land of Egypt

- "The reason why Egypt signifies not only intelligence but also insanity in spiritual things, is because the Ancient Church, which extended through many kingdoms...was also in Egypt, at which time the Egyptians excelled all others in cultivating the science of correspondences between spiritual things and natural, as appears from their hieroglyphics. But when that science was turned by them into magic, and became idolatrous, then their intelligence in things spiritual became insanity...." (AR 503)

- The Lord reminded Israel that He had called them out of that Egyptian spiritual insanity.

"You only have I known of all the families of the earth"

- "...knowing, when said of the Lord...is because the Lord knows each and all things from eternity...." (AC 6853)
- In Exodus 5:2, it is said, "I know not Jehovah..." Such a statement signifies "...not to care [about the Lord], for he who does not care, says that he does not know." (AC 7097) This is not the case with the Lord. He knows Israel completely.
- The Lord's statement that He knows only Israel is a statement of divine foresight and of divine caring for all people that goes beyond human comprehension. However, this is not what the Jewish nation understood from these words. They believed that prophecies, such as this, meant they were a favored nation or chosen people. The Writings tell us anyone who believes this errs. "...the Israelitish and Jewish nation were not chosen, and still less that it will be chosen; and also that there was not anything of the church with it, nor could be, but only the representative of a church; and that the reason why it has been preserved even to this day, has been for the sake of the Word of the Old Testament (n. 3479)." (AC 7051[4])
- So the Lord's knowing them was really His forming and choosing of them as a representative church, and any punishment for their iniquities was so that they could "...be in a holy external...and could have holy rituals by which the heavenly things of the Lord's kingdom...[could be] represented...." (AC 3479[2])
- Eventually, the evils of Israel would be overshadowed with the prophecy of the Messiah. As a nation, Israel was plundered, and her able-bodied were sent to captivity. The Old Testament prophecies needed to be preserved because they offered hope and consolation to the world. Regardless of what happened to Israel, the story of the Lord's coming and His redemption was to be kept alive within the representative rituals and teachings of Israel. The Lord knew what He wanted preserved in the church. He knew His church, and it was to be the means by which the story of Hell's defeat would be preserved and fulfilled with His coming.

Putting It All Together

1. The church was established only with the Israelitish nation. Wherefore evils and falsities will have to be examined there. Israel and its scribes, as troublesome as they were, meticulously copied every jot and tittle of the Word. They preserved the Word with a loyalty that is impressive. By the means of their labor, the books of the Word, with amazingly few errors, were passed on through the generations to us. The Lord's watchful, knowing, and corrective Providence kept the Word so that

the New Testament and the Writings might rest upon a firm foundation of the Old Testament. For this to be so, the Lord knew only Israel and their evils and falsities had to be examined there.

As we think about this, it is even more amazing to think about the "wholeness" of the Word. Here is a book written for those in the past, and yet it had to be written so as to help those of us in the present. But that is not all. The Word had to feed not only the past and the present, but it had to be the source of inspiration for the angels to study to eternity and be so profound that the angels will never exhaust the myriad of truths in a single word or placement of a comma. Every detail contains meaning: The curvatures in the letters, the Hebrew letters with little horns turning upwards, the vowel sounds adding a roughness or aspiration to the meaning of the Word. So much more could be said about what the angels find in the Word. No human could ever accomplish this astounding feat of writing. Such an awesome preparation of the Word so that our discovery of truth will always be new and exciting reminds us of a passage in Genesis:

"And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not." (Gen. 28:16)

2. Some of this amazement carries over into the way the Lord called Swedenborg to be His servant to bring the Writings into the world so as to fulfill the promise of the Second Coming. The Lord is ever watchful of His New Church. We are to be guardians of these Divine works. How are we doing? Do we think of ourselves as the chosen ones? Are we willing to be encouraged or chastised by the Lord? Do we come with a wholeness of family? The whole heart, the whole soul, the whole mind, and all the forces? Total submission to the Lord's church?

In part, the above reflects creative derived doctrine at work. What appeared void of direct teachings opened avenues of thought and application. What do you think of the use of derived doctrine? How does it contribute to our study?

Read and Review

Read Amos 3:1-2.

Read the summary in P&P.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Please write out any questions that have occurred to you during this section and share them with the group during the discussion time.
2. Here is a question I hesitate to offer because it requires knowing the differences in the branches of the New Church organizations, and I don't want to send you off with a research project to answer this question. What are the varying views of the Writings in each branch of the New Church? Remember the four are:

- a. General Convention.
- b. Conference.
- c. General Church.
- d. The Lord's New Church.

Each branch has a different viewpoint of the Writings. I have often wondered how Divine Providence is working with these divergent points of view.

3. How does the role of the New Church compare with that of the Israelitish church? What can we learn from their successes and failures? Are there temptations and strengths inherent in this role that are visible in both the Israelitish church and the New Church?
4. How much did Israel understand their spiritual role as a church? How much do we know? How do we learn more?
5. How do the differences between a spiritual church and a human organization play a part in understanding the spiritual role of a church?

Amos 3:3-6

*"Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?
 Will a lion roar in the forest, when he has no prey?
 Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he has caught nothing?
 Will a bird fall into a snare on the earth, where there is no trap for it?
 Will a snare spring up from the earth, if it has caught nothing at all?
 If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid?
 If there is calamity in a city, will not the Lord have done it?"*

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...that a church and no church cannot exist together, neither truths and falsities together without [the latter] being seized [by the former], vers. 3-6..."

AC 9348[5] and earlier sections

- "That such things do not come to pass when a man does not love himself and the world above all things, is described in Amos...iii. 4,5.
- What things do not come to pass? Earlier in this number, we are told about the signification of a snare: "...a snare when said of evils, as being allurement and deception. That evils allure and deceive, is because all evils spring from the loves of self and of the world...and the loves of self and the world are born with a man, and he feels the delight of his life from the moment of his birth...these loves, like the unseen currents of a river, continually draw the thought and the will of man away from the Lord to self, and away from heaven...."

- In this context, the things that do not come to pass are the negative aspects of the correspondences. When we read lion, roaring, prey, den, etc., we are not to focus on allurement and deceptions nor the love of self and the world. Instead, we are to focus on the positive correspondences.

AC 592

- "...it is predicated of Jehovah or the Lord that He punishes, that He tempts, that He does evil, that He destroys or kills, and that He curses. As for example...In Amos: - Shall evil befall a city, and Jehovah hath not done it? (iii. 6)." And further in this number we read: "...it is man who brings evil upon himself, and ruins and destroys himself—although it is not man, but evil spirits who excite and lead him..."

De Verbo, Section XII, number 284

- "...the Divine operation does not fall into a man who is empty and void, as for example one who does not know that the Lord is pure love and pure mercy, good itself, and truth itself, and that love itself and good itself are such in their essence that they cannot do evil to anyone, neither be angry nor revengeful....that there is no evil in the city which Jehovah hath not done, as in Amos (iii. 6)..."

Derived Doctrine

Please note that the Lord asks seven questions in these verses.

Question One: "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?"

Two

- "That two signifies conjunction is because all things in general and in particular in the spiritual world, and consequently in the natural world, have reference to two things, namely, good and truth-to good as what acts and flows in and to truth as what suffers (submits) and receives...nothing is produced unless the two make a one by a certain image of marriage..." (AC 5194)

To Walk

In many passages of the Writings, to walk represents to live. Check the following for examples: AC 1794, 6276, 8420, 9212[8], and 10087[3].

- The answer to this question seems evident when we consider that a will and understanding working together produce results, or walk toward an agreed

upon goal. Good acts and truth receives. Are they agreed? There is no indication that they are pulling against one another; therefore, they must be in some degree of agreement.

Question Two: "Will a lion roar in the forest, when he has no prey?"

Lion

- "That a lion denotes the good of celestial love and the derivative truth, in its power, and also that in the opposite sense it denotes the evil of the love of self in its power, is evident from passages in the Word where a lion is mentioned." (AC 6367)

Roaring

- "...the signification of 'as a lion roareth' as being on account of the desolation of Divine truth in the church; for a lion signifies Divine truth in its power...and to roar signifies the result of distress because of the desolation of truth....but in the contrary sense to roar or the roaring of a lion signifies an ardent desire to destroy and devastate the church, which is done by destroying Divine truth by means of the falsities of evil...because when a lion is hungry and seeks its prey, and also when it is enraged with anger against its enemy, it is its habit to roar." (AE 601[1-4])

Forest

- "...to cut down wood in a forest denotes to act from a false religiosity (extremism), and to destroy such things as are of the church; for the church is called a forest, a garden, and a paradise - a forest from knowledges, a garden from intelligence and a paradise from wisdom...and as a forest denotes the church as to knowledges, thus as to external things, it also denotes a religiosity." (AC 9011[5])

Prey

- This is one of those words we need to consider carefully. The Concordance alternates between prey, spoil, booty, rapine and despoil. Let a couple of examples show the problem. Potts translates AC 576[3] in the following way: "Prey in mine house (Mal. iii.10) = remains in the internal man, which are compared to prey because they are as it were furtively insinuated among so many evils and falsities."
- That same number in the standard edition, also translated by Potts, has "booty" in place of the word prey (along with some other word changes such as "stealthily" in place of "furtively").

- In AC 6442, we have a usage of spoil, rapine, and prey: "...spoil denotes those who have been rescued and delivered...rapine, spoil, and prey, denote the rescuing and deliverance of the good by the Lord."
- In AC 6443, "...from the signification of dividing the prey, as being to give a possession in the heavenly kingdom; for by prey are signified those who have been rescued and delivered by the Lord; hence by dividing the prey is signified distribution, namely, among those in heaven...."
- AC 6368 has a powerful message about the Lord's deliverance: "...man of himself is in hell, for his will and thought from his own is nothing but evil and its falsity, by which he has been so bound to hell that he cannot be torn away without violence. This tearing away and deliverance is what is called the prey; and because this is done from the Lord's Divine good, it is said that from the Lord through what is celestial is the deliverance of many from hell."

Do we have a possible answer to question two? The Lord's roaring is to indicate how zealously He wants to pull His people from the extreme destruction of the knowledges of the church (religiosity). He, as a lion, wants to awaken within His people the remains hidden in the internal man. This portion of the prophecy is not about doom but hopefulness. The lion in the forest will roar to announce that rescue and deliverance are available for the faithful. His celestial has the power to deliver many from hell.

Question Three: "Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he has caught nothing?"

A Young Lion

- "...the signification of a lion and an old lion, as being the good of love and the derivative truth in their power.... A young lion denotes one who is in power through truth from good, and an old lion one who is in power through good." (AC 6369)

Cry Out of the Lion's Den

- "...that a cry in the Word, is said in reference to every affection that breaks forth from the heart, wherefore it is a voice of lamentation, of imploring, of supplication from grief, of entreaty, of indignation, of confession, yea of exultation." AR 885.

We now have somewhat of a paradox to clear up. We do not have a direct representation of the word "den." We have "den of thieves or robbers." We have representations of caves, but almost nothing for a lion's den. The only reference given is the one where they put Daniel in the lion's den. In P&P (explaining Daniel 6:10-17, regarding those who proposed worship of themselves instead of the Lord), we read that "...when this decree was opposed by those who belong to the Lord's

church, it was enacted that they should undergo the punishment [pronounced] by the inquisition, which is the lion's den, into which Daniel was cast."

In the references to "cave" and "lair," we are taught that they signify the evil of self-love robbing the individual or church of its power and truth. But with several of the references above (AC 6368 and AC 6369), we have the correspondence of old (mature) lion and young lion in a most positive usage. This third question is probably a continuation of Question Two. The old (mature) lion is to teach us about the Lord's power through love, and the young lion is to teach us about His power through truth from good. Therefore we can't use den, cave, and lair in the opposite sense of self-love robbing the individual and church. The Lord robs no one. His goal is to set us free.

We can, however, see the Lord's Divine Good and Truth "catching" us and delivering us from the grip of hell. His power of truth from good can snatch us or tear us away from the grip hell imagines it has over us. Therefore, the young lion crying out of his den sounds, to me, like a celebration and announcement to all that His efforts were not in vain, and He is not without His catch. A cry of exultation!

Question Four: "Will a bird fall into a snare on the earth, where there is no trap for it?"

The literal sense seems to ask us to answer a "dumb" question. If there is no trap on the earth, the bird can't fall into the snare. Is that really what this question is trying to illustrate? Let's look at the correspondences.

Bird

- A bird in general signifies rational things and also the intellectual things of the inward man. See AC 40.

Snare

- A snare signifies mental delusions. "...to be deluded and misled by one's own evil and falsity...." (AC 10641) Being caught in a snare represents "...to be caught by their own evil, and thus brought into the evil of the penalty." (AC 7653) It also "...denotes allurement and deception through the delights of the loves of self and of the world...and this through reasonings from the fallacies of the senses which favor these delights...." (AC 9348)

A Snare on Earth

- AC 1066 has some very helpful teachings that seem to offer insights into the question under consideration. In the Word, "earth" and "land" have several meanings. "In the universal sense it denotes the place or region where the

church is, or where it has been...it (also) signifies what is not the church, for every such word has contrary or opposite meanings.... But when the church is referred to the term earth is used to predicate "...all the doctrines both true and false that were of the churches." (AC 1066)

The answer then to the Lord's question is:

If a person's mind pays attention to the rational things of the church...

- If a person's mind feeds the inward things...
- If a person's mind does not delude itself and is not misled by its own evil and falsity...
- If a person's mind is not allured through the delights of self and the world...
- If a person's mind is not fooled with the fallacies of the senses...

...then the bird will not fall into the snare on the earth. The church will exist and will seize or expel the "no church" condition of the mind.

Question Five: "Will a snare spring up from the earth, if it has caught nothing at all?"

This is a continuation of the question started above. The mind that is given to the Lord doesn't let allow itself to be snared by negative doubts. Hell would love to prove its point that all the things of the church are useless and ineffective. Hell often seeks to win its battle against the Lord with labels. The church is "narrow-minded." The church is "behind the times" and doesn't offer help with current issues. If one opposes the disorder of homosexuality, the opposer is labeled "homophobic." If an issue is addressed from scripture, it is pointed out that other prohibitions mentioned in scripture are not adhered to. "Be consistent, and don't choose what you want to expose as disorders. Don't preach to me!"

The snare of earth would love to spring up and expose the mind of the church. The "no church" mind hates the very existence of the Lord's Church.

What I hear in this question is a profound statement from the Lord: The "no churches" think they are clever and able reasoners. Their traps, their trick questions, their lies, their plot to destroy all evidence of the Lord's truth are like an empty snare on earth with nothing in it.

Question Six: "If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid?"

Blowing or Sounding a Trumpet

- In AR 391 and 397, we are told that this represents to "...call together upon solemn occasions...to explore and discover the quality of those who are in faith alone..."

- In AE 502[1] and [2], we read that it “signifies the flowing down of Divine truth out of heaven. When this flowing down is strong, it produces one effect with the good and another with the evil. With the good it illustrates the understanding, joins them more closely with heaven, and thence gladdens and vivifies their minds; but with the evil it disturbs the understanding, separates them from heaven, joins them more closely with hell, induces terror in their minds, and finally brings spiritual death.”

City

- The word “city” has a wonderful range of meanings. A city represents the doctrine of the church and religion. (AR 402) Or, it can represent everything doctrinal or heretical in a person. (AC 402) AE 223[20] says that “city” can signify the false doctrine of those who reject the Lord.

Our question seems to be addressed to all of us but most directly to those who reject the Lord. They will be called together on a solemn occasion. They will be examined. Those who have loved the Lord will find it a joyful occasion. Those who have rejected the Lord will find it a time of terror and a sense of “spiritual death.”

Question Seven: “If there is calamity in a city, will not the Lord have done it?”

Tranquility, Serenity, Moderation

- We are well acquainted with the teachings that say the Lord does no harm to anyone. It is an appearance that He is vengeful and hard on us. There is a beautiful teaching in AE 419 that explains what the Lord seeks for His children. The Word talks about tranquility and serenity:
- “...the separations of the good from the evil and the casting out of the evil in the spiritual world are effected by various degrees of moderation and intensity of the Divine proceeding from the Lord as a sun. When this flows in moderately the good are separated from the evil...when the Divine from the Lord flows in moderately there is everywhere tranquility and serenity....”
- I also like the teaching in this number that the Lord does this moderately. But those who rejected the Lord see Him as the one who brings calamity.

Perspectives

- In TCR 69, we are given a powerful example of what the good and evil will see. “The man who lifts his mind to God and acknowledges that all the truth of wisdom is from God...is like one who stands upon a lofty tower and sees beneath him a populous city and all that is being done in its streets. But the man who confirms in himself the belief that all truth of wisdom is from the natural light in himself, is like one who remains in a cavern beneath that

tower and looks through holes at the same city, seeing nothing but the wall of a single house in that city, and how its bricks are joined."

Putting It All Together

1. We must begin with the quote from P&P: "...that a church and no church cannot exist together, neither truths and falsities together without [the latter] being seized [by the former]."
2. The seven questions illustrate this point. The mind that is based on the Lord and His Word will not be empty and void.
3. The Lord will protect; He will seize the believers from the grip of hell. His roar of victory will resound throughout the heavens. Rescue and deliverance will thrill all in the heavens so that they in turn may inspire all on earth.
4. The worldly, the despisers of the Lord and His Word, will not snare the minds of those who believe in the Lord. Those who seek to snare the doctrines of the church are the ones who will be deluded and misled.
The "no church" and the "falsity" will be seized by the Lord. Why? Because falsity cannot stand in the presence of the Lord's truth. Unreality cannot exist in the presence of the Lord's Reality.
5. Picture Amos speaking this message today. In all probability, he would still be told to get out of town and go back to his sheep.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 3:3-6

Read the summary in P&P.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. Did you see a progression in the seven questions and their meanings?
2. What is the significance of the statement of the Lord's victory over the "no church" state? How does its significance to personal states compare to its significance for religious organizations?
3. Do we take the outcome of the Lord's work for granted? How does the New Church differ from traditional Christianity in its expectations of the Lord's work? What is the difference between trustful confidence and self-assured disinterest?
4. How about the Lord's promise of tranquility and serenity, stemming from the moderate influx of the Divine? What do we think of the word "moderate"? Does it have a positive and negative sense? Which sense seems to be used in this passage?
5. What about the two views of the city? How does a "peephole" view of the city limit the viewer? What might the bricks of the wall represent in this metaphor? How do we get a view from the tower and see generals leading to particulars?

AMOS 3:7-8

*"Surely the Lord God does nothing,
Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.
A lion has roared!
Who will not fear?
The Lord God has spoken!
Who can but prophesy?"*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...that the Lord will most surely reveal this, vers. 7, 8..."

AR 3

- "By servants, in the spiritual sense are meant those who are in truths; and because truths are from good, by servants are meant those who are in truths from good, thus also, those who are in wisdom from love.... Now as truths are serviceable to good by teaching it...by servant, in the Word, is meant what is serviceable, or he or that which serves; in this sense not only the prophets are called the servants of God, but also the Lord as to His Human...." Amos 3:7 is cited as an example.

AE 409[6]

- "Since the Lord in respect to Divine truth is called in the Word 'a servant' from serving, so those who are in Divine truth from the Lord and thereby serve others are there called 'servants,' as the prophets are...." Amos 3:7 is cited.

AE 601[8]

- "'The Lord Jehovah will not do a word unless He hath revealed His secret to His servants the prophets' signifies that the Lord opens the interior things of the Word and of doctrine to those who are in truths from good; 'to reveal a secret' signifies to enlighten and to open the interior things of the Word; 'His servants the prophets' signify those who are in truths of doctrine and who receive; 'the lion hath roared, who will not fear?' signifies a powerful revelation and manifestation of Divine truth; 'the Lord Jehovah hath spoken, who will not prophesy?' signifies reception and manifestation. The Lord is called 'Lord Jehovah' when good is treated of." Amos 3:7, 8 are cited.

AE 624[9]

- “In Amos: (iii. 7, 8)...to ‘prophesy’ signifies to receive Divine truth and to teach it....”

AR 241

- “...a lion signifies truth in its power...may appear from the power of the lion above every animal of the earth, as also from lions in the spiritual world, where they are images representative of the power of Divine truth.... Hence it is that Jehovah, or the Lord is compared to ‘a lion’....” Amos 3:8 is cited.

AR 471

- “...a lion roars when he sees His enemies and is assaulted by them, and when he sees his whelps and prey taken away; so does the Lord, comparatively, when He sees His church taken away from Him by devils. That this is what is signified by ‘roaring as a lion’....” Amos 3:8 is cited.

AE 278[7&8]

- “...Jehovah is compared to a ‘roaring lion,’ because a ‘lion’ signifies power to lead forth from hell or from evils, and to ‘roar’ signifies defense against evils and falsities....” Amos 3:8 is cited.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

This section of the Word is clearly explained in the Writings, and there is no need to look for correspondences beyond what we are given. Let's go directly to our summary section.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. The Lord laments when anyone purposely chooses to flee from His protection. The Lord laments when the hells attack a church. In other words, the Lord is not a passive observer of His children or His church.
2. He has given us the Word. He came so that He might fight and conquer the hells. All of this was not done without the Lord revealing it to His servants and prophets. His truth is serviceable and practical. These revelations and manifestations of Divine truth are “powerful” as told to us in AE 601[8].
The lion roaring is a spiritual roaring that puts fear into the heart of the hells. They surely know in their lucid moments that they cannot stand in the presence of the Lord. But sadly, their insanity causes them to imagine they can defeat the Lord.
We, as readers of this prophecy, must take heart that we are cared for and

loved by the Lord. He laments for each of us if anything of hell assaults us, and His truths, as servants, work to give us the wisdom of good to overcome and withstand the poison of falsity.

3. These two verses are a continuation of the previous seven questions. They highlight the good news of the Lord's victory and help us to understand what is said in the P&P summary: "...the Lord will most surely reveal this...."

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 3:7-8.

Read the summary in P&P.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. Have you noticed how often the prophecy of Amos portrays the Lord as a roaring Lion? Isn't this a powerful image to add to our picture of the Lord? What other images of the Lord do we find in His Word?
2. The prophecy of Amos is more a statement of affirmativeness and that one of doom and gloom. In the spiritual sense, it is an announcement of the coming of the New Jerusalem. What parts of the prophecy so far seem to announce the coming of the New Jerusalem?
3. What explanation or understanding comes to you when the Writings say the Lord roars when He sees His church being taken away from Him by the devils? Can Hell really take the Lord's church away from Him?
4. How much are we aware of all that the Lord does for us? How often does He act on our behalf? Does He let us help Him? If so, how? How much is done for us, and how much do we do as if from ourselves?
5. How many secrets do you think the Lord has given us? I'm not thinking of a specific number as much as a sense of appreciation for all that we have been given. Do we value them enough? What do we do to cherish this gift each day?

AMOS 3:9-10

*"Proclaim in the palaces at Ashdod,
And in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say:
'Assemble on the mountains of Samaria;/
See great tumults in her midst,
And the oppressed within her.
For they do not know to do right,'
Says the Lord,
'Who store up violence and robbery in their palaces.'"*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...for thence it appears in what manner the church is being laid waste, vers. 9, 10..."

Note: This is the only direct reference we have to these two verses. Once again, our ability to understand these verses falls on our ability to use derived doctrine.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

Palaces

- Remember that "palaces," in the positive sense, signify the understanding in which the truths of doctrine from good are arranged in beautiful forms. (AC 4926)
- So what follows is a call to learn by reflecting on specific contrasts. What does one see in the spiritual palaces of Ashdod and Egypt? Is this what Israel was to reflect on so that they might learn or see the contrasts necessary to repent?

Palaces of Ashdod

- Ashdod was the city and site of the Philistine god, Dagon. What most important message should be proclaimed in the palaces of Ashdod? AE 817[10] indicates that Dagon represents an understanding that is destitute of the good of love. This is not what the Lord wants His spiritual palaces to reflect!

Palaces of Egypt

- And what was to be said in the palaces in the land of Egypt? Egypt represented the perversion and profaning of divine truths. (AC 4735[15]) Land, on the other hand, signifies "...the church...also what is not the church...." (AC 1066)
- It seems to make sense that the Lord wanted them to look at the perverted palaces of Egypt so they would see these were not the things of His representative church. He was challenging them to clean up the spiritual palace of the mind and to restore it to the beauty and order befitting the Lord God of Israel.

The Call to Assemble on the Mountains of Samaria

- The word assemble is used to represent arranging things in order. Take for instance this quote: "Assemble yourselves. That this signifies that they should set themselves in order...for in the spiritual sense 'to be assembled' has no other meaning, because truths and goods cannot be assembled unless they are also set in order." (AC 6338)
- Let's look at some representations of Samaria:
 - signifies the spiritual church or the same perverted. (AC 1368[3])
 - signifies the church which is in the affection of falsities or in affection of truth. (AC 2466[4])
 - signifies those who are in external worship. (AC 10050[2])
- In all likelihood, the last quote comes closest to what is represented here. The AC 10050 reference is cited for our Amos 3:12 verse.
- So, the Lord was calling for the reordering of external worship so that goods and truths might lead them to repentance.

Great Tumults in her Midst

- When external order is called for, internal disorder aligns itself to resist. It will not give up easily. It will cause great tumult and anxiety in the midst of the assembling order. Disorder will fight to maintain its existence and control. The Lord is telling the Israelites they have work and warfare to wage.

Ignorance of the Difference between Right and Wrong

- This makes sense. If the Israelites have impaired their external order, if that disorder entered worship, if truth did not matter, and if their prophets were told not to give prophecies, it seems logical to assume that they would lose the ability to discriminate between the things of the world and heaven.

Storing Violence and Robbery in Their Palaces

- When the ability to discriminate between right and wrong is lost, there will be serious damage or violence to truth and justice. People will warp moral virtues to fit the justifications needed to perpetrate thefts and lies. In the case of the Israelites in Amos, the worst aspect of this robbery and violence was that they made it appear legal and sanctioned by the church and the Word. Their palaces were shabby, artificial, and dysfunctional.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. The sacrament of Holy Supper offers a time for reflection. It is a time to look specifically at our lives and find an area of disorder that is blocks the light of heaven. When that specific disorder is seen, we need to make ourselves

guilty of it. We are to confess that sin, as something for which we alone are responsible. Then we are to supplicate the Lord for His help in removing that disorder. When we do this work of repentance, there is a last step in the pursuit of our goal: A new life. We must live the change to make improvement.

TCR 700[3] likens this most important sacrament to a river “containing scarcely visible grains of gold in great abundance; but when its holiness has been revealed, it is like the gold collected from the sand, melted into a mass, and wrought into beautiful forms.”

We are to be sifters. We are to separate out the falsity of sand so that we can find the gold. That collected gold then needs to be put into some form that will honor the Lord.

2. Consequently, we are to look at contrasts. We are to desire spiritual palaces that contain the gifts of a spiritual life, palaces that will show us the difference between right and wrong. We need to find the discriminating prudence that comes from the Word.
3. The church of Israel stands forth here as a symbol of waste and dishonor. Implied in this contrast are some questions: “What is the health and vitality of your church like? Is your palace a place where violence and robbery are stored? Or is it place where order is found and a tumult is going on in the midst, so that evil is banished from a sanctuary dedicated to the worship of the Lord God Jesus Christ?

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 3:9-10.

Read the summary from P&P.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. How successful are you at preparing for Holy Supper? Are you able to reflect on some specific thing you need help in overcoming so that Holy Supper is entered into worthily?
2. Do you slip into the general or vague request: “You know me, Lord. Remove whatever is most necessary.”? It appears from the Word that we need to be specific, own up to our mistakes, and not blame others for our conduct. Why do you think it is important to follow these steps? Why is it important to be specific?
3. How fair do we have to be to discriminate in matters of right and wrong? I’ve heard it said that the Lord wants us to make decisions. If we see that we have erred, He wants us to be willing to change. The mistake is to stubbornly hold to a wrong decision and refuse to change. What makes change hard in this context?

4. What is your view of this thing called self-esteem? Do we place this idea in its proper order of importance? What are some ways to keep a healthy perspective on self-esteem?

AMOS 3:11

*"Therefore thus says the Lord God:
An adversary shall be around the land;
He shall sap your strength from you,
And your palaces shall be plundered."*

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...wherefore the truths of the church perish by falsities, ver. 11..."

AC 2973[5&6]

- "...when man does not suffer the Lord to dispose the things round about to correspondence, then he recedes from heaven in the measure in which he does not suffer it. That the soul of man is in the midst...and that the body is round about...is well known; for it is the body that encompasses and invests his soul or his spirit.... It is now plain what 'round about' means." Amos 3:11 is cited as one of the references.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

An Adversary

- Like most correspondences, the word "adversary" has a good and bad sense. In the positive sense, the Lord is an adversary to hell and all of its workings. The Lord opposes its influence on our lives. The Lord also is our adversary when we insist on doing things that are harmful to our souls. That sense is involved in Matthew 5:25, where we read, "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him." In other words, when we are out of order, it is in our best spiritual interest to patch up our differences with the Lord as quickly as possible because we are wrong. The Lord has the truth and the facts about our transgressions. If we were to be taken to a "judge," the facts, the evidence, would clearly show us as guilty, and our adversary not only completely fair, but accurate. Save yourself the grief of the "hearing" or ruling of the judge, and agree to a settlement with the Lord.
- An adversary also may signify every evil and falsity that seeks to thwart our work of repentance. Hell seeks to intimidate, threaten, embarrass, flatter, and

mock us into quitting the work of repentance. It claims to have evidence to prove our unworthy state and tries to tell us to give up. The Lord appears to be the adversary but to the degree we “suffer” ourselves to allow the Lord to dispose things round about, we become the winners over the hells.

Around the Land...

- This word “land” has appeared often in our study. It represents “the church...also what is not the church....” (AC 1066) The seeming flip-flop here is not an inconsistency of doctrine. It represents the choice we make. We will dispose things so that the Lord can enter the soul and fill us with the things of the church, or we can dispose of the order of the Lord and become that which is not the church.

The Adversary Will Sap Strength and Plunder the Palaces

- If we turn our backs on the Lord, we lose vitality and we lose the spiritual palaces storing good and truth. If we join forces with the hells, they will surely plunder us. Hell has no love for individuals. Their hatred burns to destroy the souls of people. Either way, it is a lose-lose situation, whereas agreeing quickly with the Lord is a win-win choice.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. The Lord alerts us to the fact that hell, our adversary, is all around the church. Hell’s goal is simple. It wants to separate us from the Lord. How it accomplishes that goal is dependent on each person. Hell has a bag of thousands of dirty tricks. It will try them all. It wants to sap our strength. It wants to cause us to despair. It wants us to fight with one another.
2. To be alerted by the Lord to the plan of hell is a wise beginning. What we need to do is to “suffer” (allow) ourselves to be led by the Lord. The Lord has a plan that will conquer anything hell has to offer. Reading His Word, praying for His help, and seeking to be of use to Him and the neighbor are all ways to thwart the adversary.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 3:11.

Read the summary from P&P.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. Our unit of study covered one verse. That one verse had no direct teachings for us to consider. We sought the help of derived doctrine. Did that study help us see the meaning? Was anything left out that needs clarification?

2. Do we agree with the Lord because we are scared of hell, or do we agree with Him from a “holy fear?” I’m sure many of you know the difference. If not, check out DP 136-139.
3. How can we best “suffer” ourselves to let the Lord dispose the things of order “round about” us? The “suffer” means “allow.” What does it mean when we “allow” the Lord, who is Omniscient, Omnipresent, and Omnipotent, to do something for us?

AMOS 3:12

*“Thus says the Lord:
 As a shepherd takes from the mouth of a lion
 Two legs or a piece of an ear,
 So shall the children of Israel be taken out
 Who dwell in Samaria-
 In the corner of a bed and on the edge of a couch!”*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- “...and the goods and truths of the Word will be taken away from them, ver. 12...”

AC 3869[10&11]

- “...‘to snatch the two legs’ denotes the will of good; and the ‘piece of an ear,’ the will of truth. That a ‘piece of an ear’ denotes this can as before said be seen solely from the correspondences in the other life, and the derivative significatives, according to which the internal sense of the Word, and also the rituals in the Israelitish and Jewish Church.... the obedience of faith is understood by ‘ears’ and obeying by ‘hearing’...”

AC 6188[2]

- “That a ‘bed’ denotes what is natural, is because the natural is beneath the rational, and serves it as a bed; for the rational as it were lies down upon the natural; and because the natural is thus spread out underneath, it is called a ‘bed’ as...in Amos iii.12....‘in the corner of a bed’ denotes in the lowest of the natural; and ‘on the end of a couch’ denotes in what is sensuous. For by the people Israel whose metropolis was Samaria, was represented the Lord’s spiritual kingdom.”

AC 10050[1&2]

- "...the signification of 'legs'...the exterior things that belong to the natural man.... The like is signified by 'legs' in Amos....by 'the lion' are here signified those who lay waste the church; by 'legs,' the external of the church, which also is of the natural man; by 'a piece of an ear,' its perception; by 'them that dwell in Samaria,' those who are in external worship; 'the corner of a bed and the extremity of a couch' denote the lowest natural, which is the external sensuous, and its truth and good."

AR 137

- "Doctrine is also signified by 'bed' in Amos.... 'In the corner of a bed,' and 'in the extremity of a couch,' means what is more remote from the truths and goods of doctrine. 'Bed' and 'couch' and 'bed chamber' have a similar signification...."

AE 163[3]

- "'Bed' signifies the natural man, because the natural man underlies the spiritual, thus the spiritual lies on it and on the things that are in it as on its own bed.... In Amos...'Lion' signifies the church, here those therein that destroy goods and truths; 'legs and a bit of an ear' are the goods that are in the natural man, and something of perception of truth therefrom; 'the sons of Israel that dwell in Samaria' are those of the church; 'on the corner of the bed, and on the end of the couch,' are those in a little natural light from the spiritual, and in some truths therefrom."

DERIVED DOCTRINE

Shepherd

- "...is one who exercises the good of charity.... He leads and teaches...those who are led and taught are called the 'flock.'" (AC 343)

Mouth

- "By 'mouth' is signified doctrine, preaching and discourse...reasonings from falsities of doctrine...." (AR 574) This reference from AR also presents the meaning of "his mouth being as the mouth of a lion." A lion in the good sense is representative of the Divine truth of the Word.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. The summary of this verse has many threads to follow. I will attempt to follow one. You may be drawn to one of the other choices.
2. The children of Israel had made their bed, and they were lying in it. They chose the lowest quality of spiritual life. Their doctrine, their preaching, and their discourses were superficial and not very nourishing for the soul. The “beds” upon which their rational would rest kept them in a sensual squalor that was not befitting a church that was to represent the Lord and His Word to the world.
3. They were satisfied with squeezing religion in the corner and on the edge of the bed. Compare this attitude with the Advent lessons, when there was “no room in the inn” for the Lord to be born. They were so busy with their own agendas that they ignored the Lord’s plans for the church and failed to see the reality of their states.
4. Cramped and not restful, their souls had little (inferior) spiritual light. They hung on the edge of the bed (doctrine). The good of love and the good of wisdom, like two legs of a lamb, were in the mouth of the lion. The Lord as the Shepherd rescued what little good was left. He always preserves a remnant of a dying church so as to build a new one to serve as protector or repository for the living Word of the Lord.
5. The piece of the ear preserved is compellingly symbolic of the little obedience of faith the Israelites had left in them. A tattered, chewed on remnant of obedience. People only hear as well as they listen. Israel had ears that were heavy, and they were not listening well.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 3:12.

Read the summary from P&P.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. I wonder, as we go further into this study, how those who heard Amos understood this prophecy. The deeper levels of the correspondences have to be reviewed and remembered over and over. The Israelites were so wrapped up in their lies and superficiality that I don’t think they cared enough to pay attention. What do you think about this?
2. The image of the lion with the legs in its mouth and the piece of the ear being rescued is easy to keep in the mind’s eye. How can we best use this teaching for ourselves?
3. What about the bed as a resting place for the rational? Do we see this in a practical example? Is the crowded corner and sleeping on the edge of the bed something we can illustrate too? Do these things speak of our limited time of reading, reflecting on, and discussing doctrine each day? Our daily schedules

- seem to crowd out the spiritual and we know about this, but can we change our lifestyles?
4. We need to see these questions as a positive strengthening of spiritual priorities that are intended to improve the quality of our life, and not just negative weights laid on our busy, and somewhat confusing, time management decisions. What helps us see them as positive? Do we see positive outcomes when we address such questions?

AMOS 3:13-15

*"Hear and testify against the house of Jacob,
 Says the Lord God of hosts,
 That in the day I punish Israel for their transgressions,
 I will also visit destruction on the altars of Bethel;
 And the horns of the altar shall be cut off
 And fall to the ground.
 I will destroy the winter house along with the summer house;
 The houses of ivory shall perish,
 And the great houses shall have an end,
 Says the Lord."*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- In the previous verse, we read "...the goods and the truths of the Word will be taken away from them...." And now in verses 13-15, we are told: "...together with all things pertaining to the church, vers. 13-15."

AC 921[4]

- "...'altars' denote idolatrous worship. In Amos iii. 14... 'altars' denote representative worship became idolatrous."

AC 2832[10]

- "In Amos...the 'horns of the altar were to be cut off,' was because truth from good was no longer represented there; 'Bethel' is the Divine Good, and is therefore called the 'king's sanctuary,' and the 'house of the kingdom'...."

AC 10182[8]

- "In Amos...by 'the altars of Bethel,' and by its 'horns,' are signified evils and falsities destroying the good and truth of the church, of which it is said that they 'shall be cut off.'"

Doctrine of the Lord 4

- The Doctrine of the Lord 4 has a reference to Amos 3:14. There are many passages cited whereby the word ‘that day,’ ‘in that day,’ and ‘in that time’...is meant the Lord’s advent.”

AR 270

- “A horn...by it is everywhere (in the Word) signified power; therefore when a ‘horn’ is predicated of the Lord, it signifies omnipotence....that ‘a horn’ signifies power...may appear from the following passages...” Amos 3:14 is cited.

AR 392

- In AR 392, Amos 3:14 is cited as one of representative examples of where there was worship “from evil and from the falsities of evil.”

AE 316[20]

- “In Amos...‘The altars of Bethel’ signify worship from evil, and ‘the horns of the altar’ signify the falsities of that evil; and that these are to be destroyed is signified by ‘the horns shall be cut off and fall to the earth.’”

AE 391[29]

- “In Amos...‘To visit the transgressions of Israel upon him’ signifies their last state, in the spiritual sense their state after death, when they are to be judged; it is said ‘to visit,’ instead of to judge, because visitation always proceeds judgment; ‘the altars of Bethel’ signify the worship from evil; ‘the horns of the altar’ signify worship from falsities, thus these signify all things of worship; and that these are to be destroyed is signified by ‘the horns shall be hewn down and fall to the earth.’ It is said, ‘I will visit upon the altars of Bethel,’ because Jeroboam separated the Israelites from the Jews, and erected two altars, one in Bethel and the other in Dan...”
- This quote goes on for quite a bit more. One of the interesting points made in it is that these two altars represented a division and separation of worship from charity, and brought people to the state where “the mouth speaks apart from the understanding and the will, that is apart from the mind...they say men ought to believe even though they do not understand...(thus) they put aside deeds or goods of charity.”

AC 1453[2&4]

- "...for man is a Bethel, that is a house of God, and also a gate of heaven, when he is in the celestial things of knowledges.... After Jeroboam had profaned Bethel...it had an opposite representation...."

AR 774

- "That 'ivory' signifies natural truth may be evident from the passages where ivory is mentioned, as...Amos iii. 15...."

AE 1146[3]

- "In (Amos) 'Houses' signify the things of the human mind, here the things of the natural mind separate from the spiritual mind; 'winter house and summer house' signify things of the natural man that are called sensual, and 'house of ivory' and 'great house' signify the things of the natural man that are called rational, 'house of ivory' here meaning those that have relation to truth, and 'great house' those that have relation to good."

AR 595

- "By 'horns' is signified power...here the power of speaking, teaching, and writing, thus of reasoning and arguing."

DERIVED DOCTRINE

This section of our study has a tremendous amount of information regarding Amos' prophecy. There is so much that I will not seek to find any more because it might overwhelm us in the summation of these verses. I will proceed now to the summary section.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. When things go wrong, we often look for the cause. In this series, it would appear that it is important for us to start with the possible cause of things...King Jeroboam. AE 391[29] tells us that the Lord needed to visit (bring judgment) upon Israel because "Jeroboam separated the Israelites from the Jews, and erected two altars, one in Bethel and the other in Dan." His motives brought about serious effects:
Bethel had represented a house of God and a gate to heaven. Bethel took on an opposite representation.
Their mouths (worship) separated the understanding and will. Doctrine was presented with a requirement to believe, even though they had no understanding of what it all meant. Therefore, their hearts left the worship,

and closeness to the Lord was absent.

The horns of the altar signified power: the power of speaking, teaching, and writing, and thus reasoning and arguing. When the will and understanding were separated, these sources of power gradually diminished, and like a flickering light, they were about to go out.

Worship had no checks and balances. The people, like blind men, followed the teachings of their priesthood as long as it pleased them to do so.

Therefore, falsity and idolatry entered the house of the Lord, profaning the very vessels of representation.

Every form of a spiritual house suffered. The winter house, the summer house, the ivory house and the great houses. The sensual, the rational and their relationship to the truth and good, were gone or destroyed.

No one cared. Their ruling love as represented by Jeroboam separated and perverted all of the arrangements and ordering of the tribes the Lord had seen to. The Lord's ordering was so powerful Balaam could not pronounce a curse on Israel...only a blessing.

2. The Lord said that He would punish Israel for their transgressions. The punishment was not from anger but love. His love appears hard to the wicked, but it is full of mercy. The Lord had to cut off the "horns" of their altars. Their power of speaking lies, their power of teaching profanation and idolatry, their writing of foolishness, and their specious reasoning and arguments had to be cut off.
3. The house of God—the gate of heaven—was not available to the people, and the Lord needed to restore communication with the church. There could be no compromises or easing back into things. Like a cancer, their self-serving lies had to be removed completely before the contamination tainted all vital forms of spiritual love.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 3:13-15.

Read the summary from P&P.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. Have you formed your summary of these verses? It is important that we do this so that our ability to connect the series increases as we move on.
2. There are many other historical reasons why the nations divided. Bringing that into this section may be useful. What points might be added to strengthen this study?
3. The different houses show a fascinating progression. I wanted to check the signification of each a little deeper. Winter. Summer. Ivory. Great houses. Anyone willing to go further? What does each one mean? What might the progression mean?

4. What can we as New Church members take from this so we may protect ourselves from or avert the failings presented in this text?

Chapter Four

AMOS 4:1-3

*"Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria,
Who oppress the poor,
Who crush the needy,
Who say to your husbands, 'Bring wine, let us drink!'
The Lord God has sworn by His holiness:
Behold, the days shall come upon you
When He will take you away with fishhooks,
And your posterity with fishhooks.
You will go out through broken walls,
Each one straight ahead of her,
And you will be cast into Harmon,
Says the Lord."*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- “Concerning those who pervert the doctrine of the church, that they will also fall into falsities in outermost things, vers. 1-3...”

AC 5198[3]

- “...that by ‘kine’ are signified truths of the natural may be seen from the passages in which they are mentioned....” Amos 4:1 is cited.

AC 2842[6]

- “In Amos...Jehovah swearing by His...‘great name’...by His ‘holiness’...signifies the confirmation there is in Jehovah or the Lord. A confirmation by Jehovah can be given only from Himself.” Amos 4:2 is cited.

AC 7192

- Note: When the Lord said, “I am Jehovah”...this signifies confirmation from the Divine which is irrevocable...for nothing can be confirmed by Jehovah...except by Himself: it cannot be confirmed by heaven, because this is far beneath Him, still less by anything in the world; but in order that there may be Divine confirmation which is eternal and irrevocable, it must be by the Divine Itself.”

AR 439

Note: The New King James translation says, "He will take you away with fishhooks." In the Writings, this verse is worded "...they shall take you away with stings."

- "By 'stings' are signified falsities from evil, doing hurt...." Amos 4:2 is cited.

AR 474

- This number contains an explanation of the Lord swearing by His holiness. "...the Divine truth testifies...from itself and by itself." Amos 4:2 and 6:8 are cited.

AE 513[14]

- "In Amos...‘they shall draw you out with hooks, and your posterity with fishhooks’...signifies leading away and alienating from truths by means of acute reasonings from falsities and fallacies; it is said of those who abound in knowledges because they have the Word and the prophets; such are here meant by ‘the kine of Bashan in the mountain of Samaria.’"

Note: In a prior number to the quote above, there is an interesting quote about the meaning of "hooks." "...if the spiritual is not dominant...both thoughts and affections are wondering, and thus man is destitute of the intelligence that should lead and rule...then every falsity and every evil has power to draw them over to their side, and thus wholly destroy them, is signified by 'Let him draw out all with the hook'...."(Habakkuk 1:15).

AE 560[4]

- "...falsities are signified by 'sharp instruments' in Amos: Behold the days will come upon you in which they will draw you out with barbs, and your posterity with fishhooks (iv. 2). 'To draw out with barbs' signifies to lead away from truths by knowledges (scientifica) from the Word and from the world falsely applied; and 'to draw out with fishhooks' signifies to lead away from truths by the fallacies of the senses, from which the sensual man reasons."

AE 608[2]

- In Amos iv. 2, it is said that the Lord "hath sworn by His holiness." AE 608[2] explains that this signifies "...confirmation, asseveration and simple verity, or that it is true...."

AC 4926[6]

- “In Amos: They shall draw out your posterity with fish-hooks. Ye shall go forth through the breaches, every one straight before her; and ye shall throw down the palace (iv. 2, 3); ‘to go forth through the breaches’ denotes falsities from reasonings; the ‘palace’ is the Word, consequently the truth of doctrine which is from good. And as by ‘breaches’ is signified the falsity which comes into existence by the separation of good and truth...”

DERIVED DOCTRINE

Bashan

- “...by ‘Bashan’ the external of the church, thus the natural, was signified, for Bashan was outside the land of Canaan where the church was.” (AE 163[8])

Oppressing the Poor and Crushing the Needy

- Oppressing the poor and crushing the needy is reasonably straightforward in its meaning. This represents a withholding or destruction of truths so that the spiritually poor, internally and externally, have no care or sustenance. Crushing is a restriction or holding down of the conatus or endeavor to grow spiritually.

Asking Husbands to Bring Wine and Let Us Drink

- Since this verse is not explained, we must make an attempt to get some application. Were the wives (affections) seeking a rational wisdom from their husbands? When there is a request to drink wine, it signifies a wish to investigate what belongs to faith. (AC 1071) Is this what they were requesting? Was the reference to the wives, “cows of Bashan,” a derogatory term?

Going out Through Broken Walls, Each Straight Ahead of Her

- The breach in the wall represents “falsity from reasonings” and the “separation of good and truth.” (AC 4926)
- The word “straight” usually has a positive representation of leveling, smoothing out the rough places, preparation to receive the Lord (AE 405[36]), turning the evil of ignorance into good (AC 3527[3]). There has to be a significance here that indicates Providence is going to bring good out of their disorder.
- Could the Lord be saying that all of their games of pretense and misuse of the Word will be plainly laid out before them? Their participation in the breaching of the Word made the Lord’s truth rough, uneven, and treacherous

for anyone to use. The time was at hand for a change. The Lord in His Providence saw the spiritual need to bring the Word back to His level, even, and smooth state so that people could be brought out of the evil of ignorance to receive the Lord.

Being Cast into Harmon

- We have no reference in the Writings to a place called Harmon. The *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* has a short article on Harmon that has some interesting historical comments and conjecture that might shed some light on our study:
- “The name Harmon appears (in Amos) and then nowhere else in the Bible, and no place by this name is known.” The article suggests various names or meanings for the word Harmon:
 - • The Palace
 - Beyond the mountains of Armenia
 - The mountains of Romman
 - Behind the wall of Samaria
 - Naked
 - Devoted to destruction

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. Our references from the Writings tell us that the “kine” represent those who abound in knowledges because they had the Word and the prophets. Instead of using that abundance wisely for the advancement of their spiritual uses, they turned the abundance to further their own interests.
2. They alienated themselves from truth with their “acute reasonings.” Their logic was “wondering.” They used truth as they saw fit. The consequences of this approach drew them over to the side of evil and destroyed truth. They got “hooked” on the painful barbs, or fish-hooks, of the sensual man’s short-sighted reasoning.
3. Such a careless disregard for the Word leaves the spiritually poor oppressed, and it crushes a healthy sense of one’s needy state.
Doctrine intended to offer protection is like a formidable wall; when it is not maintained, it develops breaches in it. Pulled out by the ‘hooks’ of wandering, the residents of the city are carried off to that uncertain place of Harmon. They become estranged from their beloved place. They are taken outside Samaria’s walls. They are “spiritually naked” and seem “devoted to destruction.”

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 4:1-3.
Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. Do any of the prophecies in this section seem appropriate for things we are experiencing now? In our present day idiom, we describe being obsessed or addicted as being “hooked.” Our affections want something so badly we can hardly concentrate on other things. Our thoughts return again and again to the thing we want. If it is a selfish “hook,” will doctrine pull the hook out? Will the walls of doctrine hold firm? Do breaches begin to show up? Can they be mended?
2. Have we ever gotten hooked on some “wandering” sensual reasoning that carried us off to an unknown place? The unknown doesn’t give us a clue as to where we are, and we don’t know how to get back to the safe city and the protective walls of the church. What can you do when you are lost in this way? How can you help someone else who is lost?
3. In the section titled “Passages From the Writings,” look at the quote from AC 7192. How do you understand this teaching? “...confirmation from the Divine which is irrevocable...” And then it ends with this: “in order that there may be Divine confirmation which is eternal and irrevocable, it must be by the Divine itself.” How might we apply this to life?
4. Can you think of situations in which “acute reasonings” have led you or someone you know astray? Why are these reasoning so dangerous? What makes us vulnerable to them? How can we guard against them? How might these reasonings be similar to the mental processes we call “mind games”?

AMOS 4:4-6

*“Come to Bethel and transgress,
At Gilgal multiply transgression;
Bring your sacrifices every morning,
Your tithes every three days.
Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven,
Proclaim and announce the freewill offerings;
For this you love,
You children of Israel!
Says the Lord God.
Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities.
And lack of bread in all your places;
Yet you have not returned to Me,
Says the Lord.”*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...that they arrange a worship in externals according to the statutes, which will be similar [to real worship], yet only in the outermost things, vers. 4-6..."

AC 1453[3&4]

- "...‘Bethel’ signifies knowledges....That the ark of Jehovah was in Bethel, and that the sons of Israel came thither and inquired of Jehovah...also that the king of Assyria sent one of the priests whom he brought from Samaria, and he dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear Jehovah.... After Jeroboam had profaned Bethel...it had an opposite representation...." Amos 3:14, 15; 4:5-7 are cited.

AC 2165 [5&6]

- "...‘bread’ is the Lord, it belongs to the celestial things which are of love.... therefore they who are not in love and charity have not the Lord with them, and thus are not gifted with the good and happy things that in the internal sense are signified by ‘bread.’ ...In the Prophets also the celestial things of love are signified by ‘bread’...." Amos 4:6 and 8:11 are cited as examples.

AC 9052[3]

- "In Amos ...‘emptiness of teeth’ denotes scarcity of truth; and ‘lack of bread,’ scarcity of good....‘the teeth’ in the opposite sense, signify the falsity, which destroys truth..." Amos 4:6 is cited.

AE 556[12]

- "In Amos...‘Emptiness of teeth in the cities’ stands for a scarcity of truth in doctrines in the life." Amos 4:6 is cited.

AE 556[20]

- "Because the teeth correspond to the ultimates of man’s intellectual life, which are called sensual, and these when separated from the truths of the interior understanding, which are called spiritual, are in the falsities of evil...so ‘teeth in the Word signify also ultimate truths...." Amos 4:6 is cited.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

Transgress

- There are a myriad of ways transgressions are acted out against the Lord: Disobedience, being treacherous, being obstinate, breaking the Commandments, or implementing a form of cunning and deceit that mimics innocence and truth. Each of these actions is a choice of evil that is contrary to the Lord's good and truth. "To see and understand that a thing is evil, **and still do it**, makes a person guilty." (AC 9069)

Gilgal

- "...signifies the doctrine of natural truth, which is serviceable for introduction into the church...." (AE 700[14])

At Gilgal Multiply Transgressions

- In the positive sense, multiply "...signifies the fruitfulness of the rational man when it submits itself to the sovereign control of the interior man when adjoined to good...unless the rational submits itself...it either suffocates, or rejects, or perverts the things that flow in; and this is still more the case when they flow into the sensuous knowledges of the memory." (AC 1940[1&3])

Sacrifice Every Morning

- The Writings remind us that sacrifice means to offer up, or part with, something that blocks or hinders the soul. Sacrificing such obstacles aids our efforts to submit our interior person to the control of the Lord. The minute directions of what and how to sacrifice were not recorded so vicarious atonement might be achieved, but to represent the care needed when a "sacrifice" is offered to the Lord so that our thoughts and affections might be worthily set before Him each day. What are we to give up? We are to give up the proprium that would turn its back on the Lord and set itself up as the object of worship.
- If our sacrifices are to be accepted by the Lord, there needs to be the 'morning' state of illustration; a state of new clarity; a state of brightness and new beginnings. These are the goals to be sought each day so we may move from ignorance to enlightenment. See AC 5097.

Tithes Every Three Days

- We are taught in various places that "tithes" represent remains and that "three" denotes what is holy. See AC 902 and also the following

quote: “[Tithes are]...the goods and truths which are stored up by the Lord in man’s interiors, and which goods are called ‘remains’....” (AC 3740)

Offering a Sacrifice of Thanksgiving with Leaven

- In AC 9287, we read about keeping a feast of thanksgiving and unleavened things. The latter represents “purification from falsities” and that this was a state of worship from a glad mind on account of “liberation from damnation.”
- Leavening things, on the other hand, represent evil and falsity rendering spiritual things impure and profane. See AC 2342. Leavening causes things to ferment or to bring one to the state of combat.

Announcing Freewill Offerings

- What kind of offerings? Meat? First Fruits? Heave offerings? Gifts? This prophecy doesn’t specify. The emphasis seems to fall on the word freewill. Offering represents some form of worship. What seems to be at issue here is the spirit of the giving or worshiping. Is it being offered as an obligation, or is it a willing or spontaneous act of worship? There is a passage in TCR 430 where payment of tribute and taxes seem to capture the spirit of the difference between freewill and duty bound offerings:
 - “Those who are spiritual pay these with one disposition of heart, and those who are merely natural with another. The spiritual pay them from good will, because they are collected for the preservation of their country, and for its protection and the protection of the church, also for the administration of government officials....Those, therefore, to whom their country and also the church are the neighbor, pay their taxes willingly and cheerfully....But those to whom their country and the church are not the neighbor pay them unwillingly and with resistance; and at every opportunity defraud and withhold; for to such their own household and their own flesh are the neighbor.”
- Freewill offerings would spring from the heart as a form of love and appreciation for all of the Lord’s benefits. The duty-bound would go through the motions to appear appreciative, but within their hearts they would resist and resent the inconvenience of the ritual, not feeling that the Lord and the church are the neighbor to be loved.

Clean Teeth

- Note what the Writings say about “cleanness of teeth.” Please note this does not mean their teeth were toothbrush clean. The Writings, in AC 9052[2] and AE 556[12] teach us that this means “emptiness of teeth” or to be missing teeth, so we must see this as being representative of the scarcity of truth and scarcity of doctrine.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. Having gone through most of the correspondences in these verses, we must now go back and begin with what we were taught in P&P: "...they arrange a worship in externals according to the statutes, which will be similar to real worship, yet only in the outermost things..."
Jeroboam profaned Bethel and brought about an opposite representation of spiritual knowledges. What example past or present might illustrate this for us?
2. When the Word says that they transgressed Bethel, it means that they transgressed the knowledges of the Word. When the Word says that they multiplied the transgressions of Gilgal, it means that they twisted the introductory natural truths so badly that they misled those hearing them, and the lies prevented them from offering the kind of sacrifices, each day, that would have given them the insights necessary to amend their lives.
3. The multiplicity of falsity prevented the remains from serving the inner man. Instead of offering an unleavened sacrifice of thanksgiving (purification from falsities and a celebration of liberation from damnation), they were offering the sacrifice of leaven that represents evil and falsity rendering spiritual things impure and profane.
4. Giving to the Lord, and the temple, was for show. Those donating lavishly looked at their gifts as earning meritorious mercy from the Lord. Their use of the sacrifices was not for the Lord out of grateful hearts. Sadly, it only served their need for peer recognition. This seems to explain why the Lord said to them, "For this you love, you children of Israel."
5. The "great emptiness" message comes through the unfolding of these verses. The lack of teeth prevented them from eating and chewing foods that would have been better for them; the lack of bread in all of their palaces told them of the Lord's absence; and yet, they seemed to have no awareness of these deficiencies because they failed to correct them and return to the Lord.
6. Worship requirements were being met to fill the laws, and it appeared that they were just like the "real thing," but they were worshiping with emptiness of teeth and no bread.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 4:4-6.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. These verses introduce the idea of bringing sacrifices every morning and tithes every three days. What might this mean to us? In what ways do you do some or all of this?

2. Is the use of leavening always bad? Don't we need to be brought to the point of combat so we may remove impurities? How does this teaching fit with what the Writings tell us about the nature of temptation?
3. Freewill offerings. There are times we question the wisdom of expenditures made for the church. To demonstrate our disfavor with a person or policy, we might withhold some of our future support as a sign of protest. Is this ever appropriate? Why, or why not? Have we ever justified it by saying that we will spend that money on our needs because we are also the neighbor? Should we feel guilty for not being more generous or cheerful about offering our gifts to the church?
4. Think about chewing food without teeth. Some have little confidence in their thinking skills, so they fail to think for themselves. They rely on the thinking or opinions of others. If we were to offer an analogy, we might say they have no teeth and are satisfied with prepared foods that resemble "baby food" instead of chewing things over for themselves. What are some reasons why this happens? Why is it dangerous?
How would we characterize our generation, or the current time? Are we toothless, with a scarcity of truth and a scarcity of doctrine? Is this a choice? Is there also a lack of bread in our midst? Remember, that means a scarcity of the Lord's love.
5. How aware might we be of the times the Lord called us out of our transgressions and we failed to hear or come out of them? Is our conscience tuned in to the Lord, or is it overwhelmed with the noise of other values?

AMOS 4:7-8

*"I also withheld rain from you,
When there were still three months to the harvest.
I made it rain on one city,
I withheld rain from another city.
One part was rained upon,
And where it did not rain the part withered.
So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water,
But they were not satisfied;
Yet you have not returned to Me,
Says the Lord."*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...that some truths will remain, when the rest have become falsities, whence the truths have no power, vers. 7, 8..."

AC 382[2]

- “In Amos...where by the ‘part of the field on which it rained’ is signified the doctrine of faith from charity; and by the ‘part’ or ‘piece’ ‘of the field on which it did not rain,’ the doctrine of faith without charity.” Amos 4:7-8 is cited.

AR 496

- “That ‘rain’ signifies the Divine truth from heaven, appears from these passages...” Amos 4:7-8 is cited.

AE 644 [9&10]

- “...the Lord...always flows in both with the evil and with the good...but the cause is with the man of the church, that he does not receive any influx of Divine truth, for the man who does not receive closes up with himself the interiors of his mind...‘to command the clouds that they rain no rain’ signifies that no influx of Divine truth from heaven is received....rain...is the source of spiritual intelligence...‘no rain’ signifies that no such intelligence is given...because of the evils and falsities that refuse to receive and that reject it.” Amos 4:7-8 is cited as one example.

AE 532[8]

- “In Amos...This treats of the lack of truth at the end of the church, when those who desire truth from spiritual affection will not find any truth in the doctrines, wherever they may search, and therefore it is said, ‘two three cities wandered unto one city to drink waters, yet they were not satisfied;’ ‘two three cities’ signifying those who are in the affection of truth from good, ‘city’ signifying the truth of doctrine; ‘to draw waters’ signifies to learn truths; ‘to wander’ signifies to search; and ‘not to be satisfied’ signifies not to find truth which in itself is truth; it is said ‘two three cities,’ because ‘two three’ signifies those who are in good and in truth therefrom.” Amos 4:8 is cited.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

Harvest

- “...‘harvest’ signifies the last state of the church preceding the Last Judgment, when the Lord explores every one and separates...” (AE 908)
- Almost all of AE 911[1-18] is a repetition that “harvest” signifies the last state of the church. In AR 645, “harvest” signifies the church with respect to divine truth because corn is harvested and corn is used to make ‘bread’ and bread signifies the good of the church.

Almost everything we need to look toward a summary was given to us, so we will not include more derived doctrine here.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. When falsity is the mainstay of a church, it belittles the power of truth. Think of it this way: If everyone in the world were insane, their insanity would appear to be sanity. The sane person trying to teach or live out the truth would be viewed as a “lunatic,” and his actions would be drawn into question and found unacceptable. Could this be analogous to what the faithful remnant in Israel experienced?
2. The Lord who loves all lets His rain fall upon the just and the unjust evenly. It is not the Lord who withholds the rain. Some will not allow His rain to fall into their city. They close off their minds to the Divine truth. Spiritually, they wither. They choose to resist the Lord’s “rain” and consequently fail to quench their parched souls with the living water that only the Lord can give.
3. For a few in Israel, there was a vague sense that something was missing from their lives. They searched and found water in another city, but that water could not satisfy their thirst. Why? Could it have been that they sought water from others and not the Lord? Is it an example of what the Word teaches us, that we can’t borrow truth from someone else? Is it like the example of David not being able to wear Saul’s armor?
4. Lastly, we have the wistful refrain “yet you have not returned to Me...” There was a spiritual thirst, but a collective “amnesia” as to where that thirst could be quenched. The Israelites were so caught up in the rush of external prosperity and peace that they did not know how withered they were. What would it take to snap them out of their spiritual lethargy?

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 4:7-8.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. Are there any questions here? The spiritual sense clearly outlines that the Israelite cities had no rain because they rejected the Lord.
2. I wonder about those who went to another city for water. Does it seem “unfair” that they ended up not being satisfied? Don’t they get some credit for looking in some other city? Could this search for water in another city represent lazy thinking and the willingness to borrow from the minds of others without consulting the Lord’s Word? How might it compare to the people we mentioned in the last lesson who did not want to chew their food (think for themselves)?

The Lord will not leave anyone thirsty if they truly seek His living water.

- What might have kept the Lord from “raining on their city”? Were they representative of those who make moral judgments in the “light” of popular opinions?
3. Can you remember a situation where your concept of what was right, sane, and reasonable was made to look unreasonable, insane, and wrong? How does one deal with that experience?
 4. Think about all of the activities or lifestyles that at one time were viewed as disorderly and are now tolerated. Things that Swedenborg called “unspeakable evils” are now called “viable alternative lifestyles.” Were people wrong in the past? Were we narrow-minded? Have we found new truths in the Word to change our understanding on these issues? Or have we drawn unsatisfactory water from other cities that won’t sate the thirst?

AMOS 4:9

*I blasted you with the blight and mildew.
When your gardens increased,
Your vineyards,
Your fig trees,
And your olive trees,
The locust devoured them;
Yet you have not returned to Me,
Says the Lord.”*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- “...that afterwards all things of the church have been falsified, ver. 9...”

AC 9277[3]

- “In Amos...‘vineyards’ denote the goods of faith; and ‘olive trees’ the goods of love; the punishment for not receiving these goods is signified by ‘the caterpillar devouring the olive trees.’” Amos 4:9 is cited.

AC 9277[3]

- “...‘the fig tree’ denotes natural good; ‘the vine,’ spiritual good; ‘the olive,’ celestial good....”

AC 9331[5]

- “That falsities and evils in the extremes—that is, in the external sensuous of the man of the church—are signified by the various kinds of insects...for the

subject treated of is the perversion of the truth and good of the church... which are destroyed by such insects..." Amos 4:9 is cited.

AC 10261[8]

- "...the 'fig tree' signifies the good of the external church...but the 'vine' the good of the internal spiritual church, and the 'olive' the good of the internal celestial church." Amos 4:9 is cited.

AE 403[8]

- "In Amos...'Gardens' signify all things of the church that constitute intelligence and wisdom; 'vineyards' spiritual goods and truths; 'fig trees' natural goods and truths; 'olive trees' celestial goods and truths; 'the palmer-worm' means the falsity that destroys...." Amos 4:9 is cited.

AE 638[20]

- • "In Amos...'Gardens' signify such things as belong to spiritual intelligence; 'blasting and mildew' signify evil and falsity in what is most external, or from the corporeal-sensual...the 'palmer-worm' signifies falsity destroying good." Amos 4:9 is cited.
- That "...a 'vineyard' signifies the spiritual church is evident from the passages in the Word..." Amos 4:9 is cited.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

The Insect

Note: The locust, the caterpillar, the worm, and the palmer-worm are the various names we find used in the translations for the insect that devoured the vineyard, the fig tree, and the olive trees.

- AE 543[8] says 'locust' and the 'caterpillar' have the same signification...'locust' signifies the falsity of the sensual man, and the 'caterpillar' its evil...."
- "The falsity of evil, which is in the good that is from our own, is compared to 'a worm' because the case with them is similar; for falsity also gnaws and thus torments." (AC 8481) "...the palmer-worm means the falsity that destroys..." (AE 403[8])

Blasting

- Webster's Dictionary defines this word as breathing; a violent gust of wind; or a sudden stream or discharge of air. AC 8286 says that when predicated of

the Lord, "...‘blowing with the nostrils’ or ‘breathing,’ is signified to be angry....” It would seem that this is the sense of understanding we should follow with “I blasted you with blight and mildew.”

Blight

- Turning to Webster’s Dictionary again, we read that a blight is “A disease or injury to a plant that results in a withering, cessation of growth, and death of parts, as leaves, without rotting.”

Mildew

- “...a thin, whitish growth produced on organic matter, and on plants by fungi...”
- As we know from experience, that thin layer of white is one form of fungi; another is the blackish layer of fungi. Both forms of fungi do harm to plants.

I’m sure there is some spiritual correspondence for this. Could the following application have some merit for us to consider?

A lie is a lie whether it is a “white lie” or a “black lie,” and eventually, it will put some kind of blight on our moral character and injure our first efforts to do good. Withering, cessation of growth, and the death of many a good intention are experiences we all have felt and regretted.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. *P&P* says that “...all things of the church have been falsified.”
2. Therefore, it follows that the representations in this story of the things of the church (vineyards, fig trees, and olive trees) should be shown undergoing some affliction. When the things of the church are falsified, the garden with all spiritual intelligence is a victim. The loss of celestial, spiritual, and natural good shows the demise of their love. When obedience is lost, the person in the church doesn’t hear, see, or submit to the urges of the Word. Spiritual insights are warped and made meaningless. The heart that is absent from the Lord turns cold and is inclined to follow the urges of self, the sensual or corporeal interests. To people in that state, such as the children of Israel in this story, it appears that the Lord is angry and blasting. Blight and mildew attack the growth (or lack thereof), and the locust, caterpillar, worm, or palmer-worm destroy the spiritual garden.
3. “Yet you have not returned to Me.” Notice that this is the second time in this chapter that the same phrase is given to the Israelites, and it will be used again in verse 10. Like a patient and loving parent, the Lord wants them to see the consequences of their actions. The Lord wants to face them with reality. What will it take for them to see what they are doing to themselves?

What more could the Lord have done for them? And yet, instead of having a vineyard that produced sweet grapes, they produced sour grapes not fit for much of anything.

4. What we can anticipate, from the historical perspective, is that the people of the church eventually will turn, and project on the Lord anger and disregard for their condition. They will act as if this spiritual blight came on them suddenly with no warning. They will see and remember the great “blast” as a manifestation of His sudden anger and impatience with human beings. With anguished voices, they will cry out: “Why, O Lord have you visited us with such direful punishment?”

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 4:9.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. Does this verse prepare us to think about our gardens, vineyards, fig trees, and olive trees? How can we assess the state of our gardens, etc.?
2. The blight, the mildew, and the worms that attack and seek to destroy the church: Can you put a face on them? Is there some form of “spiritual spray” to protect the tree of life?
3. The Writings liken the worm to the proprium. It is a worm that is within and gnaws its way out and thus torments. Fruit trees have to be sprayed when the blossom appears, to rid the blossom of the worm. Otherwise, the fruit will be eaten from within. Is there a message here for us?
4. What is your impression of the Lord’s words, “And yet you have not returned to Me...”?
5. The external church, the internal spiritual church, and the internal celestial church: Are you able to differentiate the meanings of these terms? How about effect, cause, and end? That is a reverse order of what should be for the church. We are taught that all order flows from End to Cause to Effect. Could it significant that philosophical “proofs of God” often reversed the method of finding God? They each start their effort by looking from the effects to cause to end.

AMOS 4:10-11

*“I sent among you a plague after the manner of Egypt;
Your young men I killed with a sword,
Along with your captive horses;
I made the stench of your camps come up into your nostrils;
Yet you have not returned to Me,
Says the Lord.”*

*I overthrew some of you,
As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,
And you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning;
Yet you have not returned to Me,
Says the Lord."*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...and that, lastly, they were profaned through sensual scientifcics, which have spread to all things of the church, so that scarcely anything was left, vers. 10, 11;"

AC 2799[14&19]

- "In Amos...‘in the way of Egypt’ denotes the memory-knowledges which vastate, when they reason from them on Divine things; the ‘captivity of the horses’ denotes the intellectual faculty deprived of its endowment....That a ‘sword’ in the opposite sense signifies falsity combating...a ‘sword’ also signifies the punishment of falsity...." Amos 4:10 is cited.

AC 7102[8]

- "In Amos...‘the pestilence in the way of Egypt’ denotes the vastation of good by means of falsities, which are ‘the way of Egypt;’ ‘I have slain your young men with the sword, with the captivity of the horses,’ denotes the vastation of truth. (By ‘young men’ are signified truths, and by ‘horses’ things of the intellect...)" Amos 4:10 is cited.

AC 7102[9&10]

- "...‘pestilence’ denotes adulterated good....‘pestilence’ denotes every kind of evil and its damnation."

AC 7161[2]

- "...as ‘odor’ denotes all that which is grateful to the Lord, so ‘stink’ denotes that which is ungrateful to the Lord, consequently ‘stink’ denotes aversion, and also abomination....which are of falsity and evil." Amos 4:10 is cited.

AC 7505

- "In Amos...where ‘the pestilence in the way of Egypt’ denotes the vastation of good and truth by means of falsities, which are ‘the way of Egypt;’ ‘your

young men have I slain with the sword, with the captivity of horses' denotes the vastation of truth; 'young men' denotes truths, and 'horses' intellectual things..." Amos 4:10 is cited.

AC 7668[3]

- "...young men'...in the original tongue denote intelligence, thus its truth, in Amos...where 'the way of Egypt' denotes memory-knowledges perverted; the 'young men' who were slain,' the truths thence destroyed; 'the captivity of the horses,' the intellectual seduced." Amos 4:10 is cited.

AC 10458

- "...the vastation of truth is here treated of, and when this is vastated, the 'camp' signifies hell....'pestilence' denotes vastation...'way' denotes truth, and in the opposite sense falsity...'Egypt' denotes what is external, and also hell...'a sword' denotes falsity fighting against truth...'young men' denote the truths of the church...'to be slain' denotes to perish spiritually...'captivity' denotes the privation of truth...'horses' denote an understanding which is enlightened...'a stink' denotes what is abominable exhaling from hell.... From this it is evident that in this sense a 'camp' denotes hell...." Amos 4:10 is cited.

AR 862

- This number has a reference to Amos 4:10 and only indicates that 'camp' signifies falsities and evils.

AC 2220[2]

- "In Amos...where Samaria is treated of, by which is signified the perverted spiritual church, and which in respect to evils in general contrary to the goods of charity is called 'Sodom,' and in respect to falsities in general contrary to the truths of faith is called 'Gomorrah;' and in respect to both...is called the 'overthrowing of God.' Amos 4:11 is cited.

AR 502

- "...'Sodom' is the love of dominating from self-love.... These loves and their evils are signified by 'Sodom and Gomorrah'...." Amos 4:11 is cited.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

A Firebrand Plucked from the Burning

- *AE 559[8]* explains that “A ‘smoking fire-brand’ signifies the lust of falsity and consequent wrath against the truths and goods of the church.”
- AC 6952 also explains that “...‘smoking firebrands’ denote wrath.”

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. With so much given to us regarding these verses, where should we start tying together a workable theme? My attention was drawn to the words “memory knowledges.”
The memory of each person is unique and has wonderful and necessary facts stored up for our usage now and later. The five senses gather impressions, note contrasts, give us the ability to cognitively follow certain logical cause-and-effect relationships. The Writings talk about the scientifics and truths in a person’s memory cohering into “bundles” or forms of information that are arranged according to the person’s loves. (See AC 5881.) Briefly, the memory is like a gateway by which the Lord may work the wonderful miracles of elevating the mind into the light of continuous and discrete degrees. So much more may be said about the potential of the things in one’s memory.
2. But the internal sense indicates that something is not right with the “memory knowledges” referred to in this story. There are words like “pestilence,” “killed with the sword,” “captivity,” “stench,” “overthrown,” “Sodom and Gomorrah,” and “firebrand” that tell us that these memory knowledges are not interested in being useful or of service to the Lord. Instead, these memory knowledges are intent on the “...overthrowing of God.” (AC 2220[2])
3. Continuous and discrete degrees require a “conatus” that seeks conjunction with the Lord. In The Doctrine of the Lord 102, we read: “...with one in whom there is nothing reciprocal [conjunction] is not possible....” Real conjunction must involve reciprocation, return, and mutuality.
4. Our text tells us that Israel involved its memory knowledges in the things of sensual scientifics and corporeal knowledges. In other words, they were only interested in what served immediate use in the world or for their bodily enjoyment. AC 4618 teaches us that the corporeal memory serves only the temporal, and like the temporal, it perishes at death.
Sadly, the scientific and corporeal caused a stench or stinking in the “camp.” Their intelligence was slain, and their thoughts were like an abomination “exhaling from hell.”
5. The reference to the Israelites being a firebrand denotes what kind of wrath against God they had within their hearts. The Lord tried to pluck them out of the burning hatred, but “Yet you have not returned to Me.” The “stick” represented the “power” or usefulness of natural good being destroyed because their ends were for themselves and not the neighbor.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 4:10-11.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. What part of AC 10458 did you find most helpful in explaining the meaning of these verses?
2. What is a corporeal memory knowledge? Can you think of anything specific to describe one of these? Can a corporeal memory knowledge be turned into a useful thing? What about the scientific memory knowledges?
3. Why would the Lord have these forms of memory knowledges die off when we die?
4. Have you ever had a discussion with someone who was totally committed to the corporeal memory knowledges? What is the feeling? How did you do with the discussion?
5. The “stink” of the camp is a graphic form of imagery, and I think we can relate to what is being suggested. Hell is full of unclean thoughts, intentions, festering, etc. Is the Lord trying to scare us into shunning these things, or is this a good form of “tough love?” How does imagery like this help us?
6. Again, we have that poignant phrase: “Yet you have not returned to Me.” Like many of the wonderful stories I have heard about the innocent participatory enthusiasm of children, my heart wants to respond, “Yes Lord, I have heard You, and I will return!” Amen, which means: So may it ever be. What is it inside of us that responds to the Lord this way? How can we foster this response in ourselves?

AMOS 4:12-13

*“Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel;
Because I will do this to you,
Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!
For behold,
He who forms mountains,
And creates the wind,
Who declares to man what his thought is,
And makes the morning darkness,
Who treads the high places of the earth-
The Lord God of hosts is His name.”*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...An exhortation that they should turn to the Lord, vers. 12, 13."

AE 405[3]

- "In Amos...God is here called 'the Former of the mountains' because 'mountains' signify the goods of love, and 'the Creator of the spirit' because 'spirit' signifies life from such goods; and because through these He gives intelligence to man it is added, 'and declareth unto man what is his thought,' for the intelligence that man has is of his thought, which flows in from the Lord through the good of love into his life, so 'to declare' here means to flow in." Amos 4:12, 13 are cited.

Doctrine of the Lord 49

- "That by 'spirit' is meant the life of one who is regenerate, which is called spiritual life...." Amos 4:13 is cited.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

"Therefore will I do to you..." and "because I will do this to you..."

- The Writings have an interesting comment on such phrases as these when predicated of the Lord: "...‘doing’ or ‘do to you’ [when]...predicated of God...[refers to His] providence...for whatever is of the Divine Providence is certain to be the event...." (AC 5284)

Prepare to Meet your God

- We have no direct teachings on the meaning of this exhortation. John the Baptist told the people to "Prepare ye the way of the Lord..." which signifies "...to prepare one's self for goods to enter..." (AC 3142) "In the precise degree in which man prepares his understanding by means of truths from the Word does he adapt his understanding to receive faith from God, and precisely as he prepares his will by means of works of charity does he fit his will for the reception of love from God.... One prepares himself to receive God and to be conjoined with Him by living in accordance with the Divine order..." (TCR 110[5])

Making the Morning Darkness

- Churches go through various states. “Its first state is...of innocence, consequently of love to the Lord, which state is called ‘morning;’ the second state is a state of light; the third is a state of light in obscurity, which is its ‘evening;’ and the fourth is a state of no love and hence of no light, which is its ‘night.’ (AC 10134[9])

The Lord God “...treads the high places of the earth....”

- In AC 85, there is an explanation of “being uplifted over the lofty things of the earth.” (Isa 58:13,14) This represents “...the quality of the celestial man...he acts not according to his own desire, but according to the good pleasure of the Lord, which is his ‘desire.’”
- Could this represent the truth that the Lord is above the highest thoughts human beings can conceive? The lofty ideas and concepts of earth will not influence the workings of Providence. The Lord will not be swayed by human prudence. He acts according to the Divine laws of His order, and that is above the “lofty things of earth.”
- The Lord told us about this in Isaiah 55:8-9: “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways...For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. *P&P* tells us that these closing verses are an exhortation that the Israelites should turn to the Lord.
2. The Lord reminds all that His Providence will act. All that His order has planned will take place. Good and truth will prevail. Therefore, preparation needs to be a priority for all of the Lord’s people.
In the precise degree the understanding and will prepare for the Lord, to that degree will He enter in and conjoin Himself with us. “Prepare to meet thy God” is not a “hell-fire and damnation” sermon. It is a well-reasoned reminder that we need to put first things first.
3. Making the morning into darkness seems as if it were an act of the Lord. It is a statement about our changing states. Have we moved from the morning state of innocence to no love, no light, and therefore darkness?

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 4:12, 13.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. The Lord knows what our thoughts are before we speak them. Why then does He let us come to Him with specific requests for help? Why do we have to perform self-examination? Wouldn't it be better for the Lord to tell us what we need to overcome and then go inside of our affections and "disconnect" all related and contributing factors?
2. Do we have an effective "prophet" to call us back to the Lord? Might it be a regular study of the Word? Church services? Doctrinal classes? We need some objective source against which to compare our progress, or lack thereof, and from which we can learn about pertinent issues. What do you think would bring about the best results for you?
3. The "earth" of the human mind made remarkable advances, but the Lord is beyond the comprehension of people and angels. In spite of this, we tend to "limit" the Lord by doubting His Providence. Therefore, these verses pose the question: how can we imitate the celestial man so that we too may "...act not according to [our] own desire, but according to the good pleasure of the Lord...."?
4. The answer seems to be: Take charge of our spiritual life. Be alert. Be responsible for our choices and actions. Check out our intentions. In all things, pull the reigns on the sensual and corporeal priorities so the Lord's good pleasure may do the leading.
5. Preparation is a "sweeping" out of the house, opening the blinds of the house so the hells are exposed and the light of heaven welcomed. Can we do this without the usual rationalizations? Like little children, will we try to deflect responsibilities by making odious comparisons? "So and so does this...." "If that 'pillar of the church' does such and such and I don't, then I don't have to worry about my regeneration right now." "Do you know what so and so did? Wasn't that stupid?" Such ridicule dulls the voice of the conscience and insulates us from hearing the "Former" of the mountains and the creator of our "spirit" telling us the things we need to hear and know. How much do we try to excuse with the statement "To err is human."?

Chapter Five

AMOS 5:1-3

"Hear this word which I take up against you, a lamentation, O house of Israel:

*The virgin of Israel has fallen;
She will rise no more.
She lies forsaken on her land;
There is no one to raise her up.*

For thus says the Lord God:

*The city that goes out by a thousand
Shall have a hundred left,
And that which goes out by a hundred
Shall have ten left to the house of Israel."*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- “A lamentation over the church, that it was successively laid to waste, vers. 1-3...”

AR 620

- “For they are virgins’ signifies because they have loved truths because they are truths, thus from spiritual affection; the reason why these are meant by ‘virgins’ is because ‘a virgin’ signifies the church as a bride, who desires to be conjoined with the Lord, and to become a wife; and the church which desires to be conjoined with the Lord, loves truths because they are truths, for by truths, when one lives according to them, conjunction is effected. Hence it is that Israel, Zion, and Jerusalem, in the Word are called ‘virgins’ and ‘daughters’; for by ‘Israel,’ ‘Zion,’ and ‘Jerusalem,’ is signified the church.” Amos 5:2 is cited.

AE 836[13]

- “Because the church is a church from the spiritual affection of truth, which is the love of truth for the sake of truth, the following expressions are frequently used in the Word.... ‘The virgin of Israel...’” Amos 5:2 is one of the references cited.

AC 576[2]

- “In Amos.... Where speaking of remains it is said that very little would be left, being only a ‘tenth part,’ or remains of remains.” Amos 5:2, 3 are cited.

AC 468[4]

- “The residue or remains of a man, or of the church, were also by the tenths, which were holy represented.... And in Amos...a city is preserved for the sake of the remains of the church....” Amos 5:3 is cited.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

“I take up against you, a lamentation....”

- In addition to the word lamentation, we might consider looking up “lament,” “mourn,” “weep,” and “wail.” The reasons for lamenting vary.
- In an AR 767 reference, those who had been in positions of authority weep and wail in embarrassment over the loss of wealth and being cast down from positions of dominion.
- In AE 695[24], we have a picture of angels and men of the church lamenting and howling because of the vastation of all good and truth.
- AE 659[4] tells of a wailing because knowledges did not “...take form as effects, conclusions, and confirmations from the truths of the spiritual man....”
- The Lord wants lamentation to come upon the church so it might grieve over any wrong it has done. Asking for forgiveness prepares the way for repentance, reformation, and regeneration. These three “r’s” restore spiritual vitality to a growing church.

“The virgin of Israel has fallen....”

- This signifies that Israel gave up its regard for the Lord’s truth. Truth became a tool to prove or justify whatever they wanted.

“She will rise no more.”

- The word “rise” in the affirmative sense is beautifully explained in the *Arcana*: When the “...words of the sense of the letter are wonderfully changed, when it ascends from a man who is reading the Word to the sphere in which the angels are, that is, to heaven....” one is said to “rise.” (AC 2333[2])
- In the opposite sense, “rising no more” indicates how the Word remained in the literal sense and was not being “wonderfully changed” for the Israelites. The Word for them was not ascending in their heart and mind to where angels were.

"She lies forsaken on her land..."

- The correspondences of the words “forsaken” and “land” are important for our understanding. In AE 768[24], we read that “forsaken” signifies estrangement from the Lord. This “...signifies they have rejected Divine good and Divine truth.... [and] turn themselves backward from the Lord....”
- “‘Land’ in the internal sense signifies...the external man of the church...signifies the region where the church is...the church itself.... [and] that which is their essential, namely, love to the Lord and charity toward the neighbor, for on this they all hang....” (AC 2571)

"There is no one to raise her up."

- So long as the church ignores the Word, communication or conjunction with the Lord is impossible, and it appears that no one can “raise her up.” But if the church returns to the Word with a desire to find genuine truths, the Lord will raise her up again. This verse then is the Lord reminding the Israelites that they cannot count on any human prudence to rescue them. Only those who listen to Him will find the way out of their ignorance, as is so aptly described in the gospel of John: “And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not....” (John 1:5) “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” (John 3:19)

Thousand, Hundred, Ten

- “The city that goes out by a thousand shall have a hundred left, and that which goes out by a hundred shall have ten left....”
- AC 576[2] tells us that this verse is “...speaking of remains...that very little would be left...or remains of remains...”
- Each of these numbers, thousand and hundred, are multiples of ten. How we are to apply these numbers doctrinally is not quite clear to me, but the teachings in the Arcana about the reduction or loss of “remains” down to the “remain of remains” gives me some insight to follow.
- The Israelitish people at one time had an abundance of truth adjoined to good, but over time, they squandered these assets away until the Lord needed to act on behalf of His people. He preserved their remains. “...for unless remains were preserved by the Lord in every one, he must needs perish eternally...if there were not always some with whom the church, or true faith, remained, the human race...a city, nay, sometimes a whole race would perish...sometimes a whole kingdom, is saved for the sake of a few.” (AC 468)
- That a “thousand” signifies “...an infinite abundance of rational truth adjoined to good, is evident from the signification of a ‘thousand’ as being much and

countless; here infinite, or an infinite abundance, because predicated of the Lord...." (AC 2575)

- In a nutshell we are given an overview of the Lord's Providence mercifully working with what "little" He is given when in blindness we turn away from the "countless" the "infinite abundance" He offers to all.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. Pride, an out-of-control love of self, needs to come to its senses. "Lamenting" is an essentially healthy emotion. Saying to the Lord that we are sorry for not letting His knowledges "...take form as effects, conclusions, and confirmations..." is so much better than lamenting over the loss of wealth or power over others. When the heart is hardened to the gentle leading of Providence, we close, lose, or wall out all that the Lord could do for us.
2. Like a virgin, our innocence falls, and it feels unable to get up. Innocence, seeing our confusion and indifference (stiff neck, heavy ears, troublesome nature), senses that we are unaware of the gravity of the situation. With no spiritual plan to follow, innocence feels there is no real hope for the future. "Is there anyone who will restore my dignity?"
3. "Rising": We need that positive sense that reading the Word of the Lord can, and does, carry us into that sphere where angels are. The words we read will be "...wonderfully changed..." for us. These words will put away any estrangement that might have crept into our hearts and minds.
4. The "remains" the Lord has watched over from our infancy and stored up in the internal will be called forth when needed, and we can go out by the "thousands," drawing on the infinite abundance of the Lord.
We need to put the image of thousands going in and out of the city as our goal. Just saying the words "remain of remains" draws the soul into the decision-making process.
"See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil....therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying His voice, and cleaving to Him...." (Deuteronomy 30:15-20)

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 5:1-3.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. There is a part of us that wants the Word to be happy, bright, cheerful and free of anything that inspires guilt. There are elements of these themes throughout the wonderful stories of the Word, and yet there are those "heavy" themes of separation or estrangement. The Rev. Cairns Henderson wrote a series of article in New Church Life about the "hard sayings" of the

- Lord. Ever read them?
 The punishment of evil and the loss of opportunities is a repetitive theme.
 How do you keep a balanced perspective of these states so that you find comfort when it is needed and be made uncomfortable when you have gotten lethargically comfortable?
2. Have you ever done a doctrinal study on the correspondence of numbers?
 Why are there times when the meanings of the numbers are explained by multiplication, division, or addition?

AMOS 5:4-9

*"For thus says the Lord to the house of Israel:
 Seek Me and live;
 But do not seek Bethel,
 Nor enter Gilgal,
 Nor pass over to Beersheba;
 For Gilgal shall surely go into captivity,
 And Bethel shall come to nothing.
 Seek the Lord and live,
 Lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph,
 And devour it,
 With no one to quench it in Bethel-
 You who turn justice to wormwood,
 And lay righteousness to rest in the earth!
 He made the Pleiades and Orion;
 He turns the shadow of death into morning
 And makes the day dark as night;
 /He calls for the waters of the sea
 And pours them out on the face of the earth;
 The Lord is His name.
 He rains ruin upon the strong,
 So that fury comes upon the fortress.*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...an exhortation that they should seek the Lord, lest all things of the church should perish through evils and falsities, vers. 4-9..."

AC 3969[12]

- "In Amos...(v. 4, 6, 15)...where...the spiritual are signified by 'Joseph,' the 'house of Israel' is the spiritual church.... 'Joseph' is the good of this church..."

AE 448[14]

- “In Amos...(v. 4, 6, 15)...‘The house of Israel’ signifies the spiritual church, and ‘the house of Joseph’ that church in respect to the truths of doctrine. That truths of doctrine will perish unless they are in the affection of truth and good and a life according to them, is meant by ‘lest He fall like a fire upon the house of Joseph’...”

AC 2723[1&2]

- “...‘Beer-sheba’ signifies the state and quality of the doctrine, namely, that it is Divine and to which what is of human reason is adjoined...to the doctrine of faith; and because they are...adjoined...the doctrine thus became adapted to human comprehension, it is called a ‘city’....” Amos 5:5 is noted as representing “the opposite sense.”

AR 410

- “...by ‘wormwood’ is signified infernal falsity.... Wormwood...from its intense bitterness... renders food and drink abominable....” Amos 5:7 is cited as a representative example of this from the Word.

AE 519[6]

- “...‘wormwood’ signifies the evil of falsity....” Amos 5:7 is cited as an example of this teaching.

Coronis 56

- This number cites Amos 5:9 as one of the many references in the Word to the “vastation” and “desolation” of the good and truth “of the church, whence there is nothing but evils and falsities.”

DERIVED DOCTRINE

NOTE THE PROGRESSION OF A SERIES THAT TELLS US WHAT IS NOT “SEEKING THE LORD AND LIVING.”

“Seek Me and live...”

- Seeking the Lord involves an effort of the will, from the love of truth, for the sake of truth. Seeking the Lord is not a gathering of facts merely to know them, but it means drawing them into ourselves so that we may live by them.
- The Writings give us a symbol to reflect on: “Drawers of waters.” AC 3058 teaches that “To ‘draw waters’ is to be instructed, to understand, and to be

wise." This number then warns us that there will be some who "...continually desire to know truths, but for no other end than to know them, while caring nothing for the use." Seeking means loving truth so spiritual uses may be offered to the Lord, to the neighbor, and to ourselves. Such "drawers of water" bring constructive amendment to the will, and their lives are lived to the fullest measure.

"...do not seek Bethel...."

- The word Bethel means "House of God." In the best sense, the Writings teach that Bethel represents the knowledge of celestial things. See AC 3720.
- Worship for the Israelites had fallen into a routine. They believed just entering the house of God was enough. The Lord said no, it isn't. Quoting celestial things is not enough. They carried the water, but they did nothing with it to quench their spiritually parched souls.
- The words of the prophet must have seemed inappropriate to his listeners. They looked up at the temple. There it stood, beautifully and esthetically awesome. "What is this man talking about? We have given of our wealth to make this the most special 'House of God.'"

"Nor enter Gilgal..."

- Gilgal represents "...the doctrine of natural truth, which is serviceable for introduction into the church." (AE 700[14]) Natural truth apart from a love for the Lord would not help carry the Israelites into spiritual life. The facts of spiritual law needed to be added to their knowledge of natural law.

"Nor pass over to Beersheba..."

- Please note that in AC 2723[1&2], we were told that in the good sense, "Beersheba" represents the adjunction of human reason to the doctrine of faith so that human comprehension might be assisted.
- The word ADJUNCTION is not the same as CONJUNCTION. According to *Webster's Dictionary*, adjunction means "...something added to another thing, but not essentially a part of it...." By contrast, conjunction is the entering into and blending or marriage occurring where the two become as one.
- Therefore, we are told in the *Arcana* that the Israelites took what could have been a helpful adjunction and turned it to the "opposite." They did not seek to adjoin their human reason with the doctrine of faith. The loss? Human comprehension of the Lord's Word dimmed like a fading or flickering light.

What were the results of the Israelitish failure to seek the Lord?

1. "...Gilgal shall surely go into captivity..." Natural truths that could have been introductory truths will become enslaved.

2. "...Bethel shall come to nothing..." The "house of God" ornate, beautiful, and impressive, will mean little to the spiritually ignorant.
3. "Seek the Lord and live..." Here is the solution, cries the prophet. Listen and obey the Lord.
4. "...fire in the house of Joseph...and [he] will devour it...." If you fail to repent, the truths of doctrine will perish. I believe the "he" here refers to the enemy of truth, not to the Lord.
5. "With no one to quench it in Bethel..." Human prudence, the priesthood, the gods, whatever they had great hope or faith in could not take away the great thirst for spiritual waters. Not wealth, not armies, not expanded territories, nothing will work! Only the Lord can give you what you so desperately need and don't know it.
6. "You who turn justice to wormwood..."
 - a. The word "wormwood" is used in the Word to convey a sense of bitterness and sorrow. The Writings teach that "wormwood" in food renders the food and drink "abominable." How so? Is it just the taste, or is there a more subtle but deadly reason?
 - b. In some countries, "wormwood" is used in the making of absinthe. It is a green alcoholic liquor containing oils of wormwood and anise and other aromatics. If over-used, this disguised, sweet-tasting, alcoholic drink will eventually cause a serious nervous derangement. The culprit? "Wormwood!"
 - c. Justice in Israel's society was being lost. Like the drink of absinthe, their morals, reasoning, caring, and sense of fairness were becoming deranged. The justice of the day, as explained by the priests, was like the cleverly mixed abominable "wormwood." Ambition, greed, and laziness covered their bitter taste of injustice with sweet anise and other aromatics.
7. "And lay righteousness to rest in the earth."
 - a. Simply put, this means that righteousness was put to sleep in the minds of people. The end justifying the means was acceptable as long as it gave them what they wanted.
8. "He made the Pleiades and Orion..."
 - a. Pleiades is a group, or cluster, of bright stars. There are seven stars in this constellation. The ancients had some elaborate myths about all of the stars in the heavens. One of these stars of Pleiades, according to tradition, became hidden or banished when it mistakenly fell in love with a human. (Isn't it interesting what lengths human self-love will go to even in myths?)
 - b. Orion is also a constellation of stars which, for the ancients, formed a gigantic warrior with a belt and sword. Orion was a man of great strength who at his death was transferred to the heavens. Did Israel find the story of these myths appealing? Or did the myths represent the foolishness of those who trusted in their own strength instead of the Lord? Did Israel consult the stars for answers? Did they seek their "powers" by offering gifts or sacrifices? The source I checked,

Interpreter's Bible Dictionary, indicated historians think they probably did.

- c. The point here is that the Lord reminded them that it was He who made these stars, and that which the Lord creates is not greater than its Creator.
 - d. Before leaving this portion of the text, let's look at two wonderful quotes in the Writings regarding stars and Pleiades and Orion.
 - e. "...I can, from all experience, and thence testimony from heaven, declare with certainty, that it is impossible to derive a single genuine theological truth from any other source than from the Lord alone; nay, that to derive it from any other source is as impossible, as it is to sail from England or Holland to the Pleiades, or to ride on horseback from Germany to Orion in the sky." (Brief Exposition 98)
 - f. "...truths are all like stars, which by their light make the faith manifest and give it form. Man acquires this faith from the Word by means of his natural light, in which light it is knowledge, thought, and persuasion; but the Lord causes it, in those who believe in Him, to become conviction, trust, and confidence; thus faith becomes spiritual-natural, and by means of charity becomes living." (TCR 137[5])
9. "He turns the shadow of death into morning and makes the day dark as night..."
- a. "'Spiritual thick-darkness,' 'the shadow of death,' and 'darkness,' are nothing else but the states of those in hell, who are in the falsities of evil.... The Word in many places treats [of the above words to mean those] whose eyes the Lord will open; and by them are meant the Gentiles...Christians...they know the Lord indeed, but do not approach Him, and they have the Word, but yet do not search for the truths therein." (AR 110)
 - b. There is hope and deliverance for those who are blind from ignorance and are lost but a stern warning to those who insist on turning the Word to their own ends.
10. "He calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the face of the earth..."
- a. There is a lesson in AC 2162[7] that explains Revelation 10:1-2. In that text, a strong angel is seen with a little book open in his hand. He has his right foot upon the water of the sea and his left foot upon the earth. We are taught that the "sea" denotes natural truths, the 'earth' denotes natural goods...."
 - b. The Lord is offering relief from the parched and thirsty condition of poor spiritual leadership. He will bridge the gap. He promises to restore a wholesome communication if they return to the knowledge and love of the Lord alone. Their spiritual thirst can only be quenched with "living waters" and not the cleverly mixed delusions the drink of "wormwood" was giving them.
11. "The Lord is His name."

12. "He rains ruin upon the strong so that fury comes upon the fortress."

What a powerful finish to the above conditions:

1. Seek Me and live.
2. Don't look to the physical temple you built.
3. Don't count on your natural-introductory truths
4. Don't destroy the adjunction of the doctrine of faith and human reason.
5. If you do, you will destroy all the things of the church, and you will perish through the evils and falsities of the drink of "wormwood" hell has prepared.
It will give you a deranged sense of justice and righteousness.
6. I will remove the shadows of death. I will turn your nights into mornings.
7. Remember, it is not the myths of Pleiades or Orion that will help you.
8. Don't waste your time courting their favor or power. There is only one Source of help:
9. The Lord is His name.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

I feel we just did that. Maybe you want to add your own summary to the above. Please do so, and share that summary with one of your study partners.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 5:4-9.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. Do you feel the sense of mercy here from the Lord? He is showing the Israelites the series of causes and effects their actions brought about, but He doesn't leave them without a solution. He shows them the way out of the confusion: "Seek Me and Live."
2. What excuses do you think will be offered up when people have their spiritual eyes open in the World of Spirits and they see all that the Lord did for them when they had imagined they fought evils alone? Do you think the excuse of ignorance will offer up an "airtight alibi"?
3. As clear a picture as the Writings give us about the prophecy of Amos, I still feel some sympathy for the plight of the "laymen" Israelites. Some of them could not read nor write. They could not go to the Word and reflect on the words the way we can. But then I remember that none of this would have happened if they had stayed committed to the ways of the Lord. The Lord provides for all states and conditions and makes sure His Word is sufficient for the day.

How far have we strayed, and what false faith have we built up that seeks to

- offer substitutes for the real things of faith? How does the Lord provide for people like the Israelites who could not read the Word for themselves?
4. I found the information about “wormwood” quite interesting and valuable. What about you? Are we still in subtle ways drinking hell’s artificially sweetened, but bitter and sorrowful, hoax? What are some ways to detect “wormwood” before we drink it?
 5. Have you noticed the number of ads on television encouraging people to seek the advice of “psychics”? Is this harmful to those who use their counsel? What about the man who claims he can contact family members or friends in the spiritual world? He has a best-selling book telling about his most celebrated contacts. Someone said, “He has told me things that only I had knowledge about.” A great following of “readers” and clairvoyants seem to be pulling people away from “Seek Me and live.” What do you think about this?

AMOS 5:10-13

*They hate the one who rebukes in the gate,
And they abhor the one who speaks uprightly.
Therefore, because you tread down the poor
And take grain taxes from him,
Though you have built houses of hewn stone,
Yet you shall not dwell in them;
You have planted pleasant vineyards,
But you shall not drink wine from them.
For I know your manifold transgressions
And your mighty sins:
Afflicting the just and taking bribes;
Diverting the poor from justice at the gate.
Therefore the prudent keep silent at that time,
For it is an evil time.*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- “...that they reject truths because they are in self-intelligence, vers. 10-13.”

AC 1071[5]

- “In Amos:- (v. 11) This is said of the spiritual church, or ‘Israel,’ of which planting vineyards and drinking the wine thereof is predicated, when it becomes such as to have faith from charity...’ Here is described the opposite condition, when the spiritual church is vastated.”

AC 8941[4]

- “By ‘hewn stone’ is signified that which is from self-intelligence....” Amos v. 11 is one of the verses cited.

AR 316

- “...it is provided by the Lord that the holy goods and truths, which lie interiorly concealed in the Word, shall not be violated and profaned. ‘Oil’ signifies the good of love, and ‘wine’ truth from that good....” In the larger quote, it references Amos 5:11 as an example of how the Lord cuts off the wine from the mouths of those who seek evil.

AE 376[17]

- In AE 376[17], the Writings translate the text as: “Vineyards of desire shall you plant...” The Revised King James Version text reads: “You have planted pleasant vineyards....”
- “...spiritual wealth, which is the knowledges of good and truth...when devastated one profits nothing and receives nothing, even though he listens to them, and sees them in the Word...” Like things are meant in Amos 5:11, we are told in this number.

AE 919

- This number quotes many passages from the Word where ‘vineyard’ signifies the spiritual church. Amos 5:11 is one of the citations.

AR 899

- “Since ‘gates’ signify introductory truths, which are knowledges from the Word, therefore the elders of a city sat in the gates, and judged; as is manifest from....” Amos 5:12 is cited as one of the examples.
- “Because ‘gates’ signify introductory truths, therefore it was among the statutes:- ‘That the elders should sit at the gates and judge’...” Amos 5:12 is one of the examples cited.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

“They hate the one who rebukes in the gate, and they abhor the one who speaks uprightly.”

- We can see from some of the above quotes that the “gate” and those who sat there were the elders of the city. By divine statutes, they were to be there for the people. They were to judge and lead the people according to the precepts

of the Word. But those who sought to deceive did all they could to discredit the truthful or faithful elders so their opinions would not interfere with their plans to cheat or defraud others.

- Apparently, it became difficult, and unpleasant, for the elders to speak from principle. Those in the city hated the “messengers” because a righteous elder made the thieves feel exposed or uncomfortable as they went about their nefarious business.

Treading Down the Poor and Taking Grain Taxes from Them

- There is an interesting quote in AR 489 that tells us that where the literal sense states there will be those who will seek to trample the holy city for forty-two months, it represents their attempt to “...disperse every truth of the Word, even so that nothing would remain.”
- “...seeds, barley, wheat, and the like denote interior truths and goods...” (AC 7112)
- The Concordance suggests that it is useful to use “tribute” when looking up the word “taxes.” A quote from AC 6659 seems to serve our present study well: “...princes of tributes...signifies falsities that would compel to serve....”
- Those who hated the elders at the gate wanted to “trample” every truth of the Word so that nothing would remain, and they worked to destroy interior truths and goods so that they could “tax” or compel falsity to serve their interests and gain from the “poor” because of their ignorance of the Word.

Houses of “hewn stone”

- We need to note the difference between a “stone” and a “hewn stone.” A stone that is “unhewn” represents the wholeness of the Lord’s truth. A “hewn” stone represents “...an intelligent person who falls into perversities, and calls or makes to be true things that are false...’hewn stone’ denotes what is fabricated.” (AC 1296)
- “If thou wilt make Me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone; for if thou lift up thy tool upon it thou hast polluted it.” (Exodus 20:25)
- The Lord wanted them to see that they had built “houses” in their minds that seemed attractive and lofty but were actually misshapen distortions of their memory knowledges. In other words, they lived in mental houses where perversities fabricated lies and distortions.

“Yet you shall not dwell in them....”

- What they thought was so secure and stable would not last or survive in the presence of the Lord’s clear and eternal truth.

Planting Vineyards of Desire, But Not Drinking Wine from Them

- When Noah drank of the wine from his vineyard, we are taught that this represented "...he desired to investigate the things of faith, and this by reasonings...." (AC 1071)
- From this explanation, may we assume that the Lord was telling them that their desire to investigate the things of faith was from a "hellish" desire and that their reasoning therefore would never have them taste of the true wisdom of the Word?

Manifold transgressions; mighty sins; afflicting the just; taking bribes; diverting the poor from justice at the gate

- Transgressions are evils done against the truths of faith. See AC 9156.
- Sin is different than evil. Evil is somewhat passive. It is a thought or a temptation. Sin is the giving in to that thought and a giving in to the temptation. When we sin, we make some evil our own. There is a wonderful passage in the Writings that presents a challenge to reflect on: "In order for anyone to know what evil is, and consequently what sin is, let him merely study to know what love of self and of the world is..." (AC 4997) Evil and sin bring about disjunction from the Lord and the heavens.
- A just person is one who lives according to divine laws. (AR 815) Those who sought to live according to divine laws were scorned and afflicted by those in power.
- Taking bribes: In AC 8711, we have an explanation of what is meant by those "...'hating gain,' as being aversion to persuasions from falsity and evil.... By 'gain' in general is signified all the falsity from evil that perverts the judgments of the mind...and withdraws from truth and good...." This is the case with those who have the world as their end.
- Diverting the poor from the gate: A gate is representative of the entrance into the mind. It also represents teachings or doctrines which introduce the truths of faith. See AC 2943 and AC 3721 for more insights into the meaning of a gate.
- Essentially, those who were "poor" in matters of faith were being ignored and purposely kept ignorant of the introductory "riches" of the Word.

The Prudent Keeping Silent, the Evil Time.

- "By means of His Divine providence the Lord leads the affections of a man's life's love, and at the same time leads his thoughts, from which human prudence is derived." (DP 200)
- It seems to make sense if the people were intent in shutting out the Word of the Lord that "prudence" would keep silent at that time. Human prudence would take over and try to present its ideas as more important and vital for life. Such a state of mind would make for "an evil time."

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. The key to these verses seems to be the problem of self-intelligence. When it takes control of one's mind, it does not wish to hear any of the judgments from the "elders" of the city gate. Instead, self-intelligence will make the spiritual principals unwelcome and hated. Self-intelligence will trample down and discredit the spiritual laws, and will build up its own secular altar with "hewn stones" that fit its concepts and feel comfortable worshiping the love of self and the world.
2. The Writings translate "pleasant vineyard" as "vineyard of desire." Self-intelligence is a vineyard of desire, and those who grow their grapes of desire would become spiritually drunk with the intoxicating disorder that would destroy freedom and rationality. The Lord urges His children not to drink this wine.
3. Another condition that hurts the spiritual potential is acceptance of bribes. Accepting a bribe is a release of internal restraints so as to be "bought off," a willingness to pervert the judgment of the mind and to have the mind withdrawn from good and truth. When we allow this to happen, the "elders at the gate" cannot lead us. Providence cannot lead our affections and thoughts. Prudence loses its willingness to follow the internal dictates of the Lord's truth.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 5:10-13.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. We learn from the three-fold Word. We have to read, reflect, and make applications. A good portion of this process uses the intelligence. How do we keep self-intelligence in a healthy state?
2. The human mind can arrange "selected" teachings from the Word in such a way as to prove whatever we want. What can we do to prevent such a "hewing" of the stones so that we don't fabricate falsity?
3. Is there a way that you keep the "poor" from coming to the gates of the city? Is there a way you keep the "poor" coming every day to the gates so that introductory truths refresh the heart, the mind, and the soul? Do you do this to yourself? To others?
4. Have you ever felt this way? In matters of daily discrimination, you feel uncertain about your stance on current issues and hesitate to speak up. But as you read the Word, and see its internal sense, you feel more confident to express your insights on the things taught in the lesson. Why do you think this happens?

5. How do you explain the difference between evil and sin? Does it make sense that we are not held accountable for the inherited tendencies toward evil, but we are accountable for sins we confirm through our loves?
6. What do you think of the difference in translations regarding the vineyard? Is there a significant difference between “pleasant vineyards” and “vineyards of desire”?

AMOS 5:14-15

*Seek good and not evil,
 That you may live;
 So the Lord God of hosts will be with you,
 As you have spoken
 Hate evil, love good;
 Establish justice in the gate.
 It may be that the Lord God of hosts
 Will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- • “...[an exhortation] that they should turn themselves, vers. 14, 15...”

AE 573[7 &8]

- “The tribes were called ‘hosts’ because the twelve tribes taken together represented all the truths and goods of the church, and each tribe some universal essential of the church.... From this it can be seen that the truths and goods of heaven and the church are meant in the Word by ‘hosts’...” Amos 5:14 and 16 are cited in the numerous references in the Word.

AC 2943

- “...in Amos...That a ‘gate’ also signifies the way of access to the rational mind, and that this mind is compared to a city...” Amos 5:15 is the cited passage. Also it is important to note that this number encourages us to read more about the ‘gates’ of a city in AC 2851.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

"Seek good and not evil..."

- Seeking requires an effort to find something. The Lord identifies what that “something” is. He asks the Israelites to find “good.” Good has a whole host of meanings, and here are just a few: Love, Will, Affection, Esse, the First, the End, the Substance. In other words, the Lord was directing them to seek Him in the things of the affections. If His Love became important again, they would have the “substance” out of which “form” (wisdom) might bring use back into their worship of the Lord.

"That you might live..."

- AC 39 has a wonderful way of describing whether a person is “alive” or “dead.” When the Lord is permitted to “illuminate” the internal man, the person is alive. When the person seeks to be resuscitated (regenerated), he or she is living. When people imagine that they live from themselves, they are dead. The Lord calls all to live but not all choose to “live.”

"...the Lord God of hosts will be with you..."

- In the simplest of terms, the Lord is promising the children of Israel that He will give them the “truths and goods of heaven and the church...” (AE 573[7])

"Hate evil, love good..."

- Abhor evil, and it loses its power. Evil cannot stand having its life rejected. Evil thrives when we give it recognition it does not deserve. Therefore, the Lord tells us to hate evil.
- We might find this teaching hard to share in our age. Hell has been working hard to color all of its disorders with respectability. Profanity is now called “adult language,” so children grow up thinking that when they reach adulthood, they should use profanity. Profanity is seen as a way to express emotions. Telling our age to hate profanity (and many other evils we could cite) would meet with some strong resistance.
- There seems to be a message here: When we hate evil, we then can come to the point where we love good.

"Establish justice in the gate."

- The mind is a gate. “Something” sits at the gate. If the gate keeper is of the Lord’s appointment, we will call, or invite, into the mind the things of spiritual importance. If the gate keeper is of hell’s appointment, it will invite in the things of hell. The Lord calls for a gate keeper of justice.

The "Lord God of hosts will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph."

- Joseph represents the Lord. He also represents "...the celestial of the spiritual from the natural....the celestial is good from the Divine, and the spiritual is truth from that good, and thus is the truth of the good from His Divine Human." (AC 5307) Putting this more simply, we might say that the Lord was promising to return the Israelites to the "remnant" remains that would help them love the wisdom of the written Word so that they might regain the glimpse of the Divine Human they had lost. God for them had become "invisible," and it was hard for them to love what they could not see or conceptualize. They had to come back to seeing God again. Isn't this a powerful promise to reflect on?
- Don't we, with the revelation of the Writings, have a wonderful way of seeing the Divine Human? The Lord has truly been gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. When each of us enters into the World of Spirits, we will pass through three states if we have chosen Heaven within our hearts. In the first state, there is an unfolding of the externals so our internals will shine forth. In the case of those who have hardened themselves against the Lord, there is often a denial of what was loved. There is an attempt by some to complain that they did not have a fair chance to find heaven. They blame parents, poor educational opportunities, etc. The Lord shows them a summary of their life and calmly points out the numerous opportunities they had to choose heaven, but they refused to accept the opportunity. They again deny this was so. They see their life again. This may go on for twenty or thirty years. Finally, they can't deny it any longer, and they dive head-long into their hell.
2. As we read these verses, this insight from Heaven and Hell may add a sense of the Lord's patience with those who deny His merciful offers. "Seek good and not evil. That you may live." The Lord offered them the chance to once again use the "host" of truths and goods of heaven and the church. The Writings in P&P plainly teach that the Lord exhorting them to turn themselves around.
3. This passage says to the Israelites, "Hate evil, love good, and put justice back at the entrance of your minds so love of the Word may manifest itself in the spiritual truths as presented in the literal sense." The great "reward" was that they would "see" the Lord in the Divine Human. They would no longer have an invisible God in their concepts, but the remnant of Joseph would graciously turn them about.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 5:14-15.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. The stated goal of the New Church is that it will have a faith in the visible God within whom is the invisible. (TCR 339) “For what is invisible does not fall into an idea of thought....” (AC 10737) “There can be no conjunction with an invisible God.” (TCR 786) How are you doing with this important work of bringing the invisible into the visible?
2. Do we have a conscious sense of how often opportunities present themselves to help us “turn” ourselves? Or will we be like those who have to see the whole of our life played over and over before we admit the Lord tried often to turn us? How can we become more alert to those opportunities when they occur?
3. Why does the Word “seem” to reverse the call to repentance?
“Seek good and not evil...
Hate evil, love good...”
4. Do you remember a course, a sermon, an article, or a book that helped you the most with the doctrine of the Divine Human? Would you be comfortable telling someone what the phrase seeing “the Lord in the Divine Human” means?
5. What question(s) came to you while you were reading these two verses?

AMOS 5:16-20

Therefore the Lord God of hosts, the Lord, says this:

*There shall be wailing in all streets,
And they shall say in all the highways,
Alas! Alas!
They shall call the farmer to mourning,
And skillful lamenters to wailing.
In all vineyards there shall be wailing,
For I will pass through you,
Says the Lord.*

*Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord!
For what good is the day of the Lord to you?
It will be darkness, and not light.
It will be as though a man fled from a lion,
And a bear met him!
Or as though he went into the house,
Leaned his hand on the wall,
And a serpent bit him!*

*Is not the day of the Lord darkness, and not light?
Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it?*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...a lamentation over the destruction of the church, and over their ruin, when the Lord comes, vers. 16-20..."

AR 501

- "'By 'streets,' in the Word, almost the same is signified as by 'ways,' because streets are ways in a city; but still by 'streets' are signified the truths or falsities of doctrine....'" There are many verses from the Word cited. One of the examples cited is Amos 5:16.

AE 652[18]

- "In Amos...‘Lamentations shall be in all the streets, and they shall say in the open places, Alas, alas!’ signifies grief because truth and good are everywhere laid waste; ‘and they shall call the husbandman to mourning’ signifies the grief of the men of the church on this account, ‘husbandman’ signifying the man of the church, because a ‘field’ signifies the church in respect to the implantation of truth."

AC 9139[5]

- "In Amos:- 'In all vineyards shall be wailing; I will pass through thee. Woe unto you that desire the day of Jehovah! What to you is the day of Jehovah? It is of darkness and not of light (v. 17, 18); this is said of the last time of the church, when there is no longer any good and truth of faith, which time is 'the day of Jehovah, a day of darkness and not of light;' whence it is said, 'in all vineyards shall be wailing.'"'

AR 650

- "That 'a vineyard' signifies the church where the Word is, by which the Lord is known..." Amos 5:17 is one of the verses cited for this teaching.

AR 573

- "...by 'a bear' are signified those who read the Word and do not understand it, whence they have fallacies.... 'The lion and a bear' are mentioned (in the Word) because by 'a lion' is signified falsity destroying the truths of the

Word, and by ‘a bear’ are signified fallacies, which also destroy, but not in so great a degree....” Amos 5:18, 19 are cited.

AE 781[16]

- “The day of Jehovah’ means the coming of the Lord, who is the Messiah whom they expected; and as they believed that He would deliver them from the enemies of the land, and would exalt them in glory above all the nations, they desired Him. But as the Lord came into the world not for the sake of any kingdom on earth but for the sake of a kingdom in heaven, and as the Jewish nation was in the falsities of evil, and these were at that time manifested, it is said, ‘Woe unto you, that desire the day of Jehovah. What to you is the day of Jehovah? It is a day of darkness and not of light,’ ‘darkness and not light’ meaning the falsities in which they were; ‘as one who fleeth from a lion meeteth a bear’ signifies fear because of the domination of falsity when truths are sought from the sense of the letter of the Word, which they cannot but falsify; for one is said ‘to flee from a lion and to meet a bear’ when he is interiorly in falsity from evil, and is led to investigate truths from the sense of the letter of the Word, which he then, because of the interior domination of falsity from evil, cannot but pervert; ‘who cometh to a house and leaneth with his hand upon a wall and a serpent biteth him’ signifies that when such a man in seeking goods consults the Word in the sense of the letter he does not see that evils pervert it; ‘the bite of a serpent’ signifying falsification, here the falsification that arises from the interior domination of falsity from evil.” Amos 5:18, 19 are cited.

AC 1839[5]

- “In these passages, the ‘day of Jehovah’ denotes the last time and state of the church; ‘darkness and thick darkness’ falsities and evils.” Amos 5:18, 20 are cited.

AC 7688

- “...thus ‘to be darkened’ is to be in falsity; and as the devastation of those who have been of the church and have known truths, but have lived a life of evil, is here treated of, therefore by ‘the land was darkened’ is signified falsity where truth was.” Amos 5:18-20 is one of the examples cited to illustrate this teaching.

AR 413

- “...by ‘being darkened’ is signified not to be seen or known by reason of evils from falsities and falsities from evils. Evils from falsities are with those who assume the falsities of religion, and confirm them till they appear as truths,

and when they live according to them they do evils from falsities, or the evils of falsity. But those have falsities from evils, who do not regard evils as sins; and still more those who, by reasonings from the natural man, and more still from the Word, confirm with themselves that evils are not sins." Amos 5:18, 20 are among the passages from the Word cited.

TCR 761

- This number tells us that the end of a church is signified with "night" as a sign of the Lord departing from it and going "to a new church."

AE 526[5]

- This number cites Amos 5:18 and 5:20 as an example of the Lord coming to judge a church because there is no longer "any good of love or truth of faith, but the evil of falsity and the falsity of evil, that day is called 'a day of darkness and of thick darkness.'"

DERIVED DOCTRINE

We are given such a full and complete explanation that there seems to be no need to offer additional references. However, if you think of some references that might add to the study, it would be appreciated if you would add them during the discussion period.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Before making a summary, let's look at key words that lead us to a summary:

1. The domination of falsity: The Israelites were interiorly in falsity from evil. The interior domination of falsity from evil cannot but pervert.
2. The streets and highways wailing is representative of the devastation of good and truth. Where once there had been truth, there was now falsity.
3. Where there had been hope and longing for the Messiah, they were now told their reasons for hope and longing where all wrong.

Any summary we make cannot match what we have in AE 781[16] and AR 413. We are taught that Israel did not have a clue about what the Lord was going to do for the world and to eternity. They focused on belief in falsified traditional thinking that they were the Lord's "chosen" people. They wanted Him to come so that they would be the "greatest" among all nations.

How do you tell a nation they are wrong? The wonderful story about the lion, the bear, and the serpent illustrates the hopeless efforts of their traditional expectations of the Lord. Instead of having "light," they had "darkness." AR 413 explains how

“darkness” entered their minds: “...by reasonings from the natural man, and more still from the Word, (they) confirm with themselves that evils are not sins.”

The “serpent” biting their hand is such a graphic description of sensual reasoning overcoming the power of the natural man’s ability to perform the ultimate uses so necessary in the life of worship to the Lord and love of the neighbor. Uses were turned to self-interests.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 5:16-20.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. With so much given to us from the Writings about these verses, did you find it easier to anticipate the summary of them? What skills do you learn from studying the Word regularly?
2. Past and present political indiscretions have produced a need for the White House advisors to hire people who are gifted as “spin masters.” What this means is that these people are to work on “spinning” a positive interpretation on any news that would appear harmful to the president of the United States or any other important senator or congressperson. Does hell have a gifted crew of “spin masters” employed in its effort to dominate interior reasonings that bring about darkness? What are some of their techniques? How can we spot them and see through them?
3. Israel longed for the coming of the Lord. He told them they didn’t really want Him to come. He told them that when He walked among them, there would be great wailing and their streets and cities, vineyards and husbandmen would wail, crying out “Alas, alas.”
4. As New Church men and women, what do we think about when we reflect on this prophecy? Do we make assumptions like those the Israelites made? Have we built a system of traditional beliefs that are blinding us to the Lord’s truth? Do we put too much emphasis on traditional forms of worship? How do we distinguish tradition from theology?
5. How much time do we spend studying the three-fold Word? What happens when we study regularly? When we don’t? Are we fleeing from the lion to encounter the bear? When at home, are we allowing our hands to be bitten by the serpent? Can we reflect on this question with a determination that some positive alternatives will come forward?

AMOS 5:21-22

*I hate, I despise your feast days,
And I do not savor your sacred assemblies.*

*Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings,
I will not accept them,
Nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings.*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...that their worship cannot be acceptable, vers. 21, 22..."

AC 925[4]

- "In Amos:- 'I hate, I have rejected your feasts, and I will not receive the odor of your holidays, for if ye shall offer Me your burnt-offerings and gifts, they shall not be acceptable (v. 21, 22).... Here 'odor' manifestly signifies what is grateful or unacceptable."

AC 922[1&2]

- "...it is evident that burnt-offerings and sacrifices were nothing else than representatives of internal worship; and that when they (internal and external sacrifices) were separated from internal worship they became idolatrous. This anyone of sound reason may see. For what is an altar but something of stone, and what is burnt-offering and sacrifice but the slaying of a beast? If there be Divine worship, it must represent something heavenly which they know and acknowledge, and from which they worship Him whom they represent...It is by internal things, namely, charity and the faith therefrom, that He who is represented is to be seen and acknowledged and believed, as is clearly evident in the prophets...." Amos 5:22, 24 are verses used to illustrate the above.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

"I hate, I despise...."

- "...when we read in the Word concerning Jehovah or the Lord 'hating'...in the internal sense (it) is not 'hatred,' but mercy, for the Divine is mercy; but when this (mercy) flows in with a man who is in evil...it then appears as hatred.... Above all other peoples the Jewish and Israelitish people were such that as soon as they observed anything unfriendly, even in associates, they believed it lawful to treat them cruelly, and not only to kill them, but also to expose them to wild beasts...and therefore...they could not believe otherwise than that Jehovah also entertained hatred, was angry, wrathful, and furious, and for this reason it is so expressed in the Word according to the

appearance; for such as is a man's quality, such the Lord appears to him...." (AC 3605)

Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices of Every Kind

- "The burnt-offerings and sacrifices in the Jewish Church represented nothing else than the celestial things of the Lord's kingdom in the heavens, and of the Lord's kingdom on earth (that is, in the church), also of the Lord's kingdom or church with each person, and in general all things which are of love and charity, for these are things celestial; and each kind of sacrifice represented something special and particular." (AC 2165[3])
- The laws for burnt-offerings may be found in Leviticus 1.
- The laws for bread-offerings may be found in Leviticus 2.
- The laws for sin-offerings may be found in Leviticus 4:1-35.
- The laws for offerings for defilement may be found in Leviticus 5:1-13.
- The laws for trespass-offerings may be found in Leviticus 5:14-19 and 6:1-7.
- The laws for peace-offerings may be found in Leviticus 3 and 7:28-34.
- The meanings of many of these sacrifices are covered extensively in the *Arcana*. The teachings are so extensive it would be impossible to quote all of them. For those who wish to pursue the quotes, turn to AC 2176-2185 for the meaning or use of each offering.

"I will not accept them, nor will I regard your fatted peace offerings."

- Why wouldn't the Lord accept their offerings? Was He interested in something deeper than the smell of burnt offerings and showy celebrations? The power of the literal sense is very clear with an answer in Micah 6:6-8:
 - "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doeth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. The children of Israel were making noise and sacrifice that was empty. Their hearts were not intent on repentance and change. They thought they were "buying" the Lord's favor. In effect, they were saying, "Look at what we are doing. See how special our assemblies are. Look at the cost of what we offer. Be pleased with us, give us more stature with other nations, and increase our possessions."

2. The Lord wanted nothing to do with these offerings. He wanted clean hearts and minds. He wanted charity and faith to increase. He wanted them to walk humbly with Him, shunning evils as sins.
3. When Israel sensed His displeasure with their offerings, they thought He hated and despised them. The message could have brought them to their knees beseeching help, asking for forgiveness, but it did not motivate them to do so.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 5:21-22.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. “What is an altar but something of stone, and what is a burnt-offering but the slaying of a beast?” As a child, growing up in a non-New-Church environment, I wondered at the requirement to offer up sacrifices. It seemed somewhat cruel and barbaric. I even wondered at Abraham’s willingness to offer up Isaac. I remember my teachers telling me it was a test of one’s faith. God needs to test our mettle. He needs to see whether we can endure the tests of faith. Does God really not know me? Is it somewhat questionable to Him what I will do under certain stresses? I never liked the explanations of sacrifices. Thankfully, I can now read what the Writings teach regarding this subject. What were some of your earliest questions or doubts when you heard or hear of sacrifices?
2. “...for such as is a person’s quality, such the Lord appears to them....” Looking at the history of religious faith, the Lord has been represented as a cruel, demanding taskmaster. He has been presented as the “absentee Creator.” The Lord is seen as one who became so angry with the world that He demanded payment for the sins of all peoples.
The teaching in AC 3605 clearly indicates that we project on to the Lord what is in our own hearts. How can we work on improving our perceptions of the Lord? How can we project a more representative image of His mercy to ourselves and others?
3. “What shall I render to the Lord?” What kind of worship is acceptable to the Lord? These verses told Israel, “Your worship cannot be acceptable.”

AMOS 5:23-25

*Take away from Me the noise of your songs,
For I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments.
But let justice run down like water,
And righteousness like a mighty stream.*

*Did you offer Me sacrifices and offerings
In the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...that it (their worship) will be acceptable if they possess good and truth, vers. 23-25..."

AC 4137[3]

- "He who does not know that in everything of the Word there is the heavenly marriage...might believe that joy and gladness are one thing, and that both are mentioned merely for the sake of greater emphasis, thus that one of the expressions is superfluous. But this is not the case....'joy' is predicated of good, and 'gladness' of truth...." Amos 5:23 is cited as one of the examples from the Word.

AC 2235

- "In the Word, 'righteousness and judgment' are many times named together, but what they signify in the internal sense has not yet been known....in the internal sense 'righteousness' denotes that which is from good, and 'judgment' that which is from truth. Good is all that which belongs to love and charity; truth is all that which belongs to the derivative faith...." Amos 5:24 is one of the many verses used to illustrate this point.

AC 9263

- This number contains similar statements to those in the above reference.

AC 9857

- This number quotes Amos 5:24, "let judgment flow like water...." with the following explanation: "...'judgment' denotes intelligence from Divine truth, and the consequent life."

AR 668

- "...by 'judgment' is signified the Divine truth, and by 'justice' the Divine good, therefore, in many passages, where the Lord is spoken of, 'justice and judgment' are mentioned...." Amos 5:24 is cited.

TCR 751

- This number offers a range of quotes from the Word where justice and righteousness are predicated of love and the judgment of wisdom. Amos 5:24 is one of the references cited.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

Noise

- Noise may have several meanings: "...tumult, or disturbance, and also on the occasion of any happy event....it [also] denotes accusation." (AC 375)

Singing

- "...in the Ancient Church and afterward in the Jewish Church the songs were prophetic and treated of the Lord, especially that He would come into the world, and would overthrow the diabolical crew...and would liberate the faithful from their assaults....the songs contained such things...[that] signified a glorification of the Lord, that is, a celebration of Him from gladness of heart...." (AC 8261[2])

Stringed Instruments

- "In general, by wind instruments were expressed affections of good, and by stringed instruments affections of truth..." (AC 8337[2])

Forty Years in the Wilderness

- "...'forty' denotes the duration of vastation and desolation; and in the internal sense forty years are not meant, but only, in general, the desolation of faith..."
- See AC 730[2&4].

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. We can probably get a mental picture of what is being represented here if we can recall a chapel service with a piano playing a hymn. Two hundred or more were standing, out of custom, with hands in their pockets. Hymnals were not open, and certain in attendance were not singing from the heart. With glazed eyes, they stood waiting for the song to finish so they might sit and comfortably go to sleep.

Israel lost the "joy" of singing about the coming of the Lord. They did not feel the joy of the Lord rescuing them from their spiritual enemies. There was no glorification of the Lord and no celebration within their hearts.

Instead of a melody, that had harmony to it, there was a "noise" of tumult and

disturbance within their minds. The Lord had to let them know there was no excitement in their voices.

The Lord offered them a “new song” the words of which encouraged them to let justice and righteousness flow like water and a mighty stream. He wanted them to pursue good and truth that would renew their lives with works of charity and a derivative faith.

2. The closing question asked them if sacrifices were necessary when they were in the wilderness for forty years. No! The Lord led them and provided those things that helped sustain them through those periods of vastation and desolation. Why would they think that offering sacrifices would be necessary to “win” His favor now? The Lord cannot be bribed with the offerings of tired and meaningless acts of worship.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 5:23-25.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. Music can touch the depths of our souls. Certain songs bring back memories of wonderful experiences we had with a friend or friends. But not if the tune is a song of one note. Some of us get so tied up with the sameness of religion that our melodies probably lack the chords and parts that blend and enliven the song of our hearts. What is your impression of this idea? Can we allow the Lord to teach us “a new song”? How?
2. Justice and righteousness running like water and a mighty stream are illustrative of a land where the running water gives life to an abundance of things. The plant life is lush and hearty, and it draws from rippling pools that are not stagnant.

The Lord is challenging us to put our principles of faith into practice. Don’t let them gather in the memory like stagnating facts. Let good and truth flow like a mighty stream.

How can we do these things? What does it take to put the things the Lord wants from us into action? Do we need to rethink and sing enthusiastically about the Lord’s Second Coming? Do we need to talk more about His liberation work? Can we show others by our actions that we are free of the curse of hell? What will keep us from having to hear the Lord say, “Take away from Me the noise of your songs....”?

I think this is a wonderful challenge presented to us. Talk about ways that individuals and organizations can accept and meet this challenge.

AMOS 5:26-27

*You also carried Sikkuth your king
And Chiun, your idols,
The star of your gods,
Which you made for yourselves.
Therefore I will send you into captivity beyond Damascus,
Says the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts.*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...that otherwise they will be deprived of every knowledge of truth and good, vers. 26, 27."

AC 1715

- "The farthest boundary of the land of Canaan, beyond Dan, is described as being Damascus, as in Amos...(Amos v. 26, 27)."

DERIVED DOCTRINE

Sikkuth and Chiun

- Is it Sikkuth or Sakkuth or Moloch? Is it Chiun or Kaiwan or Rephan? The Writings have no references or representations that I can find for these two pagan deities. They were Assyrian deities. Acts 7:42-43 quotes the prophecy of Amos but uses the names of Moloch and Rephan in the place of Sikkuth and Chiun. The *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* says that Moloch had a title: "the king." That seems to fit in with the text when Amos accuses the Israelites of carrying Sikkuth (Sakkuth) "your king."
- Rephan or Kaiwan was worshiped by the Assyrians as an astral deity, and it is the Babylonian name for Saturn. This also seems to fit in with the prophecy of Amos when he told the Israelites they had an idol that was "the star of [their] gods."

The Idols that They Made for Themselves

- In this charge, it is clear that idols are the works of their own hands and are powerless creatures that should not be in the house of the Lord. It is a reference to the futility of pagan worship.

Going into Captivity beyond Damascus

- Is this like the idea the world had prior to Columbus sailing to the new world? Did the Israelites think that there was little or nothing beyond Damascus?
- Damascus, the oldest city in the world, a city that once had the remains of the Ancient Church, represented in the positive sense the knowledges of good and truth. (AC 1715)
- Was the Lord telling the Israelites that they were about to lose all knowledge of good and truth? Was He telling them that their worship of other gods was taking them to a dangerous unknown point where they would be deprived of the holy representatives given to the church?

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

- That is what we did above. With only two short references, we had little doctrine to follow. Therefore, I feel all of the above will serve us as an “open summary” with the Lord leading us to any tentative conclusions.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 5:26-27.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. What questions or thoughts occurred to you in connection with these verses?
2. Think about the teaching about gods made by human hands. What are the gods of today that seek to supplant the Lord? What are their origins? How can we recognize them?
3. When He speaks of going into captivity beyond limits known to us, what is the Lord telling us? What was He telling the Israelites? Is the Lord warning us about the depth of depravity we can fall into when we make a religion of convenience that we would call “the king”? What other meanings do you see?

Chapter Six

AMOS 6:1-2

*Woe to you who are at ease in Zion,
And trust in Mount Samaria,
Notable persons in the chief nation,
To whom the house of Israel comes!
Go over to Calneh and see;
And from there go to Hamath the great;
Then go down to Gath of the Philistines.
Are you better than these kingdoms?
Or is their territory greater than your territory?*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- “Concerning the spiritual church which had been instituted, that it became worse than the religious systems of the other nations, vers. 1, 2...”

AE 163[4]

- “Those that ‘trust in the mountains of Samaria’ are those that trust in themselves, and from self-intelligence hatch out doctrines. ‘Samaria’ is the perverted spiritual church...” Amos 6:1 is cited. Note: We will be using this quote again when we get to Amos 6:4-6.

AC 1180

- “Calneh” (along with other nations mentioned) signifies the type or sincerity of worships themselves, “...the externals of which appear holy, but the interiors are profane.” Also see AC 1183 for another reference to Amos 6:2.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

Ease

- Regarding those who are “at ease,” the *Swedenborg Concordance* directs our attention to the word “secure” instead of the word “ease.”
- The wrong kind of security will let a person acquiesce to evils and falsities. See AC 2220[3].
- DP 340[4] warns that the person who reasons that the Lord’s mercy will save all people so therefore it doesn’t matter what kind of life one leads “...such a

- security makes nothing of adultery, frauds, injustice, violence, defamation, and revenge...he lets his spirit run riot in them all..."
- AE 706[7] cites a conversation the Lord had with the Pharisees and Scribes about what signs they were to look for. They were not really interested in signs but were tempting or mocking the Lord with their questions. They were so at "ease" with their security that they lacked the spiritual quest that would have shown them the signs of truth. The AE 706[7] quote ends with these words: "...they had no knowledge of the Lord, and lived securely in falsities from evil..."
 - Could these passages help us see what is meant by "Woe to you who are at ease..."

Ease in Zion

- Zion in its positive correspondence represents "...the church as to love." (AR 612) Used in the opposite sense, it would appear that the Lord was telling the Israelites that they were careless with their love toward Him.

Trusting "...in Mount Samaria..."

- AC 10050[2] tells us "...by 'them that dwell in Samaria', are those who are in external worship..."
- A mountain usually represents the extension of worship from either love of the Lord or a love from self. It seems reasonable to assume that this passage is speaking of the extension of external worship from the love of self. They were very much into the worship of the Lord for what it would do for them.

"Notable persons in the chief nation, to whom the house of Israel comes!"

- This quote seems to carry a warning instead of a compliment. Excellence, eminence, dignity, and sovereignty are terms that, when involving the Lord or a representative of the Lord, are spoken of with the word "glory." Truth of faith and the good of charity are the uses the Lord allows to flow through His representative "notable persons." (See AC 6345). But this verse gives no hint of genuine dignity or notability. It sounds like they were in love with the human prudence offered from those not seeking to impart wisdom from the Lord.

"Go over to Calneh and see..."

- This directive to look at Calneh had as its end a lesson about the consequences of external and profane worship. Would the Israelites look at the tragic results of Calneh so they might amend their worship of the Lord? Or would they rest in their belief that they were a chosen people and therefore continue on in their false sense of "ease" or security?

- Nimrod, as a descendent of Ham,” was mighty “in hunting before Jehovah....And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech, and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.” (Genesis 10:9-10) These cities, in the land of Shinar, were in external worship where all holy things were profaned. See AC 1183.

“And from there go to Hamath the great...”

- AC 1205 describes “Hamathite” as one of many nations representative of those who “...are entirely unwilling to know internal things, and when instructed reject them, are very prone to all...idolatries...whose interiors are unclean (who will) rush into interior idolatries...”

“Then go down to Gath of the Philistines.”

- Those who pervert the truths of the Word are seen as having “streets” that are filled with offensive and disgusting refuse. Evil reigns in the street, and to represent this, the streets appear “...full of dung, mire and clay.” In II Samuel 1:20, Israel was told, “Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice.”

“Are you better than these kingdoms?”

- What a powerful question! The sadness of this is that Israel probably responded, “Yes, we are.” They had no sense of how full of spiritual decay they were. They probably saw no validity in the contrast of the nations of heathens with themselves.

“Is their territory greater than your territory?”

- We have no direct teaching on the word “territory,” but what might this question mean if it were phrased this way: “Are you any better off than those who openly reject the Lord? Are you enlarging or expanding the borders of your mind into new territories of the Lord’s truth?”

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. This chapter offers us a valuable consideration of contrasts. The contrast is not to make us feel proud or special. Instead, it is offered to see if we are making the progress necessary to increase the “borders” of knowledge. Are we, as readers of the three-fold Word, clearing away the falsities of the other nations? Are we intellectually and affectionately open to the things of internal worship, or are we worse than the religious systems of the “other nations”?

2. The streets of the New Jerusalem, as shown in Revelation 21:21, are to be like "...pure gold, as it were transparent glass." Gold, when refined, is free of impurities and represents the pure love we are to give to the Lord. Revelation describes gold that is like transparent glass. Our worship is to be open and free of any blockage or hidden agendas.
3. These questions need not be ominous. Instead, they are liberating and challenging to improve whatever we do in our worship of the Lord. Falling into a lazy form of ease or security is not in our best interest for spiritual health. Expanding, growing, forging ahead into the wonders of spiritual territory is our challenge.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 6:1-2.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. When you reviewed these verses, were you able to see the progression of the prophecy regarding the demise of worship?
2. We all like what is comfortable, familiar, and non-threatening. We must be aware of dull routines. On the other hand, changing for the sake of changing doesn't ensure success, so what is the best way to invite the Lord's sphere into our lives?
3. Self-intelligence "hatching out" doctrines: does this sound like anything we ought to participate in? In other references, the Writings warn about "innovators" who seek to impose their ideas and doctrines on the church. Where is that fine line between being creative and spontaneous, and becoming "hatchers" or "innovators"? This reminds me of a classic argument that took place in the organized church when a debate raged on about "doctrinalists and personalists." Those who rigidly followed doctrine were seen as unfeeling and "uptight" individuals who were short on emotional responses. The personalists saw themselves as free and caring individuals who were ready and willing to take "risks" to explore new forms of worship. Bitter feelings and words were exchanged between them. We still see some of this suspicion in the church. How do we resolve this and keep self-intelligence out of the process?

AMOS 6:3-6

*Woe to you who put far off the day of doom,
Who cause the seat of violence to come near;
Who lie on beds of ivory,
Stretch out on your couches,*

*Eat lambs from the flock
And calves from the midst of the stall;
Who sing idly to the sound of stringed instruments,
And invent for yourselves musical instruments like David;
Who drink wine from bowls,
And anoint yourselves with the best ointments,
But are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...that it (the spiritual church) possesses in abundance all things of the church, and that they think nothing about the ruin of the church, vers. 3-6..."

AE 163[4]

- "...'beds of ivory' are fallacies of the senses on which doctrine is founded; 'to stretch themselves upon couches' is to confirm and multiply the falsities therefrom; 'to eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall, to drink out of bowls of wine and to anoint themselves with the firstlings of the oils,' is to draw the truths and goods of the Word out of the sense of its letter and to apply and falsify them. 'Not to be grieved over the breach of Joseph' is not to care that the spiritual church is perishing, and that its truths are being infringed upon. (That 'Joseph' in the highest sense signifies the Lord in respect to the Divine spiritual; in the internal sense the Lord's spiritual kingdom, thus also the spiritual church; and in the external sense the fructification of good and multiplication of truth, see AC n. 3969, 3971, 4669, 6417, 6526.)"

AC 9391[5]

- In Amos 6:3-4: "...here are described those who are in abundance of the knowledges of good and truth, and yet live an evil life; 'eating the lambs out of the flock' denotes to learn and appropriate to one's self the goods of innocence that belong to the internal or spiritual man; 'eating the calves out of the midst of the stall' denotes to learn and appropriate to one's self the goods of innocence that belong to the external or natural man. (That 'eating' denotes to appropriate... 'lambs' denote the interior goods of innocence... 'calves out of the midst of the stall' denote the exterior goods of innocence... Moreover the 'stall' (used for fattening) and 'fat,' signify the good of interior love...)"

AE 279[4]

- In Amos 6:3-4: "Here those who have an abundance of the knowledges of good and truth are treated of; 'to eat the lambs out of the flock' signifies to imbibe the knowledges of internal good or of the spiritual man; and to 'eat the calves out of the midst of the stall' signifies to imbibe the knowledges of the external good or of the natural man; and 'to cause the habitation of violence to draw near' is to live a life contrary to charity."

AR 137

- "That 'a bed' signifies doctrine, is from correspondence, for as the body rests in its bed, so does the mind rest in doctrine. But by 'bed' is signified the doctrine which every one acquires to himself either from the Word, or from his own intelligence, for therein the minds resets and, as it were sleeps. The beds in which they lie in the spiritual world, are from no other origin; for there every one's bed is according to the science and intelligence, magnificent for the wise, mean for the unwise, and filthy for the falsifiers."

AR 774

- "'Ivory' signifies natural truth, because it is white and can be polished, and because it protrudes from the mouth of an elephant, and likewise makes his strength...."

AE 1146[3]

- In Amos 6:4 "Reasonings from falsities are thus described, 'beds of ivory' being doctrines seemingly from rational truths, and 'to stretch themselves upon their couches' being to reason in favor of these from falsities."

AC 6188[3]

- In Amos 6:4, 6 "...'beds of ivory' denote the pleasures of the lowest natural, which are those of the proud; 'not to be grieved for the breach of Joseph,' is to have no concern about the dissipation of good from the internal."

AE 448[12]

- In Amos, "[the passage describing those who devise for themselves instruments of music like David, etc.] treats of those who counterfeit good affections in externals, and bring together for confirmation many things from the Word, and yet are interiorly evil. To counterfeit good affections in externals is signified by 'playing upon the psaltery, devising for themselves instruments of music, and anointing themselves with the firstfruits of the

oils;' to bring forth many things from the Word for the sake of appearances is signified by 'drinking out of bowls of wine;' that they have no regard for the truths of doctrine of the church, even though the church should perish by falsities, is signified by 'they are not grieved over the breach of Joseph,' 'Joseph' meaning the spiritual church, which is with those who are in the truths of doctrine."

DERIVED DOCTRINE

Day of Doom

- What is meant by putting off the "day of doom?" In the positive sense, "day" means the Advent of the Lord. In the context of these passages, where the children of Israel had little regard for the perishing of the church and their counterfeiting truth, the advent of the Lord would appear to them as a day of doom. See Doctrine of the Lord 5 for references to the many meanings of the word "day."

Seat of Violence

- Causing the "seat of violence" to come near has many interesting possible meanings. A seat represents things in the natural which receive the goods and truths "inflowing from the internal." See AC 6675.
- Coupling this with "the seat of violence," we get a picture of "those who destroy the truths of faith and the goods of charity." (AC 6353[8]) The attitude of indifference was the seat of violence that worked systematically to prevent the inflowing of anything good from the Lord.

"Singing idly to the sound of stringed instruments"

- Singing is a way of glorifying the Lord for His wonderful liberation. See AC 8261. Here, we get a picture of the children of Israel "idly" or mindlessly singing or mouthing the words, but their hearts were not filled with a joyful melody of gratitude.
- Stringed instruments represent the exciting of the affections by truth. See AC 8337[2] for a fuller explanation. But the nexus of this verse is that the Israelites were void of any real excitement about what the Lord was doing for them.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. With so much information given to us that we can see clearly what the Lord was saying to the children of Israel. He told them they had an abundance of all things of the church. He told them that they were counterfeiting the truths of the church. Cleverly, they were applying the literal sense of the Word so

that it would appear to justify their ends. By doing this they were offering a “seat of violence” to all incoming truths. Before truth had a chance to take hold, grow up, and cause a change in their lives, they killed the messengers of spiritual hope.

2. Their beds of ivory were well-polished forms of reasoning that lulled their minds to sleep. They appropriated for themselves the things of innocence and ruined their quality in both the internals and externals. They took the best of the “first” oils for themselves, ignoring the need to offer them up first to the Lord.
3. Therefore, the Israelites were ignoring the day of doom. They did not seek the Advent of the Lord into their hearts and mind. As a result, they didn’t see or care that the spiritual church was dying in their hearts and minds. Even sadder is the fact that they had plenty of spiritual resources to use, but they chose to ignore them. To use an analogy, they were starving in the midst of plenty.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 6:3-6.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. We could use many issues for our discussion. What specific applications to today’s issues could we place in our text to examine? Are there any indications of the “day of doom” being put off? Remember, this day of doom is to be a happy advent, but to the mind occupied with self, it seems like doom.
2. The beds of ivory make for an interesting thought. They refer to well-polished forms of reasoning that lull the mind to sleep. Can you think of examples in our world?
3. The seat of violence is something to ponder, too. How effective were the Israelites at blocking the entrance so that they stopped the in-flowing from the internal (soul)?
4. The “singing idly” is a wonderful point to ponder. Do we sing (talk) enough about the liberating power of the Lord from the forces of hell? Do we instead seem to be more prone to sing about “poor me, look at how sad my life is!”?
5. How can we help our children feel excitement for the Lord and His New Church? Historical faith can carry them just so far, and then they have to move on to a genuine experience of their own. Explanations are good, but discovery seems best and the most lasting. Do we have discovery in our educational techniques? What are some ways we can help our children find the Lord?

AMOS 6:7-9

*Therefore they shall now go captive as the first of the captives,
And those who recline at banquets shall be removed.
The Lord God has sworn by Himself,
The Lord God of hosts says:
I abhor the pride of Jacob,
And hate his palaces;
Therefore I will deliver up the city
And all that is in it.
Then it shall come to pass, that if ten men remain in one house, they shall die.*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...that therefore all things shall perish, vers. 7-9..."

AC 6297[3]

- The reference in Amos 6:8 to "fullness" is explained as denoting "...truth and good..."

AR 474[2]

- That by "...Jehovah...swearing "by Himself" signifies...that the Divine truth testifies....and the Lord's conjunction with the church was thence represented by a covenant, such as is made between two who swear to their compact; therefore, because an oath was a part of the covenant, it is said that 'Jehovah sware;' by which...is not meant that He sware, but that the Divine truth testifies...." Amos 6:8 is cited.

AE 608[2]

- "Now as 'to swear' is only an external corresponding to the confirmation that belongs to the mind of the internal man, and is therefore significative of that...[swearing] signifies confirmation, asseveration and simply verity, or that it is true..." Amos is cited twice: Amos 6:8 and Amos 4:2.

AE 750[20]

- "Jehovah is said 'to swear by His soul' when He confirms by His Divine truth, for 'to swear' signifies to confirm, and 'the soul of Jehovah' Divine truth." Amos 6:8 is cited.

AC 576[2]

- In Amos 6:8-9 "...where, speaking of remains it is said that very little would be left, being only a 'tenth part,' or remains of remains."

AE 675[14]

- "In Amos...[vi. 8,9] 'The pride of Jacob and his palaces which Jehovah hates,' signify the love of falsity and belief in it with those who are of the church, 'pride' meaning the love of falsity, and 'palaces' the falsities themselves, which are called 'palaces' because they belong to the proud, and because the falsities of such are embellished in external form so as to appear magnificent, although they are most vile, like huts full of rubbish and filth; 'to shut up the city and the fullness thereof' signifies to condemn the doctrine, because it is full of the falsities of evil, and is possessed by them, 'city' meaning doctrine, and 'fullness' the falsities of evil; therefore 'if there remain ten men in one house they shall die' signifies that all the truths of good with every one shall perish, 'ten men' meaning all truths, 'house' man in respect to good, and 'to die' to perish."

DERIVED DOCTRINE

Going as the First of the Captives

- I'm not sure of the meaning of this verse. However, there are some interesting possibilities. AE 811[27] says that those who bar others from truth and good will themselves be captive to falsities. Might we assume that this verse is telling us that those who are most guilty of perverting truth and good will be the first to be captives?
- Could this be a reference to love, that it is first in end and first to go captive?

Reclining at Banquets

- "... by banquets and feasts is signified conjunction, specifically initiation to conjunction...." (AC 5698)
- Reclining, the Concordance tells us, means to "press" or to "encumber" or to be "weighed down." Probably, this represents those who seek to make the "initiation or conjunction" of spiritual food seem impractical or lacking in nourishment. Those who would "press" truth would direct others away from the Word to things that seem more interesting than doctrine, saying that it is impossible to fulfill the commandments of the Lord. The Lord, they say, is a "hard taskmaster."

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. The Lord “swears” that if we break our covenant with Him, we will become captives. Hell will carry us away on its torrent of falsity. Hell will press us down with a long list of excuses why we do not read the Word and apply its teachings to our lives. They will press us to put off what is essential for our souls. Excuses will spill forth about the “style” of the Word. We will be pressed with doubts about correspondences, significatives, and representations.
2. Once evil rationalizations possess the mind, they will build “magnificent” palace walls to hide their true selves. The walls cover up the vile scenes and are “like huts full of rubbish and filth.” Remains gathered will “die” off, and as AC 576[2] tells us, “very little would be left being only... remains of remains.”

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 6:7-9.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. How many covenants do we have with the Lord? Was our baptism a covenant? Is Holy Supper a covenant? Is a marriage a covenant? How about the rite of confirmation?
2. Are there specific things we can do to cooperate with the Lord to keep remains alive and well? Admittedly only the Lord knows where remains are stored, but we can tune them out.
3. The walls of Jacob, instead of being protective from evil, seem to be set up to perpetuate a hoax that we are spiritual. How do we overcome the pretense so that we can be open to the Lord and get rid of the trash in our lives? How might the pretense of spirituality bar us from achieving actual spiritual life?
4. What did you think about the meaning of “reclining” being more like “pressed” or “encumbered?”
5. The Lord tells us that His burden is light, but we tend to think of it as heavy or difficult. Why? How can we come to see His way as easy or light?

AMOS 6:10-12

And when a relative of the dead, with one who will burn the bodies, picks up the bodies to take them out of the house, he will say to the one inside the house, “Are there any more with you?” Then someone will say, “None.” And he will say, “Hold your tongue! For we dare not mention the name of the Lord.”

*For behold, the Lord gives a command:
He will break the great house into bits,
And the little house into pieces.*

*Do horses run on rocks?
Does one plow there with oxen?
Yet you have turned justice into gall,
And the fruit of righteousness into wormwood.*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...insomuch that nothing (of the spiritual church) will remain, vers. 10-12..."

AC 1488

- Houses are compared, or likened, to "memory-knowledges that are collected." When collected in the mind, it is like that which "frames the external man, and build(s) it up, is not unlike building a house...In Amos...(vi. 11, 12)...'houses' denote in like manner falsities and the derivative evils..." We can see from the latter part of this quotation why the Lord says that He was going to "break the great house into bits."

AE 519[6]

- "In Amos...(vi. 11, 12)...'Jehovah will smite the great house with gaps, and the little house with clefts,' signifies much perversion and falsification of truth with the learned, and some with the unlearned, a 'great house' signifying a learned man, and a 'little house' an unlearned man; 'gaps' signify truths destroyed by falsities, and 'clefts' the same, but in a less degree..."

AC 5895[4]

- "In Amos...(vi. 12) 'shall horses run on the rocks?' denotes shall the truth of faith be understood? For 'rock' in the spiritual sense is faith....and 'horses' are those things which are of the understanding....'will one plow with an oxen?' denotes shall he do good? 'Oxen' being good in the natural.... That this could not be done is signified by the words which follow: 'because ye have turned judgment into gall and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood.'"

AC 9263[9]

- "...by 'judgment' is signified the truth which is of faith; and by 'righteousness,' the good which is of charity..."

AC 9857[5]

- “In Amos... (v. 24) [we read]... ‘ye turn judgment into gall....’ ‘Judgment’ denotes intelligence from Divine truth, and the consequent life.”

Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 85

- This number contains a rather long description of the meaning of the expressions “righteousness” and “judgment.” Quoting all of these references would take up quite a bit of the paper, and listing the references from the Word would be quite extensive. I therefore leave that for you to follow up on as needed.

AR 410

- “‘Wormwood’ signifies infernal falsity, from its intense bitterness, whereby it renders food and drink abominable....” Amos 5:7 and 6:12 are cited. We covered “wormwood” in our study of Amos 5:4-9. Go back and review that section if you have forgotten it.

AR 668

- AR 668 cites the signification of “judgment” and “justice.” Judgment is of Divine truth, and justice is of Divine good. Amos 5:24 is cited.

TCR 51

- TCR 51 says that “...in the Word justice [or righteousness] is predicated of love, and judgment of wisdom...it is by means of these two that God’s government is carried on in the world...” Amos 6:12 is cited.

AE 355[34]

- “In Amos... (vi. 12)... ‘Shall horses run upon the rock?’ signifies, is there any understanding of truth? ‘Shall any one plough with oxen?’ signifies, is there any perception of good? This is plainly the meaning, for it follows, ‘for ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of justice into wormwood;’ ‘to turn judgment into gall,’ signifies to turn truth into falsity, and ‘to turn the fruit of justice into wormwood,’ signifies to turn good into evil.”

DERIVED DOCTRINE

Gall

- In the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, we are told that gall is a poisonous juice extracted from the herb "Conium maculatum," and that in the Word, it is often mentioned with "wormwood." Gall is a poison, and wormwood causes one to lose a sense of what is right or wrong.

Relative, Family

- Looking up the word "relative" is not helpful at this juncture. "Family" member is somewhat more helpful. Turning to the *Arcana*, we read that in the process of regeneration, all the goods and truths, or things of charity and faith, are brought together by the Lord and are represented by families. (AC 917) Therefore, could this reference in Amos 6:10 of the relative of the dead be a powerful contrast of the total burn-out of the soul to the celebration of the newness of life that should have occurred?

Burning the Bodies

- The burning of the bodies I think represents the destructiveness of self love. AE 1173 describes the grief of the mind when it sees the "burning" or "punishment on account of the direful falsities that flowed from their loves." It is self-love that consumes and destroys the very essence of its victim, not the Lord.

The Dead

- The question posed to them was, "Are there any more [dead] with you?" Taking stock, counting the losses, does not escape the Lord's attention. He knows the extent of our deadness, but do we?

"Hold your tongue! For we dare not mention the name of the Lord."

- What could this mean? I think it ties into the bold answer the Israelites gave, saying that there were no other dead within the house. Maybe they hadn't looked carefully, and maybe there was a bit of rebellion there. Evil cannot mention the Lord's name. The mere mention of His holy name would put them to flight. In other words, the "relative" of all that was good in them recognized that evil should not speak idly in the Lord's presence. "Hold your tongue" could mean, "Be careful what you say, for we are in the presence of the Lord."

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. As in so many stories in the literal sense, it appears in these verses as if the Lord is angry or “fed-up” with the decisions of His people. The Lord breaking up great and little houses into bits and pieces seems harsh and a “rush to judgment” until we are given the internal meaning of the text. The Lord is lovingly righteous, and His judgment is full of mercy. Love and wisdom are the means by which “...God’s government is carried on in the world.” (TCR 51) There cannot be a variance from His laws of Providence. So the great and the small will have their houses brought before His Divine “fairness.” Will they stand?
2. Their “houses” of memory-knowledges had been framed up with such gaps and flimsy falsities that the great and small houses just couldn’t stand. The foundation pieces were not solidly anchored. The Lord’s truth placed along side of these distorted frameworks just knocked their props out. Can we picture our experience in the world of spirits when our “book of life” is opened? Might there be some structures we built falling apart? Yet, we thought the world of those “great houses.”
3. Turning the Lord’s things into gall and wormwood is a serious blunder by those who turn against the Lord. They must stop offering poisonous and delusional drinks offered to themselves and others. Only the Lord can call out the dead, and only the Lord can give us the perception of good and intelligence. Otherwise, we try the silly acts of horses or oxen ploughing rocks: futile work with no returns.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 6:10-12.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. Have you ever seen a “house” you thought would last forever only to see that it had to be torn down and built again? It would seem that this is par for us as humans. The problem comes when we become defensive and deny the building is in danger or we become lazy and fail to apply ourselves to the rebuilding efforts. What is your experience with this?
2. Have you ever confronted someone about their speaking disrespectfully of Divine things? Have you been looked at as a fanatic for caring so much for holy things? Have you ever wanted to say, “Hold your tongue. You don’t know not what you’re saying.”?
3. It’s interesting to consider the teaching about mixing gall in with justice. It poisons the intellect and kills the conscience so that nothing bothers us. The result is that the fruit of justice is spoiled by wormwood, causing delusions in

the rational mind. What might be some examples of this? What is the antidote to “wormwood” and “gall”?

AMOS 6:13-14

*You who rejoice over Lo Debar,
Who say, “Have we not taken Karnaim for ourselves
By our own strength?”
But, behold, I will raise up a nation against you,
O house of Israel,
Says the Lord God of hosts;
And they will afflict you from the entrance of Hamath
To the valley of the Arabah.*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- “...by reason that they have acquired these things [the worst religious system] to themselves from self, vers. 13, 14.”

AC 2832

Note: In the New King James Version, “Lo Debar” is mentioned. The *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* says that this name is an alternate form of “Debir.” In *Everyman’s Bible Commentary*, on page 143 in the chapter on “Hosea and Amos,” it says that “Lo-debar are two Hebrew words that are the idiom for ‘nothing’. Even in modern Hebrew one says lo-debar when he wants to say, ‘It’s nothing; it doesn’t matter; forget it.’”

- The AC 2832 translation of Amos 6:13 agrees with that in the quote above: “Ye who rejoice in a thing of naught, who say, have we not taken to us horns by our own strength? ‘horns here denote the power of falsity’.”

AC 10182[7]

- “In Amos...(vi. 13)...by ‘horns’ is signified power, is evident, and indeed power in both senses, namely, the power of truth against falsity, and of falsity against truth....”

AE 316[21]

- “In Amos...(vi. 13) ‘To take horns by our own strength’ signifies by the powers of self-intelligence to acquire falsities by which truths will be destroyed.” Amos 6:13 is cited.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

"Have we not taken Karnaim for ourselves...."

- The Writings give us little or no help with the meaning or correspondence of this region. One *Interpreter's Bible Dictionary* source says that Karnaim means "the horns." That seems consistent with what we have been presented in the passages regarding the people's boast of taking power (the horns) by their own strength.

The affliction "from the entrance of Hamath..."

- The Hamathites were many nations, and they signified many different idolatries. The nature of these idolatries is that they are "entirely unwilling to know internal things, and when instructed reject them...." (AC 1205)

Arabah

- Where is this place called Arabah? There is no mention of it in the Writings. Scholars debate its location. Some place it between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Eilat (Aqaba). Do we try to make some application? It seems better not to because our information about it is so uncertain. To "press" some application might take us away from the spiritual issues.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. Under King Jeroboam II, Israel had become extremely confident in its military strength. They had been boasting about their most recent conquests. To hear from an unknown prophet that these conquests were "Lo Debar" ("of no importance"; "it doesn't matter"; "forget it") seemed so inappropriate. They probably responded, "Look at what we have done by our own strength. It seems evident the Lord is not upset with us. We have recaptured lands that our forefathers had possessed and then lost. We are moving forward, and other nations can see we are a military force to be feared." When the Lord told them that they had lost all of their spirituality, it must have been hard to match up that failure with the events of their recent past. To be told they practiced the worst forms of idolatry didn't seem right for the "chosen ones."
2. How do we see this in our own life story? We get so wrapped up in the effort to get ahead in our work that we set religion aside. We face the competition in the work world and have to be "politically astute" to navigate that fine line, and we compromise our morals to avoid standing out. Talking religion is not the corporate thing to do, so we avoid it as a topic of conversation. Over the years, other priorities force religion out, and we fail to have a devotional life that has substance to it.

When this happens, we lose the “check and balance” that spirituality offers to a person living in our world, where most people want fewer and fewer restrictions to “doing it my way.” When we get into this mindset, we do feel as though we have taken the bull by the “horns” and wrestled all successes for ourselves.

3. What was the idolatry of the Hamathites? They became “entirely unwilling to know internal things, and when instructed rejected them....”
We need to pray that this condition of mind will not come to us and infill us with its coldness toward the things of the Lord.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 6:13-14.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

At this point, we need to allow you to come up with some questions. The ability to put oneself into the text is important. I will give you one question to start you off, and then you can use the space provided to write out questions of your own. Write as many as you wish. When you are finished, please share your questions in the group discussion.

1. Are there examples of an unwillingness to know internal things present in our times?

Chapter Seven

AMOS 7:1

Thus the Lord God showed me: Behold, He formed locust swarms at the beginning of the late crop; indeed it was the late crop after the king's mowings.

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "That the church has increased from the externals to externals, ver. 1..."

AE 543[11]

- "The 'locust' signifies...falsity in the most external things, or the densest falsity...which is one of the curses if they did not keep and do the commandments of Jehovah....and the 'locust'[denote] dense falsity from the sensual man that consumes and destroys...." Amos 7:1-2 is cited.

Derived Doctrine

Swarming Locusts

- The swarming of locust is not covered specifically for this verse of Amos, but we can draw on other references from the Word such as *Exodus 10:14-15*, in which the locust were so thick they darkened Egypt, and they ate the residue (the late crop) of what was left from the plague of hail.
- The Writings make a point that this represents a sad period in the life of an evil person who "persuade themselves that they are in truth by faith, but they are not; they are in falsity, and are against the truth of faith." (AC 7689) Such a spiritual state severs all connection with the light of heaven and the "crop" of every living thing is devoured with a malicious swarming of lies thus producing a gross darkness of the mind.

King

- We need to note the good and bad representation of king. In the good sense, "king" represents being led by the divine truth and divine good from the Lord, our "king." In the bad sense, it represents those who feign obedience but really seek to rule themselves by claiming, or demanding, merit. Let this quote help us see the difference:
- "Those who have lived a good civic and moral life, but have persuaded themselves that they merit heaven by their works...have their false principles

turned into such phantasies that they seem to themselves to be cutting grass, and are called grass-cutters.... They are always hoping to be taken up to heaven, and sometimes consult together how they may introduce themselves by their own power." (AC 1111)

- The locusts eat early and "late" mowings by such self-serving kings.

Putting It All Together

1. The reading in P&P on this verse turns our attention to this teaching: "That the church has increased from externals to externals..." What does that mean to you? To answer this question, let's turn to a passage in the Arcana: "...when a man is in things external, as when he is in worldly and bodily things, then the angels are removed, and when they are removed, then nothing at all of...goods and truths appears." (AC 5897[11])
2. Increasing from externals to internals is lauded. We are told that such a progression causes a conjunction of the Lord with His church. But that is not what is happening in this prophecy. All thinking and living is from sensual and bodily things. Let's liken this process to a sand dune. Little grows on it. It offers little in the way of a firm foundation because its substance shifts with the prevailing current or wind.
3. Have you ever looked at a teaching from the Word and thought you understood the essence of the passage until popular opinions caused you to have doubts about its eternal application? Were precedents pointed out that appeared to provide exceptions to the teaching? It sometimes appears that human experience testifies against a teaching in the Word, and we need to explain away the former rigidity with modern enlightenment. "We were turning people away from the church with such hard teachings." This is an appearance, not the truth.
4. The "mowings" of modern meritorious thinking seem to hold more of an appeal than the "antiquated" teachings of the Word. There are those who want to have a feel-good experience with religion. Are we in a period of moving from externals to externals? Has the external world rationalized the Lord's Word to the point where a "swarm" of locusts plunder everything in sight, silencing the warnings of our conscience and perception?
5. Lastly, do we see evidence that there are those who keep "cutting grass" thinking that leading a civil and moral life will carry the day and earn heaven for them? How about this statement: "It doesn't matter what kind of faith we follow as long as we are kind to one another. We all worship the same God, and after all that is all that really matters in the long run." What truth and falsity are mixed in this statement?

Read and Review

Read Amos 7:1.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. What is the first act of charity? To shun evils as sins. If we move from externals to externals, how can we even begin to fulfill this requirement? Why is the internal necessary to the existence of charity in us?
2. Have you ever done a study of what acts of worship the Lord abrogated? Please check out *AC 9349*. This quote might be of great use if a discussion should arise about the validity of rites and rituals. Old forms versus modern forms can be a heat-producing topic.
Did you see anything in this number that would be of great use when the world or the bodily senses (logic) try to abrogate inconvenient prohibitions to their ends?
3. How flexible have the "external of externals" made us in our thinking? Why?
4. Would you see yourself as a "mower of grass"?
5. Is it necessary for us to rework the image of the church to bring those who have been hurt back into the fold of the church? What specific things would have to be looked at and possibly changed? Would those external changes eventually lead to internal changes? Are there internal changes we can make that would bring about external changes? How can we be softer, but yet true to the Word of the Lord, so that we don't have a "swarm of locust" so thick that the skies grow dark and the spiritual food of the soul is devoured?

AMOS 7:2-6

"And so it was, when they (the locust) had finished eating the grass of the land, that I said:

O Lord God, forgive, I pray!

Oh, that Jacob may stand,

For he is small!

So the Lord relented concerning this.

It shall not be, said the Lord.

Thus the Lord God showed me: Behold, the Lord God called for conflict by fire, and it consumed the great deep and devoured the territory.

Then I said: O Lord God, cease, I pray!

Oh, that Jacob may stand,

For he is small!

So the Lord relented concerning this.

This also shall not be, said the Lord God."

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...that when externals were corrupted, reparation was made, vers. 2-6..."

AC 4281

- "...in the Word 'Jacob' denotes not only Jacob, but also all his posterity.... Jacob and his posterity were of such a character that with them celestial and spiritual love could not be conjoined with natural good (that is, the internal or spiritual man with the external or natural man)...for they did not know, nor were they willing to know, what the internal or spiritual man is, and therefore this was not revealed to them; for they believed that nothing exists in man except that which is external and natural. In all their worship they had regard to nothing else, insomuch that Divine worship was to them no otherwise than idolatrous...." Amos 7:2 is cited.

AC 7571[2]

- This number cites Amos 7:2 regarding the meaning of "grass and herbs." By these words are meant such things as are of the church. "...the truth which is of faith..."

AC 10441[3]

- "In these passages Jehovah is said to have 'repented,' when yet it cannot be that He repents, because He knows all things before He does them; from which it is evident that by 'repenting' is signified mercy." Amos 7:3, 6 are cited.

AC 587

- "...it is of mercy to be punished, because mercy turns all the evil of punishment into good.... Mercy has its name from the fact that it delivers man from miseries and from hell..."

AE 538[13]

- "In these passages...'the abyss' and 'the depth of the sea' signify the hell where and from which are the falsities of evil; for the reason that the evil spirits who are there, and who while they lived as men in the world were in the falsities of evil, seem to dwell as it were in the bottom of the seas, and this more deeply according to the grievousness of the evil from which was their falsity." Amos 7:4 is cited as one of many examples.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

"Oh, that Jacob may stand..."

- In AC 7068, we have this interesting quote: "...they who are in truth are as it were rigid, and stand erect as if they were hard; and when they ought to humble themselves before the Divine, they only bend the body a little; but they who are in good are as it were soft, and when they humble themselves before the Divine, they bow themselves down to the earth."
- In AR 366, we are told that standing before God is to hear and do what He commands.
- Standing represents new life such as belong to a regenerate person. (AE 666[3])
- Somewhere in this wide range of meanings, it would appear that the Word is contrasting the state of the Israelites to that of the external man. He is broken by the "locust" events in his life, and yet he remains resistively proud and fails to give total humility to the Lord. The external man is only willing to bend the body slightly to acknowledge the mercy of the Lord.

Jacob's Small Size

- In AE 696, we have an explanation of the "small and the great" fearing the name of the Lord. The "small" mean those "...who have but little knowledge of the truths and goods of the church, and 'the great' those who know much, thus those who worship the Lord little and much; for (small or great) is measured according to how much a man knows the truths of faith and lives according to them...."

The Lord Relenting

- "The Lord relented concerning this...." Could this mean that the Lord took into account how "small" Jacob was? If Jacob had been described as "great," would the Lord's mercy have relented?

Conflict by Fire

- AE 702 includes a teaching that may offer us a possible meaning of this verse. "...Where the evil are there were conflicts and disturbances of the thoughts and reasonings...respecting the goods and truths of the church." The ranting and ravings of hell offered up confusion and uncertainty to the worship of the Lord.
- The conflict of fire could represent how the Lord's love (fire) will consume all of these illogical ravings and disturbances. This prophecy tells us that the Lord's love or mercy will "consume" and expose the malignant insanities the

evil thought they had well hidden in the deepest recesses of their dwellings or territory.

Repetition in the Word

- Once again, the plea of the prophecy asks the Lord to cease and to help Jacob stand for he is small, and once again, we are told that the Lord relented. Why are these words repeated? Is it for poetical emphasis?
- We need to hear the teaching of the Writings:
 - "...there is not the least word [in the Word] that is superfluous and vain...There is therefore no repetition, except with another signification." (AC 734)
 - "...he who does not know the mystery...cannot but think...[that] repetition [is] for the sake of emphasis. But this is not so.... One expression has reference to truth, the other to good; thus one has reference to the intellect...and the other to the will...." (AC 4691)
- Therefore, we must see that this second reference is not repetition; it is for the examination of the quality of the will.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. When externals are corrupted, the Lord works to make reparations possible for His children. When the locust "finished eating the grass of the land...the Lord relented...." Evil has to run its course, and human beings have to almost hit the bottom of despair. Providence can then enter and lift us from the grip of hell's influence. Such states of despair help to break up the hard ground of the mind. The ground of our minds wants relief and protection from the barrenness hell has left us in.
2. How small or great are we? Will we stand before the Lord with rigidness and reluctance, bending so slightly to His magnificent royalty? Or will we fall prostrate before Him with a degree of softness and loving humbleness?
3. The Lord tells us that all factors of our choices (intentions) will be given proper consideration. We will be given an opportunity to see the contents of our understanding and our will. Mercy will carry a degree of "punishment" so that we may be led into good and that we may be rescued from the miseries of hell and their conflicts and worrisome disturbances.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 7:2-6.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. This section covers five verses. In comparison to some of the other sections, we had little doctrinal exposition. We had to use some “derived doctrinal” application. Is this an appropriate thing for us to do? What are the positive and negative aspects of this approach?
If you are interested in this question, get a copy of W.F. Pendleton’s *The Science of Exposition*. Starting on page 194, he has a chapter on making comparisons of words and passages that is very helpful and encouraging to the researcher.
2. Prayer groups form to pray for someone in the congregation or community. They “seem” to pray so as to get the Lord to relent over some difficulty or illness. Who is helped the most with prayer? Do you think your praying will help the problem a friend is facing? How?
3. What is your reaction to the quotation about mercy? “It is of mercy to be punished,” and mercy has its name “from the fact that it delivers us from miseries and from hell.”
4. The teachings on “repetition” make a statement about the Word. The Word is not superfluous and vain. When I reflect on this, I wonder about courses that teach the Bible as poetry or for literature appreciation. What spiritual effects might come from this kind of instruction? What effect will there be on organized religion if it doesn’t recognize the spiritual reasons for repetition?
5. What are some other things in the Word that appear on the surface to make no sense? What might be present “under the surface”? How can you find out?

AMOS 7:7-9

Thus He showed me: Behold, the Lord stood on a wall made with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand. And the Lord said to me, “Amos, what do you see?” And I said, “A plumb line.” Then the Lord said:

*“Behold, I am setting a plumb line
In the midst of My people Israel;
I will not pass by them anymore.
The high places of Isaac shall be desolate,
And the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid to waste.
I will rise with the sword against the house of Jeroboam.”*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...when the [corruption of] inmost things were reached, then all things were destroyed, because they were against God, vers. 7-9..."

Coronis 56

- This number quotes Amos 7:9 and simply says, "Land,' here is for the church."

DERIVED DOCTRINE

The Lord standing on a wall "made with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand."

- A wall has the following representations:
 - That which withholds falsities on all sides. See AC 8206.
 - The walls of Jericho signify the false reasonings that defended evils. See AC 8815.
 - Walls signify the Word in its literal sense, which protects the doctrine of the Lord's New Church. See AR 898.
- Spiritual character and integrity are important to the Lord. His ways are straight and uncompromising with falsity. He seeks to protect all with His walls of truth. His walls are there for our protection so as to withhold, or keep out, evil on all sides.
- Honest mistakes are pardonable when we have the resolve to correct mistakes when we find them. That is not what Israel was doing. They took the literal sense of the Word and were "leaning" or "bending" the walls of the Lord to suit their own ends. The Lord could not "pass by." He couldn't pretend He didn't see their unfaithful use of the literal sense. Nothing slips by His Divine awareness, and that is a comfort for our souls. The falsity of hell will not catch Him sleeping or being inattentive.
- Accountability, estimations, and measurements were needed to show how foolishly unstable their spiritual walls were. "...for all measures and weights, in the Word, signify the estimation of truth and good." (AR 313)

The plumb line is in the Lord's hand, and Amos is asked to acknowledge it.

- I'm emphasizing this passage because it is a powerful concept and image to reflect on.
- When there is mention of the Lord's hand, AR 55 gives a general principle to follow:
 - "...the presence of the Lord with man is adjunction, and thus conjunction by contiguity; and this contiguity is near and fuller in

proportion as man loves the Lord, that is, does His commandments....by ‘laying His right hand upon him,’ is signified inspiring him with His life.”

- The principle here seems to be that the Lord wanted Amos to see and recognize what was in His hand. Measurement was needed, and the spiritual wanted to bring about a state of adjunction through some natural means (Amos, as His prophet) for the purpose of contiguity and inspiring new life among the people.

“The high places of Isaac shall be desolate.”

- It seems we get a hint about this passage when we use the principle, taught in AC 85, that explains the meaning of being “borne over the lofty things of the earth, and [being fed] with the heritage of Jacob.’ Isaiah 53:14. This represents enjoying internal peace and happiness...and at the same time external tranquility and delight...”
- Isaac represents spiritual love, or charity. See AC 1025[2].
- Isaac represents the “rational man” within every person. See AC 1893.
- Isaac represents the Lord’s interior man, or His Divine Rational. See AC 1950.
- The loss of Isaac’s high places (using the doctrine as explained in AC 85) seems to indicate the loss of an inner peace of rationality and the desolation of clear thinking.

The Sanctuaries of Israel Laid to Waste

- Sanctuaries signify the truth of heaven and the church. See AC 8330.
- Sanctuaries signify the Word. See AE 724.
- Sanctuary signifies the mercy of the Lord. See AC 57.
- AE 632[8] says that when the sanctuary is trampled down, this signifies “to destroy the truths of doctrine from the Word....”

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. We worked hard on these passages. It appears to me that our summary is pretty clear. The church and the children of Israel were in deep trouble. What had been intended to protect them and to wall out evil from every side was so compromised with falsity that the Lord saw that it was time to bring measurement and accountability upon His people. True love would not turn its back on their disorders. The Lord would not pass by. His plumb line was going to be in the midst of them.
2. P&P teaches us that when corruption reaches to inmost things, all things are destroyed. Israel had reached that point, and the Divine needed to confront the hells.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 7:7-9.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. Do you know what a plumb line is? How is it used? Have you heard a sermon on the plumb line? What do you think about the meaning of walls and their spiritual applications to your life?
2. We use the expression mental walls" in conversation. Have you ever "walled someone out" or been "walled out" by someone close to you? How is this like or unlike what the Lord does with His walls?
3. Spiritual integrity, being morally straight, being level with everyone are necessary and useful qualities in a person. Are you able to mentally picture yourself being level with the Lord? Do we sometimes try to pretend that He doesn't see or know about our disorders? Why is that dangerous?
4. There is a saying that goes like this: A mistake is not a mistake unless we refuse to correct it. If we find a crooked wall, are we likely to tear it down or make excuses why it is crooked and necessary that it be that way?
5. People sometimes talk about the difference between healthy boundaries, or walls, and unhealthy boundaries. Earlier, we talked about being "walled out" by someone you love. This kind of wall can hurt. What are some examples of healthy walls? How can we maintain them?

AMOS 7:10-13

"Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos has said:

*"Jeroboam shall die by the sword,
And Israel shall surely be led away captive
From their own land."*

Then Amaziah said to Amos:

*"Go, you seer!
Flee to the land of Judah.
There eat bread,
And there prophesy.
But never again prophesy at Bethel,
For it is the king's sanctuary,
And it is the royal residence."'''*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- “[Those things that are against God will also be]...against all things pertaining to doctrine, vers. 10-13.”

AC 1453[3&4]

- “...for man is a Bethel, that is a House of God, and also a gate of heaven, when he is in the celestial things of knowledges. When a man is being regenerated, he is introduced by means of the knowledges of spiritual and celestial things...After Jeroboam had profaned Bethel...it had an opposite representation....” Amos 7:12-13 are cited.

AC 2832[10]

- “‘Bethel’ is the Divine Good, and is therefore called the ‘king’s sanctuary,’ and the ‘house of the kingdom’ (Amos vii. 13).”

DERIVED DOCTRINE

Amaziah

- Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, represents the perverted church. (AE 624[10]) Historically, Amaziah was a priest who backed Jeroboam II when he instituted a nationalistic, idolatrous cult at Bethel. The prophecy spoken through Amos must have troubled him greatly. He feared that Amos’ words might rally certain rebels who would cause trouble to him and his authority and wealth. As is the way of evil, Amaziah sought to discredit and silence the Lord’s truth with lies, distortion, and subtlety.
- Amaziah called Amos a traitor and claimed his words were proof of his conspiracy against the king of Israel.

Jeroboam

- Jeroboam’s reign as king of the northern kingdom was filled with excesses. He ignored the plight of the poor, justice was ignored, luxury was worshiped and morality was a sham.

“The land is not able to bear all of his words.”

- In AC 620, we are taught that “land” signifies various things depending on the preceding correspondence. For instance, AC 2571 explains that land may signify the internal man of the church; the region where the church is; the

church itself; the doctrine of love and charity where the faith of the church resides.

- Amaziah the priest spoke these words. A priest's use is to lead others to the good of life. Therefore, we might assume that this preceding correspondence is speaking about the charity of the church having no room in its idolatrous system to "bear" the words of the Lord. The church had no room for love of the Lord and love of the neighbor.

"Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive...."

- A sword signifies self-love "with its insane cupidities and persuasions, [and such]...are carried away to corporeal and earthly things...[a sword] signifies the desolation of man such that he sees nothing that is good and true, but mere falsities and things contrary...." (AC 309)
- If the "king," as a representative of ruling loves, is killed by self-love, then sadly, he leads his people into captivity, too. His insanity removes them from "their own land." He leads them out of the region where the church's faith, love, and charity reside.

"Go, you seer!"

- What are we to do with this term "seer"? Is it synonymous with "prophet"? I can't find a direct teaching on the difference between "seer" and "prophet". However, here is an interesting teaching to consider: "We read of the prophets that they were in vision, and that Jehovah spoke to them. When they were in vision they were not in the body, but in their spirit, in which state they saw things such as are in heaven. But when Jehovah spoke to them, they were in the body, and heard Him speaking. These two states of the prophets should be carefully distinguished. In their state of vision, the eyes of their spirit were opened, and those of their body shut...." (Doctrine of the Lord 52, emphasis added)
- Could Amaziah, not realizing what he was saying, have been used by the Lord to testify that the words of Amos were really of things such as are in heaven?

"Flee to the land of Judah. There eat bread."

- Amaziah felt a great deal of indignation against Amos. When we despise someone, we want them out of our sight. The rational and emotional feelings of Amaziah willed to subjugate the Divine truth for its own comfort and would not humble itself to the Lord. See AC 1923 for a fuller explanation.
- Amaziah, even though he was a corrupted priest, was used by the Lord for good. It reminds us of the story of the Wisemen losing sight of the star. They went to the corrupt priests of Herod and got the help necessary to find the star again.

- Telling Amos to flee to the land of Judah has wonderful correspondences. AC 3880 and 3881 explain the inner meaning of Judah. Judah signifies the Lord and the Divine of His Love; the Word as it relates to the Lord's celestial kingdom; and the doctrines of the Word.
- Eating bread in Judah means to appropriate every good that would provide for man's reciprocity to the Lord, and to the neighbor. These were the essentials missing in Bethel.

“...never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king’s sanctuary, and it is the royal residence.”

- Behind this bold statement, we have a recurring question for all times. Who will serve you as king? Is this life mine or the Lord’s? Is the world our sanctuary? Are pleasures in the royal residence?

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. Hell is not willing to look on the face of prophecy. It wants to banish it from its presence.
Hell is afraid that if we listen to the teaching of doctrine, we might rally our forces to expel it from the sanctuary of idolatry.
2. Literally, we need to use the sword of truth to kill the self-love leadership of Jeroboam. The “seer” of heavenly doctrine needs to share the vision of the spirit to restore within us the reciprocal and mutual love to the Lord and the neighbor.
“If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.” (John 6:51)

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 7:10-13.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

Please note that there are questions throughout the “Passages From the Writings” section. Please use them for this section, and add at least two questions of your own to practice your Word-study skills.

AMOS 7:14-16

Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah:

*“I was no prophet,
Nor was I a son of a prophet,*

*But I was a sheepbreeder
And a tender of Sycamore fruit.
Then the Lord took me as I followed the flock,
And the Lord said to me,
'Go prophesy to My people Israel.'
Now therefore, hear the word of the Lord:
You say, 'Do not prophesy against Israel,
And do not spout against the household of Isaac.'*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...so that there was no longer any doctrine, vers. 14-16."

AE 624[10]

- "In Amos...(vii. 14-17) 'To prophesy against Israel, and to drop against the house of Isaac,' signifies to refute those of the church who are in the falsities of evil, 'to prophesy' signifying to teach and refute, and 'Israel' and 'the house of Isaac' signifying the church. Because the falsities of evil are what must be refuted, this is said to Amaziah, who represented the perverted church..."

DERIVED DOCTRINE

Refuting of the Falsities of the Church: Amos Answering Amaziah's Rebuke

- To illustrate the demise of enlightenment in the church, Amos tells them that he is neither a prophet nor one of the sons of the prophets. Those who would have been chosen by the Lord were so far into disorder that "there was no longer any doctrine." So the Lord called a man whose uses would signify the needs of the church.
- We mentioned Amos' two uses in the introduction. A shepherd represents one who exercises charity and protects innocence. The Israelites as a flock were not being cared for by the priests of the church. They were vulnerable to spiritual predators of all kinds.
- Amos, as a "pincher" or pruner of the Sycamore tree, illustrated what a poor quality of fig tree (obedience) Israel represented: poor quality, tasteless figs that most people ignored. The Lord sought to refine them and turn their evil into something good, in spite of their stubborn and rebellious nature. The Lord, through Amos, spoke words of truth that refuted the contempt and intolerance of Amaziah.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 7:14-16.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. Do we need to draw this section to a fuller summary? Are the two quotes from *P&P* and *AE 624[10]* enough of an explanation? The Lord replied and refuted Amaziah's stout defense of the falsities in the life of the church. The doctrine of the church was gone. Its demise was the result of all the things the Israelites had allowed their king, their priests, and their hearts to destroy within the church.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. As I wrote that last paragraph, I felt a deep sense of sorrow. The children of Israel had the great use of being a representative church to the world. Instead of fulfilling this commission, they tried to turn it to self-love. What lessons may we draw from these chapters that we can apply to our church and uses?
2. The Lord answered Amaziah, "Do not...Do not..." This is a stern warning. It is an evaluation of the priesthood. What I hear behind these passages is that the Lord was telling Amaziah not to speak words that dishonored Him. I found myself wishing the Lord would speak similar things to our age. (Of course, I believe He is speaking through His Second Coming) What would you list as the most important things we hear Him saying to us? Where and how do we hear them?
3. As we know, when someone does not want to hear you, they will think of many reasons why they shouldn't. Amaziah did not want to hear Amos, and he came up with reasons why Amos should be silent. The reasons were not true, but they must have seemed plausible to Amaziah. What happens when we mix anger, or disorder, with "plausible" reasoning? What makes the reasoning "plausible"? What is the greatest danger to us when we think this way? What are some other dangers?

AMOS 7: 17

Therefore thus says the Lord:

*"Your wife shall be a harlot in the city;
Your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword;
Your land shall be divided by survey line;
You shall die in a defiled land;*

*And Israel shall surely be led away captive
From his own land."*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...that the church with all things belonging to it will perish, vers. 17."

AE 624[10]

- "[Amaziah's wife] 'shall be a harlot' signifies the falsification and adulteration of the Word; 'his sons and daughters shall fall by the sword' signifies that the truths and goods of the church will be destroyed by the falsities of evil; and 'the land shall be divided by line' signifies that the church and everything belonging to it will be scattered." Amos 7:14, 17 are cited.

AC 9854[3]

- "...in the Word 'cords' (lines) also signify portions of inheritance and of land, for the reason that measurements were made with cords...." Amos 7:17 is one of the references cited.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

Dying in a Defiled Land

- Dying in a defiled land seems to speak of a place where goods and truths are adulterated, namely, hell and its land of bogs, quicksand, and its awful stench, which are well documented for us in *Heaven and Hell*. Those who live there love the dank abodes, and they could not think of being elsewhere.
- Those who follow the likes of Amaziah will find themselves enslaved to falsity, and they will lose that spot in heaven that the Lord had reserved for them, a spot that only they could have filled. Each of them is "led away captive from his own land."

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. Have you ever heard someone talk about "victimless acts"? The premise of this idea is that if two people freely consent to be sexually intimate, and they are discrete about it, no harm has been done. The reasoning, to them, is clear: What one does with one's body should not be of concern to others if "no harm" is done. Are such acts truly "victimless"? Who or what might be the victim?

2. Amaziah's wife, the adulteration of the Word, is still a harlot on the streets of the doctrinal city. People are being defrauded and lied to. Being "street smart" is lauded as a virtue when in fact it is often a hardness of heart that lacks compassion for the neighbor. "Do others before they do you" is a twisting of the Lord's Golden Rule. Innocence is always a target of hell.
3. Sons and daughters represent the "births" out of the conjugal principle: the conjunction of good and truth applied to use. When we ignore the Word of the Lord our "births" become casualties of the sword of self-love. If we fail to be "keepers" of the Word, we will eventually be divided by the cord of measurement, and we will lose the eternal inheritance the Lord would lovingly give us. It is hard to believe that some prefer, and allow, the slavery of the mind to lead them to a land that is defiled.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 7:17.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. Does the theme "Paradise Lost" seem to be an ageless experience that must repeat itself? Why doesn't the experience of one loss of paradise cure the rest of us from risking paradise again?
2. Think of someone you love very much. Imagine this person preparing a special gift for you, deciding what would suit you best, and spending love and effort preparing it. Imagine this person's happy, excited face as you begin to open this gift. Imagine what that face would look like if you threw down the gift and trampled it. Think of the Lord in those personal terms, and imagine His grief at any rejection of the special places He has made for us in heaven. Talk about this image and your special place in heaven.
3. Has the Lord begun His work with the "remnant" to build the New Church?
4. Have you dealt with a "there's no harm..." attitude toward this or that license or liberty the proprium seeks to foist on the conscience? What makes this simple or difficult?

Chapter Eight

AMOS 8:1

Thus the Lord God showed me: Behold, a basket of summer fruit.

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- “That some new [element] of the church will arise, vers. 1...”

DERIVED DOCTRINE

“Thus the Lord showed me... a basket of summer fruit.”

- We read in AC 9996 that a “basket” has a signification “...as being the sensuous because the sensuous is the ultimate of man’s life, and in the ultimate are stored up all the interior things in order....”
- “Summer” indicates that this is representative of the fullness of the church. (DLW 73)
- For “fruit,” we need to look at its positive meaning: “...good works are the fruit of faith in the external sense...but that these good works have no life unless they proceed from charity; and that thus the fruit of faith in the proximate interior sense is charity. But as charity or love toward the neighbor ought to proceed from love to the Lord, this love is the fruit of faith in the internal sense; and as all love is from the Lord, it is the Lord Himself.” (AC 1873)

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. This verse describes, not so much the fullness of Israel’s potential, but what will come from the establishment of the New Church. It will be a basket of summer fruit. The fruits of the New Church will be beneficial to the neighbor and most importantly to the Lord. How much potential will the New Church have? Its “sensual ultimates” will be full. Its good works and its “summer” will enhance the ripening of all the fruits of faith. It will bring all manner of fruit and the healing of the nations with its leaves.
2. When the Lord told Amos to look and tell Him what he saw, we have a clue that the Lord was about to pronounce or reveal a judgment, an evaluation or accountability to see what they had done with what they had. How would their charity measure up? Would it be a charity proceeding from the influx of the Lord? Would their charity, or fruit, be sweet, or lifeless and tasteless?

3. “The Lord showed me.” We will get the answers to all of these questions from the penetrating light of the Lord. There will be no darkened corners where things escape His notice.

“In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” (John 1:4-5)

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 8:1.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. How well do we handle evaluations? Do we feel most of our ratings are fair? Are evaluations necessary?
2. Don’t we like to hear our strengths lauded but dislike hearing our weaknesses mentioned? Is this also true when we evaluate ourselves?
3. What about our spiritual baskets? Do we feel they have summer fruits in them?
4. Some people will have smaller baskets than others. Does the size of the basket matter, or is it what we do with what we have?
5. While Joseph was in prison, he interpreted the dreams of the butler and the baker. The butler’s life was spared. The baker was hanged. The baker’s dream had birds eating bread out of his “three white baskets” (or “three baskets with holes in them”). The Writings tell us that these two men represent the understanding and the will. The butler represents the understanding and the baker represents the will. The understanding (butler) could have its ways corrected. The perversion of the will (baker) is not as easily corrected. In AC 5077-5078, we read that the baker represents the external sensual, the internals of which did not terminate in use to the Lord or the neighbor. Love of self robbed what was spiritual from the will. Does any of this story from the Word seem to apply to this prophecy given to Amos?
6. Our understanding of this verse requires a positive prayer. We need to invite the Lord to show us our baskets so that we can bring the “sensuous” things of life to the higher order of the Lord’s priority.

Amos 8:2-3

And He said, “Amos, what do you see?” So I said, “A basket of summer fruit.” Then the Lord said to me:

*The end has come upon My people Israel;
I will not pass by them anymore.*

*And the songs of the temple
Shall be wailing in that day,
Says the Lord God
Many dead bodies everywhere,
They shall be thrown out in silence.*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...that then will be the end of the old church, vers. 2, 3..."

Doctrine of the Lord 4

- "...the expressions 'that day,' 'in that day,' and 'in that time,' in which, by 'day,' and 'time,' is meant the Lord's advent." Among the many illustrations of these phrases, Amos 8:3, 9, and 13 are cited.

Scripture Confirmations N. IX 4

- Amos 8:2-3 are quoted in here, referring to how the day of Jehovah shall be upon every one that is proud and haughty.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

"The end has come upon My people Israel"

- These words seem to say that the Israelites had so far removed themselves from the truths and goods of the Lord that they were destroying their vital internals. Their hearts were hardened to the prompting of the Lord. The Lord did not create this ending. This rebellious nation brought about its own end. The Lord constantly wants His children to live, but if they refuse to listen, He has to tell them that their end is here. Amazingly, He tells them without anger. Notice how this verse has a tender phrase, "My people Israel." Anger would have omitted such tenderness.
- "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!" (Matthew 23:27)
- "And you would not!" That attitude seems to capture the meaning of "the end has come upon My people." It was this darkness that moved the Lord to make His first advent. If He had delayed any longer, it would have been all over, spiritually, for the human race.

"I will not pass by them anymore."

- The Writings offer us several passages where “to pass” represents positive experiences. To “pass by” means to receive Divine influx into the will and understanding. (AC 683) It also signifies to feel, and to have, peace. (AC 3170) It signifies having the ability to judge things from truth. (AC 6510) In another passage, it means to know and to perceive the quality of things. (AC 3992)
- Does “I will not pass by them anymore” mean that the Israelites had cut themselves off from the Lord’s influx? Had they lost that inner peace? Were they so blind with ambition that they lost the ability to judge and to sense the inner quality of things?

“...the songs of the temple shall be wailing in that day.”

- We cited the following number before in our study, and it is one we need to think more about when we sing in our worship services.
- This number, AC 8261, tells us that the nature of singing is let the heart pour forth its affection for the Lord’s glorification so that we will be inspired to celebrate His victory over hell so we see and believe how much His liberation frees us from hell’s slavery.
- That’s the positive side. Israel’s spiritual death took away the joyfulness of such singing. They saw nothing of the Lord’s redemption. They thought only of the moment and had little assurance that there was spiritual life after death. To the ears of the Lord, their songs probably sounded like wailing, morbid, pessimistic, and monotonous tunes.

“Many dead bodies everywhere”

- Where might we begin with this quote? The body subsists through its soul; wherefore, everything in the body is representative of its soul. See AC 1807[3].
- Could we take this idea and apply it to our text? The soul of Israel was not in a living and vibrant use for the Lord. “Many dead bodies (souls) everywhere” seems to cry out that the light of truth was flickering, and almost extinguished, in the winds of falsity. The preponderance of indifference ruled for the time being.

“They shall be thrown out in silence.”

- AE 687[11] seems to sum up the meaning of this passage when it quotes Isaiah 47:5 “Sit in silence and enter into darkness....” as meaning to be in falsities, and thence in damnation. Israel might have imagined their thinking was well-reasoned and powerful in its philosophical logic. But before the

Lord, their best was silence. How sad for a people who had so much given to them. They were a full basket of summer fruit.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

I feel we did this in the above section. We had so much to derive from the passages because we didn't have direct teachings to work with, and therefore the section carried itself in the way of summation throughout our research.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 8:2-3.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. Does the Lord still "pass by" in your mind? Do we get a sense that influx flows into our will and understanding?
Do we feel the peace that comes from trusting in His providence?
Do we have the ability to judge "things" from truth?
2. Are we "singing" songs that sound like wailing or are excited about the Lord's redemptive work and spiritual liberation?
3. How can we keep ourselves from being like dead bodies everywhere? How can the soul keep its youth and vitality?
4. The voice of silence sounds so sad. What can we do to have voices that will be dignified and acceptable to the Lord's ears?

AMOS 8:4-6

*Hear this, you who swallow up the needy,
And make the poor of the land fail,
Saying:
"When will the new moon be past,
That we may sell grain?
And the Sabbath,
That we may trade wheat?
Making the ephah small and the shekel large,
Falsifying the scales by deceit,
That we may buy the poor for silver,
And the needy for a pair of sandals-
Even sell the bad wheat?"*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...when there is nothing but the adulteration of good and truth, vers. 4-6..."

AC 8540[2]

- "...‘an ephah’ denotes good...because by it and by an omer were measured dry things that served for food, such as wheat, barley, fine flour; and by things that are used for food are signified goods..." Amos 8:5 is cited.

AE 373[5]

- "As a just estimation and exploration of good and truth are signified in the Word by ‘measures,’ it was commanded that the measures should be just, with no fraud about them.... So justice, where it means the estimation and exploration of men in accordance with the quality of good and truth in them, is everywhere in the Word expressed by scales and balances of various kinds, and by ‘ephahs,’ ‘omers,’ ‘homers,’ ‘seas,’ ‘hins’...and injustice is expressed by ‘scales and balances of fraud and deceit’ (as in...Amos viii. 5...)."

DERIVED DOCTRINE

"Hear this, you who swallow up the needy"

- In AC 5217, we find an explanation of the thin ears of corn “swallowing” up the seven fat and full ears in Pharaoh’s dream. “...this signifies that the memory-knowledges of no use banished the good memory-knowledges... the ‘fat and full ears,’ as being memory-knowledges into which the things of faith and charity could be applied....” (Emphasis added)
- The swallowing up of the needy indicates a diversion of spiritual things away from the soul. Instead of placing a priority on things of the spirit, they had a higher priority for self or the sensual comfort needs.
- When the quality of the spiritual life is in a state of “no use,” the “poor of the land” will feel the effect of this spiritual apathy. The “land” is representative of the mind. If the soul languishes in a state of need, the mind will fail to discriminate between what “is” and what “is not.”

"When will the new moon be past..."

- From research into the meaning of the “new moon,” it appears that the Israelites were involved in the worship of a pagan moon god. Monthly worship was made to a male deity named “Yarah.” The records of antiquity indicate that the followers of this cult were in Palestine and Syria. In spite of

the teachings of Deuteronomy 4:19 and 17:3 forbidding worship of the moon, or any other heavenly body, the Israelites practiced these pagan rites, ignoring the warnings. Some people offered sacrifices to "Yarah" in the midst of the temple when the "new moon" occurred, and no one seemed to object to this obvious disregard of the Lord's directive.

- This prophecy uttered by Amos not only exposes their pagan worship, but highlights their superficial devotion to the pagan deity. They couldn't wait to get the "new moon" sacrifice over with so they could get back to their profitable cheating system of false weight measurements.

Trading Wheat on the Sabbath

- "Trading" represents the effort to secure knowledges for self and to communicate them. (AC 4453) In the good sense, the "Sabbath" represents a state of peace or rest from temptation. (AC 853) In Matthew 24:20, we find a reference to someone taking "flight from the Sabbath," which represents an effort to remove one's self from the good of love and innocence. (AC 3755[2])
- Trading "wheat," in the good sense, represents trying to advance in the state of love and charity. (AC 3941)
- Might we derive from these teachings that this was representative of how the Israelites traded off the essentials of doctrine and soothed themselves with how "acceptable" their expanded worship of the "new moon" was because others were doing it, too? They sold, or talked, themselves out of the good of love and innocence the Lord offered them, in the true sense of trading on the "Sabbath day."
- In the parable of the merchant seeking goodly pearls, when he found the pearl of great value, he "sold" all that he had to purchase the pearl. We are taught that this represents ridding ourselves of the self love that would prevent us from purchasing the pearl. The Israelites were not interested in offering this gift of sacrifice to the Lord. They saw no profit or advancement in such honest measurements. They only wanted to find or hear things that would confirm or affirm what they were doing.

"Making the ephah small...the shekel large...and falsifying the scales by deceit..."

- AE 373[5] calls our attention to the meaning of this passage. The Israelites' sense of justice was gone. They were willing to go to any extreme to adulterate the good and truth of the Word. They lived by the "scales and balances of fraud and deceit."

Weights and Measurements

- While we are considering weights and measurements, let's consider this teaching from AC 5658: "Weights and measurements are frequently mentioned in the Word, but, in the internal sense, they do not signify weights

and measurements, but...weights signify states of a thing as to good, and measurements, the states of a thing as to truth."

- Those who cheated the poor and needy had a code of life that allowed them to buy the "poor" for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals and even sell inferior products such as spoiled wheat. Profit took precedence over love of the neighbor.
- Have you ever heard someone interviewing a famous person, and they ask them, "What words would you like to have on your grave stone?" Certainly, we would not want, "Here lies a person whose scales and balances were measured in fraud and deceit, who sold off truth for profit and the poor for a pair of sandals."
- We should not forget as well the interview with the Lord's angels when we arrive in the spiritual world. What is their first question to the newly arrived? **What did you love?** Where your heart is, there will your treasure be.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

We summarized many points in the above section, but it would be valuable to you to engage in some reflection of your own about these verses and what summary you would construct to help you remember key elements of these verses. Use the space provided to write down at least two summary points you derived from the lesson.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 8:2-3.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. In some sense, can we identify with Israel being drawn into a pagan worship of the "new moon"? The moon represents faith. It is supposed to reflect the light of the sun. If the Lord is not the source of our light, what is? There are so many things trying to take the place of the Lord as the way to find an inner peace. It shouldn't be hard for us to think of a similar issue.
2. Justice is the means of exploring the quality of good and truth. How often do we try to "tip the scales and balances" in our favor? Facing the intent of our actions is not always easy, and we look for others who are having trouble, too. It gives us comfort and a ready excuse for not taking on the unfair nature of self-love. What do you think about this issue?
3. What meaning or application can we make with the teachings about selling off the poor, or getting a pair of sandals as an even exchange for the life of the poor?

Remember, the feet represent the natural, that which we walk on all day long. How do we apply true measurements to the practical events of our lives? The sandal represents what we use to protect the feet from painful injuries. Is there a positive sense to purchasing "sandals"? Is there a negative sense of "sandals" we need to avoid?

4. It is interesting to note the representation of the weight system: ephahs, omers, homers, seas, and hins. The shekel is also mentioned. Isn't it awesome to think that in the spiritual world we will have all the "time" we need to study their fuller meaning and application to the spiritual and celestial sense? Do you think our modern systems of weights and measures have correspondences?
5. "Selling bad wheat" seems to indicate callousness toward good and truth. Is there anything that you can relate this to? Can the food for the soul be tainted with a spoiled quality?

AMOS 8:7-10

*"The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob:
'Surely I will never forget any of their works.
Shall the land not tremble for this,
And everyone mourn who dwells in it?
All of it shall swell like the river,
Heave and subside
Like the River of Egypt.
And it shall come to pass in that day,' says the Lord God,
That I will make the sun go down at noon,
And I will darken the earth in broad daylight;
I will turn your feasts into mourning,
And all your songs into lamentation;
I will bring sackcloth on every waist,
And baldness on every head;
I will make it like mourning for an only son,
And its end like a bitter day."*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...that therefore they will perish in the day of judgment, vers. 7-10..."

AR 503

- "Egypt signifies the natural man in conjunction with the spiritual, and thus the affection of truth and thence science and intelligence; but in the opposite sense, it signifies the natural man separated from the spiritual, and then the

pride of one's own intelligence, and thence insanity in spiritual things....[by the plagues of Egypt] hell is signified.... Hence it is evident, what is meant by...‘being drowned by the river of Egypt’ (Amos viii. 8; ix. 5)."

AE 654[75]

- "All this describes how the natural man is vastated, which takes place when he casts away from himself all the truths and goods of the church, and imbibes falsities and evils, until there is no longer any truth or good of the church remaining....it can be seen what is signified by:‘Being drowned by the river of Egypt’ (Amos viii. 8; ix. 5)."

AC 6693[5]

- "...the ‘earth’ which shall be ‘shaken’ denotes the church...‘to be overwhelmed as by the river of Egypt’ denotes to perish by falsities..." Amos 8:8-9; Amos 9:5 are cited.

AC 9642[4]

- "In Amos (viii. 9) ‘I will make the sun go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the day of light’...denotes the extinguishing of all the light of truth from the Word."

AR 53

- "In these passages by ‘sun’ is not meant the sun of this world, but the Sun of the angelic heaven, which is the Divine love and the Divine wisdom of the Lord; those are said to be ‘obscured,’ ‘darkened,’ ‘covered,’ and ‘blackened’ when there are evils and falsities with man. Hence it is evident, that similar things are meant by the Lord’s words, where He speaks of the consummation of the age, which is the last time of the church..." Amos 8:9 is one of the references cited.

AR 476

- "...day and night, morning and evening, summer and winter, constitute time in this world, and when understood in the spiritual sense, they constitute the states of the church; therefore when these states no longer exist, there is no church; and when there is then no church, when there is no longer any good and truth, thus when the light of truth is thick darkness...‘there is time no longer.’" Amos 8:9 is cited..

AE 401[16]

- “In Amos:- (viii. 9) ‘It shall come to pass in that day, that I will cause the sun to set at noon, and I will darken the earth in a day of light.’ This signifies that the church, where the Word is from which it might be known what is good and true, there is nevertheless nothing but evil and falsity. ‘To cause the sun to set,’ and ‘to darken the earth,’ signify the evil of life, and the falsity of doctrine in the church; for ‘the rising of the sun’ signifies the good of love, which is the good of the life, and ‘the setting of the sun’ signifies the evil of love, which is the evil of the life; and ‘the darkening of the earth’ signifies the consequent falsity of doctrine, ‘darkness’ signifying falsities, and ‘the earth’ the church; ‘at noon,’ and ‘in the day of light,’ signify when there might be the knowledges of good and truth, because they have the Word, ‘noon’ signifying where there are the knowledges of good, and the ‘day of light’ where there are the knowledges of truth.”

AC 3693[2]

- “In Amos:... (viii. 9, 10) ‘to cause the sun to go down at noon’ denotes obscurity as to truth with those who are in the knowledges of good and truth....”

AC 4779[2]

- “In Amos:....(viii. 10) where ‘bringing up sackcloth upon all loins’ denotes mourning over destroyed goods; ‘all loins’ denotes all the goods of love.”

AC 7093[5]

- “That there was to be gladness in the feasts, and thus that ‘to hold a feast’ is to worship from a glad mind...” Amos 8:10 is used as a representative verse.

AC 8261[6]

- “That the exaltation of Jehovah, that is, of the Lord, was performed by means of songs...” Amos 8:10 is cited.

AC 9960[6]

- “As mourning represented spiritual mourning, which is mourning on account of the loss of the truth and good of the church, therefore when mourning they made bald their heads...” Amos 8:10 is cited as one of the examples.

Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 35[2&4]

- "...it was a mark of deep mourning, and also a great disgrace, for any one to make himself bald, or to be seen bald....'baldness' signified the Word without its ultimate sense." Amos 8:10 is quoted as one of the examples from the Word.

AR 47

- This number has an almost exact quote of the above citation.

AR 166

- "...on account of transgressions against Divine truths, they put off their garments, and put on sackcloth.... Amos viii. 10..."

AR 492

- This number contains more information on the representations of "mourning" and "sackcloth."

AE 66[5]

- This number has more references to the meaning of baldness and how the bald are seen in the world of spirits. The bald there "...are such as have abused the Word, and have applied the sense of the letter...to wicked purposes, and therefore have been deprived of all truth. These are most malignant." Amos 8:10 is cited.

AE 637[15]

- "In Amos:- (viii. 10) 'Sackcloth upon the loins' signifies mourning because the good of love is destroyed, for this is signified by the 'loins;' and 'baldness upon the head' signifies mourning because the understanding of truth is destroyed."

DERIVED DOCTRINE

"The Lord has sworn..."

- When the Word says the Lord "swore," it is to signify an "...irrevocable confirmation from the Divine.... The Divine cannot confirm from any other source than from Itself; and what it confirms is irrevocable, because it is eternal truth.... The Lord never confirms anything by an oath; but when the

Divine truth...passes down to a man...it is turned into the semblance of an oath." (AC 2482)

"The pride of Jacob..."

- Jacob has many representations. Which of them are we to use? Looking at the literal sense, it appears that we must choose one that shows a troublesome or shallow external in its representation. Perhaps the description in AC 3548 would come close to the internal meaning. In this number, we read that "Jacob" represented truth that appears in its outward form like good and the truth of good but which is not such internally. Could this be the pride of Jacob that the Lord was going to irrevocably expose and remove from the church?
- Pride signifies the love of self. (AC 1306) Pride involves a process of false reasoning that seems to favor self-love. Pride wears a face of arrogance and projects self-assurance. (AC 1585[4]) Pride carries with it an attempt to wield the power of domination over the things of the church. (AC 8678)

The Land Trembling

- In the positive sense, trembling represents a great alteration and change of state when one is regenerating and truth gives place to good. (AC 3593)
- Holy trembling occurs in the presence of the Lord and prepares the way for the reception of good. (AC 8816)
- AC 2571 tells us that "land" signifies various things: the internal man of the church; the region where the church is; where the faith of the church is; the doctrine of love and charity where the faith of the church resides.
- The condition of the church—"the land"—seems to be the thing that needed to tremble before the Lord. The church and its faith had to have a way opened for the Lord to come in. The church needed to return to a state of holy fear to help it prepare and receive the good that it needed to be vibrant in spiritual things.

"All of it shall swell like a river, heave and subside...."

- AE 518[26] has a beautiful promise for all ages. "...although the church and all things thereof perish, still the Word and the Divine truth it contains shall not perish...." Though the falsity of the church swell, heave, and subside, the Word will not suffer injury nor "perish in any respect."

Losses Experienced by People of a Corrupt Church

- The Lord lists what losses the people of a corrupt church will experience:
 - "...the sun (will) go down at noon" represents a loss of love and heaven's intelligence and wisdom.

- "...darken the earth in broad daylight..." represents the mind losing its ability to see clearly in spite of the abundance of the knowledges of truth within the Word.
- "...feasts into mourning...songs into lamentations..." represents the loss of worshiping the Lord from a genuine, spontaneous joyfulness. They would lack the cordial union and felicity that banquets and singing would normally bring to the repentant worshiper of the Lord.
- "...sackcloth on every waist..." represents a state of sadness because their indifference and falsity was doing harm to the conjugal principle. There would be a loss of the spiritual birth of good and truth because they were severing, or preventing, new life from the Lord.
- "...mourning for an only son...its end like a bitter day." Having a son to continue the lineage of the family traditions was important to the Israelites. The Lord touches that nerve. He tells them in the spiritual sense that they have lost their link to the rise of a new church. Indeed, it is an end "like a bitter day."
- Their pride, their love of falsity brought about "baldness on every head."

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. As sad as this section seems, we must not allow the literal sense to discourage us. We need to focus on every one of these correspondences in their most positive sense regarding the Lord's New Church.

Let us with a sense of awe have the holy fear that keeps us from bringing any harm to the Lord and His Word. We need to pray that our river of knowledge might swell and heave in such a way as the river Nile spilled over its banks, to bring richness to the crops that the Lord plants within our minds.

We need to pray that our sun will not go down at noon. We need to long for the truths that give us the light to sort through the pitfalls of hell. May our feasts and our songs flow out of us like the joyous outbursts of happy children. We need the spontaneous enthusiasm of one who once was blind but now can see.

May we search for the conjugal principle so that we may have an ardent desire to spiritually procreate and to protect what is procreated. We need those heirs to further the cause of the New Church. May we not do anything to the sacredness of the Word that would bring baldness upon the head of anyone.

Let us sing the song, "This is the day that the Lord hath made. Let us be glad and rejoice in it." We can offer a prayer that, in spite of what hell tries to tell us, we are not going to have this day or any day "end like a bitter day."

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 8:7-10.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. Can we turn the darkness of Israel's failure into a ray of hope? What can we learn that could be useful to our church? Does the Lord always offer a source of hope, no matter how dark His words seem? How can we find it?
2. Negative thoughts, if given a chance to get out of control, rob us of our hope. What is dangerous about losing hope? How can we regain lost hope?
3. The description of "baldness" gives us a challenge not to play games with the Word. Do we need this "picture" as a reminder to be true to the Word and its spiritual sense? What does being true to the Word look like in everyday life?

AMOS 8: 11-14

*"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord God,
That I will send a famine on the land,
Not a famine of bread,
Nor a thirst for water,
But of hearing the words of the Lord.
They shall wander from sea to sea,
And from north to east;
They shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord,
But shall not find it.
In that day the fair virgins
And the strong young men
Shall faint from thirst.
Those who swear by the sin of Samaria,
Who say
As your god lives, O Dan!
And, As the way of Beersheba lives!
They shall fall and never rise again."*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...that then there will be no longer any good and truth, vers. 11-14."

AR 323

- “That ‘hunger’ signifies ignorance of the knowledges of truth and good arising from the deficiency of such knowledges in the church, is evident from various passages in the Word....” Amos 8:11-14 is cited as an example.

AE 386[11]

- “In Amos:-...(viii. 11-13) ‘by famine’ and ‘thirst,’ namely, that a famine for bread is not meant, nor a thirst for water, but for hearing the word of Jehovah, thus that it is a lack of the knowledges of good and truth that is meant; and that these are not in the church or in its doctrine is described by the words, ‘they shall go from sea to sea, and from the north to the sunrise, seeking the word of Jehovah, and shall not find it,’ ‘from sea to sea’ signifying on every side, for the outmost boundaries in the spiritual world, where truths and goods begin and terminate appear like seas; consequently ‘seas’ in the Word signify the cognitions of truth and good, also knowledges (scientifica) in general; ‘from the north to the sunrise’ signifies also on every side where truth and good are, ‘the north’ meaning where truth is in obscurity, and ‘the sunrise’ where good is. Because ‘famine and thirst’ signify a lack of the knowledges of good and truth, therefore it is also said ‘in that day shall the beautiful virgins’ meaning the affections of truth from good, and “youths” the truths themselves that are from good, ‘the thirst for which they shall faint’ meaning the lack of these.”

AR 620

- “...they [who] have loved truths because they are truths...are meant by ‘virgins’...because ‘a virgin’ signifies the church as a bride, who desires to be conjoined with the Lord, and to become a wife; and the church which desires to be conjoined with the Lord, loves truths because they are truths....all they who are such in the Lord’s church, whether they be virgins or young men, wives or husbands, boys or old men, girls or old women, are meant by ‘virgins’...” Amos 8:11, 13 are cited.

AR 956

- “That by ‘thirst’ and ‘thirsting’ is signified to perish from lack of truth.... But by ‘not thirsting’ is signified not to have a lack of truth...”

AC 3081

- “The ‘fair virgins’ denote the affections of truth; the ‘young men’ truths, or what is the same, those who are in them; concerning these it is said that ‘they shall run to and fro to seek the word of Jehovah, and shall not find it,’ and

consequently ‘they shall faint for thirst.’” Amos 8:12, 13 are cited in this number.

AC 7668

- “...where ‘fair virgins’ denote the affection of truth; ‘young men’ intelligence; ‘to faint for thirst’ denotes to be deprived of truth; therefore it is said, ‘they shall run to and fro to seek the word of Jehovah and not find it.’ That fair virgins are not meant, nor young men, nor faintness by reason of thirst, is plain.” Amos 8:12, 13 are cited in this number.

AC 2723

- “...by ‘Beer-sheba’ are signified the things of human reason...adjoined to the doctrine of faith; and because they are again adjoined...became adapted to human comprehension....and also in the opposite sense, Amos viii. 13, 14.”

AC 3923[6]

- “That there is signified the denial of all things of faith, is because Dan was the last boundary of the land of Canaan, and Beer-sheba the first, that is, the midst or inmost of the land....” Amos 8:13, 14 are cited in this number.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

The Sin of Samaria

- What is the sin of Samaria? Scholars say that this prophecy refers to the twin “calf altars” at Dan and Bethel. In various other references, the Writings identify the disorderly side of Samaria as various inner sins. For instance, AC 2466[4] says that Samaria had an affection for falsities. AC 10050[2] says it signifies those who are in external worship. AE 193[8] says Samaria signifies evils of the will. AC 223[20] says Samaria signifies the false doctrines of those who reject the Lord. Could any (or all) of these be the sin of Samaria the prophecy alludes to?

“They shall fall and never rise again.”

- Is this prophecy referring to the fall and demise of a people or to the fall and demise of their false human reasoning that gave birth to the falsities within the church?

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. Several key words seem to draw this section to a summary: ignorance, deficiency, and confusion.
2. When the Word of the Lord is ignored, can there be any other outcome but ignorance and spiritual deficiencies? The virgins and the young men “sense” that they want and need something. Where can we find it? How can we satisfy this great thirst and famine?
They have physical bread and water, but they need a “hearing” of the words of the Lord. From sea to sea, from north to east, they can find no one who can open the words of the Lord for them. There is a sense of loss. They feel a sense of not being conjoined to the Lord.
3. The sins of Samaria, the sins of sensual or external worship, prevail from inmosts to outmosts. The prophecy tells the Israelites that they have lost what they need most—conjunction with the Lord. Their pursuit of frivolous things will make them faint from a great lack of the “living bread” and the “living waters” that only the Lord could provide.
4. Why must this happen? Is it because Beersheba lives? The Writings tell us that Beersheba represents a human reason that is not adjoined to the doctrine of faith. The Lord lays before us the results of such a ruling love: Human comprehension will not be willing to receive divine guidance. “They shall fall and never rise again.”

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 8:11-14.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. Is there any evidence of a longing for good and truth among us today? Where do you see it?
2. Do you see a searching from sea to sea, from north to east for the word of the Lord? What are the signs of this search?
3. AR 620 reminds us that “virgins” and “young men” represent anyone desiring to be conjoined to the Lord. For the sake of discussion, is there a process here that tells us what to do as a parent or church? For instance, are we being taught that the individual must desire to be fed and given water before he or she can be helped? In some passages of the Word, we are taught to not throw our pearls before the swine because they will trample them into the ground. In other places, the “master” or the “king” sent his servants out into the streets and highways to find people to bring them to the banquet.
Which is it: people must desire to be fed, or people must be found and fed? Or are both true?

Chapter Nine

AMOS 9:1-5

*"I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and He said:
Strike the doorposts, that thresholds may shake,
And break them on the heads of them all.
I will slay the last of them with the sword.
He who flees from them shall not get away,
And he who escapes from them shall not be delivered.
Though they dig into hell,
From there My hand shall take them;
Though they climb up to heaven,
From there I will bring them down;
And though they hide themselves on top of Carmel,
from there I will search and take them;
Though they hide from My sight at the bottom of the sea,
From there I will command the serpent, and it shall bite them;
Though they go into captivity before their enemies,
From there I will command the sword,
And it shall slay them.
I will set My eyes on them for harm and not for good.
The Lord God of hosts,
He who touches the earth and it melts,
And all who dwell there mourn;
All of it shall swell like the River,
And subside like the River of Egypt.*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- “Concerning the last judgment upon them, and that nowhere, whithersoever they shall flee, will there be any escape, vers. 1-5....”

AC 9552[2]

- “In Amos:-... (ix.1) ‘I saw the Lord standing upon the altar, who said, Smite the pomegranate that the posts may shake; that is, divide them in the head, all of them; I will slay the last of them with the sword.’ where ‘to smite the pomegranate’ denotes to destroy the memory-knowledges of good by means of the falsities of evil; the posts are then said to ‘shake,’ because ‘posts’ denote the truths of the natural (n.7847); ‘to slay the last with the sword’ denotes in this way to destroy the ultimate things; for a ‘sword’ denotes truth

fighting against falsity and destroying it: and the converse (n. 2799, 4499, 6353, 7102, 8294)."

AC 9125[2]

- "...‘to dig through into hell’ denotes to hide themselves there, thus in falsities from evil; for ‘hell’ denotes falsity from evil, because this reigns there. The falsities there are called ‘darkness,’ within which they hide themselves from the light of heaven; for they flee from the light of heaven, which is Divine truth from the Lord.” Amos 9:2 is cited.

TCR 62

- "...it is clear that God is omniscient in hell as well as in heaven, and in like manner with men in the world; thus that He perceives, sees, and is cognizant of the evils and falsities from the good and truth in which He Himself is, and which in their essence are Himself....” Amos 9:2 is cited.

AE 581[7]

- “The malice and craftiness of infernal spirits...are meant by ‘serpents’ in the following passages.” Amos 9:3 is a verse cited as an example.

AE 811[4]

- “If they have gone into captivity before their adversaries’ signifies, if they have suffered evils to take possession of them; ‘adversaries’ meaning evils, and ‘to go into captivity’ meaning to be possessed by them. ‘Thence do I command the sword that it may slay them’ signifies that falsities will shut them out from the understanding of truths, and will destroy them.” Amos 9:4 is cited.

AC 6693

- "...the ‘earth’ which shall be ‘shaken’ denotes the church (n. 6649); ‘to be overwhelmed as by the river of Egypt’ denotes to perish by falsities; and because falsities are signified, it is said that ‘the sun shall set at noon,’ and that ‘the earth shall be darkened in the day of light.’.... As the ‘river of Egypt’ signifies falsity, therefore Moses was commanded to smite with his staff upon the waters...they consequently turned into blood, every fish died, and the river stank....” Amos 8:8, 9 and Amos 9:5 are cited in this number.

AR 503

- There is a vague reference to Amos 9:5 in AR 503. “Egypt’ signifies not only intelligence but also insanity in spiritual things....” Such is represented by ‘being drowned by the river of Egypt.”

AE 654[75]

- “All this describes how the natural man is vastated, which takes place when he casts away from himself all the truths and goods of the church, and imbibes falsities and evils, until there is no longer any truth or good of the church remaining.” Amos 9:5 is one of the references used to illustrate this teaching.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

The Lord Standing by the Altar

- How beautifully this illustrates the Lord visiting the holy “element” that was provided to worship Him. The customs, the rituals, the songs, the sacrifices. What did these elements do for the quality of worship in the hearts of His people? He knew, but now it was time for them to “see” what they were doing.

Strike

- To “strike” means to bring, or apply, holy truth so that a contrast of judgment may be seen. The Lord’s presence brought innocence and all the holiness of His Love and Wisdom. Of course this would be “striking.” It would be awesome and frightening. The Lord’s striking was going to break away the veneer of Israel’s monotonous (vain) worship services.

Door

- A door, or doorposts, signifies that which has the potential to introduce the Lord and His good and truth. The Israelites’ love of falsity had to be exposed so that order might be restored. The Lord would do this by opening the arcana of heavenly truths. As with a mighty wind, the pollution of falsity was about to be cleaned away.

“That thresholds may shake”

- When winter comes to earth, it provides that many useful things occur to the soil or ground. There is a period of “rest” when vegetation does not draw from the soil’s nutrients. The ground freezes and cracks. The hardened

ground, with frost heaves, cracks open and thus allows for the aeration of the soil. The soil rejuvenates so as to provide for the coming splendor of spring. Shaking the threshold seems something like that. We get in ruts of thinking. We miss the opportunities of new growth. Could this shaking of the threshold be a positive thing the Lord “permits” for our benefit? Is the message here a reminder that it all happens so new spiritual beginnings may replace the states of indifference?

The Lord's Hand, Sight, Eyes

- Throughout these first five verses the Lord mentions His hand, His sight, and His eyes. Let's look at some of their correspondences so we can understand their importance in this prophecy:
- Hands represent ability, power, communication, and confidence.
- Seeing means that He knows all and everything from eternity; the Lord's conscience spurring man on to regeneration.
- Eyes represent His great powers of intellection and lucid perception that go beyond human comprehension.
- These Divine attributes are not listed merely to impress us. They are stated to show that nothing escapes the Lord's notice. He is the Power, the Wisdom, and the Everlasting Father of all. Hell, in its fantasy world, thinks that it is able to fool or deceive the Lord with its bag of illusions. This prophecy shakes the very threshold of hell and strikes the head of them all.

Leaving the Lord's Presence

- It is an illusion to believe one has left the Lord's presence. These verses refer to the illusion of leaving His presence by digging into hell, climbing up to heaven, hiding on top of Mount Carmel, or hiding at the bottom of the sea.
- The attempt to dig into hell has an interesting possibility. To “dig” represents to search for, to investigate, or to apply truths to false ends. (AC 7343)
- Climbing up to heaven pictures those who think they can force their way into heaven through their intellectual ability to reason apart from receiving good from the Lord. (AC 5497)
- Hiding themselves on top of Mount Carmel: Here again we have a very interesting contrast. As there is a problem with emphasizing reason apart from the affections, we now see a concerted effort to obtain good through the truths of the church from a natural application of the Word. This goal seems worthy to seek but lacking in discrimination and prudence. The truths of the Word were turned to the convenience of the moment as directed by the natural mind.
- To hide from the Lord at the bottom of the sea seems to be explained in this number from the *Arcana*: “...the hells of some appear...as deeps and as seas.... From those hells come the evil spirits that devastate... their phantasies...pour

in.... That hell is called the ‘deep’ and that the foul emanations therefrom are called ‘rivers’..." (AC 756[2])

- Through all these conditions, it appears from the literal sense that the Lord is angry and is intent on slaying the Israelites. We know that it is not the Lord who is doing these things. It is the evil within them that is destroying them. The evil, in the Lord’s presence, is in anguish because of the purity of His Love and Wisdom, and it turns on itself and finds how empty and void its choices have been. For a brief moment, evil sees the horror of its insanity.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. Psalm 139 beautifully reminds us that there is no place where we can escape the presence of the Lord. This chapter mentions ascending into heaven, having a bed in hell, taking the wings of the morning, the uttermost parts of the sea, tells us that darkness shall be as light to the Lord, and repeats the phrase, “You [the Lord] are there.” The words of this Psalm are offered in a comforting way. Now contrast that Psalm with this chapter from Amos. Is there a different message or tone? We may claim that we don’t feel Him near us, but the “distance” or absence of the Lord is our choice. If we move away from the Lord, we close ourselves off from His providential leading. However, the bottom line is that we can’t escape Him, and there will be a final judgment for each of us. “He will be there.”
2. The insanity of those who reject the Lord’s Word must be “shaken.” The series of moments to eternity has to be considered more carefully. The choice made in each moment will carry consequences. Prayerfully, we need to ask the Lord to guide our decision-making methods. We need to make corrections as soon as we see our mistakes. But spiritual insanity gets so deeply imbedded in us, with the ill-fated logic of our proprium, that the “door posts” of the mind get log-jammed with falsity. Like a thick cloud, falsity cuts off the light of heaven. The Lord never ceases in His effort to restore us to our rightful mind. Will we allow Him to do that, or will we work in every way to run away from this necessary task?
3. The message of these verses seems to say, “Don’t ignore the way of the Lord. Take care of spiritual things as a priority of the highest order.”

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 9:1-5.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. How easy is it for us to imagine we act independently from the Lord? It appears that we do everything alone. The striking, the shaking, the being

knocked down may seem like a mean act of the Lord. Being bitten by serpents, slain with swords, made captives, and made to mourn seems hard. Instead of meanness, there really is love. Spiritual reality has to remove evils. We must be shaken and humbled so that our selfish proprium will be put aside and replaced with the Lord's Proprium. Such things must happen if the New Church is to come to us.

2. Do you feel comfortable explaining passages like this one to someone who says that God is a hard taskmaster? How would you explain them?
3. Do you remember the story of the man possessed with demons? (Mark 5:2-14) He lived among the tombs, no chains could hold him, and no man could tame him. He cried in turmoil and cut himself with stones. When he saw Jesus, he ran to him for help. The Lord took pity on him and cast all of the demons into the swine. Can we see any application of that lesson to our text?
4. It is hell that does the hurting. Hell enjoys the misfortune of others. The Lord has infinite mercy and He wishes no one harm. It is our imperfect perception that leads us to picture the Lord as a hard taskmaster. What are some ways to correct that misperception?
5. We would do well to remind ourselves of this truth. Every day in thousands of ways the Lord's Divine Providence seeks to help us. If we could but see one way fully, we would be amazed at the care and detail He puts into caring for us. Not once does He try to frustrate or punish.
6. Instead of punishment, the Lord wants order. He wants to imprint His faith and charity in each of our hearts. Not everyone wills to cooperate with this goal, and the Lord seems unreasonable, hard, and cruel to them. They draw this conclusion because He seems to be interfering with their desire to avoid His influence and direction. What conversation might you have with someone who is in this state? How does it feel when you are in this state?

AMOS 9:6

*"He who builds His layers in the sky,
And has founded His strata in the earth;
Who calls for the waters of the sea,
And pours them out on the face of the earth-
The Lord is His name."*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...from the Lord, who causes the church to be, ver. 6..."

AC 8945

- “It is said ‘go up on steps,’ for the reason that elevation to interior things appears in the world of spirits, where celestial and spiritual things are presented in forms like those of the world, as an ascent by steps. This representative it has often been given me to see. For this reason also it was that angels were seen by Jacob in his dream going up to the Lord by steps of a ladder (Gen. xxviii. 12). Therefore also by ‘steps’ in the Word is signified ascent to higher things, that is, to interior things....” Amos 9:6 is quoted as a reference.

AC 9408[3]

- “...when mention is made in the Word of ‘the heavens,’ and also of ‘the heavens of heavens,’ in the internal sense are meant the angelic heavens....for in the other life a heaven with stars appears, yet not the heaven that appears to men in the world; but a heaven that appears in accordance with the state of intelligence and wisdom of the spirits and angels. The stars there are knowledges of good and truth; and the clouds which are sometimes seen beneath the heaven are of various signification according to their colors, their translucence, and their movements; the blueness of heaven is truth transparent from good.” There are many passages cited, one of which is Amos 9:6.

AR 238

- “It has also been granted me to see the seas which are at the boundaries of the heavens, and to converse with those who were therein, and thus to know the truth of this matter from experience. They seemed to me to be in the sea, but they said that they are not in the sea, but in the atmosphere; from which it was manifest to me, that the sea is an appearance of the Divine proceeding from the Lord in its boundaries....therefore ‘the seas,’ in the Hebrew language, is called ‘the west,’ that is, where the light of the sun declines towards its evening, or truth into obscurity.” Amos 9:6 is one of various other passages cited to illustrate these teachings.

AE 275[10]

- ““The steps that Jehovah buildeth in the heavens’ signify interior truths which are called spiritual; ‘the waters of the sea’ signify exterior truths, which are natural because they are in the natural man; ‘to pour them out upon the faces of the earth’ signifies upon the men of the church, for the ‘earth’ is the church.” Amos 9:6 is quoted.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

"His strata in the earth..."

- We are given an explanation of the Lord building His layers in the sky but nothing about the meaning of His "strata in the earth." A reference in AC 2162 might help us see what this means. This number tells us that the heavens denote celestial and spiritual things "...thus all things which are of internal worship.... But the 'earth' is all lower things that correspond to... the lower rational and natural things, whereof also things celestial and spiritual are predicated from correspondence....also those in the church and in external worship, and in the literal sense of the Word; in short, all such things as proceed from things internal and are presented in things external...."

Pouring the Waters of the Sea on the Face of the Earth

- The order of the Lord is imprinted on everything created. Everything that has being owes its very existence to the finition of His Divine Love and Wisdom.
- How can we illustrate this from the teachings of the Lord? The Pharisees came to the Lord to ask Him to quiet, or discipline, the people when they shouted, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." (Luke 19:38)
- The profoundness of the Lord's answer is awesome when we allow it to touch our hearts. He said, "I tell you that, if these [the disciples] should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." (Luke 19:39)
- Earthly wisdom may seek to silence the beauty of the Lord's glory. Spiritually blind eyes may refuse to see the truths that are all about them. But the Lord has poured out His truth over the whole earth so that even the "stones" give evidence of the infinite planning and order of the Lord. The denial of humanity will not quiet the work of the Lord.
- Speaking of evidence, let's consider this quote from *The Canons of the New Church*: "At this day nothing else than the *self-evidencing reason of love* will reestablish [the church], because they have fallen." The hope for our internal church is that we will rekindle our love for the Lord so that our eyes will see the self-evidencing proof of God all around us, even in the "stones" of the earth.
- "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. *P&P* reminds us that it is the Lord who gives life and vitality to the church. It is not the buildings, not the priesthood, not the people nor the size of the congregation. "The whole of religion is founded upon [having as correct as

- possible] an idea of God." If a church errs concerning its idea of God, it will err concerning matters of faith. It will also err concerning charity and will know nothing of eternal life. Thus, the church will be in a thick darkness. (This is a summary of the introduction to The Canons of the New Church.)
2. The meaning of this verse seems so clear now. The Lord has ordered the heavens. He has given us the literal, spiritual, and celestial sense of the Word. He has eternal truths that will keep us in a state of growing forever. The power of His order may be seen in all the things of earth. He pours out His loving benefits to the whole universe. Our "cup runneth over." Those who choose to miss the benefits of the Lord are like people who starve in the midst of spiritual plenty.
 3. Our verse of study asks: "Who has done all of this?" We are given the answer: "The Lord is His name." This closing sentence of our study verse calls us back to basics. "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted...in all the earth." (Psalm 46:10) Let the contrite acknowledge the Lord's endeavors by saying, "Amen," for the word "amen" means "so be it." In the Doctrine of Faith 6, we read "...the ancients...instead of saying Faith, were accustomed to say Truth. For the same reason truth and faith are one word in the Hebrew language, namely Amuna or Amen." Let the order of the Lord lead us into the mysteries of faith with understanding so that we may say Amen.

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 9:6.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. How do you understand the meaning of the phrase "self-evidencing reasons of love"? The Canons indicate it is a necessary element of faith to reestablish the light of the Lord within the church. Have you ever heard a doctrinal class on this subject?
2. See if you can pick out some examples of how self-evidencing reasons of love make all the difference in understanding the truths of the Lord. Think about your own experience with this.
3. What "stones" cry out, the truths of the Lord, when skeptics deny His glory and power?
4. How can we best assist the layers in the sky to be founded in the strata of the earth? Do we do this when we unfold the inner sense of the Word?
5. If you were to pick the most important elements of your internal church, what would you choose and how would you rank them in importance? How can each of us keep our human "prudence" from over-riding the Lord's will?

6. Did you note the difference in the quote of Amos 9:6 in the Writings? Our New King James translation says, "He...builds His layer..." and the Writings have the words "...go up on steps..." Any idea why there is such a difference in translations?

AMOS 9:7

*"Are you not like the people of Ethiopia to Me,
O children of Israel?" says the Lord.*

*"Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt,
The Philistines from Caphtor,
And the Syrians from Kir?"*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...that there were also churches before, which have been laid waste, ver. 7..."

AC 1197

- "...all those were called 'Philistines' who talked much about faith, and declared that salvation is in faith, and yet had no life of faith.... That the 'Philistines' signify in general a mere memory-knowledge of the knowledges of faith, and specifically those who make faith and salvation consist in knowledges alone, which they make matters of memory..." Amos 9:7 is offered as one of many references.

AC 9340[6]

- "...the perversion and destruction of the church after it had been set up is here treated of; 'the sons of the Ethiopians' here denote those who are in the knowledges of good and truth, but who apply them to confirm evils and falsities (n. 1163, 1164); 'the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt' denote those who have been initiated into spiritual truths and goods by means of memory-truths. (That 'the sons of Israel' denote those who are in spiritual truths and good, thus in the abstract sense spiritual truths and goods, see n. 5414, 5801, 5803, 5806, 5812, 5817, 5819, 5826, 5833, 5879, 5951, 7957, 8234; and that 'the land of Egypt' denotes memory-truth, has been shown above.) The like is signified by 'the Philistines from Caphtor,' and by 'the Syrians from Kir,' to whom they are therefore likened. 'The Philistines from Caphtor' denote those who have been initiated into interior truths by means of exterior, but who have perverted them and applied them to confirm falsities and evils (n. 1197, 1198, 3412, 3413, 3762, 8093, 8096, 8099, 8313); and 'the Syrians from Kir' denote those who are in the knowledges of good

and truth, which also have perverted (n. 1232, 1234, 3051, 3249, 3664, 3680, 4112)." This number is in explanation of Amos 9:7.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

Children of Israel

- Is there a reason the Lord addresses them, "O children of Israel...."? Children signify innocence, charity, good, truth, and the remains stored up in a person from infancy.
- It seems appropriate to assume that the Word uses children to show us how the Lord from our childhood has touched that part of our heart that will listen and want to obey His gentle, wise, caring ways. The Lord is not absent from us for the least of a moment. "O children..." touches remains and tries to soften us to listen.
- Churches before the Israelites had made serious spiritual mistakes. The Lord wished the Israelites to take heed of them and not follow their folly. It was as if He said, "Do you need examples? If I point out the folly of earlier churches, will you listen and make appropriate changes?" This is what I hear in this verse. How about you?
- "Look at the Ethiopians! Look at the Philistines! Look at the Syrians! Do you want to be like them?"
 - Ethiopians, in the "bad sense, signify the interior knowledges of the Word applied to confirm false principles." (AC 1164)
 - Philistines "represent those who conceive false principles and reason thence concerning spiritual things which overflow man." (AC 705)
 - Syrians, in a "bad" sense represent the abuse and misuse of the knowledge of good. (AC 3762)

A Reminder of the Escape from Egypt

- The Lord also reminds the Israelites that He brought them out of the land of Egypt. Could the reminder of this fact indicate that the Israelites thought that they had won their own strength and accomplishments? Were they on the brink of ingratitude?
- Bringing up Israel from the land of Egypt signifies leaving behind memory-knowledges that had no feeling or meaning to them. Put another way, the Lord wanted them to move from historical faith toward a true faith that was drawn from the Word. The Lord wanted them to have a commitment to the things of faith so that they would honestly appreciate them. (See AC 1541, 4735[15], AE 654 for further illustration of these ideas.)

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. The words that ring out in my mind about this verse are these: (They) "talked much about faith...and yet had no life of faith." The Lord, in this verse, reminds us that prior churches talked much about faith. They emphasized the idea that knowing many things would bring about salvation. There were those who talked about how much they knew, but there was no life in what they knew because they twisted the truth to confirm evils and falsities to justify their ends. There was no life in their faith. This is a sad commentary on the former churches. Israel, too, was on the brink of meeting the same end.
The perversion of truth for selfish ends stifles the spiritual life. The corrupt external initiates a series of consequences that layer over the wonderful potential of interior things. The outer lies prevent the inner conatus (endeavor) from manifesting itself in uses for the Lord and the neighbor.
2. The concern of the Lord and His mercy is forever recorded in His words, "O children of Israel." These words are a loving Divine appeal to the innocence in the souls of all His children. It is a reminder to all that we each have the potential to become an angel of the Lord if we become like "little children."
3. This verse asks a question of great importance. Will we learn from the mistakes of those who tried to gain salvation from cold and indifferent facts passed on by tradition or lore? Are we in a state to learn these things?

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 9:7.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. In Amos 9:7, there is a series of nations (churches) mentioned: the Ethiopians, the children of Israel, the Egyptians, the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir. Have you taken notes on the meaning of that series from AC 9340[6]? What downward progression of each church did you note?
2. To get a glimpse of Ethiopia in its prime, turn to AC 116 and 349 to read about the wonderful things they possessed in the beginning of their church. As a contrast read, AE 780[5] to see what they were like after they turned away from the Lord. Can you get any sense of what went wrong with them?
3. The Philistines represent those who hold false ideas and then reason about spiritual things from those false ideas. (AC 705) Have you ever done this? How easy is it to do? How may we avoid making the same mistakes?
4. Syria signifies those of the second Ancient Church in respect to their knowledges of good and truth. (AE 195[8]) The Ancient Word existed in Syria. (Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 102) How did they lose such gifts? With

- their knowledge of the Ancient Word, it is both sad and perplexing to read that they falsified the Word for selfish reasons. What do you think we must do to keep from repeating the mistakes of the prior churches?
5. Do we as a church talk about what we know but have no life in our faith? Or do we feel the indescribable power of the Word and Lord to lift us to spiritual heights where we see the dazzling spectrum of the Lord's beauty and order? Is this a personal or organizational state?
 6. Look up the word "enthusiasm" in a dictionary. Note that we are told the word means: to be inspired; to be possessed by God; transported; to have an ardent zeal or fervor. It seems that we would do well to seek the right kind of enthusiasm for the Lord that would inspire us to invite Him into our lives so that we might be "possessed" by His order. Does this sound like evangelical or "born again" type of thinking? I think the New Church could use some feeling of excitement or enthusiasm. What do you think?

AMOS 9:8-10

*"Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are on the sinful kingdom,
And I will destroy it from the face of the earth;
Yet I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob,"
Says the Lord.*

*"For surely I will command,
And will sift the house of Israel among the nations,
As a grain is sifted in a sieve;
Yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground.
All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword,
Who say, 'The calamity shall not overtake nor confront us.'"*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...that nevertheless the church will not perish, but that those perish who are in the church, vers. 8-10..."

AC 7051

- "They who know nothing of the internal sense of the Word cannot believe otherwise than that the Israelitish and Jewish nation was chosen above every other nation, and hence was more excellent than all the rest, as also they themselves believed....Hence also it is that most persons in the Christian world also believe that that nation will again be chosen, and will then be brought back into the land of Canaan, and this also according to the sense of the letter, as in many passages...." Amos 9:8, 9 are cited among the many passages given in this number.

- In the closing paragraph of this number, we read: “From all of this it can now be seen that the Israelitish and Jewish nation was not chosen, and still less that it will be chosen; and also that there was not anything of the church with it, nor could be, but only the representative of a church; and that the reason why it has been preserved even to this day, has been for the sake of the Word of the Old Testament.”

DERIVED DOCTRINE

“The eyes of the Lord are on the sinful kingdom....”

- AR 48 gives us a wide range of correspondences for “eyes” in the Word. When a human being’s eyes are mentioned, it refers to human understanding and intelligence. “...when spoken of the Lord, the Divine wisdom is meant; but by a ‘flame of fire,’ is signified spiritual love, which is charity; wherefore, when spoken of the Lord, the Divine love is meant...that by ‘eye,’ when predicated of the Lord, His Divine wisdom...His Divine omniscience and providence....” are signified.
- Using this quote, we can understand that it was not Divine anger at work but Divine Love, Wisdom, Omniscience, and Providence looking at the sinfulness of Israel. They were focused on finite goals whereas the Lord wanted them to focus on eternal goals. To those with finite priorities, it appears that God is angry and vindictive. “Hence I (the Lord) will destroy it from the face of the earth....” describes the way an unregenerate person perceives the operation of the Lord’s love.

The Face of the Earth

- What is meant by “the face of the earth...”? There is an interesting teaching expressed in AC 358: “The face, with the ancients, signified internal things, because internal things shine forth through the face; and in the most ancient times men were such that the face was in perfect accord with the internals.... They considered it a monstrous thing to show one thing by the face and think another.”
- Could the above quote be a direct teaching from the Lord that the Israelitish church would not be allowed to continue its practice of saying one thing with the lips and believing another thing in their hearts? Was the Lord telling them that the reign of hypocrisy was over?

The House of Jacob

- Why was the “house of Jacob” not utterly destroyed? A house in its positive sense represents a mind in which there is intelligence and wisdom. A house also contains affections which are of the will. (AC 1488) But in reality,

whenever one church comes to an end, the Lord provides that a remnant is saved so as to continue, or build, His church anew. (AE 407 & 676)

- Also Micah 5:7-8 speaks of "...the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass...the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people...." (AE 278)
- The "house of Jacob" represents the "external church" and the "house of Israel" represents the "internal church." (AC 5550)
- What then is the Lord teaching us about the "house of Jacob"? As we might expect, the meaning is deep and fully involved with all of the history of Jacob and his children. But consider the following quote as a possible indicator of the core of deeper things: "...Jacob represented...the Lord's natural; and as where Jacob is treated of...in the internal sense the Lord is treated of, and how He made His natural Divine...." Is the promise that the "house of Jacob" would not be destroyed a promise that the Lord's advent would overcome the idolatrous worship of the previous churches so that the New Church might become the "crown of all churches"? Is it a story of His natural serving a use prior to being glorified? Later in Jacob's life, he was told, "Thy name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel." (Genesis 32:26) This is a movement from being a representative of the external church to becoming a representative of the internal church.

"Sifting" the House of Israel Among all Nations

- Let's first consider the meaning of "all nations." AC 249 says that a passage from Micah 7:16 where "nations" is mentioned represents those who trust in their own proprium. In AC 622, "nations" represents evils that are of the will, or of cupidities. Nations therefore seems to represent a vast network of proprial desires that are so integrated into the lives of people that only the Lord can "sort things out." It is comforting to know that the Lord will not be fooled by appearances. He can distinguish between what is and what is not. He will sort out things that confound the wisest civil laws and the best human prudence. True justice in the hands of the Lord will be given to everyone. No one will be able to claim that the Lord treated him or her unfairly. Our emotional "Gordian knots" will be unwrapped, and there will be nothing left unattended among "all nations."
- These insights give us a clearer picture of why the Lord said He would sift the nations, the mind, the proprium, the cupidities, to remove the "chaff from the wheat."
- AC 9726 explains a passage from Exodus 27:4, "And thou shalt make for it a grating, a network." The grating represents "...as it were (sifting and separating) the things which enter into man and are presented to the understanding and the will, thus truths and goods."

"...not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground."

- This is like the verse in the Word that reminds us that nothing escapes the Lord's notice. Even the hairs of our head are numbered. There is not a sparrow that falls to the ground but the Lord knows. We might wish otherwise so that we could escape accountability, but the Lord's omniscience is beyond human comprehension. Not even the smallest grain shall fall to the ground. The Divine sieve works to remove the useless and to protect the potential of the smallest seeds, just as He did for the mustard seed. It was able to grow beyond expectations.

"All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword"

- To get help with the internal sense, we can read AC 2799[20&21]. "...the 'sword' denoting the punishment of falsity.... The angel of Jehovah standing in the way against Balaam with a drawn sword (Numbers xxii. 31) signified the truth which resisted the falsity in which Balaam was; and for that reason also he was killed with a sword.... That a 'sword' in the genuine sense signifies truth combating, and in the opposite sense falsity combating, also the vastation of truth, and the punishment of falsity...."
- Those who are opposed to the Lord's truth see nothing of what is good and true. When they are shown the error of their ways, they prefer falsity and defiantly demonstrate a contrary spirit against the Lord. (AR 309)
- The mental picture I get is that they are so angry with the Lord's truth that they rush upon the "sword" to destroy themselves instead of admitting their falsity. They prefer to die by the sword then to be defended by the Lord.
- How do we see that the explanation above might be so? Listen to the words of the people. "The calamity shall not overtake nor confront us." Their haughty, contemptuous, proud words seem to defy the Lord's prophecy.
- These words speak a form of "denial" that seems so human. Turning away from issues, refusing to admit them, or blaming others just doesn't work. Eventually we have to deal with the results of unbridled behavior. Evil seeks to hurt and destroy us. Ignoring disorder is not a part of regeneration.

Putting It All Together

1. The summary of this section, by now, should be pretty clear. Those in the church (any church) who refuse to obey the Lord's Word will "perish" spiritually. The Lord will not be fooled with any teaching or tradition about "specialness." There are no chosen people. Salvation is not a "right" earned by giving money to build ornate houses of worship. From the beginning of this study, we have been made mindful of the need to love the Lord and His ways. Love truth for truth's sake, and do not twist the Word to excuse or justify the desires of self.

2. The correspondence of the sifting of nations through the Divine sieve so that nothing (the smallest grain) goes to waste is a wonderful reminder that the Lord sees and knows all. The story of the widow's mite is a worthy example of this.

The thought, the look, the touch, the kind word we offer might be the small grain that becomes the mustard tree that provides branches for the birds to build nests and to hatch their young. As a secular song says, "Little things mean a lot."

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 9:8-10.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. The Writings teach that the advent of the Lord takes place every time the Word is read with love. Do you see these verses as a theme of the Lord's advent and glorification?
2. We have considered this theme before: What can we do to break down or soften our stubbornness? Why is it that we have a love for what is forbidden? Some have described this as a "command-resistance" act to demonstrate our proprial freedom. Is our insistence on "freedom" all bad? Couldn't that longing to be free also come from a "healthy urging" that is planted by the Lord? "As of self" is a useful tool in regeneration. Discuss the different types of freedom.
3. How do you picture life's emotional "Gordian knots" being unwrapped by the Lord's loving Wisdom? Have you ever been frustrated with situations that seem to offer no solvable answers to troublesome issues? Do you look forward to the "time" when all will be settled with no "backlash" effects?
4. The quote from P&P says the "church will not perish, but that those perish who are in the church." Does this remind you of what happened to the children of Israel in the wilderness? Those who sinned against the Lord roamed and roamed for 40 years. When they had all died, then the Lord led the remaining generations into the Promised Land. What are some ways that we distinguish between the church and its members? How about the distinction between the spiritual church and the human organization on earth?

AMOS 9:11-12

*"On that day I will raise up
The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down,
And repair its damages;*

*I will raise up its ruins,
And rebuild it as in the days of old;
That they may possess the remnant of Edom,
And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,”
Says the Lord who does this thing.*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- “...that a new church will be instituted, which will acknowledge the Lord, vers. 11, 12...”

AC 414[2&3]

- “...the ‘tabernacle’ ...denotes what is celestial and the holy things thereof....in ancient times they performed the holy rites of worship in their tents. But when they began to profane the tents by profane kinds of worship, the tabernacle was built, and afterwards the temple, and therefore tents represented all that was subsequently denoted first by the tabernacle, and afterwards by the temple. For the same reason a holy man is called a ‘tent,’ a ‘tabernacle,’ and a ‘temple’ of the Lord.” Amos 9:11 is cited as one example.

AC 3322 [4]

- “In Amos: (ix. 11, 12)...the ‘tabernacle of David’ denotes the church and worship of the Lord; the ‘remnant of Edom,’ those who are in good within the church; the ‘nations that were called by His name’ those who are in good out of the church.”

AC 4391[4]

- “...in Amos ix. 11...to ‘set up the tent of David that is fallen,’ denotes to restore the holy of truth after it has perished; ‘David’ denotes the Lord relatively to Divine truth...for a ‘king’ denotes Divine truth.... As a ‘tent’ signified the holy of truth, and ‘dwelling in tents,’ the derivative worship...”

AC 4926[3]

- “In Amos ix. 11...[this passage is] describing the church which is in good, the ‘tent of David that is fallen’ being the good of love and charity from the Lord....and that ‘David’ is the Lord.... To ‘fence up the breaches’ means to amend the falsities which have entered by the separation of truth from good; ‘to build it according to the days of eternity’ denotes according to the state of

the church in ancient times; that state and those times are called in the Word the ‘days of an age,’ and also ‘of generation and generation’....”

AC 9163[5]

- “...‘In that day will I raise up the tent of David that is fallen, and close up the fractures thereof; I will set up again its ruins, and I will build them as the days of eternity (Amos ix. 11); ‘the house of David,’ and ‘the tent of David,’ denote the church of the Lord, for ‘David,’ in the prophetic Word, denotes the Lord....”

AC 10248[8]

- “...where by ‘the days of an age’ is meant the time of the Most Ancient Church, which was celestial.” Amos 9:11 is the verse being explained.

AC 10545[7]

- “...the ‘tent of David’ denotes the church of the Lord and what is holy of the worship of Him; ‘to close up the breaches, and restore the ruins’ denotes to restore these by removing falsities. That ‘David’ in the Word denotes the Lord...hence it is that ‘the tent of David’ denotes the church of the Lord, and that which is holy of worship.” This passage is in explanation of Amos 9:11.

AE 799[19]

- “That a ‘tent’ signifies the church in respect to the truths of doctrine....” Amos 9:11 is cited.

AR 704

- In AR 704, a long series of quotes from the Word are given “...in which the Lord’s coming and the New Church from Him at that time are meant by ‘the day of Jehovah’...” Amos 9:11, 13 are within that series of references given from the Word.

DERIVED DOCTRINE

“On that day I will rise up....”

- Let’s focus on the words “on that day...” because they differ from “the days of old,” the “day of vengeance,” or the “day of wrath.” Checking the correspondence of to “rise up” might give us a clue. AC 4160 tells us that “to rise” signifies to reveal or to discover. AC 2218 teaches us that when people “rise up,” it signifies that perception has come to an end.

- Could this portion of the prophecy be a combination of both things mentioned in the quotes above? The Lord saw Israel's movement away from Him. He witnessed the flickering light of inner perception fading away until darkness filled the mind. "On this day," the Lord was going to reveal (let them discover) just how far they had moved away from Him.

Gentiles

- The Writings describe Gentiles as "...various forms of worship among those remote peoples who lived in mutual charity." (AC 1158) In another quote, Gentiles "signify all who are in the good of love to the Lord." (AE175[2]) Gentiles also represent "those who are in good out of the church." (AC 3322[4])

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The Lord's words are quite plain and straightforward. He tells us that:

- A New Church will be instituted that will acknowledge Him.
- The tabernacle of celestial and holy things of worship will be restored.
- The Lord will raise the church up from the mental and spiritual ruins.
- The church will be built like the days of the Most Ancient Church.
- The New Church will have the restored truths to work with.
- The church's love will be freed of self-love.
- The church fences will have the breaches (infractions of Divine order) mended.

Most of all there is given a prophecy, a new song, of hope. There is a call for a rally of the faithful to come around Him. A beginning. A church whose kingdom will be forever and ever. "Come and taste and see that the Lord is good."

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 9:11-12.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

In Revelation 6:10, we find a picture of those who had been slain for the Word of God gathered for the opening of the fifth seal. They were yearning for the day when the Lord would avenge their abuse. They asked the Lord, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

1. After reading this prophecy in Amos, do you feel the same kind of modified question forming in your mind? "How long, Oh Lord, holy and true, until..." You bring the promised New Church to those who dwell on the earth?
2. We seem so small and so diversified as a church organization. We long for the truths to take hold and spread. The delay, we are taught in the Writings, is for a purpose. Slow growth is necessary. Growth of the church must occur for the right reasons. Yet how long will it be?

AMOS 9:13-15

*"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord,
 "When the plowman shall overtake the reaper,
 And the treader of grapes him who sows seed:
 The mountains shall drip with sweet wine,
 And all the hills shall flow with it
 I will bring back the captives of My people Israel;
 They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them;
 They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them;
 They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them.
 I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up
 From the land I have given them,"
 Says the Lord your God.*

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- "...that in it (the church) there will be the doctrine of truth and its understanding, vers. 13-15..."

AR 704

- "That 'the great day of God Almighty' signifies the coming of the Lord, and then the New Church, is evident from many passages in the Word, as from these:- [Amos 9:11, 13 are cited among the many references.]"

AE 433 [27]

- "From this it can be seen how far from the truth those have wondered, who believe that at the end of time the Jews will be converted to the Lord and brought back into the land of Canaan. Those who have hitherto so believed are excusable, because they have known nothing of the spiritual sense of the Word, and therefore have not known that the 'land' signifies the church, 'Jerusalem' the church in respect to doctrine, 'Israel' those who are of the spiritual church, and 'Judah' those who are of the celestial church; also that

bringing them into the land of Canaan is treated of in the prophets, bringing the faithful into heaven and into the church is meant. This took place when the Lord came into the world, for then all those who lived in the good of charity and had worshiped God under a human form were brought into heaven; these had been preserved under heaven until the Lord came, and when He glorified His Human they were brought in. These are the ones meant in many passages in the prophetic Word that treat of the captivity of the sons of Israel and Judah, and their being brought back into their land.” Among the many passages offered, Amos 9: 12-15 is cited.

AC 6435 [10]

- “...‘mountains’ denote celestial love, and ‘hills’ spiritual love...in these passages the goods of celestial love are signified by ‘mountains;’ and likewise by ‘hills,’ but in a lower degree.” Amos 9:13 is cited as one reference.

AC 5117[7]

- “In Amos...it treats here of the setting up of the spiritual church, which is thus described—the conjunction of spiritual good with its truth by the ‘ploughman reaching the reaper;’ and the conjunction of spiritual truth with its good by the ‘treader’ of grapes reaching him that draweth the seed;’ the goods of the love and charity therefrom are signified by the ‘mountains dropping new wine and the hills melting;’ ‘bringing back the captivity of the people’ denotes deliverance from falsities; ‘building the waste cities’ denotes rectifying the falsified doctrinals of truth; ‘inhabiting them and planting vineyards’ denotes cultivating those things which are of the spiritual church; ‘drinking the wine thereof,’ appropriating the truths of that church which are of charity; and ‘making clusters and eating the fruit of them,’ appropriating the goods thence derived. Every one can see that ‘building cities,’ ‘planting vineyards,’ ‘drinking wine,’ ‘making clusters,’ and ‘eating the fruit of them,’ are merely natural things, in which there would be nothing Divine unless they contained a spiritual sense.” Amos 9:13, 14 are cited.

AC 6377 [8]

- “That ‘wine’ denotes the good of love and of faith, is plain from the Lord’s words which He said of wine when He instituted the Holy Supper...which He would give to those who are of His kingdom.” Amos 9:13, 14 are cited.

AR 316

- “...that ‘wine’ signifies truth from...good, is evident from the following passages...” Amos 9:13, 14 are cited.

AR 336

- “It is because the habitations of the angels are upon mountains and hills, that ‘mountains’ and ‘hills’ in the Word signify heaven and the church, where there exists love to the Lord and love to the neighbor, and, in the opposite sense, hell, where there exists self-love and the love of the world...[this] is evident from the following passages...” Amos 9:13, 14 are cited.

AE 405[19]

- “In Amos...‘The mountains’ are said ‘to drop sweet wine,’ and ‘the hills to dissolve,’ because ‘mountains’ signify the good of love to the Lord, and ‘hills’ the good of charity towards the neighbor, and ‘sweet wine’ truths; therefore these words signify that from these two goods they shall have truths in abundance, for the bringing back of the people from captivity, about which this is said, signifies the establishment of a new church.” Amos 9:13, 14 are cited.

AE 376[6]

- “In Amos...ix. 13-15...This chapter treats first of the vastation of the church, and then of its restoration by the Lord; and ‘the people Israel’ do not mean that people, but those with whom the church was to be established; and ‘the ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that draweth forth the seed,’ signifies that he who receives good and truth shall also perform uses, or bear fruit, thus that with the man of the church the two shall be present at the same time; ‘the mountains shall drop down sweet wine, and all the hills shall dissolve,’ signifies, as just above, that from the good of love to the Lord and from the good of charity towards the neighbor there shall be truths in abundance, ‘sweet wine’ here, or ‘wine,’ meaning truth; that ‘the captivity of the people Israel shall be brought back’ signifies the restoration of the church among the Gentiles, for ‘captivity’ means spiritual captivity, in which those are who are remote from goods and truths, and yet in a desire for them (see A.C., n. 9164). ‘The waste cities that they shall build’ signify the doctrinals of truth and good from the Word, before destroyed and at that time to be restored; ‘the vineyards which they shall plant,’ and ‘the wine of which they shall drink,’ signify all things of the church from which there is intelligence, ‘a vineyard’ signifies the spiritual church, and therefore ‘vineyards’ signify all things of the church; ‘wine’ signifies the truth of the church in general, and ‘to drink it’ signifies to be instructed and become intelligent, thus intelligence; and ‘the gardens which they shall make, and the fruit of which they shall eat,’ signifies wisdom, ‘gardens’ meaning all things of intelligence, and their ‘fruit’ signifying the goods of life, thus ‘to eat their fruit’ signifies the appropriation of good, thus wisdom, for wisdom

comes when truths are committed to the life; and because this is what is meant, therefore it is said of Israel, ‘I will plant them upon their ground.’

AC 1069[3]

- “‘Planting vineyards’ denotes the planting of the spiritual church; thus a ‘vineyard’ means the spiritual church, or Israel.” This quote follows the citing of Amos 9:14.

AC 1071[5]

- “In Amos...ix. 14...This is said of the spiritual church, or ‘Israel,’ of which planting vineyards and drinking the wine thereof is predicated, when it becomes such as to have faith from charity.”

AR 90

- “Wisdom and intelligence are also signified by ‘garden’ in...Amos ix, 14...The man of the church is also like a garden as to intelligence, when he is in the good of love from the Lord, because the spiritual heat which vivifies him is love, and the spiritual light is intelligence therefrom. It is known that gardens in this world flourish by means of heat and light; it is the same in heaven.”

TCR 467[4]

- “Elsewhere in the Word ‘garden’ signifies intelligence (as in...Amos ix. 14...)

AE 811[25]

- This number mentions Amos 9:14 but tells the reader to see the explanation in AE 376, 405.

AE 919

- “That a ‘vineyard’ signifies the spiritual church is evident from the passages in the Word where ‘vineyard’ is mentioned (as in...Amos ix. 14...).”

DERIVED DOCTRINE

1. It would appear that we have little need to turn to derived doctrine for help. We have enough direct teachings as our source to help us with our summary and application section. Our sixteen references explain just about all of the major points of the verses, helping us to frame up the internal sense. Once again, if anyone finds additional reference numbers, please share them in the discussion period.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. Contrasts are an essential part of any learning process. If you were to read books about Amos written by people who are not members of the New Church, the commentary on this last chapter would be filled with statements like this one:
Israel will in that day be restored from centuries-long captivity to rebuild her cities and inhabit them with the enjoyment of her vineyards and her gardens...Then Israel will be planted and rooted in her own land...never more plucked up and uprooted from her God-given land. The day of exile, thank God, will be past.... God's heart is full of good things in store for Israel. (This quote is taken from page 124 of *The Minor Prophets*, by Charles L. Feinberg, Moody Press.)
2. The Writings, on the other hand, remark that Israel (and the Jewish nation) "was not chosen, and still less that it will be chosen..." Israel was only "the representative of a church..." (AC 7051)
Instead, the closing prophecy in Amos is about the Lord. It is about His coming into the world to glorify His Human. Those who had been preserved (the remnant), those who had remained faithful, are the ones who are to be brought back into the land. This closing prophecy is about the New Church. The promise of sweet wine, the hills flowing with the abundance of wine, the planting, the gardens, being fed, refer to the gifts the New Church will enjoy. Put simply, the Lord is promising to restore the spiritual gifts of love and wisdom. Balance, conjunction, and elevation of heart and mind will help us see what is planted in the restored land of our captivity. We are to see the beauty and order of the gardens. We will taste the wine of the mountains. No longer will Hell be able to pull up the resources of the Lord. The New Church will be the crown of all churches whose kingdom shall reign forever and ever. Amen!

READ AND REVIEW

Read Amos 9:13-15.

Read the summary from *P&P*.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. Have you heard recently anyone speaking about Israel being the chosen people? Have you ever heard someone describe the chaos in the Middle East as a sign that the end of the world is coming? What do you think about this?
2. How might this "chosen people" concept interfere with our understanding of the internal sense? When we understand the internal sense, how is this concept a part of it?
3. Is there a sense of excitement as you read this final section of Amos? Why?

4. After reading all of the hard messages directed to the unfaithful, isn't it wonderful to end with an uplifting message about the Lord coming to our rescue with a permanence and victory? The hells do not prevail. The hells are not stronger than the Lord. The effort to remain faithful pays off. What were we worried about? Should we have been so unsure of ourselves and the Lord? How can we hold onto this triumphant state during times when it doesn't seem visible?
5. Doesn't this final chapter do a lot in restoring our confidence in the inevitability of the New Church? Let's talk about this.

Epilogue: A Summary of the Nine Chapters of Amos

The following summaries draw and expand on the outline given in “Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms.”

CHAPTER ONE

The message of this chapter outlines what happens to a church (or individual) when it *perverts the Word* and turns aside the goods of spiritual knowledge. Those who intend to “turn aside” the Word do violence to the literal sense. Those who “turn aside” the Word are likened to an army that flees in the day of combat and capitulates because it does not use the Lord’s resources.

CHAPTER TWO

Adulterating the good of the literal sense will corrupt the church. The fatalities of adulteration are both the celestial (love) and spiritual (wisdom) that are within or available to the church. Adulteration of the things of the church is like a person who is in “possession of truth and yet is without truth.” Adulterating the good of the literal harms the sense of judgment for the church, or person, and ultimately, that church or person will perish.

CHAPTER THREE

A church cannot serve two masters. It cannot peacefully coexist with truths and falsities. To want to live with both and to seek a compromise will cause the church to be laid to waste. The church will perish, and the goods and truths of the Word will be taken away from it.

CHAPTER FOUR

Compromise will *pervert doctrine* of the church. The “sensual scientifics” that result from such perversions will obfuscate external worship to give the appearance that all is well. Seemingly plausible reasons for the perversions were woven into the externals of worship. But when the Lord looked at the heart of things, He saw death and told the Israelites there was no “power” in their truths. The Lord exhorted them to turn back to Him before they became like people with “no teeth.”

CHAPTER FIVE

Self intelligence will lay the Church to waste. The Lord, once again, exhorted the Israelites to return. If they continued in their ways, it would lead them into all ruin.

He told them their worship was not acceptable. If they would turn back to the essentials, He would lead them to “acceptable” worship, and they would once again possess the good and truth. Otherwise, they would be deprived of every knowledge of truth and good.

CHAPTER SIX

Israel's choices had made it the worst religious system among the nations. What made this so sad was that they possessed an “abundance [of] all things of the church.” To continue as they were would cause all spiritual things to perish, insomuch that “nothing would remain.” The Lord told them that they had no one to blame but themselves. “...they have acquired these things *to themselves from self*.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

The organized church was *increasing from externals to externals*. The course of their actions could lead but to one thing: corruption and breaches that would end with the destruction of internal or inmost things. Their decisions were against God and doctrine. The church with all things belonging to it would “perish.”

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Lord was not going to sit by and watch the church die. He revealed to the Israelites that He was going to bring about a change. Here is the promise made: a *“new [element] of the church will arise.”* The old church would end, but with a remnant, the coming of the Lord and the glorification of His Human would successfully establish a New Church.

CHAPTER NINE

The Last Judgment would be thorough. None of the perpetrators of evil responsible for the demise of the church would escape the Last Judgment. Prior churches had followed a similar path of spiritual ruination. But this time, the new church would not degenerate as the others had. The Lord announced to Israel that a church would arise that will not perish. This New Church will worship and acknowledge the Lord. It will have soundness of doctrine and understanding, new wine, new gardens, and the abundance and beauty of the Lord’s restoration of His Church.

The Book of Haggai

How To Use This Study Guide

1. A slow, unhurried reading of Haggai is essential. Reading the chapter before looking at the notes, while working with the notes, and after finishing with the notes will give each researcher a powerful sense of the series of meanings within each chapter. It is important to be comfortable with all the names and places in the prophecy and to understand the announcements the prophet makes on behalf of the Lord. When possible, historical information will be included in the notes to increase reading comprehension and enhance application.
2. Our study of each chapter of Haggai will begin with quotes from a work of the Writings called Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms (P&P). This work includes a verse-by-verse overview of both chapters of Haggai that provides general information about the internal sense. Our research will help move us from the generals to the particulars of the internal sense.
3. Another important reference tool is Searle's General Index to Swedenborg's Scripture Quotations. This reference is used to find passages in the Writings where a verse(s) from the Word is either explained specifically or used to illustrate a doctrinal point that we can use in our study. There is also another use of this work. As we study, each researcher will be led by the Lord's Providence in myriad ways, according to specific needs or states. Knowing how to use this book will help each of us to explore relevant topics and look up related passages to increase our knowledge of the three-fold Word.
4. You will soon discover that not every verse, word, name, etc. is directly quoted in the Writings. But there are often other references to the same name, place, or thing in the explanation of a different verse of the Word. The hope is that reflection on these other doctrinal explanations will help us see possible applications to our study of Haggai. We will need to use "derived doctrine" often. Please don't run away from this maligned term. If we use it properly and admit openly that it is derived doctrine, we bring no harm to the internal sense.
5. Keep some kind of notebook handy during your study times. Write out insights, questions, and any summaries you find helpful in organizing your thoughts about each chapter. The goal of this study guide is not to give a detailed summary of the internal sense but to start each researcher's quest for deeper insight.
6. At the end of each chapter in the study guide, you will find a study review. The review includes a summary of each section to help you reinforce and build on your understanding of several of the key points.
7. Begin each study unit with a devotional prayer asking the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts. Certainly beginning in this sphere has the power to inspire and open our minds with a higher spiritual priority that will keep us in the company of the Lord's angels. As the Writings teach, we must seek to love truth for truth's sake. Such an approach will free each reader from

preconceived ideas that might limit his or her ability to "see" the intent and message of the Lord's Word.

Introduction

The book of Haggai is **the second smallest book** of the Old Testament. To grasp its full significance, we require knowledge about the books of Ezra, Jeremiah, Malachi, and Zechariah. All of these prophetic books contain a piece of the puzzle that contributes to the total historical/spiritual picture. This might partially explain why there are only two chapters in Haggai. It is as if the writer assumed the reader knew the sad news of what happened to Jerusalem almost 100 years prior to this prophecy.

Of course, we know that there is a deeper reason why all the books of the prophets were written. Within the stories of natural history, we can find spiritual truth. This spiritual sense must be relevant for eternity, and the angels care about this sense more than they care about names and history. There is a world of spiritual concepts and love of the Lord. For us, history forms an interesting outline from which we begin to see truths emerge that apply to our lives. So here are some historical points to keep in mind while reading the literal sense of Haggai.

1. The Jewish nation for years enjoyed, and benefitted from, the leadership of David and Solomon. Israel's power and influence reached far and wide. The power of David and Solomon's armies put fear and respect in the hearts and minds of neighboring nations. Israel's armies subdued the external nations and enemies, but more potent and deadly enemies lived and grew within their hearts. As their peace and prosperity increased, the quality and sincerity of worship declined in their temple. Their acts of worship became pretentious and empty of sincere love for the Lord. Instead of loving the Lord, they loved treachery, greed, and selfishness; they turned to idolatry and "polluted" the forms of worship. So the Lord spoke through His prophet Jeremiah and told the people they would be brought to their knees. The work of their hearts would be responsible for the coming events in their lives. They would suffer under Babylonian captivity for seventy years:
 - Jeremiah 1:15. "For behold...I will utter My judgments against them concerning all their wickedness, because they have forsaken Me, burned incense to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands."
 - Jeremiah 25:11. "And this whole land shall be a desolation [and] an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years."
2. On or about 586 BC, the reign of captivity began with the sacking of Jerusalem. The Babylonians, under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar, spoiled the city and defiled the temple. The burning, sacking, and looting of Jerusalem "ripped out the heart" of the people. The great temple built by

Solomon was burned and destroyed. With disbelief, the children of Israel looked at the ashes and charred timbers of their beloved temple; what was once the marvel and envy of the world was no more. We can identify somewhat with this story if we think about the day we watched, in horror, the destruction and devastation of the World Trade Center. Now imagine how you would feel if such an attack were made on a great, beloved church. The captors carried away the best, the brightest, the young, and the skillful people from Israel. The elderly and infirm were left behind in a shell of a city that could not function. The "cream of the crop" was distributed throughout Babylon. Families were uprooted and separated from one another. Any integrity of morale and tradition was severely attacked and discouraged. Their new ruler demanded to be worshiped as a god.

One can only imagine how the captive Jews must have reflected about what had been. Can we imagine them telling those who were born in captivity what it was like in the holy city of Jerusalem? As well as they could, they must have talked about the good old days and the magnificent grandeur and beauty of "their temple."

For seventy years, the Israelites were kept in Babylon and subjected to the philosophy and religion of the Babylonians. Israel's children, listening to the ideals and morals of Babylon, must have been badly confused and unsure of why they should oppose the ways of Babylon. Like "spiritual gentiles," they were vulnerable to falsity, ignorance, and idol worship.

3. Did the Lord forget Israel during those seventy years? History records the defeat of the Babylonian kingdom under the Persians. Cyrus, the king of Persia, was moved providentially to decree that the Israelites should return to their homeland. He ordered their restoration of the temple in Jerusalem and provided some funding for its completion.

Such news brought joy to the repatriated Jews. However, not all of them returned at once; they came over a period of time, journeying in small groups. For all practical purposes, this made their nation weak, an unorganized group of people with no strong leadership.

When they reached Jerusalem, they began work on the temple with enthusiasm and a sense of urgency. Ezra 3:8-10 tells us they "arose as one to oversee these workings on the house of God..." They got the foundation done. Ezra paints a picture of the tears and initial joy for the progress they made. But then a setback occurred. The Samaritans who resided in the region offered to help them with the rebuilding. Israel turned them down. The rejection did not sit well with the Samaritans so they appealed to Cyrus and his successor Cambyses to stop the work on the temple. What reason did the Samaritans offer? The Jews had a "rebellious nature." In effect, the Samaritans were warning these leaders that Israel would turn against them once the temple was completed and became the center of their lives. Therefore, a decree came from the Persian nation that all work was to cease. As disappointing as the news was, the Jews complied with the decree. For sixteen years, nothing more was done to the temple. The unfinished

foundation and beams must have served as a grim reminder of their futile efforts to regain a sense of "normalcy" in a world of servitude.

For sixteen years, Israel did no work for the restoration of the temple. Nor did they make any effort to petition for the right to continue restoring the temple. Instead, they turned their attention to their homes, their businesses, and the restoration of financial stability.

To placate their consciences, the children of Israel offered excuses. They complained about the meager crops because of drought conditions. They noted that food and drink were scarce, as were many other necessities of life. Furthermore, their efforts to broaden the base of their financial resources brought in low returns. So they allowed the work on the temple to cease, excusing themselves by saying, "It's not our fault."

4. The Lord called a prophet named Haggai to speak to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, and Joshua, the high priest. Haggai would tell these two leaders to rally the people to return and assume the real task at hand, to build spiritual things first. Haggai was called to be a motivator and a conscience to the people. There are basically four themes or prophecies in the book of Haggai:
 - Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins? Consider your ways! (Haggai 1:1-15)
 - A promise is made that the new temple, when built, will bring a far greater glory than the first temple. (Haggai 2:1-9)
 - An analogy of their uncleanness was given to show the Jews what kind of dedication to God would be needed to complete the job. (Haggai 2:10-19)
 - The Lord promised that the heathens would some day be overthrown. (Haggai 2:20-23)

5. Who was Haggai? His name means "the festive one." We don't have much information about his personal life. It is generally agreed that Haggai's family was carried off in the great Babylonian sacking of Jerusalem and that Haggai was born in Chaldea, a Babylonian city. Those who lived in this region of south Babylon were called "Chaldeans." The Chaldeans lived in loosely organized tribal groups, "...shifting allegiances...refusing to recognize any loyalty beyond that of the clan...." (The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible.) The Writings do not speak well of the Chaldeans. They signify worship that contains no truth, or truths profaned in worship. See Arcana Coelestia (AC) 1368. Apocalypse Explained (AE) 355 [24] points out that Chaldeans signify those who profane worship and destroy the church. Did the Lord choose a Chaldean-born lad to turn things around?

As a young man, Haggai came back to Jerusalem with the returning exiles. What was in him that allowed the Lord to use him in this special way? We have no direct teachings. One can only think that he had a willing heart and a desire to serve the Lord. Loyalty comes out in his call to the children of Israel. Not once does he speak for himself. "Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying...."

It is important to have this information as we turn to the story of the rebuilding of the temple because it helps us compare our own state with that of the Israelites and hear the message given to them as a message given to us. It is important to read this prophecy with expectancy and hope so we will hear the Lord talk about the New Church as the temple that "shall be greater than the former...and in this place I will give peace...."

With prayer and a desire for enlightenment, let's open the book of Haggai and share together the news of the "festive one" regarding the Lord's New Church.

Chapter One

HAGGAI 1:1-4

"In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying,

'Thus speaks the Lord of hosts, saying: This people says, The time has not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built.'

Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying, 'Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?'

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "They believe that the Messiah will come to exalt them to glory, and yet the church among them has been devastated..."

Coronis 56

- "From all these passages it may be seen what 'vastation' and 'desolation' are; and that it is not a vastation and desolation of the peoples of a land, and of cities, but of the goods and truths of the church, whence there is nothing but evils and falsities." Of the many passages listed as examples from the Word, Haggai 1:4 and 9 are cited.

Derived Doctrine

"In the second year..."

- Years signify the times and states of the church. Years do not refer to a person's life-span. (AC 515)
- Two or twain (second) signifies some kind of conjunction: conjunction of the will and understanding; conjunction of the external and internal person or church. (AC 5194) Two signifies things that correspond like a pair that complete one another. (AC 747)

"In the second year of King Darius..."

- In the positive sense, a king represents divine truth and divine good, which are in and from the Lord. Good and truth are the principals that are to guide, protect, and save the Lord's people. (*AE 446 [16] and AE 721 [12]*)
- Darius the Mede is likened to Nebuchadnezzar as representing one who required the people to worship him as a god. This worship of self means a ruling from all that is filthy and profane. (*AC 1326 [2]*)

"In the sixth month, on the first day of the month..."

- A month represents the state of truth in a person. [*Apocalypse Revealed (AR) 22, 935*]
- A month signifies a full or plenary (entire or complete) state. (*AR 489*)
- Six signifies "all" of truth and good because six is composed of three and two multiplied by each other; three signifies "all" with respect to truth, and two signifies "all" with respect to good. (*AR 245*)
- Day signifies the successive states of a person's regeneration. (*AC 6*) In the creation story, the Lord divided the light from the darkness on the first "day." In *AC 16*, we read "By the prophets...‘beginning’ involves the first period when man is being regenerated..."

"...the word of the Lord..."

- *AC 2* reminds us that the Word is from the Lord and "it must of necessity contain within it such things as belong to heaven, to the church, and to religious belief, and that unless it did so it could not be called the Lord's Word, nor could it be said to have any life in it."
- *AC 129* explains that the "true order is for a person to be wise from the Lord, that is, from the Word...Thus [our] starting-point must be the Lord, and not [ourselves]; for the former is life, but the latter is death."

"...the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet..."

- The name "Haggai" is derived from the word for "a festival." *Roget's Thesaurus* offers the following synonyms for festivity: celebration, merrymaking, gayety, and jollity. In light of the news Haggai brought, celebration would seem to be the synonym worth considering. *AE 321* tells us that "...celebration and glorification is a living acknowledgment that the Lord's Human is Divine, and has omnipotence and omniscience..."

"...to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel..."

- The Hebrew meaning of Zerubbabel's name is "seed of Babylon" or "born in Babylon." His family tree in Chronicles 3:17-19 shows that he is descended from David (through Solomon or Nathan).
- In *AR 43*, we read that "...by 'Zerubbabel,' who is to build the house, thus the church, the Lord is represented...that in that church there will also be truths from a celestial origin."
- Shealtiel, a descendent of David and a son of King Jeconiah, was Zerubbabel's father. The name "Shealtiel" means either "God is a shield" or "God is victor."
- The words "son of..." denote truths that are derived from good, thus one origin. (*AC 5515*)
- As the governor of "Judah," Zerubbabel in the supreme sense signifies the Lord as to celestial love; in the spiritual sense, the celestial kingdom of the Lord and the Word; and in the natural sense the doctrine of the celestial church from the Word. (*AR 350*)
- Governors "signify generals...in which and under which are particulars..." (*AC 5290*) Before we lose this concept of "generals" and "particulars," let's read a quote from *AC 848 [3]* that explains how important they are in "building or rebuilding" ideas. "It is with regeneration exactly as with man's birth as an infant. His life is then very obscure; he knows almost nothing, and therefore at first receives only general impressions of things, which by degrees become more distinct as particular ideas are inserted in them, and in these again still more minute particulars. Thus are generals illustrated by particulars...so it is with every one who emerges out of spiritual temptation...."

"...and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest..."

- This Joshua is not to be confused with the Joshua who succeeded Moses and led the children of Israel into the Promised Land. The Joshua of our study, like his father and grandfather, was a high priest. His priestly role is mentioned in Ezra and Nehemiah. (In these two Minor Prophets, he is called "Jeshua.")
- In the original Hebrew form, the name "Joshua" means "Yahweh is salvation," "Yahweh saves," or "Yahweh will save." The name "Jesus" grew out of the name Joshua.
- Priests represent the Lord as to His divine good. (*AR 854*) Priests are to teach truth and lead people to the good of life and so to the Lord. (*AC 10794*) The priesthood represents the Lord as to the work of salvation. (*AC 9809*)
- Only the high priest could enter into the Holy of Holies. Refer to the following numbers to read more about priestly duties and the representations of their grooming and clerical garb: *AC 6148 [7], 9477, 9807, and 9809*.

"[The word of the Lord, through the prophet Haggai came to]...the high priest, saying
'Thus speaks the Lord of hosts'..."

- The "Lord of hosts" signifies the Lord as to all good and truths fighting against falsities and evils. (*AE 453 [6]*)
- "Jehovah of hosts" signifies the church in its whole complex, by which the Lord removes the hells in general and with each person individually. (*AE 734 [8]*)
- When we read that "Jehovah said," it signifies that the Lord from the Divine Celestial through the *Divine Spiritual perceives (thinks) and acts because "saying" involves both.* (*AC 2619*)
- Thus we can see that the Lord's (saying) announcement is full and complete. All of His Goods and Truths will be brought to Use to remove the influence of Hell, and His perception and acts will be for the birth of the New Church and the salvation of His people.

"This people says..."

- Is the word "say" repeated so that we might see a contrast? The Lord's saying will be different than the people's saying. The Lord's "saying" comes from an Infinite and Eternal perspective, and the people's "saying" comes from the finite and temporal perspective. Keeping this in mind will be important for what comes next in Haggai's prophecy.

"[The people say] the time has not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built."

- "You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times." (*Matthew 16:3*)
- "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." (*Mark 1:15*)
- "Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is." (*Mark 13:33*)
- The Lord told His disciples to beware of those who predict when and where He was to be found. (*Matthew 24:23 and Mark 13:21*)
- **The point:** The Lord, and not the people, knows the time for the building or rebuilding of His house.
- *AC 710* tells us that "the house of the Lord" signifies the church in which love is primary within the celestial and spiritual church.
- The house of God in the internal sense signifies the church. In the more universal sense, it represents heaven. In the most universal sense, it represents the whole kingdom of the Lord. But in the supreme sense, it signifies the Lord Himself as to the Divine Human. (*AC 3720*)

"Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying..."

- Reading this phrase is almost like hitting the "refresh" button on the computer. This phrase is repeated to remind us who is revealing these truths. This phrase, the "refresh" button, brings online the latest, freshest, news from the Lord. These are not the words of some human named Haggai. These are the deeper thoughts of the Lord as He thinks and acts from the great resources of His Love and Wisdom. But coming through Haggai, the festival one, these words tell all in heaven and on earth the happy and necessary news of the power and salvation that is to come through the Lord's Divine Human.

"Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?"

- In the *Revised Standard Version* (RSV) of the Bible and the *New English Bible* (NEB), the word "ceiling" is used place of "paneled." The Writings tell us the meaning of "ceiling" but not "paneled." *AC 3391 [3]* says "...ceiling with cedar...denotes falsifying intellectual and spiritual truths."
- The use of "you" and "yourselves" emphasizes the fallacy of human prudence caring first for itself while ignoring spiritual issues.
- "Is it time" is the wonderful way the Lord gets us to reflect on our spiritual state. He knows the answer to that question. We lack perception and need to reflect so an answer can come to us "as-of-self."
- *AC 3720* gives us many meanings of the word "temple": the Lord's spiritual church, the spiritual kingdom, and (in the highest sense) His Divine Truth.
- The word "ruin" has many synonyms: stricken, stumble, crash, fallen, wasted, desolate, failure, dilapidated, wreck, impoverished, relic, and impure. Which of these words fit the internal sense? *P&P* introduces yet another word: devastated. "...the church among them has been devastated." How did that happen? The people of the church believed the "Messiah" would "exalt them to glory."

Putting It All Together

1. We must begin our summary with the statement found in *P&P*: "the church among them was devastated." How did that happen? After the many years of captivity, the minds of the people were longing for a "Messiah" who would restore their "world-power" status among the nations. In their minds, it was "pay-back" time, and they "believed the Messiah would come to exalt them to glory."
2. Such thinking made them lose their sense of "timing." The Lord wanted to move them from generals to particulars. He wanted them to return to the things of the Word. Patience, based on truth, needed to come among the

- people. As Isaiah 28:10 put it: "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little."
3. The people were not with the Lord at this time. It amounted to "the Lord says" versus "the people say." The call to the governor and the high priest is of spiritual significance. The Lord's deepest caring for the salvation of His people is represented by these offices. From His Celestial Love and Wisdom, the way is opened for everyone to emerge from the bondage of spiritual temptations.
 4. But the Divine question has to reach and touch hearts. "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?" It may appear that other things in life have to be addressed first. The time is right! The time is now! Look within and see where you falsified the intellectual and spiritual things of the church. Worship of the Lord is not a "me" thing. It is giving the Lord the best we have within us. Rebuilding and making the house of the Lord the center and power of our lives must be the first priority within the hearts and minds of the Lord's children.
 5. Isn't it interesting to note that the prophet comes to the governor and high priest first? The governor represents the Lord as to celestial love and the spiritual sense of the Word. The high priest is meant to do the work of salvation by leading people to the good of life and the Lord. Joshua's name means "Yahweh saves" or "Yahweh is salvation."
 6. Best of all, Haggai, whose name is "festive," gets to carry the celebratory news to the disillusioned and lethargic ex-captives. Haggai shares the news that the Messiah is coming. He is coming to restore order. His Divine Human will fight and overcome the hells, and He will help rebuild the "house of the Lord."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Haggai 1:1-4

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. The first verse gives us a historical date to fix on: the second year of Darius, in the sixth month, the first day.... The Writings open up our thinking by telling us these dates do not refer to any man's life span. Instead, all dates and times refer to spiritual states and needs. When angels read names and dates, they do not "see" names or dates. They are aware of the spiritual significance of each thing. Look back and see what states the angels might see when they read these dates. What states did you see?
2. Falling out of "timing" with the Lord seems to be a human problem. We say. The Lord says. We feel the Lord's way is slow. We feel the Lord is a hard taskmaster. The Lord says His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Do we

generally feel that is the case? Can we identify with the wish to delay taking on certain spiritual responsibilities? What makes us feel this way? How do we get out of step with the Lord?

3. What thoughts crossed your mind on the "paneled house" observation? From your perspective, is the house of the Lord inside you in a state of ruin? Is your earthly house more comfortable than your spiritual house? Why?
4. "The Lord says...." What kind of things do you hear the Lord saying? Are other voices (concerns) overriding His voice? What helps you to hear Him?
5. Generals to particulars: what a wonderful way to remind ourselves that the Lord wants steady progress. He isn't interested in quantum leaps. Precept by precept, line upon line, here a little there a little. Think about the process of regeneration. What precepts or lines do you take on one at a time? How do we keep the (particular) larger goal in view as we take each small (general) step?

HAGGAI 1:5-6

"Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways! You have sown much, and bring in little; you eat, but do not have enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes."

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- "They could no longer be taught by the Word."

Derived Doctrine

"Now therefore..."

- This phrase seems to say, "In spite of what you have been thinking, here are the facts as the Lord sees them."

"...thus says the Lord of hosts..."

- Please review the teachings about "saying" and "the Lord of Hosts" given in the previous section. (AE 453 [6] and AE 734 [8])

"Consider your ways..."

- The word "consider" commands the Jews to rethink, or reflect on, their ways. What were they to rethink? In *AC 10566*, there is a long list of the mistakes Israel made over the years:
 - They thought they were the only people with whom the Divine was present, that they were the "nation of Jehovah."
 - They thought nothing of the church.
 - They thought only of possessions and eminence over others.
 - They believed in God because they saw great miracles wrought by Him.
 - They turned aside to worship many gods.

"You have sown much, and bring in little..."

- To understand this verse, we need to consider the word "appearances." It appeared that they sowed "the good of charity and the truth of faith." (*AC 6154*) The results indicate that few real seeds must have been planted. Little is brought in. That is contrary to the Lord's teachings that good ground would yield some hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty. (*Matthew 13:8*)

"You eat, but do not have enough..."

- *AC 2343* teaches that eating signifies to communicate, be conjoined, and to appropriate. From this teaching, we get the picture that Israel went through the motions of "eating" without really taking much in. The words "do not have enough" seem to say they "ate crumbs" instead of the meal; another image is "standing in the midst of plenty starving." The lack of genuine communication with the Lord limited their spiritual sustenance and nourishment balance.

"You drink, but you are not filled with drink..."

- To drink wine signifies having a desire "to investigate the things which are of faith..." (*AC 1071*)
- *AC 3089* describes drinking water as a desire to make "inquiry whether anything of truth ...could be conjoined" or appropriated into one's life.
- It appears from the literal sense that desire, investigation, and appropriation were missing from their spiritual lives. The people felt this lack, a sense of thirst not being quenched from the "living waters." The Lord said, "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give ...will never thirst.... [My water] will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." (*John 4:14*)

"You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm..."

- *AC 9003* teaches us that clothing signifies "memory-knowledges" that support our external life.
- *AE 240 [12]* contrasts "clothed" with "naked." To be "naked" signifies "those...who are not in truths and thence not in good, being ignorant of truths and yet longing for them. This is the case with those within the church when those who teach are in falsities...and with those outside the church who do not have the Word and consequently do not know truths and thence know nothing about the Lord."
- Our text seems to represent people somewhat between the clothed and the naked state. Such people know little things of faith but do not find them warm or comforting. They appear to be cold and useless facts with no extension or application.

"And he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes."

- *AC 8002 [4 & 5]* tells us "...those who labored for hire, by them in the internal sense are meant those who do what is good for the sake of their own advantage in the world; and in a sense...for the sake of reward in the other life; thus who desire to merit by works.... Such cannot possibly be consociated with angels....The end is what determines the actions, and gives them their quality."
- Bags signify the exterior natural. (*AC 5649*) If that definition doesn't help, check this one out: *AC 5657* says bags represent truths given "gratuitously." The recipient feels doubtful of the worth of those truths, even though they are intended to provide confirmation.
- My question is this: Could these doubts about gratuitous truths given to the exterior natural be the holes in the bag that loses the wages?

Putting It All Together

1. P&P teaches: "They could no longer be taught by the Word." How sad is that?
2. The Lord tells them to consider their ways and fix the problem. The "many seeds" of their tradition were in reality a pretense that served little use. The repetitions of traditional chants, songs, and prayers were not the kind of "food" that brought genuine communication and conjunction with the Lord. They were not drinking deeply from the living waters of truth within the Word. The truths that should have clothed their minds and protected their externals were meager and inadequate: "No one is warm." The merit or recognition they sought was fleeting, a lost cause. "Consider your ways" is a call for Israel to begin anew. The Lord must be first in all things. Israel must receive the truths that are freely given every day and use them to confirm truth in the exterior natural. The Lord asks them to allow their lives and daily

commitments to the Lord to become the end that determines "the actions, and gives them their quality." (AC 8002 [5])

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Haggai 1:5-6.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. When the Lord advises us to "consider your ways," do we do so with a sense of agreement or a sense of resistance? Hell certainly has a field day with the Lord's request. It tries to get us to put off any form of reflection. The hells tell us, "Why open this or that problem? Why dwell on negative things? If you want to open unpleasant things and dwell on the negative, try looking into a sewer system. Let bygones be bygones. Live for the moment!" "Carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero." Seize the moment; Enjoy today, trust little to tomorrow. What do you think about this philosophy of life? What makes it hellish?
2. The correspondential Derived Doctrine section seems fairly straight-forward: sowing seed; drinking; clothing; and wages. What applications to life can you see for these correspondences?
3. AC 8002 has that wonderful line: "The end is what determines the actions, and gives them their qualities." How is this different from the statement of the world that says "the end justifies the means"?
4. Why would the hells want to prevent us from considering our ways? Could it be that if we consider our ways, the hells might have to go away? Certainly if we shun evils as sins, their "comfortableness in secret places" is jeopardized. Anything we take on from the Lord, such as love, stirs (agitates) them up greatly. Do you remember one of the definitions of temptation? "All temptation is an assault upon the love in which the man [person] is, and the temptation is in the same degree as is the love. If the love is not assaulted, there is no temptation." (AC 1690 [3]) In conclusion, we are taught the greater and purer our love is for the Lord, the greater is the assault against those loves from hell. Are we ready and willing to face such assaults? How can we face and conquer them?
5. Looking ahead, we will be faced with Haggai's push to rebuild the Temple of the Lord. Are you thinking ahead as to what this represents for us today and for those coming after us? What do you think the temple represents?

HAGGAI 1:7-9

Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Consider your ways! "Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the

Lord. "You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?" says the Lord of hosts. "Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house.

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "The church cannot be instituted among them, because every one looks to himself and not to the Lord..."

AC 1488 [2]

- "In Haggai...‘houses’ denote memory-knowledges by which, through reasonings, come falsities." Haggai 1:8-10 is cited.

AC 3579[2]

- Haggai 1:9-10 are mentioned in AC 3579 [2], but the number explains the correspondential meaning of verse 10, so we will come back to this number in the next section.

AE 573 [7]

- "From this it can be seen that the truths and goods of heaven and the church are meant in the Word by ‘hosts,’ which makes clear why it is that Jehovah is called in the Word ‘Jehovah Zebaooth.’ And ‘Jehovah God Zebaooth,’ that is, ‘of hosts’ as in" Haggai 1:9 and 14 are cited.

Derived Doctrine

"Thus says the Lord of hosts: consider your ways!"

- Remember that when we read "Thus says the Lord", it means that the Lord is speaking from His totality. His Divine Love and Divine Wisdom have looked, assessed, and determined that this is the quality of the issue and this is the way goods and truths will fight against falsity and evil. (AE 453) This is the whole complex by which the Lord removes the hells. (AE 734 [8])
- To "consider your ways" is the work of spiritual reflection and repentance.

"Go up into the mountains and bring wood and build the temple..."

- To ascend or go up signifies to make advancements from memory-knowledges to celestial light. (AC 1541)

- When said of human beings, ascending or going up signifies to go from a lower to a higher internal state. (*AC 811 [21] and AE 1057 [5]*)

"...bring wood..."

- Simply stated to bring wood represents the good that is in works of charity, and in justice. (*AC 2784*)

"...build the temple..."

- To build signifies to raise up or vivify (enliven, quicken, give life) what has fallen. (*AC 151*)
- To build signifies to form doctrinal things. (*AC 1187, 1304*)
- To build signifies that those who had receded from the truths and goods of the church will now return and help raise them up again. (*AE 355 [9]*)
- To build signifies to restore the church by leading into the good of love and teaching the truths of doctrine. (*AE 391 [17]*)
- A temple may signify to be or to become intelligent from divine truth and to realize a heavenly joy from such intelligence. (*AE 630 [11]*)
- A temple signifies that in the New Jerusalem, external worship will not be separate from internal worship. (*AE 918*)
- A temple signifies that the Divine Human of the Lord, or truth itself, cannot be destroyed, for when it seems to be so, it rises again, glorified. (*AC 7847 [4], AC 10406 [4], and AE 220*)

"...that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified..."

- Let's read this lesson from *AC 997* regarding pleasure, delight, and uses: "...a life of charity is a life of uses. Such is the life of the whole heaven; for the kingdom of the Lord, because it is a kingdom of mutual love, is a kingdom of uses. Every pleasure therefore which is from charity, has its delight from use. The more noble the use, the greater the delight... and so it is with every pleasure – the more noble its use, the greater its delight."
- Regarding the Lord, His Noble Uses are the source of the greatest pleasure and the greatest delight. They surely glorify His Holy Name. And how can we glorify Him? With the surrender of our hearts to His Noble uses.

"You looked for much, but it indeed came to little..."

- The loftiness of a person signifies having a desire to pursue or develop one's "own" intelligence. (*AE 445*) Is the Lord sharing with us that "looking for much" represents wanting to have a lofty self-intelligence? If so, the answer seems clear. It will "come to little."

"And when you brought it home..."

- *AC 3809* describes "bring to his house" as signifying conjunction. If a person seeks a lofty self-intelligence, he seeks to welcome it into his home and looks for ways to conjoin it to his "home."

"I blew it away..."

- Let's consider what the "it" is in this prophecy. Can we assume that the "it" refers to self-intelligence, the artificialities and hatching of ideas from the unenlightened mind?
- Couple this idea with this quote from *AE 419 [22]*: "...in the spiritual world, as in the natural world, strong winds and tempests spring up.... It has at different times been granted me to perceive these tempests and also the east wind by which the evil were dispersed and cast into the hells, when the Last Judgment was in progress." In other words, "winds" signify the dispersion of falsities and evils.

"Why?"

- The Writings have a wonderful series of passages about why the Lord asks, inquires, or interrogates people on certain issues when He already knows the answer. See *AC 226, 1931, 5800*, and *6132* for illustrations. Here is a short answer drawn from *AC 226*: "...the reason for asking is that man may acknowledge and confess." The Lord seeks to lead us to the end, cause, and effect of things. His questions show us internal disorders that lie hidden in secret places. The questions are intended to help us discover things when our state is ready to acknowledge and confess our mistakes.

"Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house."

- The Lord's house is in ruins. What does this represent in the spiritual sense?
- A house signifies accumulated memory-knowledges. (*AC 1488*)
- A house signifies scientifics (facts, data, memory-knowledges) that are collected together. To collect scientifics is to raise and build up the external person. (*AC 1488*)
- The house of the Lord signifies the church, heaven, and more universally the Lord Himself as to the Divine Human. (*AC 3720*)
- Contrast the above with what would be in a human being's "house."
- Running to our own house illustrates that we are comfortable with our ways and not as familiar with the Lord's ways. How quickly do we use human prudence without considering the ways of the Lord? Is it a surprise to hear that the Lord's house is in ruins while our "house" is cared for more often?

Putting It All Together

1. P&P announces that a church cannot be instituted among people who look to themselves and not to the Lord. For those who rely on memory-knowledges, or scientifics, there is but one end: reasoning that gives rise to falsities. The human mind void of the Lord's good and truth becomes inventive. It hatches ideas that are inconsistent with eternal truths. These artificial ideas tear away at the base of the Lord's house (within the individual) and leave it in a state of ruin.
2. "Consider your ways" is a call to reflection. It is an invitation to come aboard and participate in what is going to happen spiritually. The Lord is going to blow away the world of falsity and illusion. We need to gather "wood." The Temple of the Lord is going to be built with Love, Charity, and Justice. The house of the Lord (His Temple) will once again offer the kind of worship that will help His people see Him in the Divine Human.
3. Do you remember the history of the five Churches? The Most Ancient Church worshipped the Lord as the Divine Human. The Ancient Church worshipped Him as the Divine Human Representative. The Jewish Church worshipped Him as the Invisible One and feared to speak His Name. The Christian Church worshipped Him as the Son of Man and Son of God. But the announcement to the New Church carried the good news that we could once again worship the invisible as visible. The Divine Human would come among us—the Nunc Licet—so that we might enter into the mysteries of faith with understanding. This would be The New Jerusalem, the crown of all churches, whose kingdom shall be forever and ever.
But within this prophecy is a warning. If we care more for our houses than the Lord's house, we will miss out on the rebirth and restoration of spiritual order. Human prudence will be blown away, "says the Lord of hosts."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Haggai 1:7-9.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. Compare the passages from the Writings and the Word with the doctrine we derived from them. Do you feel this section followed that direct teachings of the Writings? Can you think of other teachings that would contribute to our discussion here?
2. How difficult is it to keep the house of the Lord in better shape than our own? Why?

3. Have you ever "hatched" artificial ideas to fit into the things of the Word? What are some ways that such artificialities manifest themselves in the world and the church?
4. Think about the Lord blowing "it" away. Smog often results from pollutants hanging over a city. What chases that stagnation away? A "breath of fresh air." So it is with the Lord and truth. We need His help in clearing away the smog of the mind. How does He clear the air? How can we help?
5. The invisible becoming visible: that is a promise of revelation. It will come, but it will come as each individual opens his or her heart and mind to the Second Coming. Don't we long for it to happen at a faster pace? Could it be that the Lord still has to get many more people to consider their ways and that He has to ask more questions among His people?

HAGGAI 1:10-11

"Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands."

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...therefore no truth or good can be received by them."

AC 3579 [2]

- "...that 'dew' signifies truth...and speaking of a new church, where the 'vine giving its fruit' denotes the spiritual of the church or the truth of faith, giving good; and the 'earth giving its produce,' the celestial of the church or the good of charity, giving truth; these are the 'dew which the heavens shall give.' "In Haggai 1:9, 10...where the 'dew of the heavens and the produce of the earth,' which were restrained, have a like signification."

AC 3580 [2]

- "...'wine' is what is spiritual, thus truth from good.... That 'corn and new wine' have this signification, may be seen...In Haggai 1:10, 11... where 'drought' denotes a lack of dew and of rain, thus a lack of truth derived from any good; 'a drought upon the corn' is a lack of good; and 'drought upon the new wine' is a lack of truth."

Derived Doctrine

Remember, the doctrines tell us that the heavens withholding dew and the earth withholding fruit represent the loss of good and truth. It is not the Lord withholding these things. It is the heart and mind of the individual who "cuts" it off. The person is the one with a cold heart and a state barren of the produce the soul needs each moment.

"...*'year of drought'*"

- A drought "signifies a state of loss and deprivation of truth." (*AE 481 [2]*)
- Drought signifies the "absence of good and truth." (*AC 1949*)
- Drought denotes truths wherein there is nothing of life. (*AC 8869*)
- A drought signifies "sounding words without any spirit in them. (*AC 10406 [7]*)
- A drought signifies "deprivation of truth." (*AE 355 [16]*)
- A drought signifies a church "where there is no good." (*AE 504 [27]*)
- A drought represents a state without perception of good. (*AE 537 [14]*)
- A year in the internal sense does not refer to 365 days. To the angels, who are in the internal sense of the Word, a year signifies what is full in respect to the states of the church and what is eternal. (*AC 2906*)

"I called for a drought on the land and on the mountains..."

- *AC 2571* shares these representations of the word "land":
 - The internal man of the church.
 - The region where the church is.
 - The church itself.
 - In the universal sense, the Lord's kingdom in heaven and on earth.
 - The doctrine of love and charity where the faith of the church resides.
- "On the mountains" signifies where the good of celestial love prevails. (*AC 10438*)
- A mountain signifies the church where love to the Lord and worship prevails. (*AE 734 [2]*)
- There are so many more references we could cite. A mountain provided the setting for the reception of the Decalogue. Therefore, it could represent the laws of the Lord setting life in order. A mountain provided the children of Israel with moments of respite when they traveled through the desert. Therefore, a mountain represented moments of peace and tranquility prior to a return to the valley to face the arduous task of regeneration.

"... [a drought] on the grain and the new wine and the oil..."

- Let's note the trine here: grain, wine, and oil.

- The Writings translate the words "drought upon the grain" to "a drought upon corn," which represents a lack of good.
- The drought upon the new wine represents a lack of truth.
- A drought on the oil means a lack of the good of love to the Lord from the Lord. See *AC 10261* or *AE 375 [24–26]*.

"... [a drought] on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and on livestock, and on all the labor of your hands."

- In the positive sense, "To bring forth" signifies the restoration and reformation of the church. "'...to bring forth' signifies to make them fruitful and bring them forth in act, which is to live according to them, and thus be reformed..." (*AE 721 [10, 18]*) When the drought is introduced, it means the opposite happened.
- Man, in the positive sense, represents or signifies the wisdom and intelligence necessary to fight against falsity. (*AC 49*)
- Livestock (cattle) "...in the original tongue is from a word which also means 'acquisition,' and 'acquisition' in the spiritual sense is also truth from which is good, for the reason that good is acquired by means of truth." (*AC 6049*)
- Livestock signifies the good of truth. (*AC 6016*)
- Livestock signifies the forms of good and truth. (*AC 6009*)
- The labor of one's hands or the fruit of one's hands represents pursuit of life according to the Lord's commandments. (*AE 340 [13]*)
- Hands signify power, and what is in a person's power is at his or her disposal. (*AC 5296*)
- The works of a person's hands signify the things proper to them, which are evil and false. The works of the Lord's hands signify the things that are proper to Him, which are goods and truths. (*AR 457*)

Putting It All Together

1. When anyone looks to themselves and not the Lord, "no truth can be received by them." (P&P) When a person looks to him- or herself for good and truth, the heavens dry up. There is no morning dew to refresh the ground. When anyone looks to memory-knowledges or the natural lumen, the mind (earth) can bear no spiritual fruit. A spiritual drought touches the land, the mountains, the grain, the wine, and the oil. When a person looks to the strength of his or her hands, that person's labor is for the moment and not eternity.
2. Sad to say, a life apart from the Lord takes away the livestock—acquisitions—for which we are to care. Livestock correspond to every essential of life that forms good and truth. Such things are essential for our souls. Our spiritual livestock must feed, cloth, and nurture the rational mind and spiritual life.

3. Into such conditions Haggai was called. He had to call on the governor and the high priest to lead the way. He had to repeat over and over, "Consider your ways." Haggai had to call attention to the inappropriate priorities. He spoke of true priorities, telling the people that the Lord had to be first and their comforts second.
Will the people listen? Will they quit making excuses and blaming others for their indifference and neglect of the Lord?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Haggai 1:10-11.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. What method do you use to keep spiritual priorities on top of your life's "to do" list?
2. Dew has an interesting correspondence. It plays a part in the manna story. It plays a part in Gideon's story. How can this "dew" reach your practical every day experiences?
3. The correspondences of draught remind us of all kinds of dryness. By itself, doctrine, or study of the Word, can seem dry to us. How can we "wet" these things so the Lord can use them to give us living water? How we let studying the Word bring rain back to the land and the mountains?
4. Livestock represent every essential of life. Thinking of animals as an essential of life is not my usual mode of thinking. How about you? On the other hand, can we still care for the essentials of life without thinking about the correspondence of livestock? How do we move from understanding a correspondence to understanding its application to life?
5. Does Haggai, as a prophet, sound and feel gentler in his prophecy than Amos or Nahum? Why or why not? What might account for the difference?

HAGGAI 1:12-15

"Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him; and the people feared the presence of the Lord.

Then Haggai, the Lord's messenger, spoke the Lord's message to the people, saying, 'I am with you, says the Lord.'

So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts,

their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "The church will be instituted among those who are wise from the Word."

AC 573 [7-8]

- "...the truths and goods of heaven and the church are meant in the Word by 'hosts;' which makes clear why it is that Jehovah is called in the Word 'Jehovah Zebaoth,' and 'Jehovah God Zebaoth,' that is, 'of hosts' (as in...Haggai 1:9, 14...). From this it is now evident that 'hosts' signify the truths and goods of heaven and the church in the whole complex; and as most things in the Word have also a contrary sense, so do 'hosts' and in that sense they signify falsities and evils in their whole complex..."

Doctrine of the Lord 47

- "There are in man two fountains of life, one is the motion of the heart, and the other is the respiration of the lungs. The life from the respiration of the lungs is what is properly meant by 'spirit' and also by 'soul.' That this acts as one with the man's thought from the understanding, and that the life from the heart's motion acts as one with his will's love, will be seen...."

Doctrine of the Lord 48, ii

- "As man's life varies according to his state, by 'spirit' is meant the varying affection of life in man. As...The excitation of life..." Haggai 1:14 is cited as one of the examples.

Derived Doctrine

Zerubbabel

- *AR 43* helps us focus on the derived doctrine we will need to use for the closing verses of chapter one. "...by 'Zerubbabel' who is to build the house, thus the church, the Lord is represented..."
- In *AR 350*, we are taught that Zerubbabel as a governor represents the Lord as to His celestial love; the celestial kingdom of the Lord and the Word; and in the natural sense, the celestial church from the Word.

Joshua

- Joshua, the high priest, represents the Lord as to the work of salvation. (*AC 9809*)

"...with all the remnant of the people..."

- A "remnant" signifies those within the church who are in good. (*AC 3322 [4]*)
- "The remnant of the people" signifies truths stored up by the Lord in the interior person. (*AC 5113 [8]*)
- "Remnants" signify the truths and goods stored up in a person by the Lord from infancy. (*AE 724 [29]*)

"...obeyed the voice of the Lord their God..."

- Listening, or harkening, denotes "obedience from affection." (*AC 3684*)
- When the spiritual man disposes all things in the natural man, the natural man ought to obey as a servant of his Lord. (*AC 3167*)
- "...the voice of the Lord" in the Word signifies the Word itself, the doctrine of faith, and also the conscience. (*AC 219*)
- "Voice" signifies what is enunciated from the Word, thus the precepts of the Lord. (*AC 8360*)

"And the people feared the presence of the Lord."

- Fear has many meanings. Let's look first at what is called "holy fear." Holy fear has within it a longing (love) for the Divine. With that longing is a desire not to do anything that would offend the love for the Lord. (*AC 3718*)
- Fearing; being not afraid "signifies resuscitation, and then adoration from the deepest humiliation". Holy fear sometimes is accompanied with a sacred tremor of the mind's interiors as there is a sense of the Lord's entrance to replace one's (proprium) own life. (*AR 56*)

"I am with you, says the Lord."

- Do we really need to cite doctrinal sources for this sentence? The Lord is Omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient: all present, all powerful, and all knowing. The Lord saying, "I am with you" is of great value when any rebuilding of the temple is undertaken.

"So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel ... and the spirit of Joshua...and the spirit of the remnant of the people..."

- Look again at the passage from *Doctrine of the Lord 48*. The "spirit of excitation" is involved in this portion of the text. A sense of newness, a sense

of restoration entered into the hearts and minds of the people mentioned in the prophecy.

"...they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God."

- We can rework this sentence with the help of *AC 573 [8]*. They came and worked on "the truths and goods of heaven and the church in the whole complex." The people came to understand the meaning of dedication, commitment, and endeavor.

Putting It All Together

1. "The church will be instituted among those who are wise from the Word." (*P&P*)
2. Obeying, harkening to the Word of the Lord, brings about powerful results. The spirit of excitation fills us. A sense of possibility replaces defeatism. How many times have we felt the voice of negativity dampen our spirit of enthusiasm? In this story, the Lord's leadership of governors and priests brings action. Holy fear, a sense of humility and love, causes the soul to tremble with anticipation as the "old ways" are removed and replaced by the "new ways." The coming of the New Church whisk in with a breath of fresh air to clear away the smog of falsity.

"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams." (*I Samuel 15:22*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Haggai 1:12-15.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. This section strikes a strongly positive note. Could you feel a sense of the building of "excitation of the spirit"? Look for examples in the passage.
2. By now, you have had plenty of practice at thinking from correspondences. Are you seeing what is behind the literal sense? Are you also applying what you see to current life issues?
3. Listening and obeying require a certain inner discipline. There's a song that says, "you only hear as well as you listen." The rebellious part of us is quick to use "yes, but" arguments to avoid some responsibilities. Yes, the Lord will rebuild, but in light of (some example is given)...it probably will not happen. How many "yes, buts" have you heard or used? What is dangerous about them?

4. The Lord's New Church is growing. Every day, we move closer to its fulfillment. What would you pick as your best contribution to this spiritual cause? How can you make that contribution each day?
5. In your marriage, in your relationship with family and friends, how do you see "holy fear" as an asset?

Chapter Two

HAGGAI 2:1-3

"In the seventh month, on the twenty-first of the month, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying: 'Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, saying; Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing?' "

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "The church when first constituted was full of truths; at the present day it is devastated."

Derived Doctrine

"In the seventh month..."

- A month signifies the end of a preceding and the beginning of a subsequent state, thus a new state. (AC 3814)
- A month refers to the state of truth in man. (AR 22 and 935)
- A month signifies a full or plenary state. (AR 489)
- A month signifies a state of life as to truth. (AR 925)
- Seven in general signifies the Lord's advent into the world, and also His advent into His glory; and every advent of His in particular. (AC 728)
- Seven occurs in the Word when anything holy is treated of, and, in the opposite sense, anything profane. (AR 10)
- Seven signifies the Lord, and representatively, celestial love. (AC 5265)

"...on the twenty-first of the month..."

- The "twenty-first" signifies a holy state and its end. Twenty-one comes when we multiply three times seven. (AC 7842, 7903)

"Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel..."

- This phrase is mentioned, or repeated, six times: Haggai 1:1, Haggai 1:12 (title of "governor of Judah" is not mentioned), Haggai 1:14 (title of "governor of Judah" is mentioned), Haggai 2:2, Haggai 2:21, and Haggai 2:23 (title of "governor of Judah" is not mentioned and "my servant" is used).

"Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest..."

- This phrase is repeated five times: Haggai 1:1, Haggai 1:12, Haggai 1:14, Haggai 2:2, and Haggai 2:4.

"...remnant of the people...."

- This phrase occurs three times: Haggai 1:12, Haggai 1:14, and Haggai 2:2.

Why should we note these repetitions? We have no doctrinal explanation why "the sons of," "governor of Judah," "high priest," and "remnant of the people" are repeated so often in Haggai. Yet, there they are. I think we ought to contemplate reasons for the repetition, keeping our minds open and ready for influx from the Lord.

"Who is left among you who saw this temple [Lord's house] in its former glory?"

- The Divine inquisition, the Lord's gentle probing of their hearts and minds, had a purpose. The question He asked them directed them to reflect on the "former glory" and beauty of the representatives of the Divine Human as seen in the temple built under Solomon's leadership. Where did Solomon get his architectural inspiration? The Lord or his own creativity?
- *AC 7847 [4]* has this interesting teaching regarding the signification of temple: "...in the supreme sense by 'temple' is meant the Lord as to the Divine Human... therefore in the representative sense by a 'temple' is meant His church..."
- Please read *AE 220*. This number has many "temple signifies" references to the Divine Human, the Word, the church, and the New Church.
- The divine question seems to be leading the remnant back to "a first love" experience of the Lord as the Divine Human. The tacit command is to build their church with the Divine Human as their blueprint.

"...how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing?"

- The word "how" has a wide variety of usages in our vocabulary: "In what manner or way; to what degree or extent, number or amount; in what state or condition; for what reason; why; with what meaning; to what effect." (*Webster's Dictionary*)
- "...how do you see it now ..." Seeing signifies the perception from the Lord of truths from the Word.
- How they perceived the Lord and how they acknowledged Him was an important discovery for the people of the church before "rebuilding" got underway. (*AC 938*)

"...is this not in your eyes as nothing?"

- AC 2276 [2-3] describes a state that sounds something like what we have in this verse. Some in the church "valued so little the Lord's merit, and redemption and salvation by Him." To illustrate this truth, the story of "thirty pieces of silver" is used.
- At first, restoring the temple was important to the people. But with adversity from the Samaritans and poor economical and produce returns, the house of the Lord sat unfinished. For sixteen years, the ruined temple stood untouched. "Is this not in your eyes as nothing?"

Putting It All Together

1. As we often do, let's begin by following the spiritual lead of the quote found in P&P. "The church when first instituted was full of truths; at the present day it is devastated." This seems to make sense when we view their captivity, the loss of their center of worship, their place among a people who believed in self-worship, and their subjection to a king who demanded to be worshipped as a god. The march of daily absurdities over a long period of time must have "muted" the alarm system of their spiritual conscience. What a tremendous toll it took on all of the Jewish children born in Babylon. Doing and accepting the "norms" of their peers had to be detrimental to the truths of the Lord.
2. Repetition of phrases within this section seems to mirror the Lord bringing the people back to essentials. The persistent recurrence of phrases in the message given by Haggai helped to reestablish the source of their spiritual heritage. The question "who among you saw the temple in its former glory" draws them back to their remains. Then the Lord, like a loving parent, asks them how they see the temple now: "...is it anything in your eyes?" The lesson sets before us a powerful question: "how do you see it now?"
3. For us, this passage might point to things within us and within the church. Do we remember how we approached the Lord when we were children? Didn't we come to the Word with more openness, acceptance, and joy? Did we not thrill with the stories of the Word and its heroes and good winning out over evil? But then we entered school, and the world began asking us what we wanted to become when we "grew up." With that question impressed on us, we turned our attention to the rigors of getting into college and finding ways to pay for it all. The thrill of marriage, raising a family, wiping noses, putting bandages on cuts and bruises, taking children to music lessons, car-pooling, etc., etc. filled our lives. Is it any wonder that the temple of the Lord gets pushed aside by a degree of captivity?
The temple of the Lord can get left behind, and the joy of hearing truths from the Word suffers and disintegrates. The question "how do you see it now?" is worth reflection. Hikers lost in the woods, without a compass, must find a

clearing where directional clues may be found to help them get their bearings. Care to take the time to look?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Haggai 2:1-3.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. How far, and long, do you think we get carried off in captivity to "Babylonians"? Does this vary with our state of life? Are there ways to avoid this pitfall?
2. How can we release ourselves from "Babylonian" control?
3. Do you believe our spiritual consciences can be "muted" by the daily absurdities going on all around us? How do we receive messages from our consciences? Think of experiences with your conscience being heard and ignored.
4. Repetition in the Lord's Word is good. It tries to draw us back to innocence. However, there is a danger of seeing the repetition as a boring nuisance. Do you have any suggestions to help us listen and not "numb out" the call to rebuild?

HAGGAI 2:4-5

"Yet be strong, Zerubbabel,' says the Lord; and strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; 'and be strong, all you people of the land,' says the Lord, 'and work; for I am with you,' says the Lord of hosts. 'According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you; do not fear!"'

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Nevertheless a church will be instituted."

AE 573 [7]

- "The tribes were called 'hosts' because the twelve tribes taken together represented all the truths and goods of the church, and each tribe some universal essential of the church ...from all this it can be seen that the truths and goods of heaven and the church are meant in the Word by 'hosts;' which

makes clear why it is that Jehovah...God is called...'of hosts'..." Haggai 1:9, 14; 2:4, 8, 23 are cited.

Derived Doctrine

"Yet be strong..."

- In this passage, the Lord commands Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the people to be strong.
- Remember that Zerubbabel's name means "born in Babylon or seed of Babylon."
- Joshua's name means "Yahweh saves."
- Mentioned in this way, the "people" may signify "doctrines." See *AC 4485*.
- As a general symbol of strength, iron represents truth that cannot be resisted.*(AC 426 [3])*
- What can we draw from the brief derived doctrinal notes above? During their Babylonian captivity, seeds of self-worship must have entered the minds of the Israelites and grown roots in their spiritual heritage. Consequently, they practiced external worship with little inner meaning. In this passage, the Lord seems to prepare to rebuild the spiritual temple by announcing the strength of His truth, strength like an iron that cannot be resisted.
- "Be strong, Zerubbabel" seems to show where the Lord would begin this restoration project. The nation's mixture of Babylonian and Jewish heritage mirrored the mixture of truth and falsity present with them. The Lord would first separate truth from falsity to bring order so that a new, enlightened leadership could guide the people with a spiritual prudence.
- The "be strong Joshua, the high priest..." is a command to the church and all of its forms of worship. The church must have a Divine strength, basic doctrinal truths, that cannot be resisted. No more mind games. No more bending and twisting truth to fit selfish priorities. Worship must be genuine; it must rise from the strength of the Lord's Word.
- "Be strong all you people of the land..." is a promise from the Lord to the people that any doctrines they carried with them and applied to life would become their own, an internal strength to lean on and follow. In place of blind faith or historical faith, He would give them true faith so they could "enter into the mysteries of faith with understanding." This exhortation for strong doctrines suits Haggai, the man whose name means "festival." His message is worthy of spiritual celebration.

"...work; for I am with you, says the Lord of hosts."

- Work signifies seeking what is true and doing what is good. *(AC 63)*
- Work, deeds, offices, and uses signify doing things for the neighbor, the country, the church, and the Lord's kingdom. *(AC 6073)*

- Work signifies that the people **were not** to be exempted from things that would be hard to bear. (*AC 7104*)
- Work is a good thing. It brings a sense of completion and exercises the "as-of-self" in a healthy way.
- "...for I am with you." To get some help with this phrase, we can think of the Lord promising to support or sustain us. "Sustaining" signifies getting internal strength or influx from the Lord to help support our external activities. (*AC 9959 [2]*)

"According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt..."

- We might ask, "Which covenant are we to look up for our study of the internal sense?" In the book of Exodus, there are five references to a covenant: Exodus 6:7, Exodus 19:5, Exodus 20:1-7, Exodus 24:7, and Exodus 34:10. In addition, we need to look up the representation of the word "covenant."
 - "...there can be no covenant between the Lord and man other than conjunction by love and faith, and therefore 'covenant' signifies conjunction." (*AC 665*)
 - "...a 'covenant' signifies nothing else than regeneration and the things pertaining to regeneration.... The Lord Himself is called the 'Covenant' because it is He alone who regenerates.... In Malachi 3:1-2 the Lord is called the 'angel of the Covenant'.... In Isaiah 55:3-4... [He is called] 'covenant of eternity'..." (*AC 666*)
 - In Exodus 24:7, Moses reading the "Book of the Covenant" to the people represents the Lord showing (leading) them into the change of state they needed to make so conjunction with Him could come. "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do and hear," said the people when Moses read to them from this great book of peace.
- **Coming out of Egypt** has an interesting representation when we contrast it with **being in Egypt**. When a person is in Egypt, it represents the natural person separated from the spiritual person, the natural focus on self and the world instead of the Lord. It represents a person following the pride of self-intelligence and thereby perverting his or her rational. Coming out of Egypt is a turning point where the natural person seeks conjunction with the Lord. The person then seeks the things of the Word as his or her covenant with the Lord. (*AE 654 [48]*)

"...so My spirit remains among you; do not fear!"

- The Lord's spirit represents mercy (*AC 19*) and truth (*AC 24*).
- Spirit, when spoken of the Lord, signifies the life of His Wisdom. (*AC 49-51*)
- The words "remains among you" and "do not fear" convey confidence, love, and courage to the minds and hearts of His people. A picture of the Lord taking children in His arms comes to mind when I read these promises. The

Lord's conjunction brings all the resources of His Love and Wisdom to the uses we serve.

Putting It All Together

1. *P&P* makes an announcement: "...a church will be instituted." There is no equivocation about it. Not maybe, not someday, not "I hope there will be." Instead, it is a firm statement: "a church will be instituted." Be strong, governor. Be strong, priest. Be strong, people. This trine is worthy of notice. We may have the "seeds" of Babylon within us, but we also have the seeds of innocence and a soul formed by the Lord. No matter how distracted we become with the world's goals and activities, the Lord will still call us out of Egypt. We can set aside the self-directing wisdom of our natural side and listen to what the "Book of the Covenant" teaches so that we can sing with sincerity, "All that the Lord has spoken, we will do and hear." What is the motto of this New Church song? We will do and obey!
2. Think about listening to the "angel of the Covenant." The "covenant of peace" allows the spiritual priestly uses to become strong and able to assist us in finding the "good of life." Worship will move out of the realm of custom and tradition into the realm of spontaneous and voluntary joy. This covenant will allow love to lead, selecting and marrying the truths of the Word with a conjugal principle in mind.
3. With a sincere worship of the Lord, the doctrines we use will spread throughout the "land," the minds of the Lord's people, to build a "temple" worthy and representative of our Lord.
4. Because we know a church will be instituted, we can work with more relaxed hearts and minds. The Lord will be among us, and we have nothing to fear from the hells. He is in charge and will give us the perception and materials to build the new temple of worship.
5. Be not afraid! "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Haggai 2:4-5.

Questions To Stimulate Reflections

1. The history of secular covenants is interesting. Basically, there are four kinds:
 - Suzerainty (the word means "above" or over lord). In this type of covenant, a superior binds an inferior to obligations defined by the superior.
 - Parity. In this type, both parties are bound by an oath.

- Patron. In this covenant, the superior binds him- or herself to some obligation for the benefit of an inferior.
 - Promissory. A guaranty is given that future performances of stipulated obligations will be entered into and kept.
- Do any, or all, of these covenants come close to the Lord's covenant with humanity? Why or why not?
2. Throughout our study, it is important to pay attention to our own reactions to the teachings we are learning, remembering that they apply to us as much as they did to the children of Israel. What does this section do for your confidence and courage? Can the Lord's Word pull us out of Egypt? How?
 3. Have you ever wondered about that song, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do and hear."? Have you felt the order is reversed? Do and hear. Shouldn't it be "hear and do"? Does it help to see that hearing represents obedience? Is the meaning "do and obey"?

HAGGAI 2:6-9

"For thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and the dry land; 'and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the Lord of hosts. The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the Lord of hosts. The glory of the latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the Lord of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the Lord of hosts."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "When the Lord comes into the world, this church will be an interior church."

AC 28

- "It is a very common thing in the Word for 'waters' to signify knowledges, and consequently for 'seas' to signify a collection of knowledges...." Haggai 2:6-7 is cited as an example.

AR 331

- "'Earthquakes' signify changes of state in the church, because 'the earth' signifies the church; and because in the spiritual world, when the state of the church is perverted anywhere, and there is a change, there is an earthquake, and as this a prelude to their destruction, there is terror.... Hence it may appear what is meant by 'earthquakes,' 'shakings,' and 'commotions' of the earth, in the following passages.... [Haggai 2:6-7 is cited among others]

passages.] But these things are to be understood as being done in the spiritual world, but not in the natural world...."

AE 400 [12]

- "In Haggai 2:6, 7... This is said of the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, and the 'new temple' there signifies a new church that is to be established by the Lord. This is meant by 'Yet once, it is for a little while,' and by 'then I will make all nations quake that the choice of all nations may come; and I will fill this house with glory,' 'nations' and 'the choice of nations' signifying all who are in good ...'house' signifying the church, and 'glory' Divine truth. This new church is further described by 'the temple' in that chapter thus.... The judgment in the spiritual world that will precede is described by 'I will make the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land to quake' 'the heavens and the earth' meaning all interior things of the church, and 'sea and dry land' all the exterior things of it."

AC 1551 [3-4]

- "...it is plain that here 'gold' is the wealth of wisdom, and 'silver' the wealth of intelligence.... In Haggai 2:7-9...the Lord's church is treated of, [where]... 'gold' and 'silver' are predicated."

AR 912

- "The reason why 'gold' signifies the good of love, is because metals, as well as each and everything which appears in the natural world, correspond: gold to the good of love, silver to the truths of wisdom, copper or brass to the good of charity, and iron to the truths of faith.... That 'gold' from correspondence signifies the good of love, may appear from the following passages..." Haggai 2:8-9 is cited among many other passages.

AE 220 [8]

- "...there are many other passages in the Word where 'temple' is mentioned. That it may be known that 'temple' means heaven and the church, as also Divine truth proceeding from the Lord, I will cite..passages here, lest the mind should cling to the idea that a mere temple is meant, and not something more holy; for the temple in Jerusalem was holy because it represented and thus signified what is holy...." Haggai 2:7-9 is among the many passages cited.

AE 242 [19]

- "...Haggai 2:7, 9... treats of the coming of the Lord; by 'nations' those who are in good and in truths therefrom are meant; by 'house' the church (AC, n.

3720); 'the glory with which it shall be filled' means Divine truth 'The silver is Mine, and the gold,' means that truth and good are from the Lord alone." Haggai 2:7-9 is the cited passage.

AR 191

- "By 'temple,' in the supreme sense, the Lord is signified as to the Divine Human, in particular as to the Divine truth; but, in the representative sense, by 'temple' is signified the Lord's church in heaven, and...in the world.... That temple signifies the church in the world is manifest from these passages..." Haggai 2:7, 9 is cited among other passages.

AC 3780 [5]

- Haggai 2:9, along with many other passages, is cited with the following explanation: "In all these passages in the supreme sense 'peace' signifies the Lord; and in the representative sense His kingdom, and good from the Lord...thus the Divine which flows into the good, or into affections of good, which causes joy and happiness from the inmost (the soul)."

Heaven and Hell (H&H) 287 [2]

- "That it is Divine and heavenly peace that is meant in the Word by 'peace' can be seen...from other passages where it is mentioned...Haggai 2:9.... Because 'peace' means the Lord and heaven, and also heavenly joy and the delight of good, 'Peace be with you' was an ancient form of salutation that is still in use; and it was ratified by the Lord in His saying to the disciples when He sent them forth..."

AR 306

- "...when a man is in the Lord, he is in peace with his neighbor, which is charity; in protection against the hells, which is spiritual security; and when he is peace with his neighbor, and in protection against the hells, he is in internal rest from evils and falsities. Since therefore all these are from the Lord, it may appear what is signified in general and in particular by 'peace'..." Haggai 2:9 is cited along with many other passages.

AE 365 [34]

- "In Haggai 2:9 'The house of God' signifies the church; 'the former house' the church that was before the Lord's coming; and 'the latter house' the church that was after His coming; 'glory' signifies the Divine truth that was in the one and the other; and 'the peace that He will give in that place,' that is, in the church, means all these things that are signified by 'peace'"

AE 400 [12]

- "In Haggai 2:6, 7...the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, and the 'new temple' there signifies a new church that is to be established by the Lord. This is meant by 'yet once, it is for a little while,' and by 'then I will make all nations quake that the choice of all nations may come; and I will fill this house with glory,' 'nations' and 'the choice of nations' signifying all who are in good... 'house' signifying the church, and 'glory' Divine truth. This new church is further described by 'the temple'.... The judgment in the spiritual world that will precede is described by 'I make the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land to quake' 'the heavens and the earth' meaning all interior things of the church, and 'sea and dry land' all the exterior things of it."

Derived Doctrine

1. "When (mercy) bursts forth, it bursts forth from the inmost..." (AC 5690)
2. "...[the faithful] know that life in the world... is only for some years, [and] is nothing compared with the life in heaven, which is eternal life; yea there is no ratio between the time of man's life in the world and the life in heaven... [think whether there can be] any ratio between a hundred thousand years and eternity, and you will find there is none." (AE 750)
3. "For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past, and like a watch in the night." (Psalm 90:4)
4. The Writings make many startling claims regarding the Lord, the Word, heaven and hell, angels, spirits, etc. But none are more startling than the teachings regarding the Last Judgment. People unfamiliar with the New Church are not taught that the Last Judgment occurred in 1757. Most of the world is expecting the Lord to come riding upon the clouds. They are looking for the "Great Rapture" when souls come out of graves and the ocean to meet the Lord. They are looking for the sun, moon, and stars to fall from the heavens. They are expecting definite (literal) physical manifestations of this Judgment.

The New Church teachings explain that the Last Judgment is not a physical worldly process but a spiritual one. The Writings reveal that the Lord fought with the hells and defeated them. Then He went into the heavens and completely reordered them. This revelation flies in the face of traditional Christian theology, which predicts an Apocalyptic doomsday.

When we read this portion of Haggai, we need to do so with focused spiritual views. The prophecies given through the prophets are about the Lord's "mercy bursting forth" to build an "interior" New Church. It is to be a spiritual church. It is to be "greater than the former" church. It will become the crown of all churches. The birth of this New Church requires a tremendous mental and spiritual "shaking-up." Old ways and old theology

must be shaken to their foundations and then the newly rebuilt temple will come into its place.

Putting It All Together

1. Wow! We have quite a bit of help this time in "putting it all together." There are more than 14 direct teachings to use. With an eye to the Lord and His guidance, let's tie the general teachings together so that particulars will come alive when we study and reflect on their specific meaning for our lives.
2. P&P starts us off with the teaching that "when the Lord comes into the world, this church will be an interior church." A more interior church means changes in thinking must occur that lead to deeper things. The Lord brings to people a correct idea of Himself. The Writings teach that a person's idea of God is like the first link upon which all other concepts depend. If the first link is weak or flawed, all of the other links will be weak and supported by falsity.
3. The Lord often said things like "you have heard it said of old...but I say unto you..." The Scribes and Pharisees placed more value in their own man-made laws than in the teachings of the Word, and they often substituted their laws in place of the Word's teachings. Generation after generation contributed its man-made falsities. When a church departs from the truths of faith and the good of charity, that church's people bring their confusion to the spiritual world. Picture millions of souls, carrying confusion and falsity with them when they enter the World of Spirits. A black cloud interposed itself between heaven and the church on earth, cutting off the vital light of heaven. This cloud of falsity carried the church into spiritual captivity and restricted the spontaneity of love to the Lord. Like the Babylonian desecration of the temple, the holy things of the church were stolen and used in blasphemous ways. The Lord's Word was "chained," locked up and ignored. Hell felt that it was in control.
4. The timing of the Lord's advent was crucial. Humanity stood at the doorway of spiritual death. Human prudence entered a deathly "tail-spin," and the former temple's foundation lay in a shambles, a daily witness to futility. Then the Lord came to our rescue. He turned His zeal and truth to the rescue of the His people. He gathered together the good of truth and the truth of faith and did battle with the hells. For every trick they sought to use, He had an answer and a way to win. Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little He laid the foundation for His new church.
5. The "gold" and "silver" of this church ARE MINE, says the Lord. The good and truth of the New Church belong only to the Lord. He is willing to fill the minds of His people with such wealth to use, but it is His.
6. This section implies that we must cooperate with the Lord in the shaking-up process, but we need a healthy view of this shake up. Reread the quote from the Derived Doctrine section: "When mercy bursts forth, it bursts forth from the inmost..." The Lord's internal goal is to fill us with energy. He wants to motivate us to do His will. Shaking up humanity isn't a bad idea when you

- think how often we get into a rut and resist change. To help us, He teaches us that "...when a [person] is in the Lord, he is in peace..." (AR 306)
7. The Last Judgment will take place "within the church and the person" and not outside the church or outside of the person. The New Church will be instituted. It will be an internal church. The Lord commands us to work with him, telling us that He will be with us as we build the church. It will be a thing of beauty. It will be more magnificent than the former church. Come and find peace within the walls of the New Jerusalem, says the Lord.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Haggai 2:6-9.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. You might have wondered why there were two quotes about time in the Derived Doctrine section. The words "it is a little while" might have you thinking from the temporal side of the quote. Time in the eyes of the Lord is relative; 1,000 years to Him is like the blink of an eye. Compare this with our human perspective. What would be different in your daily life if you could think about time from the Lord's perspective?
2. Have you tried to explain the Second Coming or the Last Judgment to someone? How did you do? If you awkwardly stumbled through it, did you decide to hide, or avoid, these teachings from others? What are some effective ways to talk about this subject with people?
3. Look back at the passages from the Writings and see where each attaches to the literal sense.
4. What images come to you when you read about the new temple that "shall be greater than the former"? The Lord said that the new temple would be full? What's going to fill the temple? People? Doctrines? Both?
5. Peace has quite a few definitions in the Passages from the Writings section. Which one touched you the most? Why?

HAGGAI 2:10-14

"On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: Now, ask the priests concerning the law, saying, 'If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy?' Then the priests answered and said, 'No.'

Then Haggai answered and said, 'So is this people, and so is this nation before Me,' says the Lord, 'and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.'

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "An external without an internal is of no use, and still less when the external has been falsified; so is it in the former church."

AC 3813 [3]

- "[There was an ordinance in the Jewish church] ...that Aaron, his sons, and they who sacrificed, and others who were clean, might eat the flesh of the sacrifices, and that this was holy... If therefore an unclean person ate of that flesh, he was to be cut off from his people.... That 'flesh' was called the 'flesh of holiness' (Jer. 11:15; Haggai 2:12), and the 'flesh of the offering which was on the tables in the Lord's kingdom..."

True Christian Religion (TCR) 717

- "Feasts in the ancient churches and also in the primitive Christian church were feasts of charity, at which they strengthened each other to abide in the worship of the Lord with sincere hearts. When the children of Israel ate together of the sacrifices near the tabernacle, it signified nothing else than unanimity in the worship of Jehovah; therefore the flesh that they ate, being a part of the sacrifice, was called holy (Jer. 11:15; Hag. 2: 12, and frequently elsewhere). Why not, then, the bread and wine and the paschal flesh at the supper of the Lord...."

AE 1082 [2-3]

- "...'bread and wine' have the same signification as 'flesh and blood,' 'bread' meaning the Divine good, and 'wine' the Divine truth, therefore these were commanded in place of flesh and blood. Divine good from the Lord was signified also by the flesh of the sacrifices that Aaron, his sons, and those who sacrificed, and others who were clean, might eat..." Haggai 2:12 is cited as an example.

AC 10130 [10-11]

- "By...unclean things are signified various kinds of evils and the derivative falsities which are from hell, and which are communicated, transferred, and received; the several unclean things signify each some specific evil; for evils which are unclean render man so, because they infect his soul; moreover from evil spirits and genii there flow forth the evils of their heart, and according to the persuasions of evil they infect those who are present. This

contagion is what is signified by the 'touch' of unclean things." Haggai 2:12-14 is cited among many other references.

AE 79

- "As all things among the sons of Israel were representative and significative of spiritual things, so also was touch; wherefore those who touched what was holy were sanctified, and those who touched what was unclean were polluted; for 'touch' signified communication and transference to another, and reception from another, as can be seen from the following passages in Moses..." Haggai 2:12, 13, 14 are cited.

Derived Doctrine

"On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius..."

- Twenty-four signifies "all things and [this number is] predicated of truths..." (AE 253 [6])
- Day signifies the state. Therefore, it appears that the Lord was examining the state of "all things" regarding the quality of their truths.
- Nine signifies all things conjoined in the complex: falsities and evils and good and truths. Note: nine is the result of multiplying three times three.
- By a "month" is signified "the end of the preceding and the beginning of the subsequent state, thus a new state..." (AC 3814)
- Two signifies all with respect to good. (AR 245)
- "In the internal sense a 'year' does not signify a year, is evident from the fact that the angels, who are in the internal sense of the Word, cannot have an idea of any year... instead of a year they have an idea of what is full in respect to states of the church, and of what is eternal in respect to states of heaven..." (AC 2906 [10])
- Darius represents the desire to be "adored as a god." (AC 1326 [2])

"The word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying..."

- This phrase is repeated often in our study. Why? It appears meant to remind us that the things being said are not human words but the Lord's words. The name "Haggai" means "festival" as if to remind us that at the core of what appears negative lies the spiritual sense, telling us news that will bring about a festive celebration of the New Church.

"Now, ask the priests concerning the law..."

- To ask signifies to investigate whether something is true, and to recognize divine truth. (AC 3385)

- The priests (from Aaron on to the Levites) represent the work of salvation in successive order. (*AC 10017*)
- The priesthood represents those who teach truth, and so lead to the good of life and to the Lord. (*AC 10794*)

Please Note the Two Questions Directed to the Priesthood.

Question One:

"If one carries meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy?"

- To "carry" signifies to instruct. (*AC 4749*) What kind of instruction? External or internal? Memory-knowledges or internal spiritual knowledges?
- The NKJV says, "in the fold of his garment"; the RSV says "in the skirt of his garment"; the *Jerusalem Bible* says "in the fold of his gown."
- A garment represents the ultimate sense of the Word, or its sensuous natural sense. (*AE 543 [14]*)
- A skirt signifies the outmost where a person's natural being is. This is also called "borders" elsewhere. (*AC 9917*)
- The signification of "meat" is somewhat directed by the literal sense when it teaches us it was carried in the "fold of garment." Meat, or flesh, signifies all pleasures that contain living good, which both delights and nourishes a person. (*AC 993-994*)
- The edge, or border, signifies the (basic) lower most things of the church. The edge or border is likened to memorized truths, knowledges from the Word, and rational truths. (*AE 518 [17]*)
- A garment touching bread represents having communication with love. Stew or pottage signifies "a chaotic mass" of doctrinal things in a person "without any certain order." This "chaotic mass" needs to be "boiled down." (*AC 3316*)
- A garment touching wine signifies communication (again based on a garment representing externals) with a faith of charity as it relates to the neighbor and the Lord.
- A garment touching oil signifies communicating the good of love or charity to the neighbor from the Lord. (*AC 10, 261*)
- A garment touching any food can be understood from the representations of food and garments. Food signifies things that are useful to the soul. (*AC 5293*) Food and raiment signify that which nourishes the soul and everything external that clothes it. Things such as prosperity and respect are the external clothing of the soul. (*AE 1193 [4]*)

"Then the priests answered and said 'No.' Why was the answer "no"?

- "Holy" is the key word to focus on. Holiness is not an external thing. It reigns in the inmost heavens. (*AC 9680*) Holiness comes from within, from enlightenment while studying the Word. (*AR 666*)
- In other words, the word "holy" does not describe a state achieved with an external or accidental "touching." Instead, it describes a state in which love, wisdom, and use are in harmony. (I can imagine an internal "holy" order being inspired by an external order of worship that is carefully and thoughtfully planned.)

Question Two

"If one who is unclean because of a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean?"

- To be unclean signifies to be in a state of falsities. (*AC 1666*)
- "Unclean" signifies appropriating things that are impure and profane derived from incorrect thinking. (*AE 654 [56]*)
- It also signifies a spiritual whoredom wherein adulteration of good and falsification of the Word take place. (*AR 924*)
- To seek the dead signifies a purposeful closing of the understanding in matters of faith. (*AR 429*) To touch the dead represents communicating with those states in which the will and understanding are not alive or vital (active) in the process of regeneration.

"So the priests answered and said, 'It shall be unclean.'"

- This question and answer are based on individual choices, not accidental events.
- Dead actions pollute. Adulterating the Lord's Word provides the medium in which a contagious and dangerous spiritual infection can grow and threaten the innocence of one's soul.
- This state of the mind and heart is "unclean" because it destroys the good states in the mind and heart. (*AC 494*)

Putting It All Together

1. "An external without an internal is of no use, and still less when the external has been falsified; so is it in the former church." (P&P) Everything that follows fills in this teaching. It appears that the Lord was explaining to the people that simply building the temple would not bring them any blessings or states of "holiness." Putting up stone and mortar doesn't touch anything holy. The existence of the temple guaranteed nothing. Therefore, the priests acknowledged that a priestly garment cannot bring holiness to anything simply by touching it.

2. Touching a dead body, on the other hand, was much more serious. The hearts and minds of the people must return to active concern with the "living" principles of the Lord and His Word. With this life, "shunning evil as sin" would become a meaningful deed instead of a memorized doctrinal phrase.
3. The priesthood responded to two questions with two different answers. One question was directed to the understanding, and one question was directed to the will. The Lord wants the understanding and the will to work together and support each other in the spiritual birth of the New Church.
"An external without an internal is of no use..." Quite a powerful statement to think about in our study as we build, each day, a temple that will be representative and worthy to host the Lord in His Holy Temple.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Haggai 2:10-14.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. When you read this prophetical section for the first time, what parts of the internal sense shone through? When you look back now, what parts of the internal sense shine through? If you studied Haggai without the Writings, how would you look for the inner meaning? How might your goals be different if you were studying without the Writings? What are your goals as you study with the Writings?
2. Let each person in the group give a general summary of the internal sense of this passage. Notice how different people will have slightly different summaries. Why do you think this happens?
3. In our study of the accidental touching of the garment, one of the derived doctrinal teachings mentioned the externals of the church being memorization, memory-knowledges, and the literal sense of the Word. The mere touching of them is not holy. Does that sound fair? We have our kids memorize recitations and give them little rewards. Hearing that these things are not holy in themselves might put a damper on that kind of work. What do you think about this external work? How can we bring such assignments into the sphere or state of holiness?
4. Does the quote "an external without an internal is of no use..." fit into something you have pondered (worried about or considered) regarding the work and life of the church? Explain.
5. What other questions would you like to contribute to this section?

HAGGAI 2:15-17

"And now, carefully consider from this day forward: from before stone was laid upon stone in the temple of the Lord – 'since those days, when one came to a heap of twenty ephahs, there were but ten; when one came to the wine vat to draw out fifty baths from the press, there were but twenty. I struck you with blight and mildew and hail in all the labors of your hands; yet you did not turn to Me,' says the Lord."

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...where truth has been turned into falsity, in which there is hardly anything of the church..."

AC 2253 [5]

- "As fifty is a number, it indeed appears to involve nothing beyond the number; whereas in the internal sense what is full is everywhere meant by it, as in Haggai 2:16, that is, instead of fullness there was not much. 'Fifty' would not have been mentioned here in the Prophet unless it had been significative."

AC 4759 [2]

- "In these passages [Haggai 2:16, 17 is cited among others.] 'twenty' denotes that which is unholy, unclean, and profane."

Derived Doctrine

"And now, carefully consider from this day forward..."

- "And now" seems to remind the listener to put aside any thought of past merit. The listener is to think about the present ("now") with eternal life as the goal or end. A new beginning, a new spiritual end, is the Lord's plan.
- The word "carefully" means to be alert, be attentive, take heed, and be circumspect.
- "Circumspect" signifies to keep the Commandments, for they cover everything of life and worship. (AC 9282)
- Look at the word "attentive." "He who is wise, attends to the end." (AC 9407)
- "...by 'this day' and by 'to-day,' there is signified perpetuity and eternity of state..." (See AC 2838, 3998, 4304, and 6165.)
- Each piece of this phrase seems to emphasize the need to reflect on life and its essentials.

- "...from this day forward..." carries the message of change and vitality from this moment onward. The Lord commands us to break out of the spiritual rut and build on eternal values.

"...from before stone was laid upon stone in the temple of the Lord..."

- What is meant by "stone upon stone"? First, let's look at these words as they were used (in the negative sense) by the Lord in the Gospels: *Matthew 24:2; Luke 19:44; Luke 21: 6*. In these passages, the Lord told the disciples that the material temple they were so impressed with would be destroyed: "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." In *Luke 19:44*, while weeping over the city of Jerusalem, He used these words: "...the days shall come upon thee...they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another..." In *Luke 21:6*, noting the rich coming into the temple and expressing adoration for the temple adorned with valuable stones and gifts, the Lord said: "...behold the days will come...where...there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."
- "That 'there should not be left of the temple stone upon stone that should not be thrown down' signifies the total destruction and vastation of the church ('stone' signifying the truth of the church)...." (*AE 220 [9]*)
- "That there shall not be left stone upon stone... [signifies] that the Lord was wholly denied among them, on which account also the temple was destroyed from its foundation." (*AE 391 [4]*)
- "That there shall not be left of the temple stone upon stone... means that every Divine truth, consequently everything of the church, is to perish; for the end of the church, which is called the consummation of the age, is here treated of." (*AE 630 [7]*)
- "...that 'there is not one stone upon another,' is signified the end of this church, in that no truth whatever would then be left..." (*AR 191 [3]*)
- "...*from before stone was laid upon stone...*" Does this point us to the purity of truth as it came to the church from the Lord? Does it refer to a time prior to the church "shaping" "forming" or "hewing" the many stones of truth? The stones of the temple were put together into a building. But denial, rejection, and falsification caused not one stone to remain upon another stone. Truth belongs to the Lord; it does not spring from human creativity.
- This point seems important to consider as we look at the next portion of our lesson where "false measurements" are spoken of. Measurements correspond to the quality of truth present with the church. *Leviticus 19:35* warns against doing injustice to measurements. Keep fair scales. *Deuteronomy 25:13-16* warns of the abomination of false weights. We are exhorted to keep honest scales. *Amos 8:5* warns against falsifying the scales by deceit. Each warning bears on our attempts to manipulate the stones of truth. The Writings warn against "hatching" ideas and concepts to fit our ends. There are approximately 35 passages I could offer on the danger

of "hatching falsities." Here are three to begin with: *AC 991, 2385 [2]*, and *2831*.

"Since those days, when one came to a heap of twenty ephahs, there were but ten..."

- Since those days... Which days? The days prior to the falsification of truth?
- Coming to a heap... Heaps or cairns were constructed by the children of Israel, at the direction of the Lord, to signify a witness of conjunction in love. (*AC 4192*) In the opposite sense, heaps, cairns, and piles describe the accumulation of offending falsities that needed to be restrained. (*AC 8286*)
- Ephahs refer to a measure of dry things. One ephah is equivalent to one half of a bushel. Therefore, the heap of 20 ephahs would have been 10 bushels. The Writings teach us that measurements are mentioned in the Word when states are examined to give an estimate of good. (*AC 8540*)
- Twenty signifies all things of good and also all that is holy. (*AC 10222*)
- Ten has many representations; one of them refers to remains. (*AC 858*) Does the reduction in number signify the loss of something? A full state of twenty represents *all that is good* and *all that is holy*. "All" seems to be the important key to our question. Half of something is missing. Is the missing portion good or truth? Or is it an indication that the people were "half" of what they could or should have been?

"...when one came to the wine vat to draw out fifty baths from the press, there were but twenty."

- *AE 695 [23]* tells us that "wine-vat" represents the Word in respect to the goods of love.
- To draw water signifies a state of instruction. (*AC 3057*)
- To draw wine signifies a wish to investigate what belongs to faith. (*AC 1071*)
- To seek wine means to have an affection for truth. (*AC 3069*)
- "Fifty baths from the press..." A bath is a liquid measurement. One bath equals five and one half gallons, so 50 baths would have been 275 gallons.
- Remember *AC 2252* says that 50 represents "what is full."
- *AR 651* teaches that a press (a wine press) signifies the truth of faith and also the investigation of works to see if the perpetrators of the works were in evil.
- *AC 4759 [2]* explains the meaning for finding "twenty" as that which is unholy, unclean, and profane.

"I struck you with blight and mildew and hail in all the labors of your hands..."

- "I" represents the Lord.
- Remember the story of Moses observing an Egyptian man "smiting" a Hebrew man? *AC 6758* explains that the Egyptian striking the Hebrew signifies "alienated memory-knowledges endeavoring to destroy the truths of the church." Could we see just the opposite meaning in this passage by

applying this concept to the Lord? Could the "I struck you" here mean Divine Truth and Divine Good endeavoring to destroy the falsities (of all kinds) within the people of the church?

- A blight is a disease or injury that results in withering, cessation of growth, and death of parts (such as leaves or stems). In human terms, it means to ruin or frustrate one's efforts. *Webster's Dictionary* also defines blight as "blasting."
- Mildew and blasting have correspondences:
 - Mildew signifies falsity that seeks to destroy the life of the understanding of truth; in a word it is that which seeks to destroy the spiritual life of faith. (*AC 83 65 [3]*)
 - Blasting signifies falsities in the corporeal-sensuous part of man. (*AE 63 [20]*)
- *AC 7553* teaches that hail signifies falsities destroying everything of the church within humanity. *AR 714* describes hail as direful and atrocious falsities working toward the destruction of the church.
- "...the labors of your hands", in the positive sense, signifies having ability, power, and confidence. (*AC 878*) The Lord "taking" these from the hands of the Jews indicates just the opposite. The Lord notes how falsity takes away the usefulness of these attributes from the hands.
- It must be noted here that the Lord never tries to destroy the faith of an individual in the church. Nor does He want a blight, mildew, hail, or loss of confidence to occur. It is the falsification of the truths of faith that causes the onset of disorder. The Lord opens everyone's interiors so the truth may be seen and known. It is the falsity within a person that becomes uncomfortable in the Lord's presence. Evil can't exist and thrive in the Lord's presence, and therefore, evil wants to blame the Lord and ascribe all of its "problems" to Him. The words of the prophet Haggai are written to accommodate that appearance that occurs when evil is present, that it is the Lord striking man.

"...yet you did not turn to Me, says the Lord."

- To "turn" signifies reflection, reflection on the revelation given by the Lord. It means to diverge from prior thinking and movement away from the Lord. (*AC 6836*) In the negative sense, to "turn" means to follow things that pervert. (*AC 4816*)
- Within these words one can hear divine sorrow. The Lord seems to say, "How often would I have gathered you under My wings...but you would not."

Putting It All Together

1. "Where truth has been turned into falsity, in which there is hardly anything of the church..." (P&P), there will be blight; there will be mildew; there will be hail; and the toiling of our hands will be useless. Blight, mildew, and hail will be within the church as long as people turn away from the Lord. Without

the Sun of Heaven, the "blast" from hell will wither and bruise the life of the church, causing its leaves to die. The black mold of hell will cover and block the finest gifts the soul wants to give to the Lord.

2. The "call" to rebuild the temple of the Lord is more than a call for an aesthetic building dedicated to "honoring" the Lord. It is a call to turn around and put first things first. It is a call to spontaneously love the Lord from within ourselves. It is a call to put the toil (ability, power, and confidence) of our hands into causes that have a divine end.

It would appear that this call is often forgotten or ignored. Think about how many times this theme appears in the messages of the Word. This is not useless repetition. It is a sign that we forget. It is a sign that we get distracted when we "hatch" our own ideas in place of the Lord's. It explains why the church, when out of control, has no stone upon stone and leans on debris as a foundation. It is a sign that we get comfortable with what we build with our own hands and think the Lord will comply with our expectations.

All of this may be read as negativity. Hell would like us to think it is. Hell would like us to blame any and all problems on Divine impatience. If hell's message is believed, the spiritual temple never gets built because the blame game pulls up excuse after excuse, making spiritual reformation seem futile. The message – the type of response we need to make – seems to hinge on changing the reaction described in the closing lines of this section: "...yet you did not turn to Me..." Instead, we need to emulate the responses Samuel and Isaiah made to the call of the Lord:

"And the Lord called Samuel." And Samuel said: "Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears." (*I Samuel 3:9*)

"...I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us? Then I said, Here am I! Send me." (*Isaiah 6:8*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Haggai 2:15-17.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Are we able to return in our minds to a state where we are close to the Lord, a time before "stone was laid upon stone in the temple of the Lord"? What can we use as an example of this state? How about the innocence of our remains? We have nothing to do with them. Remains are saved and stored by the Lord in places known only to the Lord. Think about inviting or asking the Lord to use these remains in your life. How would you do that? In a way, He places our remains one on top of another. The Lord clears the foundation for their placement. Our positive nature, our positive prayer carries us to our Beginnings, our innocent states, because that is where the Lord is.

2. How well can you identify examples of blight, mildew, and hail in daily life? What are some good techniques for identifying them?
3. The blame game is a favorite tactic of hell. This tactic encourages a person to believe that it is the fault of parents, friends, or the church that he or she is so unprepared to build the spiritual temple. The Lord is a hard taskmaster, say the hellish spirits. He expects too much from us. To what degree do we participate in this exercise of futility? How can we escape it?
4. Could you understand the meaning of the "heap of ephahs" and the "fifty baths"? We used derived doctrine to search for their meaning. Discussion time used to talk their meaning over will be time well spent. Write out some of the applications you found.
5. Negativity is a pit-fall we all have to overcome. A preoccupation with negativity will close our ears to the Lord's call. The Samuel and Isaiah response is so positive and refreshing. Don't we really wish we could answer the same way to the Lord's call? Although we don't here His voice as directly as Samuel and Isaiah did, the Lord calls us. How? How can we hear and answer?
6. Are we as a church still struggling with "stones" that we have shaped and put in a certain order? Do we ever lean toward "hatching" concepts? This is a tough question. By discussing it we run the risk of entering negativism. Try to avoid that. Instead, talk about ways to increase the church's desire to bring about good changes based on doctrine.

HAGGAI 2:18-19

"Consider now from this day forward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid-consider it: Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded fruit. But from this day I will bless you."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...although there are truths in abundance in the Word."

AE 403 [9]

- "In Haggai 2: 18, 19 ... these words in the spiritual sense mean that there are goods and truths yet remaining; all goods and truths from the first to last are meant by 'the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive-tree,' 'the vine' meaning spiritual good and truth; 'the fig-tree' natural good and truth; 'the pomegranate' in general that which belongs to knowing and perceiving, and in particular, the knowledges and perceptions of good and truth; and 'the olive-tree' the perception of celestial good and truth; 'the barn' signifies

where all these are, - either the church or the man in whom the church is, or the mind of man which is the subject."

AC 9552

- "...[that] 'pomegranates,' signify 'the memory-knowledges of good' ...is evident from ...passages where these are mentioned... [Haggai 2:19 is cited] ... 'wheat, barley, and the seed in the barn' signify celestial things internal and external; 'the vine, the fig tree, and the pomegranate' signify spiritual and natural things in their order, the last of which are the memory-knowledges that belong to the natural and sensuous man; wherefore 'the pomegranate' is mentioned last."

Derived Doctrine

"Consider now from this day forward...."

- We have covered this phrase before, but let's review it in general. It is a call to consider and reflect on your present state and then to look forward to the eternal goal of life and work toward spiritual uses.

"...the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month..."

- *AE 253 [6]* teaches that "twelve" signifies all. *AC 577* teaches that it is predicated of truths, "...likewise 'twenty-four' because that number is the double of the number twelve..."
- Days signify the successive states of regeneration. (*AC 6*)
- Nine signifies all things conjoined into one complex, goods and truths, or evils and falsities. (*AE 401 [15]*)
- Months signify a state of life as to truth. (*AR 925*)

"...from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid – consider it..."

- A foundation, or base, signifies full support by truth, or by means of the Word. (*AC 9643*)
- The Lord's temple signifies His Divine Human, which cannot be destroyed, for when it seems to be destroyed, it rises again, glorified. (*AC 7847 [4]; 10406 [4]; AE 220.*)
- "Consider it" is used twice in this passage. Does it make sense that the Lord uses this phrase twice to speak to the will and understanding because these two complete each other?

"Is the seed still in the barn?"

- A barn signifies the church or the individual of the church where good and truth are. (AE 403 [9])
- "Seed" signifies charity, and by "seed" angels understand charity, which is the essential of the faith of a church. (AC 1025 [3])
- The Lord's question here is whether there is charity left in the good and truth of the church. The Lord knows the answer. He asks the question so the church can think about the answer. Are the essentials of charity still present within the church?

"As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded fruit."

- The vine represents spiritual good and truth.
- The fig tree represents natural good and truth.
- The pomegranate represents that which belongs to knowing and perceiving.
- The olive tree represents the perception of celestial good and truth. (AE 403 [9])
- These plants and trees "have not yielded fruit." Why? Could this fruitlessness be related to the blight, the mildew, or the hail? Spiritually, the seeds were in the barn, ready to be planted. There is an abundance of fruit in the Word. The problem lay within the church, which was in spiritual disarray. Neglect, inattentiveness, and coldness of heart kept the fruit from appearing on each of the trees.

"But from this day I will bless you."

- "The Lord's 'blessing' [them]...in the Word signifies fructification and multiplication because they proceed from [the Word]." (AC 43)
- "But" in this state of barrenness, the Lord, as always, comes to the rescue when humanity reaches its last limit and is about to perish. It is the Lord's way. He wants to be sure we know that our fruitfulness or multiplication is not the result of our own prudence and efforts.

Putting It All Together

1. P&P points to the great abundance (of seed) within the (barn) Word. What happened to the church that would have caused its people to forget or not see these things? Was it the long captivity in Babylon? Did their faith get mixed with paganism? Was the barrenness of the trees due to doubts that arose when God allowed them to be humiliated before all nations? Whatever symptom we point to, we need to look for what really caused the problem. The prophecy of Haggai begins by pointing to the following causes: their belief that the Messiah would come to exalt them to glory; their

unwillingness to be taught by the Word; their reliance on themselves instead of on the Lord; their belief that their own needs were more important than the Lord's needs.

2. In spite of all the church's mistakes, the Lord's providence worked toward the promised rescue. He called on the remnant to come together to restore the beauty and dignity of worship. He blessed them with fruit on the trees of good and truth. He revitalized the temple – the barn – the seed – the trees – and the foundation of all good and truth. The message of good triumphing over evil is sounded once again to the people of the church. "Consider now – consider it" is announced throughout the church for those who are willing to hear and who are willing to be part of this exciting rebuilding project.

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Haggai 2:18-19.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. Many of the questions for this section were asked in the section above. Review the summary and answer them.
2. The one question not mentioned above is this: The Minor Prophets herald the restoration of the church over and over again. Why? For the sake of the Lord's first advent or the Lord's second advent? Or is this theme there to calm us? Is it given to urge us to hold on in the face of the doubts hell places in our minds about the future of the New Church organization?

HAGGAI 2:20-22

"And again the word of the Lord came to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying, 'speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying: 'I will shake heaven and earth, I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms; I will destroy the strength of the Gentile kingdoms. I will overthrow the chariots and those who ride in them; the horses and their riders shall come down. Every one by the sword of his brother.'"

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "All things of the former church will be destroyed."

AC 5321 [11]

- "As most of the expressions in the Word have an opposite sense, so have 'chariots,' and in this sense they signify doctrinal things of evil and falsity, and also the memory-knowledges that confirm them, as in these passages...." Haggai 2:22 is cited.

AR 298

- "That 'a horse' signifies the understanding of the Word.... A 'chariot' signifies doctrine from the Word, and a 'horseman,' one who is wise by means of it.... 'horses' in the opposite sense... signify the understanding of the Word and of truth falsified by reasonings, and like wise destroyed; as also one's own intelligence..." Haggai 2:22 is one of the verses cited.

AR 437

- "...'chariots' signify doctrinals... 'horses' signify the understanding of the Word; and 'many horses,' what is plenary...that 'a chariot' signifies doctrine, is plain from these passages...." Haggai 2:22 is one of the many cited.

AR 694

- "...'a throne' is mentioned in relation to the government of evil and falsity..." Haggai 2:22 is cited among other references.

AE 253 [7]

- "As 'throne,' in reference to the Lord, signifies heaven in respect to all Divine truth, so in a contrary sense it signifies hell in respect to all falsity." Haggai 2:22 is cited.

AE 355 [22]

- "In Haggai 2:22 [it] is said of the destruction of falsity and evil, and not of the destruction of any nation or kingdom; for 'nations' signify evils, and 'kingdoms' (like 'peoples') falsities. For this is prophetical, not historical. This makes clear what 'horse' and 'rider,' and 'chariot and him that rideth in it' signify, namely, that 'horse and rider' signify a perverted intellect and reasoning therefrom and 'the chariot and him that rideth in it' the doctrine of falsity or heresy, and those who are in it."

AE 988 [4]

- "...a man may be induced to believe mere absurdities and falsities, provided they are set up as dogmas by those placed in authority and are confirmed by others who for various reasons prefer to live in blind obedience? For instance, that ... nature is everything; ... that there is little difference between man and beast, that they die ... and do not live after death; that the Word is not holy.... 'Thrones' signify false doctrinals in other passages in the Word, as in Haggai 2: 22."

Appendix 1 to the Treatise on the White Horse

- "That 'a horse' should signify the understanding of truth, and, in the opposite sense reasonings, which appear as if they were the result of understanding, in confirmation of falsity, must needs appear strange at this day; I will therefore bring together still more passages from the Word, where the horse is mentioned. Thus in the following..." Haggai 2:22 is cited among others.

Derived Doctrine

"And again the word of the Lord came to Haggai..."

- This sentence seems like a reminder that the things about to be spoken by Haggai are not from a finite mind but are from the Mind of Infinity. These things are from the Lord and not some clerical council.
- Haggai's name means "festive" so it seems to indicate a joyous message is about to be given.

"...on the twenty-fourth day of the month ..."

- Twenty-four signifies "all things and [is] predicated of truths." (AE 253 [6])
- Day signifies the state of all things. (AC 23)
- Month signifies the beginning of a new state. (AC 3814)

"Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah..."

- Remember that the name Zerubbabel means "born in Babylon" or "seed of Babylon." If a new beginning, a new state, is to come to fruition, the Lord must speak to the "seed" of Babylon, and the "seed" of Babylon must be directed by the Lord.
- Governors signify generals in which and under which are particulars. (AC 5290)
- Judah represents doctrine from the Word that relates to the love of the Lord.(AR 350 and AC 3880–3881)
- Do we see the reordering of the church and its ruling principles?

"I will shake heaven and earth..."

- To "shake" represents to divest oneself of unclean things. (*AC 1748*)
- To shake (out) dust signifies to get rid of what is damned lest it adhere. (*AE 365 [8]*)
- To shake heaven has many levels of meaning: the internal man (*AC 16*); the angels who constitute heaven (*AC 9987*); the spiritual and celestial things of the Lord's kingdom both in the heavens and on earth. (*AC 2162 [8]*)
- This statement seems to refer to the reordering of the heavens and the earth.

"I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms..."

- In the Passages from the Writings section, we had a direct teaching about the "absurdities and falsities" that authority and blind obedience induced on the minds of the people. Those absurdities and falsities, and not physical kingdoms, are the "thrones" that will be overthrown by the Lord. (*AE 988 [4]*)
- To overthrow signifies to utterly remove evils and falsities. (*AC 9320*)

"I will destroy the strength of the Gentile kingdoms..."

- The words "destroy" and "Lord" don't fit well together until one refocuses on His work to remove evil, falsity, and hell from His church and His children. As evil and falsity flee from His presence, they cry out "we are being destroyed." Because the Lord "IS" and hell "is not," it can't exist in His presence. His presence cleanses, vivifies, enlightens, and lifts His people out of the caves of ignorance and squalor.
- With the Gentiles, there is a subtle difference. Their worship has ignorance within it. They represent a variety of forms of worship. Within their worship, a "mutual" charity exists, but at the heart of their worship is "indiscriminate" charity. The Gentile state is quite appealing and strong in appearance. In the eyes of the Lord, that which is invisible must become visible. Mutual good is only as useful as is its view of the Divine Human.

"I will overthrow the chariots and those who ride in them..."

- To overthrow means to "utterly" remove evils and falsities. (*AC 9320*)
- Chariots represent doctrinals. (See Passages from the Writings for teachings). But what kind of doctrinals? Our text clearly lets us know that this refers to human doctrines, not doctrines from the Lord.
- Those who ride on them will be thrown off. This too indicates that the rider has been directing doctrine and not the Lord. That kind of rider must be removed.

"...the horses and their riders shall come down..."

- Riders signify those who are subject to fallacies that will lead them to recede from the ways of the Lord. (*AC 6401*)
- Horses signify the understanding of the Word. (*AR 437*)
- Doesn't it make sense that these things must come down so the Lord's Church can flourish?

"Every one by the sword of his brother."

- In order to focus on the meaning of these words, we must turn to *P&P* for direction with the derived doctrine. *P&P* states that: "All things of the church will be destroyed."
- A sword signifies a person's insane persuasions by which he or she wishes, or tries, to enter the mysteries of faith. But such a person will fail and will therefore be borne away by corporeal and earthly things. (*AC 309*)
- A sword signifies divine truths in the externals that were turned this way or that way to please the natural person. (*Doctrine of Sacred Scriptures 97*)
- A sword signifies vastations. (*AC 1460 [2]*)
- A sword in the positive sense signifies divine truth combating from divine good. (*AC 288-9*)
- A brother signifies the union of charity and faith. (*AC 367*)
- When Cain slew Abel, this signified that a "separated faith" extinguishes its brother "charity." (*AC 366*)
- A brother delivering a brother to death signifies that falsity shall destroy good. (*AE 315 [21]*)

Putting It All Together

1. The newness of the Lord's Church cannot be built with old materials. The old church was the creation of councils, tradition, man-made rules, turning truth this way and that way to please the external man. In the process, the brother faith tried to rule over charity. True order is for charity to lead and guide faith. *AC 365* has a wonderful explanation of this truth.
2. For many years (we have no idea how long), falsity lived in the minds of people, and they carried it with them into the world of spirits. This falsity began to trouble the heavens. The Lord needed to "shake" heaven and earth. He had to "utterly" shake, remove, cleanse, and vivify the church. The absurdities and falsities of the church wanted to block the light of heaven. *P&P*'s statement that "All things of the former church will be destroyed" makes sense when we think about the Lord's work to rebuild His Temple: He announces that there will be a new foundation, new materials, new light, and a new charity leading the faith, a brotherhood that conjoins and protects all of the members within the family of the New Jerusalem.

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Haggai 2:20-22.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. Change and improvement are not always easy. When we get comfortable with a life style and the Lord comes along and asks us to change, it's tough to overcome the old way. It feels like the life within us is being "killed" or destroyed. Have you found a way to give in to the Lord's "remodeling plans" for your spiritual life?
2. The shaking process is described as a method to keep evil and falsity from adhering to us. Looking back over your life, can you recall some "shaking" experiences that hurt at the time but significantly helped and shaped your life?
3. As a New Christian Church organization, we have different doctrinal ideas and customs than the former Christian church. But there are some "old" materials that try to push their way into the spiritual life of the church. Can you name some of them? Begin by thinking of the following "old" ideas. "Sermons and doctrinal classes need to dwell more on "happier" topics." "Sin, evil, and regeneration are depressing and upsetting themes." "We are losing our young people. We are driving them out of the church with our coldness and rigidity." "I come to church to feel better about myself." What are some other "old" ideas?
4. In my mind, I keep hearing the theme of Haggai: "Consider now" ... "Consider your ways" "Consider from the day that the Lord's foundation was laid" urges us to think about what the Lord wants for us. My impression is that we run away from this kind of reflection. How do you see it?

HAGGAI 2:23

"In that day,' says the Lord of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant, the son of Shealtiel,' says the Lord, 'and will make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you,' says the Lord of hosts."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "The church will be among others."

Derived Doctrine

"In that day..." signifies in that "state."

- What state? A state of having the dust of falsity shaken off of us? A state of being called to consider the reality of the Lord? A state of being vastated (emptied out)? A state of recognizing that we need to respond to the new building process?

"I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant..."

- The likely answer to our questions about the state this "day" represents may be found in the next phrase: "I will take you..."
- Again, Zerubbabel's name means "born in Babylon" or "seed of Babylon."
- The great spiritual reclamation project, the spiritual ecological work, begins for the uplifting of the New Church.
- "My servant" carries a powerful message. A servant signifies the external serving the internal person. (*AC 1468*)
- Servant also signifies the external obeying the rational (*AC 1713*) and good appearing to be in supremacy. (*AC 3601*)
- There are other representations for the word "servant," but these few should help us as we consider the inner meaning of servant.

"[I] will make you like a signet ring..."

- The word "signet" also means "sign or token."
- A signet represents a token of consent, confirmation, and testification. (*AC 4874*)
- A ring signifies a conjunction or holding of things together. (*AC 9657*)
- The ring given to the prodigal son by his father represented or signified the confirmation of the power given to the son in the household. (*AC 5317*)
- "I will make you a signet ring..." carries with it the message of the special qualities and design of the ring. **The Lord makes the signet ring.** This one is not made by us, and I picture it as unique and special for each child of the Lord's New Church.

"...says the Lord of hosts."

- *AC 2* reminds us that the Word of the Lord must "contain within it such things as belong to heaven, to the church, and to religious belief, and that unless it did so it could not be called the Lord's Word, nor could it be said to have any life in it."

Putting It All Together

1. The closing summation of this passage has within it a preamble to the greatest "Covenant" made by the Lord. The covenant has nothing to do with the historical rebuilding of Israel's temple. Instead, it is a covenant that will have an effect to eternity. Like the many announcements in the Old Testament of the Lord's first advent, the books of the prophets are reminders of the greatest promise made in Revelation. There will be a crown of all churches, and it shall live forever and ever. This prophecy uses the symbol of a signet ring. What could the ring represent?
2. The ring, more specifically a signet ring, is given as a confirmation and testification that the Holy City New Jerusalem will arise out of the rubble of all of the former churches. When it comes about, all will be welcomed into its city. Haggai's prophecy emphasizes the inclusiveness of this church. No tribe or nation has exclusive rights to it. This church has the salvation of all of the Lord's people at heart. The Word of the Lord is not for a specific race or time. So the wording of the *P&P* explanation of this last verse is quite significant when we reflect on the mission of the New Jerusalem. "The church will be among others." Such a message runs counter to the evangelical teachings held by many in the Christian world. Quoting the literal sense of the Word, they announce that only those who are "born again" will enter through the gates of salvation.

What view do you have on this important issue?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Haggai 2:23.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. The Lord uses the "seed of Babylon" as a beginning point. He calls on the governor. He uses a man named Haggai – the festive – to do the work of restoration. Wouldn't it have been faster if He had sent Haggai first to a person who had a cleaner slate? Couldn't there have been some mighty warrior raised up? Can you pull together the spiritual how and why of the Lord's ways of restoring the temple?
2. Have you ever wondered why you were born into the New Church and not some other faith? If you converted to the New Church, have you ever looked back to see the trail of events that led you to that choice? Do you have a feeling of being called to be part of the building up of the New Church?
3. The signet ring is a wonderful symbol. I can't recall seeing it used in any pictures or stained glass windows. Do you think it would be useful to make it

a part of the story we tell others about mission of the New Church? If you like to draw, think about designing a picture of this ring.

4. Have you discussed the inclusiveness of the New Church concepts with a fundamentalist Christian? If you did, were you able to hold your own when he or she quoted passages from Paul and the literal sense of the Word? How do the teachings about inclusiveness apply to your daily life? How might you find them informing your perspective on various issues?
5. How much of a difference have you noted between the spiritual sense and the historical sense of Haggai? How does the literal story seem to highlight or cloak the spiritual sense?
6. It is hoped that from this study you now feel a deeper affinity with this book of prophecy called Haggai. Do you?

Epilogue: A Summary of the Book of Haggai

CHAPTER ONE

When the Lord makes His advent, what is His purpose for coming into the hearts and minds of people? Is it to exalt a race, a tribe, a church, or a religious denomination?

To turn His Advent into personal grandiosity is to make a serious spiritual mistake. The people within the church did this, and the results were devastating. They lost the Word. They lost sight of its meaning, and they could not be taught by the Word.

The literal sense describes their disorder, saying they were a church that sowed much but brought in little. It was a church that ate but didn't have enough to satisfy its needs. They drank but didn't have their thirst assuaged. They had clothing that gave no warmth. They earned wages but lost the wages because their money pouches had holes in them.

Instead of focusing on the mirror truths of the Lord, they focused on the distorted mirror of narcissism. In that mirror of self-love, they worshipped themselves and could not see love of the Lord and the neighbor. Love of self and love of the world became ruling principles. Disorder has its effects. Look at the history of the children of Israel. Israel's national security was always under some threat by the nations around her. They suffered through assault after assault.

The spiritual sense explains how the sacking and captivity of Israel related to their weak spiritual state. Such things happen in the external to reflect the condition of the internal. After they were released from Babylonian captivity, the Israelites put off seeking things that would help them achieve their spiritual freedom. They fixed up and paneled the walls of their house before caring for the Lord's house. They did not do "first things first." They delayed following the order of heaven. So the prophet Haggai called them to "consider" their ways. Ignoring the Lord while caring for self deprives the soul of its heavenly sustenance; this was the message the Lord spoke through His prophet Haggai.

CHAPTER TWO

The Lord reminded His people that the church, when first instituted, was full of truths. The present church was empty and devastated. In spite of its present condition, the Lord told them He would purify the church. He told the church that He would come into the world to establish an internal foundation. The Lord shared His message this way: "An external without an internal is of no use..."

To illustrate the potential within the Word, the Lord asked whether any seed remained in the barn, a great thought-provoking question. Then He announced to the Israelites that in spite of the blight (the blast), the mildew, and the hail, good would come from such spiritual tremors. The clinging falsities that had adhered to the church would be loosened and shaken off. The Lord promised to expose their falsification of the Word. The twisting and turning of the meaning of the Word would be thrown off. The former falsity of the horse and its rider would be thrown off, checked, and destroyed.

The Lord's New Church is for everyone. Those who love truth for truth's sake, those who love the Lord and the neighbor, and those who want the Lord to lead them will be like a signet ring. There will be a spontaneous consent from those in the church to be led. There will be a conjunction and healing within the heart. Externals and internals will wed, and the ring of commitment, or the conjugal principle, will be blessed and enriched.

A beautiful ring will be part of the covenant. The ring's beauty is special because the design, and the choice of materials, will reflect the truths of the Lord. He, and no one else, makes the ring.

The Lord's trees, the vine, the fig, the pomegranate, and the olive tree, would once again bear fruit. The blight, the mildew, the hail, and the drought ended. The blossoms and fruit on the trees reminded the exiles of the presence of the Lord and the potential of the reconstruction of the temple. Our study helps remind us that the spiritual fulfillment of the descent of the Holy City the New Jerusalem has happened and the effects of the Lord's Covenant are beginning to reach out throughout the world. A spiritual healing is underway. How can we be sure of this? Recall, the Lord's comforting words in the book of Revelation:

"In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was a tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." *Revelation 22:2*

The Book of Joel

How To Use This Study Guide

1. A careful, unhurried reading of Joel is essential. Reading the chapter before looking at the notes, while working with the notes, and after finishing with the notes will give each researcher a powerful sense of the series of meanings within each chapter. It is important to be comfortable with all the names and places in the prophecy and to understand the announcements the prophet makes on behalf of the Lord. When possible, historical information will be included in the notes to increase reading comprehension and enhance application.
2. Our study of each chapter of Joel will begin with quotes from a work of the Writings called Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms. This work includes a verse-by-verse overview of all three chapters of Joel that provides general information about the internal sense. Our research will help move us from the generals to the particulars of the internal sense.
3. Another important reference tool is Searle's General Index to Swedenborg's Scripture Quotations. This reference is used to find passages in the Writings where a verse(s) from the Word is either explained specifically or used to illustrate a doctrinal point that we can use in our study. There is also another use of this work. As we study, each researcher will be led by the Lord's Providence in myriad ways, according to specific needs or states. Knowing how to use this book will help each of us to explore relevant topics and look up related passages to increase our knowledge of the three-fold Word.
4. You will soon discover that not every verse, word, name, etc. is directly quoted in the Writings. But there are often other references to the same name, place, or thing in the explanation of a different verse of the Word. The hope is that reflection on these other doctrinal explanations will help us see possible applications to our study of Joel. We will need to use "derived doctrine" often. Please don't run away from this maligned term. If we use it properly and admit openly that it is derived doctrine, we bring no harm to the internal sense.
5. Keep some kind of notebook handy during your study times. Write out insights, questions, and any summaries you find helpful in organizing your thoughts about each chapter. The goal of this study guide is not to give a detailed summary of the internal sense but to start each researcher's quest for deeper insight.
6. At the end of each chapter in the study guide, you will find a study review. The review includes a summary of each section to help you reinforce and build on your understanding of several of the key points.
7. Begin each study unit with a devotional prayer asking the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts. Certainly, beginning in this sphere has the power to inspire and open our minds with a higher spiritual priority that will keep us in the company of the Lord's angels. As the Writings teach, we must seek to love truth for truth's sake. Such an approach will free each reader from

preconceived ideas that might limit his or her ability to "see" the intent and message of the Lord's Word.

Introduction

As we prepare to take up the study of *Joel*, let's pause for a moment and learn what we can about the historical prophet Joel. The six questions listed below will guide our quest for information.

1. What do we know about Joel?
2. Can we put Joel in a timeline with the other prophets?
3. Is Joel mentioned, or quoted, in any other books of the Word?
4. Are we familiar with any of the passages from *Joel*?
5. What are the major themes of Joel's prophecy?
6. And lastly, what specific lesson or lessons in Joel's prophecy are useful for the New Church?

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT JOEL?

Joel 1:1 reveals almost everything we know about this prophet. We know his name and the name of his father. Joel means "Yahweh is God." Some scholars note that the name Joel appears to be a combination of the two names of the Lord—Yahweh and Elohim.

Knowing the name of Joel's father, Pethuel, doesn't help us. Apparently, Pethuel was not a significant person in the history of Israel because there are no other references to him in the Word. We have no hint of what kind of life or work Joel did prior to his call from the Lord. Was he a priest? We don't know. Can we pinpoint where he lived in the land of Israel? Not really. Scholars assume that he lived in Jerusalem. Did the Lord call him from royal, priestly, or common stock? Was Joel, like Amos, a man who was not one of the "sons of the prophets"? There are no answers to these questions.

From a New Church perspective, it seems to be of the Lord's Providence that we don't know Joel's personal history. It helps to keep us from focusing on the person to the detriment of our study of spiritual principles.

CAN WE PUT JOEL IN A TIMELINE WITH THE OTHER PROPHETS?

No! Scholars are undecided about the dates of Joel's birth and death, and about what king or kings reigned at the time of his prophetic calling. Among scholars, there is very little agreement on the years of Joel's prophecy:

- One theory proposes that he lived during King Jehoshaphat's reign: 872-848 BC.

- Another suggestion is that he lived during the period 792-740 BC.
- A third suggestion places him at 597-587 BC.
- And the last scholarly opinion has Joel living around 515-500 BC.

Why are these "guesses" so diverse? Joel's prophecy gives no historical clues. He mentions no king. We are left only with "the timeless message of the Lord."

Again, we do well to ask why the Lord would keep the dateline so unclear. Is it to keep our minds steady and focused on the spiritual sense and not on people, places, and time/space concepts? I think we would agree that this seems to be a good reason for a vague timeline. We shouldn't try to put the Word of the Lord in a finite context. We shouldn't worry if we can't make God conform to our spatial concepts. The Word is the Lord's, and it has been preserved so that it may be studied to eternity. Angels don't read names or dates. They behold the spiritual sense and draw on the illustrations (immediate influx) that come from the Lord. We need to remember to emulate this approach as a goal while reading the Word.

IS JOEL MENTIONED OR QUOTED IN ANY OF THE BOOKS OF THE WORD?

There are twelve references to a "Joel" listed in *Young's Bible Concordance*. Most of the twelve references to "Joel" occur in *First and Second Chronicles* and *Nehemiah* (11:9), which are not books of the Word. There is one reference to Joel in *Acts 2:16*. The only reference to a "Joel" in the Word occurs in *I Samuel 8:2*.

Here is a list of the places a "Joel" is mentioned in the Old Testament:

1. The eldest son of Samuel was named Joel (*I Samuel 8:2*). This son of Samuel is also mentioned in *I Chronicles* 6:28, 33, and 15:17.
2. *I Chronicles* 6:36 mentions a Levite priest named Joel.
3. *I Chronicles* 4:35 identifies a chieftain of the tribe of Simeon named Joel.
4. An early leader in the tribe of Reuben was named Joel (*I Chronicles* 5:4, 8).
5. A chieftain of the tribe of Gad was named Joel (*I Chronicles* 5:12).
6. A chieftain of the tribe of Issachar was named Joel (*I Chronicles* 7:3).
7. Joel, the brother of Nathan, was a tough hero in David's army (*I Chronicles* 11:38).
8. A Levite of the Gershon tribe was named Joel (*I Chronicles* 15:7, 11).
9. A Levite, the son of Ladan, was named Joel (*I Chronicles* 23:8 and 26:22).
10. A Levite, the son of Azariah, was named Joel (*II Chronicles* 29:12).
11. There was a son of Pedaiah, who ruled over half of the tribe of Manasseh, named Joel (*I Chronicles* 27:20).
12. A son of Zichri, of the tribe of Benjamin, was named Joel (*Nehemiah* 11:9).

Acts 2:16 quotes Joel 2:28-32.

ARE WE FAMILIAR WITH ANY OF THE PASSAGES FROM JOEL?

You will probably recognize more passages than you would imagine. I have listed here what I think are the major ones you have heard most often in our church services:

1. **Joel 2:12-13:** "Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and mourning. So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness..."
2. **Joel 2:28:** "I will pour out My spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions..."
3. **Joel 2:31:** "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood..."
4. **Joel 3:10:** "Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears..."

This fourth passage in *Joel* is the opposite of *Isaiah 2:4* and *Micah 4:3*: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks..."

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR THEMES OF JOEL'S PROPHECY?

1. The sensual person has destroyed the church.
2. The Word has been scattered and stripped of its spiritual dignity.
3. The Word has been falsified.
4. Spiritual insanity reigns among the people of the dying church.
5. The day of the Lord is coming.
6. The day of judgment is coming, and there will be a great battle.
7. The Lord calls for repentance.
8. Sincere repentance will save the people (remnant).
9. The Lord will establish a new church.
10. The Lord offers acquittal to those who turn from their wrongful ways.
11. The people should be aware and respond; the Day of the Lord is here.
12. There will be a new illustration of the Word. People will see how the Word applies to their lives.
13. When this comes to pass, the church **will be the Lord's** and the church **will be from the Word.**

AND LASTLY, WHAT SPECIFIC LESSON OR LESSONS IN JOEL'S PROPHECY ARE USEFUL FOR THE NEW CHURCH?

All too often, we worry about the slow growth of the New Church. Why isn't the General Church membership in the thousands or millions? Why are other faith

groups doing so much better? Is the spread of the Lord's New Church on earth ever going to happen?

This nagging worry distresses us with a vague feeling that maybe we are "hitching our spiritual wagon" to a dying cause. The teaching of *Joel* is a pep talk. It contains a message of hope. The Lord is going to establish the church. He will win the spiritual war that is going to be waged. The New Church will be His, and His Word will catch hold of the world. But, there must be a consummation of the falsity that is still in our world. The sensual side of humanity is still very much alive. The sensual is impatient with the Lord. Looking beyond the moment is not an interest of the sensual person. The emphasis on faith alone or knowledge alone is an enemy of the conjugal principles of the Lord's Church. These things temporarily disperse the ideas of the Lord. The locust attack mentioned in *Joel* depicts wave after wave of sensual philosophical and scientific arguments against the church. It appears that they have stripped the church and the doctrines of the Lord barren.

In *Joel*'s prophecy, we hear this message: "Stay alert! Respond, for the Day of the Lord is at hand. Don't lose sight of the end. The New Church is the Lord's, and His Word will be the core of the Church."

Will it happen? Will the battle bring victory to the Church? The prophecy of *Joel* preaches a positive end. It will come, and the Lord will gather His "remnant" together to start a church that will be the crown of all churches for ever and ever.

These things will come about because of the Lord, not the efforts of any group of people. So we need to be watchful and listen for the spiritual trumpet of the Lord. Hell and its menacing legions will not overcome the Lord. The Church will win, not because of our strength but because of the Lord's strength.

Joel 3:10 has a teaching worth remembering and saying to ourselves often:

"Let the weak say, 'I am strong.'"

I hope you read *Joel* with this sense of victory and strength in "the Day of the Lord."

Chapter One

JOEL 1:1-3

"The word of the Lord that came to Joel the son of Pethuel. Hear this, you elders, and give ear, all you inhabitants of the land! Has anything like this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? Tell your children about it, let your children tell their children, and their children another generation."

Passages From The Writings

Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms (P&P)

- "To all who are of the church."

Derived Doctrine

"The word of the Lord..."

- *Arcana Coelestia (AC) 2* explains the nature of the Lord's Word. "...of necessity [the Word must] contain within it such things as belong to heaven, to the church, and to religious belief...unless it did so it could not be called the Lord's Word, nor could it be said to have any life in it" (emphasis added).
- *AC 129* teaches us, "the true order is for man to be wise from the Lord, that is, from His Word, and then all things follow, and he is enlightened even in matters of reason and of memory–knowledges..."

"...that came to Joel the son of Pethuel."

- "Coming" or "came" signifies communication by influx (*AC 5249*). What kind of influx is meant here? Was it "mediate" or "immediate"? The passage identifies the Word of the Lord coming to Joel; thus, it seems sensible to decide this refers to immediate influx because **that which comes directly from the Lord** involves **immediate influx**. Mediate influx, on the other hand, refers to that which comes through angels or some other indirect means.
- We have not a single teaching about the meaning or correspondence of "Pethuel." A New Church minister, the Rev. James Hyde, wrote: "The name Pethuel is derived from "pathu", which means 'induced,' ...To induce signifies, in a bad sense, to entice, or beget a deceptive infatuation." (*An Exposition of the Prophecy of Joel, pages 47-48.*)
- Joel's name means "Jehovah is God." Looking at the meanings of these two names (Joel and "pathu") in a positive light, could they signify that the Lord

wanted to positively induce and entice the people to have a true "infatuation" with His Word?

- A "son" signifies a general truth (*AC* 3496). Sons signify those not born within the church, or nations who are remote from goods and truths and who have not been inculcated with the goods and truths of faith; sons also signify those who are in external worship (*Apocalypse Explained [AE]* 1133 [3]).

"Hear this, you elders, and give ear, all you inhabitants of the land!"

- To "hear" means to be in a state of obedience (*AC* 2691). Hearing signifies that one who understands should obey what the Word teaches. Hearing means to both perceive and obey. See *Apocalypse Revealed (AR)* 87 and *AE* 588.
- "Elders" signify those who are wise and in a wisdom that agrees with good(*AC* 5608 [7] and *AC* 6524).
- To "give ear" signifies that one who understands should obey what the Word teaches so that he or she might be made ready to be of the New Church, which is the New Jerusalem (*AR* 87).
- "Inhabitants of the world" signify people of the church who are in the goods of doctrine, and so of life (*AE* 741 [6]). "Land" signifies the region where the church is—where the faith of the church resides (*AC* 2571).

"Has anything like this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?"

- Questions are asked by the Lord to help us to seek either knowledge or confirmation (*AC* 1913 and *AC* 2693).
- The people of Judah experienced a devastating drought and a locust plague that stripped the land of its vegetation. The question asks the reader to reflect. Was this event simply "bad luck"? Was this a natural misfortune, or was it a significant happening of divine (providential) proportions?
- "Your days" signify a kind of review or assessment of the successive states of regeneration (*AC* 6). "Days" and "years," in the Word, signify the states of life(Heaven and Hell [*HH*] 155).
- What about the "days of your fathers"? Could this question be a mandate to Judah to review the inherited tendencies toward evil they received from the present and prior churches? Could it be that the Lord wanted them to think about the inherited tendencies toward **evil** they had passed on? The question could also suggest that they should review the inherited tendencies toward **good** they received from the churches of their fathers. Both are important points to reflect on when considering the Lord's providential leading.

"Tell your children about it, let your children tell their children, and their children another generation."

- *AC 2862* explains that "telling" signifies to indicate, to come to know, to inform, or to be informed. Reflection is also an internal telling.
- "Children" signify bringing forth things that belong to one's spiritual life (*AR 534*). Offspring have birth from the marriage of the Lord with His church. Children are the offspring of goods and truths (*Conjugial Love [CL] 121*).
- A "generation" signifies those who are perpetually being created anew (*AC 1041*).
- Does this teaching about perpetually being created anew seem to apply to the meaning and process of children telling children?

Putting It All Together

To begin putting all of these ideas together, it is important that we look at the contrast within two passages relating to the three verses of *Joel* we are studying. First, let's look at the quote from *P&P* that proclaims that this is a message:

- "To all who are in the church."

Secondly, let's look at the question *Joel* asks:

- "Has anything like this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?"

P&P directs the reader's attention to the inclusiveness of the Lord's message: "**To all who are in the church.**" The Lord's reaching out to all shouldn't be missed. The Divine cares about all in the church. The Lord invites all to listen to His Word. *Joel's* name means "Jehovah is God"; therefore, all need to have the ears of obedience for the things of the Lord. The Lord calls all to His Word because it contains and offers things that belong to **heaven**. His Word offers things that are essential for **the church**. The Word is vital for our system of **religious beliefs**. Seeking the Lord through the Word opens the way for the powerful sphere of immediate influx. The Lord will give "obedient ears" the vital, intuitive insights needed to thrive spiritually. Within the heart of every believer, there has to be some inducement, enticement, and infatuation (love) for the Word. *Joel*, "Jehovah is God," calls for the "elders," or the wisdom of the mind, to teach and improve the understanding within the church so the people can respond obediently. The elders represent the degree of wisdom that readies a willing worshipper to become a member of the New Church—the New Jerusalem.

Choosing the Lord's way will open to us a life that is peaceful, productive, and happy. Casting the Lord off invites and prepares the way for unbelievable spiritual disasters, the magnitude of which has never been seen before, nor can they be

described. Hence we have the catastrophic story and frightening events alluded to in the second quote: "**Has anything like this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?**" What natural and spiritual events did Joel point to? Joel describes four kinds of locust, one after another, swarming and entering the land to consume all the vegetation therein. In effect, Joel asks: Can you believe the travesty of this experience? Tell this story so as to warn the generations of children to come. It is a story of vital importance. "**HEAR**" is the first command following Joel's lineage. Hearing requires a willingness to obey.

The full extent of this locust message is covered in our next section.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 1:1-3*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Did you notice how much we needed derived doctrine to help give us a larger glimpse of the spiritual sense of the first three verses? What did you think of this?
2. Are you clear on the point of the two contrasting passages? Obedience means giving ear to the Lord and His Word. Ignoring the Lord and His Word brings about spiritual calamities of unbelievable proportions. Can you think of any personal examples of these life states?
3. Can you describe the difference between immediate influx and mediate influx?
4. What did you think about the point of Joel's father's name being a derivative of a word meaning inducement, enticement, and infatuation? Can you see the possibilities of these inherited tendencies, if they are tendencies toward good, being a part of the Lord's working through Joel?
5. How well do we do our job of telling the generations of our children about the effects of our choices? Is it enough to count on our New Church school system to do it for us?
6. Think of the song, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do and hear." Ever wonder why the doing occurs before the hearing? What are your thoughts about this?
7. The word "elders" can have a wide range of meaning. Elders signify truths of wisdom learned. They can be the remains built up and protected by the Lord. The elders are caregivers for the preparation and building of the New Church. Do we listen to them often enough? What can they offer us?
8. New ideas are great. Our scientific achievements have given us longevity and greater freedom. Have we brought new ideas into our hearts and mind to augment or complement the elders?

JOEL 1:4

"What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten; what the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten; and what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Falsity from the sensual man and afterwards evil therefrom has consumed all things of the church."

AC 7643 [7]

- "In Joel...1:4..."locust' denotes falsity in the extremes vastating truths and goods."

AC 7643 [8]

- "...by 'locust' are signified reasonings from fallacies and the falsities thence derived, also confirmed by philosophical things. Thus also by the 'locust' are signified the falsities which are in the extremes with man, and which are more earthly and corporeal than all other falsities; and by which man may be easily deceived and seduced, for he apprehends what is obvious to the senses, and with difficulty what is opposed to the senses."

AC 9331 [5]

- In *Joel 1:4* "...falsities and evils in the extremes—that is, in the external sensuous of the man of the church—are signified by the various kinds of insects here mentioned...for the subject treated of is the perversion of the truth and good of the church."

AR 424

- "It is in consequence of falsities in the outermost parts consuming the truths and goods of the church, as they spring up in man, that they are signified by 'locusts,' which consume the grass and the herbs of the fields, as may be evident from these passages..." *Joel 1:4* is cited.

AE 543 [9]

- "The 'locust' and the 'caterpillar' have a similar signification in Joel 1:4...Evidently these noxious little animals signify falsities and evils devastating or consuming truths and goods with the man of the church..."

Derived Doctrine

"What the chewing locust left..."

- "Chewing" signifies taking knowledges from the memory and analyzing them(*Divine Providence [DP] 233 [8]*). Chewing the cud signifies thinking over things once learned and believed (*AC 5135 [2]*).
- *AR 794* teaches that "them that are left" represent those "who do not search after [truths] nor receive them, because they are in falsities..."

"...the swarming locust has eaten..."

- *AC 2122* describes the state of those who desire to become "the greatest." They think of nothing but what is filthy, obscene, and profane. They make nothing of and utterly despise all things that are of charity and faith. They do not acknowledge the Lord. They hate all who confess the Lord. These descriptions are followed by this statement: "At the present day such people flock [swarm] into the other life..."
- "Swarming" in the positive sense refers to goods, multiplying to truths (*AC 1014 and 1016*).
- To be "eaten" signifies to communicate, be conjoined, and to appropriate (*AC 2343*).
- In the negative sense, to "eat" signifies to live for self and the world and thus to appropriate evils and falsities (*AE 840 [5]*).

"What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten..."

- "Crawling" signifies pleasures from the senses. When such pleasures originate from the proprium and lusts, the senses become filthy (*AC 594*).
- That which crawls signifies things belonging to the sensuous part of a person, which, when separated from the spiritual part, become falsities from evils (*AE 556 [6]*).

"...and what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten."

- "...the consuming locust has eaten" has been translated in the *New English Bible* as "the consuming locust has put an end to." The *Revised Standard Version* translates "consuming locust" as "destroying locust." The *Jerusalem Bible* translates "consuming locust" as the "shearer" locust.

- *AC 10431* explains that "consuming" represents what happens to people when they turn away from the Lord. Such a turning away from the Lord is "consuming" in that people who turn away "perish in consequence of their evil."

NB: in the *King James Bible*, the four kinds of locust are called **the palmerworm, the locust, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar**. What representations are given in the Writings for these insects?

- *AE 403* explains that "palmerworms" signify falsity destroying good.
- *AE 573 [15]* speaks of these "noxious little animals, 'the locust, the canker-worm, the caterpillar, and the palmer-worm,' signifying falsities and evils that devastate or consume the truths and goods of the church..."
- Biblical scholars write about these four "noxious" insects as **the gnawers, the swarmers or multipliers, the lickers, and the consumers or devourers**.

Putting It All Together

P&P starts us on the path to understanding this verse. It is not a historical prophecy about four nations attacking Israel in the future. Instead, it is an eternal prophecy about what happens to a person whose heart and mind are focused wholly on the things of this world. The Writings call this kind of person the "Sensual Man." This sensual person doesn't think deeply about the Word. His or her life is occupied with values that have no extension into the spiritual world. The sensual person looks for ease, comfort, and immediate gratification, and, in reality, is angry with the Lord. The sensual person is not willing to look beyond the grave.

Following the Lord involves pursuing infinite and eternal goals. Human life involves the here and now (time and space). In the process of growing spiritually, we learn how to bring our time-and-space existence into harmony with the infinite and eternal things of the Lord.

What little spiritual knowledge is known by the sensual person is, at best, fragmented, chaotic, and vulnerable to myriad philosophic, scientific, and self-centered arguments. Without the inner sense of the Word, the heart of an individual, the church, is susceptible to devastating attacks from the "gnawers," the "swarmers," the "lickers," and the "consumers" that deprive the church of its "vegetables." Vegetables are not only beautiful and nourishing but represent the variety of celestial and spiritual things flowing from the Lord into our natural life. (See *AC 1632* for more on the meaning of vegetation.) Obviously, hell wants to consume such things to remove them from our minds.

Joel's prophecy helps us to mentally picture how myriad spiritual locusts may darken the Lord's sunlight. The beating of their wings is like a storm of sensual

controversy trying to confuse the minds of the Lord's people when they try to think of His truths. Imagine wave after wave of spiritual locusts feverishly and ravenously gorging themselves to the point of destroying a person's spiritual crop of hope. Such is the effect within the hearts of those who are disinterested in the Lord and His Word.

This is a story we need to hear so we can alertly fight off periods of spiritual lethargy. The plague of the heart and mind is a reality hell wants us to face. The Word gives us an admonition to speak to the generation of children and our children's children. We are to explain to them the devastating effects of the "sensual man." How do we warn them and ourselves about the unbelievable effects of the locust? How do we prudently tell this story to our children and their children? *AC 2862* reminds us that **reflection and perception** are to be the tools and means of unfolding the internal sense of the Word. We need to teach everyone ways to observe and shun the disorders of hell. What better way than through the prophecy of Joel and the stories of the Word? Let's close this summary by reading again the words of *AC 2862*: "...**reflection and perception is an internal telling and saying.**" One way we are to be useful is by sharing the Word of the Lord and facilitating good and useful discussion about "survival" techniques that will protect us against the marauding noxious pests of hell. How can we frame a discussion of life issues in the context of warning one another about the effects of the locust? **Doesn't this section do a good job describing the kinds of sensual damage that self-love out of control can have on our spiritual growth? "Has anything like this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?"**

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 1:4*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Can you see how those who are outside of the New Church might assume this is a prophecy about four nations attacking Israel?
2. Have you ever experienced or witnessed a swarming of ideas attacking something spiritual within you or someone else? What can you tell us about it?
3. Do you remember the purpose of the attack? To block out the sun; to devastate the vegetable kingdom, and to strip it of any vital life or fruit. What does this mean in practical terms?
4. Sensual people may have a clear self-image, but they often do not argue from fixed doctrine. Like the wind, they attack from one point and, if things are not progressing well on that front, they change direction. They see themselves as quite flexible or adaptable to theories or points of view. Sensual people

charge spiritual people with being fixed, staid, and out of touch with reality. Sensual people view themselves as vibrant and agile. To them, the spiritual person is weak, sickly, and guilt-ridden. Can you attest to sensing or hearing any of these charges in your life as you seek to grow spiritually? Do you know what the Lord answers to the sensual people regarding who is healthy and full of life?

5. I once heard a lecture wherein the speaker said that the toughest things in life are not the major problems that we face. Somehow, we seem to rise to the occasion and bravely survive. His point was that we suffer more under the daily little "pin-pricks" of life, the little gnawing, biting, distracting events we face all day long. These little pinpricks fray our nerves and put us out of sorts. These are the things that bring us to snap at people we love. Do the little things seem like the gathering of a swarming enemy? How are life's pinpricks like noxious insects chewing away at our patience and good nature?
6. We have asked ourselves this question often: How can we get serious about reading the Word? How can we put away our sensual side and develop our spiritual nature? Is this passage in *Joel* helpful? Does it paint a picture of unbelievable devastation to the "crops" within our mind? What crops are especially at risk?
7. What did you make of the four kinds of locust? What did the "gnawers," the "swarmers," the "lickers," and the "consumers" add to your mental picture of the hells and the "sensual man"?
8. The Lord gives us some strong images to think about. How do these rank among the many others we have in our minds? What are some of your favorite images from the Word?

JOEL 1:5-7

"Awake, you drunkards, and weep; and wail, all you drinkers of wine, because of the new wine, for it has been cut off from your mouth. For a nation has come up against My land, strong, and without number; his teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he has the fangs of a fierce lion. He has laid waste My vine, and ruined My fig tree; he has stripped it bare and thrown it away; its branches are made white."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Let them repent, for evil from the sensual man has destroyed the different things of the church."

AC 1072 [3 & 4]

- "A 'drunken man'...denotes those who desire, from memory-knowledges (scientifica), to investigate spiritual and celestial things...In Joel 5-

7...[drunken is] said of the church when vastated as to the truths of faith." Further on in this number, there is a passage teaching that "'drunken men' think themselves more wide awake than others, but they are in deep sleep."

AR 721

- "That 'to be made drunk with...wine' signifies to be insane in spiritual things, may indeed be seen without confirmation from other passages in the Word; but as many are not able to see this, on account of their not thinking spiritually but sensually, that is, materially...I will adduce some passages from the Word..." *Joel 1:5-7* is cited.

AE 376 [36]

- "'Drunkenness'...in the Word signifies insanity in spiritual things, and lapsing into errors..." *Joel 1:5, 6, and 7* are cited.

AC 3580 [6]

- *Joel 1:5* and *10* are cited with a very simple explanation: "...where a new church is treated of..."

AR 316

- *Joel 1:5, 10, and 11* are cited with the following statement: "Nearly the same words occur in Hosea 9:2, 3; Zephaniah 1:13; Lamentations 2:11, 12; Micah 6:15; Amos 5:11; Isaiah 24:6, 7, 9, 11."

AE 376 [18]

- "In *Joel 1:5, 10, 11*...[These words treat of] a devastated church, in which goods and truths have perished."

AC 6367

- "...a 'lion' denotes the power possessed by the evil of the love of self when it destroys and lays waste; and so in...*Joel 1:6*..."

AC 9052 [4]

- "In *Joel 1:6, 7*...‘teeth’ and ‘grinders’ denote the falsities that destroy the truths of the church; a ‘vine’ denotes the spiritual church...and a ‘fig-tree’ its natural good...That ‘teeth’ have this signification is plain also from the fact that they are attributed to a nation which will lay waste."

AR 435

- "...the sensual things of the understanding are signified by 'teeth;'"...Sensual men who are in falsities from confirmation, seem to themselves to be in power over all things, so they cannot be conquered...That 'teeth' signify the ultimates of man's life, which are called sensual things, and which, when separated from the interiors of the mind, are in mere falsities, and do violence to truths even to destroying them, may appear from the following passages..."*Joel 1:6* is cited.

AE 278 [11]

- "'Lions' in the Word signify also the power of falsity from evil by which the church is destroyed and devastated." *Joel 1:6* and 7 are cited as an example.

AE 556 [4]

- "In *Joel 1:6* and 7 'A nation that cometh up upon the land' signifies evil devastating the church, 'nation' meaning evil, and 'land' the church; 'vigorous and without number' signifies powerful and manifold; 'vigorous' is predicated of the power of evil, and 'without number' of the power of falsity; 'its teeth are the teeth of a lion' signifying destroying falsities; 'the jaw teeth of an immense lion' signify truths falsified; 'it reduced the vine to a waste, and the fig-tree to froth,' signifies the destruction of spiritual and natural truths; spiritual truths are those of the spiritual sense of the Word, and natural truths those of the sense of its letter..."Teeth' properly signify such things as are merely in the memory and are brought forth therefrom, for the things that are in the memory of the sensual man correspond to bones and teeth."

AC 5113 [13]

- "...a 'vine' signifies the good of the intellectual part; and a 'fig-tree' the good of the natural man, or what is the same, that a 'vine' signifies the good of the interior man, and a 'fig-tree' the good of the exterior man, therefore a 'fig-tree' is often mentioned in the Word at the same time as a 'vine;,' as in the following passages..." *Joel 1:6, 7, and 12* are cited as examples.

AE 403 [6]

- "In *Joel 1:6, 7, 12*...This whole chapter treats of the devastated church; and 'the nation that comes up upon the land, vigorous and without number, having the teeth of a lion, and the cheek-teeth of an immense lion,' does not signify any such nation, but direful evil and falsity therefrom; 'the land upon which it comes up' signifies the church; 'the teeth of a lion' signify the falsities

of such evil; and because these destroy all the goods and truths of the church, they are called 'the teeth of the lion and the great cheek-teeth of a lion,' 'lion' signifying [falsity] which destroys. Therefore, 'it hath made My vine a waste, and my fig-tree foam,' signifies that the church internal and external is thereby vastated, 'vine' signifying the internal church, and 'fig-tree' the external, 'foam' signifying where there is inwardly no truth; 'in stripping it hath stripped it, and cast it away' signifies that there is no longer any good or truth that is not destroyed, 'to strip' that is, of fruits and leaves, means of goods and truths, and 'to cast away' means to destroy entirely; 'the branches thereof are made white' signifies that there is no longer anything spiritual..."

Derived Doctrine

"Awake..."

- To "awake" (wake from sleep) signifies to seek enlightenment; sleep refers to an obscure state in comparison to being awake (*AC 3715*).
- To be awake signifies enlightenment in the natural (external) part of a person(*AC 5208*).
- To be awake implies a state of watchfulness to know truths and to live by them(*AR 158*).

"...you drunkards, and weep; and wail, all you drinkers of wine..."

- To be drunken, staggering, and reeling signifies to be insane in spiritual things from falsifying the truths of the Word (*AC 1072*).
- A person staggering or reeling signifies those who can see nothing of truth when they read or hear truth from the Word, particularly when spiritual things seek to inflow into the natural (*AE 376 [32]*).
- *AR 788* gives us an insight into the meaning of "weep" and "wail." "...by 'weeping' is signified mourning of soul, and by 'mourning' [wailing] grief of heart." In other words, this is a call for a new understanding and will.
- Drinking in the good sense signifies appropriating instruction in spiritual things (*AC 2704*). Drinking in the negative sense signifies appropriating falsified truths in one's life (*AR 635*).
- Drinking wine in the positive sense signifies seeking instruction in the things of the Lord's Divine truth—Divine wisdom. Such is the goal when receiving wine in the Holy Supper. See *True Christian Religion (TCR) 711*.

"...because of the new wine, for it has been cut off from your mouth."

- Reading this verse reminds us of the Lord's sayings to His people. "You have heard it said of old...but I say unto you..." The Lord's life, teachings, and examples brought new wine—truth—to the world. Some took and drank the new truth. Others cut it off, rejecting it and spewing it from their mouths.

- To "cut off" signifies that divine truth shall be taken from that people, but shall live again in a new church (*AE* 315 [23]).
- "Mouth" signifies thought from the understanding (*DP* 80). *AE* 782 carries this correspondence a little further, explaining that the mouth signifies thought as it comes forth in speech such as teaching, preaching, and reasoning.

"For a nation has come up against My land, strong, and without number..."

- "Nations from afar" signify falsity from evil, or that of the sensuous man, destroying truths (*AE* 724 [27]).
- "Nations" signify evils of the will (*AC* 622).
- In the positive sense, "nation" signifies the Lord's kingdom (*AC* 1416 [5]).
- "Against" signifies the violence hell offers against the Lord's spiritual kingdom, until, by the Lord's divine power, it is brought under His yoke (*AC* 8625).
- "My land..." "Land" represents various things: the internal man of the church; the region where the church is; the church itself; the doctrine of love and charity where the church resides (*AC* 2571). "My" makes it clear that the opposition from hell will come up against the Lord's church and not some physical or historical church.
- "Strong," or strength, in the positive sense represents truth, which cannot be resisted (*AC* 426 [3]).
- "Strong" in the negative sense represents the gathering or marshaling of the forces within the evil of the love of self (*AC* 6306 [4]).
- "Without number" in the positive sense represents a setting in order (*AC* 10218). It also signifies what cannot be counted, or multiplication to eternity (*AC* 1610).
- In the negative sense, "number" signifies the attempt of hell to dissipate the divine truths by reasonings and falsities. Such was the "number" that attacked the Lord in temptation. See *AC* 3812 [7].

"His teeth are the teeth of a lion..."

- *AR* 435 gives us the most direct teaching about the meaning of these words. It states that "the teeth of a lion" represent sensual men who are in falsities and believe themselves to be in **power over all things, so they imagine they cannot be conquered.**
- *AE* 278 [11] teaches that a "lion" signifies the power of falsity that attempts to destroy and devastate the church.

"...and he has the fangs of a fierce lion."

- "Fierce" signifies a strong aversion from good (*AC* 6358).

- "Fierce" signifies that the people turned from divine things. For when wrath or anger is said of the Lord, it means a turning away on the part of human beings(AC 10431).
- "Fang" as a verb means to seize, to lay hold of. As a noun, a "fang" is also a long sharp tooth by which the prey is seized and held. Although we don't have any specific correspondence given for "fang," we can draw certain conclusions about the nature of hell. It wants to seize, hold, and trap spiritual people so as to tear and destroy them.

"He has laid waste My vine, and ruined My fig tree..."

- "Waste" signifies evils and falsities destroying the good and truth of the church(AE 374 [5]).
- "My vine" and "My fig tree" signify, respectively, the goods of the intellectual principle and the good of the natural principle, or the good of the interior man and the good of the exterior man (AC 5113). The "My" word calls our attention to the Lord. His Divine principles seek to help the interior and exterior life of human beings.

"...he has stripped it bare and thrown it away; its branches are made white."

- Stripping signifies dispelling and annihilating the appearances of truth (AC 4741).
- To "strip" signifies deprivation of divine truth in the externals (AC 10542).
- "Bare" seems to be equivalent to the word "naked" in this verse. To get help with these terms, let's turn to AC 213. In reference to the story in which Adam and Eve claimed nakedness as a problem, we read "where there is no innocence, nakedness is a scandal and disgrace, because it is attended with a consciousness of thinking evil...and is predicated of a perverted church..." Could "he" (the hells) purposely have aimed at the innocence of the church so as to make it appear as a scandal and disgrace?
- Does the phrase "branches made white" mean that the bark was stripped off? What use does the bark provide for a tree? Not only does its tough external covering protect the tree from the elements, but it has a part in the flow of sap and the supply of life. Girdle a tree, and its death is imminent. Can we make an equal point for the spiritual meaning of this verse? "Branches" signify the power of truth from good. The "fig tree" is the good of the natural and the branch its affection. See AC 4231.
- "...stripped...bare...thrown away." Each of these words convey within their meaning a sense of a wasted potential. What could have been productive was treated carelessly; thus, instead of use, there is despair and destruction. AC 2121 exposes who really throws things away. "The Lord casts no one into hell, but every one casts himself there."

Putting It All Together

The hallmark of this section comes when the Lord calls His people to **wake up**. They not only failed to see dangerous issues, but their sleep-like state made them vulnerable to the stealthy plans of the enemies of the Lord. The parable of the wheat and darnel illustrates this principle quite well.

Secondly, the Lord told them they were drunkards. Drunkenness represents being insane with foolish ideas of how smart and powerful they were. Like staggering, reeling, and unstable minds, they needed to sober up with the reality of the Lord's eternal truths.

If they woke up, if they sobered up, they would see the need to weep and mourn over the foolishness they had previously allowed to direct their lives. Instead of drinking the wine of the sensual person, they were to drink of the wine provided by the Lord. The Lord's drink quenches the thirst of the soul and brings with it necessary instruction and a new (living) will and understanding.

The Lord's way benefits the weak and the heavy-laden. He promises to make our burden light. The lightness comes from the fact that He wills to help us. Refusing His offer of help leads us into states of despair. Listen to what is forecast: A nation that is strong and without number will rise up against you. The enemy will bare its fangs. Like a fierce lion, its teeth will seize, tear, and waste us. The land, the church, will be wasted. The truth of the church will mean nothing. Obedience, the fig tree, will be stripped bare, stripped of its bark and thrown away.

Surely the awakened, repentant, sorrowful soul will avoid all of these direful consequences. And how will this happen? **Alertness, soberness, attentiveness** will allow and help us to bear spiritual fruit. The branches of the fig trees will not be stripped and made white with the gnawing away of the bark. There will be no throwing away; instead, there will be a gathering and building up of uses for the Lord and the neighbor.

What key words should we remember from this section? **AWAKE; SOBER UP, WEEP, AND WAIL**. These things will be sufficient in the day of the Lord and will rescue His church from the reeling, staggering effects of self-love.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 1:5-7*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. If you have children, think about how you warn them of dangers. How do you go about it? Do you work with their imagination, using illustrations of contrasts? Do you sometimes let them fail so they can learn the necessity of asking for help?
2. What can you relate about a significant incident in your life in which you can admit that you "fell asleep at the switch" and made yourself vulnerable to the enemy sowing seeds of discord in your life?
3. How well can you relate to the idea of the fangs of hell grabbing and tearing away at essential spiritual issues?
4. What are your thoughts about the stripping of the branches and the throwing away described in our text? What does this look like in every-day life?

JOEL 1:8-13

"Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth. The grain offering and the drink offering have been cut off from the house of the Lord; the priests mourn, who minister to the Lord. The field is wasted, the land mourns; for the grain is ruined, the new wine is dried up, the oil fails. Be ashamed, you farmers, wail, you vinedressers, for the wheat and the barley; because the harvest of the field has perished. The vine has dried up, and the fig tree has withered; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree—all the trees of the field are withered; surely joy has withered away from the sons of men. Gird yourselves and lament, you priests; wail, you who minister before the altar; come, lie all night in sackcloth, you who minister to my God; for the grain offering and drink offering are withheld from the house of your God."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Mourning over the destruction of the goods and truths of the church."

AE 863 [15]

- "...'virgins' signify in the Word the affections of truth..." *Joel 1:7-8* is cited.

AR 334

- "The reason why 'a fig-tree' signifies the natural good of man, is because every tree signifies something of the church in man...In confirmation are these passages..." *Joel 1:7 and 12* are cited.

AR 620

- "That all they who are such in the Lord's church, whether they be virgins or young men, wives or husbands, boys or old men, girls or old women, are meant by 'virgins,' may appear from the Word, where virgins are mentioned..." *Joel 1:8* is cited.

AR 492

- "That mourning on account of the devastation of truth in the church, was represented by 'putting on sackcloth,' may be seen from the following passages..." *Joel 1:8* and *13* are cited.

AE 637 [14]

- "In Joel...‘to be girded with sackcloth’ and to ‘pass the night in sackcloth’ signify mourning because the good and truth of the church are destroyed, for the ‘meal-offering’ signifies the good of the church, and the ‘drink-offering’ its truth."

AR 778

- "That ‘wine’ signifies truth from the good of love...That ‘oil’ signifies the good of love...By ‘fine flour’ is signified celestial truth, and by ‘wheat’ is signified celestial good. That the truths and goods of worship are signified by ‘wine,’ ‘oil,’ ‘fine flour’ and ‘wheat,’ is because the drink-offerings and meal-offerings consisted of them, which were offered upon the altar together with the sacrifices; and by the sacrifices and by the offerings offered upon the altar worship is signified, for the chief part of worship consisted in them. That the drink-offerings, which were wine, were offered upon the altar together with the sacrifices, may be seen..." *Joel 1:9* is cited.

AE 376 [25]

- "This makes clear what is signified in *Joel...1:9*...namely, that worship from the good of love, and from the truths therefrom, had perished. Who cannot see that the meal-offering and the drink-offering, which were bread and wine, were not pleasing to Jehovah in worship, unless they had signified such things as are of heaven and the church?"

AR 589

- "That ‘the world’ also signifies the church, may be seen in...*Joel 1:9, 10*..."

AC 7602

- "...in Joel...1:9-11...the subject of this prophecy is the vastation of good and truth, as is evident from what follows in the chapter; and therefore by 'grain,' 'new wine,' 'wheat,' and 'barley,' are not signified these things, but spiritual things; thus by 'wheat,' interior good; and by 'barley,' exterior good."

AC 9295 [5]

- "In Joel...1:9-11...the vastation of the church in respect to the truths of faith and the goods of charity is here described by such things as belong to the field, the vineyard, and the olive yard; the church itself is 'the field;' and its last state, which was called by the Lord 'the consummation of the age, is 'the harvest.'"

AC 10137 [3 & 4]

- "That the 'meat-offering,' which was bread, signifies the good of love, and that the 'drink-offering,' which was wine, signifies the good of faith, and that they are so perceived by the angels, can be seen from all that is said in the Word...as in Joel...1:9-15...the subject here treated of is the last time of the church, when there is no longer in it the good of love and the truth of faith...From this it is plain that by 'the meat-offering and drink-offering which were cut off from the house of Jehovah,' by 'the field which was laid waste,' by 'the ground which mourned,' by 'the grain which was also laid waste,' by 'the new wine which was dried up,' by 'the oil which languisheth,' and by 'the vine' and 'the fig-tree,' are signified such things as belong to the church and heaven; but the internal sense teaches what these signify. From this it is evident that by 'the field' is signified the church as to the reception of truth...by 'the land,' the church as to good...by 'grain,' all the good of the church...by 'new wine' all the truth of the church...by 'oil' the good of love...by 'vine,' the interior good of the spiritual church...and by 'fig-tree' its exterior good..."

AC 566

- "And in Joel...1:10...it is evident that 'man,' who in the Hebrew tongue is called 'Adam,' from 'ground,' signifies the church."

AC 9780 [4]

- "...where 'the oil' denotes the good of love and charity, and 'the wine,' the good and truth of faith." *Joel 1:10* is cited.

AE 375 [30]

- "In Joel 1:10...This signifies the devastation of all things of the church which have reference in general to the good of love and the truth of faith; 'field,' and also 'ground,' mean the church, 'field' the church from the reception of truth, and 'ground' the church from the perception of good; 'corn' means everything of the church, 'new wine' truth, and 'fresh oil' good."

AC 3941 [4]

- "In Joel...1:10, 11, 13...the state of the vastated church is that which is here described; thus that 'field' and 'ground' are the church; the 'corn' its good, and the 'new wine' its truth...and that the 'wheat' is celestial love, and the 'barley' spiritual love; and as the state of the church is treated of, it is said, 'gird yourselves and lament, ye priests; howl, ye ministers of the altar.'"

AR 645

- "...by 'harvest' is signified the state of the church as to Divine truth; the reason is, because from the harvest grain is procured, from which bread is made, and by 'grain' and 'bread' is signified the good of the church, this being procured by truths. That this is the signification...may be seen more clearly from those places in the Word where 'harvest,' 'reaping'...are mentioned..."*Joel 1:10* is cited.

AE 911 [13]

- "In Joel...1:13...The devastation of the church as to good and truth is here meant by 'the harvest of the field hath perished;' 'husbandmen' mean those who are in the good of the church, and 'vinedressers' those who are in its truths; 'wheat and barley' mean good itself and truth itself; grief on account of devastation is signified by 'they were ashamed and howled.'"

AC 8369 [2]

- "That 'palm-trees' signified a holy festivity which is from good, is evident...in the following passages...*Joel 1:12*...here 'palm-tree' denotes good..."

AE 109 [4]

- "That 'trees,' which are so often mentioned in the Word, signify the interiors of man which belong to his mind and disposition, and the things that are on trees, as leaves and fruit, signify such things as are from these interiors, can be seen from the following passages..."*Joel 1:12* is cited.

AE 458 [7]

- "...Joel...1:12...describes the desolating of truth and good in the church, and thence of all joy of heart, that is, of all spiritual joy; for the 'vine' signifies the spiritual good and truth of the church, the 'fig-tree' the natural good and truth therefrom, and the 'pomegranate' sensual truth and good, which is the ultimate of the natural; 'palm' signifies joy of heart, from spiritual good, and 'apple' the same from the natural good derived from spiritual good; 'the trees of the field that are dried up,' signify the perceptions of good and the knowledges of truth, that there are none; and because spiritual joy and natural joy therefrom are signified by the 'palm-tree' and the 'apple tree,' it is added, 'joy is dried up from the sons of man;' 'sons of man' meaning in the Word those who are in truths from good, and 'joy' signifying spiritual joy, which is solely from good through truths. Who cannot see that vine, fig-tree, pomegranate, palm-tree, apple-tree, and the trees of the field are not here meant? Why should it be said in the Word and of what consequence is it to the church to say that these trees are withered and dried up?"

Derived Doctrine

"Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth."

- To "gird" signifies readiness to receive the influx of good and truth from the Lord, and to respond to it (AC 7863). To "gird with sackcloth" signifies mourning for destroyed good (AC 4779 [8]).
- A "virgin" signifies purity from all falsities (AC 3081).
- "Youth," in a positive sense, signifies the order of truths under good (AC 5704).
- A "husband" signifies the rational principle (AC 265).

"...the priests mourn, who minister to the Lord."

- Priests are to teach truth, and so lead to good, and to the Lord (AC 10794).
- The priesthood of Aaron, his sons, and the Levites represents the work of salvation in successive order (AC 10017).
- Mourning signifies grief because truth is destroyed and because good is also (AE 1129 [2]).
- Ministers of the Lord signify those who are in love to the Lord and in derivative worship (AE 444 [7]).
- A "minister" signifies a representative and servant of a special kind of holiness that is present when people read the Word. This holiness acts as an intermediary between the Lord and people who only understand the outward sense of the Word (AC 9419).

"Be ashamed you farmers, wail you vinedressers."

- To "be ashamed" in the negative sense means or signifies being in a natural good to conceal evils (*AC 216 and 217*).
- To "be ashamed" or to feel shame in the positive sense signifies a willingness to face unclean loves. The call for shame is to those who will be of the Lord's New Church. It is a call from the Lord to encourage them to seek and learn truths and to retain them. See *AR 706*.
- "Farmers," husbandmen, plowmen, and tillers of the soil signify those who teach, or those who are of the church, for a field signifies the church and "farmers" are the implanters of truths (*AE 652 [18]*).
- "Wail," "weep," "lament," and "mourn" are words used to express a state of grieving. Grieving over what? The loss of good and truth within the church. These words also represent the Lord's grief because of the night-time state among the people as to the (lack of) truths of faith in the church. See *AC 2910*.
- "Vinedressers" signify those who have truths and teach them (*AE 911 [13]*).

"...lie all night in sackcloth."

- "Night" signifies all things of a person's (own) proprium (*AC 21*).
- "Night" signifies a person's state when falsities arise (*AE 167 [5]*).
- Therefore, what we have here is a command to search for, discover, and mourn over the evils within our natural side.

Putting It All Together

The Lord saw and knew the condition of the church. The internal state of the church was not healthy. The visible aspects of the church appeared normal. Rituals were being observed by the priests and the people. High holidays were being kept. But within these normal appearances, the church was nearing spiritual death. The hells were laboring to bring about a spiritual drought of significant proportions. How could the Lord **AWAKEN, SOBER UP, and bring His church to a WEEPING AND WAILING state of honest emotional cleansing**? How could He invoke a spiritual honesty to lead the hearts and minds of His people away from rationalizations and self-justifications? We need to recall the serious weakness of the Israelites. They believed they were the chosen, or favored, people. A spirit of invincibility carried them along for centuries, and they fostered a belief that the Lord would always rescue and excuse them. Their supposed favored status would not carry them through the "day of the Lord."

Could a plague of four kinds of locust stripping the land snap the Israelites out of their fantasies? Would Joel's speaking to the people about the wasted fields, the land mourning over the ruined grain, the wine drying up, the failure of the oil, the wheat, the barley, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate tree, the palm tree, and the apple tree withering and drying up accomplish anything? Could Joel's reminder to the

people that "joy has withered away from the sons of men" bring the church to a state of repentance and reformation?

The Divinely inspired prophecy of Joel is not only a description of the problem at hand. The Lord outlined a workable plan that, if followed, would reverse the devastation of the land and the church and guarantee the restoration of joy to the church.

Let's note the order of the plan that the Lord outlined for the revitalization of the church:

1. Virgins were to lament, gird themselves with sackcloth, and remember the husband of their youth. What is the Lord calling the church to do? He wants the church to get in touch with innocence again. They are to return to the conjunction and marriage of love and wisdom, remembering that the first love of the rational soul (the husband of youth) is to serve the Lord with gladness. They are to prepare themselves to receive good and truth from the Lord and respond to it wholeheartedly.
2. Priests, teach the truth. This is a command to lead people to the good of life and the Lord. The priests of the church must have a sincere care for the souls of those within the church. They are to offer a ministry of mediation in which they introduce the Word to the people and show how the truths relate to life. The Lord asks them to show genuine sorrow for having forgotten to do these things in the past and to rectify that deficiency as quickly as possible.
3. Farmers, you need to be ashamed. Why? Farmers represent the implanters of the Lord's truth. They apparently failed to adequately prepare the field for the planting of truth. Perhaps the field was not cleared of weeds. Rocks, roots, and hard soil were not giving truth the proper depth to find nourishment and protection from the heat of the sun.
4. Lastly, the church needs to have a hearty crying time. She needs to wail and lie all night in the sackcloth of remorse. The Lord wants His church to face the night-time of its unregenerate proprium. The church has to rein in the uncontrolled and stubborn self. The command to wear sackcloth is a call to mourn and search out the spiritual enemy of the soul by resisting the evils of self-love.

This is the "day of the Lord." When these things are done, **joy** will return to the church. The land will flourish again. The grain fields will wave in the gentle restorative breeze from the Lord. The wine will flow and taste better than that which was served first. Oil will be plentiful. Fig trees, pomegranate trees, palms, and apple trees will bear abundant crops. Joy will fill the sons of men. The Lord's New Church will restore the dignity of the church and the souls of its people.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 1:8-13*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Did you notice that we had 21 direct teachings to help us with this summary? There was less of a need to turn to derived doctrine. What was one striking teaching you noticed among those given in the Passages from the Writings section?
2. Did the "gloom and doom" theme diminish as you moved toward the spiritual sense? Why or why not?
3. *AR 706* gave a positive meaning to the experience of shame. It is a call to those who will be of the Lord's New Church to encourage them to seek and learn truths and to retain them. Had you ever thought about shame in this way? What aspects of this positive idea of shame can you see in daily living?
4. Is the passage about the virgin and "the husband of her youth" supposed to remind us of love in its beginning stages? When it comes to religion, have we retained that feeling of youthful excitement and spontaneity in loving the Lord or have we fallen into a rut of boredom and begun taking the Lord and the church for granted? What are some ways to address this problem?
5. The picturesque description of the failure of the crops and the fruit trees is intended to get us thinking about what? *AE 109 [4]* teaches that trees represent **the interiors of a person** belonging to his or her mind and disposition, and the leaves and fruit represent the **things that come from the interiors**. So the fig-tree represents the natural good (obedience) being in-filled with interior things; the pomegranate tree represents external knowledge being in-filled by doctrinal things from the Word; the apple tree represents the joy of the heart that draws its strength from spiritual good. Given this brief overview, can you refine this concept specifically to your life or some example? Work with this slowly and with a friend or two.
6. What about the healthiness of having a good cry to work out a resolution of guilt or shame? How can one have a good cry and then get over it by doing something positive? The Lord wants repentance, not moroseness.
7. What state of mind brings us joy? How about this idea as revealed in *AC 3118*: "...in the Word 'gladness' is predicated of truth, and 'joy' of good...Gladness is of the countenance [face], but joy [is] of the heart; or...gladness is of spiritual affection or truth, but joy is of celestial affection or of good; thus gladness is in a degree less than joy..."
8. What did you get from the Lord's message to the virgin, the priests, and the farmers, and the directive to the priests to lie all night in sackcloth?

JOEL 1:14

"Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Exhortation to be converted..."

Derived Doctrine

"Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly..."

- "Consecrate," or sanctify, signifies to "represent the Lord and the holy things which are from Him...thus it denotes to be led by the Lord, because the Lord alone is holy, and everything holy proceeds from Him..." (*AC 9988, 10111, and 10128*)
- A "fast" signifies an unhappy state when good is no longer conjoined with truths (*AC 9182 [10]*).
- To "fast" signifies to mourn on account of the lack of good and truth (*AE 1189 [2]*).
- Fasting corresponds to temptation (*AE 730*).
- "Sacred" means dedicated, set apart in honor, holy, hallowed, inviolable, and not to be profaned.
- *AC 10796* presents the following thoughts on what is holy (sacred): "Priests must have dignity and honor on account of the holy things which they engage in; but those of them who are wise give the honor to the Lord, from whom come all holy things; and not to themselves. But those of them who are not wise attribute the honor to themselves. These take it away from the Lord. Those who attribute honor to themselves...set honor and profit above the salvation of souls, which they ought to have regard for. But those who give the honor to the Lord and not to themselves, set the salvation of souls above honor and profit."
- "Assembly" signifies setting things in order. For goods and truths cannot be assembled if there is no order. See *AC 6338*.
- "Assembly," or "the Tent of meeting," signifies where the presence of the Lord is (*AC 9784*).

"Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord."

- What is gathered, stored up, assembled, and picked up signify the things that are in a person's memory. It "further implies that both goods and truths should be gathered in man before he is regenerated; for without [them being] gathered together, through which as means the Lord may operate, a man can never be regenerated..." (*AC* 679).
- "Elders," which signify "all things that are of the natural man, such as memory-knowledges of whatever kind, are nothing but things of service; for they serve the rational by enabling it to think equitably and will justly." (*AC* 3019)
- "Inhabitants of the world" signify people of the church who are in the goods of doctrine, and so of life (*AE* 741 [6]).
- "Land" signifies various things: the internal person of the church, the region where the church is, the church itself, the doctrine of love and charity where the faith of the church resides (*AC* 2571).
- "Into the house of the Lord" signifies the church wherein love is the principal (*AC* 710).
- To "cry out" is to indicate intense thought with the full intention of doing (*AC* 7119).
- Crying out signifies supplication to the Lord from grief (*AC* 8353).

Putting It All Together

P&P states that this verse refers to **the Lord's exhortation to the people to be converted**. How were the people to accomplish their conversion?

1. Be led by the Lord alone.
2. Start this process by giving up the food of natural thought (fasting) and seeking to conjoin the good and truth of the Lord. These actions are the sacred assembly.
3. Do the work of the priesthood with dignity and care for the salvation of souls.
4. Dedicate the work of the church to setting things in order. Where there is no order, there can be no influx of the Lord.
5. Assemble goods and truths with the goal that they will become the means for the Lord to regenerate all the people within the church.
6. Gather the land together in the house of the Lord where love is the principle goal, and where the people can cry out with a united voice that the intention of the church is to do the Lord's will.

All of these actions will bear fruit if the church listens to and believes in the sacred call to conversion. These things are not for the merit or honor of the people. They are for the honor of the Lord, who cares for the salvation of souls.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 1:14*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. The Lord called for a "fast." His message seems to be a reminder to us that the foods of the natural mind are not sufficient for the soul. In addition to natural food, we need the added enrichment of spiritual food. Fasting calls for us to admit that we cannot live "by bread alone." This call to fast is intended to inspire us to reflect: Will we search for spiritual truths as a part of our on-going spiritual growth? Worship, meditation, and reflection can help us organize and assemble goods and truths in a formidable way. How does the Lord call us to fast in daily life? When does He call us?
2. Recall for a moment the meaning of "elders." **Elders signify a gathering of memory-knowledges of every kind for the purpose of service.** They are to serve the rational mind. Elders are to enable us to **think equitably and to will justly**. Is this a process that you are aware of and that you find alive and well in your spiritual growth? How can you call on your "elders" in various areas of your life?
3. What does the word "conversion" mean to you? Conversions are not what the televangelists talk about and promise to their listeners. Nor is conversion achieved while listening to a gifted preacher/teacher. Conversion is a gift from the Lord that comes to us when we love the truths of the Word and make them the principle part of our inward church. Conversion comes about when we are led by continuous degrees from ignorance to enlightenment. The Lord sees our sincere desire to learn and to be guided by His Word, and He lifts us upward, through discrete degrees, to see the spiritual and celestial levels of His truth. **Only the Lord lifts up the mind to conversion.** No one can force a "conversion" by wit or strength.
4. Let's read *HH 253*: "...man's interior and exterior faculties are such that they are turned either towards the Lord as their common center...or towards self, that is, backwards from the Lord. Those that are turned towards the Lord are also turned towards heaven. But those that are turned towards self are turned also towards the world. And to elevate these is a difficult matter; nevertheless the Lord elevates them as much as is possible, by turning the love about, which is done by means of truths from the Word."

JOEL 1:15

"Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as destruction from the Almighty."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...and to reflect that thus will be the last time, when the Lord will come..."

AC 488 [3]

- "...in Joel...1:15...where a 'day of cloud' signifies a cloud, or falsity; the 'day of the nations' signifies the nations, or wickedness; the 'day of Jehovah' signifies vastation. When the notion of time is removed, there remains the notion of the state of the things which existed at that time. The case is the same with regard to the 'days' and 'years' that are so often mentioned..."

AC 1992 [5]

- "...in Joel...1:15...[it may] also be seen from the word *shaddai* itself, which signifies vastation, and thus temptation, for temptation is a kind of vastation. But as this name took its rise from nations in Syria, He is not called 'Elohim Shaddai,' but 'El Shaddai;'..."

Doctrine of the Lord 4

- "I shall...merely adduce passages from the Word which contain the expressions 'that day,' 'in that day,' and 'in that time,' in which, by 'day,' and 'time,' is meant the Lord's advent." In the eight pages of references from the Word, *Joel 1:15* is cited.

AR 704

- "Besides these places there are many more, in which the Lord's coming and the New Church...are meant by 'the day of Jehovah;' as in these..." *Joel 1:15* is cited.

TCR 82 [2]

- "See also places where the Lord's coming is called 'the day of Jehovah' ..." *Joel 1:15* is cited.

AC 5147 [4]

- Note that this passage is said to explain *Joel 1:15-17*. The exposition really covers the meaning for verses 16 and 17.

Coronis 58 [5]

- "...passages in which the vastation, desolation, and consummation of this church...shall be only named: as, for example..." *Joel 1:15-20* is cited.

AC 10609 [4]

- "In Joel...1:15, 18...the subject here treated of is the coming of the Lord, which is signified by 'the day of Jehovah;' and the church at that time as being vastated, that is, there being no longer any good of love or good of faith."

Derived Doctrine

"Alas for the day of the Lord is at hand..."

- The word "alas" signifies grief, lamentation, and woe (*AE 652 [18] and AE 654 [38]*).
- The "day of the Lord" signifies vastations and the last time and state of the church (*AC 488 [3] and AC 1839 [5]*).
- "At hand" signifies the Lord's ability, power, and confidence to correct disorder. See *AC 4400* for illustrations of this expression.

"It [the day of the Lord] shall come as destruction from the Almighty."

- "Destruction" signifies the damnation of those who pervert memory-knowledges (*AC 1458 [3]*).
- Mentions of "destruction" signify that people, and not the Lord, will cast themselves into hell when they destroy the church within themselves (*AR 528*).
- "Almighty" signifies the Lord's Omnipotence. The Lord alone reigns in the New Church that is to be established by Him. See *AR 247, 522, and 663*.

Putting It All Together

In *Revelation 6:10*, the Lord opens the fifth seal of the great scroll that is in His hand. When the fifth seal is opened, the souls of those who "had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held" cry out with a loud voice saying "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

How many times, while studying the prophets, have we read about "the day of the Lord" when the awesome vastation of the church and the establishment of the New Church would finally come about? Like the souls of heaven, do we wonder **when and how long, O Lord** it will be before the New Church is the crown of all churches whose kingdom will be forever and ever?

With war, murder, brutality, and disregard for the ways of the Lord evident in our daily news, it's difficult not to become troubled with the apparent "slowness" of the Lord to bring an end to such blatant forms of disrespect and hatred of the neighbor. The repetition of a promise such as what is described in this verse of *Joel* intensifies the hope that "the day of the Lord" will come to pass.

The first word of *Joel 1:15* is "Alas," to express the Divine sadness and grief that there are, and will be, people who will choose not to listen to Him or follow His ways. The Lord is never capricious or angry. The people of the church will be given every opportunity to reform and repent. The evil people, and not the Lord, will cast themselves from the presence of heaven. So the Word repeats the theme of "the day of the Lord." The church will be emptied of those who twisted the Word and the memory-knowledges. The wicked will be held accountable and will answer to the Almighty. The Great Omnipotence will offer a steady and firm hand to the beautiful construction of the Holy City New Jerusalem. His ability, power, and confidence will win the day. The doors of the Holy City are wide open, and the Sun of Heaven leads, and shows, the way into heavenly order and peace.

For our part, in spite of recurring times of doubt and impatience, we need to read on and believe the promises of the Word, and stay faithful to the testimony written within each prophecy.

P&P sums up the reason we have this verse in *Joel*, with these words: "**to reflect that thus will be the last time, when the Lord will come...**"

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 1:15*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. The word "alas" signifies grief. What can you imagine about the kind of grief the Lord feels for those who reject and throw away their place in heaven? Is the Lord's grief infinite?
2. Do you think things in the world have gotten worse with passing time? We accept things today that would never have been accepted ten or twenty years ago. Have we loosened up on things because we have been enlightened? Or, is the acceptance of things part of the vastation process?
3. What is your view of "the day of the Lord"? Is it coming soon? Will it be in our lifetime? Do you see any signs that the Lord's New Church is growing throughout the world? What are they?
4. How much spiritual comfort did you receive when reading the summation in *P&P*? "To reflect that thus will be the last time when the Lord will come."

5. We believe in the second coming of the Lord. We welcome the Lord's second coming in the revelation of His threefold Word. Can we imagine what our life would be like without the revelation of the Writings? Think of all the areas of your life that are touched by your beliefs.

JOEL 1:16-17

"Is not the food cut off before our eyes, joy and gladness from the house of our God? The seed shrivels under the clods, storehouses are in shambles; barns are broken down, for the grain has withered."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...and that everything of the church has been devastated..."

AC 5147 [4]

- "'Food' is mentioned in many places in the Word, and one who is not acquainted with the internal sense cannot know but that ordinary food is here meant, whereas it is spiritual food; as in...Joel...1:15-17..."

AC 5147 [6]

- "...'food' in the spiritual sense is good..."

Coronis 58 [5]

- "The passages in which the vastation, desolation, and consummation of this church are further mentioned shall be only named: as, for example...Joel 1:15-20."

AC 4137 [2]

- "There is occasional mention in the Word of 'gladness' and of 'joy,' and sometimes they are mentioned together; but 'gladness' is mentioned when the subject treated of is truth and its affection, and 'joy' when it is good and its affection, as in...Joel...1:16..."

Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 87

- "The reason why both 'joy' and 'gladness' are mentioned is that 'joy' is of good and 'gladness' of truth, or 'joy' is of love and 'gladness' of wisdom. For

joy is of the heart and gladness of the soul, or joy is of the will and gladness of the understanding. That there is a marriage of the Lord and the church in these expressions...is evident from its being said..." *Joel 1:16* is cited.

AR 507

- "...although joy and gladness seem to be one thing; yet in these two expressions there is the marriage of the will and the understanding, which also is the marriage of good and truth, which exists in the whole and in every particular of the Word..." *Joel 1:16* is cited as an example.

TCR 252

- "Both joy and gladness are mentioned, because joy is predicated of good and gladness of truth, or joy of love and gladness of wisdom; for joy belongs to the heart and gladness to the spirit, or joy to the will and gladness to the understanding. That there is also a marriage of the Lord and the church..." *Joel 1:16* is cited among many other examples.

AE 660 [3]

- "...'to rejoice' and 'to be glad' are both mentioned, namely, because 'to rejoice' is predicated of good and its love or affection, and 'to be glad' is predicated of truth and its love or affection. This is the case in many other passages in the Word, as in the following..." *Joel 1:16* is cited among many other passages.

Derived Doctrine

"Is not the food cut off before our eyes, joy and gladness from the house of our God?"

- "Food" signifies the goods and enjoyments of affections supplied by the Lord that one may be regenerated (*AC 677*).
- "Food" signifies spiritual and celestial nourishment, which is faith in the Lord and love (*AC 680 [4]*).
- "Food" signifies things of use to the soul (*AC 5293*).
- "Cut off" signifies that divine truth shall be taken from the people, but shall live again in a new church (*AE 315 [23]*).
- "Eyes" signify the eyes of the spirit, namely the understanding (*AC 2701*).
- Note once again that "joy" signifies good and "gladness" truth (*TCR 252*).
- The "house of our God" (Jehovah) signifies the church in which love is primary, the celestial church, and the spiritual church (*AC 710*).

"The seed shrivels under the clods, storehouses are in shambles..."

- "Seed" signifies what produces and is produced, or begets and is begotten (*AC 254*).
- "Seed" signifies all truth that considers use (*AC 57*).
- "Seed" signifies the inseminating of truth by the Lord through the Word (*AC 932*).
- The words "shrivele," "shrink," "wither," and "dry up" signify the failing of truth and good in the natural (*AE 403 [21]*).
- "Wither" signifies that the truths of good seem to be dying (*AE 403 [6]*).
- "Wither" signifies the truths of good adulterated and dying (*AE 401 [35]*).
- "Under" signifies that which is lower, outside, inferior to, the literal or natural (*AC 564*).
- The word "clod" is mentioned in two places in the Writings: *TCR* 333 and *CL* 232. Both references cite those who stand in one place and do not think about higher things. They only want to debate about issues and are not really interested in finding the truth or making spiritual progress. They want to "...tread and grind a single **clod**, and not to advance."
- "Storehouses" signify knowledges of good and truth, for these are the stores or material out of which the faith of charity can be formed (*Doctrine of Faith 25*).
- The correspondence of "shambles" is not given in the Writings. The closest I could find was "disarray." John Elliot's translation of *AC 2588* reads as follows: "...the disarray into which all that constitutes man's rationality is thrown when he reasons against Divine things, however much he may seem to himself at that time to be wise."

"...barns are broken down, for the grain has withered."

- "Barns" signify the church or the individual of the church where good and truth are (*AE 403 [9]*).
- To gather things into "the barn" signifies to conjoin with heaven (*AE 911 [5]*).
- *AC 5959* teaches that "grain" "sometimes signifies the good of truth, and sometimes the truth of good..."
- The word "withered" has already been discussed above. It signifies that the truths of good are dying.

Putting It All Together

P&P directs our minds to consider this beginning point: "...everything of the church has been devastated..." How is this illustrated in the literal sense of *Joel*?

1. The food of the church, the necessary things of love (good) and wisdom (truth), will be cut off. Why? The Lord cut the church off to prevent the people of the church from seriously hurting themselves or blaspheming the

- holy things of the church. How was this protection accomplished? They found spiritual food unappetizing, bland, boring, or tedious; their desire for it was erased from their view or presence by the plague and drought of self-love.
2. Their eyes missed the joy and gladness of the love and wisdom of the Word.
 3. The love of being useful was no longer the highest priority in the house of God (the church).
 4. When the love of being useful to the Lord and the neighbor is lost, it only makes sense that what was to produce or beget those useful acts loses its power of procreation. So the seed shriveled.
 5. The great clods of the natural mind weighed down and smothered any seeds of good and truth. The wonderful image given in *CL* 232 and *TCR* 333 shows that debating and standing, or walking, in one place advances us nowhere. Stagnation of mind and heart are a sure-fire method of killing spiritual spontaneity.
 6. In such a state, the mental storehouses of the people in the church fell into a shambles with the weight of conceit. Belief in their own cleverness and opposition to the Lord created disarray that would bring their house down.
 7. The love of truth or the truth of love dried up and withered away. Such is the heart or message of these verses. The Lord, through Joel, poses a silent question: Is anyone listening? Are you willing to change? If not, know that everything in the present church will be devastated.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 1:16-17*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. The two passages of *Joel* under consideration pose some interesting questions for us to reflect on.
 - Are we hungry for the food of the Lord?
 - Do we feel a joy and gladness for the Word (good and truth) of the Lord?
 - Are we content to stand in one place "marking time" with little or no advancement or extension in spiritual matters?
 - Do we love to debate truth for the sake of appearing wise or learned?
 - Have we allowed "clods" to smother the potential growth of the Lord's seeds?
2. Can we identify with the imagery of the empty storehouses, the barns in shambles, the withering grain? Remember, these things are said in the Word

- to show us what the church will be like if it refuses to seek first the kingdom of heaven and all of its blessings.
3. Such a picture is not intended to be gloomy. Instead, it reminds us that this sad illustration has to be shunned. It serves to inspire us to move onward and upward with the Lord's Word, looking toward the New Church's birth in the hearts and minds of the people.
 4. As we look back at these passages, we can ask ourselves: were we listening to Joel's message with joy and gladness or fear and trembling? Why?

JOEL 1:18-20

"How the animals groan! The herds of cattle are restless, because they have no pasture; even the flocks of sheep suffer punishment.

O Lord, to You I cry out; for fire has devoured the open pastures, and a flame has burned all the trees of the field. The beasts of the field also cry out to You, for the water brooks are dried up, and fire has devoured the open pastures."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...for which reason there is lamentation."

AR 567

- "That men, as to their affections, are meant by 'beasts,' may appear from these passages..." *Joel 1:16, 18, and 20* are cited among many other references.

AE 650 [37]

- "In *Joel 1:16, 18, 20*...The state of the church [described occurs] when there are no longer in it any truths of doctrine or good of life. 'The food cut off from the house of God' signifies spiritual nourishment, which is from truths that are from good, 'the house of God' signifying the church; 'the beast groaneth, the droves of cattle are perplexed' signifies the lack of the affections of truth and thence of knowledges in the natural man, and grief on that account, 'droves of cattle' signifying the things of the natural man in the whole complex."

AC 6078 [5]

- "'Pastures' in these passages denotes the truths in which man is instructed, here such things as regard spiritual life; for spiritual life is such that if this

pasturage fails, it languishes and as it were pines away as does the body when it lacks food. That 'pasture' denotes the good and truth which restore and sustain the soul or spirit of man, is clear from the Lord's words in John 10:9..." *Joel 1:18* is cited as a passage where the signification is similar.

AE 482 [3]

- "As it is known in the church that 'to feed' signifies to instruct, 'pasture' instruction, and 'shepherd' an instructor, a few passages only in which 'feeding' and 'pasture' are mentioned shall be quoted without further explanation." *Joel 1:18* is among the passages cited.

AC 2708 [8]

- "That 'wilderness' is predicated of a church altogether vastated, and of those who are altogether vastated as to good and truth, who cannot be reformed is thus shown in...*Joel 1:19, 20*."

AR 546

- "That by 'a wilderness' is signified the church devastated, or in which all the truths of the Word are falsified, such as it was among the Jews in the Lord's time, appears from these passages..." *Joel 1:19-20* is cited among many other passages.

AE 504 [34]

- "...a church that can be in the light of truth from the Word is called 'the forest of the south' but that is now in knowledges alone without spiritual light; 'the trees that the fire will devour' signify such knowledges...that evil cupidities will deprive such knowledges of all spiritual life, and that there will be no longer any truth in clearness..." *Joel 1:19-20* is cited as a sign of this devastation.

AE 730 [13]

- "In Joel...1:19, 20... 'The fire hath consumed the habitants of the wilderness and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field' signifies that the love of self and the pride of self-intelligence have consumed all the perception of good and all the understanding of the truth of doctrine from the sense of the letter of the Word, 'fire' signifying the love of self, 'flame' the pride of self-intelligence, 'the habitations of the wilderness' the goods of doctrine from the sense of the letter of the Word, and the 'trees of the field' the knowledges of its truth. The sense of the letter of the Word is called a 'wilderness' when it is merely understood naturally, thus according to appearances, and not at the

same time spiritually, or according to the genuine sense. 'The beasts of the field pant after Thee' signifies the lamentations of those who are natural and yet have a desire for truths; that 'beasts' signify the affections of the natural man may be seen above (n. 650); 'for the streams of water are dried up, and the fire hath consumed the habitations of the wilderness' signifies that consequently there are no longer any truths and goods of life."

Derived Doctrine

"How the animals groan!"

- In the good sense, "animals," or "beasts," represent affections longing to be instructed or spiritually nourished (*AE 650 [10]*).
- "Groaning" signifies grief on account of the effort of falsities to subjugate (*AC 6803*).
- "Groaning" and "sighing" signify the destruction of the affections of good (*AE 863 [2]*).

"The herds of cattle are restless..."

- Could the word "restless" describe a state of being "perplexed" or "distressed"?
- "Perplexed" signifies confusion of external knowledges mixed in the outer memory (*AC 2831*).
- "Distressed" signifies a state in which the internal is alienated from the external (*AC 5470*).
- "Distressed" signifies the beginning of temptations acting on the conscience in a case in which the person does not know the origin of his or her fear and distress (*AC 4249*).
- Your attention, for the signification of the rest of this passage, is redirected to *AE 730 [13]* as cited above.
- Let's ponder for a moment the meaning of "open pastures" being devoured. This phrase occurs twice in our lesson. When the Word mentions something twice, it is not for poetical effect or repetition. Usually, when something is mentioned twice, it is to teach us about what is happening to the will and understanding.
- "Open," in the positive sense, signifies to bring out, to be taught, to communicate and conjoin things that had been concealed (*AE 303*). In the negative sense, devouring "open pastures" seems to represent a loss of the ability to communicate and conjoin (use and nurture) spiritual goods and truths.

Putting It All Together

Hard as it may be, we are to picture the church totally devoid of any truths of doctrine or good of life. What does that mean? Can we think of any examples of this state occurring in our lifetime, or in history?

The spiritual sense of Joel's prophecy explains that the problem arises when the love of self and the pride of intelligence go out of control. The church, lacking the Lord's guidance, misuses the literal sense of the Word with no thought about the meaning of the spiritual sense. For which reason, *P&P* teaches, there is just cause for "lamentation." How does the Word picture for us the devastation of the church?

- **Animals groan.** Affections long to be instructed and nourished.
- **Herds of cattle are restless.** Internals and externals feel a sense of alienation.
- **There is a loss of pastures.** The understanding languishes because of the lack of instructional feeding.
- **The flocks of sheep suffer punishment.** Innocence of wisdom is conflicted.
- **Fire devours the open pastures.** Self-love burns away at the core of a person's understanding.
- **The flame has burned all of the trees of the field.** There is a loss of knowledge.
- **The beasts of the field cry out to the Lord.** There is a sense of desperation for the Lord's help.
- **The water brooks are dried up.** Thirst for the living waters of the Lord is felt when human wisdom can't quench the soul's deep thirst for genuine truth.
- **Fire devours the open pastures.** Self love burns away the core of a person's will.

Have we come any closer to understanding this section of the prophetic meaning of the church's lamentation? Is the universal church of our time experiencing anything that sounds akin to these spiritual symptoms?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 1:18-20*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. How many times have we read about the church being devastated? It seems that this is a theme that runs throughout the Prophets. Does hearing it so often dull or numb the "alarm" system of the conscience?

2. What usually brings about the devastation of the Church? The church is devastated when people fall in love with themselves and their own intelligence. Did this happen to everyone in the church? Weren't there a few faithful souls in the church? Can you picture a whole church gone off the deep end of self-love and self-intelligence? I can picture some sweet elderly woman or man doing charitable good to others. Can you, too? The Lord always preserves a remnant of the church, on which the new church can be founded. The devastation of the church happens when the Word is ignored, when the literal sense is twisted and misapplied, when people no longer seek the spiritual sense of the Lord's Word. Notice what action the Lord takes in this situation. He brings about the spirit of lamentation, a longing for innocence and peace.
3. Have you ever thought this process through? If we fail to study; if we fail to look for the inner sense; if we rely on our own wisdom and not the Lord's, lamentation rightly begins. The Lord grieves for us. His providence works to empty such self-centered thoughts from His Holy Temple. Do we share His zealous endeavor to guard the Word?
4. How can we keep indifferent attitudes from coming into our hearts? A loving worship of the Lord can keep the doors wide open. We can become mindful of the need to have periodic self-examination so the light of heaven can keep us on the right path. Do we? Will we?
5. Last question: Please take the time to read *CL* 532 and 533. What inspiration did you feel after reading these numbers? Do you have any ideas of how we can make the truths, written on the paper, shine like a star again?

Chapter Two

JOEL 2:1-3

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord is coming, for it is at hand: a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will there ever be any such after them, even for many successive generations."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "The Lord will come and will execute judgment, when falsity and evil from the sensual has destroyed the whole church."

AE 405 [26]

- "...Jerusalem is called 'the mountain of holiness,' also 'the hill;' for 'the mountain of holiness,' likewise 'hill,' signify spiritual good, which in its essence is truth from good, as can be seen from the following passages." *Joel 2:1* is cited.

AC 1860 [3]

- "That 'darkness' signifies falsity, and 'thick darkness' evil, may be seen from the following passages in the Word." *Joel 2:1-2* is cited.

AC 2405 [3]

- "In Joel...2:1, 2...The Lord's advent and His kingdom are treated of; it is said a 'day of darkness and of thick darkness,' because the good are then being separated from the evil...and after the good have been separated, then the evil perish."

AC 7688 [2]

- "In these passages 'darkness' signifies falsities. In the Word 'darkness' also signifies ignorance of truth, such as the Gentiles are in who have not the Word and know nothing of the Lord." *Joel 2:1-2* is cited.

AC 7711 [2]

- "That in the Word both 'darkness' and 'thick darkness' are mentioned together, and that 'darkness' then denotes the privation of truth, and thick darkness the privation of both truth and good, can be seen from the following passages." *Joel 1:1-2* is cited.

AR 397

- "...it may be seen what is signified by 'sounding with trumpets.' That here...is signified the exploration and manifestation of what the state of the church is with those whose religion is faith alone..." *Joel 2:1-2* is cited.

AE 502 [8]

- "...'sounds of trumpets' signify Divine truth coming down out of heaven, and terrifying the evil and dispersing them...In *Joel 2:1, 2*...‘The day of Jehovah’ is the coming of the Lord, when also the Last Judgment takes place on the evil."

AC 9434 [4]

- "In these passages by a 'devouring fire' is meant the fire of the cupidities which arise from the loves of self and of the world, because this is the fire which consumes a man, and which vastates the church..." *Joel 2:1-3* is cited as an example passage.

AE 504 [34]

- "...‘the day of Jehovah,’ which is the Last Judgment, is predicated in the Prophets...In *Joel...2:1-3*..."

AE 1135 [2]

- "...in the Word those are called 'mighty' who are in evils and falsities therefrom, and have fortified themselves by means of devices against the goods and truths of the church, thus those with whom the church is devastated, and who devastate the church with others. As in *Joel...2:1, 2, 7*...where also the Last Judgment is treated of, which is signified by 'the day of Jehovah, a day of darkness and of thick darkness.' Those who are in falsities of evil and have fortified their falsities against truths by reasonings and by falsifications of the Word, are signified by 'a people great and mighty;' that they reason from falsities against truths, and thus assail truths..."

AC 31

- "That the 'great luminaries' signify love and faith, and are also called 'sun, moon, and stars,' is evident from the Prophets, as in...*Joel 2:1, 2, 10...*"

Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 14 [3]

- "In *Joel 2:1, 2, 10; 3:15...*'The day of Jehovah' means the Lord's advent, which took place when there was no longer anything good and true left in the church, and not any knowledge of the Lord."

Brief Exposition 78

- "In all these passages it treats of the last time of the Jewish Church, which was when the Lord came into the world..." *Joel 2:1, 2, and 10* are cited.

TCR 198

- "By 'the day of Jehovah' the coming of the Lord is meant, which took place when there no longer remained in the church any good of love or truth of faith, or any knowledge of the Lord; therefore it is called 'a day of darkness and of thick darkness.'" *Joel 2:1, 2, 10, and 3:15* are cited.

AE 526 [4]

- "...the Last Judgment...is meant by 'the day of Jehovah great and terrible;' and as this comes when the church is in darkness and in thick darkness..." *Joel 2:1, 2, and 10* are cited.

AC 488 [2]

- "In *Joel...2:1, 2...*where 'day' signifies a state of darkness and thick darkness, of cloud and of obscurity, with each one in particular, and with all in general."

Doctrine of the Lord 4

- "I shall in this first chapter merely adduce passages from the Word which contain the expressions 'that day,' 'in that day,' and 'in that time;' in which, by 'day,' and 'time,' is meant the Lord's advent." *Joel 2:1-2* is cited along with eight other verses in the chapters of *Joel*.

AR 704

- "...there are many more [passages], in which the Lord's coming and the New Church from Him at that time are meant by 'the day of Jehovah'..." *Joel 2:1, 2, and 11* are cited.

TCR 82 [2]

- "...that it was Jehovah God Himself who descended and became Man, is made clear in the following passages...see also the places where the Lord's coming is called 'the day of Jehovah' as in...*Joel 2:1, 2, 11...*"

TCR 689

- "From all this it is clear that unless a way had been made ready for Jehovah when He was descending into the world, by means of baptism, the effect of which in heaven was to close up the hells and guard the Jews against total destruction [they would all have perished]." *Joel 2:1, 2, 11, and 3:2, 4* are cited.

AC 1861 [14]

- "...'fire' denotes the infernal punishment of those who...pass their lives in the falsity of hatred. In the sense of the letter such 'fire' and 'fury' are attributed to Jehovah, but in the internal sense it is quite the contrary." *Joel 2:1 and 3* are cited.

AR 546

- "That by 'a wilderness' is signified the church devastated, or in which all the truths of the Word are falsified, such as it was among the Jews in the Lord's time, appears from these passages..." *Joel 2:1 and 3* is cited.

AE 730 [14]

- "In [Joel 2:1, 3] 'The day of Jehovah' means the end of the church, called the consummation of the age, and the Lord's coming at that time. That at the end of the church the love of self and the consequent pride of self-intelligence consume all its goods and truths is signified by 'a fire devoureth before him, and behind him a flame kindleth,' 'fire' signifying the love of self, and 'flame' the pride of self-intelligence..."

AE 372 [7]

- "From this it can be seen that 'black (nigrum)' and 'black (atrum)' in the Word signify the absence of truth; and 'darkness,' 'clouds,' 'obscurity,' and many things from which blackness arises have a like signification. As in Joel...2:2..."

AE 594 [18]

- "So the Last Judgment, when those who are in the falsities of evil are to perish, is called: 'A day of cloud and of obscurity' (Joel 2:2...)..."

AC 5376 [12]

- "In Joel...2:2, 3...it is evident that desolation is the apparent deprivation of truth with those who are being regenerated, but is the absolute deprivation of it with those who are not being regenerated."

AE 783 [3]

- "...those who are in falsities are called in the Word 'powerful,' 'vigorous,' 'mighty,' 'strong,' 'heroes,' 'rulers,' 'terrible,' 'dreadful,' and wasters, as can be seen from various passages, as from the following." *Joel 2:2 and 7* are cited.

AC 2495 [2 & 3]

- "...in the consummation of the age (or last period of the church) there will no longer be any love, or charity, nor therefore any faith. That this is the meaning is evident from similar words of the Lord in the Prophets, as in...*Joel...2:2, 10.*"

Derived Doctrine

"Blow [sound] the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My Holy mountain!"

- "Sound" signifies the influx of truths and also the announcement of truth (*AC 9926*).
- In *AC 8815*, we read "...the voice," or sound, 'of a trumpet,' [signifies] the truth of celestial good...and 'a trumpet' celestial good..."
- To "sound" a "trumpet," or "horn," signifies to announce that the intellectual of the church has been laid to waste (*AC 4592 [10]*).
- "Zion" signifies heaven and the church where the Lord alone is worshipped(*AR 612*).
- "Zion" signifies a new church among the gentiles that should acknowledge the Lord (*AE 721 [8]* and *AE 730 [27]*).
- "Zion" signifies the advent of the Lord, and the establishment of the church by Him among those who are in the good of love (*AE 433 [8]*).

- To "warn" the people represents "that they should not desire to go up to the heaven where the Divine celestial is." In other words, the warning was issued that they should not seek to bring damnation upon themselves by seeking to become god-like (*AC 8830*).
- "Mountain of holiness" signifies heaven, especially the inmost heaven where love to the Lord prevails (*AE 314 [4]*).
- The "mountain of Jehovah" and "rock of Israel" signify the Lord and goods of love, and the Lord and goods of charity, respectively (*AC 795 [3]*).

"Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble..."

- "Inhabitants of the world" in the positive sense signify people of the church who are in the goods of doctrine, and so of life (*AE 741 [6]*).
- It would appear that those who were not in the goods of doctrine and a life in accordance to them needed to tremble. "Trembling" signifies feeling distress during temptation (*AE 282 [6]*).
- "Land" signifies various things: the internal man of the church, the region where the church is, the church itself, the doctrine of love and charity where the faith of the church resides (*AC 2571*).

"A people come, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will there ever be any such after them..."

- As an important reminder of what this passage means, recall the direct teachings of *AE 1135 [2]*. The people of this church played games with the power of their reasoning. They took falsities and used them to assault truths, to make truths look like lies. We are given an example of the magnitude of their malignancy. They imagined themselves to be invincible giants in the land. "...nor will there ever be any such after them." That is not a compliment. That is a reassuring promise from the Lord. The rise and establishment of the Lord's New Church would subdue the spiritual lunacy of hell. Hell's imagined invincibility would melt away in the presence of the Sun of Heaven. Never again! Never again!

Putting It All Together

The last paragraph of the Derived Doctrine section sets us on course to "put it all together" in this section.

P&P teaches that the Lord will come and execute judgment. **For the evil**, it will be a day of terrible judgment. Of course! **The evil sense** that their power to twist truth into lies is over. **Evil's imagined power** over others will end. **For the evil**, it will be a day of darkness and gloominess. **The evil** will feel the loss of their control, and they are not happy about that. The giants of hell are to be made insignificant "midgets," and they are sad about that reality. How do we know that this is so? The

Lord has said so! He is the all-knowing and all-powerful Lord of heaven. Nothing can stand in His presence and challenge Him.

On the other side of this prophecy stands the Sun of Heaven offering light, warmth, and optimism to the faithful remnant preserved by the Lord. The Lord shares **with the faithful** the news that never again will there be the likes of these adulterers, prevaricators, deceivers, intimidators, and haters of the Lord. Their reign of terror is over! **To the faithful**, this is a day of joy and good news. Take heart all you who wait for the Lord. He is coming. Sound the alarm. Spread the good word from His holy mountain: "This is the day that the Lord has made. We will be glad and rejoice in it."

Does your heart thrill at the news of this righting of wrong and terror? It needs to because the next portion of Joel's prophecy speaks of the hells attempting to be men of war and heroes. Hell threatens the city. The hells act like strong horses leaping over mountaintops. They climb the walls of the city and break in through windows. They lunge with weapons. Chaos breaks out throughout the city.

While reading further in *Joel*, we must come back to these verses to remember the Lord's promise that hell will be defeated. Knowing this truth calms the spirit and builds our anticipation of good winning out over evil.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:1-3*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Why is it that evil never learns that it cannot stand against the Lord and win?
2. How can evil love to twist truth to falsity?
3. Hellish spirits want to make others unhappy. They enjoy and burn with a plan to pull people away from the Lord. Does the thought of this plan rally you to the cause of working with the Lord to overcome their plan?
4. The lunacy of hell is sad, empty, and illogical. The sanity of heaven is happy, full, and lucid. Is there really a question about which one we want for our lives to eternity?

JOEL 2:4-9

"Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; and like swift steeds, so they run. With a noise like chariots over mountaintops they leap, like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble, like a strong people set in battle array. Before them the people writhe in pain; all faces are drained of color. They run like mighty men, they climb the wall like men of war; every one marches in formation, and they do not break

ranks. They do not push one another; every one marches in his own column. Though they lunge between the weapons, they are not cut down. They run to and fro in the city, they run on the wall; they climb into the houses, they enter at the windows like a thief."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Falsity of evil will destroy all things of it by various insanities."

AC 5135 [9]

- "In Joel 2:7 and 9...a 'great people and mighty' denotes falsities fighting against truths...and because they fight mightily in destroying truths, they are said to be 'like heroes and men of war;' the 'city' through which they are said to 'run to and fro' denotes the doctrinals of truth...The 'houses into which they shall climb' denote the goods which they destroy...The 'windows through which they shall enter in' denote things intellectual and the derivative reasonings...hence they are compared to a 'thief' because they take possession of the abode previously occupied by truths and goods."

AE 412 [30]

- "In Joel 2:6...this treats of evils and falsities devastating the church, and of the judgment upon those who are in them; those who are in falsities are signified by 'the peoples who tremble;' their interiors which are in falsities of evil are signified by 'the faces that have gathered blackness;' 'faces' meaning the interiors, and 'blackness' the falsity of evil. The infernals who are in falsities from evil appear black in the light of heaven."

AE 746 [4, 5, & 6]

- "'Man and brother' signify truth and good, and in the contrary sense falsity and evil...'brother and companion' signifying good from which is truth and truth from good, and in the contrary sense evil from which is falsity and falsity from evil..." AE 746 [6] quotes *Joel 2:8* as an example.

AC 3391 [2]

- "In [Joel 2:9]...speaking of the evils and falsities of the last days of the church; 'climbing up into the houses' denotes destroying the goods of the will (that 'house' denotes the goods of the will may be seen...n. 710, 2233, 2334); and 'entering in by the windows' denotes destroying truths and their knowledges which are of the understanding."

AR 164

- "Since good and truth are taken away from those who are in dead worship, as if it were done by a thief in the dark, therefore in the Word the same is sometimes likened to a thief, as in the following passages..." *Joel 2:9* is cited as an example.

AR 898

- "...a wall great and high, signifies the Word in the sense of the letter from which is the doctrine of the New Church...Nothing else is meant by its 'wall' but the Word in the sense of the letter...for that sense protects the spiritual sense, which lies hidden within, as the wall does a city and its inhabitants...And that this sense is the guard, lest the interior Divine truths, which are those of the spiritual sense, should be injured...It is called 'a wall great and high,' because...'great' is predicated of good, and 'high' of truth...[as may be seen] in the following passages..." *Joel 2:9* is cited.

TCR 318

- "...to steal means to deprive others of the truths of their faith, which is done by means of falsities and heresies. Priests, who minister solely for gain or from a lust for honor, and teach what they see or might see from the Word to be untrue, are spiritual thieves, since they take away from the people the means of salvation, which are the truths of faith. Such are called thieves in the Word, in the following passages..." *Joel 2:9* is cited.

AE 193 [7]

- "In *Joel* (2:9)...The vastation of the church through falsities from evil is here treated of; 'city' and 'wall' signify the things of doctrine; 'houses' and 'windows' things pertaining to the mind that receives; 'houses' that part of the mind that is called the will, where good is, and 'windows' that part of the mind that is called the understanding, where truth is. (That 'city' in the Word is doctrine, see *Arcana Coelestia*, n. 402, 2449, 2712, 2943, 3216, 4492, 4493; that 'wall' is the truth of doctrine defending, n. 6419; that 'house' is that part of the mind which is called the will, where good is, n. 2231, 2233, 2559, 3128, 5023, 6690, 7353, 7910, 7929, 9150; and 'windows' that part of the mind which is called the understanding where truth is, n. 655, 658, 3391.) From this it is clear what is signified by 'running upon the wall,' 'coming up into the houses,' and 'entering in through the windows like a thief.'

AE 1005

- "Behold I come as a thief, signifies the Lord's coming and the Last Judgment at that time. This is evident from the signification of 'coming as a thief,' as being in reference to the Lord, His coming and the Last Judgment...This is the signification of 'coming as a thief,' because taking away the knowledges of good and truth, and devastating the church, as a thief takes away wealth and robs a house, is attributed to the Lord; also because the church is then in night and in darkness, that is, in falsities from evil, and the last state of the church is called 'night,' and the falsities of evil that then prevail are called 'darkness,' and a thief comes in the night when it is dark. This is why the Lord's coming and Last Judgment are compared to a thief..." *Joel 2:9* is cited as an example.

Derived Doctrine

"Their appearance is like the appearance of horses..."

- *AC 589* teaches "...the Word was spoken according to the **appearances** with man. Whoever therefore desires to confirm false principles by the **appearances**, according to which the Word was spoken, can do so by passages without number. But it is one thing to confirm false principles by the Word, and another to believe in simplicity what is in the Word. He who confirms false principles...scrapes together and accumulates confirmations wherever he can, thus also from the Word, until he so strongly persuades himself that he can no longer see the truth" (emphasis added).
- The word "appearances" is mentioned twice. Could such a repetition be used to illustrate how the will and understanding are influenced to confirm an error by appearances?
- *AR 298* teaches that "horses" signify the Word and the understanding of the Word. Think about the colors of the horses mentioned in *Revelation 6*: white, red, black, and pale. The progression of colors from white to pale is used to signify the stages the Word goes through when it is falsified.

"...like swift steeds, so they run."

- "Swift" is used when referring to intelligence and the affection of truth. In the opposite sense, "swift" signifies reasoning against truth. See *AE 281 [7 & 10]*.
- The word "steed" is used when referring to a spirited horse, a stud horse, or a war horse, according to *Webster's Dictionary*.
- "...like swift steeds" has a positive and negative usage in the Word. Which way are we to understand the meaning of this passage? It seems that we are led to see it in the negative sense. Hell imagines itself to be swift, virile, and so clever.

"...so they run."

- Picture the meaning of this in your mind. We have an expression, "running with our thoughts." Can we see the hells running with their insane thoughts like wild steeds? What kind of emotions do they display to all they hope to intimidate? Listen to the next part!

"With a noise like chariots..."

- *AC 5321 [10]* defines "chariots," in the negative sense, as representing the doctrine of evil and falsity with the outward (worldly) knowledge or "facts" confirming it. The noisy shouting of how wise and true evil's thinking is comes to mind.
- If these things had been said of the Lord, they would have corresponded to doctrinal things of good and truth leading the way to salvation (*AE 355 [4]* and *AC 5321 [6]*).

"...like chariots over mountaintops they leap, like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble."

- "Over" signifies having a glimpse of what is within (*AR 800*).
- Because we know this passage is describing the hells, we can turn to the negative correspondence of "mountain." *AR 336* and *AE 411* describe "mountains" as signifying evils which spring from the love of self and of the world.
- "Leaping" in the positive sense represents an expression of joy from the conjunction of good and truth. Thus, there is a sense of joyousness (*AE 710 [31]*). Once again, we must consider this correspondence of "leaping" in its negative sense. In a negative sense, this meaning of "leaping" suggests that the hells were delighted with themselves over their delusional false perception of their mighty disjunction of good and truth.
- "...the noise of a flaming fire..." Can we hear the snap and crackle and see the flying sparks of self-love burning away within their hearts? *AC 306* describes the meaning of "flame of a sword" as self-love "with its insane desires and consequent persuasions...carried away to corporeal and earthly things..."
- "Devours" signifies the destruction of doctrine at its inception (*AR 542*). *AC 9348 [4]* teaches that "devours" signifies the destruction of goods and truths.
- "Stubble" signifies outward knowledges we are taught by other people (*AC 7131*). Stubble is also referred to as "chaff," which signifies the casting down and subjugation of the hells by the Lord when external knowledges are scattered and removed (*AC 2468*).

"...like a strong people set in battle array."

- "Strong" in the good sense signifies truth, which cannot be resisted (*AC 426 [3]*). "Strong" in the good sense also signifies the celestial church that is in the good of love to the Lord (*AC 4545 [2]*). "Strong" in the negative sense describes the evil of the love of self (*AC 6306 [4]*).
- "Battle" in the negative sense signifies falsity fighting the truth of the New Church (*AR 431 and 704*). "Battle array" refers to armament, or battle clothing, worn by a warrior. What would an angel wear? What would an evil warrior wear? For hellish spirits, the clothing would consist of secular reasoning that would support their claim of invincibility and power over the Lord and His church. They would use practiced, smooth, cunning angles to prey on the unsuspecting, spiritually uninformed, and uneducated souls. In contrast, angels would be clothed with the finest truths of eternal unity with the Lord and His Word.

"Before them the people writhe in pain..."

- "Writhing" signifies cunning and deceit (*AE 581 [8]*).
- "Pain," "sore," and "sorrow" signify conflicts with resulting anxieties (*AC 261*).
- "Pain" signifies lusts that cause misery (*AC 4496*).

"...all faces are drained of color"

- Note Bene: The *New King James Bible* uses "faces are drained of color," and the *Revised Standard Version* has "all faces grow pale." Whereas the *King James Bible* and the Writings read "all faces gather blackness." What do we do with this difference? My inclination is to go with the "faces gathering blackness" because of the direct teaching we have in *AE 412 [30]*.

"...every one marches in formation, and they do not break ranks."

- *AC 3901 [7 & 8]* explains the meaning of "marching through the breadth of the land" as signifying the vastation of the truths of the church. In the positive sense, "marching" signifies the enlightenment of the gentiles by the Lord when He assumed the Human (*AE 594 [13]*). In this verse, it appears that "marching" is meant to illustrate both senses. In the negative sense, it announces the inevitable judgment on the vastated church, which would occur even though it appeared solidly organized, in step, and unified. And it could be a positive prophetical promise that enlightenment would be restored to the world and church through the advent of the Lord.

"...they do not push one another; every one marches in his own column."

- Let's first focus on the spiritual meaning of "push," shove, or jostle. *AC 8593* describes the nature of hellish genii as "pushers" of anyone who tires or weakens in the process of regeneration. *AC 4585* describes the minds of people who don't want to believe in things that belong to eternal life as people who like to "push" ideas from themselves and at heart reject truth from the moment they see it. *New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* 71 describes the spiritually insane and those with immoderate lusts as people who aspire to "unlimited power and glory," who desire **"to push their rule into heaven and transfer to themselves the Divine power of the Lord..."** and constantly crave to go even beyond this" (emphasis added). *Spiritual Experiences (SE)* 2121 describes vicious groups, hard to control, who gang up and harass people, relishing the chance to push people around in an insolent manner, constantly trying to bring harm and destruction upon many.
- What does the above information tell us about the possible meaning of this verse? I sense that hell doesn't argue with itself when it purposed to "push" the spiritual things of the Word around. Hell hopes to find the Lord's believers in a tired and wavering state. Hell is unified in its rejection of the Lord's truth from the moment it sees or hears it. Hell is marching in unison to usurp the Divine power of the Lord. Hell is an unruly gang that acts up in an insolent way to bring harm and destruction to those who love the Lord.
Therefore, they don't push each other, and they all assume their own column to wage war against the Lord and His followers.
- The image of everyone marching in his own column seems to be representative of the idea that they had their cadence, their own ideas, and eventually, their own spiritual rut. The expression, "Johnny One-Note," refers to this kind of absence of variety or harmony. It describes the shouting of one idea without consideration of the myriad avenues truth has to offer.

"Though they lunge between the weapons, they are not cut down."

- How are we to picture what this passage means? Do we see them thrusting their weapons wildly to and fro? Do they jump between the thrusts, narrowly avoiding being cut or killed?
- *AC 9141 [4]* teaches that in the negative sense, "weapons" signify the consuming and desolating of good and truth. In the positive sense, "weapons" signifies the truths of doctrine from the Word, which afford protection from the falsities of evil.
- Will the rebellious ones escape accountability for their assault on the city? We know the answer to this question. In the end, evil loses. The Lord will win!

Putting It All Together

The Lord outlines for us in this section of the Word a story of hell's imagined power. He shows us the hoard of spirited warriors. He lets us see their imagined agility and likens them to horses, swift steeds, and chariots. They have a leaping ability; they run like mighty men and climb the walls of buildings, entering through the windows. It appears that they march in ordered rows with a cadence of deafening proportion. Their faces are blackened and ugly. They thrust their weapons in chaotic motions. Amazingly, they don't do harm to themselves. They are not our friends. Instead, they are called thieves, and they wish to rob us of our goods.

Is the Lord's purpose in telling us this **just** to scare us? I don't think that is the plan. Instead, I believe He shows us this picture so that we have a feeling of revulsion for the hells. Listen to this teaching in *AC 1740 [3]*:

"...the greater the horror that is conceived for evils and falsities, the more of love for goods and truths is insinuated by the Lord. And further, the greater the horror for evils and falsities the less do evil spirits dare to approach, for they cannot endure aversion and horror for the evils and falsities in which their life consists..." (emphasis added).

CL 249 urges us to become involved in the uses and resistance plan outlined by the Lord in the Word. By doing this, we let our mind be "bound and circumscribed as by a circle, within which it is successively integrated into a form truly human. From this as from a house [each person] sees the various lusts as outside of himself, and from sanity of reason within, banishes them."

Scary as hell might appear in these verses, it is essential that we know and remember, at all times, that hell is not what it appears to be. The Lord has a plan for us that is powerfully summed up in this passage of *AC 1717 [2]*: "...he who is in combats of temptations, and conquers, acquires more power over evil spirits...until at last **they dare not attempt anything**" (emphasis added).

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:4-9*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Were you able to put the bullies of hell in their proper perspective after reflecting on the meaning and uses of these verses? When do we most need to do this?

2. Do you feel you can use the Lord's plan for revulsion against the hells? If yes—how? If no—why not?
3. Why were the hells able to thrust their weapons wildly and not bring harm to themselves?
4. Doesn't the Lord do this in the deepest of the hells as well? He mercifully sends His tender angels there to snap them, ever so briefly, back to a moment of sanity so they can't do harm to themselves and others. What does this tell us about the Lord?
5. What did you think about the passages in the Putting It All Together section that tell us of the great victories we can have over hell?

JOEL 2:10

"The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble; the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "All good and truth has been dispersed, together with the knowledges (cognitions) of them."

AC 1066 [2]

- "In Joel 2:10...The church and the things of the church...are said to quake...when these are vastated, 'heaven and earth' are said to quake, and the 'sun and moon' to grow dark, that is, love and faith."

AC 1808 [3, 4, & 7]

- "Every one can see that by 'the stars' and 'constellations' here are not meant stars and constellations, but things true and good; and by 'the sun,' and by 'the moon,' faith; for the evils and falsities which cause darkness are treated of...by 'the sun' the celestial things of love, by 'the moon' the spiritual things, by 'the stars' things good and true, that is, the knowledges of what is good and true, which are thus darkened near the consummation of the age, when there is no faith, that is no charity." *Joel 2:10* is cited.

AC 2441 [4 & 5]

- "To those who are in evils of the love of self and of the world, that is, to those who are in hatreds against all things of love to the Lord and of charity toward the neighbor, the light of heaven actually appears as thick darkness; on which account it is said in the Word that to such the 'sun was blackened;' by which

is signified that they rejected everything of love and charity, and received everything that is contrary thereto...As in *Joel 2:10*..."

AC 3355 [3]

- "In *Joel 2:10*...the subject is the day of the Last Judgment; the 'earth quaking' denotes a changed state of the church; the 'sun and moon,' the good of love and its truth (n. 1529, 1530, 2441, 2495), which are said to 'become black,' when goods and truths are no longer acknowledged; the 'stars' denote the knowledges of good and truth (n. 2495, 2849)."

HH 119

- *Joel 2:10*, among other references, is cited: "In these passages the 'sun' signifies love, and the 'moon' faith, and 'stars' knowledges of good and truth. These are said to be darkened, to lose their light, and to fall from heaven, when they are no more. That the Lord is seen as a sun in heaven is evident also from His appearance when transfigured before Peter, James, and John."

AR 51

- "By 'stars falling from heaven' are not meant stars, but that the knowledges of good and truth will perish." *Joel 2:10* is cited.

AR 312

- "They who appear in the abominable kind of blackness are called devils, such holding truth in abomination as horned owls do the light of the sun. But they appear in that kind of blackness...That 'black,' in the Word, is spoken of falsity, may appear from these passages..." *Joel 2:10* is cited.

AR 331

- "'Earthquakes' signify changes of state in the church, because 'the earth' signifies the church...and because in the spiritual world, when the state of the church is perverted anywhere and there is a change, there is an earthquake, and as this is a prelude to their destruction, there is terror...But these things are to be understood as being done in the spiritual world, but not in the natural world..." *Joel 2:10* is cited.

AR 413

- "...by 'the sun' is signified love...by 'the moon' is signified intelligence and faith...by 'stars' are signified the knowledges of truth and good from the Word...by 'being darkened' is signified not to be seen or known by reason of

evils from falsities and falsities from evils. Evils from falsities are with those who assume the falsities of religion, and confirm them till they appear as truths, and when they live according to them they do evils from falsities, or the evils of falsity...When light is extinguished, there comes darkness." *Joel 2:10* is cited as an example.

AE 372 [3]

- "...'sun' signifies the good of love, and 'moon' the truth of faith." Later in *AE 372 [b]*, *Joel 2:10* is cited as an example.

AE 400 [3]

- "In Joel...2:10...'Earth and the heavens' here, as often elsewhere, signify the church; 'earth' the external church, and 'heavens' the internal church. The external church means the worship from good and truth in the natural man; and the internal church, the good of love and the faith, which is in the spiritual man, from which is worship; for as there is an internal and external man, or a spiritual and a natural man, so is it with the church...A change and perversion of the church is signified by 'the earth trembled, and the heavens quaked;' 'the sun and the moon were blackened' signifies that there is no good of love or truth of faith, and 'the stars withdrew their brightness' signifies that there were no longer any knowledges of truth and good."

Canons, chapter IV [5]

- In this passage, *Joel 2:10* is cited as an example of the following: "The progression of the church to its end, and the end itself, are described in very many places in the Word."

Derived Doctrine

The direct teachings on *Joel 2:10* are so complete that we have no need to use derived doctrine this time.

Putting It All Together

To get into the meaning of this verse, let's think about **end, cause, and effect**. **End** relates to that which is first—love of the Lord. **Cause** relates to that which is of wisdom from the Lord. **Effect** relates to uses or the application of love and wisdom in life as shown by the Lord.

When love for the Lord (End), represented by the sun, is significantly perverted in the heart and mind of the church, consequences follow the pollution of that love. The faith (Cause), represented by the moon, loses its light. From science classes, we

have learned that the moon has no light of its own. The moon reflects the light of the sun. On the spiritual plane, it thus makes sense that if the spiritual sun is darkened by our actions or lack of love, the spiritual moon will be darkened. Since the earliest times, stars have been likened to knowledge. Reading the stars was a science among the ancients. When love darkens and faith loses its light, it follows that the stars will fall from the heavens. The loss of love leads to a loss of wisdom; darkness covers the way of faith, and without the stars, we lose the ability to chart the course of life's voyage.

Lastly, let's not overlook a quote found in *AR* 331: "...when the state of the church is perverted **anywhere** and there is **change**, there is an **earthquake**...these things are to be understood as being done in the spiritual world...not in the natural world..." (emphasis added). Implied in this quote is an "end, cause, and effect" challenge to the church and each individual within the church. We need to keep the sun of heaven shining brightly. We need to seek out the Lord's wisdom so the moon of our faith reflects the truths of the Word. Anything less perverts and pushes for changes in the alignment of the stars.

I can't imagine how horrible and devastated our natural world would be without the sun, moon, and stars. Disorientation, psychotic feelings of hopelessness, and death would overtake life quickly. What must it be like within someone's spiritual life when they purposefully choose to exclude the Lord from their daily life?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:10*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. With a dozen direct quotes from the Writings, it appears that we should have little trouble understanding the meaning of *Joel 2:10*. Was this your experience? What did you get from this verse?
2. How much do you think the events of the world have caused "quakes" in the spiritual world, or vice versa?
3. When we make church policies, have you ever wondered about the long-term effects these policies might have on the life of the church? How can we guard against setting into motion things that might eclipse the sun of heaven?
4. The choice to exclude the Lord from our lives was addressed in our study of *Joel 2:10*. Have you come up with a mental picture of the darkness this causes within?
5. Having asked that question, let's examine what we can do to protect the sun, moon, and stars of our spiritual life. Can a daily study regimen do us good? Will application of doctrine to life do it?

6. Lastly, the Writings teach us that thinking from END to CAUSE to EFFECT is the correct way to follow the Lord. Thinking from EFFECT to CAUSE to END is the wrong way. Why would this be so?

JOEL 2:11

"The Lord gives voice before His army, for His camp is very great; for strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; who can endure it?"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "The Lord will fight with them."

AC 4236 [3]

- "That the 'camp of God' denotes heaven may...be seen in Joel...2:10-11..."

AC 7573 [2]

- "...'the voice of Jehovah' denotes truth Divine, which enlightens and perfects those who are in good, and terrifies and devastates those who are in evil." *Joel 2:10-11* is cited as an example.

AR 862

- "That 'a camp' in the spiritual sense signifies all things of the church which have relation to its truths and goods...That by 'an army' in the Word are signified the truths and goods of the church, also its falsities and evils..." *Joel 2:10-11* is cited as an example.

AC 3448 [6]

- "...where the coming of the Lord is treated of...His 'army' denotes truths Divine. It is from this, and also because the Lord alone fights for man against the hells which are in the continual effort to assault him, that in the Word the Lord is so often called 'Jehovah Zebaoth,' God Zebaoth,' the 'Lord Zebaoth,' that is, 'of armies,' ..." *Joel 2:11* is among the various passages cited.

AC 9926 [6]

- In *Joel 2:11*, "the voice'...denotes Divine truth, consequently the Word of the Lord..."

AC 9987 [4]

- "...all truth which is from the Divine is called the 'word,' as in *Joel...2:11*...where the 'voice which Jehovah utters' denotes truth from the Divine...the 'camp of Jehovah' denotes heaven...From this it is evident that 'countless is he that doeth His word' denotes one who does truth Divine."

Doctrine of the Lord 14 [4 & 5]

- "Their 'strong ones,' and 'enemies,' are the hells, for all there feel hatred against the Lord. His advent into the world for this purpose is meant by, 'that day is to the Lord Jehovah Zebaoth a day of vengeance, that He may take vengeance of His enemies.'" *Joel 2:11* is mentioned as an example.

AR 37

- "...a great voice,' when heard from heaven, signifies the Divine truth..." *Joel 2:11* is cited as an example.

AR 447

- "Since the goods and truths of heaven and the church are signified by 'the hosts (armies) of the heavens,' the Lord is therefore called 'JEHOVAH ZEBAOTH,' that is, Jehovah of armies (hosts)..." *Joel 2:11* is cited.

AE 261 [4]

- "In *Joel...2:11*...That Divine truth here is 'the voice of Jehovah' is evident, as in many places."

AE 414

- "...in *Joel...2:11*...'to stand,' like walking and sitting, in the Word signifies to be and to live; and 'to stand,' has a similar meaning with to stand firm and stand still."

AE 573 [5]

- "That the angels are called 'hosts' is evident from the following passages. In *Joel...2:11*...The angels gathered together, or a company of them, is called 'a

host,' because 'the angels,' the same as 'hosts,' signify Divine truths and goods, because they are recipients of these from the Lord..."

Derived Doctrine

It would appear from the number of direct teachings we have for this passage that there is no need for us to seek additional help from derived doctrine. Therefore, we will move on to "putting it all together."

Putting It All Together

P&P states, "**The Lord will fight with them.**" Who are the "them" mentioned in this verse?

- The hells are "them."
- Those who feel hatred toward the Lord are "them."
- Those who oppose His advent are "them."
- Those who are in a continual effort to assault the Word of the Lord are "them."
- The 'strong ones' and 'enemies' are the 'them' who cannot endure the Lord's army.

What forces will the Lord draw together to wage war against "them," and what will be the result of this war?

- His "voice," which is truth Divine, will enlighten and perfect those who are in good and truth.
- His "voice" will devastate and terrify those who are in evil.
- The Lord's "camp," His church, will become His "army." The "camp" and its "army" will have the finest armament of goods and truths.
- Angels, the hosts, whose faces look to the Lord and receive instruction from Him, will assist the church in the fight against "them."

Those of us who feel hell is out of control and running amok in this world need to recall the words the Lord spoke in *Joshua 23:6*. He presents a powerful challenge to choose this day whom we shall serve: "**Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left...hold fast to the Lord your God...**"

We need to remain confident that hell ("them") will be devastated, that they will tremble and not endure when the day of the Lord comes. **For the "voice" of the Lord has said so.**

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:11*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Can you imagine the voice of the Lord calling together His army? Can you see the order of the camp? Do you remember Balaam's reaction when he was on the mountain looking down on the order and arrangement of the tribes of Israel? The order of the encampment prevented him from pronouncing a curse on Israel.
2. The hellish forces, misjudging their strength and ability to overthrow the Lord, come to a devastating end. When will they, when will we, learn that hell has no power in the presence of the Lord?
3. Did this verse boost your level of courage? Did it make you feel the worth of fighting against "them"?
4. "This day is to the Lord Jehovah Zebaoth a day of vengeance, that He may take vengeance of His enemies" (*Doctrine of the Lord 14 [4 & 5]*). Do these words comfort the "army" and strike fear in "them"?

JOEL 2:12-17

"Now, therefore,' says the Lord, 'turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and mourning.' So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm. Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him—a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and nursing babes; let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, and the bride from her dressing room. Let the priests, who minister to the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar; Let them say, 'spare Your people, O Lord, and do not give Your heritage to reproach, that the nations should rule over them. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Exhortation to be converted to Him, to repent, and to be wise."

AC 588 [3]

- "Repentings' plainly denote great mercy. So in Joel...2:13...where also to 'repent' manifestly denotes mercy."

AC 598 [3]

- "That there is a distinction in the Word between 'mercy' and 'grace' is evident from many passages where Jehovah is called 'merciful and gracious' (as in...Joel 2:13)...That 'grace' relates to spiritual things, which are of faith, or of the understanding...and that 'mercy' relates to celestial things which are of love, or of the will..."

AC 10441 [4 & 5]

- "...Jehovah is said to have 'repented,' when yet it cannot be that He repents, because He knows all things before He does them; from which it is evident that by 'repenting' is signified mercy...That 'repenting,' when said of Jehovah, denotes mercy, is plain in...Joel 2:13..."

AC 10577 [2]

- "That 'to show grace' denotes to endow with spiritual truth and good, and 'to show mercy' to endow with celestial truth and good, is because 'grace' is predicated of faith, and 'mercy' of love; and...those who are in the Lord's spiritual kingdom speak of 'grace;' and those who are in the Lord's celestial kingdom speak of 'mercy'...Unless there were such a difference between grace and mercy, it would not have been said, 'show grace' and 'show mercy.' From this it is that Jehovah is called 'gracious and merciful.' *Joel 2:13* is cited as an example.

AE 340 [17]

- "In Joel...2:14... 'blessing' signifies spiritual blessing, which in general has reference to good and truth proceeding from the Lord and given to man, therefore it is said, 'He will leave behind Him a blessing, a meal-offering and a drink-offering to our God,' 'the meal-offering,' which was bread, signifying good, and 'the drink-offering,' which was wine, signifying truth, both from the Lord, for it is said, 'from our God.'"

AC 5608 [7 & 9]

- "In Joel...2:15, 16... 'elders' denotes the wise; 'babes and those that suck the breasts,' the innocent...Man is so created that when he grows old and becomes like a little child, the innocence of wisdom conjoins itself with the

innocence of ignorance which he had in infancy, and so he passes into the other life as a true infant."

AR 797

- "By 'a bridegroom,' in the highest sense, is meant the Lord as to the Divine good; and by 'a bride' the church is meant as to the Divine truth from the Lord." *Joel 2:16* is cited among many other passages from the Word.

AE 1189

- "...so 'bridegroom and the bride' mean the conjunction of the Lord with the church, and also the conjunction of good and truth. Because all spiritual joy is from that conjunction, it follows that 'the voice of the bridegroom and the bride' signifies the joy therefrom. Moreover, the angels have all their wisdom and intelligence, and thus all their joy and happiness from that conjunction...This is the signification of 'the voice of the bridegroom and bride,'..." *Joel 2:16* is cited.

Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 86

- "That repetitions of the same thing occur in the Word on account of the marriage of good and truth, may be seen quite clearly from passages where 'nations' and 'peoples' are mentioned..." *Joel 2:17* is cited.

AR 483

- "That 'peoples' signify those who are in truths or falsities of doctrine, and 'nations' signify those who are in goods or in evils of life, may appear from many passages in the Word...Where 'peoples' and 'nations' are mentioned together...'peoples' relate to truth, and 'nations' to good." *Joel 2:17* is cited.

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- "Nations and peoples are mentioned together, because by nations those are meant who are in good, and in the opposite sense those who are evil; and by 'peoples' those are meant who are in truths...Therefore those who are of the Lord's spiritual kingdom are called 'peoples,' and those who are of the Lord's celestial kingdom are called 'nations;'" *Joel 2:17* is cited as one of many representative passages.

Derived Doctrine

"Now, therefore, says the Lord, turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and mourning."

- Is "now" used as a means to mark a transition from one thought to the next? Or is "now" used with a sense of immediacy? The present time is always a good time to begin changing.
- To "turn" signifies to begin a period of reflection upon revelation, to diverge from what one had previously been thinking (*AC 6836*).
- "Turn to Me" is a Divine directive from the Lord. The Lord is asking people to turn from thinking about themselves to thinking about the Lord, and to do so with all of their heart or love.
- "Fasting" signifies doing something to get over an unhappy state when good is no longer conjoined with truths (*AC 9182 [10]*).
- "Weeping" signifies both sorrow and joy (*AC 5773*). Thus, we need to be sorry for the periods of our life when there was a separation or removal of truths and feel consolation, or joy, when truths are restored to our life by the Lord.
- "Weeping and mourning" signify the grief of the soul and grief of heart; for weeping and mourning are representatives of the loss of truth and good (*AE 1164*).

"So rend your heart, and not your garments..."

- "Rending" signifies mourning on account of the destruction of truth or the absence of faith (*AC 4763*). It also signifies mourning because of the deprivation of Divine good and Divine truth (*AC 9960*).
- One's "heart" signifies the will. *AC 3813 [4]* reminds us that the Own (proprium) residing in the heart needs to be emptied out so that it can be vivified. Ridding ourselves of the human proprium and taking on the Lord's Proprium is a necessary work of regeneration. See *Doctrine of Life* 95-97.
- "Garments" in the positive sense represent truth in its lowest form. "Garments" represent the truths of memory such as appear in the Word. See *AC 9372 [8]*. Are these truths what is meant in this passage?

"Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness..."

- "Grace" and "mercy" were explained in *AC 598 [3]*. "Grace" relates to spiritual things, which are of faith and the understanding, and "mercy" relates to celestial things which are of love and the will. How do we get grace and mercy? By returning to the Lord with a willingness of heart and a sense of humility.
- "Slow" signifies successive states of preparation (*AC 4381*). "Anger" signifies in the highest sense the zeal of the Lord to protect and save. The work of the

- Lord to overcome evil is a slow and successive preparation. It is a plan that will root out all the tentacles of hell with a zealous love for His flock.
- The "kindness," or unfailing love, of the Lord signifies the protection afforded by His interior and superior truths (*AC* 4391).

"...and he relents from doing harm."

- Please read *AC* 587. The Lord only appears to relent as He sees and provides all things from eternity. The Lord intends nothing but good. Evil resisting the Lord's good ways calls His providential leading "doing harm." Evil projects itself in its image of the Lord, viewing His actions as interference with the way it seeks to have free rein and avoid abiding in His truth.

"Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him—a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord your God?"

- Every day, in thousands of ways, the Lord's Providence gifts us with blessings. Most of the Lord's blessings slip by our conscious sense of awareness. It's only later while looking back on our life that we see dimly a finite portion of the loving ways the Lord blessed our life. Our lack of perception doesn't stop the Divine benefactions. They flow on like a mighty river, carrying us in the "stream of Providence." Like the Psalmist, we can say "My cup runs over."
- A "grain offering" signifies interior goods and truths (*AC* 7112).
- "Drink" signifies a spirit of inquiry to investigate things belonging to faith (*AC* 1071). "Drink" signifies to inquire whether truth can be conjoined or appropriated (*AC* 3089).
- "Who knows" is a question that can broaden our spiritual awe of the Lord's love for us.

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly..."

- A "trumpet" or horn signifies Divine truth about to be revealed out of heaven (*AE* 55 and 502).
- "Zion" signifies the advent of the Lord and the establishment of the church by Him among those who are in the good of love (*AE* 433 [8]).
- To "consecrate" represents to prepare oneself for the Lord and to receive truth by good from Him (*AC* 10111).
- Fasting with consecrated efforts requires taking a spiritual inventory to see what spiritual goods and truths are lacking in life and application to uses.
- "Assembly" signifies to set things in order, for goods and truths cannot be assembled if they are lacking order (*AC* 6338). A "sacred assembly" speaks clearly about what kind of order is needed.

"...gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and nursing babes..."

- To "gather" signifies to store up truths in the memory (*AC 679*). To "gather" or "assemble" signifies to excite to do combat (*AR 707*). To "gather" or "collect" signifies to procure (*AC 6451*).
- By "gather the people" is signified the gathering of truths. Depending on the meaning of the internal sense, "people" can represent evil truths or good truths(*AR 483*).
- Elders, children, and nursing babes are discussed in *AC 5608 [7 & 9]*.

"...let the bridegroom go out from his chamber..."

- *AC 4638 [4]* describes the meaning of "bridegroom" as the Lord coming for judgment. *AR 797* teaches that "in the highest sense," a bridegroom represents the Lord as to Divine good.
- A "chamber" signifies the church as to its goods (*AC 3900 [1]*).
- *AC 9927* gives us a clue about the meaning of "going in and going out." Whatever belongs to motion, such as "walking," "going," or "advancing," signifies a state of life. "Going out" among "the ancients was a customary form of speaking to say that they knew a person's coming in and his going out, or his entrance and his departure, when they meant that they knew every state of his life." Thus, they were talking about knowing the quality of a person's good and truth in worship, and the thoughts and affections that flowed from worship into life. Now let's apply this knowledge to the Lord. He knows our "coming in" and our "going out" with respect to His "judgment" as the bridegroom.

"...and the bride from her dressing room."

- A "bride" signifies the proprium being made new and vivified by the Lord (*AC 155*). A bridegroom signifies the Lord as to divine good, and a bride signifies the church as to divine truth from Him (*AR 797*).
- A "dressing room" is a place where one puts on clothes that are appropriate for the occasion. In this case, the bride is there to put on her wedding clothes. "A 'wedding garment' signifies the intelligence of the spiritual man, which is from the knowledges of truth and good; but 'he that had not on a wedding garment' signifies a hypocrite, who by a moral life counterfeits the spiritual life..." (*AE 195 [11]*)
- "Clothing" signifies memory-knowledges that support one's external life (*AC 9003*).
- To "clothe" a person signifies to instruct that person in truths (*AE 240 [4]*).
- NB: Clothing serves as a kind of protection for the body, keeping us warm and helping us to look more attractive than we would without it. In the same

way, our minds can be clothed and protected by good and truth. The Lord's Word makes our minds much more interesting and attractive!

- The word "from" in this phrase ("from her dressing room") calls our attention to *AC* 9927 again. "Motion" signifies a state of life, and also the quality of good and truth in one's worship and application to life.

"Let the priests, who minister to the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar..."

- "Let" means allow, permit, don't impede, don't obstruct, give, and offer assistance to another person.
- "Priests" are to represent the Lord as to the Divine good in the work of salvation (*AC* 9809). The priests of Aaron and his sons, and the Levites, represent the work of salvation in successive order (*AC* 10017). Priests are to teach truth, and so lead to the good, and to the Lord (*AC* 10794).
- To "minister" signifies to serve and to mediate (*AC* 9419). To "minister" signifies to serve as a representative of the Lord (*AC* 9809). To "minister" signifies worship and preaching (*AC* 9925). To "minister" means to be called into **warfare** or **military service** because to minister represents the Lord's work of salvation in removing evils and falsities from hell that are continually fighting against goods and truths (*AE* 734 [14]).
- "Weeping" in the positive sense signifies the Lord's love and mercy. It is also a sign of the Lord's grief on account of the "night" state among His people as to the truths of faith in the church. See *AC* 2910. "Weeping" signifies both sorrow and joy (*AC* 5873).
- A "porch" signifies exterior truths that lead to interior things (*AC* 7353). A "vestibule" signifies truths leading to goods, which in turn reveal more interior truths (*AC* 9659 [5]).
- An "altar" signifies the Lord and the holy element in worshipping Him (*AC* 4541). An "altar" signifies the falsities from evil, which are to be dissipated (*AC* 10642). An "altar" signifies the preparation of the Lord's Human Divine for undergoing the last degrees of temptation (*AC* 2811). Lastly, this idea regarding an altar of incense: it signifies the grateful hearing and reception by the Lord of all the elements of worship that are from love and charity (*AC* 10176).
- Weeping **between** the porch and the altar signifies having preparation for conjunction of truth and good (*AC* 10237a).

"Let them say, 'spare Your people, O Lord, and do not give Your heritage to reproach, that the nations should rule over them...'"

- Let (permit) them to say...To "say" sometimes signifies "to perceive" and sometimes "to think" because saying involves both (*AC* 2619).
- "Spare" signifies intercession from love (*AC* 2253) and also salvation (*AC* 2262). "Spare" signifies the destruction of falsities before they are confirmed (*AE* 573 [11]).

- "Heritage" signifies the truths of the good in the natural man (*AE* 714 [25]).
- "Reproach" is translated as shame or disgrace. "Shame" signifies lacking the power to resist evils and falsities (*AC* 10481). "Shame" signifies having no power to resist evils from the proprium (*AE* 654 [59]). "Shame" is said to those who will be of the Lord's New Church to encourage them to learn truths and to retain them (*AR* 706).
- "Nations from afar," although not the exact wording of our passage, has an interesting signification. It signifies falsity from evil, or that of the sensuous person, destroying truths (*AE* 724 [27]). "Nations" signify evils of the will, or lusts, while "people" signify falsities of the understanding, or persuasions (*AC* 622).
- To "rule" signifies having a degree of dominion. What kind? Is it the dominion of freedom from the Lord or the dominion of slavery from hell?

"Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

- A believer's **understanding** alone is incomplete and subject to a host of false conclusions. Love and wisdom, working together, make it possible for us to achieve a conjunction with the Lord. "People" signify falsities or persuasions from the understanding. So, based on this understanding, we can perhaps see why the people came up with the question: "Where is their God?" The Lord taught us in the Beatitudes "Blessed (Happy) are the pure in heart for **they shall see God.**" Two people looking at the same scripture—one a believer and one an unbeliever—will not see the same thing. The believer will say "there is God!" The unbeliever will say "where is your God? I don't see Him."

Putting It All Together

P&P sums up the prophecy of *Joel* 2:12-17 by saying it is an "Exhortation to be converted to Him, to repent, and to be wise."

This is a directive from the Lord and not Joel. The directive comes with a mission plan:

1. Turn to the Lord with all your heart. This is a call for our total commitment to the Lord.
2. The command to consecrate a fast means we are to take an inventory of the spiritual resources at our disposal. If a significant shortage is detected, we need to weep and mourn over the deficiencies found. But then something has to be done to restock. We need to supplicate the Lord for His help. We need to desire a new life with new resources.
3. Rending one's heart and not one's garments is a call to do the work of the Lord from substance and not form. This can also be seen as a call for action and not words. We are to walk the walk of love and not the walk of talk.

4. Why should people return to the Lord? His way is gracious and merciful. His way is not the way of anger. It is a way of great kindness. Hell loves all that is ungracious and unmerciful. Hell's way is full of anger and has a plan of destructive domination.
5. Be prepared. Enlist in the military service of the Lord and His church. Hell will engage us in warfare. Don't fear the battle. The Lord's Intelligence and Love is sufficient to battle all disorders.
6. In preparation for what is to come, gather together the love of innocence and the wisdom of innocence so that a marriage, or conjugal conjunction, may take place.
7. The pure in heart shall see God. That which is invisible will become visible.
8. Those who see the Lord have the assurance that they will not be among the lost and confused who ask "Where is your God?" The committed soldier of the Lord knows the ways of the Lord and confidently walks in them.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:12-17*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Does the Lord's plan ask too much of us? Is it possible for us to give Him our whole heart, mind, and soul?
2. Self-examination, making one's self guilty, supplicating the Lord for help, and living a new life are the components of a well-known process we are taught about in the Writings. This portion of Joel certainly illustrates that it is a consistent plan of the Lord's. The Writings urge us to follow this plan once or twice a year just prior to Holy Supper. Do we follow this suggested plan?
3. *AE 734 [14]* calls for our enlistment in the Lord's military service. He advises us that warfare will incur. I did not hear in His plan a call for negotiations. It is to be a battle where only one outcome is predicted. The Lord will overcome the hells. Do we ever try to "bargain" or negotiate a peaceful settlement with hell? What is the result?
4. The gift of seeing God is a promise in the declaration of the New Church. That which is invisible will become visible. Do you find the Lord is clearly seen at all times, or do you find it necessary to keep refreshing your view of the Lord? How do you do this? *TCR* mentions that the Word of the Lord is like a mirror in which we see the image of the Lord. Such a teaching makes it a necessity to read the Word with a degree of consistency. Our hope is that a project such as this one will assist in your pursuit of daily "mirrors" in which to see God.
5. Do you come in contact with those who ask "Where is your God?" What happens when you do?

JOEL 2:18-19

"Then the Lord will be zealous for His land, and pity His people. The Lord will answer and say to His people, 'Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil, and you will be satisfied by them; I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations.'"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "The Lord will establish the church, to which He will give its goods and truths..."

AC 8875 [1, 6, & 7]

- "...the zeal of the Lord, which in itself is love and compassion, appears to [those in falsity] as anger; for when the Lord from love and mercy protects His own in heaven, they who are in evil are indignant and angry against the good and rush...with the endeavor to destroy...'the zeal of the house of Jehovah' denotes His love toward those who receive good and truth...the zeal of the Lord protects the good..." *Joel 2:18* is cited among other passages as an example of this truth.

AE 433 [27]

- "...it can be seen how far from the truth those have wandered, who believe that at the end of time the Jews will be converted to the Lord and brought back into the land of Canaan...because they have known nothing of the spiritual sense of the Word...In these passages those also are meant who were to be brought into the church, and thence into heaven from the earth after the Lord came, not only where the Christian religion is received but everywhere else. *Joel 2:18-27* is cited among many other passages.

Derived Doctrine

"Then the Lord will be zealous for His land, and pity His people."

- *AC 8875* teaches that "zealous" means love and compassion. "Land" represents where the doctrine of love and charity reside in the church (*AC 2571*). "Land" also represents the internal spiritual person, for that is where the church is (*AE 365 [41]*).
- "Pity" or "compassion" signifies the inflow of charity from the Lord (*AC 6737*). "Compassion" signifies the influx of the Lord into those who are ignorant of truths and yet desire them (*AC 9182 [7]*).

"The Lord will answer and say to His people..."

- "Answer" has some very interesting representations. "Answer" signifies reciprocity when assent is given (*AC 2919*). "Answer" signifies influx, inspiration, perception, and information. "Answer" also signifies mercy and aid. See *AE 295 [6]* and *AE 471 [2]*.
- When we read in the Word that "Jehovah said," it signifies that He perceives from the Divine Celestial (*AC 2619*). When "said" is predicated of Jehovah, it signifies to inform by divine truth from the literal sense of the Word (*AC 8041*).

"Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil..."

- The word "behold" means to have or to keep in sight, to look at, to watch, to observe, or survey and discern. Which of these synonyms should we use when seeking the signification of behold? *AC 2329, 2770, 3495*, and *3711* all use one or more of these words to say they represent thought and reflection, acknowledgment and confession of the Lord. Proper "beholding" brings us into the presence of the Lord.
- "Send" signifies something being revealed by the Lord through heaven to those who are in the good of love (*AE 8 [2]* and *AR 5*).
- "Grain," "barley," "wheat," and the like denote interior truths and goods (*AC 7112*).
- *AC 3941 [4]* quotes *Joel 1:10, 11, 13*: "The field has been laid waste, the ground has been mourning because the grain has been laid waste, the new wine has failed, the oil languishes. It is evident to anyone that here the state of the church when it is vastated is what is described...‘the field,’ ‘the ground’ means the church, the ‘grain’ its good, and the ‘new wine’ its truth."
- "Oil" has many uses. There is oil for cooking, oil for anointing, and oil for lamps. In general, "oil" signifies the good of love or charity to the neighbor from the Lord (*AC 10, AC 261, and AE 375 [24-26]*).
- Is it a surprise to you that the Lord sends new "grain," new "wine," and new "oil" when He establishes His new church? The former church ended with the four kinds of locust ravenously stripping the land. There was a drying up of the grain, the wine, and the oil. There was turmoil and shock the likes of which had never been seen. Then came a new beginning with the Lord's zeal providing for the new start for His church. Look now at the next part of this verse.

"And you will be satisfied by them."

- To be "satisfied" signifies to enjoy peace and good from mercy (*AE 146*). "Satisfy" signifies that all spiritual nourishment is from the Lord and that as much is given as one wills (*AC 8410*).

"I will no longer make you a reproach among nations."

- To remove "reproach" signifies that the affection of internal truth will no longer be barren or dead (*AC* 3969). The Lord promised the removal of shame and disgrace from the church. The torn, the tattered, the tired elements of the church were going to be removed—replaced with a new vitality by the Lord. Dignity, respectability, honor, and wholesomeness would infill the doctrines and all of the forms of worship and uses.

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes the meaning of *Joel 2:18-19* with these words:

"The Lord will establish the church, to which He will give its goods and truths..."

The direct teachings and the derived doctrine add a degree of warmth, compassion, zeal, protection, mercy, feeding, and restoration and a grand sense of hope to this summary from *P&P*. In place of the swarming locust and the barren fields in Chapter One, this portion of the prophecy offers the news that there will be a full crop of grain, new wine, and flowing oil once again.

As with every Old Testament prophet we study, Joel's prophecy begins with a bleak synopsis of the trouble the church got itself into by ignoring, twisting, and misusing the literal sense of the Word. As a consequence of this failure to learn from the literal sense, the heart of the church lost its conjunction with the Lord and, blinded, couldn't find its way to the light of heaven. Falsity needed to be emptied out. The church had to confess its evils as sins against the Lord. The church needed to admit its guilt and genuinely supplicate the Lord for help. Most importantly, the church had to want the new life that was based on the Lord's way.

Satisfaction is promised by the Lord. There will be an enjoyment of peace and good from the Lord's mercy. Reproaches will not follow the revitalized church. Nurturing will be accommodated to the individual level and need of all in the church. Wholesomeness of doctrine and uses will flow out of the hearts of the people in the Lord's New Church.

As I wrote these things, I felt a sense of joy and hope that I might be part of such a grand awakening and restoration of the church. How about you? Did you want to say "How long O Lord?" Well, maybe our prayerful wish for these things to come to pass is an important step within the stream of Providence. It could be that the Lord wants more of us to feel this way so that He can usher in a church whose grain, wine, and oil is definitely new.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:18-19*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Did you find yourself challenged with a sense of hope and consolation?
2. Was the bleak theme of the opening chapter replaced with a new song of "This is the day that the Lord has made"?
3. New grain, new wine, and new oil—does any example of these gifts come to mind?
4. What kind of "putting it all together" would you have written for this section?

JOEL 2:20

"But I will remove far from you the northern army, and will drive him away into a barren and desolate land, with his face toward the eastern sea and his back toward the western sea; his stench will come up, and his foul odor will rise, because he has done monstrous things."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...and will remove falsities of evil, and thus hell."

AE 422 [16]

- "In that day signifies His coming, and the 'eastern sea' signifies the last limit toward the east in the spiritual world, at which there was no reception of Divine truth before the Lord's coming, but where there was reception when Divine truth proceeded from His Divine Human. That the ultimates in the spiritual world are like seas may be seen above (n. 342b, c); and that there are dry places and wastes there may be seen in Joel (2:20)."

Coronis 56

- "From all these passages [*Joel 2:20* is one of them] it may be seen what 'vastation' and 'desolation' are; and that it is not a vastation and desolation of the peoples of a land, and of cities, but of the goods and truths of the church, whence there is nothing but evils and falsities."

Derived Doctrine

"But I will remove far from you the northern army..."

- Please note the definite sense of the opening. It is not "I may," nor is it "I might," but it is "I will." This same definiteness is carried throughout the whole of this twentieth verse of *Joel*.
- To "move" signifies to turn away from error (*AC 6290*). To "move" also means to "cut off."
- "Far" in the spiritual world is not marked off in measurable distances. Instead, it represents **a remoteness of spirit** (*AC 9261*). Thus, it seems the Lord is teachings us that evil and falsity will be removed from His church. They will be pushed to the remote or furthest limits of heaven.
- "Army," in the positive sense, signifies the truths and goods that protect the church. "Army," in the negative sense, represents the self-justifying falsities and evils that destroy the church. See *AR 862. AE 573 [2]* gives us the same representation.
- "Northern" signifies those who are out of the church and in darkness as to the truths of faith, and also the relative darkness in people (*AC 1605*). "Northern" signifies what is sensuous and natural (*AC 426 [2]*). "Northern" signifies those who are in obscurity as to truth because they do not have the Word (*AE 401 [28]*).

"...and [I] will drive him away into a barren and desolate land."

- "Drive" signifies to put away with strength and power (*AC 7189*). To "drive away" signifies that evil and falsities will be separated from every truth of the church (*AC 386*).
- "Barren," in a positive sense, represents those who recognize they are not in the Word and long for its truths. In the negative sense, "barren" represents a picture of evil and falsities in an idolatrous worship with no capacity to reproduce itself any further. See *AC 1371-1372*.
- "Desolate" signifies evil without any visible truth (*AC 6141*).
- "Land" represents the church, the internal man, and the doctrine of love and charity where the faith of the church resides (*AC 2571*).
- And who is the "I" in this verse? The Lord God Jesus Christ, the One God of heaven and earth.

"...with his face toward the eastern sea and his back toward the western sea..."

- "Face" signifies the interior things, or thoughts and affections within the internal man. The Lord beholds the internal face and not the external face. See *AC 4299*.
- "Face toward the eastern sea..." represents the last limits in the spiritual world where there was no reception of Divine truth prior to the coming of

the Lord (AE 422 [16]). Could these words represent the falsities that were brought into the spiritual world prior to the advent of the Lord? The thick dark clouds of falsity, prior to the advent, entering in from the World of Spirits, needed to be turned away from the face of all people. The true east became clear when the Lord made His advent. He came to show heaven and earth the true, inner, source of light from the East.

- "Sea" signifies a collection of spiritual and natural knowledges in the memory (AC 28 and AC 991).
- "Back," in the positive sense, signifies the externals of the Word, the church, and worship (AC 10584). "Back" signifies the subordination of voluntary (love) things (AC 8194). In the negative sense, "back" signifies a denial of the Lord God, and this was one of the abominations of the decadent Jerusalem (AE 401 [32]). "Back" signifies departing from truth by not wanting to understand the Word (AC 6401).
- "West" signifies those who are in self-love and interior thick darkness who think themselves wise (SE 5676). "West" signifies faith separated from charity because of the evils of life (AE 316 [16]). AC 7702 describes "...the signification of a 'sea' or west 'wind' as being the cessation of Divine influx through heaven..."

"...his stench will come up, and his foul odor will rise, because he has done monstrous things."

- Those who oppose the Lord and His truth give off an odor of decay (death), a stink, a stench of aversion and abomination (AC 4516).
- The "foul odor", in the Writings, is coupled with the word "cupidities." "Foul" is linked with cesspools, excrement, and many other horrible stenches. Essentially, the "foul" hells are made up of people who have wholly engrossed themselves in the pursuit of their own pleasure. See AC 1, 285, and 540 for examples of the "foul."
- "Monstrous things," or forms, are graphically presented in the Writings by faces. There are faces that are devoid of life. There are faces that are sunken, faces twisted because of their hatred toward the Lord, faces that take on the forms of hatred, cruelty, deceit, adultery, and hypocrisy. But in their own light, the spirits with these grotesque faces see themselves as attractive because of their own fantasies (AC 4798). Sadly, these monstrous forms want to get away from the Lord, so they cast themselves headlong into hell. The deeper the hell, the better. See AC 5057.

Putting It All Together

In light of this verse, is there any doubt about what the Lord **will** do for His church?

1. He will remove the northern army far from the church. The Lord will remove the self-justifying falsities and evils that destroy a church. Those who turned their back to the true East will have their shallow wisdom exposed.
2. The Lord promises to remove the non-productive things of idolatry that carry with them no potential usefulness for the future. Idolatry and barrenness are a spiritually sad end—cause—effect choice of the heart and mind.
3. Without the Lord's advent, the collection of knowledges (seas) would have held the minds of people in a state of denial regarding the Lord. Without the Lord, there would have been a "wanting" to know and understand the Word without fulfillment of this desire.
4. Without the day of the Lord and His judgment, the dead church would have continued giving off its stench of aversion, abomination, and self-serving cupidities. These attitudes and ways of life put on the face of respectability, but they represented a fantasy world. The Lord saw the reality of their faces. To His eyes, their faces were masks of monstrous forms of hatred, cruelty, deceit, adultery, and hypocrisy. Before the Lord's advent, those who lived contrary to the Lord lived "wholly engrossed in the pursuit of their own pleasure." No more. It is over. How do we know this will be so? The great "I will" has said so, and He keeps His word.

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:20*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Is there any doubt in your mind that the end of the dead church has come about and that a New Church will come?
2. What monstrous masks are you aware of? Do you think these masks continue to fool people into mistaking them for forms of respectability?
3. *AC 5056* said something sad about those who vehemently oppose the Lord. They cast themselves into hell. The deeper the hell, the better. Can you picture someone so opposed to the Lord that they would choose the deepest hell? That is a lot of hate.
4. Is there a growing sense of the "good news" for the church in our study of *Joel*? Are we finished hearing about the disorders of the church? Do you suppose we might have some more overturning of church disorders before a flurry of positive things finishing the prophecy of *Joel*?
5. Well, looking ahead to the next five verses, we can expect more good news about the restoration of the internal church. "Fear not," "Be glad," and "Rejoice" are some of the messages ahead. Are we ready for these encouraging words from the Lord to help us with our travails?

JOEL 2:21-25

"Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the Lord has done marvelous things! Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field; for the open pastures are springing up, and the tree bears its fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their strength. Be glad then, you children of Zion. And rejoice in the Lord your God; for He has given you the former rain faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for you—the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil. So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust and the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "They will have trust in the Lord, from which they will have goods and felicities"

AE 660 [4]

- "In all these passages, 'exultation' signifies delight from love and from the affection of good, and 'gladness' signifies pleasure from the love and affection of truth." *Joel 2:21* is cited.

AR 567

- "...the affections of a man, in the spiritual world, appear at a distance as beasts, as has been stated before; and beasts, considered in themselves, are nothing but forms of natural affections, but men are not only forms of natural, but of spiritual affections...That men, as to their affections, are meant by 'beasts,' may appear from these passages..." *Joel 2:21-22* is cited.

AE 650 [39]

- "In [Joel 2:21-23]...This is said of the establishment of the church by the Lord; and the 'earth which will fear, but rejoice and be glad' signifies the church and its delight; its establishment by the Lord is signified by 'Jehovah hath done great things;' therefore 'the beasts of His fields' mean those who are in the affections of good and long for instruction from the Word, 'beasts' meaning those who are in the affections of good belonging to the natural man, and 'fields' the doctrinals from the Word."

Coronis 3 [2]

- "That the states of the church are likewise described in the Word by beasts...is evident from numberless passages...[*Joel* 2:21 and 22 are cited.]...Hence it is that 'beasts' are so often named in the Word; and by them in the spiritual sense are signified affections, inclinations, perceptions, and thoughts."

AC 46

- "That 'beasts' signify man's affections—evil affections with the evil, and good affections with the good—is evident from numerous passages in the Word..."*Joel* 2:22 is cited.

AC 217

- "...in *Joel* 2:22...The 'vine' here denotes spiritual good, and the 'fig-tree' natural good."

AC 7571 [2]

- "...'pastures of herb' denote the spiritual nourishment which is of the soul..."*Joel* 2:22, along with other passages, is cited as an example.

AE 109 [5]

- "Moreover, the things that are on trees, as leaves and fruit, signify such things as are with man; 'leaves,' the truths with him, and 'fruits,' the goods, as in the following passages..."*Joel* 2:22 is cited.

AE 403 [7]

- "In [*Joel* 2:22]...This treats of the establishment of the church, therefore 'the beasts of the field' do not mean beasts of the field, but the affections of good in the natural man, consequently those in whom are such affections. Who does not see that it cannot be beasts to whom it is said, 'Fear not, ye beasts of My fields?' 'The habitations of the desert are made full of herbs' signifies that with such there will be knowledges of truth where there were none before, 'the habitations of the wilderness' meaning the interiors of the mind of those in whom these did not exist before, 'full of herbs' signifying the increase and multiplication of these; 'for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig-tree and the vine shall yield their strength,' signifies that they have natural good and spiritual good, 'strength' here meaning the production of fruit."

AC 5113 [13]

- "As in the genuine sense a 'vine' signifies the good of the intellectual part, and a 'fig-tree' the good of the natural man, or what is the same, that a 'vine' signifies the good of the interior man, and a 'fig-tree' the good of the exterior man, therefore a 'fig-tree' is often mentioned in the Word at the same time as a 'vine;' as in the following passages..." *Joel* 2:22 is cited along with *Joel* 1:6, 7, and 12.

AR 496

- "...by 'rain,' the truth of the church thence is signified...That 'rain' signifies the Divine truth from heaven, appears from these passages..." *Joel* 2:23 is cited as an example.

AC 3580 [7]

- The passage refers to *Joel* 2:23-24 and to *Joel* 3:18, " where the Lord's kingdom is treated of; and by 'sweet wine,' by 'milk,' and by 'waters,' are signified spiritual things whose abundance is thus described."

AC 6537 [2]

- "That a 'threshing-floor' signifies where are the good of truth and the truth of good, thus where are the things of the church, is evident in *Joel*...2:23, 24...where the 'sons of Zion' denote truths from good; the 'threshing-floors full of grain,' the abundance of truths and goods."

AR 651

- "A winepress is also spoken of the goods of charity, from which truths of faith proceed, in *Joel*...2:23, 24."

AE 375 [29]

- "In *Joel*...2:23, 24...‘new wine and oil’ signify the truth and good of the church, for ‘sons of Zion,’ to whom these things are said, signify those who are of the church; ‘the former rain in righteousness’ signifies Divine truth flowing into good, from which is there conjunction, fructification, and multiplication; and ‘floors full of pure grain’ signify fullness." Note this number also cites *Joel* 1:10, where we read about the devastation of the ground, the corn, and the new wine, and how the fresh oil languishes.

AE 644 [15]

- "In Joel...2:23, 24...‘The sons of Zion’ signify those who are in genuine truths through which they have the good of love, for ‘Zion’ signifies the celestial church which is in the good of love to the Lord through genuine truths. That the Lord with such flows in with the good of love, and from that good into truths, is signified by ‘He shall give them the former rain in righteousness;’ ‘righteousness’ is predicated in the Word of the good of love, and ‘the righteous’ mean those who are in that good...That the Lord continually flows into truths with the good of love is signified by ‘He shall cause to come down the former rain and the latter rain, in the first month;’ that from this they have the good of love towards a brother and companion is signified by ‘their floors are full of pure grain;’ and that from this they have the truth and the good of love to the Lord is signified by ‘the vats overflow with new wine and oil.’ Those who are of the Lord’s celestial church have the good of love towards a brother and companion; and this love, with those who are of the Lord’s spiritual church, is called charity towards the neighbor."

AE 922 [6]

- "That ‘wine-press’ and ‘treading it’ signify the bringing forth of truth from good, because ‘the grape’ signifies spiritual good, and ‘wine from the grape’ truth from that good, can be seen from...Joel 2:23, 24...‘Sons of Zion’ signify those who are in wisdom from the Divine truth; ‘the floors are full of corn’ signifies that they have celestial good in abundance; ‘the wine-presses overflow with new wine and oil’ signifies that from the good of charity they have truth and its delight."

AE 922 [8]

- "In most passages, where ‘vintage’ and ‘wine-press’ are mentioned, the ‘harvest’ and the ‘corn-floor’ are also mentioned (as in...Joel 2:23, 24; Joel 3:13...)...‘corn’ and ‘bread’ signify the good of celestial love, which is love to the Lord; and ‘vintage’ and ‘wine-press,’ from the ‘grape’ and ‘wine,’ signify the good of spiritual love, which is love towards the neighbor; for these two loves make one, like an efficient cause and its effect."

AC 9780 [4]

- "...‘the oil’ denotes the good of love and charity, and ‘the wine,’ the good and truth of faith." *Joel 2:24* is cited as an example.

AC 7643 [7]

- "...'locust' denotes falsity in the extremes vastating truths and goods." *Joel 1:4-7* and *Joel 2:24-25* are cited.

AC 9331 [5]

- This number cites *Joel 1:4-5* and *Joel 2:24-25*. The explanation however shows the signification of the perversion of the truth and good of the church by the locust. Our text emphasizes the Lord's compensation for the earlier destruction of the locust.

AE 543 [9]

- In *Joel 2:24-25*, "...'wine' and 'new wine' signify the truth of the church; likewise because it is said that 'the floors shall be full of grain, and the presses shall overflow with new wine and oil,' the 'floor' signifying the doctrine of the church, 'grain' and 'oil' its goods, and 'new wine' its truths."

AR 424

- This passage cites *Joel 1:4* and *Joel 2:25*. The expositional portion gives the negative representation of the locust and not the compensation meaning.

AR 447

- "...by 'the locust' and the rest falsity in outermost things is signified..."

AE 573 [15]

- "In Joel...2:25...An 'army' signifies falsities and evils of every kind...since these noxious little animals, 'the locust, the canker-worm, the caterpillar, and the palmer-worm,' signify falsities and evils that devastate or consume the truths and goods of the church...'locust and caterpillar' signify the falsities [and evils] of the sensual man."

Derived Doctrine

With twenty-seven references covering *Joel 2:21-25*, it seems we have enough exposition to go to the Putting It All Together section. Every major point seems to have been addressed.

Putting It All Together

We need to focus on the theme of restoration and compensation. Why? In *Joel 1:4*, the four kinds of locust stripped the land of its vegetation. The land, the grain, the vine, the fig-tree, the new wine, and the oil dried up. Never in the lifetime of those witnessing these things had they seen anything like it. Joy and gladness left the people with the shriveling seeds, the stripped branches, the dried-up clods of grass, the broken barns, and the cattle groaning. All of these things represented the demise of the vastated church. Those who had ignored and twisted the Word were being replaced by the Lord. The church needed to be vivified by the Lord.

Those who in their hearts loved the good of truth and the truth of good would be brought to the forefront of the Lord's new church. Don't let these terms slip by you. **Good of truth** and **truth of good** are terms the Writings use to show how a person approaches the Word with charity and uses for the Lord and the neighbor.

Let's look first at **good of truth**. In place of **good**, put the word **love**. In place of **truth**, put the word **wisdom**. Now we have **the love of wisdom**. The emphasis of this approach is to let love lead to wisdom. Now let's do the same thing with **truth of good**. For **truth**, use the word **wisdom**. For **good**, once again use **love**. Now we have **the wisdom of love**.

The good of truth (love of wisdom) is the approach of the celestial angels. The truth of good (wisdom of love) is the approach of the spiritual angels. The two approaches are mutually inclusive. They work toward a wholesome conjunction with the Lord through the study of His Word. The love of wisdom has an intuitive aspect to it. It's a love that knows the truth instantly when the truth from the Word is read. The wisdom of love is a more rational approach where the understanding seeks to be enlightened by a love for the Lord and His Word.

Why do we need to know these things? Because the Lord, in these verses, announces that He will restore the church, the grass, the fig-tree, the new wine, and oil through these two angelic approaches. Please read again *AE 644 [15]* to see that this is so.

The Lord needs both—good of truth and truth of good—for the building up of the new church. Never allow the hells to engage you in an argument as to which of these is better. We are not to choose one over the other. It is not an either/or question. The church grows when both thrive for the Lord and His church. Fear not; do not be afraid; rejoice; He will restore the years of the consuming locust. Compensation comes from the Lord. Our job is to sing in our hearts the words, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do and hear."

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:21-25*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Did you read all twenty-seven references in preparation for understanding the spiritual sense?
2. How well can you distinguish the good of truth and the truth of good? If you are still unsure about these terms, read *Doctrine of Life* 32.
3. Have you listened to or participated in a debate regarding the importance of love and wisdom? Some feel love is primary. Others feel truth is primary. Doesn't hell just love to get us arguing about such things to divide us?
4. Think about restoration and compensation with the former rain and latter rain restoring life to the plants, animals and mankind. What does this mean? We are taught that the former rain signifies the Lord flowing in with the good of love, and from that good into truths—the former rain is righteousness. What then is the latter rain? Could the latter rain be the tranquility of peace when the Lord made His advent and defeated the hells? Could the latter rain be that sense of calm when combat ceases with the Lord winning out over hell?
5. Are you still basking in the light of this prophecy about the strength and power of the New Church?
6. The words "do not fear"; "do not be afraid"; "rejoice"; and "restoration" are words of comfort and encouragement. Can we somehow tell people in the church about this message of *Joel*?

JOEL 2:26-27

"You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you; and My people shall never be put to shame. Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I am the Lord your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- We must preface this quote with what was started in verses 21-25: "They will have trust in the Lord, from which they will have goods and felicities..." The portion for the present verses is "...and acknowledgment from the heart."

AR 809

- "...[that] 'to praise God' signifies to worship Him, and hence that the praise of Him is the worship of Him, is evident from many passages in the Word, a few only of which are adduced..." *Joel 2:26* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

"You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied..."

- "Eat" signifies to communicate, to be conjoined, and to appropriate (*AC 2343*).
- In "plenty," or in "abundance," signifies the external knowledges to which good from the celestial level of the spiritual person can be applied, during states when truths and goods are multiplied. See *AC 5192* and *5292*. These numbers explain the meaning of the seven years of abundance in Egypt.
- "Satisfied" signifies that all spiritual nourishment is from the Lord and that as much is given as one wills (*AC 8410*).

"...and praise the name of the Lord your God."

- "Praise" signifies internal worship (*AC 1171 [3]*). "Praise" comes when there is a love of truth (*AC 3880 [5]*). "Praise" is given by the Lord through innocence(*AC 5236 [4]*).
- The "name of the Lord" is the sum of all by which the Lord is worshiped, consequently His name is the essence of everything of love and faith (*AC 2724*).
- "...the Lord your God..." When both "God" and "the Lord" are named, divine good and divine truth are signified. For where Divine Good is meant, the names "Lord" and "Jehovah" are used, and where Divine Truth is meant, the name God is used. See *AE 689*.

"Who has dealt wondrously with you..."

- No correspondences come to mind with these words. What could be of value is to recall all of the miracles the Lord provided in the wilderness experience and the miracles of the Lord in the New Testament. These things He wondrously gave the children of Israel, and the effects of them live on to eternity.

"...and My people shall never be put to shame."

- "People" in the spiritual sense represent the church, the good and truth of the Lord's Word (*AC 1259-60* and *AC 5342*). In other words, the Lord's "family" of good and truth will not be put to shame.

- "Shame" signifies the presence of unclean loves (*AR 706*). This number goes on to encourage us to learn the truths of the Lord and to retain them.

"Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel..."

- The "midst," or middle, signifies what is inmost and primary, the best and purest things. The "midst" is perfection and purity. See *AC 9666*.
- "Israel" in the supreme sense is the Lord in relation to the internal of the church (*AE 768 [15] and AC 4570*).

"I am the Lord your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame."

- Can we not, on our own, draw all of the above points together in this verse to get the meaning?
- The Lord is the center of the church. He is our purity and highest perfection. His miraculous deeds are infinite. The hells will never be able to use their falsity to tarnish His Love and Wisdom. His people, His Church, **will never** be put to shame.

Putting It All Together

Do we really need to pull this section together? The message is so simple and straightforward. The days of hell polluting the church are over. The days of hell making the church feel ashamed are over. We need to repeat this phrase again and again. IT IS OVER. IT IS OVER. The Lord's New Church will reign for ever and ever. "**They will** have trust in the Lord, from which **they will** have goods and felicities and acknowledgment from the heart." (*P&P*)

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:26-27*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Can we, the next time the hells try to embarrass us, pull this lesson into the "midst" of our thinking? Can we say the words, "His People, His Church **will never** be put to shame"?
2. These words will put the hells to flight. Hell can't stand to be in the presence of the Lord's sphere. His wondrous miracles exist in our lives. Do we ever allow ourselves enough time to think about the miracles in our lives and then thank the Lord for them? Or do we slip into feeling sorry for ourselves?

3. The miracles of life are manifold. Each miracle is personal. They spill out in many ways and places. We touch the lives of others in ways we have no idea about unless someone tells us.
4. Do you think a church banner ought to be created with this message as its contribution to church events such as Charter Day or New Church Day?

JOEL 2:28-29

"And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "By His Divine the Lord will fill those who are of that church, with all things, and vivify them."

AC 574

- "That 'flesh' signifies that man had become corporeal appears from the signification of 'flesh' in the Word, where it is used to signify both every man in general, and also, specifically, the corporeal man. It is used to signify every man, in Joel...2:28..."

AC 2534 [3]

- "...it is manifest that to 'prophesy' is to teach." *Joel 2:28* is cited as an example.

AR 8

- "In Joel...2:28...This is concerning the church which was to be established by the Lord, in which they would not prophesy, but receive doctrine, which is to 'prophesy.'"

AE 624 [8]

- "In Joel...2:28...This is said of the Lord's coming, and of the perception of Divine truth by those who receive the Lord and believe in Him; the 'spirit' that will be poured out upon all flesh signifies the Divine truth proceeding from the Lord, for this is meant in the Word by the Holy Spirit; 'to prophesy' signifies to understand and teach the truths of doctrine; 'to dream dreams' signifies to receive revelation; and 'to see visions' signifies to perceive

revelation; 'sons and daughters' signify those who are in the spiritual affection of truth and good; 'old men' signify those who are in wisdom, and 'young men,' those who are in intelligence."

AC 2567 [5]

- "In *Joel*...2:28, 29...where the Lord's kingdom is treated of; 'to prophesy' denotes to teach (n. 2534); 'sons,' truths themselves (n. 489-491); 'servants' and 'maidservants,' lower truths and goods, upon which the spirit is said to be poured out when they accede and confirm. That such things are signified by 'menservants and maidservants' here and elsewhere does not appear, by reason both of the common idea respecting menservants and maidservants, and of the apparent history."

AC 4682 [2]

- "...in *Joel*...2:28, 29...where 'pouring out the spirit upon them' denotes to instruct concerning truths, and 'prophesying' denotes to teach and preach them, and the same is signified by 'dreaming dreams.' 'Old men' are the wise, 'young men' the intelligent, 'servants' those who know."

AC 9818 [20]

- *Joel* 2:28-29 is cited with other passages, about with the following is said: "That in these passages 'the Spirit of Jehovah' denotes the Divine truth, and through this the life of faith and of love, is evident; that it flows in immediately from the Lord and also mediately from Him through spirits and angels..."

Doctrine of the Lord 49

- "That by 'spirit' is meant the life of one who is regenerate, which is called spiritual life..." *Joel* 2:28-29 is but one of many passages cited.

AE 183 [12]

- "That the 'Spirit of God' is Divine truth, and thence spiritual life to the man who receives it, is further evident from these passages." *Joel* 2:28 is cited.

AR 704 [2]

- "That 'the great day of God Almighty' signifies the coming of the Lord, and then the New Church, is evident from many passages in the Word..." *Joel* 2:29 is cited.

Derived Doctrine

"...it shall come to pass afterward..."

- "Pass" signifies what relates to the will and understanding (*AC 683*). To "pass through" signifies to know and to perceive the quality (*AC 3992*).
- The word "afterward" is not a past-tense correspondence. *AC 5216* gives us a clue about the possible meaning of "afterward". "...'after' denotes what is successive in time; in the spiritual world, and consequently in the spiritual sense, there is no notion of time, but instead of it the kind of state that corresponds."

Putting It All Together

"By His Divine the Lord will fill those who are of that church, with all things, and vivify them" (*P&P*)

The Lord's spirit, His Holy Spirit, will be poured out on all. He will help all to understand and teach the truths of doctrine; He will open the way to **receive** revelation and to **perceive** doctrine. He will increase within the church the number of people who will have a spiritual affection for truth and good; wisdom and intelligence will sparkle with a radiance of His love and wisdom; and we shall all be vivified—made alive like never before. A feeling of mental youth and agility will be ours because the Lord gives us truth both immediately and meditately. Gone will be the control of the corporeal selfishness crowding out spiritual priorities. He promises vivification of mind and soul to the church.

"And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen!'" (*Deuteronomy 27:15*)

"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever." (*Psalm 45:2*)

"Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only does wondrous things! And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen." (*Psalm 72:18-20*)

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:28-29*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. What reaction did you have when you read the passages of our lesson? Do you recall hearing these verses being read in a church service? Do you remember what feelings you had about their message?
2. There is a calm sphere with these words. There is a sense of peace and an assurance that all is right with us because the Lord is in charge. Does any resistance to this vision surface from the "corporeal" person?
3. Our positive theme carries on. Our encouragement to look for the spiritual New Church is in this prophecy. How can we pray for the Holy Spirit to be poured out on us? Should we be praying to receive revelation and the ability to perceive revelation?
4. In answer to these questions, I would hope we all will say—so may it be evermore—Amen.

JOEL 2:30-31

"And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Falsities of evil and evils of falsity will dissipate influx on the day of judgment."

AR 422

- "Every love in the spiritual world, when it is excited, appears at a distance as fire, within the hells as a glowing fire, and without, as the smoke of a fire, or as the smoke of a furnace. The falsities of the lusts springing from evil loves, are also described by 'smoke from fire' ..." *Joel 2:30* is cited as an example.

AE 494

- "...'smoke'...signifies falsity from evil..." *Joel 2:30* is cited.

AE 539 [8]

- "In Joel...2:30...it is said of the Last Judgment; and 'blood, fire, and columns of smoke,' signify the truth of the Word falsified, its good adulterated, and mere falsities resulting therefrom, 'blood' meaning the truth of the Word falsified,

'fire' its good adulterated, and 'columns of smoke' mere dense falsities therefrom."

AC 1861 [3]

- "In Joel...2:30, 31...'fire' denotes hatred; 'pillars of smoke' falsities; 'the sun' charity; and 'the moon' faith."

AC 4735 [14]

- "Falsified and profaned truth is signified by the following passages concerning blood." *Joel 2:30* and *31* are cited.

AC 8819 [2]

- "(That 'smoke' denotes the obscurity of truth and also the thick darkness which is of falsity, is evident in...*Joel 2:30, 31...*)"

AC 9127 [5]

- "In these passages by 'blood' is not meant the blood of man's bodily life...but the blood of his spiritual life, which is truth Divine, to which violence has been done through falsity from evil." *Joel 2:30-31* is one of the passages cited.

HH 570

- "In these and in many other passages 'fire' means the lusts pertaining to love of self and love of the world, and the 'smoke' therefrom means falsity from evil." *Joel 2:30* and *31* are cited.

AE 329 [22]

- "In Joel...2:30, 31...the contrary meaning [of] 'blood' signifies violence offered to the Divine truth; for 'sun' in the Word signifies the celestial Divine, which is the Divine good, and 'moon' signifies the spiritual Divine, which is the Divine truth; it is therefore said that 'the moon shall be turned into blood.'"

AE 504 [34]

- "...the day of Jehovah,' which is the Last Judgment, is predicted in the Prophets...In *Joel...2:30, 31...*"

AC 2495 [3]

- "...by these words of the Lord there is signified that in the consummation of the age (or last period of the church) there will no longer be any love, or charity, nor therefore any faith. That this is the meaning is evident...in the Prophets, as in...Joel 2:31..."

HH 119

- "...in the Word the Lord in respect to love is likened to the sun, and in respect to faith to the moon; also that the 'sun' signifies love from the Lord to the Lord, and the 'moon' signifies faith from the Lord in the Lord, as in the following passages...Joel 2:...31..."

AR 53

- "In these passages by 'sun' is not meant the sun of this world, but the sun of the angelic heaven, which is the Divine love and the Divine wisdom of the Lord; these are said to be 'obscured,' 'darkened,' 'covered,' and 'blackened' when there are evils and falsities with man. Hence it is evident, that similar things are meant by the Lord's words, where He speaks of the consummation of the age, which is the last time of the church..." *Joel 2:31* is cited.

AR 332

- "It is said, 'the sun became black...' because adulterated good in itself is evil, and evil is black; and the reason why it is said 'the moon became as blood,' is because 'blood' signifies the Divine truth, and in the opposite sense, the Divine truth falsified...Nearly the same is said of the sun and moon in *Joel...2:31...*"

AR 379

- "In these places, and many others, 'blood' signifies the truth of the Word falsified, and also profaned; which yet may be seen more manifestly still by reading those passages in the Word in their series...[by] 'blood' in the genuine sense, is signified the truth of the Word not falsified." *Joel 2:31* is cited.

AR 413

- "The reason that 'darkness' signifies this, is because light signifies truth; and when the light is extinguished, there comes darkness. In confirmation the passages will...be adduced, where similar things to those here in the

Apocalypse are said of 'the sun, the moon, and the stars,' and of 'the darkness'..." *Joel 2:31* is cited.

AE 401 [14]

- "It is clear from what has been said above, that in these passages 'the sun and moon made black and darkened' means that there was no longer any good or any truth..." *Joel 2:31* is cited.

AE 526 [3]

- "In *Joel...2:31*...‘The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood,’ has a similar signification...namely, that at the end of the church there will be the falsity of evil in the place of the good of love, and evil of falsity in the place of truth of faith."

Canons, Chapter IV

- This chapter, which is too long to include here, deals with the meaning of the sun, moon, and stars.

Derived Doctrine

"And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth..."

- The word "wonders" is not given a doctrinal explanation. "Wonder" is. "Wonder" signifies that with the Lord all things are possible (*AC 2211*). "Wonder" signifies awe and admiration (*AC 1756 [3]*).
- "Heaven" signifies the spiritual and celestial things of the Lord's kingdom both in the heavens and on earth, in the church and every human being (*AC 2162 [8]*).

Putting It All Together

"Falsities of evil and evils of falsity will dissipate influx on the day of judgment."(*P&P*)

The meaning of the word "dissipate" is to scatter aimlessly, to break up, to squander, to waste away. With the day of the Lord coming to bring about the consummation of the dead church, hell musters together a massive covert plan to be covered or hidden in a huge black cloud of smoke called falsity and evil. Hell's goal is to interrupt, to destroy, and to scatter aimlessly any influx of the Lord from heaven. Will it work? Not if we look at the opening words of the Lord. "I will show wonders

in the heavens and in the earth." Even though hell frantically blows black and billowing smoke from its fiery, glowing ovens, the Lord will not be deterred. The blackness of their hearts is clear as day to Him. So the wonders of the heavens and the earth will be shown by the Lord. In the presence of the Lord, there will be signs of awe and admiration of His power. For with Him, all things are possible.

The hellish spirits will seek to turn the sun into darkness and the moon into blood. They want the "sun" of the Word to be falsified and its good adulterated. They want the "moon" of our faith falsified and violated so truth looks like evil and evil looks like truth.

But it will not work. Pass on the good news. The Lord will rid the church of evil and falsity and will establish His New Church.

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:30-31*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Let's talk about the purpose of smoke screens. The purpose of a smoke screen, militarily, is concealment and to permit stealth-like tactics. When the smoke is thick, the people on the other side of the smoke can't see or focus on the alignment or movement of their foe. There is an element of terrifying suspense involved. It's like a psychological torture. Our passage describes a hellish attempt at concealment to prevent the Lord's influx from coming to us. Do you get the sense of hell's plan?
2. Has hell ever given you a temporarily blackened sun? Have you had a time or incident that just shook your faith in the Lord? Did someone you trusted ever let you down, and did you feel like your world was collapsing?
3. Have you ever been taught a falsity as a truth or a truth as a falsity? What happened?
4. Hell wants us to give up on the Lord and the New Church. If we focus on persons in the church and not the principles of the church, we can have momentary "black-outs." Therefore, we need to create times to let the Lord show us the wonders of heaven and earth. What ways of seeing the Lord's power and awe work best for you? Is it a walk in the beauty of nature? Is it the presence of a child? Is it spending time with your best friend? Is it reading the Word? Is it listening to music? Is it writing a letter or poetry?
5. Please take a moment to reflect on how many times in this chapter the Lord says "I will." These positive words are full of assurance and a source of encouragement.

JOEL 2:32

"And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the remnant whom the Lord calls."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...but those who acknowledge and worship the Lord will be saved."

AC 5897 [5 & 6]

- "...man is continually among evils and falsities, and is held in captivity by them...Therefore unless the Lord were to gather up the goods and truths which as occasion offers are insinuated into a man during the progress of life, the man could not possibly be saved, for without remains there is salvation for none...From this...it is manifest that by 'remains' are meant...goods and truths...because these are what do no perversity, nor speak a lie, neither is a tongue of deceit found in their mouth." *Joel 2:32* is cited.

AC 5899

- "From these passages it is plain what it is 'to escape,' namely, that they who 'escape' are they who have remains, and that 'to escape' is to be delivered from damnation." *Joel 2:32* is cited.

AC 7051 [2]

- "Hence...it is that most persons in the Christian world...believe that that nation will again be chosen, and will then be brought back into the land of Canaan and this according to the sense of the letter, as in many passages...*Joel 2:32*..."

AE 433 [27]

- "From this it can be seen how far from the truth those have wandered, who believe that at the end of time the Jews will be converted to the Lord and brought back into the land of Canaan...In these passages those also are meant who were to be brought into the church, and thence into heaven from the earth after the Lord came, not only where the Christian religion is received but everywhere else..." *Joel 2:32* is cited as an example of how people have wandered from the truth.

Derived Doctrine

"And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

- "Pass" signifies to flow in or to receive influx, and "pass" relates to the will and understanding (AC 683). May we then conclude from this promise, from the Lord, that He would pour out the influx of His spirit and power to the faithful remnant? Is it a promise that their will and understanding would be strengthened with the resolve of the Lord's truth?
- To "call on the name of the Lord" (Jehovah) signifies to worship from charity(AC 1455). Review for a moment what this means. Worship from charity is a worship that is based on love of the Lord and the neighbor. It is free from the hidden agendas of self-interest. It is a service in which genuine love flows out from the heart of the internal person.
- "The name of the Lord" represents thinking of the essence or qualities of the Lord. "Calling on the name of the Lord" signifies thinking about the sum of all by which the Lord is to be worshiped, that is, to count all of the blessings we receive from His love and wisdom (AC 2724).
- To be "saved" means to be rescued, or delivered, from the effects of the damnation brought on by self-love. The "remains" stored up in every one of us by the Lord are the means by which the Lord effects the rescue. Please read AC 5897 [5 & 6] again. It is cited above in the Passages from the Writings. It is one of those passages that is well worth reading often.

"For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance..."

- "Zion" signifies the advent of the Lord, and the establishment of the church by Him among those who are in the good of love (AE 433 [8]). AR 612 teaches that Zion signifies heaven and the church where the Lord alone is worshipped.
- "Jerusalem" signifies "the church as to worship, and therefore also the church as to doctrine, for worship is prescribed in doctrine, and performed according to it..." (AR 880)
- "Deliverance" and "remains" are synonymous. The Lord, and the Lord alone, knows where our remains are and which of them should be called forth at the precise moment of need. Trusting the Lord, following His providential leading, brings about our deliverance. AC 5897 [5 & 6] and AC 5899 are important passages about the power of remains and the message of deliverance. How can this be said with conviction? Look at the closing sentence of this chapter.

"...as the Lord has said, among the remnant whom the Lord calls."

- Doesn't this sum up well what we have just studied above regarding remains?

- The words "deliverance" and "escape" are used in our lesson about redemption. In some ways, I like the use of both words. "Deliverance" gives me a picture of the Lord taking our hand, and "escape" gives me a picture of Him leading those who call on His name to come out of the war zone to a safe place. What an escape plan that is! He leads us past sneak attacks. He helps us avoid traps laid out for us. Yes, "escape" seems like a powerful image to hold on to when we think of our deliverance.

Putting It All Together

P&P says "...those who acknowledge and worship the Lord will be saved."

This quote along with all of the quotes from the Writings shed great light on the meaning of the prophecy of Joel. What are the points of Chapter 2?

1. The Lord would come to visit the fallen church. How did the church fall? Its people allowed the holy things of the church to fall into a natural mode of thinking and living. The thinking of the natural world set the standards by which decisions were made. Eternal ends were not being sought by those in the church.
2. Therefore, falsity and evils were dispersing the knowledges of the Lord within the church. The church was dying. People were in danger of losing the light of heaven. So the Lord lovingly fought with the church.
3. The Lord exhorted the church to repent, to be converted, and to choose wisdom. He called for them to value His good and truth so as to remove the falsities of hell.
4. The Lord called on them to trust Him. He called on them to acknowledge Him from their hearts.
5. The Lord promised to vivify and fill the church with His presence and His ways.
6. Such an endeavor would not come easily. Hell would seek to dissipate any influx from heaven. Hell would lay down a huge amount of black and choking smoke from the ovens of self-love. Hell would seek to prevent the sun of heaven from shining on the church. The reflected light of the moon would be filled with blood so that its light would be lost, too.
7. But then the promises of the Lord and the call for deliverance cut through the efforts of hell. The Lord, in His positive and calm manner, announced that He would win out over hell and the dead church. A new church would rise up out of the death and despair of the present church.
8. He revealed His way of deliverance. The escape plan was laid out. Who will find these things? The remnant. Deliverance will come in the gifts of remains within those who are willing to be lead from Mount Zion and Jerusalem.

The Lord—the great "I will"—shall prevail against the morose and perverse plans of hell. His Hand is held out to "those who acknowledge and worship" Him. They shall be saved.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:32*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. I'd like to share something of the inspiration I got from reading about remains. Remains do no perversity. Remains speak not a lie. Nor is there a tongue of deceit found in their mouth. Remains give us deliverance. Remains provide us with the means to escape from the clutches of hell. Now for a two-part question: Have you given remains much doctrinal thought? Now that we have read these things about remains, are they more important to you than at any time before this lesson?
2. What has been your feeling about Israel being a favored nation in the eyes of the Lord? Does it make sense to you why many people, Christians as well, have believed this? We know the literal sense has many passages that seem to support the "favored nation" concept, but in light of what the Writings say, can we correct this idea in our minds?
3. Hell's black smoke screen to prevent the Lord's influx is quite graphic in the Word. How about in your life experiences? The moon filling with blood is another example. The moon represents faith. The moon has no light of its own. It reflects the light of the sun. So what do you think is the meaning of these examples of spiritual phenomena?
4. I am struck with the ending repetition of the prophet's messages. They all deal with the death of the church—be it the Jewish Church or the Christian Church. They announce the advent of the Lord and the birth of the New Church. But why do we need to hear this theme so many times? Granted, each story focuses on a different element of the death of the Church. Is the message repeated because we have failed to receive it? Or is this theme prevalent to ensure that, no matter what prophet we read, we will hear this story at least once?
5. Looking ahead to the third chapter, what message would you anticipate reading? Will we read about the gathering up of the remnant? Will we study more about the struggle ahead of the new church? Will we read about the eventual triumph of the Lord over the hells?
6. Will the Word recapture the hearts and minds of the faithful?

Chapter Three

JOEL 3:1-3

"For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land. They have cast lots for My people, have given a boy as payment for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they may drink."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Then the church will be gathered together, and then judgment will be executed upon those who have scattered the goods and truths of the church..."

Doctrine of the Lord 4

- "...I shall in this first chapter merely adduce passages from the Word which contain the expressions 'that day,' 'in that day,' and 'in that time;' in which, by 'day,' and 'time,' is meant the Lord's advent. In...Joel...3:1, 2, 14, 18)."

AR 704

- "...the Lord's coming and the New Church from Him...are meant by 'the day of Jehovah'; as in these...Joel 3:1, 14, 18..."

TCR 82 [2]

- "...the Lord's coming is called 'the day of Jehovah' (as in...Joel 3:1, 14, 18...)..."

AC 5236 [5]

- "In the following passages...by a 'boy' or 'child' is signified innocence." *Joel 3:3* is cited.

AE 376 [24]

- "In Joel...3:3... 'To cast lots upon the people' signifies to dissipate the truths of the church, 'to cast a lot' signifying to dissipate, and 'people' signifying the church in relation to truths, thus also the truths of the church; 'to give a boy'

for a harlot' signifies to falsify truth, 'boy' meaning the truth of the church, and 'harlot' falsity; and 'to sell a girl for wine, which they drank,' signifies to pervert the good of the church by truth falsified, 'girl' meaning the good of the church, and 'wine' truth falsified."

AE 863 [10]

- "In Joel...3:3..."To cast lots upon the people' signifies to disperse the truths of the church by falsities; 'to give a boy for a harlot' signifies to falsify the truths of the Word; 'to sell a girl for wine' signifies to falsify the goods of the Word; 'which they drank' signifies becoming imbued with falsity."

Derived Doctrine

"When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem..."

- "Bring back" signifies that the internal person will reduce everything in the external to a state of agreement (*AC 1717*).
- "Captives" signify a mind in darkness about good and truth (*AC 7950*).
- "Judah" signifies a celestial love to the Lord, with all who are to be of His new heaven and new church (*AR 350*).
- "Jerusalem" signifies those who will be in the church who will receive interiorly the Divine Proceeding (Holy Spirit) and will receive it exteriorly (*AE 629 [6]*).

"...gather all nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat..."

- To "gather" or to "store up" signifies the truths in the memory. *AC 679* teaches us that "...'gathering' is predicated of the things that are in man's memory, where they are gathered together."
- The "valley of Jehoshaphat" signifies the falsification of the Word (*AE 911 [8]*).
- To "gather all nations" signifies the evils of the will, or lusts, and nations (people) the persuasions of the falsities of the understanding (*AC 622*).
- Do we see what is being said here? In order for the Lord to bring back the captives, He must collect all of the truths in the memory of the people. The gathering of the nations is a collection of the evils in the will and understanding. He must expose how these corrupted vessels brought about the falsification of the Word. The Lord didn't do this in the mountain. It took place in the valley where battles occur, where the daily life was more impure and profane. See *AC 1292*.

"...I will enter into judgment with them there [in the valley of Jehoshaphat]..."

- The doctrine of good relates to Justice and the doctrine of truth to Judgment (*AC 612 and 2231*). To "enter into judgment with them" signifies that the Lord will bring His truth into the center of their falsification of the Word for the purpose of exposing and expelling the disorders of their evils.

"...on account of My people, My heritage Israel..."

- "Heritage" has a **good representation**. *AE 650 [53]* teaches that "heritage" signifies the church. *AE 727 [10]* describes "heritage" as signifying the church that has Divine truth, and its power against falsities. *AE 727 [6]* teaches that the "flock of heritage" signifies those in the church who are in spiritual things of the Word, which are the truths of its internal sense. "Heritage" in **the negative sense** is described as the "heritage of Esau" wherein the natural person's good is destroyed by the falsities of the sensuous person (*AE 714 [25]*). And lastly, *AE 730* gives us this: "'Esau's heritage' signifies the falsities from evils."
- "Israel" in the highest sense means the Lord in relation to the internal of the church and also the church with those who are interiorly natural and have truths there from a spiritual origin. "Israel" signifies the church that is spiritual-natural (*AE 768 [15]*).
- "People" signify truth or falsity, and "nation" signifies good or evil (*AC 1259-60*). Note this interesting quote from *AC 1259 [6]* and 1672: "Before the sons of Israel sought for kings, they were a nation...but after they desired a king...they became a people."

"...whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land."

- "Scattered" signifies to spread falsities from evil (*AE 67*). "Scattered" signifies an infernal enjoyment of mixing or mingling falsity with truths (*AC 10464-65*). "Scattering" signifies the dissemination of falsities by those who are not in truths (*TCR 137*).
- "Among the nations" signifies the enjoyment of scattering falsity in the will or good of the church. See *AC 1259* for the signification of "nation."
- "Divided" signifies the devastation of the church and its end, when there is a separation of its truths and goods (*AE 710 [24]*).
- "Land" signifies various things: the internal man of the church; the church itself; the doctrine of love and charity; where the faith of the church resides (*AC 2571*).

"They...have given a boy as payment for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they may drink."

- "Give" in the positive sense signifies that all things are the Lord's (*AC 2026*). The question jumps out at us—were they giving away that which was the Lord's?
- "Payment" or the act of buying means that they sought to make acquisitions for themselves. Truth that constitutes faith is never an acquisition that a person makes; it is a gift instilled and conferred by the Lord. See *AC 5664*. What did they want to buy?
- "Boy" signifies the truth and good of innocence (*AE 863 [11]*).
- "Harlot" signifies to falsify the truths of the Word (*AE 863 [10]*).
- "Sold," or "sell," signifies to claim for oneself (*AC 3325*). "Sell" signifies to remove something from oneself (*AC 4752*). "Sell" signifies to ascribe something to someone else (*AC 5371*). "Sell" signifies those who make personal gain from holy things (*AE 840 [4]*). In the positive sense, "sell" signifies to set aside all self-love to procure the divine truth in the Word (*AC 840 [9 & 10]*).
- "Girl" signifies goods and their affections and the derivative gladness (*AC 2348*).
- "Wine" in the positive sense signifies faith from charity. To "drink wine" signifies a wish to investigate what belongs to faith (*AC 1071*). The "wine of whoredom" signifies adulterated truths of faith (*AC 1072 [4]*).
- To "drink" signifies to inquire whether any truth could be conjoined or appropriated (*AC 3089*). "Drink" signifies instruction in spiritual things (*AC 2704*). We can, from the context of this verse, see that "they" did not want to investigate the Lord's truth. Instead, they wanted to investigate ways to falsify and pollute the Word.

Putting It All Together

"Then the church will be gathered together, and then judgment will be executed upon those who have scattered the goods and truths of the church." (P&P)

Can we picture the great spiritual gathering of the church? I don't necessarily picture throngs of people as much as I picture the Lord "reviewing" the doctrines, the policies, the attitudes that misled the church over the years. It's not as if the Lord wasn't aware of these things up to this point. That's not His nature. All along the way, He was intricately involved. Each step of the way, He tried to mediate things. He tried to lift the church. If someone wanted to choose a disorder, He worked to get that person to choose a lesser disorder. The life of humanity was in great peril. In effect, the church and its people had run out of spiritual options. The "time" left to them was at its end. The Lord needed to act on behalf of the church. *Doctrine of the Lord 3* outlines the seriousness of the situation for us:

"The Lord came into the world **in the fullness of times**, which was when He was no longer known by the Jews, and **unless He had then come into the world and revealed Himself, mankind would have perished in eternal death.**"

How does this quote fit into our lesson from *Joel*?

1. The spiritual barrenness of the church was "gathered together" so it could be made plain to the church what gross evils they had come to live and love.
2. Their actions, their choices were reviewed in the valley of Jehoshaphat, a valley of decisions where a "war" was going to take place. The outcome would not be in doubt. The Lord was going to make a judgment on the folly of their thinking. He was going to end the reign of evil and falsity, and give birth to a new church.
3. What issues would come under the scrutiny and light of the Lord? The falsities of the sensual person had destroyed natural good. The scattering of the people spoke of the infernal enjoyment the hells derived from mixing and mingling falsities with truths. The clever subterfuges used to mislead the church would be exposed. The mocking laughter and glee of the hellish spirits would end.
4. Hellish loves worked tirelessly to divide the will and understanding. There was devastation in the land. Lots were cast. We are taught that casting lots signifies the plan of hell to dissipate the truths of the Word. The hells propounded the idea that they could "buy" their way into heaven or anywhere else they wanted to go. This was illustrated with the buying and selling of the young boy and girl. The philosophy of "payment" was wrong. The things they tried to claim for themselves were not theirs to buy or own. The Lord owned them. It was His choosing to do with them what He wanted. The Lord conferred divine things freely on the faithful. The faithful needed no money. The hells could not sell the holy things of the Lord for their own profit. It was now time for the Lord to completely expose the layers of falsity and evil within the fallen church.
5. Humankind, the church, had spiritually and morally bottomed out. The Lord's love and mercy needed to come into the world to provide a way out of the pit of hell. If the Lord had delayed His coming any longer, it would have been all over, spiritually, for the church.

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 3:1-3*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. The word "Jehoshaphat" in Hebrew comprises various meanings. It means "Yahu **judges** or **has judged**." It also is identified with the term **decision**. But when considered in a larger context, it is speaking of a **verdict** being made by the Lord. Would you agree that the choice of the valley of Jehoshaphat in the prophecy was not a random choice? How is it relevant to the situation?
2. The story of the tower of Babel comes to mind when I read about the buying and selling theme in *Joel*. The builders of that tower felt they could force their way into heaven and become god-like. Do you see some of this outlook when you think about the hells' brazen attitude about purchasing whatever they wanted?
3. Our lesson portrays hell's glee and delight in mixing and mingling falsity with truth. As always, we need to think of some example of this in our day. What examples come to mind?
4. One of the quotes in our Derived Doctrine section mentioned that before Israel had sought a king, they were a "nation." After they took on a king, they were called a "people." What do you make of this point? Doesn't this sound like a loss of cohesion moving from nation to people? The unity of the nation was lost when "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (*Judges 17:6*)
5. The giving and selling of the boy and girl signifies the cheapening of the good of innocence and the conjugal quality. What application of this principle can we make in today's issues of life?
6. Does the quote from *Doctrine of the Lord 3* awaken your mind to the desperate conditions of the world before the advent of the Lord? Have conditions improved since the advent? How? Does the fact that we have the Writings improve our opportunities to combat the forces of hell?

JOEL 3:4-8

"Indeed, what have you to do with Me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Philistia? Will you retaliate against Me? But if you retaliate against Me, swiftly and speedily I will return your retaliation upon your own head; because you have taken My silver and My gold, and have carried into your temples My prized possessions. Also the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem you have sold to the Greeks, that you may remove them far from their borders. Behold, I will raise them out of the place to which you have sold them, and will return your retaliation upon your own head. I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off; for the Lord has spoken."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...upon those who are in knowledges (cognitions) alone and in faith alone, and have thereby destroyed the truths of the Word and of doctrine."

AC 1201 [2]

- "In Joel...3:4, 5...Here 'Tyre and Zidon' evidently denote knowledges, and are called 'the borders of Philistia;' 'silver and gold,' and 'desirable good things,' are knowledges."

AC 9340 [8]

- "In Joel...3:4, 5...‘all borders of Philistia’ denote all the interior and exterior truths of faith; ‘to carry silver and gold and desirable good things into their temples’ denotes to pervert truths and goods, and profane them by application to evils and falsities. (That ‘silver and gold’ denote truths and goods, see n. 1551, 2954, 5658, 6112, 6914, 6917, 8932.)"

AC 1197 [4]

- "In Joel...3:4-6...Here it is evident what is meant by the Philistines, and by ‘all Philistia,’ or all ‘the borders’ of it. ‘Silver and gold’ here are the spiritual and celestial things of faith; ‘desirable good things’ are the knowledges of them. That they ‘carried them into their temples,’ is that they possessed and proclaimed them; and that they ‘sold the sons of Judah and the sons of Jerusalem,’ signifies that they had no love and no faith; ‘Judah’ in the Word is the celestial of faith, and ‘Jerusalem’ is the spiritual of faith thence derived, which were ‘removed far from their borders.’"

AC 10011 [3]

- "That by the ‘head’ is meant the whole man, is also evident from many passages in the Word, as the following...Joel 3:4, 7..."

AE 577 [12]

- "But in the contrary sense the ‘head’ signifies the craftiness that those have who are in the love of ruling...That the craftiness by which they purpose and contrive evil against others returns upon themselves is by..." *Joel 3:4 and 7* are cited.

AC 1551 [4]

- "In Joel...3:5...This is said concerning Tyre, Zidon, and Philistia; by which are signified knowledges, which are 'the gold and the silver' that they carried into their temples."

AR 913

- "The reason why 'gold' signifies the good of love is because metals, as well as each and every thing which appears in the natural world, correspond: gold to the good of love, silver to the truths of wisdom...That 'gold' from correspondence signifies the good of love, may appear from the following passages..." *Joel 3:5* is cited.

AC 1151 [6]

- "...in Joel...3:6...'The sons of Judah' denote celestial things of faith; 'the sons of Jerusalem,' spiritual things of faith—thus things internal; and 'the sons of the Javanites,' worship in externals separate from what is internal. Because this worship is so widely remote from what is internal, it is said that they have 'removed them far from their border.'"

AE 840 [11]

- "Moreover, 'to sell' and 'to be sold' signify to alienate truths and to be alienated from them, and to accept falsities in their place, and to be captivated by them." *Joel 3:6* and 7 are cited.

AC 5886 [3]

- "In Joel...3:6-8...Speaking of Tyre and Sidon; 'to sell' here also denotes to alienate."

AE 119 [4]

- "He who knows that by 'Judah' is meant in the highest sense the Lord, and in the internal sense His kingdom and the Word, and in the external sense doctrine from the Word, also in a contrary sense those who deny the Lord and adulterate the Word, can know what is signified by 'Judah' in very many passages of the Word, as in the following..." *Joel 3:6, 18, and 20* are cited.

Derived Doctrine

"Indeed, what have you to do with Me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Philistia?"

- Does the word "indeed" mean "in truth," "in fact," or is it an exclamation of surprise, irony, or incredulity?
- "Tyre" and "Sidon" (Zidon) represent those who perverted spiritual things. The Lord is making it quite clear that these two cities had no interest or part of Him in their hearts and minds. They were dangerous and arrogant neighbors of Israel.
- As we think about the meanings given above for "...and all the coasts of Philistia," it may be helpful to consider *Ezekiel 25:16*: "...therefore thus says the Lord God: 'I will stretch out My hand against the **Philistines**, and I will...destroy the remnant of the **seacoast**.' *AE 275* explains the spiritual sense of this passage: '**the Philistines' signify those who are in the doctrine of faith alone**, and the remnant of the **seacoast signify all things of truth.**'"

"Will you retaliate against Me? But if you retaliate against Me, swiftly and speedily I will return your retaliation upon your own head..."

- There is a "law of order" in the spiritual world that is constant and perpetual. When an evil spirit intends harm to be inflicted on others, whether they are companions or enemies, the intended evil recoils upon the spirit who willed it to be done (*AC 8223*). The spirit of retaliation faces the constant and perpetual law of order. Can we see this law written within this passage? Those who want to retaliate against the Lord will experience swift and speedy retaliation upon their own head. The spirit of retaliation comes only from the evil and not from the good because the good continually desire to do good to both foes and friends.

"...because you have taken My silver and My gold, and have carried into your temples My prized possessions."

- To "take away" signifies to remove every good and truth of the church for the purpose of leaving no power to resist falsities (*AE 727 [12]*). According to *AC 10540*, to "take away" signifies to destroy defending truths.
- "My silver" relates to understanding truths of the Lord. "My gold" relates to willing the things of the Lord. Hence, this phrase describes a removal of the understanding and the will.
- What would be a "prized possession" of the Lord's? It most likely would be the conjugial principle within all things. What is that conjugial principle? *CL 316* teaches, "The conjugial principle is present in the tiniest details of each human being." *AC 3915* shares with us, "The conjunction of good and truth is

the conjugal principle in the Lord's kingdom." So the crime here is that the prized possession was carried into the temple of self-love so that it could be disjoined, severed, and lost.

"Also the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem you have sold to the Greeks, that you may remove them far from their borders."

- "The people of Judah" signify love to the Lord, with whom the church was to be established (*AC 10329*). The people of Jerusalem signify the church with whom the Divine Proceeding (Holy Spirit) was to be received (*AE 629 [6]*).
- "Sold to the Greeks" signifies being among a nation of falsities (*AE 242 [12]*). "Selling" signifies the desire to have personal gain from holy things.
- Removing the people "far" from their borders is an effort to diminish the memory-knowledges of truths stored up from the Word. To carry people "far from their borders" is to trivialize the things of the Word learned from childhood. *AE 518 [17]* drew me to the possibility of applying this meaning to the passage.

Putting It All Together

P&P focuses our reflection on the heart of the problem in these verses.

"...knowledges **alone** and faith **alone**" are what destroyed the truths of the Word and the doctrine drawn from the Word. Aloneness fosters separation of the will and understanding instead of a balanced conjunction. It dissolves the conjugal principle within what the Lord intended to be united.

Did the frequent use of the word "retaliation" come to your attention? In the passages we are considering, the word "retaliation" occurs three times. The dictionary defines retaliation as "To return like for like; to return evil for evil."

Why did the fallen church feel it had to retaliate? What led them to decide they must give the Lord "like for like" or "evil for evil"? The Lord does no evil. He only seeks to do good to all of His children. Could the anger they felt stem from their belief that the Lord hindered them from doing what they wanted to do? Was their anger a form of displaced hostility? When self-love is out of control, it favors no one except self. Anyone or anything that gets in the way of self-love is attacked. We know from many teachings in the Writings that hell burns to blot out the name of the Lord. They long to destroy the Lord and all those who love Him. Hell enjoys attacking good and truth.

The Lord introduces us to an important "law of order." He shows us the results of the spirit of retaliation. Those who wish harm on others will have a like harm return to them. Those who wish good to a friend or neighbor will have a like good return to them. The fallen church was in for a sad end. "Swiftly and speedily," their retaliation would "be upon [their] own head."

But we should not end on this retaliatory note. The Lord promises to restore and return His "prized possessions" to the temple. He will return those who were held captive by self-love and bring them into the presence of the gold and silver in the temple. The good of love (gold) and the good of truth (silver) will once again be the conjunctive means to restore a balanced worship of the Lord. The bleak **aloneness** will be removed. "Knowledge **alone** and faith **alone**" will no longer be present in the hearts and minds of His people. The conjugial principle will thrive in the church. The great gate of conjunction will be open wide, inviting all to enter into the warmth and protective fellowship of the Lord's new church.

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 3:4-8*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Can you recall a time when you wanted something strongly and no warning advice against getting it was allowed in the pursuit of your goal? What happened?
2. Did you feel antagonism toward the person speaking against your goal? Sometimes, our persistence is for something good. But think now of a time when you insisted on getting your own way and the situation ended sadly. Why do we sometimes fail to listen to the advice offered to us?
3. What about the "law of order" regarding retaliation? Do you see it being so? Did it worry you? What are the fruits of getting even with someone?
4. I hope we will be able to recall the positive aspect of the "law of order." Our good wishes for others also return to us.
5. Do you see the danger of "aloneness"? Separating the will and the understanding brings sad results. Hell wants to get us arguing about which is most important, Good (affections) or Truth (understanding). The Jacob and Esau story in the Word illustrates in many ways the strife between the will and understanding. What illustrations of this point can you think of?
6. Have you ever participated in a debate about the importance of "feelings" over the rational approach to problem-solving?
7. The gold and silver stolen away have quite a rich application to life. Please note the Writings say that these "prized possessions" of the church were taken away by "the craftiness" and purpose of those who "contrive evil against others." We are taught that these crafty ones are those who are in the love of ruling. Any ideas of how we may see this application to our lives and times?
8. One last suggested question: Do we sense that there is a conjugial principle in all things created? If that principle is ignored, hated, or separated, do you see

the ramifications of how the spiritual church within us dies and becomes antagonistic to the Lord? Aloneness is a cold and lifeless way of existing.

JOEL 3:9-12

"Proclaim this among the nations: 'Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, let all men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, 'I am strong.' Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O Lord. Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Combat of good and truth against evils and falsities at that time."

AC 9857 [10]

- "...'doing judgments' denotes to judge either to death, which is damnation; or to life, which is salvation. Salvation or damnation is also signified by 'judgment,' ...Where the office of a judge is treated of..." *Joel 3:12* is cited as an example.

AE 911 [8]

- "In Joel...3:12, 13...This chapter treats of the falsification of the truth in the Word, and the devastation of the church by it; and this verse treats of the last state of the church, when judgment takes place...That judgment then takes place is plainly declared, 'the valley of Jehoshaphat,' where judgment is executed, signifying the falsification of the Word."

Derived Doctrine

"Proclaim this among the nations: 'Prepare for war!"

- *AC 10412* explains that to "proclaim" signifies that the true Divine is shown as the essential of the church, and it is to be announced that this Divine is to be perpetually worshipped. In *AE 302*, "proclaim" signifies that an exploration is to be made. The influx of the Lord will make known the states of life of everyone in heaven and on earth.
- "Nations" signifies the evils of the will, or lusts, whereas "people" signifies the falsities of the understanding, or persuasions (*AC 622*).

- "Prepare" signifies **making ready to receive truth** (*AC 3142 [2]*). "Prepare" signifies to make one **ready to live according to divine order** (*TCR 110 [5]*). To "make ready" signifies that **the church was to be conjoined with the Lord through the Word** (*AR 881*).
- "War" signifies spiritual fighting against the lusts of evil and the persuasions of falsity (*AC 1663, 1664*). "War" signifies the combats of the Lord with the hells (*AE 817 [7]*).

"Wake up the mighty men, let all men of war draw near, let them come up."

- "Wake" signifies a clear and alert state (*AC 5210*). "Wake" signifies a state in which people begin to know that they do not live from themselves. Thus, they "wake up." See *AC 147*.
- "Mighty men" or mighty warriors signify those who are strong in faith (*AC 1179*). "Mighty ones" signify those who love good (*AE 922 [2]*). In the opposite sense, "mighty men" signify those who live falsities because of self-love (*AC 8317*). Mighty warriors signify those consumed by self love (*AC 583*).
- To "draw near" signifies receiving influx to be conjoined to the Lord through love (*AC 8159*).

"Beat your ploughshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears..."

- To "beat" signifies the arrangement and disposal of truths in their order and series (*AC 10303 [2]*). To "beat" or hammer signifies to make good solid (*AC 9550*). The rain and wind beating on the house built on the rock signifies to form the person of the church so that he or she does not fall but conquers (*AE 411 [11]*).
- "Ploughshares" signify the goods of the church that cultivate truths (*AE 734 [3]*).
- In *AC 2799*, "swords" are described as signifying the truth of faith combating. A "sword" in the internal sense signifies the truth of faith combating and also the vastation of truth. In the opposite sense, a "sword" is falsity combating truth, and the punishment of falsity. *AE* contains at least eight passages stating that a "sword" signifies falsity destroying truth and good.
- "Pruning hooks" signify doctrinal truths and also signify perceptions and knowledges of truths (*AE 734 [2]*).
- "Spears" signify truths of use in spiritual warfare, which, with regeneration, become preparatory to the reception of truths from good (*AC 1664 [3]* and *AC 5895*).
- **Before passing on to other derived doctrine, please note that *Isaiah 2:4* and *Micah 4:3* reverse this command from the Lord.** These two passages command the Israelites to "beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks."

"Let the weak say, 'I am strong.'"

- "Weak" signifies being without supporting truths (*AC 6344*). "Weak" signifies that the affections of external truth have a feeble and wavering understanding (*AC 3820*).
- *AE 922 [5]* has an explanation about strength that seems to apply to the words "I am strong." "As all strength in the Word is in the letter, it is said (in *Isaiah 63:1*) 'walking in the multitude of His strength.'" In other words, we need to know and feel the strength of the Word and walk in the ways of truth, which "cannot be resisted" (*AC 426 [3]*).
- "Let" means to allow or permit. "Allow" signifies to have or obtain spiritual food regularly to become freed from sins (*AC 2165*).

"Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around."

- *AC 6338* explains that "assemble" signifies to set goods and truths in order, for goods and truths cannot be assembled if they are not in order.
- "Come and see" signifies giving attention to and having a degree of perception (*AE 354*).
- "All you nations" possibly represents the gathering of those in the Lord's kingdom. See *AC 1416 [5]*. The indication here is that the natural, spiritual, and celestial of the Lord's kingdom have a divine calling to gather. There was to be a combined and unified mobilization of heavenly forces to oust the hells from the church.
- "Gather together all around." "Gather" signifies to excite the truths in the memory for combat (*AR 707*). All in the same goods and truths gather to meet and organize forces (*AC 6451*). Please note the call to gather "all around." The Divine circle. The total or complete protection for the day of the battle.

"Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O Lord."

- The word "cause" seems to imply "make," "send," "direct," or "command." "Your mighty ones." There is another important word to focus on: "Your" mighty ones. This battle is being waged from the Lord's resources and not humanity's. When the battle occurs and victory is secured, human prudence has no claim to the victory. The Lord's mighty ones assured the victory.

"Let the nations be awakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat..."

- "Awaken" signifies enlightenment. To be asleep signifies to be in an obscure state (*AC 3715*).
- "Come up" signifies to progress from what is external to what is internal (*AC 5202*).

- The "Valley of Jehoshaphat" signifies the falsification of the Word (*AE 911 [8]*). In other words, the Lord was directing His mighty ones to the source of all the spiritual problems. Listen now to the closing portion of this verse.

"For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations."

- To "sit" signifies a state of thought (*AC 2684*).
- To "judge" denotes the Lord opening the doctrine of His truth (*AC 2231*). When He opens His truth, all veneers will melt away. All pretenses will be uncovered. True motives will be seen. Things misjudged or improperly learned will be straightened out. "The crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth; the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." (*Isaiah 40:4-5*)
- "All surrounding nations" will see and witness the eradication of falsity. The Word will be restored to its Holy place in the hearts and mind of the church.

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes these verses with an announcement from the Lord of a combat against evils and falsities. The literal sense of the Word boldly declares, "Prepare for war!" The internal sense declares what must be done to prepare for war:

- We must live according to divine order.
- The church must be conjoined with the Lord and the Word.
- We must be awake, be alert, and realize that we cannot live from ourselves alone.
- Ploughshares must be beaten into swords, meaning that good must be made solid and firm, and then it must put truths in order.
- The sword of faith must combat evil.
- Instead of calling our efforts weak, we need to trust the Lord and believe that with His guidance, "I am strong." The hells flee from us when they see that we believe this truth because the Lord told us to say it.

The day of the Lord's judgment is at hand. The pretense and false front of the hells will be exposed and removed by the Lord and His mighty ones. The Lord will sit in judgment in the valley of Jehoshaphat—the falsification of the Word—and He will return the Word to His people and His New Church. All of the nations, all of the heavens, will sit and witness this magnificent restoration of good and truth. The crooked will be made straight, and the rough places will be made smooth. There will be a new highway built by the Lord, and He will guide His people to the eternal Promised Land through the process of regeneration.

So let us "Gather together all around." Let us share the exciting news from the Lord with confidence and feel the surge of power from heaven so we can say in unison: "**I am strong!**"

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 3:9-12*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Did you find this section spiritually invigorating? The Lord minced no words. There was going to be combat. There was going to be order and arrangement of resources. There was going to be a hardening up of good and truth. There was a call to be awake. What do you make of all these preparations by the Lord?
2. Did you feel like you wanted to be part of the winning army? Isn't it comforting to know that hell will not win despite its defense?
3. How may we practice the "I am strong!" speech to ourselves?
4. Why would the quotes from *Isaiah* and *Micah* about ploughshares and spears be different?

JOEL 3:13-15

"Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full. The vats overflow—for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Then evil is consummated."

AC 9295 [6]

- "In Joel...3:13...By 'the harvest' is signified the consummation of the age, or the last state of the devastated church."

AR 651

- "'A winepress' signifies exploration, because, in presses, must is pressed out from clusters..." *Joel 3:13* is cited.

AE 911 [8]

- "In Joel...3:12, 13...This chapter treats of the falsification of the truth in the Word, and the devastation of the church by it; and this verse treats of the last state of the church, when judgment takes place; and this state is described...by 'sending forth the sickle, for the harvest is ripe,' the 'harvest' being that last state; also by 'the wine-press is full and the vats overflow,' ...That judgment then takes place is plainly declared, 'the valley of Jehoshaphat,' where judgment is executed, signifying the falsification of the Word."

AE 922 [3]

- "In Joel...3:13...The devastation of the church as to good and as to truth is thus described; and 'the wine-press is full and the vats have overflowed' signifies that there was nothing except falsities from evil."

AE 922 [8]

- "In most passages, where 'vintage' and 'winepress' are mentioned, the 'harvest' [signifies] the good of celestial love, which is love to the Lord; and... 'wine-press,' ...[signifies] the good of spiritual love, which is love towards the neighbor; for these two loves make one, like an efficient cause and its effect." *Joel 3:13* is cited as an example.

AC 2495 [2 & 3]

- "...the 'sun' does not mean the sun, nor the 'moon' the moon, nor the 'stars' the stars; but that the 'sun' signifies love to the Lord and charity toward the neighbor; the 'moon' the faith of love and charity; and the 'stars' the knowledges of good and truth...so that by these words of the Lord there is signified that in the consummation of the age (or last period of the church) there will no longer be any love, or charity, nor therefore any faith. That this is the meaning is evident from similar words of the Lord in the Prophets, as in...*Joel 3:14, 15...*"

AC 4697 [4 & 5]

- "...by the 'sun and moon' are signified love and charity, or good and truth, and by the 'stars' knowledges may be seen...And because the last day or the last state of the church is here treated of, by 'the sun being darkened and the moon not giving her light' is signified that then the good of love and of charity will perish; and by 'the stars falling from heaven,' that the knowledges of good and of truth will also perish. That these things are signified, is evident

from the prophetic parts of the Word, in which similar things are said of the last state of the church, as in...*Joel 3:14, 15...*"

AR 53

- "...the Lord appears as a sun in heaven before the angels..." 'The sun'...also signifies love and wisdom from the Lord...*Joel 3:14, 15...*In these passages by 'sun' is not meant the sun of this world, but the sun of the angelic heaven, which is the Divine love and the Divine wisdom of the Lord; these are said to be 'obscured,' 'darkened,' 'covered,' and 'blackened' when there are evils and falsities with man. Hence it is evident, that similar things are meant by the Lord's words, where He speaks of the consummation of the age, which is the last time of the church..."

AE 401 [14]

- "It is clear...That in these passages 'the sun and moon made black and darkened' means that there was no longer any good or any truth..." *Joel 3:14-15* is cited.

AE 526 [4]

- "In *Joel...3:14, 15...*This is said of the last time of the church, when there is no longer any spiritual good or truth, or the good and truth of heaven and the church, but evil and falsity. That the goods and truths of the church, which are called the goods of love and the truths of faith are changed into evils and falsities, is signified by 'the sun and moon shall be obscured and darkened, and the stars shall not give their light;' the Last Judgment that then follows is meant by 'the day of Jehovah great and terrible;' and as this comes when the church is in darkness and in thick darkness, that day is also called 'a day of darkness and thick darkness,' and also 'a day of cloud and obscurity'..."

AC 1808 [4]

- "Every one can see that by 'the stars' and 'constellations' here are not meant the stars and constellations, but things true and good; and by 'the sun,' love; and by 'the moon,' faith; for the evils of falsities which cause darkness are treated of." *Joel 3:15* is cited.

HH 119

- "In these passages [*Joel 3:15* is cited] the 'sun' signifies love, and the 'moon' faith, and the 'stars' knowledges of good and truth. These are said to be darkened, to lose their light, and to fall from heaven, when they are no more."

Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 14 [3]

- "That there is not meant a darkening of the sun and moon, nor a falling of the stars to the earth, is very evident from the Prophets, in which like things are said about the state of the church when the Lord should come into the world."

AR 51

- "...that by 'stars' are signified the knowledges of good and truth from the Word...may appear from these passages..." *Joel 3:15* is cited.

AR 312

- "That 'black' in the Word, is spoken of falsity, may appear from these passages..." *Joel 3:15* is cited.

TCR 198

- "...in the spiritual sense 'the sun' that shall be darkened means love to the Lord; 'the moon' that shall not give her light means faith in the Lord; 'the stars' that shall fall from heaven mean knowledges of what is true and good...That this does not mean the darkening of the sun and moon and the falling of the stars to earth, is very clear from like statements in the prophets respecting the state of the church, when the Lord was about to come into the world; as in...*Joel*...3:15..."

TCR 620

- *Joel 3:15* is cited. "...darkness would be upon the earth...It would be the same with man without truths, which send out light from themselves; for the sun from which the light of truths flows forth is the Lord in the spiritual world. If spiritual light did not flow therefrom into human minds, the church would be in mere darkness, or in shadow from a perpetual eclipse."

AE 72 [4]

- "'Darkness upon the land' means falsities in the church. In *Joel*...3:15..."

AE 372 [3]

- "...by 'I will make the stars thereof dark,' 'stars' meaning knowledges of truth... 'and the moon shall not make her light to shine,' 'sun' signifying the good of love, and 'moon' the truth of faith." *Joel 3:15* is cited as an example.

Derived Doctrine

"Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe."

- A "sickle" signifies "the Divine truth of the Word...because by a 'harvest' is signified the state of the church as to Divine truth, here its last state; therefore by 'reaping,' which is done with a sickle, is here signified to put an end to the state of the church, and to execute judgment..." (*AR 643*).
- A "harvest" signifies the last state of the church preceding the Last Judgment when everyone is explored by the Lord and there is a separation of the evil from the good (*AE 908*).
- "Ripe" has some interesting meanings. *AC 5117* describes its meaning as the progress of rebirth or regeneration. In the "unripe" state, truth predominates. But when good has the primacy, the "ripe" state exists. *AR 645* defines "ripe" as the last state of the old church. *AE 911* says "ripe" signifies the time to collect the good and to separate them from the evil.

"Come, go down; for the winepress is full. The vats overflow—for their wickedness is great."

- To "go down" signifies to move toward the exterior or lower natural and earthly things (*AC 5406*). To "come down" when said of the Lord signifies judgment (*AC 1311*).
- A "winepress" signifies in the negative sense violence offered to divine truth (*AE 922 [5]*). *AR 651* teaches that a winepress signifies an examination of the quality of works, and the quality is determined by the products (uses).
- "The 'vats' overflow—for their wickedness is great": we need some lead-in to achieve a glimpse of the spiritual sense of this phrase. *AE 644 [15]* develops a series of positive things that have a "vat overflow." It speaks of the Lord's continual influx intro truths with the good of love. From this influx, a person has a good love towards a brother or companion, and from this they have the truth and good of love to the Lord. *AE 695 [23]* explores the negative sense of "vats" overflowing, noting that "The floor and the wine shall not feed them" signifies failure to draw from the Word the good things of charity and love. The wine vat signifies the Word in respect to the goods of love, and the "vat" means they were so full of themselves that they had no room for the good of charity and love. *AE 922 [3]* teaches that the "vats" overflowing signifies that there was nothing except falsities from evils. And what were the results of this? They separated faith from charity and made faith without works "the law of saving."
- "Wickedness" needs a moment of reflection so we can clearly define it and know more accurately what effect wickedness has on our lives. What is at the heart of wickedness? Consider this quote from *AE 257 [7]*: wickedness signifies **"all the falsities of evil committed to the complete destruction of good and truth in a person."**

"Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision."

- *AE 750 [10]* has this explanation for "multitudes." "Multitudes" (hordes) signify the false beliefs and wrong opinions of those who array themselves against the truths and goods of the church.
- When the word "multitude" is used twice, it is not for effect or emphasis. When one word is repeated, it speaks of a heavenly marriage in the positive sense. In the negative sense, it represents the effort of evil to destroy the conjugal principle of the will and understanding.
- "The valley of decision" needs to be looked at from two vantages. A "valley" represents the natural portions of the mind where battles occur between truth and falsity. A "valley" signifies what is external in worship "wherein is what is profane." (*AC 1292*) "Decision" is identified with a church that has come to "its old age, or its winter, or its night; and its time and state then are called 'decision,' and 'fulfillment.'" (*AC 2905*)

"For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision."

- "Day of the Lord" signifies vastation and the last time and state of the church(*AC 488 [3] and AC 1839 [5]*).

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes this section as "Then evil is consummated." The word "consummated" means to bring to completion, to sum up, or to carry to the utmost extent.

The consummation of the external church did not take place on the mountain of the Lord. It took place in the "valley of decision." Therefore, we are looking at the last days of the external church. The Lord was coming to the harvest of that church. His "sickle" had to sort things out from the "harvest." Judgment in the Word is often depicted as a man sitting down on the shore to separate good fish from bad fish. Or it is presented as the sheep being separated from the goats. Such a day of decision was crucial. The Word had, for many years, been falsified. Errors, misdeeds, and falsity during that long period of time had gained credence within the church. Falsity was accepted as truth, and truth was being accepted as falsity. Vastation came to the church so that "spiritual things" could be emptied out and freed from the smothering effects of the hells. Truth was to be ousted. Falsity was to be removed and banished from the church.

Is it any wonder then that the Writings gave us many quotes regarding the meaning of the sun, moon, and stars losing their light? Falsity was blocking out the Lord who is our "sun of heaven." Falsity was causing the "moon of faith" to lose its reflection of the light of the sun. Falsity caused the "stars" of knowledge to fall from the heavens.

Exploration came from the Lord so that violence to the Word would end. "Multitudes" and "multitudes" of false beliefs and wrong opinions had arrayed themselves against the Lord, but their day, their end, was at hand. The external church, a church in a state of "old age," a church in a "winter" state, a church in a state of "night" was being called into the valley of decision.

Who did the calling? It was the Lord, the sun of heaven, who is true and mighty. What will this day of decision be like? *Isaiah 60:4-5*, in a prophecy of the advent of the Lord, captures this day of enlightenment with these words:

"Lift up your eyes all around, and see...you shall see and become radiant, and your heart shall swell with joy..."

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 3:13-15*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. The process of the sun, moon, and stars losing their light is a theme found in many prophesies of the Old Testament and in the New Testament. Have you, by now, pictured the meaning and the process of this happening to the previous churches?
2. Will this same thing happen to the organized New Church on earth?
3. *Isaiah 60:20* promises that the spiritual New Church will not experience the loss of the sun, moon, and stars. Listen to that prophecy: "Your sun shall no longer go down, nor shall your moon withdraw itself; for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended."
4. Isn't this a wonderful state to look forward to?
5. Can you picture the Lord with His sickle harvesting the field of the "old," "tired," "winter" state of the consummated church?

JOEL 3:16-17

"The Lord also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will shake; but the Lord will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So you shall know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, and no aliens shall ever pass through her again."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "This is from the Lord, whom they will then also acknowledge, and from whom is the church."

AC 7573 [3]

- "In Joel...3:...16...the 'voice of Jehovah' denotes truth Divine; that it is said to be 'from Jerusalem' is because by 'Jerusalem' is signified the Lord's spiritual kingdom, in which are they who are in good from truth, and in truth from good."

AC 9926 [6]

- "...that 'the voice' in this passage denotes Divine truth, consequently the Word of the Lord, is manifest." *Joel 3:16* is cited.

AR 37

- "...'voice' signifies the Divine truth from the Lord..." *Joel 3:16* is cited.

AR 471

- "...'His roaring as a lion,' for a lion roars when he sees his enemies and is assaulted by them...so does the Lord, comparatively, when He sees His church taken away from Him by devils. That this is what is signified by 'roaring as a lion,' may appear from these passages..." *Joel 3:16* is cited.

AE 261 [3 & 4]

- "'The voice of Jehovah'...is the Divine proceeding, or Divine truth, from which is all intelligence and wisdom..." *Joel 3:16* is cited.

AE 601 [6]

- "In Joel...3:16...The protection of the faithful by the Lord by means of Divine truth is described by 'Jehovah shall roar out of Zion, and shall give forth His voice from Jerusalem;' the vehement power of Divine truth, and consequent terror, are described by 'the heavens and the earth shall quake;' and salvation and protection by 'Jehovah shall be a shelter for His people, and a stronghold for the sons of Israel;' 'the people of Jehovah' and 'the sons of Israel' being the faithful who are of the church."

AR 612

- "Hence by 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem' are signified the inmost things of the church...but by 'Zion' the church as to love, and by 'Jerusalem' the church as to doctrine from love. It is called 'mount Zion' because by 'a mountain' is signified love...That by 'mount Zion' is signified heaven and the church where the Lord alone is worshiped, may appear from the following passages..." *Joel 3:16, 17, and 21* are cited.

AE 850 [15]

- "In Joel...3:16, 17, 21...'To roar,' and the 'roaring of a lion,' when predicated of Jehovah, signify an ardent zeal for protecting heaven and the church, and for saving those who are therein by the Divine truth and its power, which is done by destroying the evils and falsities that rise up out of hell...and as 'Zion' signifies heaven where the Lord reigns by the Divine truth, and 'Jerusalem' signifies doctrine therefrom, it is clear what is signified by 'Jehovah shall roar out of Zion, and shall utter His voice from Jerusalem.' That the Lord is present where He reigns by His Divine truth, both with the angels of heaven and with the men of the church, is signified by 'ye shall know that I am Jehovah, dwelling in Zion, the mountain of My holiness.' That there shall be no falsities of evil there is signified by 'no strangers shall pass through her,' 'strangers' being the falsities of evil."

AC 10287 [9]

- "And in Joel...3:17...'Jerusalem' denotes the church, but that in which the Lord is acknowledged, men live in good, and believe in the truths which are from the Lord; that 'strangers shall not pass through her any more' denotes that the evils and falsities of evil which are from hell shall not enter."

AE 405 [26]

- "...Jerusalem is called 'the mountain of holiness'...[because this signifies] spiritual good, which in its essence is truth from good, as can be seen from the following passages." *Joel 3:17* is cited.

AR 336

- "...a mountain signified heaven and love...And for the same reason the Lord was transfigured before Peter, James, and John, upon a high mountain...And on this account Zion was upon a mountain, and also Jerusalem, and they are called 'the mountain of Jehovah,' and 'the mountain of Holiness,' in many parts of the Word." *Joel 3:17-18* is cited.

Doctrine of the Lord 64 [7 & 8]

- "'Jerusalem' means a church from the Lord...which was to be set up anew by the Lord, and which actually was set up anew by Him, and not the Jerusalem in the land of Canaan that was inhabited by the Jews..." *Joel 3:17-20* is cited as an example text.

AR 880

- "By 'Jerusalem' is also meant the church from the Lord in the following passages..." *Joel 3:17, 18, and 20* are cited.

Brief Exposition 100

- "That by 'Jerusalem' is meant the church, is very clear from the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning a New Church to be established by the Lord, wherein it is called 'Jerusalem.'" *Joel 3:17-20* is among the many passages cited.

TCR 782

- "That 'Jerusalem' means the church can be clearly seen from the prophecies in the Old Testament respecting the new church to be established by the Lord, in that it is there called 'Jerusalem.'" *Joel 3:17-21* is cited.

TCR 789

- "...other prophets have made many predictions respecting this church, what its character would be, a few of which shall be cited..." *Joel 3:17-21* is cited.

AC 3881 [6]

- "That by 'Judah' is not meant Judah; but, as already said, in the internal sense the Lord's celestial kingdom...may also be clearly seen from the following passages..." *Joel 3:17, 18, and 20* are cited.

Derived Doctrine

"...the heavens and earth will shake..."

- The Lord's first advent reordered all of the heavens and the earth. "The 'heavens' are the celestial and spiritual things (thus the inmost things) of both the Lord's kingdom in the heavens, and the Lord's kingdom on the earth, that is in the church, and also in every man...the 'earth' is all lower things...as the lower rational and natural things..." (*AC 2162*)

- To "shake" signifies to divest the heart and mind of unclean things (*AC* 1748).
To "shake" signifies to get rid of evil lest what is damned should adhere (*AE* 365 [8]).

"...the Lord will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel."

- The word "shelter" has no correspondential explanation in *The Swedenborg Concordance*. There is a suggestion made by Alice Sechrist, in *A Dictionary of Bible Imagery*, to look at the correspondence of "shade," "shadow," or "cloud" when considering the word "shelter." Let's see if the explanation of a "cloud" offers any meanings that could apply to "shelter" as well.
- A "cloud" signifies "...the ultimate of the Word, which is therefore relatively obscure...That this is 'the cloud' is because the Divine truth which is from the Lord cannot possibly appear in the very brightness in which it is, for man would thereby perish, because his understanding would be totally blinded by the light of truth, and his will would be wholly extinguished by the fire of good; thus all his life would be annihilated. Hence it is that Divine truth is accommodated to each person's apprehension, and as it were veiled with a cloud..." (*AC* 9433)
- The strength, the fortification, of the Lord is His truth, which cannot be resisted (*AC* 426 [3]). The Lord's strength is the Divine good and truth in the church (*AE* 288 [4]).

"So you shall know that I am the Lord your God..."

- To be able to "know" and "name" the Lord is an important part of the process of making that which is invisible visible. To "name" signifies to know the essence or quality of all the affections of the Lord that are to be worshiped (*AC* 2724).
- "You shall know" is both a positive and encouraging idea to hold within the heart during this period of "shaking" the heavens and earth, this vastation of the dead church.

Putting It All Together

"This is from the Lord..." *P&P* teaches that the new church will come to acknowledge the Lord and will know that the church is from Him.

The Lord as a "roaring lion" is not a reference to the sound of anger. Instead, the roar of the Lord is filled with a loving zeal to protect His beloved. The Lord "roars" when He sees His church being carried away by devils. He roars when He sees His enemies assaulting the faithful within the church. His mighty roar strikes terror in the heart of the hells.

His roar is not all noise signifying nothing. He steadily saw to the reordering of the heavens and earth. He caused His truth to bring about a spiritual shaking to rid the church of unclean things. The shaking helped to rid the new church of the "dust" of falsity so that it wouldn't adhere to the mind and heart of the new church. While the hells were being consummated, the Lord spoke words of comfort to the faithful.

- "I will be your shelter and I will be the strength, or fortification, of My people."
- "You will know Me. You will know that I am the Lord your God."
- "The church will be holy."
- "Aliens, evils and falsities which are from hell, shall not enter or pass through the New Church again."
- The Lord assures us that the church will live in good and will believe in the truths which are from Him.

"This is from the Lord..." and not anyone else. For the Lord has spoken. And it is so!

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 3:16-17*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. When you read the Word, do you hear the comforting "roaring" of the Lord?
2. Can you imagine the great trembling that hell goes through when we listen to the leading of the Word?
3. What was your impression of the meaning of "cloud" in place of the word "shelter"? Does it seem to communicate what the word "shelter" might mean in the spiritual sense?
4. That teaching about aliens not coming into the Church ever again had my heart crying out "How long O Lord?" I would love to see the evils and falsities of the world gone. I would love for the pretentious shams to leave us alone. What are your wishes for the day when truth will be truth, falsity will be falsity, and never will the two be mistaken for one another?
5. The Lord promises that the church will live in good and believe in the truths that are from Him. **This is from the Lord.** Does hell want us to doubt the validity of His promise? Why?

JOEL 3:18-19

"And it will come to pass in that day that the mountains shall drip with new wine, the hills shall flow with milk, and all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water; a fountain shall flow from the house of the Lord and water the Valley of Acacias. Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom a desolate wilderness, because of violence against the people of Judah, for they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall abide forever and Jerusalem from generation to generation."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "The Lord will then teach them the Word, and falsifications of the Word will be removed."

AC 2184 [6]

- "In Joel...3:18...Speaking of the Lord's kingdom; 'milk' denotes the celestial spiritual. In the Word the land of Canaan also (by which the Lord's kingdom is represented and signified) is called a 'land flowing with milk and honey' ...and in these passages nothing else is meant by 'milk' than an abundance of celestial spiritual things, and by 'honey' an abundance of the derivative happinesses; the 'land' is the celestial itself of the kingdom, from which those things come."

AC 2702 [7]

- "That a 'fountain' is the Word, or doctrine from it is plain also in Joel...3:18...where 'waters' denote truths; and a 'fountain out of the house of Jehovah,' the Lord's Word."

AC 3580 [7]

- This passage refers to *Joel 3:18*, "...where the Lord's kingdom is treated of; and by 'sweet wine,' by 'milk,' and by 'waters,' are signified spiritual things whose abundance is thus described."

AC 6435 [10]

- In *Joel 3:18* "...the goods of celestial love are signified by 'mountains;' and likewise by 'hills,' but in a lower degree."

AR 316

- "That 'oil' signifies the good of love will be seen...but that 'wine' signifies truth from that good is evident from the following passages..." *Joel 3:18* is cited among other passages.

AR 409

- "That 'rivers' signify truths in abundance may be evident from the following passages..." *Joel 3:18* is cited.

AE 376 [5]

- "In Joel...3:18...This treats of the Lord's coming, and of the new heaven and the new church from Him. It is well known that the mountains in the land of Canaan, or in Judea, did not then drop down sweet wine, nor the hills flow with milk, nor the water-courses of Judah flow with waters more than before, therefore these words must mean something else than new wine, milk, and waters, or than mountains, hills, and water-courses, namely, 'that the mountains shall drop down sweet wine...' or wine...means that from the good of love to the Lord there shall be genuine truth; 'the hills shall flow with milk' means that from the good of charity towards the neighbor there shall be spiritual life; and 'all the water-courses of Judah shall flow with waters' means that from the particulars of the Word there shall be truths. (For 'Judah' signifies the Lord's celestial kingdom, and also the Word, see A.C., n. 3881, 6363; therefore 'its water-courses' signify the particulars of the Word; that 'mountains' signify the good of love to the Lord...And 'hills' the good of charity towards the neighbor...and this because in heaven those who are in the good of love to the Lord dwell upon mountains, and those who are in the good of charity towards the neighbor dwell upon hills...)"

AE 405 [7]

- "In Joel...3:18...This treats of the Lord's coming and of the new heaven and new earth at that time; 'the mountains shall drop down sweet wine' means that all truth shall be from the good of love to the Lord; 'the hills shall flow with milk' means that there shall be spiritual life from the good of charity towards the neighbor; and 'all the water-courses of Judah shall flow with waters' means that there shall be truths from the particulars of the Word, through which there is intelligence."

AE 483 [5]

- "In Joel...3:18...What is signified by 'the mountains shall drop down must [sweet wine], and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the water-courses of

'Judah shall flow with waters,' may be seen explained above (n. 433c); and that 'a fountain shall go forth out of the house of Jehovah and shall water the brook of Shittim' signifies that there shall be truth out of heaven from the Lord illustrating the knowledges and cognitions that are in the natural man."

AE 518 [10]

- "In Joel...3:18...'The fountain that shall go forth out of the house of Jehovah' signifies the truth of doctrine out of heaven from the Lord; and 'the brook of Shittim that it shall water,' signifies the illustration of the understanding."

AC 3654 [9]

- "So in Joel...3:18, 20...from all the particulars in this passage also it is manifest that by 'Judah' is not meant Judah, nor by 'Jerusalem,' Jerusalem, but those who are in the holy of love and of charity; for these 'shall abide forever, and to generation and generation.'"

Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 51 [8]

- "He who reads the Word without doctrine does not see the consistency of what is said in the Prophets about the Jewish nation and Jerusalem—that the church with that nation, and its seat in that city, will remain to eternity; as in the following passages...Joel 3:18-20...In these passages the Lord's advent is treated of, and that this [establishment of the Jews] will then come to pass."

AE 433c [13]

- "In Joel...3:18-20...Here, too, the Lord's coming and a new heaven and a new earth at that time are treated of. 'The mountains shall drop down must [sweet wine]' signifies that all truth will be from the good of love (that 'mountains' signify the good of love see above, n 405a-f; and that 'wine' and 'must' signify truth see also above, n. 376a-f). 'The hills shall flow with milk' signifies that spiritual life will be from the good of charity towards the neighbor; and 'all the water-courses of Judah shall flow with waters' signifies that from the particulars of the Word there will be truths, through which there will be intelligence; 'a fountain shall go forth out of the house of Jehovah, and shall water the brook of Shittim,' signifies that out of heaven from the Lord there will be truth of doctrine that will illustrate those who are in cognitions and knowledges; 'Egypt shall be a waste, and Edom shall be a waste wilderness' signifies that false principles, and the evils of the love of self, both from the natural man, will be destroyed; 'because of the violence to the sons of Judah, whose innocent blood they have shed in their land,' signifies because of the truths of the Word falsified and its goods adulterated, which they have corrupted and destroyed; 'Judah shall sit to eternity, and

Jerusalem to generation and generation,' signifies that the Word and the doctrine of genuine truth therefrom will remain to eternity with those who are in love to the Lord. This makes clear that 'Judah' does not here mean Judah, nor 'Jerusalem' Jerusalem."

AC 6353 [8]

- A 'man of violence' denotes those who destroy the truths of faith and the goods of charity; their fighting against these truths and goods..." *Joel 3:19* is cited.

AC 9262 [7]

- "In the proximate sense 'the innocent' signifies one who is without guilt and without evil..." *Joel 3:19* is cited.

AR 503

- "'Egypt,' in the opposite sense, signifies the natural man separated from the spiritual, and then the pride of his own intelligence, and thence insanity in spiritual things, in these passages...*Joel 3:19*..."

AR 546

- "That by 'wilderness' is signified the church devastated, or in which all the truths of the Word are falsified, such as it was among the Jews in the Lord's time, appears from these passages...*Joel 3:19*..."

AE 654 [72]

- "In *Joel...3:19*... 'Egypt shall be a waste' signifies that the natural man will be without truths, and thus in mere falsities; 'and Edom a waste wilderness' signifies that the natural man will be without goods and thence in mere evils; 'because of the violence to the sons of Judah, whose innocent blood they have shed,' signifies because they have offered violence to the truths and goods of the Word, which they have perverted."

AE 730 [20]

- "In *Joel...3:19*... 'Egypt' and 'Edom' signify the natural man that has perverted the truths and goods of the Word; that it is to be so destroyed as to see only such things as serve for confirmation is signified by 'Egypt shall be a waste, and Edom a waste wilderness;' that this will be because of the adulteration of every good and truth in the Word is signified by 'because of the violence to the sons of Judah, whose innocent blood they have shed,' 'violence to the

sons of Judah' signifying the adulteration of the Word in respect to good, and 'shedding innocent blood' the adulteration of the Word in respect to its truths. (That 'Judah' signifies the celestial church, and also the Word...and that 'shedding innocent blood' signifies to do violence to Divine truth, thus to adulterate the truth of the Word...) The adulteration of the Word is effected by the knowledges (scientifica) of the natural man when these are applied to confirm falsities and evils, and the natural man becomes a 'waste' and a 'wilderness' when his knowledges are used to confirm falsity and evil; 'Egypt' signifies such knowledges, and 'Edom' the pride that falsifies by means of these."

Derived Doctrine

With twenty direct quotes from the Writings, there is little need for us to use derived doctrine this time.

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes these passages this way: "The Lord will teach them the Word, and falsifications of the Word will be removed."

And how will the Lord do this? Let's look at the steps outlined in our text:

1. The Lord will cause spiritual forces to "come to pass." His Divine influx will organize and put into place new beginnings, a fresh start with the states of the new heavens and the new church.
2. The good of love to the Lord (genuine truths) and the good of charity toward the neighbor will become the centerpiece of the church's spiritual life.
3. The Lord will open the Word so that the particular truths from the Word will be illustrated. Knowledges and cognitions will be highlighted to the natural side of each person.
4. The particulars from the Word will be like an abundant fountain flowing into the heart and mind, bringing inspiration and great happiness.
5. The former sadness of Egypt and Edom will be no more. What was the sadness of Egypt and Edom? Egypt was the pride of intelligence, and Edom was the pride of self-love. What did these two bring to the church? The slaughter of innocence and the falsification of the Word.
6. The Lord, with His coming, will show what desolation and waste these two attitudes had while seeming to be in charge of the church.
7. The mountains will drip with "new wine." The hills will flow with "milk." The brooks of Judah shall be flooded with "water," and "a fountain shall flow from the house of the Lord." Is there any doubt as to what these things signify regarding the restoration of the Word and the Lord's church with the new church?

The Lord will teach [us] the Word, and the falsification of the Word will be removed.

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 3:18-19*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Can we put some examples before us that represent Egypt's love of self-intelligence and Edom's love of self?
2. Are any of the examples you picked examples of acts that do harm to the church and kill the innocent?
3. Think for a minute about some verse, chapter, or lesson from the Word that illustrates some special truth for you. What were your feelings when this part of the Word opened up for you? Do the Writings give us that feeling of illustrating the truth? Do the Writings help us love the Lord and love the neighbor on a deeper level? How?
4. Once again, we have the positive voice of optimism and good winning out over evil. The Lord is taking away the falsity of hell, instructing us in the way of order. Isn't it refreshing to read this message again and again?

JOEL 3:20-21

"But Judah shall abide forever and Jerusalem from generation to generation. For I will acquit them of the guilt of bloodshed, whom I had not acquitted; for the Lord dwells in Zion."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Then the church will be the Lord's and from the Word."

AC 6239 [5]

- "And in Joel...3:20...'eternity' is here predicated of Judah, because by Judah is represented the celestial church...and 'generation and generation' is predicated of Jerusalem, because by 'Jerusalem' is signified the spiritual church..."

AC 10248 [10]

- "...Joel 3:20...Where by 'Judah' is signified the celestial church, of which it is therefore said, 'according to the days of an age,' is signified the spiritual church, of which it is said ...'to generation and generation.'"

AR 350

- "...by 'the tribe of Judah' is signified celestial love, which is love to the Lord; but because they were such as to the Word, and as to the Lord, therefore by 'the tribe of Judah' is also signified the opposite love, which is the love of self, properly the love of dominion from the love of self, which love is called diabolical love. That by 'Judah' and his tribe is signified the celestial kingdom and its love, which is love to the Lord, is evident from these passages...Joel 3:20..."

Derived Doctrine

"...Judah shall abide forever..."

- The word "abide" in the *New English Bible* has been translated as "to remain united." This addition of the word "forever" certainly enhances the meaning. The celestial church (Judah) will remain forever united with the Lord.

"I will acquit them of the guilt of bloodshed, whom I had not acquitted..."

- The word "acquit" means to clear, purge, discharge as a debt, to pronounce as not guilty, or to exculpate. Does the word "forgive" seem to apply as well?
- "Guilt" involves rejecting good and truth (*AC 5469*).
- "To shed blood" signifies offering violence to good (*AC 3400*).
- We have little help with "whom I had not acquitted." Does this mean that some people were not acquitted for all things of which they were guilty? Does this indicate that some responsibility for allowing themselves to be led away from the Lord had yet to be cleared up?
- The promise is that the Lord will forgive (acquit) where there is a spirit of repentance.

"...for the Lord dwells in Zion."

- **This is the closing statement of this prophecy;** we must look here for the summation of all that preceded it. *AE 594 [15]* teaches that "'The dwelling place of Mount Zion' signifies the good of the celestial church..."
- "Zion" signifies heaven and the church where the Lord alone is worshipped(*AR 612*). "Zion" signifies the advent of the Lord, and the

establishment of the church by Him among those who are in the good of love (*AE* 433 [8]).

The prophecy of Joel began with the declaration that the Word had been devastated by the falsities of "the sensual man and afterwards evil therefrom," which "consumed all things of the church." The plague of the locusts dramatically illustrated this for us.

The last verse of Joel's prophecy ends with an affirmation that all has been made right. Evil, the falsification of the Word, the power of self-intelligence, the power of self-love will not prevail against the Lord's celestial church. The conjugal principle of Divine Love and Divine Truth will forever "abide" in the Lord's New Church. With the Lord dwelling in Zion forever, the heavens and the church can rejoice and feel safe again.

The *P&P* summary of this closing verse triumphantly heralds the Lord's message:

"Then the church will be the Lord's and from the Word."

Putting It All Together

The closing statement, as outlined above, seems to pull things together. Forgiveness; acquittal; a returning of the faithful to a church where the Lord is at the center; the cleansing of the Word from all of the falsities the dead church had surrounded it with—these themes make quite a closing statement. The Lord is in His Heavens, and all is right with His people and His church.

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel* 3:20-21.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. These verses talk about acquittal for those who did violence to the Word. Does this strike you as an answer to those who try to portray the Lord as a hard and stern taskmaster? Isn't there a sense of forgiveness that is needed when we err in our spiritual thoughts?
2. How will you go about reviewing the three chapters of *Joel*? Do you think you will use the Epilogue section to do this? The Epilogue can't do it all for you, but it can form an outline for your review.
3. Do you think you might go back over some of the notes to pick out your favorite points? For instance, there is the section where the army of hell leaps

up the walls and breaks in through the windows. For all of their bravado and appearance of being in step, what was their end?

4. Or you might revisit that chapter where remains are defined in a way that I don't recall ever hearing about in a class or lecture. Look at page 97. Read *AC 5897 [5 & 6]*. Why is this a passage worth remembering?
5. What will you remember about the positive progression of this prophecy? Out of hellish disorder, the Lord's Church rises with a sense of victory and joy. How can we retain that feeling of hope in our daily battles against hell?
6. I hope you have gained much from this study. I also hope it will inspire you to continue with the whole series of twelve study guides on the Minor Prophets. Our need is to study daily the Word of the Lord. Is this method helping you to achieve that reflection time with the Word?

Epilogue: A Summary of the Three Chapters of Joel

The following summary draws and expands on the outline given in the Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms.

CHAPTER ONE

The message of the prophecy of Joel is for all people. It is a message that needs to be shared with our children, the children of our children, and their children to another generation.

What is the story the Lord, through the prophecy of Joel, wants us to tell them? We are to tell them about the dangers of the "sensual man." The sensual person is not interested in, nor cares for, spiritual things. The sensual person does not look toward the life that awaits the soul after death. Immediate gratification is of greater importance to the sensual person, and therefore sensual people become vulnerable to a myriad of philosophical, scientific, and self-centered arguments that induce hateful and oppositional feelings toward the Lord and His Word. The falsity from the sensual person and afterwards the evil therefrom "consumes all things of the church."

The plagues of the four kinds of locust represent the intent of the spiritual attack hell waged on the Word. There are the "gnawers," the "swarmers," "the lickers," and "the consumers." With the terrifying sound of the beating of their wings, and numbers so great, they blocked out the light of the sun, they consumed all things in wave after wave of their attack. They stripped the external church, and its doctrines from the Word, bare.

A call for repentance was made by the Lord. The Lord provided examples of how the evil of the sensual people worked, and He illustrated the kind of destruction they brought to the church.

A call for mourning was issued by the Lord. He wanted the people to sincerely grieve over the destruction of the goods and truths of the church.

The Lord delivered an exhortation to be converted and to reflect that the "day of the Lord" was at hand. The Lord announced the imminent approach of His advent. This advent was crucial because everything of the church was devastated, and thus, there were serious reasons to lament over the state of the Word and church.

CHAPTER TWO

Because the sensual people had destroyed the "whole church" with falsities and evil, it was time for the Lord to come and execute His judgment. The variety of insanities of the sensual people caused good and truth, and knowledges, to be dispersed.

The Lord was going to wage war against the sensual people. He blew the trumpet to sound the alarm. His approach would cause those who were opposed to Him to tremble. Upon the proud and resistant, there was to be a terrible judgment. The evil felt the approach of the Lord, and they did not want to lose their power.

So the evil took on the appearance of "steed horses." They hooked themselves up to chariots. They started fires in the stubble of the field. A call was made to form up a mighty army. They lined up in a formation and did not break rank. They lunged with their weapons, running throughout the city. They climbed the walls of the city, breaking through the windows of the houses like thieves.

The battle was not without some temporary negative aspects. The action of the sensual person caused the darkening of the sun and moon, and it made the stars of heaven fall from the sky.

Another call was made by the Lord to His people. He asked them to return to Him with "all your heart, with fasting, with weeping and mourning...Rend your hearts and not your garments." The exhortation here is to be converted and repent, and to be wise.

We are taught that the Lord will establish the church again; He will give it goods and truths, and He will remove evil and thus hell. The new church will have trust in the Lord and will acknowledge Him from the heart. The Divine of the Lord will fill those of the new church with all things, and He will vivify them. Falsities of evil and evils of falsity will dissipate in the "day of His judgment." Those who acknowledge the Lord will be saved.

The theme of this chapter is a call to "awake," to hear the Word of the Lord and respond to His battle cry. For there is no doubt regarding the outcome of this battle: The Lord will, in the end, win the battle for His Word and His Church.

CHAPTER THREE

The church will be gathered together, and the great judgment will be executed upon those who resisted the Lord and were responsible for the scattering of the goods and truths of the church. Those who sought to separate the conjugal principle with their focus on faith "alone" and knowledges "alone," and who thereby had destroyed the Word and doctrine, would face the consequences of their decisions. The light of heaven would be restored. The sun, moon, and stars would be seen again.

We are taught that the Lord's Divine Love and Divine Wisdom will be too much for the evil. In His presence, their evil will be consummated. Their reign of terror, their variety of insanities and boastful claims will be removed under the guidance of our powerful and loving Lord.

For the remnant, there will be a spirit of newness in the truth taught to them. They will be acquitted, lifted, and forgiven. A new form of illustration of the truths of the Word will enter their life. Forgiveness will be extended to those who made errors of judgment and had misunderstood the Word. Let us listen to the closing statement of the Writings regarding the outcome of this great judgment:

Then the church "will be the Lord's" and the church will be "from the Word."

Until these events occur, *Joel 3:10* reminds us that we are to remain very courageous:

"Let the weak say, 'I am strong.'"

The Book of Jonah

How To Use This Study Guide

1. A slow unhurried reading of Jonah is essential. Reading the chapter before looking at the notes, while working with the notes, and after finishing with the notes will give each researcher a powerful sense of the series of meanings within each chapter. It is important to be comfortable with all the names and places in the prophecy and to understand the announcements the prophet makes on behalf of the Lord. When possible, historical information will be included in the notes to increase reading comprehension and enhance application.
2. Our study of each chapter of Jonah will begin with quotes from a work of the Writings called Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms. This work includes a verse-by-verse overview of all four chapters of Jonah that provide general information about the internal sense. Our research will help move us from the generals to the particulars of the internal sense.
3. Another important reference tool is Searle's General Index to Swedenborg's Scripture Quotations. This reference is used to find passages in the Writings where a verse(s) from the Word is either explained specifically or used to illustrate a doctrinal point that we can use in our study. There is also another use of this work. As we study, each researcher will be led by the Lord's Providence in myriad ways, according to specific needs or states. Knowing how to use this book will help each of us to explore relevant topics and look up related passages to increase our knowledge of the three-fold Word.
4. You will soon discover that not every verse, word, name, etc. is directly quoted in the Writings. But there are often other references to the same name, place, or thing in the explanation of a different verse of the Word. The hope is that reflection on these other doctrinal explanations will help us see possible applications to our study of Jonah. We will need to use "derived doctrine" often. Please don't run away from this maligned term. If we use it properly and admit openly that it is derived doctrine, we bring no harm to the internal sense.
5. Keep some kind of notebook handy during your study times. Write out insights, questions, and any summaries you find helpful in organizing your thoughts about each chapter. The goal of this study guide is not to give a detailed summary of the internal sense but to start each researcher's quest for deeper insight.
6. At the end of each chapter in the study guide, you will find a study review. The review includes a summary of each section to help you reinforce and build on your understanding of several of the key points.
7. Begin each study unit with a devotional prayer asking the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts. Certainly beginning in this sphere has the power to inspire and open our minds with a higher spiritual priority that will keep us in the company of the Lord's angels. As the Writings teach, we must seek to love truth for truth's sake. Such an approach will free each reader from

preconceived ideas that might limit his or her ability to "see" the intent and message of the Lord's Word.

Introduction

Say the name Jonah and what other word quickly comes to mind?

The number one answer would most likely be **whale**. Sunday school materials, children's movies, and cartoons show a whale rescuing the drowning Jonah. But in the adult world outside the New Church, many articles stoutly urge us to eliminate the word "whale" and substitute the words "sea creature," "special fish," or "special leviathan monster." To the authors of these articles, holding onto the word "whale" is not only laughable but reduces the Word to absurdity and makes its message vulnerable to other scientific difficulties. For instance, critics ask, how could Jonah have survived three days and three nights in the belly of a whale? Would he not have been severely "bleached" by the digestive juices of the whale, fish, or sea monster? Wouldn't his air supply have been severely threatened if not eliminated in the belly of the whale? With the great feeding cycle of whales and the repeated intake of water, how could Jonah have had time to compose a reflective and repentant prayer to the Lord?

If we were to research denominational beliefs regarding Jonah being swallowed by a whale, we would soon discover that this was, and is, a hot doctrinal issue. For the fundamentalist, it is one of the litmus tests used to expose dangerously liberal biblical scholarship. One denomination (the Lutheran Missouri Synod) suffered a painful schism within its membership over the whale question. Those holding the fundamental view insisted it was a whale. The Word says it happened, and Jesus referenced Jonah in the belly of the whale, so there should be no question about its accuracy. Proponents of the liberal view could not tolerate or support that doctrinal insistence. The result was a split in their organization.

George Adam Smith, considered a liberal Biblical scholar, offers this cautionary argument: "We sin against the spirit of the book [Jonah] in trying to take it as real history." Another writer, R.H. Pfeiffer, states, "It is fiction—a short story with a moral—like the book of Ruth...or the stories about Daniel...[Jonah] is a perfectly good short story—with a beginning, a middle, and an end...[the author of Jonah] composed a charming story intended to teach a lesson...that Jehovah's loving-kindness and compassion are not restricted to the Jews but [are offered] to the heathen as well." (*Introduction to the Old Testament*, pages 587-588.)

J.M.P. Smith is quoted in the *Encyclopedia of Religion* as saying: "...Jonah is religious fiction, with the key happenings historically impossible...This book is allegory...[Jonah's] three days [in the belly of the whale] symbolize the three [Jewish] exiles...This satire on prevalent beliefs is one of the greatest, yet one of the most misunderstood books in the Bible."

Raymond Calkins in his book, *The Modern Message of the Minor Prophets*, writes: "[Jonah]...is not literal history—it is not a short story but an allegory, similar to the Parables of Jesus." Calkins, on page 168 of his book, illustrates this with his list of allegorical meanings:

- Jonah represents the people of Israel.
- Nineveh represents the whole heathen world.
- The stormy sea represents the confusion in the Hebrew mind.
- The tossing sea represents, or illustrates, the threat that the heathen world was ready to engulf Israel.
- The sea monster swallowing Jonah represents the misfortunes that would befall the disobedient people of God.
- The whale disgorging Jonah describes the disaster of the Babylonian exile and the subsequent return of the people to Jerusalem.

Do we have any helpful doctrinal teachings in the New Church that might clear up the controversial "whale" question? As we might expect, the first three passages cited below highlight the need to pay attention to the spiritual sense (internal sense) of the word "whale."

- "'Fishes,' ...signify memory knowledges, now animated by faith from the Lord, and thus alive. 'Whales' signify their general principles, in subordination to which, and from which, are the particulars; for there is nothing in the universe that is not under some general principle, as a means that it may exist and subsist. 'Whales,' or 'great fishes,' are sometimes mentioned by the Prophets, and they signify the generals of memory-knowledges." (*Arcana Coelestia [AC] 42*)
- "...that Jonah's being in the whale three days and three nights represented that the Lord would thus be in the heart of the earth; and thus these words of Jonah describe the Lord's direful temptations." (More of this passage will be cited when we look at *Jonah 2:2-3, 5-6*.) (*Apocalypse Explained [AE] 538 [11]*)
- "...particulars [in the book of Jonah] are historical, and yet prophetic, involving and representing such arcana, as do all the other historicals of the Word." (*AC 1188 [2]*)

But then we find a startling, thought-provoking passage in the work called *Spiritual Experiences (SE)* that brings us full circle to the literal sense of the "whale" swallowing Jonah. Consider the impact of this quote:

- "...as that Jonah was swallowed by a whale, which **actually happened in the world**; as also did the miracles of Egypt, and many other [necessary effects] called miracles." (*SE 1391, written March 15, 1748*)

For effect, let me highlight that passage once again so we get the crux of what is said in *SE 1391*:

"Jonah WAS swallowed by a whale, which ACTUALLY happened in the world; AS ALSO DID THE MIRACLES OF EGYPT, and many other [necessary effects] called miracles."

What is this passage calling us to look at before making up our minds about the reality of a whale swallowing Jonah? As you look over the list of miracles below, ask yourself this question: Why do we find it easy to believe some miracles in the Word and yet doubtfully question others? Do we get to pick and choose what the Lord can and cannot do? Divine miracles don't seem to follow fixed order so they are called into question. But we must allow that what is order to the Lord goes infinitely beyond our finite comprehension of order. He knows things we will never know. So let's look at some of the miracles the children of Israel benefited from while in Egypt and on the way to the Promised Land:

- Moses saw the burning bush, and the fire did not consume the bush.
- Aaron's rod cast before Pharaoh turned into a snake.
- Aaron's snake (rod) ate the snakes produced by Pharaoh's sorcerers.
- The waters of the Nile turned into blood.
- Egypt suffered plagues of frogs, flies, murrain, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and death of the firstborn.
- The Israelites were saved by the parting of the Red Sea.
- The Lord allowed Moses to heal the bitter waters of Marah.
- The Lord sent manna and quail. (Please note that these gifts were miraculously given for forty years.) See Exodus 16:35.
- The Israelites wore clothes and sandals that did not wear out for forty years. See Deuteronomy 8:4.
- The Lord allowed Moses to bring water from a smitten rock.
- Aaron's rod grew buds like a living tree.
- The Lord used a brazen serpent to heal the people.

How many more miracles might we cite from Genesis to Revelation? Can we verify the Lord walking on water or turning water into wine? How did He take five loaves and two fish and multiply them so that 5,000 were fed with twelve full baskets left over? Can we validate something as simple as the cruse of oil that never ran out or as amazing as the fantastic healing of the blind, sick, palsied, deaf, and dumb, and the raising of the dead? Do we risk trivializing or making the Word laughable if we believe that any, or all, of these things ACTUALLY happened? Do we fear the ridicule of science because miracles seem beyond the reach of logical scientific explanation? If the Lord could furnish manna and quail for forty years; if the Lord could keep clothing from wearing out for forty years, could He not cause a whale, or a special fish, to swallow Jonah? Are any of these miracles beyond His power?

Finding a "whale" answer in *Spiritual Experiences* will cause some New Church people to doubt its appropriateness as a doctrine. But before dismissing it, let its powerful perspective work for a few minutes in your mind. It seems to put the

"Jonah was swallowed by a whale" question into a positive framework for us to find an answer. What do you think? Does *SE 1391* resolve the whale issue for you?

Maybe using the words "special fish" or "great fish" would be a better translation of the original Hebrew word than "whale." But to dismiss the possibility of Jonah being miraculously swallowed by a special fish seems to be an error that leads to falsity. To deny God's power to actually perform this miracle makes Him small and limits His Infinite Power and Knowledge. *Matthew 19:26* states well what needs to be our attitude toward miracles: "**...with God all things are possible.**"

As we leave the question of Jonah and the whale, please note how *AC 1188 [2]* states that the book of Jonah deals with both actual history and correspondential (allegorical) meanings. Let's say it again: The Book of Jonah is both historical and prophetic. The Book of Jonah is not the creative story of a human author. It is a Divine lesson plan of the Lord's that holds infinite truths to be studied forever. These truths will never be exhausted. Angels will thrill with the story of the whale, special fish, or great fish, forever. To them, the book of Jonah will not be laughable or absurd. Nor will they worry about scientific difficulties or objections. They don't see or read the natural names and places. Instead, they see the spiritual meaning with its important illustrations and applications to their lives and uses. They see the Word of the Lord as a resplendent array of colors and beauty. The truths of the Word are like shining stars in the heavens.

THE AUTHOR

What do we know about a man named Jonah? In *II Kings 14:25*, we read: "He restored the territory of Israel from the entrance of Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which He had spoken through His servant Jonah the son of Amitai, the prophet who was from Gath Hepher."

- Not much is known about this obscure Galilean prophet named Jonah. The Word identifies him as a counselor for King Jeroboam II. This would place him in the 786-746 BC time period.
- Scholars set the date for the Book of Jonah much later, in the postexilic timetable of Israel's history, because he (the unknown author) appears to be influenced by teachings found in Jeremiah and Isaiah. The real Jonah would not have been alive at the time of Jeremiah and Isaiah.
- Based on this logic, many believe the author of Jonah is an unknown author who chose to adopt the voice of this obscure prophet to champion his opposition to Israel's "racial exclusiveness, narrow nationalism, and religious intolerance..." (*The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, page 964.)
- The prophet Jonah is different from other prophets in that he is never called a prophet in the book attributed to him. Unlike other prophets, there are almost no "oracles" given through him.

- Unlike other prophets, Jonah is sent to preach to a foreign people. The other prophets preached against foreign nations; they were always sent to preach to Israel.

Should we agree with scholars that the book of Jonah had to be written by an unknown author? Are we to agree that if words or phrases cited in the book of Jonah sound as if they were borrowed from Jeremiah or Isaiah that this conclusively proves Jonah had to be written during postexilic times?

Truth is not the creation of human prudence. All truth originates in the Lord. We have no "original" thoughts. The prophets were inspired to deliver the words of the Lord, not their own words. Why do we have to assume Jonah was influenced by Jeremiah or Isaiah? Couldn't the Lord have given Jonah a similar view of His truth? It seems foolish to limit teachings to people, dates, and world events. Nor does it seem prudent to ascribe ownership of any of the Lord's truths to a specific prophet. Things written in the Psalms by David were repeated verbatim by the Lord. Do we bother ourselves by who "said it first"?

As for saying Jonah could not have been alive during Jeremiah and Isaiah's times, are we on solid ground with this assumption? Have we forgotten the longevity of Methuselah, Abraham, Moses, and other Biblical patriarchs? Scholarship is a wonderful tool, but scholarly researchers must remain humble and open to what the Lord can and will do with His servants. If the Divine chose to extend the longevity of Jonah, it would have been done regardless of research findings. Let's close this whole question of "whale," "laughable," "embarrassing conclusion," and all other doubts of the historical and prophetic debate with this quote from the *Arcana*:

"What a man believes from authority belongs to others in himself, and is not his own; and what is merely believed from this source by virtue of confirmation appears after confirmation as truth, even although it is false; as can be very plainly seen from the faith of every religion, and from the variety of this in the whole world." (*AC 10124 [3]*)

The point of this quote seems to be that we should keep an open mind to the spiritual sense, in this case while reading the Book of Jonah. Paul, in *II Corinthians 3:6*, reminded his readers that the written letter of the Word kills but the spirit gives life. This is the message of the New Church, too. Don't get pulled into the debates of liberal versus conservative theology. Instead, we need to remain deeply committed to the Lord's guiding influx. We need to supplicate and rely on the Lord's help to find and see the spiritual sense. This is what the Lord intends for angels and humanity: To be in His truth, to be lead by His truth, and to strive to work for His truth.

With this dedication in mind, let's turn now to the historical and prophetic sense of the Book of Jonah and read with a degree of inspired awe and excitement. Like the angels, we need to look beyond the limitations of the literal sense so we can walk among the vast applications of the Lord's spiritual sense. After all, the Word is a

story about the life of the Lord and it is a story about our regeneration. Every letter, comma, period, and every jot and tittle holds this invitation: "**O taste and see that the Lord is good!**" (*Psalm 34:8*)

Chapter Two

JONAH 1:1-3

"Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amitai, saying, 'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.' But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Those who were of the Jewish nation were commanded to teach the Word to the nations round about, but they would not, and thus they kept the Word among themselves alone."

Derived Doctrine

"Now the word of the Lord came..."

- "Now" carries the meaning of presently, today, as soon as possible, and immediately. In some instances, it is used in a sentence as an admonition. AC 2838 informs us that "now" or "this day" signifies the "perpetuity and eternity of a state." The Word of the Lord is not for a passing moment. The Word is given for eternal uses.
- This phrase also calls our attention to the true Source of the prophecy—the Lord. His word signifies communication and confirmation. (AC 7406) His words signify a unity of doctrine (a unity of good and truth). (AC 1288)
- To "come" (came) signifies to perceive or receive the Lord into the intellect. (AC 2513) It also signifies judgment (AC 1311) and a progression from what is external to what is internal. (AC 5202)

"...Jonah the son of Amitai..."

- The name Jonah means "dove." A "dove" represents the truths and goods of faith with one who is to be regenerated. (AC 870) Also recall that a "dove" descended at the Lord's baptism, and these words were heard: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17)
- Jonah signifies his nation in its self-love and falsities and reflects its unwillingness to share the spiritual things of the Lord. (AE 401 [36])
- Jonah "prophetically" describes the Lord's temptations against the hells. (AC 1691 [5] and AE 538 [11])

- Jonah signifies the complete glorification of the Lord's humanity. (*AE 706 [6]*)
- Amittai's lineage can be traced to the tribe of Zebulon. His name means "truth." Let's follow a bit of derived doctrine with the following teachings:
- Zebulon signifies, in the highest sense, the Lord's Divine Human and in the spiritual sense the heavenly marriage of good and truth. (*AC 3960-61*)
- Can we safely bring these teachings with us when we consider the words "son of Amittai" to mean that Jonah represents the "spiritual progeny" of such truths?

"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it..."

- *AC 3050* and *AC 5605* explain that "arise and go" signifies a call to elevate the external thoughts to be in harmony with more interior things.
- *AC 1612* describes the idea of arising to mean surveying the heavenly kingdom. Such an elevation would bring one into a state of affection and charity for the Lord and the neighbor. (*AC 2326*)
- "Nineveh" signifies the falsities of doctrinal things derived from reasoning that contrives and lead to an unenlightened understanding. (*AC 1184 and AC 1188 [2]*)
- "...the great city" signifies looking at everything doctrinal or heretical. (*AC 402*) In Nineveh's case, it would appear they had a "great" number of things that were leading them to destruction. Nota Bene: Think for a moment about the layout of a city. All its streets are organized so that they will lead to some house, business, library, hospital, church, etc. Therefore, this passage illustrates the great devastation or errors the inhabitants of this "spiritual" city were following. Human doctrinal errors were powerfully influencing and misleading them in every aspect of their spiritual lives.
- "...cry out against it..." makes sense in light of the above concept. Nineveh's way of thinking from doctrine was misleading the people, and they had to change to allow repentance, reformation, and regeneration to come into their hearts.
- "...for their wickedness has come up before Me." Without enlightenment, one might think this "coming up before Me" was like a sudden or unexpected revelation to the Lord. The Lord saw it and knew that it would happen before they falsified the truth. His Providence sought to bend and moderate all things to good. In reality, it was now time for Nineveh to come up before Him to see what falsity they were following.

"But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord."

- Tarshish signifies doctrinal ritual. It represents external worship. (*AC 1152*) Are we to picture Jonah justifying his flight from the call of the Lord by the precedence of traditional "chosen race" thinking? Certainly, passages (fallaciously understood) from the literal sense must have come to his mind as a validation for running away.

- *Apocalypse Revealed (AR) 796* defines what "from the presence of the Lord" might mean. Let's note "presence" in the positive sense. "The acknowledgment and worship of the Lord, and the reading of the Word, cause the presence of the Lord... these two together with a life according to His commandments effect conjunction with Him." This teaching opens a way for us to see what Jonah's flight from the presence of the Lord meant regarding the Word and his acknowledgment of the Lord.

"He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish..."

- We have no direct teaching to help us with the representation of Joppa. We do know the word "Joppa" means "beauty" or "beautiful." Joppa is located thirty-five miles northwest of Jerusalem.
- In biblical times, Joppa was a small, attractive seaport with a natural breakwater of rocks that were parallel to the coastline, somewhat like a cape. We make mention of this because it created a kind of haven for the boats to enter and drop anchor in security.
- We do have a correspondence for "sea." It represents a collection of knowledges and scientifics. (*AC 28*)
- "To go toward the sea" signifies the choice to follow scientifics because a sea represents a collection of them. (*AC 2702 [15]*)
- A port is a haven for ships. The Writings teach that a haven signifies the state where memory-knowledges terminate and begin, and where there are doctrinal things from the Word. (*AC 6384 and 6385*)
- To find a ship in the positive sense signifies looking for knowledges of good and truth from the Word that will serve for the uses of life. (*AR 406*)
- Jonah was headed for Tarshish so we get the hint that he wanted to be in a place where "external worship prevailed..." (*AC 1152*) Joppa, the beautiful, seems to imply that Jonah wanted something of external reasoning to appear attractive and acceptable to him and his peers. The interests and mission of the Lord were not part of his search for a ship.

"... so he paid the fare, and went down into [the ship]..."

- To "pay" in the negative sense signifies to offer a substitute in place of the former. (*AC 9186*)
- The word "pay" in Swedenborg's *Concordance* is identified with the word "hang." We read that hanging is an attempt to remain between evil and good. (*AC 2410*)
- "Went" is the past tense of "go." Can we take from this (past tense) a hint that what is happening in the present is a result of how Jonah lived, progressed, and thought in the past?
- Jonah's going down into the ship seems to indicate that a spiritual downfall or calamitous state was overtaking him.

"...to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord."

- The "them" in this verse means the ship's crew, a group of men, we will see later, who worshiped all sorts of gods. It seems interesting to note that Jonah was called to go save Nineveh. This call he deemed to be contrary to his faith. Nineveh was full of gentiles. On the other hand, he used "them" (gentiles) to save himself from the Lord. Isn't life full of inconsistencies and paradoxes?
- Going toward Tarshish remember is a movement toward a place where external worship prevails. Such an external worship leads one away from the "presence of the Lord."

Putting It All Together

"Those who were of the Jewish nation were commanded to teach the Word to the nations round about, **but they would not**, and thus they **kept the Word among themselves alone.**" (*P&P*)

With this guiding doctrine, we can pull the meaning of Jonah's flight from "the presence of the Lord" to a finer point. Jonah, or the people of Israel, felt they knew better than the Lord what was to be done with the Word and who should have it. This is a pretty heavy point to mull over in our hearts and minds. The Lord loves everyone. He has no favorites. He wants the "good news" of His Word to reach all people. The care for souls and a life that leads to charity is a "mission statement" the church needs to have as its collective goal. Exclusiveness is not a right of birth or the merit of a chosen people.

Certainly, the New Church has a mission to perform. We need to not only live the life of our doctrines but also to share our gifts with the "nations round about." The message here is that we should not seek out a beautiful (Joppa) "safe haven" to avoid "presence." Please consider again that passage from *AR* 796 regarding the meaning of "presence." How do we stay in the presence of the Lord? "...the acknowledgment and worship of the Lord and the reading of the Word, [such spiritual values] cause the presence of the Lord..."

To do less than this is an attempt to "pay" a fare that leads to making substitutions or trying to walk a fine line between good and evil. Such a philosophy of life will indeed have us "go to the very bottom" of the ship of scientific reasoning and out of the light of the Lord's sun.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Jonah 1:1-3.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. How do you think we, as a church, can profit from this lesson about withholding the Word from the nations round about?
2. Do you see any signs that we try to seek beautiful "safe havens" when it comes to telling the story of the Lord's Second Coming?
3. What "excuses" can you recall that Jonah might have used to run away from his mission? Try to pick or mention those that might have appeared valid to Israel.
4. How are we doing with the task of keeping the Lord's "presence" in the church? This question is not a chance to criticize so much as a chance to take inventory.
5. What new insights were you able to glean from this section of study?
6. Paradoxes are interesting to consider. Jonah's rejection of the gentiles and then his personal use of the gentiles seem interestingly inconsistent, and yet I am sure we do similar things all the time. How can we reflect on this paradox and learn from it?
7. Jonah fleeing toward Tarshish indicated that he elected to pursue "external forms of ritual." There seems to be a lively debate within our church regarding "traditional" versus "contemporary" worship, or a service that combines elements of both. What is useful about the various types of worship services? When is this debate healthy or unhealthy? In some cases, it seems to foster an "us" against "them" feeling. What might resolve this in a way that keeps us from pulling away from one another or keeping the Word from anyone?

JONAH 1:4-6

"But the Lord sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up. Then the mariners were afraid; and every man cried out to his god, and threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten the load. But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship, had lain down, and was fast asleep. So the captain came to him, and said to him, 'what do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God; perhaps your God will consider us, so that we may not perish.'"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Knowledges (cognitions) began to perish with them, and yet they lived unconcernedly."

Derived Doctrine

"...the Lord sent out a great wind on the sea..."

- "Great" signifies the things of affection and love, and of thought and faith. (*AR 656*)
- "Wind" signifies the dispersion of falsities. (*AC 842, 7682*) "Wind" signifies the emptiness of mere (lifeless or useless) doctrine. (*AE 811*)
- The Lord sending the wind on the sea is not an act of vindictiveness but an act of love. He wants to clear the mind and our memory-knowledges of falsities and misconceptions. We need to hold this picture in our hearts because the hells try to convince us that the Lord is aloof or indifferent to our spiritual state or welfare.

"...there was a mighty tempest on the sea..."

- "Mighty" in the positive sense signifies the omnipotence of the Lord and His Divine Human. (*AC 6425*)
- "Mighty" in the opposite sense signifies those who are consumed by self-love. (*AC 583*)
- "Tempest" signifies the dispersion of truths with the evil. (*AE 419 [22]*) "Tempest" also signifies the dispersion of falsities and evils, which destroy all the truths of the church. (*AE 578 [17]*)
- Once again, we need to correct the appearance that the Lord is out of control and angry. Instead, it is a plan of love and wisdom to free the church and its resources so the church can effectively lead and protect those in the church.

"...so that the ship was about to be broken up."

- *AE 514 [1-2]* gives us information that we can use in this verse and others to follow. Ships signify doctrinal things; they represent the Word and doctrine from the Word. "A ship's 'planks', 'oars' and 'mast' signify the various things of which doctrine consists.
- Those who teach, lead, and rule, are meant by "pilot" 'ship-masters,' "rowers," and "mariners," and the doctrinals themselves by its 'wares,'..."
- "...the ship was about to be broken up." This breaking of the ship had to happen. The Jewish Church was using the literal sense of the Word to favor its external loves and tenets. Such a ship carried dangerous cargo. (*AC 10492*)

"Then the mariners were afraid; and every man cried out to his god..."

- "Mariners" represent those who are leaders or teachers in the church.
- Being afraid can mean several things. It can represent a "holy fear," being afraid to do anything that would offend or hurt the Lord. In the opposite sense, fear can represent a fear of losing control. The Pharisees had this kind

of fear when the Lord taught. They feared losing control over the people. In this context, I think we can assume that those in control of the church feared losing their place of authority and power.

- Crying out is a common theme in the Word, and it applies to any annoyance, noise, and occasion of disturbance. It can also signify accusation. (*AC 375*) Every man crying "to his god" seems to represent that they turned to the reasoning of falsities and evils that resided in their selfhood. They had no clear vision of the Lord, so where else could these "mariners" turn but to their lifeless, errant, idolatrous prudence?

"... and they threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten the load."

- Do we need much help in seeing what is represented here?
- Cargo or wares signify the doctrinal things of the church. The mariners tried everything to lighten the load. The mariners made some choices as to what doctrines in their ship were expendable.
- Did their choices ease the problem?

"But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship, had lain down, and was fast asleep."

- Sleeping signifies being in an obscure state. (*AC 5210*) It is a state when inattentiveness allows an individual to be unaware of subtle falsities from hell entering the mind. Think about the parable the Lord gave about the enemy sowing seeds in the wheat field while the owner slept. (*Matthew 13:25*)
- The lowest parts of the ship communicate something of the corporeal or worldly nature of people and their doctrine. One can almost picture the stagnant water swishing around between the supporting beams, fallen pieces of cargo mixed in the water, and a stench of decaying debris. Are these things representative of what is meant by the "lowest parts of the ship"?
- The literal sense also conveys a lack of knowledge and concern about the great wind and tempest going on above the lowest parts of the ship. Could Jonah have been so unaware of the roll and pitching of the boat?

"So the captain came to [Jonah]..."

- A "captain" signifies memory-knowledges serving a person's rational and disposed to make faith the essential of the church. (*AC 2719*) A captain is an officer. *AC 8141* illustrates the point that falsities both in general and in particular need to be "reduced into order under generals." This is a subtle point that requires some thought. Are general evils easier to amend than particular evils?

"What do you mean, sleeper?"

- Jonah is being asked what he thinks he is doing to be sleeping at such a time. The Lord uses questions to get the process of reflection working. AC 1913 and 2693 teach us that the Lord questions us so that comfort might come and give relief from trouble.
- The problem first must be identified. Sleeping has to be replaced with wakefulness. Darkness cannot continue. Bring the Lord into your life, and light comes to show what "you mean."

"Arise, call on your God; perhaps your God will consider us, so that we may not perish."

- A call to reconnect with the Lord. A call for reconciliation. A hope that the Lord's mercy will save. As the "gentile" sailor said these words, there was doubt in his mind about the outcome. We don't know how these words affected Jonah's heart, but we can evaluate and discuss how they affect our hearts.
- Arising is the best way of sharing. Elevation of state is primary. Keeping our eyes on the Lord's way gives a clearer perception of help and rescue from peril.

Putting It All Together

"Knowledges began to perish with them, and yet they lived unconcernedly." (P&P)

Human beings are unaware of the decline of truth. They are unconcerned about the inferior quality of their truth, but the Lord begins the process of dispersion and restoration. His wind, an act of love, comes with a great force and blows away the smog and deadly encircling falsity within the church. The Lord wants to cause the "mariners," the teachers and leaders, to feel fear. They need the Divine challenge to see clearly. They need to jettison the wares of falsity to lighten the load. How did the Lord say it? "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden ...take my yoke...and learn from Me...My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (*Matthew 11:28-30*)

The Lord gives us the mirror of His Word to look at Jonah's apathy. He gives us a contrast to illustrate this matter of sleeping while the ship is near its breaking point. The phrase "they lived unconcernedly" elicits a question that must be answered: Am I so lethargic that I don't care about the well being of my doctrinal ship? Is my ship of doctrine sound, or is it at the point of breaking up?

The mariners did their best to lighten the load. Jonah slept through the beginning phase of the spiritual restoration. The Divine questions come to help and comfort. Sleeper, what do you think? Did your plan to escape the mission of the Lord work?

Look at the disorder it brought. Turn to prayer. Petition your God. Can we attain "presence" with the Lord again?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Jonah 1:4-6.

Questions to Stimulate Reflections

Many of the questions we need to consider may be found in the above summary section. Please consider them, and then ask yourself a question: Am I like or unlike Jonah with my choices in developing a presence with the Lord? Can you look back and see some tumultuous turning point in your life where you woke up in "the lowest parts of the ship"?

Please consider this point in your discussion. Over the years, actions that once shocked people have ceased to evoke the same concern. For example, look at the progression of adultery. In earlier times, it brought public disgrace. The word "adultery" sent shivers down people's spines. Offenders were stoned, put in stocks, or branded for life. Today, we use softer words to describe adultery such as "an affair," "a tryst," or "a moment of intimacy between two consenting adults." Something seems to be lost. National indignation is no longer aroused by this offense. We carry many "wares" in the boat of scientific cognitions. Should any of them be jettisoned from the boat? Is the Lord's mighty wind going to shake and break such a boat? Our church has a high incidence of divorces. I have no idea how many of these can be traced to adultery. In the courts, a "no fault" divorce is possible. In contrast, the church can appear insensitive and behind the times when it does not condone divorce. Do we go to safe havens to avoid issues? Do we "pay" to find substitutions? How will we help our children in our church schools so they can read and listen to *Conjugial Love* or discuss related issues without feeling a judgment is being made on a parent or family member?

JONAH 1:7-9

"And they said to one another, 'come, let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this trouble has come upon us.' So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. Then they said to him, 'Please tell us! For whose cause is this trouble upon us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you? So he said to them, 'I am a Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.'"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "The nations perceived that the state of the church was perverted among themselves, because of the loss of knowledges (cognitions) among the Jews, and that the latter were unwilling to impart them to others outside of themselves."
- "...nations were distinguished by the gods on whose name they called, and the Hebrew nation by Jehovah...." *Jonah 1:9* is cited as an example of this teaching. See *AC 1343 [2-4]* for a fuller explanation.

Derived Doctrine

"And they said to one another..."

- "They" refers to the "mariners" or "sailors" who represent those who teach, lead, and rule, or govern and are like "pilots" of a ship of doctrine. (*AE 514 [2]*)
- "Sailors" also signify those in the church, who contribute and are called laymen. (*AR 767*)
- Saying "one to another" signifies a desire for mutuality. (*AC 8461*) What does that mean? They were seeking an explanation that made sense of why the sudden wind and tumultuous seas were beating upon their ship.

"Come let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this trouble has come upon us."

- In the Old Testament, drawing lots was a common method among the nations of solving exceptional problems. In *Numbers 26:55* and *Joshua 14:2*, "lots" were used to apportion newly conquered land among the tribes of Israel. Lots were also drawn to detect a guilty person who broke laws (*Joshua 7:14* and *I Samuel 14:42*) and to determine which goat should be sacrificed on the Day of Atonement as the sin offering (*Leviticus 16:7-10*) Lots were cast to choose the first king of Israel. (*I Samuel 10:20-21*) Priests, singers, and gatekeepers to serve in the temple were assigned or chosen by lot. (*I Chronicles 24:5; 25:8, and 26:13*) Casting lots also settled who would provide wood for the temple.
 - **Nota Bene:** The use of lots was not considered magic. It was seen as a way to cast things "before the Lord our God" so that He could reveal the way choices should be made.
- In the New Testament, lots appear in several important places. Roman soldiers cast lots for the Lord's garments. (*Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34, and John 19:24*) When the disciples sought a replacement for Judas,

they cast lots and the "lot of succession" fell on Matthias. *Acts 1:26* reports the results of that "lot."

- Therefore, it should not surprise us that this method was used to determine who among the people on board the ship had transgressed against the will of the Lord.
- *AC 376 [24]* gives a clue to the meaning of "casting lots" upon people. It means or signifies "to dissipate the truths of the church, 'to cast a lot'...on people signifies the church in relations to truths, thus...the truths of the church..." This quote seems to agree with the description of the internal sense in *P&P*.
- New Church history has a "drawing of lots" story as well. For an interesting account of the selection of the first New Church ministers, read C.T. Odhner's book *Robert Hindmarsh*, pages 17-24. The basis for believing in "lots" is drawn from *True Christian Religion (TCR) 696 [5]* and *SE 4008*. Here is a summary of their reasoning: Use of lots appeared to be supported by the disciples use of them "...to fill the vacant place of Judas; and by the teaching in the *True Christian Religion*, n. 696, concerning the immediate guidance of the Divine Providence in the drawing of lots."

"...the lot fell on Jonah."

- Do these words convey something of the hope that there would be "immediate guidance of the Divine Providence" in the calming of the great storm?

The Five Questions Posed to Jonah

- The mariners asked Jonah five questions. Let us consider them, one at a time.

Question One

"Then they said to [Jonah], 'Please tell us! For whose cause is this trouble upon us?'

- This question deals with many issues: Blame, responsibility, identifying the root of the problem, and seeking to find a remedy.
- To the evil, it appears that the Lord and His truth cause the trouble. (*AR 696*) When temptation enters our lives, a degree of labor and strife disturbs us. The Lord allows the pain and discomfort of temptation so that we will spend some "quality time" attempting to find answers that will give us a sense of "the power of conquering." (*AC 8670*)
- At first, we tend to deny our involvement in bringing any of this trouble on ourselves. It is always someone else who caused our spiritual affliction. This question, posed by the ship's crew, seems to focus our thinking on "for whose cause is this trouble upon us?"

Question Two

"*What is your occupation?*"

- Occupation, toil, work, labor, deeds, uses, ways, and practices are all words we might research for help with our derived doctrinal study.
- Pharaoh's question to Joseph's brothers, "What are your works?", signified an inquiry about their "goods," "services," and "uses": all of these are works (goods) for "the neighbor, for our country, for the church, for the Lord's kingdom." (*AC 6073*)
- "All good things that take form in act are called uses; and all evil things that take form in act are also called uses...all good things are from the Lord and all evil things from hell..." (*DLW 336*) Can we hear a Divine question being posed here for the purpose of stimulating reflection on the source of our "occupation"?

Question Three

"*And where do you come from?*"

- Would it be accurate to assume they wanted to know something of his "habitation"?
- *AC 4651* lists names of people. Following the list of names, we have this explanation: "...'according to their families, according to their places, in their names,' signifies the doctrinal things of good from them, and their rise, state, and quality; ...[names] signify the principal doctrinal things; 'according to their habitations in their land'...[their] truths and goods..."
- Can we apply the above quote to the mariners' question? Were they seeking insight into the "rise," "state," and "quality" of Jonah's doctrinal good and truth? In more modern terms, were they trying to see what he was "made of"?

Question Four

"...*and what is your country?*

- "One's own country is the neighbor according to its goods, spiritual, moral, and civil." (*Doctrine of Charity 83*)
- *AC 4651* teachings apply to this question when we focus on the meaning of "places."

Question Five

"And of what people are you?"

- In the Word, when "a 'city' is mentioned instead of a family, and 'people' instead of nation, truth is signified which is of faith." (AC 2943 [2])
- Were they asking Jonah this question to see what truths he followed or practiced in matters of faith?

Jonah's Answers to the Five Questions

"So [Jonah] said to them, 'I am a Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.'"

- Why did Jonah say he was a Hebrew? Why not "I am Jewish"?
- Jonah's response to the mariners, on the surface, seems historically self-evident. **He was telling them that his background could be traced to Eber or Heber.** But from the internal sense, one discovers that this simple statement carries a depth of meaning that requires some background knowledge of the Word and a degree of concentration and organization to fully understand. Following is an attempt to bring **some** of the facts to the forefront.
- When other nations were worshipping many gods, Eber and those who made up that Hebrew nation "with unanimity acknowledged the Lord, and called Him Jehovah..." (AC 1343)
- In the Word, we find numerous passages where this quote is used: "The Lord God of the Hebrews sent me to you..." (Exodus 3:18; Exodus 7:16; Exodus 9:1, 13; and Exodus 10:3 are but a few examples of the use of this phrase.)
- Why would Moses announce this to the Egyptians? "...the descendants of Jacob in Egypt lost [their unanimous acknowledgment of the Lord. Moses himself was called to] instruct first of all that Jehovah was the God of the Hebrews, and the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob...[and]...the second essential of the worship of the Hebrew nation consisted in sacrifices..." (AC 1343 [4-5])
- AC 1702 and 1703 repeat a phrase we must pay attention to: "'Hebrews' are mentioned in the Word when anything of service [servitude] is signified, of whatever nature it may be..."
- AC 8974 states that "Hebrew is predicated of those things which are of the church, and of those things which are of some service..."
- Servitude needs to be adjoined with affection: "...[he who] does good from obedience only and not from affection which is of love, cannot be regenerated..." (AC 8974)
- The opening paragraph of the above number begins with this teaching: "...a Hebrew servant,' signifies those within the church who are in the truths of doctrine and not in good of life according to them..."

- Can we go back and draw some "general" ideas to provide a basis for deeper "particulars"? Heber as a church had unanimity about the Lord. With the passing of time, that unanimity and love for the Lord dissolved. The descendants of Jacob forgot. Moses did not know who the great "I Am" was. The Lord taught Moses again. Moses received two lessons to teach to the people: the identity of the Lord God of the Hebrews and the sacrifices that were to be offered to Him. Before these things were completed, the Hebrews had to serve the Egyptians. They were called out of that bondage.
- Jonah, on the other hand, seems to represent, once again, a period of regression in the Jewish church. As a "Hebrew" in servitude to the Lord, he was going through the motions of serving. His refusal to answer the Lord's call to help Nineveh clearly shows that he did not serve from affection or love for the Lord. Instead, he offered greater service to self-prudence than to the Lord's will. Jonah, in common with the people of his church, felt he knew best who should hear and have the Word. In light of this lesson, his identification with his Hebrew heritage seems strikingly shallow and in immediate need of review and rededication.

"And I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.

- AC 2826 tells us that what "fearing God" signifies "may be seen from a great many passages" in the Word. "The 'fear of God' signifies worship, and indeed worship either from fear, or from the good of faith, or from the good of love; worship from fear when the non-regenerate, worship from the good of faith when the spiritual regenerate, and worship from the good of love when the celestial regenerate are treated of." Without making a spiritual judgment, it would appear that Jonah's remark probably illustrates the fear of God as illustrated by the "non-regenerate."
- "...the God of heaven..." "In the Word the Lord is sometimes called 'Jehovah,' and sometimes 'God,' **and always for a secret reason in the internal sense.** Where love or good, and the celestial church, are treated of, He is called 'Jehovah'; but when faith or truth, and the spiritual church, are treated of, He is called 'God', and this constantly..." (AC 2001, *emphasis added*)
- "...who made the sea and dry land." "It is a very common thing in the Word for 'waters' to signify knowledges, and consequently for 'seas' to signify a collection of knowledges. (AC 28) "Dry land" signifies "the external man".(AC 27)

Putting It All Together

P&P points us to the essence of this section. The children of Israel were experiencing the "loss of knowledges." They were forgetting the Lord, His teachings, His mission. The Lord of the Hebrews was becoming "invisible." What is invisible does not fall into an idea of thought. It is quite difficult to love that which is invisible to us. Consider this teaching in *Heaven and Hell* (H&H) 82: "Those [who extinguish the

divine light from heaven] by self-intelligence prefer an invisible God; while those that have extinguished it by a life of evil prefer no God."

Things that we don't love soon pass from our care and attention. The goal or mission of the New Church is to make that which is invisible visible once again. How will we go about cooperating with this vital spiritual process?

When we lose something, how do we go about finding the lost article? We usually begin by retracing (literally or mentally) our steps. We ask ourselves where we last had, used, or saw the missing thing. Asking the right questions sometimes can help us go back and find the thing that's missing.

We see a similar process happening in the story of Jonah, and the questions the mariners ask contribute to this reflective process. The five questions start out with "who," "what," "where," "what," and "what."

Jonah's responses to the questions are true. He is a Hebrew. His God is the God of heaven, the sea, and the dry land. He claims that he "fears" the Lord, but it all seems so superficial and rote. If he really feared the Lord, he would have taken the missionary journey to Nineveh. If he really feared God, he would never have imagined he could go in the opposite direction of his use.

Let this feeling about Jonah expand, not in a self-righteous vein but to the end that we might look for and resist the same tendencies in ourselves. If we see them, we confront ourselves and learn how these tendencies fail to meet our standards of acceptable thought and action. When we talk about shunning evils as sins, we need some specifics to consider. Do we lightly assume our New Church heritage and talk a good line but lack enthusiasm for the uniqueness of the Divine tasks laid before us?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Jonah 1:7-9.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. How would you go about checking up on yourself to see what kind of "loss of knowledges" you have had? More to the point, what kind of teachings help make the Lord visible to you and bring Him nearer to your heart? How do the Writings make the invisible visible again?
2. Recall the quote from *H&H* 82. What thoughts do you have about it? What makes the Lord seem invisible or absent to some people?
3. Consider the five questions posed to Jonah: What issues did they help you focus on?

4. What about casting lots? Were you aware of their use in the Old and New Testaments? Were you aware of their use in the ordination of our first New Church ministers? That story about Hindmarsh is quite interesting. Have you ever read it?
5. How far might we trust or follow the use of lots today? What is your point of view about playing the lottery? Could Divine Providence be involved in "games of chance"? How might this be used or abused?
6. "I am a Hebrew" has many passages and applications to consider. A book could be written on just these words. We tried to shorten the overview so as to not overwhelm the mind. It is all there for someone to explore and research. There are many secrets to be unfolded. Anyone interested in picking up the challenge to go forward with this research?

JONAH 1:10-13

"Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, 'Why have you done this?' For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them. Then they said to him, 'What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us?'—for the sea was growing more tempestuous. And he said to them, 'Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest is because of me.' Nevertheless the men rowed hard to return to land, but they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "[The gentiles] should reject those things which were from the Jewish nation, because they were falsified, so that [the gentiles] might be saved."

Derived Doctrine

"Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to [Jonah]..."

- *AC 2543* explains a passage from *Genesis 20:9* regarding the meaning of the words "the men feared greatly." "'Fearing,' or 'fear,' like all emotions, though in appearance simple, involves in itself many things, namely, in worldly matters the loss of life, of reputation, of honor, and of gain; and in heavenly matters the loss of what is good and true, and of the life thence derived. As fear involves these things it also involves aversion to whatever endeavors to destroy them; and this the more in proportion as the man is in affection of what is good and true."

- That same passage has a wonderful quote about the Lord's aversion for the contrary things hell sought to put in His way. The Lord had a "zeal" for doctrine that it might "be free from contamination..."
- This same number explains that "men signify rational things and memory-knowledges, or all intellectual things whatever..."
- To understand the phrase "...and said to Jonah," we need a brief reminder of the problem to which that "fear" or "zeal" held an aversion. Jonah (the object of the aversion) signifies the unwilling attitude of his nation to spread, or share, the faith of the Lord. (*AE 401 [36]*)
- The mariners asked Jonah two more questions: "Why have you done this?" and "What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us?"
- These two questions stimulated Jonah to think, to soul search and reflect on his misguided actions. A passage in *SE 734* offers an insight into the importance of such moments of self-reflection from the Word, as opposed to allowing others to do the reflecting for us. When others reflect for us, "[we] remain in [our] phantasies...and [then we] consider truth to be falsities, because [we] judge from [our] phantasies..." The first question is direct and personal. "Why have you done this?" Such a question moved Jonah away from tradition and what others said or believed. He had to become accountable for his own decisions.
- The first question posed by the mariners seems to go to **motive**. They wanted to know his reasons, his principles, or his intentions. Truly, they wanted to know what was in his heart. "I have seen many who place all worship in oral and outward piety, while in their actual life they gave no thought to the Lord's commandments in the Word, believing that what is sincere and right, just and equitable, must be done not from regard to religion, thus from a spiritual motive, but merely from regard to civil law and also to moral law, that they might appear sincere and just for the sake of reputation...believing that this would take them into heaven before others." (*AE 325 [5]*)
- The second question posed by the mariners seems to go to the issue of **consequences**. They wanted Jonah to get help from the Lord so the Lord's corrective action would overcome the "stormy" nature of his consequences. He especially needed to make amends for his poor decision to turn away from the calling of the Lord.
- Let's look at several teachings in the Writings that speak to this point. "Every smallest fraction of a moment of a person's life entails a chain of consequences extending into eternity...and since the Lord foresaw from eternity what man was going to be like in the future and even into eternity it is clear that providence is present in the smallest individual things, and...is governing him and diverting him so that he may be such, this being achieved by constant re-shaping of his freedom." (*AC 3854 [3]*) In *SE 4091*, we read "...consequences are never removed except through the bond of conscience, and thus by a thorough repentance...in order to the receiving of faith from the Lord."

"For the [mariners] knew that [Jonah] fled from the presence of the Lord, because [Jonah] had told them."

- "Fleeing" has several meanings. *AC 4114* uses the word "separation." It is an attempt to distance oneself from someone or something.
- "Fleeing" as described in *AC 4537* indicates a purposeful decision to place truth over good.
- When Moses "fled" from Pharaoh, it represented the Word separating itself from falsities. (*AC 6770*)
- We then have to consider what Jonah's fleeing from the presence of the Lord means. He indeed separated himself from the Lord. Jonah's mind was set, closed to the influx of the Lord. He placed the tradition-derived truths or concepts of the church above the Lord's love for all people. Jonah's flight illustrated how active falsity was in separating itself from the Word of the Lord.
- A plus, if you can call it that, was that Jonah was "up front" about what he was doing. Jonah told the mariners.

"What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us?—for the sea was growing more tempestuous."

- These words carry some exciting meanings and applications. To follow all of the points would necessitate a fuller text than we can offer in this study guide format. We could turn to *Psalm 107:25 and 29* and read, "For [the Lord] commands and raises the stormy wind...He calms the storm, so that the waves are calm." We could turn our thoughts to *Mark 4:39* and read, "Jesus awoke and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, 'Be quiet, be still.' And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm."
- *AC 5725* gives us an insight as to why "deluges" occur in our lives. "When a person who has led a good life is taken back into his own selfhood, and so into the sphere that emanates from the life properly his own, it seems like a deluge. Caught in this deluge he is annoyed and angry, has unpeaceful thoughts and wildly evil desires...But when a person is kept within the sphere emanating from the life he has received through regeneration from the Lord...he is, so to speak, in a calm and sunny, cheerful and happy place, and so is far removed from annoyance, anger, unpeacefulness, evil desires, and the like."
- *AC 3696* describes the inevitability of "storms" in our life. As a person "advances in years or grows up," he or she often relinquishes trust in the Lord, and life consequently moves into states that are not serene. Evils and falsities will "emerge and show themselves, and these trouble [the person], so much so at length that he undergoes temptations and trials from the devil's crew who try all the time to destroy...his...state of life."
- "The sea was growing more tempestuous..." *AE 514 [22-23]* helps us understand the meaning of the tempestuous seas. "...lusts of every kind rise

up therefrom into the natural man, these...are signified by 'the wind and the waves of the sea,' and hell itself is signified by the 'sea' in the spiritual sense....This [the Lord's calming of the wind and sea] could not have been said to the wind and the sea unless hell had been meant thereby, from which arise the tempestuous emotions of the mind from various cupidities."

"And [Jonah] said to them, 'Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you."

- The key to understanding the spiritual sense of this passage seems to appear when we note that to lift up signifies to "gather together." (AR 707) To pick up or lift signifies to elevate the intelligence and to think from higher principles.(AC 2789) In short, Jonah's words represent a call to the gentile state to gather together the falsities (in this instance, the falsities of the Jewish Church) so they might be rejected. Falsities have to be removed from the ship of doctrine. When that task is accomplished, the seas once again will become calm, serene, and peaceful.

"For I know that this great tempest is because of me."

- Is this confession of Jonah's (Israel's) commendable? Is he finally coming to his senses and admitting that he was wrong and he now is ready to change? Or is it a "forced" confession based on the hard and dangerous facts at hand? The boat was nearing the breaking point. He was cornered and questioned by the seamen who had an idea he was the one responsible for the tempestuous waves. Was he sorry for what he had caused or was he sorry that he got caught in the act of rebellion? Is Jonah truly ready to sacrifice himself for the safety of these gentile seamen?
- Jonah represents the Jewish church. Is there a change occurring here that will bring them to a point of joyfully sharing the Word of the Lord with Gentile nations?

"Nevertheless the men rowed hard to return to land, but they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them."

- AE 514 [2] teaches us that those who are "pilots," "ship-masters," "rowers," and "mariners" represent those who teach, lead, and rule. With this insight, we can see that the mariners rowing hard to return to land indicates that they tried to solve the problems of the tempestuous sea on the merit of their own prudence.
- TCR 68 announces that people who think that they can fight against evil on their own are as helpless as "a fish against the ocean, then a flea against a whale...then a locust...against an elephant, or a fly against a camel." A lone person has no chance of being on solid ground to fight against evil. Unless

people approach the Lord, they will "be driven about by evils, one after another, as a skiff at sea is driven by the storms." (*TCR* 68)

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes this section with this admonition: "[The gentiles] should reject those things which were from the Jewish nation, because they were falsified..."

Can you, in your heart and mind, picture something of the magnitude of the Lord's zeal to preserve and protect the purity and correctness of His doctrine? When the Lord sees His church in harm's way, He doesn't respond with an impetuous "rush to judgment" attitude. Instead, His eyes look to eternal uses and salvation. When the Lord speaks to us, He does so in measured and accommodated ways so we can grasp and use His truth. He misses nothing. An amazing amount of zeal flows from Him into the smallest particles of creation. Like little listening threads, they lead us to the Lord and the vitality of eternal life.

How important are we to the Lord? Let's consider this reflection offered in *TCR* 766: "The Lord is present with every man, **urging and pressing to be received...**"

He came to stop and correct the effects of the gross falsities of hell. He came to bring light to all who were lost in the darkness of spiritual ignorance. He came to clear away the lifeless forms of boring and useless tradition. He admonished the Scribes and the Pharisees for substituting their tradition for the Lord's teachings, or holding their own laws to be more important than the Word of the Lord. So His work involved saying to them: "You have it heard that it was said to those of old...but I say to you..." (*Matthew* 5:21-22) He told them they strained out gnats but swallowed camels. (*Matthew* 23:24)

Let's begin reflecting on why the Lord would urge the gentile mariners to "reject those things which were from the Jewish nation..." Are these words a historical condemnation of Judaism? That is not likely. Instead, they are a condemnation of spiritual attitudes that permeate attitudes of all nations and churches that turn away from Him. Consider this teaching from *AE* 412 [14]:

- "...the Jewish nation...was such that it looked to externals only, and to internals not at all; and to look at externals and not at the same time internals, or at externals without internals, is like looking at the image of a man that is without life; but to look at externals and at the same time internals...is like looking at a living man..."

AC 10566 summarizes the things a church, or individual, has to correct or overcome to become a living vessel that is worthy to serve the Lord:

- Holding the church in low regard. "Israel thought nothing of the church."

- Thinking "only of the possessions of the land..."
- Desiring "eminence over others."
- Believing that "there were many gods."
- Worshiping "Jehovah merely on account of the miracles, and not because He alone was God."

Jonah, therefore, is a representative of all stubborn and unwilling spiritual attitudes that pervade a heart and mind unwilling to serve the Lord. Jonah's life is a correspondential story of the danger and foolishness of a self-made fantasy world. To break the mold of that fantasy, we have the recorded words of the mariners asking questions: "Why have you done this?" "What shall we do to you...?" The heading of *TCR* 525 begins with these words (emphasis added): "Recognition of sin and the discovery of some sin in oneself is **the beginning of repentance.**" *TCR* 528 expands on the process of repentance:

- Examine yourself.
- Recognize and acknowledge sins; make a true confession apart from moroseness and blaming others.
- Pray to the Lord (supplicate the Lord's help).
- Begin a new life.

Jonah begins the process of repentance by confessing his transgressions. He admitted that the tempestuous seas were due to him. Will he follow through with the rest of the steps of repentance?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Jonah 1:10-13.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. The mariners experienced fear. What kind of fear? Was it merely for their lives, or were they fearful of losing their "affection of what is good and true"?
2. What would you say we fear the most: other people's opinion of us, or the Lord's opinion of us?
3. Self-evaluation is hard work. *SE* 734 reminds us that we have to do it for ourselves. If others think for us, we "remain in our phantasies" and "consider truth to be falsities." Hell tries to think for us. Hell pushes its morose qualities into reflection. It tends to "muddy" the water with the great blame game. Hell encourages us to trace the fault to others and excuse ourselves as helpless pawns in an unfair life. How can we do a fair self-examination in a constructive way?

4. Can we see that "the Jewish nation" is not just the Jewish nation? The faults, the mistakes they made have to be shunned in the New Church, too. We cannot afford to be an external church without an internal. Why? AE 412 [14] gives us our answer.
5. What "listening threads" do you have reaching out in all directions, like a spider's web, so you can with great sensitivity feel and respond to the Lord's zeal for doctrine?
6. Active participation in the process of spiritual growth is so much healthier than passively resisting the Lord. When do you feel a positive push to be more active in the ways of the Lord?
7. One last question to consider. Did the rowing of the mariners to save Jonah touch some kind of responsive chord? They tried to clear up the problem with their own prudence. Ever done that? How did the quote (in the Derived Doctrine section) from TCR 68 help you rethink the role of human prudence in repentance?

JONAH 1:14-16

"Therefore they cried out to the Lord and said, 'We pray, O Lord, please do not let us perish for this man's life, and do not charge us with innocent blood; for You, O Lord, have done as it pleased You.'

So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the Lord and took vows."

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "They prayed unto the Lord for salvation, which was effected for them, when the falsities from the Jewish nation had been removed."

Derived Doctrine

"Therefore [the mariners] cried out to the Lord..."

- AR 885 offers us this insight into the meaning of crying out: "...be it known, that 'a cry,' in the Word, is said in reference to every affection that breaks forth from the heart, wherefore it is a voice of lamentation, of imploring, of supplication from grief, of entreaty, of indignation, of confession, yea of exultation."
- AC 7119 indicates that "crying" signifies "strong thought...with full intention of doing..." a worship that is worthy and honoring to the Lord.

"We pray, O Lord, please do not let us perish for [Jonah's] life..."

- It is a self-evident truth that purposeful wrongs cannot be committed with impunity. Redress is necessary. In the minds of many, Divine forgiveness is not gratuitous. There must be some penalty. For the children of Israel, a sin against God especially had to be atoned for by offering a "sacrificial lamb." The blood of the spotless animal had to be sprinkled on "holy vestments" with the hope that this would secure the Lord's forgiveness. In the Old Testament, **propitiation** was meticulously offered by the priest in order to win, or secure, divine favor. Many other nations at that time also believed in the concept of propitiation.
- In the epistles of the New Testament, there is a great emphasis on teachings that the Lord, as God's Son, came to offer Himself as the great **Propitiation** to appease God's wrath. The epistles are used to support a fervent belief that a penalty for the sin of Adam (original sin) had to be paid. Unless propitiation was made, no one had a chance of being saved. Jesus paid the penalty for our sins and thus secured our salvation. Without the Lord taking on the sins of the world, no one could have been saved.
 - **Nota Bene:** Such teachings are not supported by New Church doctrines.
- Is the fear of the mariners justified in light of the long history and acceptance of propitiation? Did they see themselves as possible sacrifices to appease the wrath of the Lord? Did they see themselves as hapless victims necessary to secure Divine favor and atonement for Jonah's sin?

"...do not charge us with innocent blood; for You, O Lord, have done as it pleased You."

- Can we hear their argument? We are innocent. We had no part in this turbulent storm of trouble. You, meaning the Lord, started all of this. This pleased You. Please leave us out of it. They leave out of their prayerful argument Jonah's transgressions. Isn't this typical? It's always the Lord's fault when human prudence examines culpability.

"So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging."

- "'To be lifted up' or 'to be elevated' is to advance toward the interior things; for what is elevated or high is predicated of...interior things...for heaven is in the interior things." (*AC 5124*)
- When Abraham "cast out" Hagar and Ishmael from his presence, *AC 2657* explains, the "casting out" signifies that the "things of the merely human rational should be banished..." With every person being regenerated, there are two rationals: one before regeneration and one after regeneration.
- "...they threw [Jonah] into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging." To bring this passage into our understanding, let's first focus on the raging sea.

AC 2832 [2] describes surging seas as representative of heresies and controversies in an uproar. Could this derived teaching be representative of Jonah's thinking? He imagined that the church and its knowledge were exclusively for the Jewish people. He resisted carrying the Word to the gentiles. So the roaring of the waves signified the heresies within the externals of the church. *AR 402* and *AE 511* describe the "sea" as being knowledges in general that were lacking any internal foundation.

- Any and all controversies and heresies have to be cast out of the church for it to come to any state of peace or calmness. Heresy in the New Church will be subdued by the Lord. When the "first rational" was cast out, the "second rational" had a chance to be formed. This is described in the words "the sea ceased from its raging."

"Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the Lord and took vows."

- This fear of the Lord has a positive spiritual meaning. In the spiritual sense, this pictures the human understanding coming to have a great affection (positive fear) for the Lord's truth. (*AE 328 [15]*)
- Offering a sacrifice to the Lord represents the following things: *AC 4210* says it signifies worship coming from the good of love. *AC 5998* teaches us that a sacrifice represents worshiping the Lord from charity. *AC 8088* says that sacrificing is to see that real faith of charity is from the Lord. Sacrifice involves a willingness to give up one's proprium to be obedient to the Lord.
- To take vows represents a willingness to rely on the Lord and to have a heart that acknowledges the necessity of the Lord's Providence directing our life. Please read all of *AC 3732*. This number has much more on the meaning of "taking a vow."

Putting It All Together

P&P sums this section up with the teaching that salvation comes through prayer and the shunning of evils and falsities as sins against the Lord. Other passages from the Writings extol the virtue of periodic, wholesome, and realistic self-examination. Self-examination is best when it is free from self-pity and a morose attitude. When an evil or sin is found, we need to make a confession of our guilt, supplicating the Lord for help with a desire to live a new life in harmony with Divine order.

Let's consider for a moment the thoughts that are present in the first rational: There is a desire there to blame the Lord for our turmoil; we feel as though the Lord is picking on us unfairly; and we look for the easy (propitiatory) way to appease the "wrath of the Lord." Casting all of our sins on the Lord and walking away with little or no regenerative struggle on our part sounds good. Doctrine does not support this attitude. Until we elevate our minds to higher truths and fight with the Lord's spiritual truths, we will miss the essence of repentance, reformation, and

regeneration. The Lord wants us to seek out His truth and do battle against our proprial inclinations.

The second rational, when freed of heresies and controversies in the proprium, experiences an inner calm. How do we get to the second rational? We pray for help. We turn over to the Lord our resistive nature. The second rational flourishes when our thinking is based on the ways of the Lord. Instead of allowing historical tradition to think for us, we turn to the Word for guidance. With these intentions, we will take a "vow" to rely on, obey, and implement the eternal ends of the Lord. With a song in our heart, we promise "all that the Lord has spoken we will do and hear." The second rational is lifted up, and higher goals and priorities inflow when the resistive Jonah nature is thrown overboard.

Doesn't the goal of the lifted "second rational" sound stronger and more dynamically cooperative with the Lord than "dumping" (propitiatory idea) all our sins on the Lord and walking away with little or no responsibility?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Jonah 1:14-16.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Our lesson from *P&P* claims "Salvation comes through prayer." Are you clear on how we are to pray and what prayer is? The Lord's disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray. They were taught the Lord's Prayer. Is that prayer to be our model? Are prayers to be well thought out or can spontaneous prayers be as effective when we call out in a moment of need? How many kinds of prayers are there?
 - Prayers taken from the Word. (The prayers of the Psalms, for instance.)
 - Prayers for spiritual ends as described in *Divine Providence (DP)* 214, 215, and 219.
 - Prayers for the spiritual good of others.
 - Prayers for the church.
 - Prayers for what we need.
 - Prayers for revelation.
 - Prayers during and after the shunning of evils.
 - Prayers to help us carry out a Use.
 - Perpetual prayers "when we are in the life of charity, although not with the mouth, but of the heart." (*AE* 325)
 - Prayers to help us through periods of temptations.
 - Prayers while we read and acquire truths from the Word.

- Note we have left prayers of intercession off the list. Why? Do these kinds of prayers need to be included in our list? Does the Lord wait for us to band together to hold up a name before He acts to heal, comfort, or change something in someone's life? Are our prayers effective in the removal of drug addiction, cancer, alcohol, or mental problems?
- 2. The steps of repentance are: self-examination, make ourselves guilty for our sins, supplicate the Lord for help, and seek to begin a new life. Do these steps involve making sacrifices? Do we have to offer up a "propitiatory" sacrifice to appease the Lord?
- 3. Does "casting our sins upon the Lord" sound appealing? Fighting to change our lives seems threatening and painfully time consuming. The Lord knows our sins. He knows where and how to remove them from our lives. Why not let Him do it all for us?
- 4. The first rational and second rational—can you think of ways to illustrate the difference between them? How about this natural idea (from I Corinthians 13) as a starter: "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." Carry this imagery along now in spiritual matters.

Chapter Two

JONAH 1:17

(Note: *P&P* reminds us that the *English Bible* has verse 17 of chapter 1 as verse 1 of chapter 2. Consequently, the quote from *P&P* will apply to both Jonah 1:17 and Jonah 2:1-10 as given in the *New King James Version.*)

*"Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." **JONAH 2:1-10***

"Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish's belly. And he said: 'I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, and He answered me. Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and You heard my voice. For You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the floods surrounded me; all Your billows and Your waves passed over me.' Then I said, 'I have been cast out of Your sight; Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.' The waters surrounded me, even to my soul; the deep closed around me; weeds were wrapped around my head. I went down to the moorings of the mountains; the earth with its bars closed behind me forever; yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O Lord, my God.

When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer went up to You, into Your holy temple. Those who regard worthless idols forsake their own Mercy. But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.'

So the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land."

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "[This is a] Prophecy concerning the Lord's combats with the hells, and concerning His most grievous temptations at the time, and concerning His state at the time; the 'three days and nights during which Jonah was in the bowels of the fish,' signify the entire duration of the combat with the hells."

AC 901 [4]

- "That Jonah was three days and three nights in the bowels of the fish, manifestly represented the burial and resurrection of the Lord on the third day." (*This refers to Jonah 1:17.*)

AC 2788 [2]

- "...the 'third day' denotes the Lord's coming, and His resurrection. And from Jonah, that he 'was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights'..." (*Jonah 1:17*)

AC 4495 [3]

- "...it may be seen that there was some mystery in the number 'three,' and that therefore this number...signifies an entire period of the church and of the things in the church, whether great or small...that it consequently signifies what is complete and also continuous to the end..." (*Jonah 1:17*)

Doctrine of Sacred Scripture (DSS) 29

- "...by 'three,' in the Word, in the spiritual sense, is meant what is complete and perfect; and also the whole simultaneously. And as this is the signification of the number three, it is employed in the Word whenever any such thing is marked out for notice." (*Jonah 1:17*)

AR 505

- "That 'three' signifies what is complete, thus to the end, may be seen from these passages in the Word..." *Jonah 1:17* is cited.

TCR 211

- "[There are] many other passages where the number three is mentioned; and it is mentioned where a finished and perfect work is treated of, because this is what that number signifies." *Jonah 1:17* is cited.

AE 532 [5]

- "As the number three signified what is complete even to the end, that number was adopted and employed in the representative church, whenever something complete was to be represented, as can be seen from these things in the Word ..." *Jonah 1:17* is cited.

AE 622 [9]

- In *Jonah 1:17*, "...'the bowels of the whale'...signifies the hells where there are most direful falsities, with which he was encompassed, consequently grievous temptations..."

AC 247

- "...when man averts himself from the face of Jehovah, he 'cleaves by his belly to the dust and to the earth.' In Jonah likewise, by the 'belly' of the great fish, into which he was cast, are signified the lower parts of the earth..." *Jonah 2:2* is cited.

AE 538 [11]

- "The Lord teaches in Matthew 12:39, 40; 16:4; Luke 11:29,30, that Jonah's being in the whale three days and three nights represented that the Lord would thus be in the heart of the earth; and these words of Jonah describe the Lord's direful temptations. And because it is by the overflow of evils and falsities that come up out of hell, and as it were overwhelm, that temptations exist, it is said that 'out of the belly of hell he cried,' and that 'he was cast into the depth, even into the heart of the seas,' which signifies hell; 'the river and waters that enclosed him,' and 'the billows and waves that passed over,' signify the evils and falsities from hell; 'the abyss that encompassed round about,' signifies the hells where and from which are the falsities; 'the cuttings off of the mountains to which he went down,' signify the hells where and from which are evils; that the Lord was as it were bound by these is signified by 'the sedge wrapped about the head,' and 'the bars of the earth that were upon him,' 'wrapped by sedge' signifying to be bound as it were by falsities, and 'the bars of the earth' signifying to be bound as it were by evils; victory over these from His own power is signified by 'yet hast Thou made my life to come up out of the pit.' It is said, 'Thou hast made to come up,' but in reference to the Lord this means that He made Himself to come up by His Divine, that is, by His own power." *Jonah 2:2-3, 5-6* are cited.

AE 518 [38]

- "As all spiritual temptations come through falsities that break into the thoughts and infest the interior mind, thus through reasonings from falsities, so temptations are signified by the inundations of waters and by the irruptions of rivers and torrents." *Jonah 2:3* is cited.

AR 191

- "'The temple of holiness of Jehovah,' or the Lord, is His Divine Human, for that is bowed down to, looked to, and prayed to, and not to the temple only, for the temple in itself is not holy. It is called 'the temple of holiness,' because holiness is predicated of the Divine truth." *Jonah 2:4,7* are cited.

AE 220 [6]

- "In the passages that follow 'temple' signifies the Lord's Divine Human, and at the same time heaven and the church." *Jonah 2:4, 7* are cited.

AC 756

- "In *Jonah 2:5*...the 'waters' and the 'deep' denote the extreme of temptation."

AC 6726

- "...'sedge' denotes memory-knowledge; the sedge that is at the bank of a river signifies memory-knowledge of low value... 'sedge' denotes false memory-knowledges in *Jonah 2:5*...in this prophetic utterance is described a state of temptations; 'the waters which compassed even the soul' denotes falsities... 'inundations of waters' denotes temptations and desolations... 'the deep round about' is the evil of falsity; 'the seaweed bound about the head' denotes false memory-knowledges besetting truth and good, as is the case in a state of desolation."

AC 8278 [3]

- "...temptations are effected by means of falsities and evils that are injected by the hells. In this sense 'abyss' is used in these passages..." *Jonah 2:5* is cited.

AC 9050 [10]

- "In these passages [*Jonah 2:5* is cited among others] 'waters' denote falsities, and also temptations which are caused by injected falsities..."

AE 750 [5]

- "That 'soul' signifies the life of man's spirit, which is called his spiritual life, is evident from the following passages." *Jonah 2:5* is listed in a long series of examples.

AC 1691 [5]

- "In *Jonah 2:5, 6*...the Lord's temptations against the hells are thus prophetically described by Jonah, when in the belly of the great fish. So likewise in other passages of the Word, especially in David. He who is in temptations is in the hells; place has nothing to do with being in the hells, but state."

AC 4728 [5]

- "In Jonah 2:6...where the subject treated of is the Lord's temptations, and deliverance from them. The 'cuttings off of the mountains' are where the most damned are, the dark clouds which appear about them being the 'mountains.'"

AE 750 [14]

- "In Jonah 2:7...This treats of temptations; and that 'his soul fainted upon him' signifies that the truth fainted (or ceased) in the faith and understanding."

AC 3880 [10]

- "...in Jonah 2:9...confession...in the supreme sense signifies the Lord and the Divine of love; in the internal sense, the Word and also the Lord's celestial kingdom; and in the exterior sense, the doctrine from the Word which is of the celestial church."

Derived Doctrine

Our derived doctrine section will focus on the three verses not covered in our doctrinal exposition. We will seek help with derived doctrine for *Jonah 2:1, 8, and 10*.

"Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish's belly."

- "'Fishes' in the Word signify memory-knowledges, which spring from things of the sense. For memory-knowledges (*scientifica*) are of three kinds: intellectual, rational, and sensuous. All of these are planted in the memory, or rather memories, and in the regenerate man are called forth thence by the Lord, through the internal man...and that a 'whale' or 'sea monster' signifies the generals of these knowledges." (AC 991)
- Recall the first mention of the fish. "...the Lord prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah." Our best source for deriving an understanding of this passage comes when we study *AC 42 (emphasis added)*: "...'fish' means facts, here facts quickened and brought to life through faith from the Lord. 'Sea monsters' means those facts' general sources, below which and from which details derive... In the Prophets sea monsters or whales are mentioned several times, and in those places they mean those general sources of facts. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, who represents human wisdom or intelligence—that is, knowledge in general—is called 'a great sea monster'...This stands for the fact that mankind did swallow cognitions of faith...just as the sea monster swallowed up Jonah. In that story the sea monster stands for people who treat general cognitions of faith as mere facts, and behave accordingly." (This is the Elliot translation of AC 42)

- "Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish's belly." Please note the two direct teachings cited above (*AC 247* and *AE 622 [9]*) about the meaning of Jonah being in the "belly" of the whale. We must add some derived doctrinal thinking, or application, to this passage. The Word is exposing the inner world of the Lord's spiritual state. The hells tempted His sensuous mind to lead Him away from spiritual uses, hoping to distract His sensual mind from any heavenly inspiration and guidance. These temptations were far more grievous than we can imagine. Each love within Him was assaulted and subjected to ridicule and constant attack. Therefore, the Word illustrates this "downward" pull and His need to be lifted up with Jonah's prayer to the Lord from the "belly" of the whale.
- Prayer is nothing else but communication with the Lord. (*AC 3285*)
- Praying is talking with God. (*AC 3535*)
- In the universal sense, a person prays with all the truth he or she thinks and speaks. (*AE 695*)
- Praying effects a kind of opening of the interiors toward the Lord. This opening is according to the state of the person praying. Praying signifies to be in worship of the Lord. (*AE 325 [8]*)
- A person is continually praying when he or she is in the life of charity, although not with the mouth, nevertheless with the heart. For that which is of love is always in the thought, whether a person knows it or not. (*AE 325*)
- See *AC 247* regarding the meaning of the "belly of the great fish." From this passage, we can see that fish correspond to the affection for thinking from the senses, and the knowledge thus acquired. Some water animals are not fish. For example, a whale breathes through lungs and not gills. The whale is a warm-blooded animal. Fish are cold-blooded creatures of the sea. The whale roams great distances in the ocean and consumes large quantities of fish, krill, and plankton. A whale corresponds to a warm affection (desire) for general knowledge of truths and facts. The amount of sea creatures whales consume illustrates the magnitude of their "fact-finding" search.
- But when whales are used in the negative sense, they represent the corruption or abuse of fact finding. Is the whale the one who corrupts the facts? In this case, it was Jonah's state being illustrated. He took facts from the "belly of the whale" and corrupted and made useless the general knowledges and truths of the Lord's Word.

"Those who regard worthless idols forsake their own mercy."

- To comprehend the negative context of "worthless idols," we need to understand the positive correspondence of "worthy." The word "worthy" means a person who is in truths from the Lord or people who will live from the Lord through knowledges of truth and good from the Word. (*AR 167*) It also signifies acknowledgment from the heart that everything divine is from the Divine Human. (*AE 337*)

- Idols signify the falsities of religion, and their doctrinals. (*AE 827[3]*) Idols signify falsities of religion and worship that come to be called truths and goods. (*AE 585[9]*) Idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood signify worship from falsities of every kind. (*AR 457*)
- To "forsake" signifies the withdrawal of the Lord on account of the iniquities and sins of false worship. (*AE 412[19]*)
- Forsaking their mercy signifies a rejection of the inflowing of love. (*AC 3063*) In the positive sense, mercy signifies a cleansing process from evils with a forgiveness of sins and an attention to all the elements of worship from the good of love. (*AC 9505*)

"So the Lord spoke to the fish and it vomited Jonah onto dry land."

- The Lord speaking to the fish seems to best understood with this thought in mind: speaking signifies influx and compliance from faith and love; or living as the Lord has taught us in the Word. (*AC 9312*)
- Vomiting signifies a casting out of falsified things. (*AE 235[5]*)
- Dry land signifies a state where there is no longer anything spiritual, much less celestial. (*AC 806*) Dry signifies the external person lacking in truths. (*AC 27*) Land signifies the church and its perception of truth. Dry land therefore indicates a kind of barrenness that existed with the church represented by Jonah.
- It seems that when vomiting is mentioned in the Word, it is pointing us to something akin to vastations. It is an emptying out of falsity so that a new beginning may occur, a beginning directed by the Lord.

Putting It All Together

To pull this section together, we must focus and rely on the help we get from *P&P*. The internal sense is a story about the Lord and not about a person named Jonah. Jonah's choices and his resistance to the call of Divine Love represent the type of temptations the hells laid out as a trap to defeat the Lord while He was on earth. Jonah's experiences give us an overview of the things the hells hoped would overcome the Lord. We can see something of the magnitude of temptations the Lord faced, but we will never fully know how devious the hells were in their attempt to defeat Him. Every love He had was attacked. Every truth He had was challenged. The purity of His love intensified hell's maniacal fury and hatred of Him. Read again the summary of the internal sense as given in *P&P*:

"[This is a] Prophecy concerning the Lord's combats with the hells, and concerning His most grievous temptations at the time, and concerning His state at the time; the 'three days and nights during which Jonah was in the bowels of the fish,' signify the entire duration of the combat with the hells."

Through the dialogue of Jonah, the hells cited authoritatively the opposing traditional beliefs the Jewish church adopted, venerated, and followed blindly regarding gentiles—all people outside of the Jewish Church. The hells quoted (misquoted) passages from the Word. The hells burned to interrupt His mission. Their plan was to catch Him off guard. If He had relaxed for even the smallest moment, they would have rushed in to destroy His soul. Their maniacal plan, like the man possessed with a legion of demons, seemed strong enough to break any restricting chains put around them. The hells perceived themselves to be invincible. Hell's name was "legion" and each unclean spirit was nefariously deadly. They wanted the Lord to concentrate on His natural/sensual mind, seeking a smoke screen of minutiae they hoped would keep Him from concentrating on spiritual and celestial issues. The weeds they wrapped around His head (the sedge of memory-knowledges) tried to blind and choke the spiritual reality of His Divine essence. The Lord cast off each layer of sedge and resisted every decayed tactic. Through it all, He remained steadfast and true to the mission of salvation. The Lord emptied out (vomited) the idols of their thoughts. He faced the "belly of the whale" experience. He saved the church. Dry as the land was and empty as the church was, the Lord came to bring new growth and "living water" for all who thirsted. He restored mercy to the church. He quieted the fierce turbulent seas, and when those who had tried to weather the storm with their as-of-self, hard, and frantic rowing, saw little or no progress, they cried out to the Lord for help. He heard their voices. He rescued His beloved and gave them a new song of hope: "I will look again toward Your holy temple." (*Jonah 2:4*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Jonah 2:1-10.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. When you read the story of Jonah, remember that it is a lesson about the Lord's battle against hell. The hells didn't want Him to reach out and bring the message of repentance to all people. What reasons did the hells use to argue their case? Think of the life of the Lord. At the beginning of His ministry, He was taken up into a mountain and shown the "world." He was told it could all be His if He would do what? Please note the nature and scope of the three temptations that He underwent on the mountain.
2. The Writings teach us temptation is an assault on some spiritual love given to us by the Lord. The greater the love, the more severe the temptation. Consider the degree and level of temptation the Lord faced. "Most grievous" captures some of the severity but falls far short in our comprehension. He is all Love. He is all Truth. The attacks against His "all" must have been horrific. How do we think about our relationship to the Lord in light of this?

3. Think about some severe temptation in your life. What can you learn about the Lord's experiences by thinking about your own?
4. The hells tried to use all kinds of memory-knowledges, traditional minutiae to confuse the Lord. The Scribes and Pharisees used many traditions against Him. Remember Pilate's conversation with the Lord; Pilate had the power to release Him, but he failed to do so because the crowd influenced him. He asked the Lord if He was the king of the Jews. The Lord replied that He was and that He had come to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth "hears My voice." Pilate resorted to a word game. "What is truth?" That ended the dialogue. Have you seen a similar behavior in yourself or other people? What causes it?
5. We all need to have a hero. Can you recall some of your childhood heroes? Is the Lord still one of your Heroes? Looking at the severity of His fight against the Hell's always reminds me what a loving Hero He is.
6. If you have access to "Stairs" or "Word Search," look up Isaiah 9:6 and compare the wording of this verse in the Writings with that in other Bible versions. See how consistently "Hero" appears in the Writings translation of that verse. Why isn't the word "hero" listed in all the other translations? You might not have an answer, but it is amazing that "Hero" is one of the names for the Lord.

Chapter Three

JONAH 3:1-10

"Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, 'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you.' So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey in extent. And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, 'Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!' So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, 'Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who can tell if God will turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?' Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it."

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "The nations, hearing from the Word of God about their sins, and that they would perish, were converted after repenting, and were heard by the Lord, and saved."

AC 9437 [2]

- "As 'forty' signified what is full or complete...forty signifies what is complete in respect to instruction and influx...for this reason it was said by Jonah to the Ninevites that 'the city would be overthrown after forty days' (*Jonah 3:4*)

AR 492

- "By being clothed in sackcloth is signified mourning on account of the vastated truth in the church; for garments signify truths; and therefore, to be clothed in sackcloth, which is not a garment, signifies mourning that there is no truth; and where there is no truth, there is no church." *Jonah 3:5-6* is cited.

AE 637 [6]

- "...in the Jewish and Israelitish church mourning was represented by 'rending the clothes and being clothed in sackcloth;' and this because grief of mind and mourning of heart, which are interior things, were represented at that time by external things, which because of their correspondences with spiritual things were significative." *Jonah* 3:5, 6, and 8 are cited among the examples from the Word.

AC 4779 [2]

- "...the rite of putting sackcloth on the loins to testify...mourning may be seen from the historic and prophetic parts of the Word, as in...*Jonah* 3:5-8...for a sign representative of mourning over the evil on account of which Nineveh was to perish; thus over destroyed good."

AR 166

- "From the signification of garments it is also manifest why they rent their garments, when any one spoke against the Divine truth of the Word...and why, on account of transgressions against Divine truths, they put off their garments, and put on sackcloth." *Jonah* 3:5, 6, and 8 are cited.

AE 195 [17]

- "That in mourning for transgression against Divine truths they should put off their garments and put on sackcloth." *Jonah* 3:5, 6, and 8 are cited.

AC 7520

- "That 'ashes' denote falsity, may be confirmed from passages where another word for 'ashes (cinis)' is used, for these ashes have a like origin..." *Jonah* 3:6 is cited.

AC 9723

- "...by 'ashes' in the opposite sense, namely, what is condemned that remains after the burning from the fire of self love. This is signified by 'the ashes' which they carried on the head, and in which they rolled themselves when bewailing their sins." *Jonah* 3:6 is cited.

AR 337

- "In the spiritual sense by kings those who are in truths are signified, by the great ones those who are in goods, by the rich those that are in the

knowledge of good, by the mighty they that are in erudition, by servants they that are in such things from others, and thus from memory, and by freemen they that are in such things from themselves..." *Jonah 3:7* is cited.

AE 408 [3]

- "Internal goods are signified by 'great ones,' because these four, namely, 'great ones,' 'the rich,' 'the commanders of thousands' and 'the mighty' signify all the goods and truths that are with man, thus the goods and truths both of the internal or spiritual man and of the external or natural man...Like things are signified by the 'great ones' elsewhere in the Word (namely in...*Jonah 3:7*)."

AC 7523

- "The interior good and also the interior evil...are signified by 'man,' are those which are of the intention or end, for the intention or end is the inmost of man; but the exterior good and also the exterior evil which are signified by 'beast,' are those which are of the thought, and of the consequent action when nothing stands in the way...By 'beast,'...in respect to the external or natural man, a man is nothing else than a beast, for he takes delight in the like cupidities and pleasures, as also in the like appetites and sense...Therefore...from a holy rite it was commanded by the king of Nineveh, that both man and beast were to fast, and were to be covered with sackcloth (*Jonah 3:7, 8*)."

AR 567

- "...in the spiritual world a man's affections appear at a distance like beasts...and beasts, viewed in themselves, are nothing but forms of natural affections...By man and beasts together is signified man as to spiritual and natural affection, in the following passages...*Jonah 3:7, 8*..."

AE 650 [21]

- "...'man' signifies the internal spiritual man, and 'beast' signifies the external or natural..." *Jonah 3:7-8* are cited as an example.

AC 623 [2]

- "Here 'webs' and 'garments' are predicated of things of the understanding, that is, of the thought; 'iniquity' and 'violence,' of things of the will, that is, of works. In *Jonah 3:8*...the 'evil way' is predicated of falsities, which are of the understanding; and 'violence,' which are of the will."

AC 588 [2]

- "...the 'wrath of anger' is attributed to Jehovah, and consequently 'repentance.' In Jonah ...[3:9]."

DSS 51 [2]

- "...the Word is such in the sense of the letter, it may be evident that it cannot be understood without doctrine. But let examples illustrate this. It is said that Jehovah repented (Jonah 3:9; 4:2), and it is also said that Jehovah repented not (Num. 23:19...): without doctrine these statements do not agree."

TCR 226 [2]

- Please note that this reference has the same wording and sources as cited in the quote above.

AC 10441 [2-4]

- "In these passages (Jonah 3:9,10) Jehovah is said to have 'repented,' when yet it cannot be that He repents, because He knows all things before He does them; from which it is evident that by 'repenting' is signified mercy."

Derived Doctrine

"Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time..."

- The word of the Lord coming to Jonah for the second time seems to convey a restoration—an opening again—of a covenant between heaven and earth. "The conjunction of heaven with man is by means of the Word, and the Word is called a covenant, because a covenant signifies a conjunction." (*White Horse 10*)
- A second time, perhaps, signifies an acknowledgment that a conjunction would involve "labor and combat." See AC 755 regarding the correspondence of "second." Two, or second, signifies conjunction. AC 5194 explains that two or twain represent the conjunction of the external natural with the things of the internal natural. Two also represents the conjunction of the will and understanding.

"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you..."

- AC 1612 teaches that to "arise" signifies a Divine edict to survey the heavenly kingdom.
- AC 2326 teaches that arising represents acknowledgment from the elevation of the mind, or a state of affection from charity.

- *AC 3050* and *5605* add to the meanings of the word "go" this thought: it is to elevate one's mind within to more interior things.
- Nineveh signifies falsities of doctrinal things from reasoning and contrived by the proprium (selfhood). (*AC 1184*) Nineveh signifies falsities from the fallacies of the senses in the obscurity of an unenlightened understanding, or ignorance. (*AC 1188 [2]*)
- To preach signifies about the same thing spiritually as naturally, but to teach rather than exhort. (*AE 612*)
- The "message I tell you..." directs us to the true source of mercy and salvation.

"So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord."

- Nota bene how well this verse repeats and ties together the derived teachings we turned to above.

"Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk."

- The city was a three-day journey in extent. This is the first day. "Day" signifies the successive states of a person's regeneration. (*AC 6*) "Three" signifies what is holy; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; Love, Wisdom, and Use.
- That which is "first" sets the tone or theme for all that is to follow: Repentance, Reformation, and Regeneration.

"To enter the city..."

- To enter in, when predicated of the Lord, signifies to conjoin Himself to man. (*AE 251*)
- A city denotes the order and organization of the interiors of the mind, specifically as to good and truth. (*AC 3538*)

"Forty days"

- Forty signifies the duration of temptation and likewise its vastation. (*AC 730 [2], AC 862, and AC 1963*)

The people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast..."

- A fast signifies to mourn because of a lack of good and truth. (*AE 1189 [2]*) A fasting signifies to be in an unhappy state when good is no longer conjoined with truths. (*AC 9182 [10]*)

Putting It All Together

The great city of Nineveh has many spiritual representations. The world saw Nineveh as a mighty nation, but in the eyes of the Lord, it represented the shallowness and weakness (death) of false doctrines, contrived beliefs confirmed by the proprium (self love), the fallacies of the senses, and the unenlightened understanding that spawns spiritual ignorance. The Lord's mercy and love for all prompted Him not only to send His message to Nineveh, but to ensure that it would be preserved for eternity.

Jonah's call to "arise and go" preach to Nineveh what the Lord told him is a call for spiritual renewal. It is a call for repentance. Thus, the fasting, sackcloth, and ashes symbolize a call to be aware that "where there is no truth, there is no church." Where the Word is closed and not loved, there is a loss of conjunction with the Divine resources. The fasting of man and beast symbolizes a need for the spiritual and natural appetites to come to the Lord for that "bread which comes down from heaven." The Ninevites giving up their natural food and drink represents their turning away from the "as-of-self" concepts and reminds all who read and hear the Word of the Lord to rely on heavenly manna. "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance..." (*Isaiah 55:2*)

The king sitting in ashes and mourning represents a sorrowful attitude toward "the remains of the fire of self-love." Repentance involves: self-examination, making oneself guilty for the sins and evils committed, asking the Lord for His help, and desiring to attain a new life.

As we mull over this concept, think about the Lord's preaching on earth. As He went about His mission, He often used these words: "You have heard it said of old...but I say unto you..." Putting aside human traditions and taking on the Lord's teachings is an ongoing effort. Jonah was told to preach the words of the Lord. He was not to make things up from his memory. He was to be a true and faithful prophet of the Lord's ways.

P&P tells us of the results of Jonah's mission: "**The nations, hearing from the Word of God about their sins, and that they would perish, were converted after repenting, and were heard by the Lord, and saved.**"

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read Jonah 3:1-10.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Where there is no truth, there is no church. Can you imagine any society where there is a total absence of truth? Could there be situations where truth is present but empty because people ascribe it to themselves and deny the Lord?
2. How did the Lord's words to Jonah strike you when He said "...preach...the message that I tell you"? For me, those words carry power. Sermons, doctrinal classes need to be carefully worked to keep the focus on the words of the Lord. Jokes, humor, have their place in the proper setting. Is the church or worship a proper setting?
3. Were you struck with the quickness of Nineveh's repentance? First, the people of the city responded, and then the king did so with his call for national observance of fasting.
4. Was the literal sense of the king sitting on ashes to mourn clear enough that you can now make some application to a life situation? Ashes represent the remains from the fire of self-love. Can you recall some project or cause that carried you away and in spite of advice or a warning from the conscience you pressed on? Looking back you clearly see that your motives grew out of self-love. In retrospect you now see what a waste of time it was. Instead of doing it for the good of the Lord or neighbor it was "all about ourselves." An unhealthy self-love leaves us with a burnt out useless pile of residue. What had appeared at the time a momentous cause really ended up a little thing that sadly was limited in eternal uses. Is this your insight of this king on the ashes scene? One last doctrinal thought: A king represents ruling loves. Is this passage giving us a picture of the Lord as the mourning king or is it a picture of ourselves as a repentant king?
5. The Lord's love for us is a major theme in this chapter. The impossible happening ought to give us cause to be thankful. What emotions usually accompany gratitude to the Lord? How do we associate gratitude and repentance, or do we? Should we?
6. Preaching should teach and not exhort. I'm still mulling over that quote from the Writings. Effective preaching, if it involves opening the spiritual sense of the Word, eventually brings some kind of exhortation. Could this be a reminder to teach and then let the Lord do the exhorting? Does teaching inspire self-exhortation? How and when?

Chapter Four

JONAH 4:1-11

"But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. So he prayed to the Lord, and said, 'Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than live!' Then the Lord said, 'Is it right for you to be angry?' So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city. There he made for himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city. And the Lord God prepared a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So Jonah was very grateful for the plant. But as morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered. And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah's head, so he grew faint. Then he wished death for himself, and said, 'It is better for me to die than to live.' Then God said to Jonah, 'Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?' And he said, 'It is right for me to be angry, even to death!' But the Lord said, 'You have pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left – and much livestock.'"

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "The Jewish nation became very angry at the salvation of the nations. A representation of their being inflamed thereat."

AE 401 [36]

- "It is written in Jonah that 'the gourd that came up over him withered, and that the sun beat upon his head, so that he fell sick.' As this cannot be understood without explanation by the internal sense, it shall be explained in a few words...This is a description of the genius of the Jewish nation, that they are in the love of self and in falsities therefrom. Jonah was of that nation, and therefore also was sent to Nineveh; for the Jewish nation had the Word, and was therefore able to teach those who were outside of the church and who are called gentiles; these are signified by 'Nineveh.' Because the Jewish nation was, above others, in love of self and in falsities from that love, they did not wish well to any but themselves, thus not to the gentiles, but these they hated. Because that nation was such, and Jonah represented it, he was very

angry that Jehovah should spare Nineveh... This evil in that nation is signified by the gourd which the worm smote so it dried up. 'The sun that smote upon the head of Jonah' signifies the love of self which was in that nation; and 'the scorching east wind' the falsity therefrom; and 'the worm that smote the gourd' signifies the destruction of this evil and the falsity thence. That this is the signification of 'the gourd' is evident from its being said in this description that Jonah at first 'was glad over the gourd,' and after the gourd had been smitten by the worm and had dried up that 'he was angry over it, even unto death,' and also from its being said that 'he had pity over the gourd.' That the Jewish nation, because it was in such a love and in such falsity...was liable to damnation is meant by these words to Jonah, 'thou didst not cause it to grow up, because thou didst become a son of night, and a son of night perisheth.' (*Jonah 4:1, 3, 6-11*)

AC 10441

- "...'repenting' when said of Jehovah, denotes mercy, is plain [in *Jonah 4:2*]."

DSS 51 [2]

- "It is said that Jehovah repenteth...and also that Jehovah repenteth not...without doctrine these statements do not agree." (*Jonah 4:2*)

TCR 226 [2]

- Please note that this passage uses the same wording as the above passage and also refers to *Jonah 4:2*.

AE 419 [26]

- "...by the wind coming from the east, which is called 'the east wind,' namely, that with the evil it disperses all the goods and truths which they presented in external form before the world, and all the truths which they talked about for the sake of appearances..." *Jonah 4:8* is cited as an example.

Derived Doctrine

"Jonah became angry..."

- Anger signifies a grievous turning away from good. (*AC 6358*) A hot anger signifies repugnance and aversion. (*AC 7791*)

"...when I was still in my country, was not this what I said..."

- This passage indicates that Jonah, although he did the preaching for the Lord, never really did so from a changed heart. A country signifies the genius of each, in particular and general. (*AC 1215*) So it would appear that Jonah (the Jewish nation) was of the same mind, in generals and particulars, as when he tried to run the first time. Jonah mentions his fleeing to Tarshish.

The great platitudes regarding the gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness.

- One might do well to remember Balaam when reading these words. He was hired to speak a curse on Israel, but the words of condemnation couldn't be uttered.
- *AE 140* teaches that Balaam signifies those whose understandings have been enlightened, and so teach truths, but who would yet love to destroy the church by craft. Jonah seems conflicted and yet hardened. He hates Nineveh and is in disbelief that the Lord would act contrary to his assumed spiritual correctness; he feels justified in excluding gentiles from the benefits of the Word and church.

"Is it right for you to be angry?"

- The Divine question is the Lord's way of opening internal reflection. The Lord knows the answer. Jonah needs to dig deeper to find the Lord's answer.
- Jonah wished to end his life. Hellish states burn with a desire to destroy others. Are we seeing the influence of hell wanting to destroy Jonah and make him ashamed of what he had done in the name of the Lord?

"Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city."

- Jonah left the city. In the positive sense, a city reflects the organization and protection of truth. Truth, like a physical city, offers homes, places of business, places of worship, protection, libraries, hospitals, etc. In the opposite sense, a city represents the falsification of truth. It would be like living in caves, bogs, and makeshift housing. It seems that Jonah left the doctrinal city. He had to find ways to justify his opposition to what the Lord had done for Nineveh.
- Sitting on the east side of the city sounds like a case of justification. East is where the ancients believed the Lord resided. They faced east to worship Him. Was Jonah fabricating his reasons for wanting and waiting for Nineveh to have a fiery ending? Was he constructing "spiritual" reasons why the destruction should happen?

"There he made for himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade."

- Jonah made shelter so as to have shade for his comfort. In the good sense, this represents having a defense against evil and falsity. (*AE 298 [5]*) In the opposite sense, shade or shadow represents the mind darkening itself with reasoning from memory-knowledges. (*AC 6723*)
- Sitting signifies a state of thought. (*AC 2684*) We are left with an idea that Jonah was reflecting on knowledges from his memory.

The gourd (the plant) and the worm

- A gourd represents love of self. A worm signifies the torment of internal pain. (*AR 763*) A worm signifies falsities that destroy. (*AC 8481*)

"God prepared a vehement east wind..."

- East wind signifies a state of temptation and vastation. (*AC 7679 [3]*) It also signifies providing the means to dissipate falsity (*AC 8201*) and influx from heaven. (*AE 538 [10]*)

"The sun beat on his head, so that he grew faint."

- Faintness signifies the failure of external good. (*AR 381*)
- The sun beating on his head illustrates how troubling the light of the Lord (the sun) was to his thoughts of dominion. The Jewish church's belief that the Lord favored them over all nations was a great contributor to its self-love. (*AC 250*)

"Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

- This Divine question was put to Jonah with his best interests in mind. The Lord's question goes to the heart of Jonah's compassion. Do you care more for the gourd and your comfort than for the people of Nineveh?
- Sadly, the answer comes back, "It is right for me to be angry, even to death!"

The Lord recounts that Nineveh had more than 120,000 inhabitants who could not discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock."

- I cannot find a correspondence for 120,000. *AE 430* gives quite a detailed explanation of simple numbers multiplied with greater numbers. If you have a gift for math and numerology, please give this reference a try.
- For the meaning of right hand and left hand, see *AC 10,061 [4]*: "As most things in the Word have an opposite sense, so also have the right and left...‘the right’ signifies the evil from which is falsity, and ‘the left’ the falsity through which is evil..."

- A hand signifies ability, power, and therefore confidence. (*AC 878*)
- Putting these things together, one can see how desperately the Ninevites needed the Lord's rescue. They were confused and unable to discriminate with power and confidence the degree of evil around them.

Putting It All Together

The Jewish Church would not reconsider its belief in its "favored nation status." The people, as represented by Jonah, could not and would not share the Word with other nations. They challenged the Lord. They could not believe that He wanted to save a worthless and cruel Nineveh. In this chapter, Jonah gives us a sense that he thinks he knows better than the Lord. His statements about the Lord seem to imply that He is a soft and loving God, with a forgiving side, who needed to come around to Jonah's tougher view on the plight of the gentiles.

The Jewish Church was going to hold fast to those things in its memory-knowledges about gentiles. Jonah was going to be angry. He believed he had a right to be angry. Jonah preferred death than seeing the Lord's way save more than 120,000 people. Self love wanted shade, protection for its concepts. The Lord needed to bring such thinking to an end. The worm brought about death to the gourd from within. The Lord sent a vehement east wind to represent a blowing away of the stagnant thinking of the church. His heavenly sun shone upon them, but they felt faint. Their insistence on their own troubling view of things made them uncomfortable with the Lord's view. The Divine questions offered them a way to learn to enjoy the success of their neighbor as their own, but they would not.

Jonah as a representation of the Jewish church cared most for his own comfort, and he awaited the death and destruction of the gentiles. How sad for him. How wonderful for those who listened and repented because they heard the Word of the Lord.

Read and Review

Read the Selection from *P & P*.

Read Jonah 4:1-11

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Is there a Jonah-like spirit still among us today? Do we have a smug sense of being a favored church? Are there still people who believe in ethnic purity?
2. Have you ever chosen your way over the Lord's way? How do we resist the Lord's enlightenment—choosing death, choosing to be angry instead of happy?

3. What little shelter have we built to protect us from the sun of heaven? How do we know when we are feeling faint or dizzy about spiritual things? What can we do about it?
4. What Divine questions can you recall hearing in your life that helped you reflect on a deeper level?
5. Do you feel a sense of sadness for Jonah? He went to preach the message of repentance. In spite of his half-hearted efforts, the Lord's Word was powerfully effective. Jonah seems to have been ashamed of his work. Sound familiar?
6. How has this study changed your understanding of the story of Jonah and its meaning?
7. This study had us thinking about the mistakes of self-love within the Jewish Church. We also needed to see Jonah as being representative of the Lord and all that He had to fight against. Were you able to keep the two in mind as you read? When Jonah failed, it showed what maternal inherited tendencies the Lord overcame. The story of Jonah shows us the states of exinanition the Lord overcame on His way to the Glorification of the His Divine Human. What is exinanition? It is the emptying out of all inherited tendencies from His mother Mary.

Epilogue: A Summary of the Four Chapters of Jonah

The following summaries are drawn from and expand on the outline given in Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms.

CHAPTER ONE

Those who were of the Jewish nation were commanded to teach the Word to the nations round about, but they would not, and thus they kept the Word among themselves alone.

Because of this decision, knowledges began to perish with them, and yet they lived unconcernedly.

The nations round about them perceived that the state of the Jewish church was perverted because of the loss of knowledges among the Jews, and that the Jews were unwilling to impart any knowledge to people outside their own church.

The nations were shown that they should reject the falsified things of the Jewish nation so that they might be saved.

They prayed unto the Lord for salvation, which was effected for them, when the falsities from the Jewish nation had been removed.

CHAPTER TWO

This chapter deals with the prophecy concerning the Lord's combats with the hells, concerning His most grievous temptations at the time, and concerning His state at the time; "the three days and nights during which Jonah was in the bowels of the fish" signify the entire duration of His combat with the hells.

CHAPTER THREE

The nations, hearing from the Word of God about their sins, and that they would perish, were converted after repenting, and were heard by the Lord, and saved.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Jewish nation became very angry at the salvation of the gentile nations. Jonah sitting on the east side of the city awaiting Nineveh's destruction represents this anger. He enjoyed the shade of the gourd for a brief time. A worm came and destroyed the gourd. A vehement east wind blew upon him. He felt faint from the

sun on his head. Jonah's anger at his inconvenience made him chose death over seeing Nineveh saved. To help him see the good of the Lord's work, Jonah was asked several questions by the Lord. These questions did not help Jonah repent. He remained very angry regarding Nineveh's repentance and the Lord's salvation of gentile nations.

The Book of Nahum

How to Use This Study Guide

1. A slow unhurried reading of Nahum is essential. Reading the chapter before looking at the notes, while working with the notes, and after finishing with the notes will give each researcher a powerful sense of the series of meanings within each chapter. It is important to be comfortable with all the names and places in the prophecy and to understand the announcements the prophet makes on behalf of the Lord. When possible, historical information will be included in the notes to increase reading comprehension and enhance application.
2. Our study of each chapter of Nahum will begin with quotes from a work of the Writings called Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms. This work includes a verse-by-verse overview of all three chapters of Nahum that provide general information about the internal sense. Our research will help move us from the generals to the particulars of the internal sense.
3. Another important reference tool is Searle's General Index to Swedenborg's Scripture Quotations. This reference is used to find passages in the Writings where a verse(s) from the Word is either explained specifically or used to illustrate a doctrinal point that we can use in our study. There is also another use of this work. As we study, each researcher will be led by the Lord's Providence in myriad ways, according to specific needs or states. Knowing how to use this book will help each of us to explore relevant topics and look up related passages to increase our knowledge of the three-fold Word.
4. You will soon discover that not every verse, word, name, etc. is directly quoted in the Writings. But there are often other references to the same name, place, or thing in the explanation of a different verse of the Word. The hope is that reflection on these other doctrinal explanations will help us see possible applications to our study of Nahum. We will need to use "derived doctrine" often. Please don't run away from this maligned term. If we use it properly and admit openly that it is derived doctrine, we bring no harm to the internal sense.
5. Keep some kind of notebook handy during your study times. Write out insights, questions, and any summaries you find helpful in organizing your thoughts about each chapter. The goal of this study guide is not to give a detailed summary of the internal sense but to start each researcher's quest for deeper insight.
6. At the end of each chapter in the study guide, you will find a study review. The review includes a summary of each section to help you reinforce and build on your understanding of several of the key points.
7. Begin each study unit with a devotional prayer asking the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts. Certainly beginning in this sphere has the power to inspire and open our minds with a higher spiritual priority that will keep us in the company of the Lord's angels. As the Writings teach, we must seek to love truth for truth's sake. Such an approach will free each reader from

preconceived ideas that might limit his or her ability to "see" the intent and message of the Lord's Word.

Introduction

Listen to a few rave reviews the book of Nahum has received:

Rev. Ormond Odhner, in his notes on Pre-Advent Churches, says that Nahum's "work is unmitigated gloating over the fierce wrath that Jehovah has brought upon His enemies.... But for all of that, it is a piece of exceptionally beautiful poetry, written in a quick and rapid meter, and at times throwing up one piece of sensual imagery after another in such quick succession that the prophet did not even bother to finish his sentences..."

The Interpreter's Bible Dictionary says, "Nahum's poetic genius ranks with the highest in the Hebrew Bible. He sketches scenes of warfare with the vivid sense of the picturesque or horrible details.... Nahum is different from the other literary prophets of the Old Testament..."

In *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephaniah and Nahum*, by J.M.P. Smith, we read, "Though the rhythm and metre of Nahum are not smooth and regular as is the case with some Hebrew prophets, yet in some respects the poetry of Nahum is unsurpassed in the Old Testament. His excellence is not in sublimity of thought, depth of feeling, purity of motive, or insight into truth and life. It is rather in his descriptive powers. He has an unexcelled capacity to bring a situation vividly before the mind's eye.... Accurate and detailed observation assists in giving his pictures verisimilitude."

Have these reviews piqued your interest to read and study this book of the Lord's Word? One can hope that this fascinating study will be helpful with life issues and with our battle against Hell and its arrogance and false sense of invincibility.

SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Most scholars agree that the Book of Nahum is the seventh book of the collection of the "Twelve Prophets." When was it written? The estimated date of authorship is placed between 663 BC and 612 BC. How did the researchers come up with this time span? Nahum mentions the fall of Thebes in chapter 3, verse 8, and this event is believed to have occurred in 663 BC. The fall of Nineveh occurred when the combined forces of the Medes, Babylonians, and Scythians besieged the city and destroyed it in 612 BC. The *Oxford Annotated Bible* narrows the range of dates to between 626 and 612 BC. Most scholars lean toward 612 BC as possibly the correct date.

WHO WAS NAHUM?

Very little is known about Nahum. We know that his name means "compassion" or "comfort." Nahum states his name and identifies himself as an "Elkoshite." Is "Elkosh" a city, town, or family name? I found a wonderful summary on the Internet of how this question has been answered within theological circles. A Dr. Greg Herrick (no identification of his work or background) summarized the four major theoretical answers one might consider:

"The term 'Elkoshite' probably indicates that Nahum was from a town called Elkosh, though nothing for certain is known about it. This fact, however, has done very little to stop speculation as to where it was. Four competing theories have emerged. *First*, some scholars have argued, on the basis of the etymology of 'Capernaum,' that that was the city from which Nahum came (*Caper-naum*). Thus the city was named after its most celebrated citizen. *Second*, eastern medieval tradition has identified a site opposite the ruins of Nineveh on the Tigris River-for both the birthplace and tomb of Nahum-though the evidence for this position is quite weak. *Third*, Jerome (ca 347-419) suggests that Elkosh was El Kause and is to be identified with Elkesi in Galilee. *Finally*, there are still others who argue for a town in Judah called Elcesei-a town half way between Jerusalem and Gaza. This final interpretation has some merit for it seems that although the book of Nahum is directed against the Assyrians, it was written for the Jews in the south, in Judah.... Further archaeological studies may confirm its location, but for now the information is too slight to be dogmatic."

As interesting and speculative as all these theories might be, we need to resist the urge to adopt one. Instead, we are urged by the Writings to hold fast to the doctrines that remind us it is the internal sense that must lead and reveal the true meaning of each thing represented in prophecy. As hard as historians seek to find the place of Elkosh, we must work as hard, if not harder, to find the inner (timeless) meaning of Nahum. Let's consider these helpful teachings as a model to strive for in our study efforts:

- "Every king, whosoever he was, whether in Judah or in Israel, or even Egypt, and in other places, might represent the Lord." (*Arcana Coelestia* 1361, 1409)
- "The Divine influx assumes the form of representatives in the superior heavens, and descends thence to the inferior." (*Arcana Coelestia* 2179, 3213, 9577)
- "Representations are more beautiful and perfect in proportion, as they have a more interior birth and existence in the heavens." (*Arcana Coelestia* 3475)

As we read the words of Nahum and consider the meter, the poetry, the vivid descriptions of war, we must resolutely consider the historical facts as the means by which the inner beauty of the "more perfect" representations of heaven is transmitted to the angels and to us.

Historical Facts as a Foundation for the Spiritual Sense

Nahum's prophecy tells the story of the defeat and destruction of the great and powerful city of Nineveh. This city was also the centerpiece of the Book of Jonah. The Lord called Jonah to "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me." Jonah's hatred for Nineveh caused him to run away from his appointed mission. His efforts to run from the Lord's call might have been based on some first-hand experience with Nineveh's injustice. But he finally went and preached the words of the Lord: "Yet in forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" Nineveh's king decreed that all its people should fast and turn from their ways, and they were spared because they did as they were told. Jonah was sad about their repentance. He sat on the hillside waiting to witness Nineveh's complete destruction. It didn't happen.

Nahum's story takes place some 100 to 140 years after the repentance of Nineveh. The destruction Jonah had hoped to see Nahum not only saw but reported. Indeed, he did so with glee and gratitude for the Lord's humbling of the tyrant nation. Why was there such widespread hatred for this great city?

Nineveh was for hundreds of years the dread of western Asia. It was strongly fortified, and its position as a great commercial center increased its wealth. Nineveh also enriched itself through numerous military conquests. It enjoyed a continuous succession of great, but harsh, rulers. Tiglath-Pileser III, Sargon, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Assurbanipal are a few of the names that brought fear to the hearts and minds of the neighboring nations.

With each conquest, the armies of Nineveh carried off prisoners and plundered cities, towns, and villages shamelessly. They became masters in the art of war and of humiliating those they conquered. They were merciless, ferocious, and heartless. With this power came the feeling of invincibility. However, Nineveh was hated by all the surrounding nations, and several of them began to plan secretly for Nineveh's demise. They watched and waited for signs of vulnerability. Any differences they had among themselves meant little for the time being; they were united in their common hatred of Nineveh and their common goal to defeat this hated Assyrian power.

We learn in the introduction to the Book of Nahum in the *Oxford Annotated Bible* that "The fervent reaction to the overthrow of Assyria, expressed by the peoples long subjected to its yoke, is nowhere more clearly seen than in the book of Nahum. The core of the book is a superb, vivid poem extolling Nineveh's destruction, which Nahum felt to be inevitable. The prophet spells out the reason...in unequivocal terms: it is the Lord's judgment upon an unscrupulous, defiant nation."

NAHUM'S ACROSTIC COMPOSITION IN CHAPTER ONE

Verses 2 to 11 of Chapter One are written in an incomplete "acrostic psalm" form. What does that mean? Acrostic writing is found in some of the Psalms. It is a composition, *Webster's Dictionary* says, that occurs "usually in verse, in which one or more sets of letters, when taken in order, form words." Nahum uses another form of acrostic, in which each separate line begins with a Hebrew letter, and the letters used are in Hebrew alphabetical order.

Nahum starts using this format in Chapter One, uses 11 letters, and then stops. If anyone owns a copy of *The Jerusalem Bible*, turn to the Book of Nahum and you will find the acrostic format wonderfully illustrated.

Now let us turn to the verse-by-verse exposition of the Book of Nahum.

Chapter One

NAHUM 1:1-2

"The burden against Nineveh. The book of vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.

God is jealous, and the Lord avenges and is furious. The Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies..."

Passages From the Writings

Prophets and Psalms (P&P)

- "Concerning the last judgment upon those who are in evils, vers. 1, 2..."

Derived Doctrine

Oracle

- The word "burden" is not used in the *Revised Standard Version* of the Bible. In its place is the word "oracle": "An oracle concerning Nineveh."
- The word "oracle" has these meanings:
 - The medium by which a god reveals hidden knowledge or makes known the divine purpose.
 - A place of communication from God such as the Holy of Holies of the Jewish temple.
 - A thing or person supposed to give divine or authoritative decisions.
 - An authoritative or wise expression; a wise answer.

Burden

- "Burden," on the other hand, represents "infestations by falsities and the consequent combats..." (*Arcana Coelestia* [AC] 7109)
- So which word (oracle or burden) do you think is more in keeping with the intent of the spiritual sense? Let's hold judgment on this question for just a little longer.
- "The burden against 'Nineveh'...signifies falsities from the fallacies of the senses in the obscurity of an unenlightened understanding, and from ignorance..." (AC 1188 [2]) "And by 'Nineveh' is signified external worship in which there are falsities." (AC 1188 [3])

Anger and Zeal

- "...'to be kindled with anger' signifies to be indignant. Real spiritual indignation derives nothing from the anger of the natural...but from the interior essence of zeal; which zeal does indeed appear in the outward form like anger, but in internal form is not anger...but is a certain sadness that is attended with a prayerful wish that it be not so; and in a form still more interior it is merely a certain obscure feeling that breaks in on the celestial delight on account of something not good and true in another." (*AC 3909*)

Vengeance, Revenge, Avenge

- The words "vengeance," "revenge," and "avenge" are treated similarly in New Church reference books. Therefore, the following explanations would probably apply to any of the three words.
- "Vengeance signifies the truths by which the Lord fought with the hells." (*Apocalypse Explained [AE] 395[13]*)
- "Vengeance signifies the Last Judgment and the condemnation of those who, by falsities and evils, have laid waste all the truths of the church." (*AE 850*)

"He reserves wrath for His enemies..."

- God is never angry or wrathful with human beings. "...it appears to man, when he is punished and tormented...as if it were from God, therefore, in the Word, anger and wrath, yea evil, is attributed to God." (*Apocalypse Revealed [AR] 658*) The truth is that God is not angry with people, but people are angry with God. It is that anger toward God that punishes and torments the evil.

Putting It All Together

1. The key to these opening verses seems best summarized with some of the derived doctrine cited above. Consider again these key words: zeal, sadness, prayerful wish, celestial sorrow, and burden. Think of the Lord's zeal, sadness, prayerful wish that it be not so, and celestial sorrow that Nineveh was not following what is good and true.
2. The "burden of Nineveh" was its wayward, sinful choices. The people of Nineveh had no interest in repentance. In fact, they systematically excused their cruel and self-centered ways. Nineveh became expert in clearing the conscience of any moral and spiritual obligation to the neighbor. Specious reasoning became the normal way of thinking and motivation for action. In more modern terms, we would call the Nineveh state "users" or, even more critically, "leeches." The people of Nineveh considered other people as superfluous in relation to themselves.

In the end, their "religion" brought them into such unenlightened obscurity that the Lord had to expose, and defeat, such a foreboding darkness and ignorance. His zeal, His sadness, His prayer, and His sorrow had to intercede.

Read and Review

Read Nahum 1:1-2.

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. The Writings make an important point about the foundations of correct thinking. Whatever is first in a person's thoughts or beliefs is like the first link of a chain from which all other "links" hang. What kind of beginning link have we been given in this study of Nahum? Have you seen the shift from history to correspondences?
2. A person's view of God is like the first link in a chain. If that link is weak, or wrong, or false, all other doctrine that follows becomes vulnerable. Are there ways we can discipline ourselves to periodically check first links? What applications might this teaching have to parenting?
3. Nineveh represents falsity, spiritual ignorance, a darkened understanding, and specious reasoning used in excuses. Can you identify these characteristics in the world around you? How do you identify and respond to them?
4. What affectional response do you have to the quote about the Lord's zeal, sadness, prayer, and sorrow for those in the Nineveh state?
5. Why is it that those who hate the Lord project on Him, anger, wrath, and vengeance?
6. Have you thought any more about the choice between the words "oracle" and "burden" as part of unfolding the spiritual sense? Is one more appropriate than the other? Do you see both contributing to the inner meaning?
7. Reread question 4 and remember your response. Consider that the Lord is Infinite in all that He is and does. Can we comprehend what His Infinite Zeal, Infinite Sorrow, and Infinite Prayer are like?
8. Is it fair to characterize Nineveh as a culture of "users" or "leeches"? What's wrong with being a "user" as it is meant in this context?

NAHUM 1:3-6

"The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.

The Lord has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet. He rebukes the sea and makes it dry, and dries up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither, and the flower of Lebanon wilts.

*The mountains quake before Him, the hills melt, and the earth heaves at His presence,
Yes, the world and all who dwell in it.*

*Who can stand before His indignation? And who can endure the fierceness of His
anger? And the rocks are thrown down by Him."*

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...that by the Divine presence all things are revealed, and that those who are of the perverted church will not endure, vers. 3-6..."

AC 2162 [15]

- "In Nahum: (i.3)...where the 'dust of the feet' signifies the natural and corporeal things of man, whence come the 'clouds.'"

AC 9406 [5]

- "In Nahum: ... (i. 3)...where also 'the clouds' denote the Word in the sense of the letter, which also is 'the storm and tempest in which is the way of Jehovah.'"

AR 343

- "...a nearer and stronger Divine influx through the heavens disperses the truths with the evil, therefore 'wind' signifies the dispersion of the truth with them; and thence their conjunction with hell, and destruction; as may be seen from these passages..." Nahum 1:3 is cited among the passages.

AE 36 [3&4]

- "Who cannot see that these things are not to be understood according to the sense of the letter, that is, that Jehovah sits upon a cloud, that He rides upon the clouds, and that He makes the clouds His chariot? He who thinks spiritually may know that Jehovah is present in His Divine truth, for this proceeds from Him, consequently that this is what is meant by 'clouds there'...." Nahum 1:3 is cited.

AE 69 [3]

- "In Nahum: ... (i.3) 'Cloud' is the external of the Word, or the Word in respect to the letter. Because 'cloud' is the external of the Word, it is also the external of the church and of worship; for the church and worship are from the Word.

'Clouds' are called 'dust of the feet,' because those things that are in the sense of the letter of the Word, which is natural, appear scattered."

AE 419 [22]

- "It has been said...that in the spiritual world, as in the natural world, strong winds and tempests spring up; but the tempests in the spiritual world spring from the influx of the Divine into the parts below, where those are in evils and falsities; as that influx descends from the heavens towards the lands that lie below, it becomes more dense and appears like clouds, and with the evil, dense and dark according to the quantity and quality of the evil. These clouds are appearances of falsity from evil, arising from the spheres of their life; for round about every spirit and angel there is a sphere of life. When from the Lord as a sun the Divine is sent forth powerfully and flows into these dense and dark clouds, a tempest arises which is perceived by spirits there in like manner as tempests on earth....It has at different times been granted me to perceive these tempests and also the east wind by which the evil were dispersed and cast into the hells, when the Last Judgment was in progress. From this it can be seen what 'tempests,' 'storms,' and 'violent winds' signify...." We find Nahum 1:3 cited among the many other passages from the Word.

AE 594 [8]

- "In Nahum: ... (i.3) Truth in ultimates, which is the truth of the sense of the letter of the Word, is called 'clouds, the dust of the feet of Jehovah,' because it is the natural and lowest truth, into which Divine truth in heaven, which is spiritual, closes, and upon which it subsists. Divine truth in ultimates, because it is but little understood unless there is enlightenment from heaven, is a subject of discussion and controversy, and this meant by 'storm and tempest in which Jehovah hath His way,' spiritual 'storm and tempest' meaning discussion concerning the genuine sense, which nevertheless, with those who desire truth the Lord enlightens by means of influx."

Derived Doctrine

"Slow to anger and great in power..."

- In Genesis 34:14, the Lord said, "I will proceed slowly..." AC 4381 explains that this means the conjunction of good and truth is a gradual process. It is a "successive state of preparation." From infancy to adulthood, there is a movement from generals to particulars, from the simple to the complex. So it is also with judgment. The work (zeal) of the Lord will be slow, thorough, and powerful. Falsity will be "emptied out" so that no connection or thread of connection will remain. Nothing escapes His detection.

"[The Lord] will not acquit the wicked..."

- To "acquit" means to excuse, clear, absolve, discharge, release, whitewash, pardon, or forgive. It is an "...error of the age.... [to believe] that sins are remitted...by the sacrament of the Supper, although they have not removed them from themselves by repentance. They also are in [error] who believe that they are saved by faith alone; also by papal dispensations.... To every one the Lord remits sins. He does not accuse and impute. And yet He can take them away only in accordance with the laws of His Divine providence..." (*Divine Providence [DP] 280*)

The Rebuke of Jehovah

- "The rebuke of Jehovah..." means "...the ruin of the church, which takes place when there is no knowledge of truth and good, that is, no living knowledge, because there is no perception; 'to dry up the sea' signifies to deprive the natural man of true knowledges, and thus of natural life from the spiritual...." (*AE 513 [3]*)

The Sea

- A sea "signifies a collection of spiritual and natural knowledges in the memory." (*AC 28 and 991*)
- "...the 'sea,' [signifies] knowledges...because these are of the understanding of the Word from God...." (*AC 2761 [2]*)

Drying up Rivers and Pools

- To "dry up rivers and pools" signifies "to annihilate all the understanding and perception of truth, 'rivers' signifying intelligence which is of truth...." (*AE 405 [47]*)

"Bashan and Carmel wither..."

- Bashen signifies the church in its externals, or in the natural man." (*AE 163 [8]*) Carmel "means fruitful fields, and signifies the spiritual church and its good." (*AC 1971 [4]*)
- Wither "signifies to dry up, or lack good and truth." (*AE 419*) Withering "signifies the failing of truth and good in the natural." (*AE 403 [21]*)

"The flower of Lebanon wilts..."

- Flowers "signify memory knowledges of truth, for they are growths which precede and seem to produce fruit and seed, as knowledge of truth produce with man the things which are of wisdom." (*AC 9553*)

- Lebanon "signifies the spiritual church, or spiritual good and truth." (AC 9406 [2])

"The hills melt...."

- Hills "signify worship of the Lord from love, and worship from charity, which is love to the neighbor..." (AC 795 [4])
- Melting "signifies that their capacity for receiving heavenly good vanished with their increasing strong desire for external satisfactions." (AC 8487) Melting "signifies that their ability to receive the goods and truths of heaven and the church was in vain." (AE 721 [24])

Heave

- "...the earth heaves at His presence..." What does the word "heave" mean?
 - The *King James Version* (KJV) reads "the earth is burned at His presence."
 - The *New King James Version* (NKJV) has a footnote saying "heaves" means to "burn before Him."
 - The *Revised Standard Version* (RSV) has "the earth is laid waste before Him."
 - *The Jerusalem Bible* has "the earth collapses before Him."

Putting It All Together

1. With so much given to us in direct and derived teachings, it will be a challenge to keep this summary brief. But here goes my attempt to do so. I am trusting that you will try to make a summary of your own. Let's begin with the summary as given us in P&P. "By Divine presence all things are revealed..." Picture in your mind the Lord revealing the true intent of the corrupted church. His Presence will reveal the true intent of the church. With it comes the Divine statement that He will not allow the falsities of the church to endure any longer. Its unsound and falsely constructed mental system is about to crumble under the weight of its selfish ends.
2. What brought the corrupted church of Nineveh into this state? Two major things are mentioned. The church was natural and corporeal. Love of the world and love of selfish pleasures were the things they worshiped most. Consequently, their spiritual eyes were "clouded," and they were confused and doubtful about the holiness of the Word. Controversy swirled around them. Their debates were not helpful in settling spiritual matters, and they did not connect religion to their lives. Religion was dedicated to loving charity and performing uses to the Lord and neighbor, and such actions were not in keeping with their choices. Most likely, the debates about doctrine were intended to show the cleverness and agility of their human prudence.

- What's the "bottom line"? Their choices helped them achieve an unhealthy conjunction with hell and separated them from heaven.
3. The "Lord's Presence" reviewed every "Nineveh" decision thoroughly, one by one. The corruption of the church could not continue. Sin and evil had to be emptied out. No longer could anyone or any philosophy rationalize or justify its position. Words would no longer hide the real intentions.
As a consequence, the Lord would dry up the "seas" and "rivers." The shallow memory knowledges of their false understanding would be exhausted. The Word is quite descriptive of the action the Lord would take. The people of Nineveh were to be "dried up." Their external "flowers" and "fruit" would be taken away.
 4. This portion of the Word ends with varied images: Hills melting; the earth (the mind) burning in His presence; the mind "laid to waste"; and the mind "collapsing before Him." No matter which of these events you picture, it is an image that is easy to hold on to. Nahum was prophesying that the hard ground of the mind was going to experience a Divine upheaval. If new beginnings were to occur in the mind (ground), there had to be upheavals, a turning of the soil so that new seeds of truth could begin to replace the dull and unproductive "old crop."
Nineveh, the representation of obscurity, an unenlightened understanding, superficial worship, and love of self and the world, was about to have its "burden" broken up by the "presence of the Lord." This is a prophecy of the Last Judgment that was to make way for the Crown of all Churches, the descent of the Holy City New Jerusalem.
Let's question again the divine purpose of the Lord's presence. Was it a visit or presence of anger? Was it motivated by vengeance? Was it really caused by His terrible wrath? The answer depends on whose side we consider. From the perspective of heaven, it was a necessary and loving presence that would enable the restoration of order. From the perspective of hell, where the spirits hates His presence and wishes to obliterate His Holy Name, it was a horrible visitation. To hear that they would be "dried up" and lose the power of worldly and corporeal delights made it seem like a wrathful, avenging presence.

Read and Review

Read Nahum 1:3-6.

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. What points would you like to add to the summary given above?
2. Are there current events that seem to fit into the summary? Remember, we don't want to lock this study in time and space history. 612 BC was a long

- time ago. Life experiences of today must flow into our applications, with the help of the Lord's Presence.
3. Nahum may have been the writer of this book, but do you think he had any idea of the far reaching eternal values of the correspondences contained in these verses? Talk about the timelessness of the Word.
 4. Looking back in your life, what upheavals would you list or identify as "life saving" and helpful? Perhaps you didn't think of them as helpful at the time, but when you look back and reflect on them, you may see they were of great significance and a necessary part of your spiritual growth.
 5. Is the Divine visitation to Nineveh something that happens repeatedly throughout the generations? Is it a process that occurs in us over and over again during our regeneration?

NAHUM 1:7

"The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him."

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...that the Lord protects those who trust in Him, vers. 7..."

Derived Doctrine

"The Lord is good..."

- When we read passages such as this one, many avenues of application must come to mind. The Lord is the End, Cause, and Effect of all things. End represents Love or Good. Cause represents Wisdom or Truth, and Effects represent Uses. There is a correct way and a wrong way to approach the Lord. Thinking from END to CAUSE to EFFECT is the orderly progression. Put another way, thinking must progress from LOVE to WISDOM to USE. Thinking from Effect to Cause to End is the wrong way, and it leads to all falsity. *Divine Love and Wisdom (DLW) 187* warns that "to see on the basis of effects alone is to do so on the basis of fallacious appearances, from which spring errors, one after another, which can be so multiplied by inductive reasonings that at last egregious falsities are called truths."
- "The Lord is good...." This reminds us to begin with the FIRST or END. All that which is not connected to the First cannot have true or eternal existence. So those who want to have His protection must see, feel and believe that the Lord is good. His love endures forever and ever and is our starting point.

"A stronghold..."

- The *A Dictionary of Bible Imagery* by Alice Sechrist suggests looking up "fortress" and "citadel" when checking the meaning of "stronghold." A "fortress signifies the defense which divine good gives by divine truth." (*AE 316 [10]*) "Citadels signify defense against falsities and evils from the literal sense of the Word." (*AE 727 [4]*)

"Trust in Him..."

- All trust and confidence "...draws its being (*esse*) from the end or goal of life, and so it is truly found only in what is good." (*AC 4683*)

"In the day of trouble..."

- Day represents "states of man's regeneration." (*AC 6*) Trouble signifies "labor in temptations." (*AC 8670*) Regeneration only occurs when we face spiritual temptation, so what may seem like a day of trouble may really be an opportunity from the Lord to start a "new day."

Putting It All Together

1. Having a stronghold, a fortress, a citadel that can protect us from the wiles of hell depends on what is First with us. Love is diligent and protective. The Lord's watchfulness sees the approach of the enemy. He provides the Divine Protection for the legion of disorders in hell's bag of wily tricks. The Lord's protection is ever alert. He will keep us safe even when hell quotes or calls to mind things from the literal sense of the Word that seem hurtful and wrong.
2. Isn't it wonderful that we can say: The Lord is Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent. Nothing is greater or more loving than the Lord! His way is the safe way. The Lord protects those who trust in Him. "So may it ever be" cries out the soul within all of us.

Read and Review

Read Nahum 1:7.

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Is the importance of End, Cause, and Effect clear in your mind? Can you see why thinking from effects leads to all falsity?

2. Try to pick an example of a time or instance where you used right thinking. Then try thinking of an instance where you used wrong thinking. How were they different? Do you see the importance of right thinking?
3. Trust in the Lord. That is hard at times. We are so into the "as-of-self" mode of living that it is sometimes hard for us to let go and have confidence in the Lord. Have you found a way to rely more on the Lord than on your as-of-self? How did you find it?
4. "In the day of trouble..." This refers to a time of temptation, a time when we feel alone and quite vulnerable. We feel startled, perturbed, hurt, troubled, and betrayed. Our life is in turmoil, and we feel like quitting. Doesn't it seem important to have a prayer for such days? The Lord's Prayer? The Twenty Third Psalm? Saying in our mind "The Lord protects those who trust Him"? How does prayer help us in temptation? How does it help when we feel alone?
5. Do you remember an old hymn called "What a friend we have in Jesus..."? Some of the words in that song might not be doctrinally correct, but the idea of having the Lord as our Divine Friend is comforting and powerful. I sing this song to myself. How about you?

NAHUM 1:8-11

"But with an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of its place, and darkness will pursue His enemies. What do you conspire against the Lord? He will make an utter end of it. Affliction will not arise up a second time. For while tangled like thorns, and while drunken like drunkards, they shall be devoured like stubble fully dried. From you comes forth one who plots evil against the Lord, a wicked counselor."

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...but that those who are in falsities will perish, vers. 8-11...."

Coronis 34 [2]

- "In an overrunning inundation He shall make a consummation of the place thereof, and thick darkness shall pursue His enemies (Nah, i.8)..."
- "By 'the inundation' which shall consummate, is signified the falsification of truth, and by 'thick darkness,' truths themselves in the night..."

Coronis 58 [5]

- "The state of the consummation of the Israelitish Church is described in both the historical and the prophetical parts of the Word....The passages in which

the vastation, desolation, and consummation of this church, are further mentioned, shall only be named..." Nahum 1:8-9 is cited.

Derived Doctrine

"...overflowing flood...."

- The *New English Bible* (NEB) translation of *Daniel 11:40* speaks of a "sweeping over like a flood..." which "signifies to immerse in falsities and evils." (*AE 355 [20]*)
- *Revelation 12:15* says, "And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a river after the woman, that he might cause her to be swallowed up by the river...." This passage describes the efforts of hell to inundate the church with falsities, "which, if confirmed, appear outwardly like truths, but within they conceal falsities in abundance." (*AR 563*)

To "pursue His enemies..."

- "To 'pursue the enemies' is here to expel the evils and falsities which were with the goods and truths, and that caused them to merely appear to be goods and truths, and thus to liberate and purify them." (*AC 1710*)

Utter

- The word "utter" means complete or total. The Lord promises that He will bring an end, a complete and total end, to the "overflowing flood" of falsity His adversaries sought to implement under the protection, and stealth, of darkness. The Lord will pursue such things to liberate and purify the church.

"What do you conspire against the Lord?"

- In addition to the word "conspire," we need to consider "plot" and "machinations." There is a quote in the *Arcana* that gives the signification of "conspiring." It seems to go to the heart of our study. "...the signification of 'conspiring,' as being to will from a depraved mind, since whatever men will from a depraved mind, they conspire to accomplish..." (*AC 4724*)

"Afflictions shall not arise the second time..."

- We will need to keep this passage under some prayerful consideration for enlightenment. There are at least two ways we might apply this teaching. *First*, could the following number from the *Arcana* give us a starting point? "...the consummation of the age, or last times of the church, are treated of; 'affliction' denotes temptations, *both external and internal*, the external being persecutions from the world, and the internal being

persecutions from the devil." (*AC 1846*) Remember, we are considering the wording "second time." Could the first affliction represent the "worldly affliction" of the external as it relates to the church? Could the second time represent the effort of hell (the devil) to inflict temptation on the internals of the Lord? *Second*, is this reference reminding us that hell had its first chance when the Lord assumed the human and defeated their "first" efforts to afflict Him? That attempt failed. The Lord defeated every effort of hell. He Glorified His Human as planned for the salvation of mankind.

- Does it mean that hell had one chance and will never get a second chance? When the Lord brings about the Last Judgment, He will "utterly" end the "devil's" efforts to conspire, or plot, against His internal. Thus, this prophetic statement announces to the faithful that the persecution of hell will be over.

"Tangled like thorns..."

- The word tangled is not given a representation in the Writings. Roget's Thesaurus offers words like web, trap, snare, mesh, mixture, disorder, or difficulty as synonyms for tangled. The RSV uses the word "entangled." With these suggested words let's consider how they might fit in with thorns.
- The Writings teach that thorns represent "...the concupiscences of evil..." (*AC 3310 [2]*) "The falsities of concupiscences... [which are] confirmatory of the things of the world and its pleasures..." (*AC 9144 [9]*)
- The point of the phrase "tangled like thorns" seems to be to expose the vast network of confirmations of falsity that evil uses, as a trap and a snare, to justify their pleasures. To the natural mind, the prickly thorns present a hurtful maze. To the Divine mind, they are discernible and therefore easily rendered harmless.

"... and drunken like drunkards..."

- *AR 721* seems to summarize this quote well. "Drunk signifies [to be] infatuated or insane in regard to spiritual things." *AC 1072* reminds us that "they are called drunkards in the Word who believe nothing but what they comprehend, and in this spirit inquire into the mysteries of faith, in consequence of which they must needs fall into many errors."

"They shall be devoured like stubble fully dried...."

- Two references in the *Arcana* offer us help with this portion of the prophecy. "Stubble, being the grain bearing stalk, denotes scientific truth." (*AC 7131*) "To be consumed as stubble denotes full vastation." (*AC 8285*)
- Note: "Scientific truth" is a term the Writings use to denote truth that appears in the light of the world and is used to confirm one's beliefs or human prudence. Scientifics are not good or bad until one sees the end they serve. In this passage, it is clear that scientific truths were misused. "Dry

"stubble" implies a lifeless and useless love that was extinguished and deprived of its "liquid" wholesomeness. It was not deprived by the Lord but by its own evil.

"From you comes forth one who plots evil against the Lord, a wicked counselor."

- With the word "counselor," we might find it useful to think of the words "advisor" and "guide" when using derived doctrine.
- To work toward the internal sense, we need to understand who the "you" is that comes forth to plot evil. Would we be safe to assume that "you" is a reference to a disorderly proprium? Some New Church translators have used the word "own" for proprium. What is "one's own" certainly connotes something that comes forth from everyone's "as-of-self" wish. A proprium that wants to follow its own way will resist the Lord's efforts to lift it to a higher "Proprium" that is from the Lord. It makes sense that the unregenerate proprium would plot and consider all kinds of insubordinate villainies in order to get its "own" way.

Putting It All Together

1. The message to the faithful is positive and direct. The free reign of hell to flood and (inundate) overwhelm the minds of sincere people will be ended. The rebel within the proprium will not be able to plot and take counsel against the Lord.
2. The Lord spoke directly to the offenders: The tangle of thorns will no longer trap and hurt our efforts to make progress with regeneration. The noisy, feisty spiritual drunkards will lose their fascination and stagger with an intoxicated mentality regarding the meaning of the Lord's Word. The Light of the Lord will expose the squalor and neglect in the shelter and hiding place of darkness. The tasteless and dry stubble will be taken away, and although there is no mention of what will replace it, we can be sure that it will be something that will nourish the soul. We have the promise of such care in these words: "You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing." (Psalm 145:16)

Read and Review

Read Nahum 1:8-11.

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. The next time evil brags about its beauty, flexibility, and strength (or whatever foolishness it rants about), how might remembering these verses

help you to put hell to flight? Can you think of specific situations in which these verses would be helpful?

2. Have you ever noticed the various ways drunkenness manifests itself with people? Some sit in the corner, weeping and whining about "poor me." Some are silly or giddy drunks. Everything strikes them funny. Some become obnoxiously loud and talkative. They are annoying and intrusive. The worst drunks are those who want to fight anyone they meet, who act as if they could conquer any and all. What are the differences between drunken people and people who are sober?
3. Hell's inebriated states are similar to these drunken states, aren't they? The hells intend to disarm us. They love to intimidate. They fill our minds with pouting references to how unfair things are. They love to brag about how much stronger they are than the Lord. They laugh off any serious topic and make light of eternal values. How do we cope with these "spiritual drunks"?
4. The proprium is a difficult foe to unseat or discipline. Have you had a recent battle with yours? Is it possible to put off our proprium so as to take on the Lord's Proprium? How?
5. Life has a great number of tangled thorns. Pruning thorns is not a simple task. A few years ago, my yard was filled with them. In the process of getting rid of them, I "got" as good as I "gave." I cut them; they cut and scratched my hands. They clung to my pants (front, back, and on the sides). If I didn't pull them off my clothes the right way, they snagged tighter. It took years of thorn cutting to rid my lot of their pervasive dominance. Does my experience with tangled thorns match an experience you had? How does this add to our lesson? What about that crown of tangled thorns they put on the Lord's head? Doesn't that "crown of thorns" seem powerfully representative of what the Lord came to fight and overcome?
6. Imagine a town where almost all of the people are insane. Insert a couple of sane people. What would the insane think of the sane? How would the sane ones face the town's "norms"? In a sense, this proposed scenario is like hell. Hell's madness tells us we are the weak and crazy ones. It says we fixate on sin and repentance, trying too hard to regenerate. Can we hear their mocking voices? "Lighten up! You are making yourself weak, sickly, uptight, and unhealthy." Then they present themselves as hale and hearty fellows who are able to adjust and change easily to life situations. What do you hear the angels saying in response to them?

NAHUM 1:12-14

"Thus says the Lord: Though they are safe, and likewise many, yet in this manner they will be cut down when he passes through. Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more; for now I will break off his yoke from you, and burst your bonds apart.

The Lord has given a command concerning you: Your name shall be perpetuated no longer. Out of the house of your gods I will cut off the carved image and molded image. I will dig a grave, for you are vile."

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...but that those who are not of the above church, and are in falsities from ignorance, will be accepted, and their falsities removed, vers. 12-14."

Derived Doctrine

"Thus says the Lord..."

- When we read in the Word that "Jehovah said" or the "Lord speaks," these "simple words" take on a huge and important meaning when the doctrines are opened. AC 2619 illustrates this fact with detailed information. We are taught that what really is being said is that the Lord perceives all things from His Divine Celestial (Divine Good) through His Divine Spiritual (Divine Wisdom). So when He speaks or says anything, it comes from His Celestial Love, a love that goes beyond the comprehension of celestial angels. When He speaks from His Wisdom, from a Divine Spiritual Understanding, He unfolds all paradoxes, all motives, all mysteries that humans and angels have caused or wrestled with for ages and ages. His Love and Wisdom are balanced and in perfect harmony. There are no gray areas. There is no "unfairness" in His judgment. He shows no "favorites." His pronouncements carry no misstatements or mistakes. There are no misrepresentations. Everything is clear as day to Him. Darkness can hide nothing from His eyes. Darkness is like the light of day to Him. Hidden motives are laid bare. Knowing this, the words "Thus says the Lord...." will capture our attention and obedience in a deeper way.
- Someone might remark, "Why doesn't the Lord say such things plainly? Why are things hidden in the spiritual sense? Why use terms like "Divine Celestial through the Divine Spiritual?" It may not be the perfect answer for these questions, but I tend to reflect on the teachings that say the Lord wants to protect us and our freedom and rationality. Only those willing to search for the truth of the spiritual sense will find answers. "Influx is directly proportional to efflux." (AC 5828 [3]) Only those willing to search for deeper truths will find and appreciate His answers, and will treasure and keep the inner meaning. The next time you read the words "Jehovah said" or "The Lord speaks," perhaps you will find yourself picturing a fuller meaning and application to life. Indeed, they are simple words but what powerful and rich truths lie in them, waiting to be found.

"...though they are safe, and likewise many..."

- So reads the *New King James Version* (NKJV). "Though they be strong and many..." is the way the *Revised Standard Version* (RSV) reads. Would you have imagined "safe and strong" as having the same root meaning? Both translations kept the "many" wording. Let's say it again: Safe... many, and strong... many. Do they mean the same thing?
- The entry for "safe" in *Pott's Concordance* refers the reader to "protect." Then "trust" is suggested, and "confidence" finally emerges as a word that seems to tie all three together. In *AC 2982*, we read: "...the very faith itself which saves is confidence; but this confidence is quite impossible except in the good of life. Without the good of life there is no reception, and where there is no reception there is no confidence, except at times a certain apparent confidence, in suffering conditions of mind or body, when the cupidities of the love of self and the world are at rest. But with those who are in evil of life, when this crises passes or the condition is changed, such fallacious confidence altogether vanishes; for a confidence is found even with the wicked. But whoever desires to know the quality of his confidence, let him examine in himself the affections and ends, as well as the practices of his life."
- Strong, in *AE 504 [26]*, "...signifies what is hatched out from self-intelligence; he who trusts in himself and his own intelligence is often called 'strong' in the Word, for he regards himself and his work that he brings forth as strong..." So "strong and many" implies the belief that might (numbers) makes right. People who justify their deeds and thoughts by pointing out that a majority of other people support them have no standing with the Lord, especially if their ideas were hatched out of self-intelligence.

"...yet in this manner they will be cut down...."

- Let's look at how "cut" is used in the Word.
 - Cut or cutting is used in the spiritual sense to illustrate the shallowness of earning merit. The examples given in the Writings deal with cutters (mowers) of grass and hewers of wood. These "hewers" worked for praise. Another example given is the Lord's command not to put "hewn stones" in the construction of altars dedicated to worship Him. They were forbidden to chisel or shape the stones so as to not offer anything in worship that was artificially made or fashioned by their hands.
 - To cut off signifies "that divine truth shall be taken from...people, but shall live again in a new church." (*AE 315 [23]*) To cut off means "to protect and thus to remove..." (*AC 9316*)
 - To cut asunder represents the dissipation of falsity. (*AC 8184*)
 - To cut down represents "... that doctrinal things are to be utterly rejected." (*AC 10644*)

- It becomes clear that the Lord was telling those outside of the church that He was going to cut off, cut down, cut asunder, remove, dissipate, and reject all things within their religion that lacked connection with Him and the Word.

"...when he passes through."

- When it is said that the Lord passes through, it means that He will know and perceive the quality of good and that He will lead and teach them. See *AC* 3992.

"Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more..."

- To use derived doctrine, we need to keep our mind focused on the summary from *P&P*. Those who are not of the Nineveh church, those who were not in it but are in falsities from ignorance, will be accepted and their falsity will be removed. Therefore, our theme draws us to look for, and anticipate, Divine help and hope.
- *AC 1947 [6]* seems to come close to shedding light on this passage.
"...'affliction' denotes the mastering and subjugation of the evils and falsities that rise up from the external man into the rational.... 'afflictions' also denote temptation..."

"...for now I will break off his yoke from you..."

- *AE 365 [27]* teaches "...'the bonds of the yoke' [mean] the delights of evil from the love of self and the world, which keep them bound, and 'those who make them to serve' [mean] falsities, since these make them to serve those evils." The words "his yoke" seem to refer to the one who does the bonding. Note well that it could be easy to blame "his" as if it meant hell or the devil. But in reality, are we not the ones who bind ourselves when we choose to accept evils as sins?
- The Lord promises to burst the yoke apart. Here the spiritual sense seems clear and direct. The Lord promises to rip, rend, break, or burst apart the power or strength of evil and falsity. He offers a chance to make a new start, an opportunity to gain freedom from the servitude of ignorance. The ability to be a "self-starter" by understanding and applying New Church truths is the promise one must look forward to as this portion of our text is read.

"The Lord has given a command concerning you..."

- We have a passage in the Writings that seems to help us with this portion of the prophecy. In *AC 783*, we read "As God commanded...signifies that he had been prepared to receive...with the Lord, to 'command' is to prepare and do."

"...your name shall be perpetuated no longer..."

- The spiritual meaning of the word "name" signifies the essence or quality of a person's affections. *AC 143-145* explain how the people of the Most Ancient Church knew the essences of others by their names. *AC 1308* teaches that "name" may also signify something about those who seek a reputation for power. *AC 145* explains what the Word means by "...they shall be called by a new name..." as signifying to become of another character. And lastly, let's consider this teaching in *AE 724 [34]* that explains the words of *Isaiah 14:22* "Cut off...the name and remnant..." as signifying that all truths, or falsities, from first to last will perish and will be swept away.

"Out of the house of your gods, I will cut off the carved image and molded image...."

- Could there be a spiritual reason the Lord used "out of the house..." instead of "out of the home...?" The word "house" seems impersonal. "Home" has a warmer and more affectional meaning. *Webster's Dictionary* says a home is "the abiding place of the affections."
- Let's see if there is some correspondential validity to this question. A house signifies accumulated memory knowledges. (*AC 1488*) In *AC 3036, 3736, and 5253*, a house represents that which is of the memory knowledges, with their seeming attractiveness. On the other hand, a home signifies the truths and goods by which people live. (*AC 4651*) The home or a habitation signifies the perpetual presence of the Lord. See *AE 630 [9]* or *TCR 74 [3]*. A house holds things that are of the memory. A home holds things that are of the affections in one's heart and life.

Images

- Carved and molded images; graven or molten images; idols and figures signify the falsity of a person's selfhood (*proprium*) and its evil. See *AC 215*.

"I will dig a grave, for you are vile."

- That which is vile in the eyes of the Lord signifies everything of the church — its doctrines and goods, and truths — being profaned. (*AE 827 [5]*) Graves can signify spiritual death (*AE 659 [7]*), damnation by falsities (*AC 8165*), or hell, for those who are spiritually dead (*AE 659 [9]*). Whereas, digging has means to search for truths or to look for a way to open truths from good. (*AE 918 [4]*)

Putting It All Together

We had only one reference from the Writings to work with for these three verses. *P&P* provided us with the summary that told us the Lord will remove the falsities

from those "outside" of the Nineveh church. Acceptance for those outside the church of Nineveh is mentioned in the summary. Rejection is directed to the harmful things learned from ignorance and unenlightenment. So as we look over the derived doctrine notes, the quote from P&P must direct our attempt to draw things to a summary.

1. The Lord will open to each person what is true and false. With clarity He will "speak"; He will "say"; He will separate out things that were taught incorrectly. Historical faith will be put aside. No longer will tradition, human prudence, or "hatched" ideas from self-intelligence persuade or determine what people value as standards. The Lord will "cut down" the empty and vain concepts of the proud and pompous doctrine makers.
2. Falsity always hurts the soul. What might have seemed like a "victimless" falsity will be shown for what is: an affliction, a yoke, a burden that needs to be broken by the Lord. From "first to last will be swept away." He will be our emancipator. When He does this, our name, our quality, will be freshened up. He will give each person a "new name."
3. From our "houses," memory knowledges will be cleared of the "idols" made by our hands or mind molds. What seemed attractive as a thought will be shown for what it really is — vile and worthy of being put in the grave. The Lord's digging within the mind and heart will bring the goods and truth necessary to bury falsity and profanation. The falsity of our proprium will be changed by the Lord. Our "homes" will house the affections of our hearts and will assist us in the application of doctrine to life.

Read and Review

Read Nahum 1:12-14.

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. How do you feel about the large amount of derived doctrine we needed to help us understand these verses?
2. What is one essential point you drew from the summary of the internal sense of these three verses? Why do you think it is essential?
3. Can you contrast the views of those within the Nineveh church with the view of those outside of it? We must see this because the Lord said He would accept and help those outside of the church.
4. Were those inside the Nineveh church hopelessly lost in their spiritual insanity? Why or why not?
5. What do you think of the distinction we noted between "house" and "home"?
6. Do you believe there is such a thing as a "victimless" act? Some imagine that an act is quite harmless if consenting people are involved and no one gets

- "hurt." "What's the harm?" they ask. What kind of response would you offer to this philosophy? Can you think of real-life examples to support your response?
7. Can you give any examples that would illustrate the meaning of carved and molded images?
 8. Review the teaching about putting vile things into their graves. Habits are not always seen as vile. If "the Lord speaks" of one of our pet habits as vile, do we try to defend its existence and importance or do we bury it as soon as possible?

Chapter Two

NAHUM 1:15 AND NAHUM 2:1-3

"Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, Who proclaims peace! O Judah, keep your appointed feasts, perform your vows. For the wicked one shall no more pass through you; He is utterly cut off."

"He who scatters has come up before your face. Man the fort! Watch the road! Strengthen your flanks! Fortify your power mightily. For the Lord will restore the excellence of Jacob like in the excellence of Israel, for the emptiers have emptied them out and ruined their vine branches. The shields of his mighty men are made red, the valiant men are in scarlet. The chariots come with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the spears are brandished."

Passages From the Writings

Please note that *P&P* treats Nahum 1:15 as the first verse of Chapter 2 because the verse and chapter were arranged this way in the "English Bible" used for that edition. We will follow this format since the summary statement in *P&P* includes Nahum 1:15 in its teachings about the Lord's advent and His protection of the church.

P&P

- "Concerning the Lord's advent, and concerning a new church from Him, and the protection of that church by Him, vers. 1-4..."

AC 7093 [5]

- "That there was to be gladness in the feasts, and thus that 'to hold a feast' is to worship from a glad mind, is plain...in Nahum i. 15."

Doctrine of Sacred Scriptures 51 [8]

- "He who reads the Word without doctrine does not see the consistency of what is said in the Prophets about the Jewish nation and Jerusalem – that the church with that nation, and its seat in that city, will remain to eternity; as in the following passages...In these passages the Lord's advent is treated of, and that this [establishment of the Jews] will come to pass." Nahum 1:15 is cited among many other passages.

AR 336

- "That by 'mountains' and 'hills' are signified heaven and the church, where there exists love to the Lord and love to the neighbor, and thus where the Lord is, is evident from the following passages..." Nahum 1:15 is cited.

AR 350

- "...that by 'the tribe of Judah' is signified celestial love, which is love to the Lord; but because they were such as to the Word, and as to the Lord, therefore by 'the tribe of Judah' is also signified the opposite love, which is the love of self, properly the love of dominion from the love of self, which love is called diabolical love. That by 'Judah' and his tribe is signified the celestial kingdom and its love, which is love to the Lord, is evident from these passages..." Nahum 1:15 is cited.

AR 478

- "In the Word of the Old Testament, which is called prophetic in the spiritual sense, and also where this sense shines forth...the Lord alone is treated of...His advent in the fullness of time...when there is no longer any good of charity and truth of faith in the church (this) state is called the consummation, devastation, desolation, and decision...which constitute the Last Judgment executed by Him; and afterwards of the creation of a new heaven, and the establishment of a new church...That 'to declare good tidings' (evangelize) signifies the Lord's coming, and His kingdom...is manifest from these passages..." Nahum 1:15 is cited.

AE 405 [8]

- "In Nahum:- it is said 'behold upon the mountains the feet of him that publisheth peace,' ... to 'publish peace, signifies to preach the Lord's coming, for 'peace' in the highest sense signifies the Lord, and in the internal sense every good and truth that is from the Lord...and 'O Zion, that proclaimest good tidings,' means the church that is in the good of love to the Lord...the church that is thence in truths of doctrine from the Word."

AE 433 [11]

- "In Nahum:- ...His coming is meant by 'Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that proclaimeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!' 'to celebrate feasts' and to 'render vows' signify to rejoice in His coming and then to worship Him; 'Belial shall never more pass through Judah, he is utterly cut off,' signifies that evil shall be no more with them because they are in the Lord. This could not be said of the Jewish nation, but may be said of those

who are in love to the Lord; which makes clear that such are meant by 'Judah'."

AE 612

- AE 612 quotes Nahum 1:15 in conjunction with Isaiah 52: 7-8 but gives no significations. The topic covered though is "proclaiming the good news.

Scripture Confirmations, pp. 48 and 62

- The literal sense of Nahum 1:15 occurs twice in Scripture Confirmations on pages 48 & 62.

AC 3021 [8]

- "Concerning what was seen by Nebuchadnezzar we read in Daniel: 'The head of the statue was good gold; its breast and its arms were silver; its belly and thighs were brass; the feet were part iron and part clay...' ...From all these things it may be seen what is signified by the 'thighs' and the 'loins,' namely, in the chief place conjugal love, and from this all genuine love, as is evident from the passages quoted, and likewise from others..." Nahum 2:1 is cited among other references.

AC 3300 [5]

- "In Nahum..."The shield of the mighty men (of Belial) is made red, the valiant men are made crimson, in the fire of torches are the chariots in the day (ii.3)...‘red’ in like manner ...signifies the evil which is of the love of self; and this because the cupidities of the love of self are compared to fire and are called ‘fire’...and in like manner they are compared to blood and are called ‘blood’..."

AR 436

- "By 'breastplates' are signified defenses, because they protect the breast; here, defenses of falsities, which are effected by arguments from fallacies, by which a false principle is defended. For from a false principle nothing but falsities can flow. If truths are advanced, they are only viewed outwardly or superficially, thus sensually, and are consequently falsified, and with such persons, become fallacies...‘breastplates...of iron,’ signifies that their arguments seemed to them so strong that they could not be refuted; for ‘iron’ from hardness, signifies what is strong." Nahum 2:3 is cited among several other references.

AR 305

- "...the reason why 'red' (rufus) is predicated of good destroyed, is, because by red (rufus) an infernal red is meant, which is from infernal fire, which is the love of evil; the red which is an infernal red is hideous and abominable, there being nothing alive therein..." Nahum 2:3-4 is cited as an example of red signifying the evil of love.

AE 364 [7]

- "As 'red' signifies the quality of a thing in relation to good, so in a contrary sense it signifies the quality of a thing in relation to evil, which is the opposite to good, consequently good destroyed. In this sense 'red' is mentioned in the following passages..." Nahum 2:3-4 is cited.

AC 7093 [5]

- "That there was to be gladness in the feasts, and thus that 'to hold a feast' is to worship from a glad mind, is plain ...in Nahum i. 15."

Doctrine of Sacred Scriptures 51 [8]

- "He who reads the Word without doctrine does not see the consistency of what is said in the Prophets about the Jewish nation and Jerusalem – that the church with that nation, and its seat in that city, will remain to eternity; as in the following passages; ... In these passages the Lord's advent is treated of, and that this [establishment of the Jews] will come to pass." Nahum 1:15 is cited among many other passages.

Derived Doctrine

"Upon the mountains the feet..."

- The feet of the Lord, in the above quotes, were not covered directly. We need the assistance of derived doctrine. We are taught that the feet represent the lowest part of the natural mind, the corporeal life of the senses. (AC 5328) But this is not the case with the feet of the Lord. His feet represent the Divine power in ultimates brought down to the human race in His Divine Human. (AC 3761) In one reference, the Lord's right foot was seen on the sea and the left was seen on the land. AE 600 teaches that this signifies His watchful care of the external and internal church. One last reference might help us see the signification of the Lord's feet. In AR 468, we are taught that the Lord's Divine Natural, the lowest of divine order, as to love, wants to sustain all things and publish good tidings.

"The wicked one shall no more pass through you..."

- We are not told who the wicked one is. We can surmise that hell, the devil, and Satan would fit that designation. But doing so might allow us to "scapegoat" these representations. Instead, let's look at the qualities of wickedness:
 - Wickedness has no will (love) for good. (*AC 584*)
 - Wickedness wants to extend knowledges for external uses only. (*AC 1600*)
 - Wickedness infests a person with malice and malignity. (*AC 7590*)
 - Wickedness involves a recession from good to evil. (*AE 710 [17]*)

"Shall not pass..."

- To pass signifies to flow in. Evil, the wicked one, shall not pass through. See *AC 3992* for a fuller explanation of the positive and negative representations of passing. In essence, this is a Divine promise to end the wicked one's walking through our lives.

"...utterly cut off..."

- The word "utterly" carries with it the meaning of totally, completely, entirely. Again, this is a promise that the wicked one will be vanquished.

"He who scatters has come up before your face..."

- Who is the one who scatters and comes up before our face? It would appear that the best way to answer this is to first look at the meaning of "face." Here are some of the representations of our faces:
 - The face corresponds to the mind. (*AC 4791 and 4805*)
 - The face corresponds to affections. (*AE 280*)
 - The face when predicated of the Lord signifies mercy, peace, and good. (*AC 222, 223 and 2434*)
 - The face represents spiritual and celestial things existing interiorly within us. (*AC 5571*)
- "Scattering" has some very interesting representations:
 - To vanish (and not to be received or acknowledged). (*AC 1309*)
 - To spread falsities from evil. (*AE 67*)
 - To scatter falsities from infernal enjoyment mingled with truths. (*AC 10464*)
 - The dissemination of falsities by those who are not in truths. (*TCR 137*)

"Man the fort..."

- The word "man" means defend, protect, guard, shield, preserve or shelter. What things must we protect? Let's look for clues in the meaning of "fort":
 - A fortress signifies the defense that divine good gives by divine truth. (*AE 316 [10]*)
 - A fortress signifies defense against falsities and evils from the literal sense of the Word. (*AE 727 [4]*)
 - Forts are confirmations from the Word. (*AE 388*)

"Watch the road..."

- Let's look at the meaning of "watch" or "watchfulness":
 - Watchfulness signifies the study of life according to the precepts of faith. (*AC 4638 [10]*)
 - Watch (wake up) signifies to know truths and to live by them. "But he who is not in truths, but only in worship, is like one who sleeps and dreams..." (*AR 158*)
- What representations are there in the word "road"? Since the word "road" is not specifically used in the Writings, we must find some help by using the words "highway" or "pathway":
 - A highway signifies the affection for truth that leads to a life of good will. See *AE 219*.
 - A highway signifies disposing into order. (*AC 842*)
 - A path signifies precepts of life. (*AE 734*)

"Strengthen your flanks..."

- The flank means the side wing of an army. It also means to "pass around." A flank also means the location between the ribs and the hip. It is noteworthy to recall where the Lord was wounded while on the cross. They pierced or stabbed His side. That act signified an attempt to completely extinguish all the truth and good of the Word. (*DLW 16 [6]*)
- We might pay heed to the possible meaning that we should learn and know (strengthen) our understanding of the spiritual sense of the Word to avoid being "blind sided" with the misuse of the literal sense of the Word. If Hell sought to do this with the Lord, why not with us too?

"Fortify your power mightily..."

- The word "fortify" means to uphold, sustain, barricade, get evidence, facts, premises, data, corroboration, ratification, confirmation. How are we to fortify ourselves? Mightily and with power. One can hear a Divine call to doctrinal study that has some life and vitality to it.

"...the Lord will restore the excellence of Jacob like the excellence of Israel..."

- Please note the following things: the Divine Natural of the Lord and the Internal Natural, or the Celestial Spiritual of the Natural. Jacob's restoration to excellence represents understanding what is meant by the Lord's Divine Natural coming through to the church. This understanding is followed by the restoration and excellence of the church from this knowledge of the deeper Internal Natural of the Divine Human. For help with the Jacob representation, go to *AC 4603, 4641 and 4569*. For help with Israel's representation, go to *AC 4570 and AE 768 [15]*.

"Emptiers have emptied them out..."

- Does this mean "emptiers" have emptied out Jacob and Israel? If so, who are the "emptiers"? It would appear that anything that contributes to the separation of good and truth is an emptier. (*AC 3095*) We also know that when truth is not present, good cannot be present. (*AC 4744*) *AE 697 [3]* reminds us that a church is laid to waste when its doctrinal truths are desolated as to faith.

"...ruined their vine branches."

- To lay waste a vineyard means the loss of the good and truth of the church through various lusts. (*AC 9139*) A restored vineyard signifies restitution from the unimpaired truths of the church. (*AC 9142*) Branches signify the power of truth from good. A branch is like the arms of a man. (*AC 9555 and 9558*)

Belial

- Please note in *AC 3300 [5]* where the Writings quote *Nahum 2:3*, the quote says, "The shield of the mighty men (of Belial)..." The NKJV and the RSV do not use this term in the text. However, footnotes mention that the word "wicked" was later transliterated from the word "Belial."
- In *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, we read this explanation of the word "Belial": "This should not be regarded as a proper name. It is generally associated with the words 'man,' 'son,' 'daughter,' or 'children.' Hence 'son' or 'man' of Belial simply means 'a worthless person.'"

"...the chariots come with flaming torches..."

- Chariots (used in the negative sense) represent doctrine of evil and falsity, and outward knowledges confirming them. (*AC 5321 [10]*) In the positive sense, chariots signify doctrines that teach the way of salvation. (*AE 355 [4]*)

- Torches signify, in the negative sense, the consuming of desire and separation of those who are in the church from the Lord. AC 1861 [2].

"And the spears are brandished."

- Spears in a positive sense represent truths that have been adapted to spiritual warfare. (AR 299) Spears signify truths of use in spiritual warfare, which with regeneration become preparatory to the reception of truths from good. (AC 1664 [3] and 5895)
- Brandishing means to shake or wave, usually menacingly. Does this definition change the meaning or application of "spear" and bring it into a negative spiritual meaning or act?

Read and Review

Read Nahum 1:15 and Nahum 2:1-3.

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Putting It All Together

1. As always, let's begin our overall summary with a look at *P&P*. This portion of our study is concerned with the Lord's advent. It is about the new church that is to come from Him. It is about the protection of that church by Him.
2. We are given a view of the things that will be overcome. We see the nature of their resistance. For instance, how powerful an illustration is given regarding those who had breastplates of iron. They were so proud of their false principles. They thought they were invincible. Their love was turned from a life-giving red to a dead, hideous, and abominable color. "Lifeless" and "useless" are words that come to mind. Our text gives us a picture of them "strutting" proudly, feeling immune to Divine accountability. They shall be "utterly cut off." Belial, "the worthless person," will end in a scattered and useless array, their chariots flashing with flames.
But in spite of all the negative things that opposed the Lord, listen to the stirring words of restoration promised in Nahum and Isaiah 52:7: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation..."
3. How about these challenges that are given to the new church? "Man the fort." "Watch the road." "Strengthen your flanks." "Fortify your power mightily." Such words are so necessary for a church to grow and remain vibrant. If we don't do these things, we will be blind sided. The enemy will get up in our face and endeavor to shake our mind, our affections, and our practical usage of the Word in life situations.

4. The Lord makes a statement here that has powerful ramifications. Evil, the wicked one, the scatterer, will not endure. His Divine Human will come and be among all the people of His New Church. This is a theme of joy. It is a message of good news. It is a theme we need to keep before the church as we labor in the vineyard and let the Lord protect the branches or extension of the church.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. To digest the passages and derived doctrine gathered in this section will require a slow reading and reflection on the facts. Isn't it wonderful that we have so much to draw from out of the Writings? Would you have imagined there was this much to be found regarding the book of Nahum? How much more than we expect might we find in the Writings about other works in the Word?
2. Which of the Lord's rallying cries do you respond to most? Do you favor one or all? What about the series of commands that must be present in their order? Do you think they were given in this order for a purpose? What might it be?
3. Are there any portions of this text that you feel were left out? If so, could you work out your own research notes for them? How would you go about getting or using resources if you lack them at home? Do you know where to borrow or buy them?
4. The brandishing of spears...Does that remind you of any situations where you have seen truth misused? Are half-truths ever used to intimidate an opponent? Can doctrinal quotes be used as weapons instead of pointing the way to salvation? Have you ever misused a doctrinal "spear"?
5. Can you identify anything in the daily news or your work experience that seems equivalent to the chariots and flaming torches we discussed earlier? Our next unit continues with the correspondences of chariots raging in the streets. If you elected to not follow this question this time, it will come about again. Isn't it interesting how the Word brings issues back for us to consider again and again? Why would the Lord do that?

NAHUM 2: 4-7

"The chariots rage in the streets, they jostle one another in the broad roads; they seem like torches, they run like lightning. He remembers his nobles; they stumble in their walk; they make haste to her walls, and the defense is prepared. The gates of the rivers are opened, and the palace is dissolved. It is decreed: She shall be led away captive, she shall be brought up; and her maid-servants shall lead her as with the voice of doves, beating their breasts."

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...that at the day of judgment those who have destroyed the church will perish, and will be cast into hell with a violent commotion, vers. 4-7."

AC 2336 [6]

- "In Nahum... (ii.4) the 'chariots' denote the doctrine of truth, which is said to 'rave in the streets,' when falsity is in the place of truth."

AR 501

- "'By streets,' in the Word, almost the same is signified as by 'ways,' because streets are ways in a city; but still by 'streets' are signified the truths or falsities of doctrine, because 'a city' signifies doctrine...and by 'ways' are signified the truths or falsities of the church...That 'streets' signify truths or falsities...see the following passages..." Nahum 2:4 is cited.

AE 652 [5]

- "In Nahum (ii. 4)... 'chariots' signify the doctrinals of truth, and 'streets' and 'open places' what is in accord with each one's affection and perception, as above, it is said 'the chariots raged in the streets, they ran to and fro in the open places,' 'to rage' signifying to call falsities truths, and 'to run to and fro' signifying to wander off."

Derived Doctrine

"Jostle one another in the broad roads..."

- The word "jostle" means to push, bump, elbow, or collide with. In *AC 9081*, we read that to push in the good sense means to destroy falsity by the power of truth, or it can signify the opposite sense of destroying truths with falsity.
- Look just above at the quote from *AE 652 [5]*. Note that instead of using the words 'broad road,' the Writings use "open places." The RSV says they rushed "to and fro through the square." Once again, we need to let the internal sense lead the way as we choose which word to use. Once we understand the spiritual meaning, each translated word can be examined to see which helps to communicate the larger truth.

"...they seem like torches and run like lightning..."

- We discussed torches in the previous verses, but let's review the meaning again. In the negative sense, a torch represents the "burning of cupidities," the desires of selfhood out of control. What is sad is that they pictured themselves as fast as lightning. They perceived themselves alive and vital. We would probably call these people "fast movers" today. *AR 396* shares with us this description of lightning. It is likened to a person who lives by faith alone with no influx; they reason and have ready-made answers that favor or give justification to their arguments.

"He remembers his nobles..."

- We must begin this derived doctrinal search with a question. Who is the "he"? Is it the Lord? Is the "he" representative of something within the Nineveh Church? Is the "he" representative of the understanding within the church? If the text had used "she," we would have had our attention called to the affectional things of the church.
- Ultimately, everything represents the Lord, but in this case, I think we should focus on the "he" as being descriptive of the church and the understanding it had formed. Remember, the previous verse portrayed the understanding of the church and its chariots jostling one another as they darted to and fro destroying truths with falsities. They perceived themselves as bright, articulate, and ever so quick with their ability to use the rational mind. So in this verse, it would appear that the Lord was giving them, and us, a view of what "he" was really like. *AE 574* says that a "noble" signifies false principals. According to *AC 5430* and *8885*, to remember signifies foresight as to what was to occur, or as to what is perpetual in the thought. Keeping this in mind, let's look at the description of how "he" and his nobles acted in their moment of Divine remembrance and His assessment of Nineveh's spiritual motives.

"They [the nobles or officers] stumble in their walk..."

- In *Isaiah 8:15*, we read, "Many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken." *AC 9163* explains the meaning of this passage and gives us this insight: "...'to stumble' denotes to be induced to commit evil, and thus to fall from truths into falsities; 'to fall and be broken' denotes to be dispersed..."
- Please note the words "the nobles or officers" in brackets in above. The RSV uses "officers" instead of "nobles." So let's look at the correspondence of "officer." Officers represent "those who infest, instill evils and falsities and compel servitude." (*AC 7111*)
- Consider next, the positive meaning of walking:
 - Walking represents living according to the doctrines or truth of faith. (*AC 519*)
 - Walking represents meditating on doctrine. (*AR 137*)

- Walking represents to live by the enlightenment of the Lord. (*AR* 75)
- *AE* 687 explains the internal sense of *Psalm 1* and the words WALK, STAND and SIT.
- The nobles stumbled in their walk. Therefore, we see from these quotes the possibility that they were not living according to doctrine or meditating on doctrine. Therefore, the Lord could not enlighten them. They walked in the way of the ungodly and the path of sinners.

"They make haste to her walls..."

- Notice the use of the word "her." Can we assume that the church and its affections are about to be examined and exposed by the Lord? Let's refrain from answering this question until we look at some quotes from the Writings. In *AC* 5284, we find this regarding "haste": "In the internal sense, 'to hasten' or 'haste' does not mean quickly, but certainly, and also fully, thus in every event; for haste implies time, and in the spiritual world there is no time, but instead of time state; thus haste in time has reference there to such a condition of state...that there are many things acting together toward the result, and thus insuring a certain and full event."
- Walls, we are taught in *AR* 898, signify "the Word in the sense of the letter from which is the doctrine of the New Church...by its 'wall' (nothing else is meant) but the Word in the sense of the letter, from which the doctrine is; for that sense protects the spiritual sense, which lies hidden within, as the wall does a city and its inhabitants...the sense of the letter is the basis, the containant, and the support of its spiritual sense..."

"The defense is prepared..."

- Can't we see plainly what is being taught here? The nobles or officers, stumbling in their walk, were shown by the Lord that they are not living according to His Word. Their meditation focused on self-worship and not spiritual worship. They "jostled" one another with false arguments. In an attempt to prove the worth of their "doctrines," they turned, or returned, to the walls of the literal sense to find support for their suppositions. They believed the "walls" would vindicate or justify their position. **"The defense is prepared..."** But will the closing summation of their defense hold up when the true state, the full events, are presented by the Lord?

"The gates of the rivers are opened..."

- Gates have the following representations:
 - The passage of knowledges into the rational mind. (*AC* 2943)
 - The gates of a city signify doctrine which serves as an entrance into the church. (*AC* 2943)

- Gates signify introductory knowledges of what is good and true from the literal sense. (*AR* 899, 901, 904)
 - There are with every person two gates. One leads to hell and one leads to heaven. (*AC* 2851)
 - And lastly, we need to recall the two gates of Baptism and Holy Supper.
- Rivers signify truths that are in abundance to serve the rational, consequently the understanding, for the purpose of doctrine and life. (*AR* 683) Rivers, or floods, signify temptations. (*AR* 409) Rivers signify trials, difficulties, and falsity. (*AR* 790)
- To "open" signifies to communicate and to conjoin. (*AE* 537)

"...and the palace is dissolved..."

- The NKJV uses the word "dissolved," and the RSV uses the word "dismay." A thesaurus offers these synonyms for the word dissolve: destroy, liquefy, break up, end, melt, vanish, evaporate, fade, and disintegrate. Whereas dismay carries these synonyms: consternation, terror, or discouragement. Which word is more suited for the internal sense? I checked the word "melt" in the concordance. Here are three passages to consider:
 - Melt signifies "that those who had formerly been of the church vanished because they adulterated goods and falsified truths." (*AC* 8317)
 - Melt "signifies that their capacity for receiving heavenly good vanished with their increasing strong desire for external satisfactions." (*AC* 8487)
 - Melting "signifies that their ability to receive the goods and truths of heaven and the church was in vain." (*AE* 721 [24])
- A "palace," in the positive sense, represents something quite beautiful, dignified, and regal. In the opposite sense, a palace is ugly, self-serving, and a hovel. Let's look first at the positive. A "palace signifies the understanding in which truths are in a beautiful form... from (the) affection for truth." (*AE* 724) "Palace signifies the whole church as to its truths from good." (*AE* 410)
- Using the derived doctrinal quotes, can we come to any conclusions regarding the meaning of their palaces dissolving or melting? Their understanding was in complete disarray. Their understanding was dismal. They were "melting" or "vanishing" as a church. When the gates of the rivers opened, their prepared defense could not stand nor support their life of religion. Their "palace" was exposed as a façade. Its pretentiousness dissolved or melted away.

"It is decreed: she shall be led away captive..."

- A decree is an order (edict) from a king or powerful ruler. The announcement must be heard and carried out by all who are subject to the king or governor.

The uses of the Lord decreed that He would come and face every disorder of the hells. It was decreed that He would reorder the heavens and the hells.

There is a quote in *AC 10248* worth considering regarding a decree or ordinance, which means or "signifies an eternal law of order."

- The words "she shall be led away captive" carry sadness in them. If "she" had listened to the decree of the Lord, the affections ("she") would have been led and illuminated by truths. (*AE 386 [27]*) "She" would have been led "to confirm goods and truths of faith..." (*AC 8098*) Ignoring the Lord leads her to captivity. Captivity signifies a mind in darkness about what is good and true. (*AC 7950*) Captivity signifies evils that possess. (*AE 175 [12]*) Lastly, those who capture others and bar them from truth and good will themselves become captive to falsities. (*AE 811 [27]*)

"She shall be brought up..."

- In our language, when someone is stopped in their tracks, we say they were "brought up short." The implication is that they were exposed, stopped in their tracks, and prevented from doing anything else that would hurt or interfere with the freedom of others. It appears that this meaning comes close to what is being taught here.

"And her maidservants shall lead her as with the voice of doves..."

- Let's look at the various meanings of maidservants. Maidservants signify in general the pleasures of external knowledges, which serve the internal man. (*AC 1486*) A slave girl signifies the affection of knowledges in the external man serving intellectual truth. (*AC 1895*)

"With the voice..."

- What a fascinating series of possibilities we get with this correspondence. Voice signifies dictate, the doctrine of faith, and also the conscience. (*AC 219*) Voice signifies violence inflicted upon charity. A voice may signify anything that accuses. (*AC 374*) Voice is applied to any incident of noise, tumult, or disturbance, and also to anything especially happy and signifies announcement of the Lord's Advent. (*AC 220 and 375*)

"...the voice of doves..."

- Doves signify the truths and goods of faith with one who is to be regenerated. (*AC 870*) Doves signify that whatever good a person does of themselves returns to them, because it relates to their selfhood. (*AC 876*) Doves represent affections for ideas, and for thinking from ideas; doves represent affections for the heavenly ideas that agree with innocent love to the Lord and conjugal love. (*AE 282 and AC 10132*)

"They beat their breasts."

- To beat signifies injuries inflicted by falsities. (*AC 7146*) To beat signifies disposal of truths in their order and series. (*AC 10303 [2]*) Beating signifies grief due to the loss of good and truth. (*AC 6432 [6]*) Striking signifies alienated knowledge seeking to destroy the truth of the church. (*AC 6758*)
- Note: When we look for the meaning of breasts, we need to also consider the words "bosom" and "paps." "Paps and breasts signify love, and in the eminent sense the divine love." (*AR 46*) The bosom or breast signifies spiritual love, which is love in act. (*AE 821*)

Putting It All Together

1. Where do we begin with our summation? The Word calls our attention to the following series of correspondences:
 - Chariots are seen raging in the broad streets.
 - Chariots are pushing, shoving, jostling one another. Intimidation reigns among them.
 - Flashing torches are seen and people running as fast as lightning.
 - The nobles stumble in their walk.
 - With a sense of urgency and need for protection, they run to the walls and prepare their defense.
 - Rivers open up and overflow and dissolve their palaces.
 - A decree is heard that she, the church, will be carried away captive.
 - She will be brought up and held accountable for her errors.
 - Maidservants (external knowledges) try to lead her on but to no avail.
 - With futility and hopelessness, they beat their breasts because the pain of reality exposes the falsity or emptiness of their life.
2. With this series of correspondences, the Word shares with us a picture of what happens to a church, or individual, when they allow themselves to be carried away with pride in external knowledge. They fall in love with their own voice. They put their ideas ahead of the Lord's Word. Instead of sharing the good news of the Lord, they force their own priorities on others. In the end, they do violence to truth. A self-serving church tries to point to truths (walls) of the Word that seem to justify their position, but the Lord quickly exposes the fallacy of their thinking and ways. The palaces melt, dissolve, crumble as the Lord's truth exposes what "IS" from what "is not." Those things that had ministered as maidservants, with voices that sounded like doves, can no longer help them.
3. The closing line of the text sums up the results of a life separated from the Lord. They will beat their chest to illustrate the emptiness and frustration of self-love. If they had served the Lord, they could have beaten their breasts to signify a love of divine things and a love of the Lord in act. Instead, they beat their breast to illustrate the empty hollowness of self-love.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Chariots raging in the streets represent the turning of truth into falsity. Do any current events fit into this passage? As you reflect on this, think of doctrine as the chariots raging.
2. Pushing, shoving, and jostling sounds like the work of bullies. The Writings often illustrate the sensual person as such a bully. Sensual people like to tell spiritual people that they have hang-ups. They make a false observation that spiritual people are sickly and preoccupied with sin and evil, whereas they see themselves as alive, flexible, and ever so adaptable. They like to intimidate and ridicule the spiritual person. Have you experienced the bullying tactics of hell?
3. The text tells us about those who go to the wall to defend themselves. The wall in this case is the literal sense. Have you ever experienced someone using the literal sense as a defense to excuse some evil? Why is this dangerous?
4. The beating of one's breast expresses a positive and negative meaning. Can you give examples from life of each type of "beating"?
5. What kind of feelings did you have while reading this section? Is the theme repetitive? Were you wondering what this has to do with your life? Were you able to put the message in the context of today's issues? If you aren't sure how to answer these questions, try again. Make sure you don't pass on to the next section without some effort to make this one personal.

NAHUM 2:8-11

"Though Nineveh of old was like a pool of water, now they flee away. 'Halt! Halt!' they cry; but no one turns back. Take spoil of silver! Take spoil of gold! There is no end of treasure, or wealth of every desirable prize. She is empty, desolate, and waste! The heart melts, and the knees shake; much pain is in every side, and all their faces are drained of color. Where is the dwelling of the lion's, and the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion walked, the lioness and lion's cub, and no one made them afraid."

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...that all things of the church will be taken away from them, vers. 8-11..."

AR 241

- "That a lion signifies truth in its power...may be evident from the power of the lion above every animal of the earth; as also from the lions in the spiritual world, that they are representative images of the power of the Divine truth;

and also from the Word, where they signify the Divine truth in its power.... It is hence that Jehovah or the Lord is compared to a lion, and is also called a lion; as in the following passages..." Nahum 2:11 is cited as one of the many examples in the Word.

AE 278 [4]

- "In Nahum 2:11...'lions' signify those who are in power through Divine truth; 'their abode' signifies where there are such in the church; their 'feeding place' signifies the knowledges of truth and good; their 'walking and none making them afraid' signifies their state of security from evils and falsities."

Derived Doctrine

"Though Nineveh of old was like a pool of water..."

- The "Nineveh of old" is an interesting and important place to being our derived doctrine section. In *Doctrine of Sacred Scriptures 102*, we have this quote: "The ancients with whom the [Ancient Word] is still in use in heaven were in part from the land of Canaan and from the kingdoms on its borders; as from Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Chaldea, Assyria, Egypt, and from Zidon, Tyre, and **Nineveh**; the inhabitants of all of these kingdoms were in representative worship and hence in the knowledge of correspondences."(emphasis added)

"...like a pool of water..."

- As we might expect, there is a positive and negative meaning for the phrase "pool of water." *AC 7324* illustrates this for us. In the spiritual sense of the Word, a pool signifies "intelligence from the knowledge of good and truth." Pools of water in the opposite sense signify evils from falsities. It appears reasonable to assume that we will be shown that the root or cause of Nineveh's destruction resulted from their loss of the "pool of water." We need to feel a degree of sadness for what is about to happen to Nineveh. They had the representative wonders of the Ancient Word and gradually but purposely falsified the correspondences or holy truths of the Ancient Word. Why would they choose to do such a foolish thing? What would cause them to turn their back to the Lord's Word?

"Now they flee away..."

- The *RSV* has this verse translated as follows: "Nineveh is like a pool whose waters run away." Our mind would do well to focus on the meaning of the water running away. The Ninevites were not running away to find relief from unpleasant circumstances, nor were they trying to elude the pursuit of an

enemy. They were fleeing so they could escape, or be "away" from, the Lord's presence. They lost the water of truth they had drunk many years earlier from the Ancient Word.

"Halt! Halt! They cry; but no one turns back."

- Please note the two "halts." In the positive sense, two represents conjunction. Again in the positive sense, two represents the conjunction of the will and understanding. In another sense, the conjunction desired by the Lord is that of our external life reflecting our internal life. Nineveh, representing a church unraveling and in a state of disjunction, was losing sight of the truth. The water, or pool of water, was running off. They were "losing it." So the voice of the Lord cried out "Halt! Halt!" to get their attention. The will and the understanding must pay attention and return to their uses if spiritual things are to survive.
- "But no one turns back." They had ears to hear, but they did not hear. The desire of their heart wanted to be free from the inner voice of the Lord, so they refused to heed the call for repentance. They chose to not turn back.

"Take spoil of silver! Take spoil of gold!"

- The RSV translation offers this wording: "Plunder the silver, plunder the gold!" We need to ask who is to take or plunder the silver and gold? Why is the order given to take the silver first and the gold lastly? It appears that the Lord is the one taking the silver and gold, but in reality, falsity is the plunderer. The Lord never wishes to take or withhold what is good for us. The Word reminds us that it is our "Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom." (*Luke 12:32*) Hell wants to plunder or spoil that offer.
- As to our second question, silver represents truth and gold represents love. *TCR* 67 teaches us that: "love and wisdom without use are only fleeting things...separate from use the two (love and wisdom) are like birds flying over a great ocean, that at length, wearied with flying, fall down and are drowned." So it is when love has no truth to conjoin itself to and when there is no use to serve, they lose their conjugal union and the plundering of silver and gold is sure to take place.

"There is no end of treasure, or wealth of every desirable prize."

- *AC 10406* and *AE 840* teach us that treasure signifies the knowledges of truth and good. So in effect, the Lord reminded them what they gave up when they turned their back on the Ancient Word. They had within their reach every precious teaching, every desirable prize their soul could have wanted. Wealth, in the spiritual sense, "consists in matters of knowledge," and wealth consists in "what is known." (*AC 4508*)

"She is empty, desolate, and waste!"

- "She" represents the will and the church.
- "Empty" signifies where there is nothing true, because there is nothing of good with it. See *AC 4744*.
- "Desolate" signifies being without visible truth. See *AC 6141*.
- "Waste" signifies evils and falsities spoiling or destroying the good and truth of the church. See *AE 374 [5]*.

"The heart melts, and the knees shake..."

- The heart signifies the affection of a person's will. See *AE 622 [5]*.
- "Melting" signifies the diminishing of one's capacity to receive heavenly good as a strong desire grows to find external satisfaction. See *AC 8487*.
- Shaking or trembling is predicated of a church when falsities are believed and are called truths. See *AE 400 [7]*.
- "Knees" in a positive sense represent the conjunction of the truth of faith with the good of love. In the negative sense, they represent the disunion, the disturbance of the mind of the church because of its evils. See *AE 677 [7]*.

"Much pain is in every side, and all their faces are drained of color."

- "Sore," or pain, signifies the extreme desolation one feels from the lack of spiritual things. See *AC 5576*. It also represents people feeling that the Lord's power seems extreme against them when He exposes their states of self-love and the evils and falsities they imbued. See *AC 4993*.
- "Pain in (on) every side" seems to be a necessary part of this section of correspondences. The Lord is everywhere. His judgment on the falsity of a church is complete. He sees every side and facet of the desolation.
- The face represents the spiritual and celestial things existing within a person. The Lord sees spiritual faces and not what is shown to others externally. See *AC 5571*.
- All faces are drained; all faces grow pale! Paleness signifies the absence and deprivation of spiritual life. See *AR 320. AE 381 [3 and 4]* is an excellent reference on the meaning of turning pale.

*"Where is the dwelling of the lions..." "...the feeding place of the young lions..."
"...where the lions walked..." "...the lioness and lion's cub..." "...and no one made them afraid?"*

[Note: First, review the portions of this verse explained in the **Passages From the Writings**. Next, let's look at some of the correspondences not explained so we can allow the Lord to infill and enlarge our understanding through the use of derived doctrine.]

- "Dwelling" represents the presence of love, the presence of the internal things of worship and to live spiritually. (*AC 1102 and AC 1293*) The dwelling of lions in the positive sense represents living the life of good and truth with power. (*AC 6367 and 6369*)
- "Feeding place" represents sustaining or providing for the increase of the church. See *AR 547*.
- To walk with the Lion (the Lord) is to teach and live according to the doctrine of faith. *AC 519* has much more to share about walking.
- A cub or whelp signifies the beginning of the reception of truth in the form of affirmation and acknowledgment. (*AC 3923 [3]*) A whelp signifies innocence with power. (*AC 6367*)
- No one made them afraid? The church or individual who walks with the Lord, the church or individual who lives the life of good and truth with power — do they have anyone to fear? Being in the stream of Providence gives a security that is wonderful and comforting.

Is this what is being said here? I suspect that we need to look at the opposite meaning of the above. The church of Nineveh imagined their power and success was due to their physical might. After all, they had the strongest army and the shrewdest leaders in the world. They were the nation others feared most. No one made them afraid. Not even the Lord?

The Word often uses "contrasts" to teach us truth. The contrasts in this section have been made clear. To Nineveh, the Lord is saying this is what could have been yours. Look at what you chose. For us, these contrasts can help us choose wisely while we dwell, feed, have cubs, and walk with the "Lion of heaven."

Putting It All Together

1. I feel as though our summary has been made easier for us through the efforts we just made "surfing" through our derived doctrine sources. The Nineveh of old, our remains, are full of spiritual potential. The innocence of our remains is wonderfully guarded and protected by the Lord. He alone knows where they are stored, and He adds to them throughout our life. We need to be vigilant and cooperate with the Lord in matters of our spiritual growth. It is prudent to check periodically to see if our efforts are to follow the Lord. Do we choose to dwell with Him? Will we feed on His truth? Will we walk the path that leads to heaven? Are the spiritual births (whelps) in our life in the form of affirmation and acknowledgment of the Lord's truth and providence?
2. Nineveh chose to turn and lose the water of life. Nineveh chose to ignore the calls to halt. They allowed the silver and gold of their church to be plundered. With these choices, their faces lost the glow of happiness. Their faces were cast over with a look of pale death. Their capacity to receive heavenly benefits diminished, and they were empty of the infinite and eternal things the Lord wanted to share with them.

3. As often happens when the Lord works on the separation of evil and falsity, the "soreness" caused by the Lord's light is used by hell to claim He is unfair. They launch one last effort to fix blame on the Lord and divert responsibility from themselves. "My pain and soreness," they claim, "is a result of the Lord's severe, stern, and over-used Divine power." For those who want and seek the light of heaven, is there any pain? Is there any reason to fear the light? In the place of pain and pale faces, there is heartiness and newness that is healthy. When we invite the Lord in to sit and sup with us, He will come in. He will offer us a cup of His living water. Do we recall His words: "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:14)

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Why do you think Nineveh chose to turn from the Ancient Word? Was it due to boredom? Did they take the Word for granted and place a lower value on it? Did the neglect come about slowly or rapidly?
2. This section has some very picturesque ways to describe the fall of Nineveh. Think of the pool of water leaving Nineveh, the words "Halt! Halt!", the people choosing not to turn back, the pale face. Which of these do you find easy to recall when thinking about or summarizing the quote from P&P "all things of the church will be taken away from them..."?
3. What are some contrasts the Lord shows us in this section between positive and negative things? We need to see the errors of Nineveh, but we also need to see the great message to the church that remains in the order of the Lord. Too many readers of the Word focus on the negative and fail to see or focus on the positive. Can you do both when you read? When you seek to apply what you read to life? How?

NAHUM 2:12-14

"The lion tore in pieces enough for his cubs, killed for his lionesses, filled his caves with prey, and his dens with flesh. 'Behold, I am against you,' says the Lord of hosts, 'I will burn your chariots in smoke, and the sword shall devour your young lions; I will cut off your prey from the earth, and the voice of your messengers shall be heard no more.'"

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...they will no longer destroy the church and its holy things, vers. 12-14."

AC 6367 [8]

- "...in Nahum 2:11-13 ...a 'lion' denotes the power possessed by the evil of the love of self when it destroys and lays waste...."

AE 494

- "...'smoke' in the contrary sense signifies falsity from evil...because the fire that makes such smoke signifies evil of love." Nahum 2:13 is cited.

AE 539 [7]

- "In Nahum 2:13 [this verse]...treats of the devastation of the church; and 'to burn a chariot in the smoke' signifies to pervert all truths of doctrine into falsities, 'smoke' meaning falsity, and 'chariot' doctrine; and 'the sword shall devour the young lions' signifies that falsities will destroy the chief truths of the church, 'young lions' meaning the chief and protecting truths of the church, and 'sword' meaning falsity destroying truth."

Derived Doctrine

"The lion tore in pieces enough for his cubs..."

- Let's consider this teaching in AC 5828 regarding the meaning of "being torn in pieces," as being to perish by evils and falsities. "That 'to be torn in pieces' has this signification, is because in the spiritual world there is no other tearing in pieces than that of good by evils and falsities."
- Cubs in the positive sense represent the reception of truth, in the opposite sense they signify the successive profanation of truth through the allurements of falsities. See AC 6367.
A lion's representation can be both positive and negative. Its usage is determined by what it does in the text. This lion tears, it fills its cave with prey and flesh. We then need to turn to the representation of the lion that has the power of self-love when it destroys and lays to waste the affections of the church and individual.
- A cave is a dark abode representing direful falsity from evil. See AE 655 [8].
- A den represents a place where those who are in self-love seek and desire to profane the church and worship. (AE 325 [10]) Remember what the Lord said to those who defiled the temple: "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" (Matthew 21:13)
- "Prey" signifies the vulnerability of truth without good. See AC 4844.
- "Dens of flesh..." Flesh has many interesting representations. Here is but one. Flesh signifies man's evil will, which is his proprium (own) from birth. See AE 1082 [7].

"Behold, I am against you, says the Lord of hosts..."

- Those who seek to do violence against the Lord, imagining they are strong enough to win, will eventually face the Lord's divine power, be brought under His yoke, and will enter (dive) into hell. See *AC 8626*. The announcement "I am against you" signals the turning and defeat of His adversaries.
- "The Lord of hosts" signifies the Lord marshaling all good and truths (love, faith, knowledges, angels, the church in its complex) to join in on the fight against falsities and evils. See *AE 453 [6]*.
- Burning chariots in smoke and the sword devouring young lions are covered above in **Passages From the Writings** section.
- "The voice of messengers shall be heard no more." Do we not see what this means all on its own? Evil's loud boasting and twisted messages will come to an end. The Lord promises He will expose their empty and worthless system of falsity.

Putting It All Together

1. Just hearing the announcement from the Lord that "they will no longer destroy the church and its holy things" offers comfort to anyone who cares deeply for the church. As in a movie or play, there is a sense of joy when good wins out over evil. I can remember once being in a movie theatre where the audience clapped and cheered for the hero or heroine when they were rescued.
2. Hell has been doing its best to tear the things of the church into little pieces. Hiding in their caves or dens, the evil spirits were highlighting the church's game of self-love. With propriums puffed up, the Ninevites felt so smug and powerful. Hell claps its hands when we make mistakes. When any of us show a flaw, they point to it as a failure for regeneration. Just hearing the Lord say, "I am against you...the voice of your messengers shall be heard no more," means so much. The chariots of hell will go up in smoke. Their sword of false doctrine will lose its cutting edge. It makes me want to cheer. There is good news in this prophecy. We need to seize its power and feel the protection of the Lord rushing in for the rescue.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Do you agree that this section of our study is a message of hope? Why or why not?
2. How well did the derived doctrine section help us learn some of the correspondences in this section? This question is asked often to show that using derived doctrine is not only fun but essential. We want each reader to gain confidence. No harm comes to the Word when we use derived doctrine to study and be helped by the Lord.

3. How strong do you think the voice of hell's messengers is today? Are they stronger than in days of your youth? Were things better in the past, or they better now? What has or hasn't changed?
4. Share with the group one question that occurred to you as you read this section.

Chapter Three

NAHUM 3:1-4

"Woe to the bloody city! It is all full of lies and robbery. Its victim never departs. The noise of a whip and the noise of rattling wheels, of galloping horses, of clattering chariots! Horsemen charge with bright sword and glittering spear. There is a multitude of slain, a great number of bodies, countless corpses- they stumble over the corpses- because of the multitude of harlotries of the seductive harlot, the mistress of sorceries who sells nations through her harlotries, and families through her sorceries."

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "Concerning those who have falsified and adulterated the Word, that they will perish in hell, vers. 1-4."

AC 8908 [4]

- "All with whom there reigns the love of self or the love of the world, that is, who have as their end eminence, or honors, or wealth, or gain, do not hesitate to say and persuade others that what is just is unjust...thus to act the part of witnesses of a lie...'lies' denote the falsities of faith." Many passages are offered to support this teaching. Nahum 3:1 is among the citations.

AR 924

- "A lie signifies falsity of doctrine, because a spiritual lie is nothing else: hence by doing a lie is signified to live according to falsities of doctrine... [this] may be evident from the following passages..." Nahum 3:1 is cited.

TCR 322

- "A lie signifies falsity and false speaking..." Nahum 3:1 is cited.

AR 298

- "...the falsification of the truth of the Word...is a horse...it is from appearances in the spiritual world that a horse signifies the understanding of truth from the Word..." Nahum 3:1 is cited as an example.

AR 437

- "...a chariot signifies doctrines...horses signify the understanding of the Word; and many horses full understanding..." Nahum 3:1-3 is cited along with many other references.

AC 6978

- "That 'blood' signifies the falsification of truth and its profanation, is especially evident in Nahum 3:1-4...that by the 'city of bloods' is signified the doctrine of falsity, thus by 'blood,' falsified and profaned truth, is plain from all the words of its description in the internal sense, and not only in these verses...but also in those which follow...in the whole chapter; for by 'city' is doctrine; its being 'all full of lying and rapine' denotes being full of falsity, and of evil from falsity; 'the voice of a whip and the voice of the sound of a wheel' denotes the defense of falsity by fallacies; 'a neighing horse and a jumping chariot,' denotes from a perverted intellectual and the like doctrine; 'the horseman mounting, the shining of a sword, the flashing of a spear,' denotes combat against truth; 'the multitude of pierced' denotes innumerable falsities thence, and those who are in falsities; 'a heap of carcass, and no end of body' denotes innumerable evils thence, and those who are in evils; 'the whoredoms of a harlot' denote the falsifications themselves, and in like manner 'witchcrafts.'"

AE 355 [23]

- Nahum 3:1-4 "...treats of the violence offered to Divine truth, and its destruction by the falsities of evil; for this is signified by 'the city of bloods,' respecting which what follows is said... 'the whole is filled with lying and rapine,' 'lie' meaning falsity, and 'rapine' violence offered by falsity; and as 'wars' signify spiritual combats, which are the combats of truth against falsity and of falsity against truth, all things pertaining to war, as 'whip,' 'horse,' 'chariot,' 'sword,' and 'spear' signify various things pertaining to spiritual warfare; but what each of these in particular signifies need not be explained here, only what 'horse,' 'horseman,' and 'chariot' signify. 'The voice of the rattling wheel' signifies reasonings from falsities and evils; 'the horse neighing and the chariots leaping' signifies the lust of destroying truths, 'horse' meaning the intellect perverted and 'chariot' the doctrine of falsity, which destroy; 'to neigh' and 'to leap' meaning to be moved to destroy by lust and delight, and 'horseman making to ascend' meaning assault. It is therefore said, 'a multitude of the slain, and a heap of carcasses'; those are called 'slain' who perish from falsities, and 'carcasses' who perish from evils; therefore it is also said, 'because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the harlot, selling the nations by her whoredoms, and families by her sorceries'; 'whoredoms' signify the falsifications of truth, 'harlot' heresy, 'to sell nations' signifies to

become estranged from goods, and 'to sell families by sorcery' to become estranged from truths, 'nations' meaning goods, 'families' truths therefrom, and 'sorceries' the falsities of evil which estrange."

AR 134

- "...by committing whoredom is signified to adulterate and falsify the Word....because there is a marriage of good and truth in each thing of the Word, and this marriage is broken when good is separated and taken away from truth....Since the Jewish church was of such a character, the Jewish nation was therefore called by the Lord an adulterous generation." Nahum 3: 1, 3, 4 are cited among other references.

TCR 314

- "There are many...passages where adulteries and whoredoms mean adulterations and falsifications of the Word...." Nahum 3: 4 is cited as one of them.

AE 141 [14]

- "It is manifest that in these passages by 'whoredoms' are meant the falsifications of truth." Nahum 3:1, 3-4 is cited as an example.

AC 7297 [2]

- "By 'sorcerers,' and 'enchantments,' when mentioned in the Word, is signified the art of presenting falsities so that they appear as truths, and of presenting truths so that they appear as falsities, which is especially done by means of fallacies.... 'the city of bloods' denotes the falsification of truth; 'whoredoms,' the falsified good and truth; 'sorceries,' the arts of presenting falsities as truths, and truths as falsities." Nahum 3:1, 4 is cited.

AC 8904 [10]

- "From these passages it is very manifest that 'to commit adultery'...denote to explain and pervert the truths of the Word from one's own heart, that is, from one's own, in such a manner as the loves of self and of the world persuade one to do; consequently it is to speak lies...falsities..." Nahum 3:1, 4 is cited.

AR 213

- "...he who does not procure to himself from the Lord the good of love and the truth of wisdom...he must appear in the opposite love, which in itself is

profane. This is signified by uncovering the nakedness, and manifesting the shame of it...." Nahum 3:1, 4, 5 are cited.

AE 240 [8]

- "'The city of bloods' signifies the doctrine of falsity which offers violence to the good of charity." Nahum 3:1, 4-5 is cited.

AC 6971 [3]

- "With regard to the signification of a 'voice,' as being what is announced from the Word, be it known that a 'voice' is often spoken of, and is also joined to such things as have no relation to a voice, as here it is (with a whip and wheel)..." Nahum 3:2 is cited.

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- "By whoredoms are meant adulterations and falsifications of the Word." Nahum 3:4 is one of many passages cited.

AC 9188 [5]

- In Nahum 3:4... 'whoredoms' denote perversions of truth; and 'sorceries,' the falsities thence derived."

AE 840 [10 & 11]

- "'To trade,' signifies acquisition and possession of truths...in the contrary sense...they signify the acceptance and appropriation of falsities.... Moreover, 'to sell' and 'to be sold' signify to set aside truths and to be set aside by them, and to accept falsities in their place, and to be captivated by them." Nahum 3:4 is cited.

Derived Doctrine

1. Note that NKJV uses this wording in verse 1: "Its victim never departs." The RSV has this wording: "...no end to the plunder!" This latter translation helps us to see that the bloody city suffers endless plundering. Evil lays waste to the truths and goods of the church continuously.
2. Note that NKJV has "the noise of rattling wheels..." The Writings translate this passage as "the voice of the wheels." Rattling means "rapid succession of sharp, noisy sounds." Wheels signify the doctrine of natural truth. See AC 2686. Can we put these two ideas together? Natural truth must have been going a mile a minute trying to drown the voice of the spiritual sense. Some

- debaters talk loud and over their opponent. Could this be what is being said about the enemy?
3. Similar things can be said about "clattering chariots." "Clattering" means a continuous or confused noise. Doctrine, if not carefully and slowly thought out, can be like a continuous or confused noise to the church. Arguing about the number of angels on the head of a pin might generate much heat but not much light.

Putting It All Together

P&P states that this section is about those who falsify and adulterate the Word. How did they go about doing this?

- They used noise, confusion, fast talking, natural facts tainted with falsity.
- Half-truths were made to look reasonable, logical, and invincible.
- They wanted to set aside truth and offer falsity in its place.
- To accomplish this, they had to have continuous attacks — noisy voices to shout down the truth — plundering the church of its good and truth. How long did they wage this attack? Its victim never departed; there was no end to the plunder!
- How costly! The Word says a multitude was slain. So many were slain that people stumbled over the corpses. The mention of sorcery refers to their process of estrangement. Make a person unhappy with spiritual things, and they will estrange themselves from the Lord.
- Those who loved evil and falsity had bright swords and glittering spears. This represents the lust, thrill, and excitement they felt while plundering the things of the Lord.
- They loved their adulteries and selling off the things that had eternal good and truth. These treasures were traded, sold into bondage and servitude. All the people cared for was dominion and power to do and accomplish what they pleased.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. After including some twenty direct teachings about this section, I began to wonder how many of these passages would be read slowly. So many of them seem repetitious, and yet there are two references that cover a major portion of the meaning of these verses. I worried that readers might give up on the direct teachings and jump to the summary section? What did you do? If you jumped over the passages from the Writings, would you be willing to try reading all of them?
2. Were you able to identify with the meaning of "rattling wheels" and "clattering chariots"? Many conversations we have with people who are anti-religious seem to go nowhere. They are so busy denying and finding exceptions to the Word that they don't hear. Preposterous measures are

- taken to justify or prove what they want as an end. What's your experience? Do we try to deal with them, or do we flee from them so we are not "victims" who never leave? How do you decide?
3. Have you ever experienced some one who burned (lusted) to destroy someone? Each piece of news about their enemy could be turned into something negative. Whatever that person said or did became "grist for the mill." How did you respond to this situation? Why?
 4. Did you marvel at how well these verses were covered in so many separate passages from the Writings? At one point during my research, I had twenty different volumes on my desk. Talk to each other about differences in your study of sections that rely mostly on direct teachings compared with sections that rely more heavily on derived doctrine.
 5. Let's ask a question about repetition. Is repetition a friend of learning or a detriment? Certainly with children repetition is a necessary experience. Why do you think there are repetitive passages or teachings in the Word and Writings? How or why does this repetition happen?

NAHUM 3:5

"Behold, I am against you,' says the Lord of hosts; 'I will lift your skirts over your face, I will show the nations your nakedness, and the kingdoms your shame."

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...all their adulterations will be uncovered...ver. 5"

AC 5433 [6]

- "...'nakedness' signifies being without truths...In Nahum 3:5...were 'showing the nations the nakedness' denotes to show ugliness; for all ugliness is from want of truths, and all beauty is from truths."

AC 9917 [5]

- "In Nahum...3:5 'to uncover the skirts upon the faces' denotes to remove external things so that internal ones may appear; for in various ways the external things of the natural man hide the internal things, which are hypocrisies, deceits, lies, hatreds, revenges, adulteries, and other like things; and therefore when the external things are taken away, the internal ones appear in their uncleanness and filthiness."

AC 9960 [11]

- "In Nahum 3:5...‘uncovering the skirts’ denotes to take away the externals so that the interiors appear; ‘the nakedness which shall be shown to the nations, and the shame which shall be shown to the kingdoms,’ denote infernal loves, which are the loves of self and of the world, which defile the interiors."

Representations in these verses requiring the use of derived doctrine:

"Behold, I am against you."

- "Behold" signifies thought and reflection; acknowledgment and confession of the Lord. See AC 2329, 2770, 3495. So the word "Behold" seems to call us to acknowledge and listen to the Lord. Observe what I am about to do! Learn of Me!
- Once the Lord begins His war against the hells, "they can never rise up." (AC 8626)

"I will lift your skirts over your face..."

- Although I could find no teaching to back up what I am about to suggest, I think it might be in line with the internal sense. A skirt covers the body from the waist down to the feet. Within that area reside physiological organs that correspond to conjugal love. Could the Lord's lifting the skirt to expose their ugly nakedness be a Divine investigation of "unclean and filthy things" pretending to be conjugal love? Their gross disfigurement, disconnection from the Lord, prevented such beauty and love from ever happening.

Nations and Kingdoms

- "Nations" and "Kingdoms" will be shown nakedness and shame. Is there an important correspondence here for us to see?
- Nations signify those who are in the good of love and charity from the Lord.(AR 667)
- Kingdoms signify the church. (AR 33) "Thy kingdom come" represents that the Lord shall reign. (AR 839 [10]) A kingdom in the Word represents Heaven and the Church. (AE 48)
- The call to the nations and the call to the kingdoms to see Nineveh's errors seem appropriate. Learning from the example of disorder reminds the faithful, by example, specifically what they need to shun as sins against the Lord.

Putting It All Together

1. The teachings within this section seem straightforward. The Lord promises an uncovering of hell's hypocrisies, deceits, lies, hatreds, revenges, adulteries, and other hidden disorders. In other words, the pretentious game is over for those who hate the Lord and His Love and Wisdom.
2. Witnessing the Lord's disclosure of the sham is important. We need to see in the external world things that reflect what is hidden within. As we see cruelty in the world, we have a chance to see that the potential to be cruel is within us. As we learn to fear disorder, the Writings tell us that our fear frightens Hell. They don't like us to feel revolted by their disorder. As we dislike hell and its manifestation, hell loses power within and wants to flee from our presence. Therefore, it makes sense that the Lord would want to show every nation and every kingdom the nakedness and shame of Nineveh. As angels draw near, hell flees.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Do you sense any anger or heartlessness in this portion of Nahum's prophecy? In its place, there seems to be a calm, a serene spiritual sense, telling us all will be taken care of for those who have feared hell's clever pretenses. What message did you hear?
2. Once the Lord begins His war against hell, "they can never rise up again." Do you feel a question popping up: "When will that happen?" We would like to have a safe feeling and assurance that nothing can hurt or harm us. How often does the Lord war against hell? How can we learn to notice when He does?
3. The work *Conjugal Love* teaches that married couples in heaven have spiritual offspring. Do you recall what is taught about couples in hell? Are they able to have offspring?

NAHUM 3:6-7

"I will cast abominable filth upon you, make you vile, and make you a spectacle. It shall come to pass that all who look upon you will flee from you, and say, 'Nineveh is laid to waste! Who will bemoan her?' Where shall I seek comforters for you?"

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...their adulterations will be uncovered, and they will perish, vers. 6-7..."

Derived Doctrine

"I will cast abominable filth upon you..."

- We need to remind ourselves that the Lord casts no one into hell; the evil do this to themselves. See AC 2121 or 9642 [6]. The same principle is true about casting abominable filth on anyone. Doing such a thing would be unbecoming of a perfect Lord. Anger, wrath, and getting even are not of His nature. The abominable filth does not come from the Lord. Rather, it becomes apparent when the presence of the Lord's light reveals the true nature of self-love: filth.

"[I will] make you vile..."

- The Writings explain what makes for a vile life. It is one who feigns "good for the sake of the evil that is within, in order to obtain some end, to which the seeming good serves as a means." (AE 403 [19])

"[I will] make you a spectacle..."

- Can we change this wording to "I will make a public example of you"? The RSV uses the word "gazingstock." Regardless, the nations around Nineveh would see her for what she really was within her soul.

"It shall come to pass..."

- "It shall come to pass..." is not in the RSV. That translation goes directly to "And all who look on you..." Since we don't have this portion of the passage in the Writings, we don't know whether to keep "it shall come to pass" or press on. However, there is a passage in Luke where the shepherds said one to another "let us go see this thing which has come to pass." (Luke 2:15) "Come to pass" is used by the Word, but we have no explanation.

"...all who look upon you will flee from you..."

- In Psalm 104:7, we read: "At Your rebuke they fled; at the voice of Your thunder they hastened away." AE 405 [21] explains that these words mean that the Lord will provide a way to escape and to be rescued. "Falsities are dispersed by truths and evils by goods from heaven." Nineveh's fall will serve as a signal that all nations need to flee from similar mistakes.

"Nineveh is laid to waste! Who will bemoan her?"

- Can we recall what a wastefulness Nineveh passed through? She had the Ancient Word. She had a view of the Divine Representatives and gave it away.

Nay, she sold it for a mess of pottage? She betrayed that gift for thirty pieces of silver? She sold it into harlotry? Can anyone in the light of the Lord really have pity for her or make excuses?

Putting It All Together

1. This section illustrates our need for derived doctrinal research. Only one reference is cited, and P&P gives only one sentence: "their adulterations will be uncovered, and they will perish." But even with our doctrinal "short fall," I think we can see how and why the wasting of Nineveh occurred. She turned away from the greatest gift she had from the Lord and sought her own ends.
2. Obviously, we need to see this. We have been made aware of the power of the Lord's Second Coming. We have the internal sense as revealed by the Lord. We must take and use these gifts wisely and with love. We need to approach the Lord with prayerful hearts and ask His help to keep us safe and within the walls of the Holy City New Jerusalem. May He help us avoid the sins Nineveh committed and resist making excuses for such errors and sins.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. It is sometimes difficult but always important to keep the flow of ideas connected to the internal sense when we have only one direct teaching from the Writings. Derived doctrine can help just so far, and then we have some huge gaps to fill. Taking notes, drawing out concepts can and will help. What ideas, insights, or examples can you share with the group about this section?
2. Have no pity on Nineveh. Make no excuses for her. Do you think there might be someone found who would take up her cause and complain for her? It is amazing how many strange ideas and concepts get support and sympathy for their cause. Any examples come to mind? What makes it easy or difficult to excuse evil? What are some of the arguments used for and against sins like Nineveh's?
3. There have been five churches in the spiritual history of the human race. Each one began with a new vision of truth, and each one but the last one eventually fell. The New Church is to be the crown of all the churches, the one that will not fall. How can we help our church keep from repeating the mistakes of fallen churches? What makes our church any different than the churches that fell before it?

NAHUM 3:8-10

"Are you better than No Amon that was situated by the river, that had the waters around her, whose rampart was the sea, whose wall was the sea? Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was boundless; Put and Lubim were your helpers. Yet she was carried away, she went into captivity; her young children also were dashed to pieces at

the head of every street; they cast lots for her honorable men, and all her great men were bound in chains."

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...that knowledges and scientifics will not save, because they will be dissipated, vers. 8-10."

AC 1164 [4]

- "In Nahum 3:9 'Cush and Egypt were her strength, and there was no end; Put and Lubim were thy helpers'...this is said of the church vastated, and here in like manner 'Egypt' denotes memory-knowledges, and 'Cush' knowledges."

AC 1166

- "That by 'Put,' or 'Lybia,' in the Word, are signified the knowledges from the literal sense by which in like manner false principles are confirmed..."

AR 337

- "In the spiritual sense by kings those who are in truths are signified, by the great ones those who are in goods...what the great ones signify, is manifest in...Nahum 3:10...for great is predicated of good..."

AE 408 [3]

- "'Great ones' in the Word signify internal goods which are the goods of the internal or spiritual man, because 'great' and 'greatness' in the Word are predicated of good...'great ones'...signify all the goods and truths that are with man, thus the goods and truths both of the internal or spiritual man and of the external or natural man.... Like things are signified by 'great ones' elsewhere in the Word [namely in...Nahum 3:10...]"

AE 6526 [26]

- "In Nahum 3:10...her infants were dashed in pieces at the head of all the streets, and over her honorable ones they cast a lot, and all her great ones were bound with chains. Here also 'infants' mean the truths that are firstborn and vivified, and 'to be dashed in pieces at the head of all the streets' signifies to be scattered and to perish: 'honorable ones' signify the goods of love; 'to cast a lot over them' signifies dispersion of these; 'great ones' signify the truths of good; and 'to be bound with chains' signifies to be tied by falsities so

that truth cannot come forth. This is said of 'the city of bloods' which signifies the doctrine in which truths of the Word are falsified."

Derived Doctrine

"Are you any better than No Amon..."

- The name No Amon is the Hebrew name for the Egyptian capital, Thebes. The Assyrians (Nineveh) in 663 BC ruthlessly sacked Thebes. Why are we being told this historical fact? Is there a spiritual lesson to be learned? Consider this teaching in AC 8223: "When evil spirits wish to inflict evil on good, they are grievously punished, and that the evil which they intended to others returns upon themselves." Are we seeing such a "law" being acted out in this lesson? Nineveh, are you any better than Thebes? What you did to them is now happening to you.

"That was situated by the river, that had waters around her ..."

- Biblical scholars footnote this verse to tell us this river is the Nile river in Egypt. They suggest that the waters around her refer to the many finger-like canals that feed off of the Nile. AC 5196 gives us the following representation of the Nile: "The Nile, or river of Egypt, represented the sensuous things subject to the intellectual part, thus the memory knowledges derived of them; for these are the ultimates of the spiritual things of the Lord's kingdom."

"Whose rampart was the sea, whose wall was the sea?"

- "Every passage in the Word in which the name of a city occurs (to angels a city) never means a city, but always something doctrinal or else heretical...(angels ideas are celestial and spiritual) the celestial and spiritual...is...described by 'cities,' 'palaces,' 'houses,' 'walls,' 'foundations of walls,' 'ramparts,' ...by 'ramparts' doctrinal things only are meant." (AC 402 [2, 3, 4])

Cush

- "'Cush' denotes those knowledges from the Word that confirm falsities which are hatched from memory-knowledges.... 'Egypt' denotes memory-knowledges; and 'Cush' the knowledges of the interior things of the Word, which are the boundaries as far as memory-knowledges go." (AC 1164 [3])

Put, or Libya

- Note in AC 1166 "Put" and "Lybia" signify the same thing as Cush. They signify knowledges collected from the literal sense of the Word that are applied to confirm false principles.

Putting It All Together

1. I almost wish we had shared this teaching at the beginning of our study:
"...the things of the literal sense of the Word are general vessels which receive truths, and because the quality of these vessels does not appear...until they have received truths...they are generals, which first must be learned ... in order that he may receive the particulars and singulars in a fit and proper manner..." (AC 6222 [2])
Our study of Nahum has many, many particulars. Which particular do we align with another particular? What are we to do if they don't seem to fit together? Frustration and disappointment can come in and dash our "children" into pieces. Our "great men" will appear to be bound in chains. Let's begin our summary with the generals. P&P gives us a general. Say these words over a few times so that the verses will begin to come into your mind "in a fit and proper manner." "Knowledges and scientifics will not save." "Knowledges and scientifics will not save."
2. Memory-knowledges about the Word will not uphold or sustain the spiritual life. The memory of the literal sense has "the great ones" present. Egypt and Cush can confirm things from the literal sense, but within them are some "hatched" falsities that memory-knowledges can twist in ways that will confirm anything they want. Hatched ideas. We don't have to go far to discover "hatched" ideas in the world that get confirmed with the greatest of ease.
3. The Nineveh state of mind will ruthlessly attack Egypt, Cush, and Libya and knock down the ramparts (doctrinals) that had been built with the idea that they would be protected by the sea (knowledge) and that the sea would survive any attack.
But there was and is a missing ingredient in this story. Love of the Lord and His truth. We need a commitment to love truth for truth's sake; we need to love the Lord and the neighbor more than self. Instead, the danger of the ages was and is to take the Word and confirm whatever makes us most comfortable. The process of regeneration sounds hard and painful. Our natural side urges us to find an easier way.
4. Nineveh struck with the intent to destroy the representatives of the literal sense. There was no interest in following truth from generals to particulars so singulars would fit in a proper manner. They wanted to be free to hatch every falsity and evil that would suit their goal. In the end, they fell into the very trap they wished for others. In shame their name and legacy was shown as a bloody city where doctrine and the Word were falsified.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. As you find a general teaching, look at the doctrinal quotes and let the Lord fill them with truth so they can be ordered. Use this study guide to practice receiving general and particular truths. Write down one example of a general truth you have learned and some particular truths that go with it.
2. What "great men" have you seen taken prisoner? Think of two examples from real life. Start by thinking of ideas you might have had in your youth and outgrew. If nothing replaced that idea, the great men got shackled in chains. Can you think of ways this teaching applies to parenting?
3. What were the correspondences of the children being dashed to pieces? The ramparts? The wall? Write down two practical examples of these truths being enacted in real life.
4. Remember that "knowledges and scientifics will not save." What do we need to add to our knowledge? How can we do that? How can we help our children do that? Talk about how we learn and how this teaching may apply to education.

NAHUM 3:11-12

"You also will be drunk; you will be hidden; you also will seek refuge from the enemy. All your strongholds are fig trees with ripened figs: if they are shaken, they fall into the mouth of the eater."

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...inasmuch as they do not protect, that those [of the church] will perish from falsities of evil, vers. 11, 12..."

AR 721

- "That to be made drunk with that wine signifies to be insane in spiritual things, may be seen...from other passages in the Word...." Nahum 3:11 is cited.

AR 335

- "...a fig tree from correspondence signifies a man's natural good conjoined with his spiritual good ...because the natural man separated from the spiritual man perverts by reasoning the knowledges of good and truth...it follows that this is signified by the fig-tree shaken by a great wind.... A fig

tree signifies natural good in man, because every tree signifies something of the church in man..." Nahum 3:12 is cited.

AE 403 [23]

- "In Nahum 3:12...this is said of the 'city of bloods' which signifies doctrine in which truths are falsified and goods adulterated. This is compared to 'fig trees with the first-ripe figs, if they be shaken they fall upon the mouth of the eater,' and this signifies that the goods therein are not goods, however much they may appear to be goods; and that such are not received, or if received are received only in the memory and not the heart. That 'if they be shaken they fall' signifies that they are not goods although they appear to be goods, because they are 'the first-ripe figs'; and their falling 'upon the mouth of the eater' signifies that they are not received even in the memory. That 'the mouth of the eater' signifies nonreception is evident from appearances in the spiritual world; for those who commit anything to the memory appear to receive it with the mouth; so 'to fall upon the mouth' signifies not to receive even in the memory but only to hear, and also if they do receive, that it is only in the memory and not in the heart. 'Fig trees with their first-ripe figs' may also mean genuine goods, of which the like is true as of those who are in the falsities of evil."

Derived Doctrine

"...you will be hidden..."

- *AC 222* shares this meaning of being hidden: "...to 'hide themselves from the face of Jehovah,' means to be afraid of the dictate, as is want to be the case with those who are conscious of (their) evil..." *AE 329 [27]* says that "hidden" signifies an apparent withdrawal of the divine truth from those who are in falsities and their evils.

"You also will seek refuge from your enemy..."

- This has an interesting meaning if we first determine who the enemy is. In the eyes of "the bloody city," the Lord is the enemy. Seeking refuge in the good sense means being in a state of blamelessness and exempt from punishment. (*AC 9011*) Nineveh, to the end, tried to look blameless and did not want to hear condemnation. Therefore, they sought refuge from the Lord and thought He was their enemy. He wanted to call them to repentance, but they saw no reason or need to repent.

"...your strongholds are fig trees..."

- AC 717 [18] teaches that strongholds signify the things of self-intelligence confirmed by the letter of the Word, which can be drawn on like an armory to confirm falsity.

Putting It All Together

The passages from the Writings and the derived doctrine make our summary quite clear. The hiding, the seeking refuge, the strongholds reveal the intention of the evil people. Even the picture or representation of the shaken tree dropping figs into the mouth of evil is so rich and full of meaning. There is no effort on their part. Life is easy and effortless. Spiritually alert people would go and pick figs. They would be selective. To be under the tree with mouth wide open seems to be not only lazy but indiscriminate and stupefied.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. As always, we need to find ways that these teachings apply in the situations of everyday life. How and why do you see this kind of hiding in real life? What about spiritual laziness? What is self-intelligence? Then ask yourself how you can learn from this lesson so that you can avoid the failures outlined for us by the Lord.

NAHUM 3:13-17

"Surely, your people in your midst are women! The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies; Fire shall devour the bars of your gates. Draw your water for the siege! Fortify your strongholds! Go into the clay and tread the mortar! Make strong the brick kiln! There the fire will devour you, the sword will cut you off; It will eat you up like a locust. Make yourself many – like the locust! Make yourself many – like the swarming locusts! You have multiplied your merchants more than the stars of heaven. The locust plunders and flies away. Your commanders are like swarming locusts, and your generals like great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges on a cold day; when the sun rises they flee away, and the place where they are is not known."

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...howsoever they had confirmed themselves by these knowledges and scientifics, but in vain, vers. 13-17..."

AC 1296

- "In Nahum 3:14,15...‘to tread the clay’ denotes falsities; ‘to repair the brick-kiln’ denotes the derivative worship; ‘the fire’ is the punishment of cupidities; ‘the sword’ is the punishment of falsities."

AC 6669 [2]

- In Nahum 3:14, 15 "...to tread the clay denotes to think from evil what is false."

AC 7519 [9]

- In Nahum 3:14 15 "...where ‘going into the mire’ denotes into falsity; ‘treading the clay,’ evil; ‘the brick kiln,’ or ‘furnace for brick,’ denotes the falsities which they invent, and which are injected by the evil...‘fire’ denotes the cupidity of evil...‘the sword’ denotes falsity."

AC 7643 [6]

- In Nahum 3:15-17...the subject here treated of is the ‘city of bloods,’ by which is signified the doctrine of falsity; and because falsity and evil are especially multiplied in the extremes of the natural, for therein are the fallacies of the senses that originate from the objects of the world, and of the earth, and also pleasures from various kinds of appetites, therefore the multiplication of evil and falsity is also described by ‘the caterpillar and the locust’..."

AR 424

- In Nahum 3:15-17 "That falsities in the outmost things, because they consume the truths and goods of the church springing up in man, are signified by the locust which consume the grass in the plains and the herbs in the fields..."

AE 179 [10]

- In Nahum 3:14-15 "'To draw waters for the siege and to strengthen the fortresses' is to fortify falsities by various means against truths; ‘to go into the mire and tread the clay’ is to confirm falsities by fictions and fallacies; doctrine thence derived is called ‘a brick kiln,’ because infernal love is strengthened by falsifications; it is therefore said that ‘the fire shall devour, and the sword cut off’; ‘fire’ is infernal love, and a ‘sword’ is falsity combating and destroying truth....what is fabricated is a product of man’s self-intelligence..."

AE 540 [8]

- In Nahum 3:14-15 "'the waters for the siege' mean the falsities by which they endeavor to destroy truths; 'to strengthen the fortresses' signifies to fortify falsities by such things as appear to be truths; 'to go into mire and tread the pitch' signifies to make them appear to cling together, 'pitch' meaning falsity from evil conjoining; 'to repair the brick-kiln' signifies to repair the doctrine framed out of falsified truths and fictions, 'bricks' signifying the falsities that are fabricated and do not cohere with truths; 'fire shall devour thee' signifies that they will be destroyed by the evils of their loves; and 'the sword shall cut thee off' signify that they will be destroyed by falsities."

AE 543 [10]

- In Nahum 3:15-17 "...the destruction of those who are in a faith and life according to that doctrine is signified by 'the fire shall devour thee; the sword shall cut thee off,' the fire that shall devour' signifying evil destroying good, and 'the sword' falsity destroying truth; and because evil and falsity from the sensual man are meant it is said, 'the caterpillar shall devour thee; make thyself many as the caterpillar; make thyself many as locust; thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of the heavens.' Multiplication like that of the caterpillar and of the locust is mentioned because falsifications of the Word are made in the greatest abundance by those who are sensual, thus by the sensual man, for the sensual man is signified here by the 'caterpillar and locust' The sensual man falsifies the Word more than others, because the outmost sense of the Word...is for the natural and sensual man, while the interior sense is for the spiritual man; consequently when a man is not a spiritual man...he does not see goods and truths in the Word, but adapts its outmost sense to corroborate his falsities and evils. 'Merchants' signify those who falsify and who communicate and who offer for sale."

Derived Doctrine

"Surely, your people in your midst are women!"

- People in the good sense have relation to truth, and in the opposite sense to falsity. (AC 1259)
- Woman in the good sense signifies [the church] the affection of truth, and in the opposite sense a love of false principles. (AR 620)
- "Midst" signifies what is primary, or principal and inmost. See AC 2940; AR 9331; or AE 313.

"The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies..."

- Gates signify the passage to the rational mind. See AC 2943.

- Land signifies various things: See *AC* 2571.
 - The internal man of the church.
 - The region where the church is.
 - The church itself.
 - The Lord's kingdom in heaven and on earth.
 - The doctrine of love and charity, where the faith of the church resides.
- Wide signifies the quality in the truths of doctrine. See *AE* 629 [17].
- Open is the opposite of closed or hidden.
- Enemies signify evils, falsity, perversion, the hells, self-love...!

"Fire shall devour the bars of your gates..."

- Gates signify stability and protection, and bars signify the power belonging to the truth that is from good. (*AC* 9496 [3])
- Fire in the Word signifies some kind of love in a good or bad sense. (*AC* 934)

Putting It All Together

1. The Lord often asks questions or gives the impression He is not aware of the answer. In reality, it is humanity who doesn't know its real state. So the Lord asks a question to get us to think and reflect. Notice how the Lord starts this thinking process. "Surely" there is a woman in your midst. Is there a church within you? Do you have an affection for truth? What is your primary inmost?
 2. Then the Lord reveals to them that they are leaving themselves in a vulnerable state. Their gates are wide open. They have loosened their internal restraints so much they have left themselves unprotected. The enemy enters in through the gate meeting no resistance. Let's look at a few of the things the Lord showed them they brought into their midst:
 - Fallacies of their senses.
 - Satisfying their physical pleasures from "various appetites."
 - Living with fictions and fallacies.
 - Walking in mire making bricks.
 - Repairing the brick kiln so that they could more efficiently fabricate and corroborate lies.
 - Multiplying and merchandising the lies of the heart.
 - Imagining they were growing larger than the Lord's truth.
- Given the enormity of their self delusion is it any wonder that when the Lord cried out "Halt! Halt!" the Word reports to us that "No one turned around."

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. I left out the meanings of some parts of this passage. What was left out? Can you write up their significations? For instance, what is meant by locust and grasshoppers, generals, drawing water for the siege, etc.?

2. The making of bricks reminded me of the children of Israel making bricks for the Egyptians. I also thought of the tower of Babel. They made bricks too. They had slime for mortar. Can these stories be of help to the theme of Nahum?
3. Think about what gives you a sense of security in your life. What constitutes real security? What gives the appearance of security? How can you tell the difference?
4. Look back at the list of correspondences for "land." Talk about what makes up the "land" in your life, your community, your church, etc. What are the gates to this land? Who opens or closes them?

NAHUM 3:18

"Your shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria; Your nobles rest in the dust. Your people are scattered on the mountains, and no one gathers them."

Passages From the Writings

P&P

- "...neither will reasonings save, ver. 18..."

Derived Doctrine

"Your shepherds slumber..."

- A shepherd is one who leads to good. (*AC 6052*)
- Sleeping or slumbering signifies that one believes that he lives, thinks, speaks, and acts from himself. See *AC 147*.
- To sleep means to live a natural life as distinguished from a spiritual one. See *AC 187 [2]*.

"O king of Assyria..."

- A king in the positive sense represents divine truth and divine good that are in the Lord and from Him. (*AE 446 [16]*) In the opposite sense, a king represents dominant evils and falsities that are against the Lord. (*AC 1661-1664*)
- Assyria signifies reasonings from scientific things in the memory knowledges that are sometimes mad reasonings which become the source of falsities. See *AC 120* and *AE 811 [10]*.

"Your nobles rest in the dust..."

- Let's look first at the meaning of dust. Dust represents the sensuous life that can only live from what was, or is, physical and material. See *AC 242*.
- Nobles in the positive sense represent those who teach and lead. See *AE 644*.
- Putting these two together, do we not see that those who were teaching and leading were doing so from physical and material ends? They based their facts on things that are full of "dust."

"Your people are scattered on the mountains..."

- "Scattered" speaks of disunity, confusion, lack of order. It also represents not receiving or acknowledging the Lord. See *AC 1309*.
- Mountains in the positive sense represent celestial principles of the Lord and also the good of love and charity.
- So we are given a picture of the great loss the people suffered because the nobles, the shepherds, failed to lead in the ways of the Lord.

"And no one gathers them."

- What can we learn from this haunting refrain? There is sadness in these words. Shepherds asleep. Nobles not teaching or leading. The people scattered.

Putting It All Together

The literal sense is so clear when we draw doctrine to explain it. How important it is to have wise teachers and shepherds in the church. How wise it is for every person to study the Word to learn the things that are not dust.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Both lay people and priests need to study the Lord's Word. We need to inspire each other. Can you see how important this mutuality is for the health of the church? Talk about it.
2. What did you learn from this verse about the danger that lurks behind spiritual lethargy?
3. Think of a false principle you have encountered. What was the dust on which it was based?
4. Are we a people scattered upon the mountain of the Lord? Why or why not? How are you or can you be a part of the current state of the New Church?

References from the Writings concerning these verses:

P&P

- "...that there is nothing sound, wherefore ruin will overtake them, ver. 19."

AC 9163 [5]

- "'There is no scar of thy breach; thy blow is desperate (Nahum iii. 19)'. In these passages a 'breach' signifies injury done to the truths and goods of faith, and thus to the church; 'healing' denotes amending and restoration."

Derived Doctrine

"Your injury has no healing..."

- Healing has a wonderful correspondence. The Lord alone heals and preserves us from evils. See AC 8365. Healing is a process of reformation. Truth and its derived good take away the hurts of evil and bring about change and restoration. See AE 283 [9].
- The "no healing" of someone's injury tells us that without the Lord's help with reformation, we remain troubled and like an open sore.

"...your wound is severe."

- A wound signifies a lack of soundness (wholeness) because faith and charity have become desolate. See AC 431.
- A wound signifies that some grievous hurt has been done to the affection flowing out of love. See AC 9056.
- A wound signifies an injury that has been done to the mind and spiritual life by falsity. See AE 444.

"All who hear news of you will clap their hands over you."

- Hearing represents obedience; it represents an acknowledgment and confession that will be made where the church is. See AC 427.
- Although we have no teachings telling us what "news" means, we can see that it is the "Good News" that the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns for ever and ever. Hell has had its time. It has inflicted its wounds. But the good news tells us that its reign of terror is over.
- Thus, the clapping of hands is a joyous celebration. Hands represent having a feeling of confidence and power to serve the Lord and the neighbor. See AC 878.

"For upon whom has not your wickedness passed continually?

- We can say Amen to this. We know how often hell has inflicted us with its painful ways. Many a time we wanted to be free of its influence but fell under its sway in a moment of weakness.
- Paul once said these words: "That which I know I should do, I do not; and that which I know I should not do, I do."
- When the Lord's New Church is established, such things will pass away.

Putting It All Together

There is a sense of great celebration in this closing verse. The news that hell is not going to get well is not a celebration for those who are lost in Hell. It is not a gloating time. Instead, it is a celebration that hell's reign of terror is finished. Hell's open sores will never heal. All of hell's bragging about its health and vitality is ended. We have been greatly afflicted by hell for generations. But now the Lord declares its end. He will heal and make well all who turn to Him for reformation. With such news, we will indeed want to clap our hands. Confidence and power will be ours through the Lord.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. What thoughts and feelings surfaced for you while reading this dramatic finish?
2. Did some kind of impatience for this to happen pop into your mind?
3. Did any mocking voice come to say, "It isn't so?"
4. What "open sores" have you seen in the world? How are they to be healed?
5. Healing is a wonderful act of the Lord. A cut or sore forms a scab, and the scab protects the sore while it heals. Eventually, the scab falls off, and within a period of time, the scar is not visible to the naked eye. Isn't that process significant in the spiritual sense as well?

Looking back over the three chapters of Nahum, are you able to summarize the spiritual message? Our summary should be different from those that focus on the man Nahum and the country of Nineveh. The spiritual sense is about the Lord. It is about His Church. It is about our spiritual growth. Focusing on history and nations will leave us detached and uninvolved. Can you summarize the message of Nahum in a spiritual and personal way?

Epilogue: A Summary of the Three Chapters of Nahum

The following summaries draw and expand on the outline given in Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms.

CHAPTER ONE

The last judgment will come upon those who are in evil. What is within the heart of evil is exposed when Divine presence sheds its light. Nothing shall be hidden nor shall darkness cover it anymore, for the Divine Presence sees everything. Those who are in a perverted church will not endure.

But for the faithful who trust in the Lord, there will be Divine protection. Their falsities from ignorance will be accepted and removed by the Lord.

CHAPTER TWO

The advent of the Lord will bring about a new church from Him. His advent will not be a mild entrance. His presence will cause a violent commotion. There will be a shaking and upheaval, and the things of evil will be taken away from the evil people. They will lose their power to hurt or destroy the holy things of the Lord's new church.

CHAPTER THREE

Those who falsified and adulterated the Word will perish in hell. The extent of their adulteration will be uncovered. All of the reasoning they pull from the scientifics and historical precedence will not stand in the presence of the Lord. All of their reasonings will not save them because there is and was no soundness in them. Their shepherds and nobles were asleep and resting in dust. They will be scattered, and there will be no one to gather them.

The righteous in the Lord's sight will clap their hands and rejoice that the church of Nineveh will no longer afflict or hurt them anymore because the Great Healer has brought His Reformation to the church. We have a sure promise from the Lord that is borne out in these words written in the book of Revelation:

"And He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away..."

Behold, I make all things new." Revelation 21: 3-5.

The Book of Zephaniah

How To Use This Study Guide

1. A slow unhurried reading of Zephaniah is essential. Reading the chapter before looking at the notes, while working with the notes, and after finishing with the notes will give each researcher a powerful sense of the series of meanings within each chapter. It is important to be comfortable with all the names and places in the prophecy and to understand the announcements the prophet makes on behalf of the Lord. When possible, historical information will be included in the notes to increase reading comprehension and enhance application.
2. Our study of each chapter of Zephaniah will begin with quotes from a work of the Writings called *Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms*. This work includes a verse-by-verse overview of all three chapters of Zephaniah that provide general information about the internal sense. Our research will help move us from the generals to the particulars of the internal sense.
3. Another important reference tool is *Searle's General Index to Swedenborg's Scripture Quotations*. This reference is used to find passages in the Writings where a verse(s) from the Word is either explained specifically or used to illustrate a doctrinal point that we can use in our study. There is also another use of this work. As we study, each researcher will be led by the Lord's Providence in myriad ways, according to specific needs or states. Knowing how to use this book will help each of us to explore relevant topics and look up related passages to increase our knowledge of the three-fold Word.
4. You will soon discover that not every verse, word, name, etc. is directly quoted in the Writings. But there are often other references to the same name, place, or thing in the explanation of a different verse of the Word. The hope is that reflection on these other doctrinal explanations will help us see possible applications to our study of Zephaniah. We will need to use "derived doctrine" often. Please don't run away from this maligned term. If we use it properly and admit openly that it is derived doctrine, we bring no harm to the internal sense.
5. Keep some kind of notebook handy during your study times. Write out insights, questions, and any summaries you find helpful in organizing your thoughts about each chapter. **The goal of this study guide is not to give a detailed summary of the internal sense but to start each researcher's quest for deeper insight.**
6. At the end of each chapter in the study guide, you will find a study review. The review includes a summary of each section to help you reinforce and build on your understanding of several of the key points.
7. Begin each study unit with a devotional prayer asking the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts. Certainly beginning in this sphere has the power to inspire and open our minds with a higher spiritual priority that will keep us in the company of the

Lord's angels. As the Writings teach, we must seek to love truth for truth's sake. Such an approach will free each reader from preconceived ideas that might limit his or her ability to "see" the intent and message of the Lord's Word.

Introduction

As we prepare to study the literal and spiritual senses of the **Book of Zephaniah**, let's look at some historical facts that will help us enter into the eternal message of the Lord's Word. First, let's consider the following questions:

1. Who was Zephaniah?
2. What kings of Judah preceded Zephaniah's prophetic work, and what king was reigning during his prophecy?
3. What spiritual issues did Zephaniah address on behalf of the Lord?
4. What hope did Zephaniah bring to Judah from the Lord?

WHO WAS ZEPHANIAH?

Zephaniah gives us a glimpse of his heritage. Four generations are mentioned:

- The son of Cush
- The son of Gedaliah
- The son of Hezekiah
- In the days of Josiah, the son of Amon, king of Judah.

Zephaniah may be the only minor prophet of the Lord to have royal family connections. Scholars identify him as the great-great-grandson of Hezekiah, the twelfth monarch of the kingdom of Judah. Hezekiah reigned for 29 years and was considered a good king in that he sought to lead his people in the ways of the Lord. Some scholars have dubbed Zephaniah "the royal prophet." It is believed that he was born during the reign of King Manasseh and that he worked as a prophet during the reign of Josiah.

If Zephaniah is truly of royal lineage, is this of any spiritual significance? This is a question worthy of speculation, but I found no direct teachings to help us answer this question. My inclination is to follow the teachings regarding the correspondence of "kings" and the "sons of kings," and of "hidden" or "concealed" when spoken of in reference to the Lord.

Kings represent goods and truths having the upper hand. Kings also represent the dominant evils and falsities against which the Lord fought. (*Arcana Coelestia [AC] 1661-1664*) Kings signify divine truth and divine good in and from the Lord, as noted in *Apocalypse Explained (AE) 446 [10]*.

Zephaniah's name means **Jehovah hides; Jehovah has hidden or concealed; Jehovah of darkness**. We are not given direct teachings as to why the Lord would call a prophet, at this precise moment, whose name means hidden, concealed, or darkness. We can reflect on possible reasons. Was Zephaniah kept, or protected by the Lord, from the influence and disorders of his times? Or, could it be a representation of the state and spiritual condition of the people to whom he spoke? Had the falsity of the church obscured the light of heaven, concealing or hiding truth in the darkness of ignorance? The idea of something hidden is clearly borne out in Chapters 2 and 3, where the Lord draws out from hiding the meek from among the haughty. The hidden are the remains the Lord uses to restore a New Church.

WHAT KINGS OF JUDAH PRECEDED ZEPHANIAH'S PROPHECY, AND WHAT KING WAS RULING DURING THE TIME OF HIS PROPHECY?

The kings of Judah preceding Zephaniah's prophecy are the first three in boldface type below. Zephaniah's prophecy came during the reign of Josiah. During the period beginning with Hezekiah and ending with Jehoahaz, spiritual issues fluctuated according to the leadership of the king. Here is a list of all of the kings (and one queen) of Judah for your reflection:

The Rulers of Judah

Rehoboam reigned 17 years
Abijah reigned 3 years
Asa reigned 41 years
Jehoshaphat reigned 25 years
Ahaziah reigned 1 year
Athaliah (queen) reigned 6 years
Joash reigned 40 years
Amaziah reigned 29 years
Uzziah reigned 52 years
Jotham reigned 16 years
Ahaz reigned 16 years
Hezekiah reigned 29 years
Manasseh reigned 55 years (**695–642 BC**)
Amon reigned 2 years (**642–640 BC**)
Josiah reigned 31 years (**640–619 BC**)
Jehoahaz reigned 3 months
Jehoiakim reigned 11 years
Jehoiachin reigned 3 months
Zedekiah reigned 11 years

Manasseh became the king of Judah at the age of twelve. For many years, Manasseh permitted cults to exist in Jerusalem and the land of Judah to appease the cult-

followers among the people. He allowed and participated in human sacrifices. He even offered one of his own sons as a sacrifice. This is horrific to think about.

When Manasseh was taken prisoner by the Assyrians, he "found religion." He realized he had been disobedient to the Lord. He returned to Jerusalem, where he sought to mend his ways before he died. Some reforms were started, but they ended quickly when Manasseh died and his son Amon assumed the title of king. Amon reintroduced idolatry and immorality, corrupted his office, and concentrated more on accumulating personal wealth than on working for the good of others.

Josiah, a son of Amon, loved the ways of the Lord and sought to reform the kingdom. At the suggestion of the high priest Hilkiah, Josiah ordered the repair of the Temple. During the repairs, a lost book of the law (Deuteronomy) was found. Josiah, when he heard the reading of the book, ordered it to be read to the people. He also took positive steps to clean up the spiritual disorder in Judah. Josiah closed down dozens of shrines, destroyed idols, and centralized all worship in the city of Jerusalem.

Both Jeremiah and Zephaniah were shown by the Lord that the "reforms" were not genuine. Reform was only a surface or cosmetic change in the hearts of the people. The population complied with reforms because the king promoted them. They went along with the popular views of the kingdom. How deeply did the people of Judah believe in the mission?

Jehoahaz's reign of three months answers this question for us. His tolerance of evil during that brief reign brought cults, idols, and disorder back to their former state of importance in the nation.

WHAT SPIRITUAL ISSUES DID ZEPHANIAH ADDRESS ON BEHALF OF THE LORD?

Chapter one of Zephaniah carries a message of judgment. The strong words of the Lord are spoken to Judah so that she might see her errors and work for a deeper reformation. The Lord promises to "consume," "punish," "search," and "bring distress" to the unrepentant evil ones.

Chapter two stresses that the Lord will not tolerate the abuse or maltreatment of His Word and church. He promises that the meek (the remnant) will be hidden, cared for, and rescued by Him. The meek are hidden among the haughty.

Chapter three is a magnificent story of the end of the rebellion, the restoration of order, and the rejoicing that will come back to the church. Zephaniah prophesies that there will be a new song sung. The Lord will be in the midst of the church. It will be a time of exhilarating confidence and assurance. The former barrenness will be replaced with productivity.

WHAT HOPE DID ZEPHANIAH BRING TO JUDAH FROM THE LORD?

This question is asked purposefully in light of the preceding summation of the three chapters of Zephaniah. So many scholars highlight the gloom and doom of the first chapter. They don't focus enough on the book's movement to hope and restoration. The third chapter of Zephaniah is a powerful message of hope, restoration, singing, productiveness, new birth, and the Lord's return to the center of His New Church.

Don't we need the prophecy of the "royal prophet" today to bolster our wavering faith? Doesn't this minor prophet named Zephaniah seem extremely relevant for our times, too?

Please read the study guide with an eye to the past, the present, and the future. As always, we need to begin each chapter, verse, or line with a prayer. The Lord told the Pharisees and the Scribes that they had eyes to see and saw not. He told them they had ears to hear but heard not.

Then He looked at His disciples and promised that their eyes would see and their ears would hear. May our prayer be that we will see and hear the positive promises of the Lord as we study the prophecy spoken by Zephaniah.

It is to be hoped that the meek will come out from among the haughty popular opinions of the evil. It is the goal of the Lord that we learn a new song. The Lord tells us that all of the years in which we have felt bound and unproductive will end. The Lord promises births. We need growth and confidence in the regeneration work He calls us to undertake. It isn't impossible. We can achieve the innocence of wisdom promised in the doctrines of the New Church.

So let's sing a new song and be done with the monotony of hell's tune. We are the "apple of the Lord's eye." Freedom is reserved for and awaiting those who are meek and faithful.

Chapter One

ZEPHANIAH 1:1-3

"The word of the Lord which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah. 'I will utterly consume everything from the face of the land,' says the Lord; 'I will consume man and beast; I will consume the birds of the heavens, the fish of the sea, and the stumbling blocks along with the wicked. I will cut off man from the face of the land,' says the Lord."

Passages From The Writings

Prophets and Psalms (P&P)

- "All knowledge (cognitio) and understanding of truth will perish."

AC 411

- "That the last time of vastation must exist before a new church can arise, is frequently declared by the Lord in the Prophets, and is called 'vastation' or 'laying waste,' in reference to the celestial things of faith; and 'desolation,' in relation to the spiritual things of faith. It is also spoken of as 'consummation' and 'cutting off.'" *Zephaniah 1:1-18* is cited as an example.

Apocalypse Revealed (AR) 290

- "[By]...‘every created thing which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and in the sea,’ are meant angels... Their being called ‘created thing’ is according to the style of the Word, in which, by all created things, as well those which belong to the animal kingdom as those which belong to the vegetable kingdom, are signified various things with man, in general such things as belong to his will or affection, and such as pertain to his understanding or thought...since the Word is written by mere correspondences, similar things are said of the angels of heaven and the men of the church; in proof of which a few passages...shall be adduced..." *Zephaniah 1:2-3* is cited.

AR 567

- "...harmless and useful beasts signify man as to good affections, and noxious and useless beasts signify man as to his evil affections... The reason is, because the affections of a man, in the spiritual world, appear at a distance as beasts...and beasts, considered in themselves, are nothing but forms of

natural affections... That men, as to their affections, are meant by 'beasts,' ... 'by beasts' are signified men as to their affections. By 'man and beasts' together is signified man as to spiritual and natural affection (as in the following passages)..." *Zephaniah 1:2-3* and *Zephaniah 2:13-14* are cited.

AE 342 [9]

- "'Man and beast' when mentioned together signify the interior and exterior affections of good...and 'the fowl of the heavens and the fishes of the sea' signify the affections of truth and the thoughts spiritual and natural, but in the passages here cited, that these are about to perish." *Zephaniah 1:2-3* is cited.

AE 650 [17]

- "In these passages [Zephaniah 1:2-3] 'man and beast' signifies what is interior or spiritual, and 'beast' what is exterior or natural; and therefore 'man' signifies the spiritual affection of truth, from which is all intelligence, and 'beast' the natural affection corresponding to the spiritual. What is exterior or natural is signified by 'beast,' because man, in respect to his external or natural man is nothing but a beast; for he enjoys like desires and also pleasures, appetites and senses, so that in these respects man is entirely similar to the beast; therefore the natural man may be called the animal man. But what is internal or spiritual is signified by 'man,' because it is in respect to his internal or spiritual that man is man..."

AC 776 [4]

- "Here [Zephaniah 1:3] 'man and beast' denote the things which are of love and of good; the 'fowls of the heaven and the fishes of the sea,' the things which are of the understanding, thus which are of truth. These are called 'stumbling-blocks' because goods and truths are stumbling-blocks to the wicked, but not beasts and birds; and they are also plainly spoken of 'man'."

AC 991

- "In [Zephaniah 1:3] the 'fowls of the heavens' denote things of reason, and the 'fishes of the sea' lower rational things, that is, man's thought from sensuous memory-knowledges."

AC 7523 [1&2]

- "...'beast' denotes the affection of good, and in the opposite sense the cupidity of evil... 'Man and beast' denote interior and exterior good..." *Zephaniah 1:3* is cited as an example.

AR 405

- "...[in the spiritual world] the affections and the perceptions and the thoughts of spirits and angels appear at a distance in the forms of animals or creatures upon the earth, which are called beasts, of creatures in the air which are called birds, and of creatures in the sea which are called fishes, therefore in the Word mention is so often made of 'beasts,' 'birds,' and 'fishes,' by which nothing else is meant..." *Zephaniah 1:3* is cited as an example.

AR 757

- "...by 'bird' is signified everything that is of the thought or the understanding and thence of the design..." *Zephaniah 1:3* is listed among many examples from the Word.

AE 280 [8]

- "In Zephaniah (1:3)...‘To take away man and beast’ means to take away the spiritual affection of truth; ‘to take away the fowl of the heavens and the fishes of the sea’ means to take away spiritual truths and natural truths; and ‘to cut off man from the surfaces of the earth’ means to cut off the affection of truth and wisdom."

AE 513 [8]

- "In Zephaniah (1:3)...‘the beast of the field’ means man’s voluntary faculty, ‘the fowl of heaven’ his intellectual faculty, and ‘the fish of the sea’ his knowing faculty..."

AE 1100 [16]

- "In Zephaniah (1:3) ‘To consume man and beast’ signifies to destroy spiritual and natural affection; ‘to consume the birds of the heavens and the fishes of the sea’ signifies to destroy the perceptions and knowledges of truth; and as these signify things pertaining to the church it is said, ‘I will cut off man from the faces of the land,’ ‘man’ signifying everything of the church."

Derived Doctrine

"*The word of the Lord which came to Zephaniah...*"

- "Coming" denotes communication by influx. (*AC 5249*)
- *AC 5272* teaches that "the Word of the Lord" signifies divine truth, from which all things, which are things, exist.

- Most importantly, we get the sense that we are being shown that all that follows in this prophecy is the Lord speaking and not the prophet. His word is the "all" for our spiritual good and truth.

"...the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah..."

- Four generations are mentioned in this first verse. We need to reflect on the possible correspondential meaning of Zephaniah's lineage. It is necessary for us to consider the meaning of the number four, the idea of a generation, and the offices (uses) that some of Zephaniah's forefathers served. Especially must we note Zephaniah's connection with the royal family of king Hezekiah and king Josiah.
- Four signifies union, or disunion in a negative sense, because it is two pairs. (*AC 1686*) Four signifies the duration and state of temptation. (*AC 1856*) Four signifies what is conjoined to the full in repayment for an injury or injustice. Four signifies the restoration of interior good to the full. (*AC 9103 [2]*)
- Generations signify those who are perpetually being regenerated, or created anew. (*AC 1041*) Passages in *AC 208* and *280 to 285* help us to reflect on the meaning of "fourth posterity." "...the fourth posterity of the Most Ancient Church [occurred when they allowed] themselves to be seduced by self-love and were unwilling to believe what was revealed, unless they saw it confirmed by the things of sense and of memory-knowledge."
- *AC 280-285* gives us the meaning of seven posterities. The fourth posterity denotes a state where "natural good [begins] to be dissipated..."
- I cannot find a representation of the name Cushi, nor can I find a meaning for his name. Is his name a shortening of the name Cushite?
- Gedaliah's name means "Jehovah is great." Other than this insight, we have no doctrinal teachings about him.
- Amariah's name means "Jehovah has spoken." Amariah was a son of Hezekiah, and he was a subordinate Levite, one of six assistants appointed to help in the distribution of offerings. (*II Chronicles 31:15*)
- Hezekiah's name means "Jehovah is my strength." Hezekiah succeeded his pagan-minded father, Ahaz, and led his people through some frightening days when the Assyrians were on a campaign to conquer all the nations around them. Hezekiah sought to bring the people out of their pagan worship. He destroyed shrines, high places, pillars, Asherah images, and any venerated icon he found being worshipped in the kingdom.
- Unfortunately, Manasseh, his son, did not continue with the work of spiritual cleansing. Instead, Manasseh brought the nation to a low point of spirituality by rebuilding the "high places," restoring the altars of Ashtoreth, Chemosh, Milcom, and Baal. Manasseh allowed the worship of the stars, sun, moon, and astral bodies within the temples. To keep Assyria from attacking his kingdom, he paid tribute to their deity Esarhaddon.

- All of this information is useful when we consider Josiah's reign. He succeeded Manasseh and sought to restore the worship of the Lord among the people. Zephaniah was called during this period of reformation. Josiah's name means "may Jehovah give."
- Priestly uses represent the Lord as to the Divine good and the work of salvation. (*AR* 854) Priests are to teach truth, and so lead to good, and to the Lord. (*AC* 10794)
- Kings and rulers signify divine truth and divine good in the Lord and from Him. (*AE* 446 [16])

All of these derived doctrines seem to offer us important clues when we consider the importance and meaning of "four generations" in this passage. Their names, the successive seed that passed on the inherited tendencies toward good and evil in their souls, and their uses testify what tendencies toward good and evil the generations had inherited and to what state Zephaniah was called to speak the words of the Lord.

Remember that the purpose of derived doctrine is to help us see the spiritual sense more fully. Without doctrine, the words about the Lord consuming everything from the face of the earth—men, beasts, birds, and fish of the sea—seem harsh and vindictive.

Putting It All Together

"All knowledge and understanding of truth will perish." (*P&P*) "I will utterly consume everything from the face of the land. I will consume man and beast...the birds...the fish and the stumbling blocks along with the wicked. I will cut off man from the face of the land, says the Lord."

Taken at face value, these are chilling words. How could Zephaniah's listeners ignore or brush off the Lord's promise to "utterly consume" and "cut off man from the face of the earth"?

The direct teachings of doctrine indicate such things were to happen within the hearts and minds of the people of Judah. "Vastations must exist before a new church can arise..." (*AC* 411)

There were 20 kings of Judah prior to the great exiles. Of those 20, 12 were bad kings and 8 were good kings. Manasseh, a bad king, ruled 55 years. During that reign, he allowed serious spiritual disorders to exist and thrive in the kingdom. His evil leadership provided the means and example for the people to move away from the Lord. So the minds and hearts of the people were in great errors, evils, and sins. In the words of our text, their hearts and minds were providing "**stumbling blocks**" to all that was holy and good.

The Writings picture the "spawning medium" of hell as a self-love out of order. If a church is to be saved or preserved, the stumbling blocks of self-love must be emptied and consumed. *AC 5258* expresses what this consuming means: falsities that are not of charity or of faith must be exterminated. This cleansing occurs in the voluntary (love), in the intellectual (wisdom), and in the knowing (use) faculties. Hence we have the representations of the beast, the fowl, and the fish. Each of these inner vessels required a Divine purging to be saved and to make room for the new church to rise up.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Zephaniah 1:1-3*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. As you read the literal sense about the utter consummation that the Lord would bring about, did you sense or anticipate that this was a spiritual event? Why?
2. Can we imagine what it would be like to live under total spiritual chaos for 55 years? What effect would so many years of worshipping multiple gods have on us and our children? How would this confuse our understanding of the true nature of the Lord?
3. Spiritual stumbling blocks are something we experience daily. For example, when we express a doctrinally based personal belief, it is not always welcomed. An exchange of views on doctrine may bring us into a "point and counterpoint" argument with someone. Stumbling blocks are troublesome and hurtful. How can we face them? Can we avoid them? How can we overcome them without compromising the Lord's truth? How can we faithfully present the Lord's truth with charity and conviction?
4. What did you take from the information about the four generations of Zephaniah? What correspondence was most interesting to you? How did the representation of generations add to your reflection? Was the possibility that Zephaniah's lineage linked him to a royal family of any significance?
5. What do you understand about the concept of vastations? Are vastations welcome, to a degree, as a necessary event for the New Church to begin and flourish?
6. Please note that the Lord promises to empty the church of falsity. Doesn't that promise give us some hope and confidence while we are waging war against hell?

ZEPHANIAH 1:4-6

"I will stretch out My hand against Judah, and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. I will cut off every trace of Baal from this place, the names of the idolatrous priests with the pagan priests – those who worship the host of heaven on the housetops; those who worship and swear oaths by the Lord, but who also swear by Milcom; those who have turned back from following the Lord, and have not sought the Lord, nor inquired of Him."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "The church will perish because it is in mere falsities and evils in respect to doctrine and in respect to worship."

AE 608 [7]

- "As the ancients were allowed to swear by Jehovah God, it follows that it was an enormous evil to swear falsely or to swear to a lie, as is evident from these passages." *Zephaniah 1:4-6* is cited.

AC 10184 [3]

- "As a 'roof' signified good, therefore the ancients had roofs on their houses where they walked, and where they worshiped, as can be seen in...*Zephaniah 1:5*."

AR 919

- "Since by 'the sun,' in the opposite sense, is signified self-love, and by 'the moon' one's own intelligence and faith from himself, therefore, it was an abomination to adore the sun, moon, and stars, as may appear...in *Zephaniah 1:5*; and that such were stoned."

AE 573 [8]

- "In *Zephaniah (1:5)*...‘the host of the heavens’ means the sun, moon, and stars, because these signify all goods and truths in the complex, but here all evils and falsities in the complex; for the ‘sun’ in the contrary sense, as here, signifies all the evil flowing from the love of self, the ‘moon’ the falsity of faith, and the ‘stars’ falsities in general (that the ‘sun, moon, and stars,’ in the natural world, when they are worshiped instead of the sun and moon of the angelic heaven, signify direful evils and falsities....)."

Derived Doctrine

"I will stretch out My hand against Judah..."

- AC 7205 offers us an insight into the meaning of stretching out. "...from the signification of a 'stretched out arm,' as being Divine power... [That a] 'stretched out arm' denotes omnipotence or Divine power, is because when an arm appears stretched out in the heavens, there is represented power from the Divine... Hence then it is, that in the Word, Divine power is very often expressed by a 'stretched out arm,' and by a 'strong hand,' ..." AE 684 instructs us that the hand signifies the **omnipotence of truth from good**, and the arm represents the **omnipotence of good by truth**.
- The Lord opposing or being against Judah seems obvious. Judah was worshiping idols and other gods, and making unholy pledges. The Lord's omnipotence and power would come against such evils and sins.

"...against all of the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

- AE 741 indicates that to "inhabit" signifies those of the church who are in (or lacking) the good of doctrine, and thence the good of life. AR 558 says inhabiting signifies those who are principled in the doctrine of faith alone and thence in the evils of life.
- Jerusalem has a positive and negative correspondence. AC 2909 notes that Jerusalem signifies the Lord's spiritual church and His celestial church. AC 2466 [3] notes that in the opposite sense, Jerusalem represents the church perverted as to truths.

"I will cut off every trace of Baal...the names of idolatrous priests with the pagan priests..."

- AE 315 [23] explains that to "cut" signifies that divine truth shall be taken from the people but shall live again in a new church. AC 9316 explains that to "cut out" signifies that hell is to be removed solely through the protection of heaven and by the hand of the Lord.
- Baal signifies worship motivated by the evils of self-love and love of the world. (AE 160 [2])
- Idolatrous priests represent those who should have known better but chose to blaspheme and falsify the truths.
- Pagan priests were gentiles. They polluted truth because of their ignorance. Both idolatrous and pagan forms of worship need to have their names (essence or qualities) wiped out by the Lord when He establishes His new church.

"...those who swear by Milcom..."

- Milcom or Malcam is an Ammonite god also called Molech. Scholars believe that Molech was a pagan deity to whom children were sacrificed as a means of making the most binding vows or pledges, to emphasize the sanctity of a vow.
- The literal sense describes the followers of Molech as people who turn their backs on the Lord. Does the word "traitor" seem to be implied here?

Putting It All Together

P&P sums up these verses by saying, "The church will perish because it is in mere falsities and evils in respect to doctrine and in respect to worship."

The people of Judah were swearing by the name of the Lord and yet not meaning it. There was a showy appearance (the rooftop walk) that they were doing the right things. They tried to mix all forms of faith together to please everyone, to accommodate the preferences for differing forms of worship. Those who turned away from following the Lord had "not sought Him nor inquired of Him."

Throughout the Word, the Lord reminds His people to "choose this day whom you will serve." He asks them how long they will limp between opinions. He tells us that we cannot serve God and mammon. We will love one and hate the other.

The Lord said He would stretch out His hand. His divine omnipotence of truth from good would eradicate the vain promises of Judah. The twisted doctrines of the Jewish priests and the ignorance of the pagan priests had to be cut out of the heart and mind of Judah. Cutting it out seems like an appropriate representation. Like a cancer, self-love has to be completely removed along with all its extending tentacles. When the Lord deals with evil and sin, there is no room for a compromise with the hells. No deals. It has to be done the Lord's way. He sees and knows the way of truth—doctrine—and He builds the New Church where open and loving worship will flow from the heart and mind.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Zephaniah 1:4-6*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. As you read this short section, how did you respond to the imagery of the Lord's "stretched arm"? The Divine power of the Lord's arm and hand stretching to cover all things gives us a sense of His protective, controlling

- power. It is a powerful image to hold onto, especially when hell tries to convince us the Lord's arms are too short or small to help everyone.
2. What images are conjured up by the picture of the people of Judea walking on the housetop swearing vows to the Lord? Why does this seem representative of what a vain, pompous, spiritually empty person would be like? Can you think of stories in the Word that show a contrasting type of person?
 3. The inhabitants of Judah lapsed into a forgetful spirit; they did not seek the Lord, nor did they ask about Him. How can we learn from their mistakes? How can we sincerely "inquire" about the Lord with interest and care?
 4. Once again, let's think about the cutting off or cutting out of dead falsity within our hearts. How does this "surgery" feel? Painful or bearable? Is it life saving? How is it accomplished?
 5. Can you identify with what traitor priests and pagan priests do to our lives? Any current examples come to mind?
 6. Have you ever "sworn by the Lord's name" and not kept the promise? Can you imagine a situation where someone intentionally "swears to a lie"?
 7. Perjury is an action the courts hold to be a heinous crime. Do life experiences sometimes justify or excuse "white" lies? Why or why not? Is there a limit after which you won't tolerate false "swearing"?

ZEPHANIAH 1:7-8

"Be silent in the presence of the Lord God; for the day of the Lord is at hand, for the Lord has prepared a sacrifice; He has invited His guests. And it shall be, in the day of the Lord's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with foreign apparel."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "The Lord will come and gather [men] together to the church."

Doctrine of the Lord 4

- "...I shall in this first chapter merely adduce passages from the Word which contain the expressions 'that day,' 'in that day,' and 'in that time;' In...Zephaniah 1:7, 8, 10, 12, 14-16, 18..."

True Christian Religion (TCR) 82

- "See...the places where the Lord's coming is called 'the day of Jehovah'...Zephaniah 1:7-18..."

TCR 688-689

- "...John was the prophet sent to make ready the way of Jehovah God, who should descend into the world and accomplish redemption...by means of...baptism...men were introduced into the future church of the Lord, and in heaven were inserted among those who were there looking for and longing for the Messiah; and they were thus guarded by angels, that devils from hell might not break forth and destroy them. Wherefore it is written in...Zephaniah 1:7-18... From all this it is clear that unless a way had been made ready for Jehovah...the effect of which in heaven was to close up the hells and guard the Jews against total destruction [they would all have perished]."

AR 704

- "That 'the great day of God Almighty' signifies the coming of the Lord, and then the New Church, is evident from many passages in the Word, as from these...Zephaniah 1:7, 14; Zephaniah 2:2, 3 and Zephaniah 3: 11, 16, 19, 20..."

AC 10287 [15]

- "In Zephaniah (1:8)...‘those clothed in the clothing of a foreigner’ denote those who are in falsities; for ‘princes and the king’s sons,’ upon whom was visitation, denote the chief truths, and in the opposite sense the chief falsities (that princes have this signification, see n. 1482, 2089, 5044; and that ‘kings’ denote truths themselves, and in the opposite sense falsities themselves...) consequently ‘the king’s sons’ denote that which is derived therefrom."

AR 20

- "He who does not know the spiritual signification of ‘kings and priests,’ may be hallucinated by many things which are related concerning them in the prophets...as in these in the prophets..." *Zephaniah 1:8* is one of many passages cited.

AR 166

- "The Jewish church is here described, that to it were given truths, because it had the Word; but that they falsified them..." *Zephaniah 1:8* is one many examples cited.

AE 31 [5]

- "'Kings' are also frequently mentioned by the prophets in the Old Testament; and there likewise are meant those who, from the Lord, are in truths from

good, and in a contrary sense, those who are in falsities from evil; as in...Zephaniah 1:8..."

AE 195 [12]

- "In Zephaniah (1:8)...'Princes' and 'king's sons' signify those who are in truths, and in the contrary sense, as here, those who are in falsities; these are said to be 'clothed with the garment of the alien,' because 'garment' signifies falsity, and 'alien' those who are out of the church and do not acknowledge the truths of the church."

Doctrine of the Lord 14 [4-5]

- The Lord's advent into the world, and His subsequent victory in the Word are described as "...they are dismayed, and that their strong ones being beaten down... His advent into the world for this purpose is meant by, 'that day is to the Lord Jehovah Zebaoth a day of vengeance, that He may take vengeance of His enemies.' *Zephaniah 1:8, 15-16* are cited among other verses.

Derived Doctrine

"Be silent in the presence of the Lord God..."

- *AC 8176* explains that "silence" signifies an awareness that nothing can or will be accomplished by one's own strength. *Psalm 46:10* carries this theme: "Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth." *Psalm 4:4* urges us to "Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still." "The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him." (*Habakkuk 2:20*) "When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour." (*Revelation 8:1*)
- *AE 487* explains the meaning of the words in *Revelation 8:1*: "When He opened the seventh seal, **there was silence in heaven...**" This "signifies astonishment that the church is such and that its end is at hand... [and signifies] the destruction of the church and the damnation of all in whom there was no church; that is, in whom there was no conjunction of truth and good or of faith and charity; for this conjunction makes the church in every one."

"For the Lord has prepared a sacrifice; He has invited His guests."

- *AC 5998* explains that a sacrifice signifies worship from charity, or from truths which are from good.
- A worthy sacrifice will have a Divine influx that comes from the Divine Intellectual. Thus, we can see why it is said in our verse that the Lord has

prepared a sacrifice. He gives His people a special sacrifice of worship from charity and invites guests to His sacrifice.

- AC 4205 (Elliott translation) explains the meaning of "guest" this way:
"...good flows in from the Lord, but does not become fixed within anything apart from truths, for truths receive good as a guest since the two are congenial...good flowing in from the Lord is able to be received as a guest."

"And it shall be."

- The word "Amen" means may it ever be so. *Doctrine of Faith* 6 explains:
"...truth and faith are one word in the Hebrew language, namely Amuna or Amen." "And it shall be" seems to be an utterance of the word Amen.

Putting It All Together

"The Lord will come and gather [men] together to the church." (*P&P*)

Within your heart and mind, picture Zephaniah speaking these words to the people of the church: "Be silent in the presence of the Lord God." In the place of any terror, focus on this calming thought: The Lord is asking us to be still. For just a moment, put aside all other plans and worries. Let your soul drink in the message that the Lord is in charge. His plan, His Providence wants to give us a sacrifice that is full of holiness and a sense of joyous worship. The Lord wants us to receive an influx of His Love and Wisdom, so that we recognize that we can welcome Him in as our desired guest.

There is a required state that we need to create in ourselves and offer up to the Lord. We need to get rid of the "princes and the king's children." We need to throw off such things that are like "foreign apparel," the pretense, the act of looking good on the outside with evil and sin underneath.

The words of the Lord, "Be still and know that I am God..." carry a soothing message that is important to hear in our "as-of-self" lifestyle. The Lord is in charge, and all will be well with those who trust in His providential guidance.

His first advent defeated all of the disorder the hells sought to use against Him. None of their tricks worked. Now we have a prophetic message that the Lord will "come and gather together the church." Which church? The New Church. How do we know this? The prophets repeat this message over and over again. They are wonderful words of life. They are words to carry in the heart and mind while battling the bullies of hell. They are words worth repeating often.

Let us prayerfully recite these quotes from the Word:

- "Be silent in the presence of the Lord God."

- "The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him."
- "Be still and know that I am God."
- "Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Zephaniah 1:7-8*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. Are you a calm soul, or are you a hard-driven, schedule-minded soul? Do you recognize that you need some moments of silence to hear the Lord? What can you do to find the time for spiritual silence? Can you spare five minutes each day?
2. What would you describe as foreign or alien clothes one puts over the mind?
3. Are you aware that all of the prophets are messengers of the New Church? Why is this important?
4. The "day of the Lord is at hand." The Lord has prepared a sacrifice, and He is going to invite His guests. What application can be made of this in our day? Are we on the guest list? Are those outside of the New Church on the guest list? What might the "sacrifice" be?
5. Please share in the discussion other questions you have thought about while reading this portion of the chapter.

ZEPHANIAH 1:9-11

"In the same day I will punish all those who leap over the threshold, who fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit. And there shall be on that day, says the Lord, the sound of a mournful cry from the Fish Gate, a wailing from the Second Quarter, and a loud crashing from the hills. Wail, you inhabitants of Maktesh! For all the merchant people are cut down; all those who handle money are cut off."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Then those who have adulterated the truths of the Word will perish, and are to be cast into hell."

AR 624

- "...by 'deceit' is signified speech, preaching, and doctrine...and by 'deceit' is signified persuasion to evil by falsity, properly from cunning and design; for he who persuades to anything from cunning or deceit also persuades from design; for cunning or deceit proposes something to itself, conceals its purpose, and does it when opportunity offers ..." *Zephaniah 1:9* is cited among many other references.

AE 866 [3-4]

- "...'deceit' signifies falsity that is not from ignorance of truth, but from deliberation, thus from the purpose of deceiving...'violence and blood' signify perversion of truth and falsification of the Word..." *Zephaniah 1:9* is cited as an example.

AC 375

- "A 'voice crying,' and the 'voice of a cry,' are common forms of expression in the Word, and are applied to every case where there is noise, tumult, or disturbance, and also on the occasion of any happy event... In the present passage it denotes accusation." *Zephaniah 1:9-10* is cited as one of many examples.

AC 2240 [3]

- "In Zephaniah (1:10, 13) where...a 'cry' is predicated of the falsities which lay waste."

AR 885

- "That 'crying,' in the Word, is said of grief and fear of falsities from hell, and thence of devastation by them, appears from the following passages..." *Zephaniah 1:10, 13* are cited as examples.

Derived Doctrine

"In the same day I will punish all those who leap over the threshold..."

- The words "in the same day remind us that on the same day that He invites guests to the special holy sacrifice, He will deal with those not invited. The uninvited are those who chose to ignore the Lord's invitation. Plain and simple, they did not want to come. Watching the Lord gather His church together caused them anguish. They hated the Lord, and they hated the

church. What the church had to offer the soul made them uncomfortable, troubled, and sick.

- What did the uninvited do to bring this on themselves? They leapt over the threshold. What does this represent? A threshold signifies introductory truths. "Spirits who are in the knowledge of the doctrinals of faith, without love, are in such a coldness of life and obscurity of light that they cannot even approach the first threshold of the court of the heavens, but flee..." *AC 3833 [3]* records this arcanum against those who will not believe: "...it may be known in what obscurity such persons are, and that they do not even see, much less touch, the first threshold of wisdom."
- Leaping in the positive sense signifies having a joy from the perception of truth. (*AE 455 [20]*) It would seem, then, that in the negative sense, leaping for the evil would be a joy at closing off, evicting, the introductory truths from their lives. The remains of their youth and the first things of faith were stifled and allowed to wither and die.

"Who fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit."

- Check *AC 3041-45* regarding the meaning of a master. A master signifies knowledge of good in the natural person that exacts a sacred obligation or obedience. It is the pledging of the natural person to the good of marriage love. *AE 409 [8]* explains that master signifies the internal human whom the external human serves.
- Can we not, with what is given above, see that those who turn away from the Lord wish to fill the master's house with things that are destructive of the internal or conjugal principles of doctrine?

"...a mournful cry from the Fish Gate..."

- Let's first look at this from the literal sense. The Fish Gate was the main gate of Jerusalem. There, fish were sold. The fisherman unloaded their catch for sale in the market. Manasseh made some changes, or modifications, at this gate. He fortified the entrance way.
- Nebuchadnezzar made his triumphant entry through the Fish Gate. Indeed, when the city was attacked, there must have been a mournful sound heard as his army pressed on to the next gate.
- Fish signify items of information that arise or spring from sense-impressions and external learning. (*AC 991*)
- A gate signifies the teachings that introduce one to the truth of faith. (*AC 2943*)
- A mournful cry signifies grief because truth and good are being destroyed. (*AE 1129 [2]*)

"A wailing from the Second Quarter..."

- This second gate was second in dignity to the Fish Gate, but it had its place of importance because it had V-shaped defensive walls and some of the oldest ramparts of the city. Huldah the prophetess dwelt there. Josiah sent the newly found scroll of Deuteronomy to her. She read the scroll and warned that the day of God's reckoning was fast approaching. See *II Kings 22:14* and *II Chronicles 34:22*.
- Again, can we see some of the importance of this literal sense to the spiritual sense of our study?

"Wail, you inhabitants of Maktesh!"

- Another name for Maktesh is "the Mortar." Its importance to the city of Jerusalem was its silver industry. Silver traders and silversmiths conducted their business there.
- Silver signifies truth; in the opposite sense, it represents falsity. (AC 1551)
- Did the merchants use the silver to make idols?
- To wail signifies to have grief on account of damnation. (AE 659 [4]) To wail signifies the grief of sensuous people in their opposition to truths. (AR 435)

"All of the merchant people are cut down; all those who handle money are cut off."

- Merchants signify those who falsify the Word, speak out, and offer for sale.(AE 543 [10])
- Money handlers signify those who make gain for themselves. (AE 840 [4])
- Both of these are "cut down" or "cut off." This action by the Lord signifies that hell is removed through the protection of heaven. (AC 9316)

Putting It All Together

"Then those who have adulterated the truths of the Word will perish, and are to be cast into hell." (P&P)

Choices are so important. If we listen to the Lord, we are invited to His Church. If we ignore and reject the invitation, we wall ourselves off from Him. Instead of filling the Master's home with good things, those who reject Him fill their house with violence and deceit.

The inhabitants of a house of deceit and violence never get to, or past, the threshold. Like blind people, they grope and stumble, never finding the entrance or threshold. The sad part is that these people had the innocence of remains from their childhood. The great spiritual Fish Gate was there. The Second Quarter had its prophetess to read the newly found Deuteronomy. But those intent on their evil ways wanted to hone their skills, to twist the silver truths, to make idols. They were more interested

in making money for their own interests than in heeding the Lord's call. What is to be the end for them? Mourning and wailing, to be cut down and cut off from eternity.

In these passages, we have contrasts. There is the invitation from the Lord to leap for joy, and there is the "leaping over" the spiritual conjunction with the Lord. Obviously, there is a silent question here: Which choice will we want for our soul?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Zephaniah 1:9-11*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. What did the brief historical overview of the Fish Gate, the Second Quarter, and Maktesh help you discover about the deeper meaning of the spiritual sense?
2. What ideas did you have regarding the Master's house? Is the house representative of our mind or soul? Is it both? Do we have a way to periodically clear our spiritual house of unhealthy spiritual clutter?
3. Hell always thinks it can win against the Lord. No matter how many times the hells are defeated, their insanity continues to cloud their sense of reality. Do you think we pay unnecessary attention to their bragging? Do you think they will leave us alone if we remind ourselves often enough of the stories of the prophets (the Word)?
4. Have you ever noticed how often the Word uses the correspondences of fish? Think for a moment about the Lord's ministry. He called fisherman to be His disciples. He sent them out several times to catch many fish after they had toiled all night with no results. Following His directions, they came back with record catches. The Lord used the correspondence of fish in His parables. He fed the multitude with the loaves and fish. He multiplied the fish and bread so as to have 12 full baskets left over. When the question of taxes came up, He sent the disciples to a brook to catch a fish. In the mouth of the fish was a coin. After His resurrection, He sat on the shore and cooked fish for the disciples and called them in from fishing to sup with Him. Can you think of other uses the Word makes of fish?
5. Can you understand the spiritual reason why Nebuchadnezzar invaded the city of Jerusalem through the Fish Gate first and then worked his way toward the Second Quarter Gate?

ZEPHANIAH 1:12-13

"And it shall come to pass at that time that I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and punish the men who are settled in complacency, who say in their heart, 'The Lord will

not do good, nor will He do evil.' Therefore their goods shall become booty, and their houses a desolation; they shall build houses, but not inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards, but not drink their wine."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "No truth will then be left in the church."

AC 1488 [2]

- "'Houses' mean where there are wisdom and intelligence, thus where there are the knowledges of good and truth... 'House' is used in the opposite sense in Zephaniah (1:12 & 13)...'houses' denote memory-knowledges by which, through reasonings, come falsities."

AC 1071 [5]

- "...planting vineyards and drinking the wine thereof is predicated, when [the spiritual church] becomes such as to have faith from charity. In Zephaniah (1:13)...is described the opposite condition, when the spiritual church is vastated."

AR 316

- Note that this number states: "Nearly the same words occur in Hosea 9:2, 3; Zephaniah 1:13; Lamentations 2:11, 12; Micah 6:15; Amos 5:11, Isaiah 24:6, 7, 9, 11."

AE 376 [16]

- "In Zephaniah (1:13) the 'wealth that shall be for plunder' signifies spiritual wealth, which is the knowledges of good and truth; 'the houses that shall be for devastation' signify the things of the church in man; that from these when devastated one profits nothing and receives nothing, even though he listens to them, and sees them in the Word, is signified by 'building and not inhabiting, and planting vineyards and not drinking the wine thereof,' 'houses' meaning the goods of the church, and 'vineyards' with 'wine' its truths."

AE 919

- "That a 'vineyard' signifies the spiritual church is evident from the passages in the Word where 'vineyard' is mentioned..." (Zephaniah 1:13 is cited among

many other passages.) "From the signification of 'vineyard' it can be seen that 'to gather the vintage' signifies to collect for uses those things that will be serviceable to the understanding, and which give intelligence and wisdom; and in the contrary sense it signifies to lay waste the church as to spiritual good... In the contrary sense 'vintage'...[is] used in the sense...this signifies...that all spiritual good, and thus all truth that is truth...is destroyed; and this especially effected in the church by falsifications of the Word, likewise when evil of life corrupts all good, and falsity of doctrine perverts all truth..."

Derived Doctrine

"I will search Jerusalem with lamps..."

- *AR 140* explains that by "searching" is signified "to see all the things which a man believes and loves, thus the quality of his truth and of his good."
- "Lamps" signify "the light of truth from the Divine Human of the Lord." (*AC 2832 [3]*). *AR 796* explains that lamps signify an illumination from the Lord.
- "Jerusalem," as explained in *AR 880*, signifies the church as to worship and its doctrine. "For worship is prescribed in doctrine and performed according to it..."

"...and punish the men..."

- *TCR 459 [15]* has a helpful explanation for punishment. In essence, this number teaches that punishment has as its end or use amendment. Punishment is to bring the offender into order, and it is to protect the greater good of society and heaven. Anger has nothing to do with punishment when administered by the Lord.

"...who are settled in complacency..."

- The Writings don't seem to deal specifically with the word "complacent." But if we look for the synonyms of complacent, we find: contentment; satisfaction; and self - satisfaction.
- The Lord with His lamps will show what is at the core of the heart. The people to whom Zephaniah was speaking had no drive to undertake self-examination. They had no desire to make themselves guilty for any transgressions. Nor were they willing to supplicate the Lord for help. They did not want a new spiritual life. They liked what and where they were spiritually. They were content with themselves.

"The Lord will not do good, nor will He do evil."

- Do we hear arrogance (the hells) speaking? Do we hear them saying the Lord is a do-nothing deity?
- The prophet Zephaniah tells how wrong they are in this assessment. He speaks for the Lord of action.

Putting It All Together

"No truth will be left in the church." (*P&P*) How do we know this? With the help of the internal sense, the truth of this statement is easily ratified.

The Lord says that He will come with His Divine lamp (light) and search the heart and mind of all within the church. He will examine what the people believe. He will look at their faith and doctrines. For those who believed in their own prudence, for those who were satisfied with life's status quo (complacency), there is not good news: their evil ways will bring them self-punishment. They will not find heaven. In spite of their pronouncements of Divine inaction, good will come from the Lord. Rejection of the Lord will bring the evil to their knees. These things are so because the Divine order will serve as the amending force to bring about His new church.

For the evil, the plundering of their houses, the vineyards from which they could not drink wine, their goods becoming booty, the building of houses that they could not inhabit, all illustrate the fruitlessness of their choices. They do not have much to look forward to.

Is this a hard message to consider? It depends on what choice has been made. For the faithful, it is an encouraging and reassuring prophecy. For those who hate the Lord and His ways, it is an ominous prophecy.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Zephaniah 1:12-13*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. Do you think the complacent will believe the words of this prophecy?
2. Can you anticipate what arguments they might offer to neutralize the potency of the Lord's promised examination?
3. Do you recall the words of the serpent to Adam and Eve when they were tempted to eat of the forbidden fruit? How might those words relate to this story?

4. The "punishment" of the Lord seems to spring from anger. What do you know about the distinction between anger and zeal? The Lord never acts from anger. He acts from a zeal that is based on love.
5. Order is a state that comes from the Lord. When the Lord establishes order, hell will be curbed. The greater good will be protected, and good people will feel free to perform uses. What other thoughts come to your mind when you hear this promise of the Lord's?
6. Do you think the complacent will believe the words of this prophecy?
7. Can you anticipate what arguments they might offer to neutralize the potency of the Lord's promised examination?
8. Do you recall the words of the serpent to Adam and Eve when they were tempted to eat of the forbidden fruit? How might those words relate to this story?
9. The "punishment" of the Lord seems to spring from anger. What do you know about the distinction between anger and zeal? The Lord never acts from anger. He acts from a zeal that is based on love.
10. Order is a state that comes from the Lord. When the Lord establishes order, hell will be curbed. The greater good will be protected, and good people will feel free to perform uses. What other thoughts come to your mind when you hear this promise of the Lord's?

ZEPHANIAH 1:14-17

"The great day of the Lord is near; it is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the Lord is bitter; there the mighty men shall cry out. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastation and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high towers. I will bring distress upon men, and they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like refuse."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "They will perish on the day of the judgment by the Lord."

AC 1839 [5]

- "In Zephaniah (1:14, 15)...the 'day of Jehovah' denotes the last time and state of the church; 'darkness and thick darkness' falsities and evils."

AR 340

- "That 'the day of the Lord's anger' signifies the Last Judgment is evident from the following passages...Zephaniah 1:14, 15..."

AR 413

- "Who...cannot see that the sun, the moon, and the stars of the world are not meant in these cases? That falsities of various kinds are signified by 'darkness,' is evident from these passages..." *Zephaniah 1:15* is cited among the many references.

AE 526 [5]

- "...by 'the day of Jehovah great and terrible;' and as this comes when the church is in darkness and in thick darkness, that day is also called 'a day of darkness and thick darkness,' and also 'a day of cloud and obscurity,' as also in the following passages...In Zephaniah (1:14, 15)..."

AC 5376 [12]

- "In Zephaniah (1:14-18)...it is evident that desolation is the apparent deprivation of truth with those who are being regenerated, but is the absolute deprivation of it with those who are not being regenerated."

AC 1860 [3]

- "In Zephaniah (1:15)...‘the day of Jehovah’ denotes the last time of the church, which is here treated of; ‘darkness’ denotes falsities, ‘thick darkness’ evils; both therefore are mentioned; otherwise it would be repetition of the same thing, or an unmeaning amplification. But the word in the original language that in this verse is rendered ‘thick darkness’ involves falsity as well as evil, that is dense falsity from which is evil, and also dense evil from which is falsity."

AC 7688 [2]

- "[In Zephaniah 1:15]...‘darkness’ signifies falsities. In the Word ‘darkness’ also signifies ignorance of truth, such as the Gentiles are in who have not the Word and know nothing of the Lord."

AC 7711 [3]

- "[In Zephaniah 1:15]...‘darkness’ denotes the privation of truth; and ‘thick darkness,’ the privation of truth and good; if ‘thick darkness’ signified

nothing more than ‘darkness,’ it would be an empty repetition which would be far from the Holy Word.”

TCR 761 [3]

- "...all the truth of the church will be consummated, and then it will be night, because the truth of the church is light." *Zephaniah 1:15* is cited as one of the examples.

AE 594 [19]

- "So the Last Judgment, when those who are in the falsities of evil are to perish, is called: 'A day of cloud and of obscurity' (*Zephaniah 1:15*)."

Coronis 58 [5]

- "Full consummation...is described thus in...(*Zephaniah 1:15; 2:9*)."

AR 397 [3]

- "...[that] by...trumpets...is signified the exploration and manifestation of what the state of the church is with those whose religion is faith alone...may be seen in the following passages..." *Zephaniah 1:15-16* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

"The noise of the day of the Lord is bitter; there the mighty men shall cry out."

- *AE 618* offers us this insight regarding "bitter." "'Bitter (or bitterness)' signifies what is undelightful because of adulterated truth...what is sweet becomes bitter and thus undelightful by a mixture with something offensive...'sweet' signifies what is delightful from the good of truth and the truth of good, so 'bitter' signifies what is undelightful because of adulterated truth."
- "The noise of the Lord is bitter..." signifies that the Lord's presence will bring a sense of disturbance to those who adulterate truth. He "disturbs" their falsities. The angels view 'noise', generated by the Lord, as a form of celebration. (*AC 375*)
- "...the mighty men shall cry out." The positive meaning of mighty men denotes those who are in the good of love. (*AR 832*)
- Conversely, "mighty ones" signify those who are intoxicated with self-love. (*AC 583*)
- *AR 885* instructs us that "cry" in the Word is said of every affection that breaks out from the heart. It can be a cry of lamentation, of imploring, of supplication, of indolence, of indignation, of confession, and of exultation.

"That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high towers."

- *Heaven and Hell (HH) 155* tells us that "day" and "year" in the Word signify the states of life in general.
- "Day of anger and wrath" relates to the Last Judgment executed at the Lord's Second Advent. (*AE 413*)
- A day of "devastation" is predicated of good. (*AE 960*)
- A day of darkness signifies a state of ignorance caused by the deprivation of truth. (*AE 526*)
- "Thick darkness" signifies the presence of hatred, instead of charity. (*AC 1860*) The light of heaven effectively appears as darkness to those who are in the love of self and of the world. (*AC 2441*)
- A "trumpet" of alarm signals, or announces, that the intellectual of the church has been laid to waste. (*AC 4592 [10]*)
- "A day of darkness and gloominess..." "They...who are in truth and not yet in good, are in shade [gloom] and darkness; because truth has no light from itself, and the light which they have from good is faint, like a light which is going out..." (*AC 6400*)
- In *TCR 755*, we read "desolation signifies the consummation of truth, 'devastation' the consummation of good..."
- "High towers" signify the worship of self which manifests itself when people exalt themselves above others. (*AC 1302*) The "highest towers" signify doctrines of falsity, or those who love to dominate by misusing the holy things of the church. (*AC 315 [15]*)

"...they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord..."

- To be "blind" signifies being ignorant of truth and so being without understanding. (*AE 239 [22]*)
- To "walk" signifies to live (or not live) according to the doctrine, or truth, of faith. (*AC 519*)
- The church, from its high tower of self-love, became like "blind men." The people of the church sinned against the Lord. Their eyes lost the heavenly light. They stumbled and tripped through life, missing the light of the Word because of their sins.

"...their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like refuse."

- "Blood" in the positive sense represents charity, or love of the neighbor. (*AC 1000 [2]*)
- Blood being poured out like "dust" intends to show us something quite the opposite of charity. "Dust" signifies the sensuous life. Thus, blood being

poured out like dust signifies a "charity" that lives only from what is physical and material, or the body and earth. (*AC* 242)

- "Refuse," or litter or rubbish, signifies the worthlessness of such a life of pretense. Real charity begins with the shunning of evils as sins. This kind of life keeps our "blood" rich and contributing to the health and well-being of our spiritual life and vitality. (*AE* 374 [5])

Putting It All Together

"They [the high and lofty abusers of the Word in the church] will perish on the day of the judgment by the Lord."

The spiritual sense of this portion of Zephaniah deals with the things that will occur following the Last Judgment. The Second Advent of the Lord will cause a positive internal conflict within the church. It is a necessary overturning and emptying of falsities that misled the hearts and minds of the people within the church. His spiritual coming will cause the church to face the most grievous and heart-searching temptations. Those who sought to hold the course of truth will find themselves on the edge of momentary anxiety and despair. But His Second Advent will be worth the temporary anguish. This Last Judgment will inspire the unification of the faithful throughout the heavens. The Doctrine of the Lord will draw the good and faithful away from the influence of hell.

Hell does not like losing to the Lord. The mere mention of His presence and of restoration of the heavens causes the inhabitants of hell to speak words of condemnation about His uncharitableness to them. He is made to appear dark, gloomy, stormy, terrifying, vengeful, and a destroyer of people.

Those in hell like puffing themselves up. Their blood, their life, is one of pomposity. They love their lofty towers where they speak words and make "erudite" pronouncements solely to attain adulation from those who have joined them in a life of "dust" blood and "refuse." The representation of the "dust" blood and "refuse" is powerful, a stark picture of spiritual reality from the Lord but ever so true. The Lord sees motives and intentions. His heavenly light exposes all corners and dark places where evil loves to hide and cover up its corrupt essence.

The Lord watches the extent of the shallowness of evil people. He permits the pompous pretenders their brief moment of flaunting good and truth. But it is only for a moment. The Lord wants all to know it will not last. It cannot last because it has no light and wisdom. Like a flickering candle in the wind of the Lord's refreshing truth, their flame will go out.

The hellish spirits lament this. They cry out in protest. They deny that it is of their own choice and actions that these things will come to fruition. No, they say, it is the

Lord's fault. He is the one who causes the dark, gloomy, fierce, vindictiveness that is so unfair.

The Lord's Second Coming, the Last Judgment, is the great liberator of good and truth. To hell, the trumpet of the Lord is like a piercing "bitter" noise that hurts them. To the angels, the trumpet of the Lord is a delightful "sweet" noise of great celebration and victory.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Zephaniah 1:14-17*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. Are you anxious about the things that have to come to clear the way for the spiritual New Church? What makes you anxious?
2. The hells protest the Lord's presence. They love to find examples of "unfair" things in life. Do we assist them in any fashion if we allow negative states to enter our mind? What negative issues capture your attention? How can you counteract this?
3. Hell's lofty towers seem clear in the mind as a representation. Can you put any natural specifics with the spiritual imagery?
4. Bitter noise versus sweet noise of the Lord's trumpet is an interesting concept. It seems to go along with the idea that one person's meat is another person's poison. Can you relate to times of bitter and sweet music from the Word?
5. Any thoughts regarding the blood like dust and the flesh like refuse? How can we illustrate these states?

ZEPHANIAH 1:18

"Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy. For He will make speedy riddance of all those who dwell in the land."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "They cannot be preserved."

AC 4535 [4]

- "...by 'land' in the Word is signified the church...From this it is manifest what is meant ...in Zephaniah by the 'speedy consummation of all that dwell in the land.' That the Jewish nation which dwelt in that land was not consummated, but the holy of worship with them..."

AR 216

- "...'zeal' in the Lord is not wrath; it only appears so in externals, interiorly it is love. It appears so in externals, because the Lord seems to be angry when He rebukes man, especially when man's own evil punishes him. It is so permitted from love, that his evil may be removed; just like a parent, who, if he loves his children, suffers [allows] them to be chastised for the sake of removing their evils." This explanation follows the citing of *Zephaniah 1:18* and *3:8*.

AR 658

- "...by 'the anger of God' is signified evil with men, which, because it is against God, is called the anger of God; not that God is angry with man, but because man, from his evil, is angry with God, and because it appears to man, when he is punished and tormented for it, as is the case after death in hell, as if it were from God, therefore, in the Word, anger and wrath, yea evil, is attributed to God." *Zephaniah 1:18* is cited as an example of this truth.

TCR 755

- "...[that] the consummation of the age is the last time of the church, can be seen from those passages in the Word where it is spoken of...(Zephaniah 1:18)...In these passages 'the land' signifies the church..."

AE 397 [3]

- "In Zephaniah (1:18)...'Consummation' signifies the last state of the church, a state in which there is no longer any truth because there is no good, or in which there is no longer any faith because there is no charity; and when this is the state of the church, then comes the Last Judgment. The Last Judgment then comes, for the further reason that the human race is the basis or foundation of the angelic heaven, for the conjunction of the angelic heaven with the human race is perpetual...when therefore the basis does not correspond the angelic heaven totters; consequently there must then be a judgment..."

Derived Doctrine

"Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath..."

- "Silver" signifies truth, and in the opposite sense, falsity. (*AC 1551*) Silver also signifies rational truth. (*AC 2575*)
- "Gold" signifies good. It is representative of good from love and the good of faith from love. (*AC 110*)
- Gold and silver signify knowledge of celestial things and knowledge of spiritual things. (*AC 1551 [3]*)
- The word "deliver" means to be saved or to be rescued. To be delivered in the positive sense means to be withdrawn from falsities. (*AE 714 [14]*)
- "The Lord's wrath" signifies the advent of the Lord to judgment. (*Divine Love and Wisdom [DLW] 5*) This kind of wrath comes about when the Lord turns away the opposition and the consequent penalties the opposition feels from His judgment. (*AC 5798 [6]*)

"...the whole land shall be devoured..."

- *AC 2571* offers us a wide view of what "land" represents. Land may represent the internal man or woman of the church; the region where the church is; the church itself; also in the universal sense, the Lord's kingdom in heaven and on earth; the doctrine of love and charity, hence the faith of the church.
- To be devoured signifies to destroy goods and truths. It also signifies the destruction of doctrine from its inception. (*AR 542*)

"By the fire of His jealousy...He will make speedy riddance of all those who dwell in the land."

- "Fire" signifies the good of love. (*AC 2799*) Fire in the opposite sense represents the love of self and the hell of falsities therefrom. (*AC 2444*)
- "Jealousy" signifies that divine truth is perceived as falsity and divine good as evil by those who do not receive the divine truth of the Lord's divine good; so they attribute anger and wrath to the Divine, for to be jealous in the case of the Lord means to be zealous. The words jealous and zealous come from the same root meaning. (*AC 8875*)
- Jealousy signifies the Lord's love of saving humankind. (*AC 5071*)
- "Zeal" signifies a kind of fire, but within it is the love of doing good to others, or, with the Lord, the love of saving humankind. (*AC 5071*)
- Can we now see the meaning of speedy riddance in the land? The Lord's love is alive. It is quick, meaning it is fervent, thorough, and lively in its task of removing the hells and their attendant evils. Nothing of disorder shall be left when the Lord completes the consummation of the church.

Putting It All Together

"They [the great deceivers within the falsified church] cannot be preserved." (*P&P*)

Those who sought to be deceivers of the doctrines of the church cannot use the silver of "rational truths" to talk their way out of the Lord's spiritual assessment. Nor can they present the gold of imagined celestial knowledge to justify their actions. What looked beautiful and precious on the outside was a veneer—a cover-up—of a valueless base. *TCR 519* likens the pretense of hell to coins made of dung and covered over with gold. Their fine coverings will not save them. So committed to evil were the people of Zephaniah's time that there was no love left within their hearts to be changed. If they had asked for help, it would have been given to them. But the great falsifiers wanted nothing to do with the Lord.

When the Lord cleans and purifies His church, He does so completely. The whole "land" will receive His cleansing. The "fire" of His jealousy is the way the Word explains what zeal He has to save humankind. The warmth of His love is strong and comforting. He will not tarry over the removal of disorder. Speedy. Complete. Thorough. Hell has nothing, no power, to stop the Divine process of reformation and regeneration.

Will this happen in our lifetime? Let the people say Amen, which is to say, "may it ever be so."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Zephaniah 1:18*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. Is there any uncertainty in your mind about what the Lord says will happen during the Last Judgment? What does this section teach you about the refreshing changes the Lord will introduce in His New Church?
2. Will the false charges against the Lord, by the deceivers, stand up in the end? Discuss this.
3. Remember when the Lord called Moses by the burning bush. Do you see something in that story that shows the fire of His love as a preservation of our freedom? The bush burned, but it was not consumed. What does this tell us about how the Lord leads us?

The promise of the Lord's thorough emptying of the vastated church shows that He offers no compromises to the rebellious. Therefore, we can rest assured that there are no compromises with hell either. Comments?

Chapter Two

ZEPHANIAH 2:1-3

"Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together, O undesirable [shameless] nation, before the decree is issued, or the day passes like chaff, before the Lord's fierce anger comes upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger comes upon you! Seek the Lord, all you meek of the earth, who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "They ought to be converted before the Lord comes to judgment..."

Doctrine of the Lord 4

- "...I shall in this first chapter merely adduce passages from the Word which contain the expression 'that day,' 'in that day,' and 'in that time;' in which, by 'day,' and 'time,' is meant the Lord's advent...In Zephaniah (2:2, 3)..."

AR 340

- "'The great day of the anger of the Lamb,' signifies the day of the Last Judgment; 'and who is able to stand?' signifies their inability to endure it by reason of their torment; for when the Last Judgment is at hand, the Lord, together with heaven, approaches, and of those who are below in the world of spirits, no others can endure the Lord's coming, but those who are interiorly good, who shun evils as sins, and look to the Lord. That 'the day of the Lord's anger' signifies the Last Judgment is evident from the following passages...Zephaniah 2:2, 3..."

AR 704

- "...the Lord's coming and the New Church from Him...are meant by 'the day of Jehovah'; as in...(Zephaniah 2:2, 3)..."

AE 413 [5]

- "In Zephaniah (2:2, 3)...'the glowing of anger' and 'the day of Jehovah's anger' mean the Last Judgment."

Derived Doctrine

"Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together..."

- *AC 679* explains that to "gather" signifies searching and gathering together (inventorying) the truths in the memory.
- *AR 707* presents the negative meaning of gathering as signifying "to excite to combat from falsities against truths...From the purpose of destroying the New Church..."
- Please note the repetition of the word "gather." The cause of repetition in the Word is because the Word treats distinctly of the two faculties, namely the understanding and the will. (*AC 707*)

"O undesirable [shameless] nation..."

- As we know, there is a good and bad meaning to all words used in the spiritual sense. "Nation" in the good sense represents the Lord's kingdom or the spiritual church that receives the good of faith. (*AC 2699*) In the negative meaning, nation signifies falsity from evil, that which comes from the sensuous man that nurtures destructive truths. (*AE 724 [27]*) "Nation" signifies those who trust in themselves. (*AC 249*)
- The wording of our text makes it plain as to which of the possible meanings of "nation" we need to reflect on. "O undesirable [shameless] nation..." This seems to call forth the image of a church or nation that was in love with nurturing those doctrines that harbor destructive truths.

"Before the decree is issued..."

- A decree signifies that the Lord was to come into the world. (*TCR 101*) A decree signifies an eternal law of order. (*AC 10248*)
- To "issue" means to set forth; to publish; to emit (to give influx); to announce.

"Or the day passes like chaff..."

- "Chaff" signifies things in which there is nothing good and also falsity of every kind that has a hellish origin. (*AC 3941 [9]*)
- "Day" signifies vastation (as taught in Zephaniah 1:14), and "day" represents the last time and state of the church. (*AC 488 [3] and 1839 [5]*)

"Before the Lord's fierce anger comes upon you..."

- Anger (especially fierce anger) is attributed to the Lord, but it signifies more of the anger of the people, or church. It represents the separation or turning away from things divine; for when wrath or anger is said of the Lord, it means a turning away on the part of the individual. (*AC 10431*)

- Any movement or correction by the Lord, to the evil, appears to be from anger, when in reality, His purpose is a calm and loving motive.

"Seek the Lord, all you meek of the earth..."

- To "seek" signifies a longing to be instructed in the ways of truth. (*AC 3058 [2]*) Seeking describes the attitude of those who will nothing and seek nothing except that which is from the Lord, and whatever they ask is granted. (*AR 951*)
- The "meek" signify those who are in the good (love) of charity. (*AE 304 [44]*) Meekness denotes a willingness to follow the ways of the Lord. Putting aside our unhealthy forms of self-love is a worthy act of meekness.
- The spiritual meanings of the word "earth" are manifold. It would be impossible to record the full list in this brief capsule. Here are but a few of the references to consider. The "earth" signifies the external man. (*AC 477 [3]*) "Earth" signifies a receptacle. (*AC 28*) "Earth" signifies the exterior things of the church, and interior things are the heavens. (*AC 1066 [3]*) In the parable of the Sower, four kinds of "earth" are mentioned. The good "earth" represents the good in a person, or church, which receives the Word. (*AC 3310 [2]*) One last quote might be worth considering, too: "earth" signifies the old church. (*AC 8902 [8]*)

"...who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility."

- "Justice" signifies a life that holds dearly to the good of charity. Those who love the good of charity are endowed by the Lord with the ability to know what is true. (*AC 615*)
- To "uphold" represents to support, and to have an inner sustainability in times of temptation. (*AE 298 [10]*)
- "Righteous" can be tied in with integrity and perfection, having a clear conscience and thinking from innocence and simple good. (*AC 2525*)
- "Humility" signifies a willingness to give in to the ways of the Lord. It signifies a quieting of one's proprium so that the Lord's Proprium can grow within us and lead the way to good and truth.
- "Seeking" indicates a willingness to be instructed in truths. (*AC 3058 [2]*)

"It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger."

- When the words "It may be..." occur in the Word, the core of their meaning seems best explained by the following passage from *AC 994*: "...interior things are as it were asleep, being immersed in the corporeal things. But yet **it may be** evident to any one who reflects, that all pleasures are such as are the affections that are more and more interior, and that they receive from these all their essence and quality." The words "It may be..." remind the reader of the words "Nunc Licet." "Now it is permitted..." Interior things will

give the faithful a sense of new enlightenment, protection, and pleasures forevermore.

- To be "hidden" by the Lord signifies finding refuge in the protection of the Lord. (*AC 8764*)
- "...in the day of the Lord's anger..." We best understand this phrase when we study the root meanings of anger and zeal. The Lord has no anger. He is full of zeal. He wishes no harm or destruction on anyone. He doesn't lash out, nor does He seek revenge. Zealously, He wants to save, protect, and deliver all from the anger of hell. We are the ones who project anger on the Lord when in fact it is hell that is full of anger.
- The phrase "day of anger" as used in the *Old Testament* relates, or points, to the judgment that will be executed at the incarnation of the Lord. (*AE 413 [6-7]; AC 488 [3] and 1839 [5]*)

Putting It All Together

"They ought to be converted before the Lord comes to judgment." (*P&P*)

The underlining of the words ought and converted is added to help us focus on our summary. The word "ought" conveys to us a powerful sense of why we have the Lord's Divine imperative. The church ought to be proactive in its work of repentance, reformation, and regeneration. It's a work dedicated to preparing the way for the Lord. To use the imagery of *Isaiah 40:3-4* and *Luke 3:5*, our spiritual work is a specific series of changes. The Word proposes changes that will make His incarnation positively direct and free of stumbling blocks.

"Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth..."

AE 405 [36] explains this passage as signifying that we "should prepare [ourselves] to receive the Lord; 'wilderness' signifying where there is no good because there is no truth, thus where there is as yet no church; 'every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill shall be made low,' signifies that all who are humble in heart, that is, all who are in goods and truths, are received, for such as are received by the Lord are raised up to heaven; while 'every mountain and hill shall be made low' signifies that all who are elated in mind, that is, who are in love of self and the world, shall be put down."

The call to be converted will bring us out of the "undesirable [shameless]" nation state. Instead of being like chaff, we can be converted to the "heart" or kernel of wheat. Conversion changes our negative fear of the Lord to a positive love of the Lord. We will seek His counsel. His love and wisdom will give us a sense of being upheld by His justice. In the stream of the Lord's Providence, we will be carried to

places of innocence, peace, calmness, tranquility, and mutual love to the Lord and the neighbor.

Please note how understanding the spiritual sense of the Word turns us away from negative ideas. Quickly the affirmative side of the Lord's Providence calls us to gather ourselves together and prepare the way for Him. "Seek the Lord, all you meek of the earth...seek righteousness, seek humility."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Zephaniah 2:1-3*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. How do the words "ought" and "conversion" sit with you? There are some psychological schools of thought that urge us to give up on compulsion words. Should, ought, and must are seen as enemies of a healthy and balanced psyche. Do you agree with this concept? What about the church's teachings that tell us there is freedom in self-compulsion?
2. If these compulsion words are not troublesome, how do you incorporate them into a healthy lifestyle?
3. How about the word "conversion"? What does it mean to be converted?
4. What "valleys" in life can you identify that need to be lifted up? In the stories of the Word, wars, despair, and danger exist in the valley. The Twenty-Third Psalm reminds us: "Yea, though I walk through the Valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for Thou art with me..."
5. The mountains that need to be lowered speak of a mental vanity. What are some spiritual mountains that need to be leveled or moved?
6. Remember, these preparatory events are not just to humiliate us. They are to be experienced to make the way straight for the Lord. We need to get the crooked straight. What does this last process tell us about playing around with truth, twisting it this way and that way for our own ends?
7. Lastly, did the harshness of the literal sense soften for you as the spiritual sense shone through?

ZEPHANIAH 2:4-6

"For Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon desolate; they shall drive out Ashdod at noonday, and Ekron shall be uprooted. Woe to the inhabitants of the seacoast, the nation of the Cherethites! The word of the Lord is against you, O Canaan, land of the Philistines: 'I will destroy you; so there shall be no inhabitant.' The seacoast shall be pastures, with shelters for shepherds and folds for flocks."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...for the evil will then perish on account of evils and falsities of many kinds."

AC 1197 [3]

- "The 'Philistines' signify in general a mere memory-knowledge of the knowledges of faith, and specifically those who make faith and salvation consist in knowledges alone, which they make matters of memory..." Thus, "it is evident what is meant by the Philistines, and by 'all of Philistia,' or all 'the borders' of it...So also in other places in the Prophets, as in...Zephaniah 2:5..."

AC 9340 [4]

- "The reason why 'Philistia,' which bordered on the land of Canaan even unto Tyre and Zidon, signified the interior truths of faith, was that the representative Ancient Church had been there, as is evident from the remains of Divine worship among its inhabitants, and referred to in the historic and prophetic books of the Word that treat of the Philistines and the land of Philistia; as in the prophecies of...Zephaniah 2:5..."

AC 1565

- "That 'flock and herd' signify the possessions of the external man, is evident from the signification of 'flock' and 'herd,' as being goods..." And that they also "signify things not good, is evident from the following passages of the Word." *Zephaniah 2:5-6* is cited among other references.

AC 2323 [3]

- "...when a Judgment is close at hand, that is, the salvation of the faithful and the condemnation of the unfaithful, then visitation precedes, or an exploration of what quality they are, that is, whether there is any charity and faith. This visitation takes place in the 'evening;' and therefore the visitation itself is called 'evening,' as in Zephaniah...2:5, 7."

Derived Doctrine

"For Gaza shall be forsaken..."

- "...by 'Gaza' [are signified] the things that are revealed concerning charity..."

- To be forsaken signifies withdrawal. The apparent absence of the Lord is the result of the lack of charity and the iniquities and sins of the Philistine church. (*AE 412 [19]*)

"...and Ashkelon desolate..."

- Of the five principal cities of the Philistines, Ashkelon is the only one located on a seacoast. Ashkelon's long history shows a spirit of rebellion. She caused the Egyptian Pharaoh, Ramses II, to storm her city. He crushed the rebels, and to record his victory, he inscribed on their temple walls a dramatic representation of the battle.
- Was the spirit of Ashkelon's rebellious nature actively being demonstrated against the Lord? Are we to consider the spiritual meaning, or representation, of a Philistine city on a seacoast? A "sea" represents a collection of spiritual and natural knowledges in the memory. (*AC 28 and 991*) A "coast" represents the border, the extension of the church from the knowing faculty to the intuitive and thinking faculties. (*AC 569 [12]*)
- To be "desolate" signifies to be without visible truth. (*AC 6141*) To be desolate connotes ruin.

"They shall drive out Ashdod at noonday..."

- Ashdod, too, was one of the five principal cities of the Philistines. It was the northernmost city (near the coast and half way between Gaza and Joppa.) When the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant, they took it to Ashdod, where the temple of the god Dagon was located.
- Since we don't have a direct teaching about Ashdod, we have to turn to what we do know to draw inferences about what might be represented. The Philistines represent those whose faith is separated from charity. They place everything of religion in knowledge and cognitions. This type of faith sounds like faith alone. (*AE 700 and TCR 203*) Dagon represents a mixture of doctrine. They made the representation of Dagon in a form that was half man and half fish. Dagon's form testifies to this mixture that lacks intelligence and power and is deficient of spiritual good. Does its northern location also tell us about a "coldness" or indifference to the good and truth of the Lord?
- To "drive out" signifies that the Lord will put to flight all of their evils and falsities. (*AC 1835*)
- "Noonday" is a period of the day where the greatest amount of light is present. Noonday therefore represents a state of fullness of enlightenment. The light of heaven presents to the heart and mind of the church the greatest intelligence and wisdom. (*AC 5672*)

"And Ekron shall be uprooted..."

- "'Beelzebul,' who was the god of Ekron, means the god of all falsities, for Beelzebul by derivation means god of flies, and 'flies' signify the falsities of the sensual man, thus falsities of every kind." (*AE 740 [10]*)
- A "root" signifies the proprium as the source of infernal falsity. (*AR 410*) A root signifies that charity cannot bear fruit. (*AC 382 [3]*) In *Doctrine of Life* 93, we read that as the proprium "constitutes the first root of [our] life, it is evident what kind of a tree a man would be unless this root were plucked up, and a new root planted in its place..."

"Woe to the inhabitants of the seacoast..."

- "Woe" signifies an admonition of disaster and warns of the danger of eternal damnation. (*AC 3755*)
- Inhabitants in the good sense represent all goods and those who are in charity. (*AC 795 [4]*) In the contrary sense, inhabitants represent evils goods and a lack of charity to the Lord and neighbor. Therefore, we can sense why the Lord spoke words of woe to the inhabitants.
- The "sea" represents a collection of spiritual and natural knowledges in the memory. (*AC 28 and 991*) "Coast" signifies the extension of the church from the knowing faculty to the intuitive and thinking faculties. (*AC 569 [12]*)

"...the nation of the Cherethitest!"

- We need to identify the Cherethites. Cherethites have an interesting background. They constituted a section of David's personal army when he defeated the Philistines and were part of his retinue after he was established in Jerusalem. (*II Samuel 8:18*) Their loyalty to David may be seen when they joined him in the fight against Absalom and his mutinous army. (*II Samuel 20:7*)
- The Cherethitest lineage also has family roots that cross lines with the Philistines. Is it the Philistine connection that is being condemned here? Or is the condemnation due to a spoiling of their loyalty and support of Israel's Lord?
- Since we do not have direct teachings regarding the nation of Cherethitest, we might do well to focus on the Philistine representations. Philistines represent those who are in faith separated from charity. The Philistines also represent those who hold false ideas and reason about spiritual things from their false ideas. (*AC 727*)

"The word of the Lord is against you, O Canaan, land of the Philistines: I will destroy you; so there shall be no inhabitant."

- When the Word speaks of the Lord being against anyone, it means something other than what we would mean if we used these words. For the Lord, it means bringing things back into order. It means bringing hell to the point of being yoked or controlled. Divine power is offered in place of self-interests. (*AC 8625*)
- Canaan has many representations. Let's look at some of them. In the negative sense, it represents a church or an individual who is worshiping externally without internals. In a positive sense, Canaan represents the Lord's kingdom, the church, the man or woman of the church, the celestial of the church, or its good. (*AC 5757*)
- Can we use derived doctrine here? Would it make sense to see this as an announcement from the Lord that He planned to reorder the worship of the church? Can we imagine a movement from a lifeless external worship to a spiritual excitement for internal worship?
- The destruction announced by the Lord is a cleansing process. It "means not to be afraid because of the damnation which comes upon those who are in knowledges and pervert them." In other words, it signifies the removal of perverted memory-knowledges. (*AC 1458 [3]*)
- "Inhabitants" represent goods and truths. (*AE 741 [6]*) To announce that no inhabitants would be left represents the removal of all evils and falsities that had been called goods and truths. See *AC 417 [10]* for the meaning of "unpeopled."

"The seacoast shall be pastures, with shelters for shepherds and folds for flocks."

- "Pastures" signify knowledges that contain the goods of truth.
- Pastures also signify what sustains the spiritual life. (*AC 6078*)
- Pastures signify the Word from which spiritual nourishment is derived. (*AE 644*)
- To find pastures signifies to be taught, enlightened, and nourished by divine truths. (*AR 914*)
- A "shelter," or shade, signifies a defense against evil and falsity. (*AE 298 [5]*)
- A shelter in the negative sense represents an obscure general perception of good and truth, especially with one who is in external worship. (*AC 2367*)
- "Shepherds" signify those who lead to the good of life. (*AC 6052*)
- Shepherds signify one who does the goods of charity or who leads and teaches. Shepherds signify the Lord. (*AE 375 [34]*)
- "Gold" signifies good from the celestial things of love, in which innocence may rest. (*AC 415*)
- A "flock" signifies those who are led and taught. (*AC 343*)
- A flock signifies the church of those who are in the truth of simple good. (*AC 6828*)

Putting It All Together

P&P sums up this section from the Word with this doctrinal statement: "...the evil will then perish on account of evils and falsities of many kinds."

What evils and sins of every kind were the Philistines guilty of?

- They made memory-knowledges the core of their faith.
- They believed salvation to consist in knowledges alone.
- This attitude took the Lord and charity out of genuine worship.
- They were rebellious and quarrelsome within their hearts toward the good and truth of the Lord.
- Ashdod proudly and defiantly hosted the god Dagon within its temple. Dagon's image was a mixture, half man and half fish. Dagon signifies a religious faith that separates truth from charity. (*Divine Providence [DP] 326 [12]*)

After looking over the summary of "evils and sins of every kind," do we find anything listed above that makes us cringe with horror and disgust? If nothing affected our sense of injustice, why is that so? Does it mean we have fallen victim to misconceptions about true faith? Some describe this state as being "numbed out." Is this a good description of the process of losing a vital faith?

As I read it, the Philistines placed too much emphasis on mere confession of faith. They chose to have a faith of the lips and not of the heart. In many ways, they were dangerous spiritual hypocrites. They represented a religion that valued the "faith alone" choice. Such a choice spurned real spirituality. They were not interested in finding the spiritual sense of the Word to see the error of their ways or to get a better understanding of their spiritual needs. Instead, they looked for ways to excuse or justify their actions. The Philistines molded a mixture of man and fish ideas to pollute and adulterate truths they had had from the days of the Ancient Church. In other words, they were intent on destroying the "Divine Human Representative" understanding they had of the Lord.

Are we now moving toward a clearer understanding of what the Lord is condemning within the Philistine church? Can we picture the light of the Lord going out? Instead of striving to keep as correct an idea of God as they could, they worked toward worshipping an "invisible" lifeless statue of Dagon, an idol fashioned from their minds and hands.

Real spiritual growth depends on a progressive, deepening faith from the Word and on shunning of evils as sins. A true faith pushes aside spiritual lethargy, negligence, and self-love so as to serve the greater good of the Lord and the neighbor.

Do we still have these enemies of faith among us? Can we sense that the "faith alone" ideas thrive in present-day churches? Are there places where you see the memorization of creedal statements honored as meriting heaven? Do we still try to mold and blend, or bend, the ways of the Lord with time-honored excuses and justifications, such as "we are only human"? Are we still a people of lip service and not heart service?

Recall the position of the nation of Cherethites. David trusted them and made them a part of his inner circle of confidants. They rallied to help him overcome the rebellious army of Absalom. What happened to those virtues within their nation? The Word illustrates the correspondential answer: they turned away and sought to fashion their own spiritual ends.

Our story doesn't end with this bleak picture. Instead, the prophecy announces: "**The seacoast shall be pastures, with shelters for the shepherds and folds for the flocks.**" The Lord promises that there will be a restoration of knowledge based on the goods of His truth. He promises to teach, enlighten, and nourish the flock. He will bring shepherds who will lead them to the good of life. In the highest sense, the Lord is promising that He will be the Shepherd of Innocence Who will bring peace and rest to His people.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Zephaniah 2:4-6*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

The following questions are drawn from the "Putting It All Together" section.

1. How does this part of Zephaniah and its meanings give us a sense of the depth, or seriousness of the spiritual disorder of the Philistines?
2. If nothing appeared serious enough, for you, to warrant total desolation of the Philistines, where do you think we might be missing the point? Have we become somewhat numbed to the seriousness of disorders? Certainly with what we see daily in the media, nothing seems to surprise us anymore. We see and hear all kinds of brutality on a nightly basis. Are we somewhat jaded? Have we thrown in the towel on restoring spiritual values in our world? Are there ways to counteract this numbness?
3. Did the point about the Philistines being part of the Ancient Church register and strike you as something we ought to remember? At one time, they were a church that saw the Divine Human in all of the representative forms around them. They let their spiritual gift slip away with a mixture of rationalizations

- and memory-knowledges. Can we find ways to keep lip-service worship from replacing a heart-inspired worship service?
4. Real spiritual growth comes about when we participate in a deeper study of the Word. It comes when we look within ourselves honestly to remove those areas of evil and sin that cause a blockage between the Lord and ourselves. How might a study, like this one, help us develop a more disciplined way to read the Word? What are the fruits of such reading?
 5. What were your reflections about the inadequacy of "faith alone" and memorization of facts for achieving salvation? Real faith is an internal acknowledgment of truth—the Lord's truth. If you believed in the confessional booth and the granting of absolution, would that take away a sense of your individual need to shun evils as sins?
 6. What modern application can we make of what we learned about the representative nation of the Cherethites?
 7. Did the positive closing prophecy about pastures, shelters, shepherds, and flocks help lift the cloud of doom and eminent destruction? What do these images bring to mind?
 8. What other questions would you add to this study?

ZEPHANIAH 2:7

"The coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed their flocks there; in the houses of Ashkelon they shall lie down at evening. For the Lord their God will intervene for them, and return their captives."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Then some are to be saved."

AC 1565

- "That 'flock and herd' signify the possessions of the external man, is evident from the signification of 'flock' and 'herd,' as being goods...That 'flock' and 'herd' signify also things not good, is evident from...Zephaniah 2:5-7."

AC 2323

- "...when a Judgment is close at hand, that is, the salvation of the faithful and the condemnation of the unfaithful, then visitation precedes, or an exploration of what quality they are...this visitation takes place in the 'evening';...as in Zephaniah 2:5-7.

AC 7844 [4, 5-6]

- "...the coming of the Lord into the world is signified by 'evening and morning,' ...In Zephaniah 2:7... 'evening' denotes the first state of the rising church. As 'evening' signified the last state of the old church and the first of the new...That 'evening' denotes the last state of the church, when there is dense falsity because there is no faith, and dense evil because there is no charity..."

Derived Doctrine

"The coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah..."

- "The coast" signifies the extension of the church from one limit to the other, that is, from the knowing faculty to the intuitive and thinking faculties." (AC 569 [12], *emphasis added*) To grasp the significance of this citation, we must picture the Lord coming to the church to make a judgment. The Lord's visitation is for the purpose of building up the new church. All of the faulty thoughts and affections must be vastated. Therefore, He opens the aspects of the church concerned with knowing; He visits the intuitive and thinking faculties. He examines the real thinking and affections of the church to rid it of lip service and pretense. Nothing can be hidden if spiritual integrity is to be restored. What is in the heart will be shouted from the rooftops.
- "...shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah..." When a church is vastated, a remnant always remains and is continued under the guidance of the Lord. (AC 407) A remnant signifies those who have joined some goods of charity to faith. (AR517)
- The house of Judah signifies the celestial church. (AE 710) What are the qualities of the celestial church in comparison to those of the spiritual church? "The truth of good is of the celestial church, and the good of truth is of the spiritual church. With those who were of the celestial church, good was implanted in the will part, which is the proper seat of good, and from this good, that is, through this good from the Lord, they had a perception of truth...But with those who are of the spiritual church, good is implanted in the intellectual part by means of truth..." (AC 5733)

"They shall feed their flocks there; in the houses of Ashkelon they shall lie down at evening."

- To feed signifies to make provision for the increase of the new church. (AR 547)
- To feed signifies to teach. (AR 383)
- To feed signifies to imbibe good and truth in a state of temptations. (AC 8527)
- A flock signifies those who are to be led and taught. (AC 343)

- A flock signifies the church and those who are in the truth of simple good. (*AC 6828*)
- Houses represent the natural mind. The rational mind and the natural mind are like a house. (*AC 4982*)
- Houses signify the church. (*AC 3720*)
- Houses signify the will principle. (*AC 706*)
- Houses signify scientifics that are collected together to raise and build up the external human, which is not unlike the building of a house. (*AC 1488*)
- We have no representation given for the city of Ashkelon. The Philistines had five major cities: Ashkelon was one of them. Ashkelon was the only one among the five powerful cities to be on the seacoast.
- To understand the meaning of lying down at evening in the houses of Ashkelon, let us consider first the representation of "down." *AC 1311* teaches that to come down signifies judgment. Can we take this to mean that the houses, the natural-rational mind, were about to be brought "down" to judgment? Does the evening represent the judgment of the last state of the church and the mind prior to the "new day" of the Lord's advent? Consider this possible meaning in light of the passage below.

"For the Lord their God will intervene, and return their captives."

- To "intervene" means to come between; to mediate, arbitrate, intercede, or interrupt. Recall the wonderful teachings regarding the importance of the "remnant." Whenever a church undergoes vastations, *AC 407* teaches, the Lord sees to it that "...there always remains some nucleus of a church" so that a new light may shine forth to lead the captive back to a state of freedom.
- The Lord "interrupts" evil. His light comes between us and our states of disorder, and cleans or removes the murky and nefarious works of hell.
- *AC 10500* teaches that expiation for our sins "signifies a **possibility by virtue of the Divine power of the Lord [to be] with those who have so completely turned themselves away...that their worship be...accepted and heard.**" (Emphasis added.)
- The Lord will intervene. He will provide a way out of spiritual captivity. He will free us from our cruel enslavement of mind, heart, and soul. His church will renew its work to feed and care for the souls of His flock.

Putting It All Together

Restoration, healing, rebuilding—this work is not always attractive. There is the knocking down and removal of what is worn out, the scarred walls, and weak foundations. With the dust of the rubble clouding our vision and the scattered remnants of steel and cement all over the former foundation, it is hard to picture what the new building is going to look like. The architect and the builder may assure us that the new building is going to please us and more adequately fit our growing

needs. We look at their plans and drawings, and hope for the day when it will be completed so we can move in and enjoy the new usefulness of the building.

Surgery is not pretty, either. A hip replacement means cutting tissue and muscles and removing the damaged parts. There will be blood and weeks of soreness. The doctors promise that all of their work and a rehab regimen will bring relief and more mobility. We hope, we fear, we trust that it will happen as they promise.

Zephaniah's message is direct. What the church had been building was going to collapse in the day of the Lord's judgment. The doctrines of the church were faulty, based on false logic so precariously unbalanced that it was in eminent danger of collapsing. The worship going on within the church was superficial and nearly empty of holiness. The flock was not being fed. Souls were not receiving care. People were going through the motions of praise, but their hearts were not feeling any excitement. Genuine ends were not evident, and much spiritual ignorance was enslaving the Lord's flock.

The Lord, as the Divine Architect and Divine Physician, counseled His people that falsity would fall and that it would be cut out of the diseased body of the church. A day of judgment was at hand. Those who loved their man-made truths were going to be separated from the church. They would be cut off not because of Divine anger, but because of their unwillingness to let the Lord lead them in the way of truth. They, the self-promoters, would no longer dictate what was essential to the church.

Zephaniah 2:7 reports that "some are to be saved." Who will be saved? Why only some? Why not everyone? The concept of the "remnant" comes out in this prophecy. The nucleus of a church will remain. The Lord's intervention begins with a few. Again, we ask, why with a few? Real spiritual growth comes with a degree of slowness. It is a faith that has a line-upon-line and precept-upon-precept mission statement. Growth in the Lord's church is founded on good and truth, not on popular opinions. Can you accept this plan of the Lord's? *AC 10500* encourages us to see that the Lord's Divine power can restore the integrity of the church so that worship can be heard and accepted.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Zephaniah 2:7*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. As you look at the state of the church (for now, let's use the church universal as our model), what is your view of its soundness? What is the basis for your opinion?

2. Can you see any signs of the nucleus (remnant) working? Is the New Church part of the nucleus? Are the Writings a nucleus?
3. When we research and judge civil, moral, and spiritual issues, how much are we influenced by popular concepts and how much by the Word?
4. For example, consider the issue of same-sex marriages. Whatever your opinion on this issue, how do you search "objectively" for answers? Will the courts and individual states decide for us? Do we put our heads in the sand and make no stand, hoping that it will eventually sort itself out?
5. What makes for a living and active church? Is a successful church one that fosters activities for all ages? Is a successful church one that provides preaching (worship), teaching, and doctrinal instruction for all ages? How do we avoid going through the motions of empty worship?
6. "A few will be saved." How did your heart and mind react to those words? Did you wish for a larger promise? If the Word had said "many" will be saved, how would that have changed how you felt about the prophecy?
7. We have so much more to learn about the ways of the Lord. We tend to try to get ahead of the Lord. We want faster results, faster growth. Impatience is a factor. What will it take for us to follow the Lord's pace in growing the New Church?
8. Continuing the thought from question 7, how do we follow the pace of the Lord and avoid being complacent about our need to spread the good news of the Second Coming?

ZEPHANIAH 2:8-10

"I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the insults of the people of Ammon, with which they have reproached My people, and made arrogant threats against their borders. Therefore, as I live, says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, surely Moab shall be like Sodom, and the people of Ammon like Gomorrah—overrun with weeds and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation. The residue of My people shall plunder them, and the remnant of My people shall possess them. This they shall have for their pride, because they have reproached and made arrogant threats against the people of the Lord of hosts."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Those who have adulterated the Word will utterly perish"

AC 2468 [13]

- "In Zephaniah... (2:8-10)...To 'reproach the people,' and to 'enlarge against their boundary, and against the people of Jehovah Zebaoth,' is to hold as vile and to reject interior truths, which are the 'people of Jehovah Zebaoth.' The

consequence of this is that goods become evils of falsity, which are 'Sodom' and a 'place abandoned to the nettle;' and truths become falsities, which are 'Gomorrah' and a 'pit of salt.' For it is from internal things that external are capable of being good and true."

AC 1259 [4-5]

- "That the 'nations' denote the goods of charity, or, what is the same , those in whom there are goods of charity...This is said of the Lord's kingdom; 'peoples' denote truths; 'nations' goods. Those in the church who are endowed with the good of charity are 'nations,' and those who are endowed with the truths of faith are 'peoples;' for goods and truths are predicated according to the subjects in whom they are..." *Zephaniah 2:9* is cited as an example.

AC 1666 [3]

- "As cupidities and falsities are what vastate or lay waste man, that is, deprive him of all the life of the love of good, and of the affection of truth, vastation is described in many passages by 'saltiness.'" *Zephaniah 2:9* is cited.

AC 2455 [3]

- "In Zephaniah...2:9...where a 'place that is left to the nettle' denotes vastated good, and a 'pit of salt' vastated truth; for the expression 'place left to the nettle' refers to Sodom, by which is signified evil or vastated good, and a 'pit of salt' to Gomorrah, by which is signified falsity or vastated truth...That the subject is vastation is manifest, for it is said an 'eternal desolation.'"

AC 9207 [7]

- "A 'pillar of salt' denotes disjunction from truth; for in the opposite sense 'salt' signifies the destruction and vastation of truth (*Zeph. 2:9...*)."

AC 10300 [6]

- "In Zephaniah...2:9...a place left to the nettle' denotes the ardor and burning of the life of man from the love of self; a 'pit of salt' denotes a longing for what is false, which, as it destroys truth and good, is called 'a waste forever.' It is said that it shall be 'as Gomorrah,' because by 'Gomorrah and Sodom' is signified the love of self (AC 2220)."

Doctrine of the Lord 39

- This number gives many references in the Word where the Lord is called "the God of Israel" only. *Zephaniah 2:9* is cited.

Doctrine of Sacred Scriptures 86

- "That repetitions...occur in the Word on the account of the marriage of good and truth, may be seen quite clearly from passages where 'nations' and 'peoples' are mentioned..." *Zephaniah 2:9* is cited.

AR 483

- "That 'peoples' signify those who are in truths or falsities of doctrine, and 'nations' those who are in goods or in evils of life, may appear from the many passages in the Word...where 'peoples' and 'nations' are mentioned together, from which this may be concluded, since in the Word in each and every thing there is a marriage of the Lord and the church, and thence...'peoples' relate to truth, and 'nations' to good." *Zephaniah 2:9* is cited as an example.

TCR 93

- "That Jehovah and the Holy One of Israel are one, although the names are different, is made clear by the passages here quoted..." *Zephaniah 2:9* is cited.

TCR 251

- "It would be tedious to show from the Word that there are...dual expressions in the Word, which seem like repetitions of the same thing, for to do so would fill many pages. But to remove doubt, I will cite some passages where 'nation' and 'people' ...are mentioned together..." *Zephaniah 2:9* is cited.

AE 331 [6]

- "...'peoples' and 'nations' signify all who are of the Lord's church; 'peoples' those who are of His spiritual church, and 'nations' those who are of His celestial church." Later on in *AE 331[8]*, *Zephaniah 2:9* is cited.

AE 653 [6]

- "In *Zephaniah...2:9* 'Moab'...means the natural man, who from the love of self adulterates the goods of the church, and 'the sons of Ammon' mean those who falsify the truths of the church; and as thence is the devastation of all good and truth it is said, 'a place abandoned to nettles, and a pit of salt, a waste for ever;' the devastation of all good is signified by 'a place of nettles,'

and the devastation of all truth, by 'a pit of salt;' like things are signified by 'Sodom and Gomorrah.'"

Coronis 58 [5]

- "...passages in which the vastation, desolation, and consummation of [the] church, are further mentioned..." *Zephaniah 2:9* is cited among the many passages.

AC 2220 [2]

- "In Zephaniah...2:9...where 'Sodom' denotes evil from the love of self, and 'Gomorrah' the derivative falsity, of both of which 'desolation' is here predicated, as previously was 'overthrown.' 'Pride' is the love of self; to 'reproach the people of Jehovah Zebaoth,' is to bring evil upon truths; and to 'enlarge upon the people,' is to bring falsity upon them."

AR 502

- "That 'Sodom' is the love of dominating from self-love, may appear from the description of Sodom in Moses, that they wished to do violence to the angels who came into Lot's house; and that fire and brimstone rained upon them out of heaven...These loves and their evils are signified by 'Sodom and Gomorrah'..." *Zephaniah 2:9* is cited. Then note the continuation of this passage: "That this love is signified by 'Sodom,' is not known in the world; but keep this in mind and remember it when you come into the world of spirits, as is done after death, and you will be fully convinced."

Derived Doctrine

"I have heard the reproach of Moab..."

- The word "reproach" denotes shame and disgrace; it means to discredit, to dishonor, and to blame. When Rachel conceived and bore Joseph, she cried out that "God hath gathered my reproach." She meant that God had ended her barrenness. In the context of *Zephaniah 2:8*, Moab's reproach, or shameful act, was adulteration of good, and it would be removed so that the church's barren state might be ended. Moab signifies the state of people in natural good who allow themselves to easily be led astray. (*AC 3242 [3]*)

"...and the insults of the people of Ammon..."

- "Ammon" signifies those who falsify truths and live evil lives. (*AC 6405 [4]*)
- The insults of Ammon conveyed contempt, abuse, a maligning derision.

- The Lord heard these things. He heard their arrogant threats against Him and His people. Read *DLW 50* regarding the seriousness of such derision against the Divine Human.
- In one sense, we get a glimpse of how little their contempt for the Lord accomplished. Their arrogant threats came against the "borders." Borders signify the lowest parts of the church. This was an attack against fixed boundaries that are set up around what is good so that it cannot be approached and injured by evils from hell. (*AC 9492*)

Putting It All Together

"Those who have adulterated the Word will utterly perish." (*P&P*)

Those who want to discredit, mock, speak arrogantly about, and shame the Word of the Lord will not get away with their insults. In case they think they can approach and harm spiritual things, the Lord reminds every listener that people with evil intentions can only come to the edge or border of internal spiritual things. Guards prevent them from spoiling all that is holy. They can attack the externals of memory-knowledges but not the living substance of Love and Wisdom.

Accountability is front and center in these two verses. Moab is linked to Sodom. Ammon is linked to Gomorrah. Just as fire and brimstone fell on Sodom and Gomorrah, so will it fall on Moab and Ammon. To illustrate their end, the Lord likens them to overgrown weeds and salt pits. Theirs is to be a life of perpetual desolation.

Does this sound ominous? It depends on which side of the issue one stands on. If a "people" and a "nation" stand with the Lord, it is welcoming and comforting news. If one stands with Moab and Ammon against the "people" and "nation" of the Lord, it has to be distressing news.

There are contrasts throughout these two verses. The repetition has a purpose. The contrasts enable us to see both sides and choose which side we want. Think of Joshua's words: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." This is a call for dedication against those who would mock and speak arrogantly against the Lord's truth.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. How many lessons about salt can you recall from the Word?
2. How many good uses of salt can you recall?
3. Is salt always a good thing? Isn't it a poison, too?
4. Please notice that weeds and their correspondence are also mentioned frequently in the Word. Look for some examples.
5. This question might be more than you care to take up at this time. There has been a long-time discussion in the church about the eternity of the hells.

Some would like to believe that the Lord will only allow people in hell to be there until they come to their senses, whereupon He will lift them into heaven. Others believe that hell is to eternity. What are the foundations of each opinion? Do the words of our verse "a perpetual desolation" answer this debate?

6. How does the teaching about the "border" strengthen our faith and offer encouragement?

ZEPHANIAH 2:11

"The Lord will be awesome to them, for He will reduce to nothing all the gods of the earth; people shall worship Him, each one from his place, indeed all the shores of the nations."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "They will perish that whoever is able may acknowledge the Lord."

AC 1158 [4]

- "In Zephaniah...2:11..."The isles of the nations' denote nations more remote from the knowledges of faith."

AR 34

- "That by 'islands' in the Word are signified the nations which are more remote from the worship of God, but which yet will draw near to it, is evident from these passages..." *Zephaniah 2:11* is cited.

AE 50 [2]

- "That 'islands' signify nations that are about to accede to the true worship of God, is evident from the following passages..." *Zephaniah 2:11* is cited.

AE 406 [15]

- "In Zephaniah...2:11&12...signifies that the falsities of evil will be dispersed, and truths and goods given to those who are in falsities indeed, but not in the falsities of evil; 'the gods of the nations that He will make lean' signify the falsities of evil, 'gods' signifying falsities, 'nations' evils, and 'to make lean' to remove evils from falsities..."

Derived Doctrine

"The Lord will be awesome to them..."

- Awesome is translated differently in the various translations of the Word. The Writings use the word "terrible." The Authorized Version (King James) uses "dreadful." The New English Bible uses the word "fearsome."
- These words are all related to fear. Fear, holy fear, is a holy state. (*AC 3719*)
- The word "terrible" signifies the omnipotence and omniscience of the Lord. (*AE 298 [7]*)
- *AC 8816* explains that those who do good indeed tremble at the presence of the Lord, but it is a holy tremor that precedes reception.

"He will reduce [thin] to nothing all the gods of the earth..."

- Thinning or reducing the gods of the earth signifies exposing the empty charity in that which was believed to have been fat, or full of charity, in its externals. (*AC 5204*)

"People shall worship Him, each one from his place, indeed all the shores of the nations."

- From this verse, we can derive the point that everyone's state will provide some means, some extension, by which he or she can worship the Lord. *P&P* puts it this way for us: "that whoever is able may acknowledge the Lord."

Putting It All Together

Seeing the "awesome," "terrible," "fearsome" God is a good thing. Holy fear inspires and paves the way for the reception of what is holy. The awesome God will cause the gods of pretense to wither away to nothing. They cannot stand His presence. They will disintegrate because their fatness, or substance, was external; it was not based on eternal values. Their form had nothing of spiritual substance. Please note the wonderful transition in *P&P*. They will perish – that whoever is able – may acknowledge the Lord.

Our spiritual life is richer if we acknowledge the awesome God. If we carry with us a holy fear, we will tremble. I picture the trembling as one of excitement. We see the preparation accomplished by holy fear. It is the preparation to receive greater things than we can imagine.

The false gods are reduced to nothing.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. Would you agree that God is awesome? Before you assume that the answer is obvious, think about how many people tend to make God small in their attitudes. Hell, they say, is stronger than heaven. God can't do this or that. We need to review our belief system and put the Lord back in the "awesome" category. It scares hell when we think like this. How can we, as a church, put the Lord back where He belongs in our lives?
2. Can you see or feel false gods waning in His presence? How?
3. Can you think of any moments when holy fear made an important difference in your life?
4. Some fundamentalist Christians believe there is only one way available to reach heaven. How does our lesson soften and enlarge that narrow view?
5. The voice of *Zephaniah 2:11* declares that "each one from his place, indeed all the shores of the nations" shall worship Him. Doesn't this sound like an inclusive God of all people? What are the implications of that type of inclusiveness?

ZEPHANIAH 2:12-15

"You Ethiopians also, you shall be slain by My sword." And He will stretch out His hand against the north, destroy Assyria, and make Nineveh a desolation, as dry as the wilderness. The herds shall lie down in her midst, every beast of the nation. Both the pelican and the bittern shall lodge on the capitals of her pillars; their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be at the threshold; for He will lay bare the cedar work. This is the rejoicing city that dwelt securely, that said in her heart, 'I am it, and there is none besides me.' How has she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down! Everyone who passes by her shall hiss and shake his fist."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Those who have falsified the knowledges (cognitions) of truth, by means of reasonings and knowledges (scientifica), and have thus destroyed the church, will utterly perish."

AE 406 [15]

- "...the Kushites' signify those who are in falsities indeed, but not in the falsities of evil; and in the abstract sense...in the natural, and, therefore 'the island of nations' [signifies] the natural man in respect...to the falsities in the natural man; these falsities are signified by 'slain by My sword,'..."

AC 1186

- "...the spiritual church (Israel), reason (Asshur) and memory-knowledges (Egypt)...These three constitute the intellectual things of the man of the spiritual church, which follow one another in this order. In other places also where Asshur is named, it signifies the rational, either true or false, as in...Zephaniah 2:13..."

AC 7673 [3]

- "In many passages...omnipotence is described by 'Jehovah stretching out His hand,' as also by 'His outstretched hand,' and by 'His outstretched arm' – by 'Jehovah stretching out the hand,' in the following passages..." *Zephaniah 2:13* is cited.

AC 1188 [4]

- "In Zephaniah...2:13&14...Nineveh is here described, but in the prophetic style, and the falsity itself which is signified by Nineveh. This falsity, because it is worshiped, is called 'the north, the wild beast of his kind, the cormorant and the bittern in the pomegranates,' and is described by 'a voice singing in the windows,' and by 'laying bare the cedar,' which is intellectual truth. All these expressions are significative of such falsity."

AC 3391 [2]

- "In Zephaniah...2:13&14...where the destruction of the truths of faith by reasonings, which are 'Asshur,' is treated of (n. 119, 1186); that a 'voice shall sing in the windows' signifies the desolation of truth, thus of the intellectual faculty as to truth."

AC 9552 [2]

- "In Zephaniah...2:13&14...where 'pelican and the bittern in the pomegranates' denote falsities of evil in the memory-knowledges of good."

AR 567

- "...the affections of a man, in the spiritual world, appear at a distance as beasts...beasts, considered in themselves, are nothing but forms of natural affections, but men are not only forms of natural, but of spiritual affections at the same time. That men, as to their affections, are meant by 'beasts,' may appear from these passages..." *Zephaniah 2:13-15* is cited.

AE 388 [11]

- "In Zephaniah...2:13-15...This treats of self intelligence, which confirms falsities and evils by reasonings from knowledges (scientifica), and by applying to them things from the sense of the letter of the Word. 'The north' signifies the natural and sensual man, and the knowing [faculty] (scientificum) that belongs to it; and 'Assyria' signifies reasoning therefrom; and 'saying in her heart, I, and none other beside me,' signifies self-intelligence. This makes clear what is involved in these particulars, in series, namely, 'Jehovah will stretch out His hand over the north, and will destroy Assyria,' signifies that He will deprive such a natural man, and its power to understand and reason thence, of all perception of good and understanding of truth; 'the droves shall lie down in the midst of her, every wild beast of the nation; both the pelican, and the bittern, shall lodge in the chapters thereof,' signifies that there shall be falsities of evil, and falsities of thought and perception in the knowledges from the Word everywhere therein, 'the wild beast of the nation' meaning the falsity of evil, 'pelican and bittern' the falsity of thought and perception, and 'chapters' the knowledges from her heart, 'I, and none other besides me,' signifies that such intelligence trusts in itself and draws only from self (ex proprio), 'city' signifying doctrine from such intelligence; 'how is she become a waste, a place for the wild beast to lie down in.' signifies that it has nothing of truth in it but is full of falses."

AE 650 [56]

- "In Zephaniah...2:13-15...This describes the vastations of the church by the falsities of doctrine which are from self-intelligence. The 'north over which Jehovah will stretch out His hand' signifies the church that is in falsities; 'Assyria which Jehovah will destroy' signifies the reasonings from falsities; 'Nineveh which He shall make a waste, a dry place like the wilderness' signifies the falsities of doctrine; 'droves,' 'the wild beast of the nation,' the 'pelican,' and the 'bittern,' signify the affections of falsities, and falsities themselves interior and exterior."

AC 655

- "In Zephaniah...2:14...This is said of Asshur and Nineveh; 'Asshur' denotes the understanding, here vastated; a 'voice singing in the windows,' reasonings from phantasies."

AC 908 [3]

- "That 'wild animal' in the opposite sense is taken in the Word for what is not living, is evident from many passages, of which only the following will be cited, for confirmation... In Zephaniah...2:15..."

Derived Doctrine

Is there a need for derived doctrine for this section? We have some excellent passages that cover almost everything in these verses, but there are a few things we need to add to increase the depth of our understanding. We need some positive correspondences to contrast with the dark and foreboding opposite sense.

"...in the windows..."

- *AE 675 [19]* teaches that the windows of heaven signify the Divine inflowing, from which come intelligence and eternal life.
- *AE 282 [5]* teaches that "windows" signify a thorough investigation of truth.

"...lodging on the capitals of her pillars..."

- *AC 3115* teaches that "lodging" (spending the night) in the positive sense signifies a state of abiding—as in having a state of or affection for truth.
- *AE 219 [5]* teaches that "capitals" (chapters) signify superior knowledge that helps support heavenly truths.
- *AC 9674* teaches that "pillars" signify what supports heaven and the church, namely the goods of love and of faith from the Lord.
- *Coronis 40* teaches, "The man who has religion, in spiritual things, is like a pelican nourishing its young with its own blood; but the man who has not religion, in those things is like a vulture in a state of starvation devouring its own offspring."

"Everyone who passes by her shall hiss and shake his fist."

- To "pass by" is to know and to perceive the quality. (*AC 3992*)
- Hissing signifies rejection of falsities of the natural mind. (*AC 7444 [2]*)
- A "fist" signifies the weakening of a truth from some external or general truth. (*AC 9025*)
- To "shake" signifies to divest oneself of unclean things. (*AC 1748*)
- Shaking signifies an action taken lest what is damned should adhere to them. (*AE 365 [8]*)

Putting It All Together

Where might we focus to get at the heart of these four verses? We might do well to look at the boast of self-sufficiency. "**I am it, and there is none besides me.**" Isn't that the attitude which renders all the correspondences in the negative? The spiritual church (Israel), reason (Asshur), and memory-knowledges (Egypt) become falsified. Falsity becomes the thing, or god, to be worshiped. The Lord is absent from the hearts and minds of people with this attitude. They wallow in a pitiful self-sufficiency. The windows of their minds could have received the shining light of

heaven. The pillars of their faith could have been supported by superior knowledge. Instead, they chose to have windows turned away from the light of heaven. Instead of turning to the "east," they were cold and indifferent, turning to the north. They were dry as a desert, barren, empty, with a life worthy of the hisses and shaken fists of all who pass by it. The church within them was not a sanctuary for the Lord; it was a sanctuary of wild beasts serving the base desires of their self-love.

In light of these teachings, we can see the meaning of what is in *P&P*: "Those who have falsified the knowledges of truth, by means of reasonings and knowledges, and have thus destroyed the church, will utterly perish."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Zephaniah 2:12-15*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. Were these verses hard to take? Just about everything that might have been a positive correspondence came out negative.
2. We need to spiritually shake our fists at this self-sufficient attitude to make sure none of its haughtiness adheres to us. The hissing is a rejection of the falsities of the natural mind. Again, we must face the fact that the natural mind, left unprotected and unguarded by the Word, will probably think of itself as beyond everyone and everything. Can you picture these correspondences applying to real happenings in your life? The haughtiness? The hissing? The shaking of the fists?
3. In a world where getting ahead requires using the word "I" often, do we forget to thank the Lord for His major influence and strength in our life? Does it help to be "we-focused"? Why and how?
4. These verses urge us to apply their truths positively to our lives. How can we do that?

Chapter Three

ZEPHANIAH 3:1-4

*"Woe to her who is rebellious and polluted, to the oppressing city!
She has not obeyed His voice,
She has not received correction;
She has not trusted in the Lord.
She has not drawn near to her God.
Her princes in her midst are roaring lions;
Her judges are evening wolves that leave not a bone till morning.
Her prophets are insolent, treacherous people;
Her priests have polluted the sanctuary,
They have done violence to the law."*

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Everything of the doctrine of truth and good has been perverted."

AC 6367

- "...a 'lion' denotes the power possessed by the evil of the love of self when it destroys and lays waste..." *Zephaniah 3:3* is cited as an example.

AC 6441

- "...by a 'wolf' are signified those who seize...The signification of a 'wolf' is in a similar category to that of a 'lion,' also a rapacious animal..." *Zephaniah 3:3* is cited.

AC 6353 [8]

- *Psalm 140:1-4, 11* is cited regarding those who seek to destroy the truths of faith and the goods of charity. Such people sharpen their tongues as a serpent and have poison under their lips; it describes the evil hunting what is good to overthrow it. "(And so in other passages, as...*Zephaniah 3:4...*)"

AE 624 [18]

- "In the Word 'priest and prophet' are also often mentioned, and 'priest' means there one who leads men to live according to Divine truth, and

'prophet' one who teaches it." *Zephaniah 3:4* is listed as one of many examples.

Derived Doctrine

"Woe to her who is rebellious and polluted..."

- "Woe" signifies the danger of eternal damnation. (*AC 3755*)
- Woe signifies lamentation over the unhappy state of the evil in anyone. (*AR 416*)
- Woe signifies grief because of the vastation of good and its truth in the church. (*AE 918 [5]*)
- Woe is lamentation over their doctrine and religious persuasion. (*AE 1165*)
- To be "rebellious" signifies to be against the divine good and the divine truth. (*AE 412 [33]*)
- "Rebel" or "revolt" signifies trespasses and transgressions against the truths of faith. (*AC 9156*)
- "Pollution" signifies a conjunction that is not legitimate. (*AC 4433*)
- Pollution signifies the defiling of the truths of faith. (*AC 4504*)

"...to the oppressing city!"

- Oppression signifies an attempt to subjugate by those who are in falsities. (*AC 6861*)
- A "city" signifies everything doctrinal or heretical. (*AC 402*)
- A city signifies the church as to its doctrines. (*AE 518 [26]*)

"She has not obeyed His voice."

- *AC 1937* outlines what obedience means. To be obedient is to be humble. Obeying means exercising self-compulsion so that we may place ourselves under the controlling power of interior truths in order to do good, to obey what the Lord commands. Obedience allows the Divine good and truth to reign.
- "She," the affections, was not willing to abide by the principles of obedience.
- "His voice" signifies the Word, the doctrines of faith, and it also signifies hearing the internal dictate of a spiritual conscience. (*AC 219*)

"She has not received correction..."

- "Correction" or amendment signifies to walk in the right way, or to live goods and truths from the Word. (*AC 10422*)
- Correction or recovery signifies the healing power of the Lord. (*AC 6988 [3]*)

"She has not trusted in the Lord..."

- Trust carries with it contentment and confidence in all things provided by the Lord. *AC 8478* reminds us that in those who are not content with their lot, who do not trust in the Divine, there universally reigns a solicitude about things; they become anxious, and they grieve over the loss or lack of things.

"She has not drawn near to her God."

- To come near signifies to be conjoined by love, and to hearken signifies to obey and to be instructed. (*AE 331 [3]*)

"Her princes in her midst are roaring lions..."

- "Princes" signify the primary precepts of charity. (*AC 2089*)
- *AR 548* teaches that a prince, or ruler, signifies a principal or leading truth.
- "In the midst" signifies what is inmost and primary. The best and purest things, and those closest to perfection, are in the center. (*AC 9666*)
- A roar or "roaring" signifies lamentation from grief of heart. (*AE 601*)
- A roar signifies infernal loves of self and the world. (*AE 601*)
- Roaring signifies an ardent desire to destroy and devastate the church. (*AE 601*)

"Her judges are evening wolves that leave not a bone till morning."

- How are judges to act? *AC 3921* describes the way the Lord judges us. "He judges from righteousness, and hears everyone from mercy. He judges from righteousness in that He does so from Divine Truth. He hears from mercy in that He does so from Divine Good." Such is the model to be emulated by those chosen by the Lord to be a judge.
- "Evening" signifies a state of obscurity. (*AC 22*)
- "Wolves" signify those who teach falsities as if they were truths. (*AE 195 [13]*)
- Wolves signify cunning in deceptions by falsities. (*AE 355 [24]*)
- Wolves signify an eagerness to snatch away, to scatter. (*AC 6441*)
- Bones correspond to external truths. They are like hard facts in fixed form on which higher truths may rest for support.
- To lose a bone represents being without a basis or support system for spiritual thoughts.

"Her prophets are insolent, treacherous people..."

- Those who teach truths are called "prophets." (*AE 100*)
- Prophets and priests signify those who teach and live according to what is taught. (*AC 382*)

- Prophets are those who are in truths of doctrine and live accordingly. (*AR* 526)
- Arrogant, haughty, flippant, sassy, and smart aleck are but a few synonyms for the word "insolent."
- "Treachery," or guile, signifies malice from the will, with premeditation. (*AC* 9013)

"Her priests have polluted the sanctuary. They have done violence to the law."

- Priests are to teach truth, and so lead to good, and to the Lord. (*AC* 10794)
- Pollution signifies that the truth of faith has been defiled. (*AC* 4504)
- Pollution signifies a conjunction with that which is not legitimate. (*AC* 4433)
- "Sanctuary" in the supreme sense signifies the Lord and those things in heaven and the church. Everything that the church has comes from the Lord. (*AC* 9479)
- *AC* 2258 offers this insight: "...in the Representative Church...the priests...were at the same time judges; for as priests they represented the Divine good, and as judges the Divine truth..."

Putting It All Together

P&P states that "everything of the doctrine of truth and good has been perverted." The passages from *Zephaniah* 3:1-4 give concrete examples of this perversion. The church was rebellious and polluted. The church would not obey the voice or bidding of the Lord. The church would not allow the Lord to make corrections in its doctrines and behaviors. The church trusted itself more than the Lord. Such an attitude drew the people away from the Lord. The primary, introductory truths were not used for the salvation of souls. Instead, the people were devastatingly calloused and full of self-centered ends. The priests and judges did what was right in their own eyes. Worship, judgments, and truth became pawns in the hands of the highest bidder. What was the result? The prophets were insolent and treacherous. Wolves ripped the structure to shreds. Not a bone was left to support doctrine. There was no "new day," only nighttime. Arrogant, haughty, flippant, sassy attitudes replaced love of the Lord and the neighbor.

Sadly, the end result was that the church became polluted. Illegitimate unions or conjunctions became part of the church. Violence was done to the law. Is it any wonder then that the Lord had to tell them:

"Everything of the doctrine of truth and good has been perverted."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Zephaniah 3:1-4*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. What are two or three important points from the Derived Doctrine section?
2. The church got so involved in its own agenda that it ignored the Lord. What can we do personally and collectively to make sure this doesn't happen today?
3. Without becoming negative, can you recall a time when a church got arrogant or insolent?
4. What are situations you remember in which people were left to the wolves and roaring lions so that not a bone was left in the morning? How might it have been prevented?
5. I'm hoping you have questions you can add to this discussion.

ZEPHANIAH 3:5

"The Lord is righteous in her midst, He will do no unrighteousness. Every morning He brings His justice to light; He never fails, But the unjust knows no shame.

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "When the Lord comes He will investigate."

AC 2405 [5]

- "In Zephaniah...(3:5). The 'morning' denotes the time and state of Judgment, which is the same as that of the Lord's advent; and this is the same as the approach of His kingdom."

AC 9857 [5&6]

- "...'judgment' denotes intelligence from Divine truth, and the consequent life." *Zephaniah 3:5* is quoted. "In these passages 'judgment' and 'judgments,' denote Divine truth."

AR 151

- *Zephaniah 3:5* is cited with the following explanation: "By 'morning,'...is meant the Lord's coming, when He came into the world and established a New Church...And because the Lord alone gives those who will be of His New Church intelligence and wisdom; and all things which the Lord gives are Himself because they are of Himself, therefore the Lord says that He is 'the morning star'..."

TCR 764

- "As the successive states of the church in general and in particular are described in the Word by the four seasons of the year, spring, summer, autumn, and winter, and by the four divisions of the day, morning, noon, evening, and night; and as the present church in Christendom is the night, it follows that the morning, that is, the beginning of a new church, is now at hand. That the successive states of the church are described in the Word by the four states of the light of day, can be seen from the following passages..." *Zephaniah 3:5* is one of the passages given.

AE 179 [9]

- "That 'morning' signifies the Lord's coming into the world and then a new church is evident from the following passages..." "Here likewise the Lord's coming and the end of the former church and the beginning of a new one are treated of. In *Zephaniah*...similar things are meant..." *Zephaniah 3:5* is cited.

Coronis 5

- "...the successive states of the church are meant by 'morning,' 'day,' 'evening,' and 'night,' in the Word...The subject there treated of is the Consummation of the Age, and the coming of the Lord at that time..." *Zephaniah 3:5* is cited as one of many examples.

AC 8211 [4]

- "As 'morning' signifies the state of enlightenment and salvation of the good, and the state of thick darkness and destruction of the evil, therefore also 'morning' signifies the time of the Last Judgment, when they are to be saved who are in good, and they are to perish who are in evil; consequently it signifies the end of a former church, and the beginning of a new church, which things are signified in the Word by the Last Judgment." *Zephaniah 3:5-6* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

"The Lord is righteous in her midst..."

- Right, righteous, rightness, and upright. Think about the meaning of these words.
- *AC 1813* teaches that "...the Lord was not born righteousness, but became righteousness through combats of temptations and victories, and this from His own power. As often as He fought and overcame, this [righteousness] was imputed to Him...as a continual increase, until He became pure righteousness."
- "In her midst" signifies that the Lord brought His best and purest things to the church. His midst is perfection. (*AC 9666*)

"He will do no unrighteousness."

- Do we need any quotes to explain this? The Lord is perfect. He will not do wrong.

"Every morning He brings His justice to light; He never fails."

- Evil loves darkness. Evil seeks to hide its intent under the cover of darkness.
- The Lord is light. Everything is open to be seen. No hidden agenda. His justice is fair to all. "He never fails" says it all.

"But the unjust knows no shame."

- Would it be fair to say that in order for someone to feel shame, there must be good, innocence, and honesty present within him or her? The unjust people, who knew no shame, emptied the good and truths of the Lord from their lives. Therefore, they felt no shame. Kindness, care for the Lord and the neighbor, were, for them, buried under the weight of selfishness.

Putting It All Together

Is it striking to you that this verse of Zephaniah is not tied in with others? It stands alone—it is not grouped with 2 or 3 verses. Why might that be so? The derived doctrine helped us see that the Lord alone is perfect. He is righteousness because He fought and overcame every temptation hell brought against Him. The Lord never failed while facing even the tiniest of temptations. He brings the purest and the best to His church. Is this a hard concept to relate to in our lives? We make unintentional errors all the time. Being perfect is something we never experience except as we read and believe the teachings about the Lord in His Word. "He never fails" is a profound statement to believe and live by.

Like the morning light, the Lord stands against the malevolent desires of hell. His judgment is not to punish anyone. Those who hate Him and the neighbor have to be faced and shown how wrong their ruling love is. For the greater good, they cannot remain unchecked. So, with love for all that is good and true, He comes to put an end to the reign of terror. The falsity of that kind of "church" must be vastated so that new truths and clean loves can replace it. "When the Lord comes He will investigate." (*P&P*)

Why does this verse stand apart from the others? We have no doctrinal reason. What does your heart tell you as you reflect on the message of the Lord's righteousness and perfection?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Zephaniah 3:5*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. How hard do you think hell will work to hide the words "He never fails" from the new church? Can you predict what sneaky and subtle strategy they might use?
2. What has happened to a person if he or she is unable to feel shame for opposing the Lord?
3. *P&P* teaches us that "When the Lord comes He will investigate." The Lord doesn't really need to investigate. He knows everything. So why call it an investigation? Why not call it the exposure of evil?
4. Is His investigation due to the intricate, entangled, complicated connections evil weaves to conceal its true hiding place? I can picture the Lord untangling evil piece by piece so that no tiny sliver of corruption is left. The Divine operation will be complete, and the patient, the church, will be built up anew.

Does the Lord want us to participate in this "investigation"? Why or why not? If so, how?

ZEPHANIAH 3:6-8

"I have cut off nations, their fortresses are devastated; I have made their streets desolate, with none passing by. Their cities are destroyed; there is no one, no inhabitant. I said, surely you will fear Me, you will receive instruction—so that her dwelling would not be cut off, despite everything for which I punished her. But they rose early and corrupted all their deeds. Therefore wait for Me, says the Lord, until the day I rise up for plunder; My determination is to gather the nations to My assembly of

kingdoms, to pour on them My indignation, all My fierce anger; all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "The evil will perish and are to be cast into hell."

AC 2336 [5&6]

- "As 'streets' signified truths, it was a representative rite among the Jews to teach in the streets...In the Prophets, 'streets,' wherever named, signify in the internal sense either truths, or things contrary to truths...the 'chariots' denote the doctrine of truth..." *Zephaniah 3:6* is cited among other passages.

AC 2712

- "That 'to dwell' is predicated of the good, that is, of the affection, of truth, is evident from many passages in the Word where cities are treated of, by which truths are signified, and...truths without good are like a city in which there is no one dwelling. So in *Zephaniah...3:6*."

AC 3134

- "In *Zephaniah...3:6*...‘No man’ denotes no truth; ‘no inhabitant,’ no good..."

AR 194

- "That 'cities' signify doctrinals, may in some measure appear from the following passages...In these places by cities, in the spiritual sense, are meant doctrines..." *Zephaniah 3:6* is cited.

AR 342

- "The four quarters are also called 'the four corners'...because [corners/quarters] relate to heaven or hell..." *Zephaniah 3:6* is cited.

AR 501

- "By 'streets,' in the Word, almost the same is signified as by 'ways,'...because 'a city' signifies doctrine...and by 'ways' are signified the truths or falsities of the church..." *Zephaniah 3:6* is cited among other passages.

AE 223 [7]

- "In Zephaniah...3:6...‘nations’ are those who are in evils; ‘to desolate streets’ means to desolate truths, and ‘to lay waste cities’ means to lay waste doctrines."

AE 417 [10]

- "In Zephaniah...3:6...The destruction of all the goods of the church is signified by ‘I will cut off the nations, and their corners shall be laid waste;’ ‘nations’ meaning the goods of the church, and ‘corners’ all things of it, because its outermost parts...The destruction of the truths of doctrine is signified by ‘I will make desolate their streets and I will lay waste their cities;’ ‘streets’ meaning truths, and ‘cities’ doctrinals; total destruction even until there is no truth and good left is signified by ‘that none pass by, and there is no inhabitant;’ for ‘to pass by’ in the Word is predicated of truths, and ‘to dwell’ of goods."

AE 652 [11]

- "In Zephaniah...3:6...The ‘nations that shall be cut off,’ signify the goods of the church; the ‘corners that shall be laid waste’ signify the truths and goods of the church in the whole complex...The ‘streets that shall be made desolate, that no one may pass through,’ signify the truths of doctrine; for the ‘cities that shall be laid waste, that there may be no man nor inhabitant,’ signify doctrinals, ‘man’ and ‘inhabitants’ meaning in the Word in the spiritual sense all who are in truths and goods, thus in an abstract sense truths and goods."

AE 662 [2]

- "That ‘to dwell’ signifies to live, and thus life, can be seen from passages in the Word, where ‘to dwell’ is mentioned..." *Zephaniah 3:6* is cited.

AC 6442

- "...that the ‘spoil’ denotes those who have been rescued and delivered, is manifest. That...spoil...[is] also spoken of the Lord in the Word because of His rescuing and delivering the good..." *Zephaniah 3:8* is cited as an example.

AC 6997 [3&4]

- "...the Israelites and Jews were driven by punishments to observe the statutes and precepts in outward form; and from this they believed that Jehovah was angry and punished, when yet it was themselves who by idolatries brought such things upon them, and separated themselves from

heaven...From all this it can now be seen what is meant in the Word by 'anger and wrath of Jehovah'..." *Zephaniah 3:8* is cited as an example.

AC 8875

- "...the zeal of the Lord, which in itself is love and compassion, appears to [the evil] as anger; for when the Lord from love and mercy protects His own in heaven, they who are in evil are indignant and angry against the good, and rush into the sphere where the Divine truth and Divine good are, with the endeavor to destroy those who are there...then the Divine truth of the Divine good works in them and makes them feel torments such as are in hell...yet in the Divine there is absolutely nothing of anger, and absolutely nothing of evil; but pure clemency and mercy." In *AC 8875 [7]*, *Zephaniah 3:8* is cited as an example.

AC 9143

- "(That the zeal of Jehovah is love and mercy, and that it is called 'anger' because it so appears to the wicked when they incur the penalty of their evil, see n. 8875.)" *Zephaniah 3:8* is cited as an example.

AR 216

- (Zephaniah 3:8) "...'zeal' in the Lord is not wrath, it only appears so in the externals, interiorly it is love. It appears so in externals, because the Lord seems to be angry when He rebukes man, especially when man's own evil punishes him. It is so permitted from love, that his evil may be removed..."

AR 494

- "...'anger,' and 'fury'...It is not meant that this comes from Jehovah, but from the infernal love of the wicked. Such things are said in the Word, because they are appearances; and the Word, in its literal sense, is written by correspondences and appearances..." *Zephaniah 3:8* is used as an example.

Doctrine of the Lord 4

- Zephaniah is quoted often in this number regarding "that day," "in that day," "in that time." One of the quotes offered is *Zephaniah 3:8*. The "Lord's advent" is represented by the words in this passage.

Derived Doctrine

"I have cut off nations, their fortresses are devastated..."

- "Cut off" signifies that divine truth shall be taken from the people, but it shall live again in a new church. (*AE 315 [23]*)
- "Nations" signify evils of the will, or lusts, while "people" signify falsities of the understanding, or persuasions. (*AC 622*)
- "Fortresses," strongholds, and citadels signify confirmations in falsities and evils from the Word, and memory-knowledges. (*AC 7102 [3] and AE 388 [19]*)
- Devastation occurs within a church when the Word is falsified, when the Word is explained to favor earthly loves and to confirm falsities of doctrine. When this happens, the church is laid to waste because then heaven is closed up. When heaven is closed up, there is no longer any church with humanity. (*AE 914 [3] and AC 7573*)

"I have made their streets desolate, with none passing by. Their cities are destroyed; there is no one, no inhabitant."

- These teachings are well covered in *AE 417 [10]*, but add to this what we learned earlier about the word "desolate."
- To be "desolate" signifies to be without visible truth. (*AC 6141*) To be desolate connotes ruin.
- The combination of these two passages seems to explain well the meaning of "no one, no inhabitant."

"...surely you will fear Me, you will receive instruction—so that her dwelling would not be cut off..."

- "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom..." (*Psalm 111:10*) Holy fear springs from love. It is holy because it fears to do or say anything that would hurt the Lord.
- Holy fear provides ways for instruction. A holy fear longs for instruction.
- Holy fear keeps influx flowing in. Such a state strengthens our spiritual dwelling places.

"But they rose early and corrupted all their deeds."

- The positive sense of "early" signifies to perceive clearly. "Early" also signifies a light of confirmation.
- Rising, in the positive sense, signifies that the spiritual truth is seen to be in agreement with external truth. (*AC 2028*)
- Could the negative sense of rising mean they perceived quickly how to bend truth to their own ends?

- This derived doctrine seems to explain the meaning of "corrupted all of their deeds."

"Therefore wait for Me, says the Lord, until the day I rise up for the plunder..."

- "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait I say on the Lord." (*Psalm 27:14*)
- *AC 6402* teaches that to "wait" signifies to look upward or inward for salvation.
- *AE 514 [11]* teaches that to wait signifies to long for the Lord's coming.
- *AR 217* says that to wait signifies to be prepared for the reception of truth, or the presence of the Lord.
- To "rise up for the plunder" signifies that the Lord will rescue and deliver the good. (*AC 6442*)

"My determination is to gather the nations to My assembly of kingdoms, to pour on them My indignation, all My fierce anger..."

- Determination, resolve, restoration, setting things right—these meanings seem to go well with the teaching in *AC 5620* that to set right signifies that heavenly goods and truths will re-emerge when a new church is established.
- The re-emergence of truth will seem like indignation and fierce anger to the hells, but to the faithful, it will be the re-emergence of Divine love.

Putting It All Together

Without the internal sense, these verses would seem to be hard and full of irreversible gloom. Let us look at the series of fearful things predicted by the Lord: "Cut off"; "fortresses devastated"; "streets desolate"; "no one, no inhabitants"; "corrupted deeds"; "plunder"; "pour on them My indignation"; "My fierce anger"; "devour [them] with the fire of My jealousy."

With the direct teachings and derived doctrine, we get a totally different message to those who "wait on the Lord"; to those who hold hope for the church; to those who eagerly long for the Lord's coming to rescue the church. The Lord is determined to gather the nations and restore order. The Lord's jealousy, His zeal, will triumph over those who "rose early" to corrupt spiritual uses, and they will perish. Their love of disorder will make them jump into hell to remove themselves from the Lord's presence.

Once again, the apparent darkness of the literal sense is turned from gloom to bright optimism for the church that stands patiently waiting for the Lord's leadership. The Lord in *Matthew* spoke these words: "Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (*Matt. 11:29*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Zephaniah 3:6-8*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. Did your initial reading of this section make you want to stop reading? Our minds don't usually want to hear stern words of condemnation from the Lord. We prefer happy themes. So, how can we learn to persevere and wait until we discover the internal meaning of the Word before closing or setting aside the lessons of divine investigation?
2. Learning from the Lord is something we do best with regular study and reflection. How much spiritual learning comes from life experiences? Are life experiences enough to build a strong fortress to resist the forces of hell? Why or why not?

What did you think about the teachings on devastation and desolation? Read the teachings in *AE 914* and *AC 7573* to formulate an answer.

ZEPHANIAH 3:9-10

"For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one accord. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, the daughter of My dispersed ones, shall bring My offering."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Then a new church made up of those who acknowledge the Lord will arise."

AC 1085 [3]

- "In Zephaniah...to serve Him with one shoulder [accord] (3:9)...meaning with one soul, thus with one might."

AC 1286 [4]

- "In Zephaniah...3:9...‘a clear lip’ manifestly denotes doctrine."

AC 4937

- "By the 'shoulder,' in the Word also is signified all power, as is evident in the following passages..." *Zephaniah 3:9* is cited.

AC 9836 [7]

- "That 'carrying upon the shoulder,' when said of subjection, signifies servitude, may be seen in...*Zephaniah 3:9*...but that when said of command, it signifies supreme power..."

AC 349

- "In *Zephaniah...3:10*...‘Ethiopia’ denotes those who are in possession of celestial things, which are love, charity, and the works of charity."

AC 1164 [6]

- "In *Zephaniah...‘the crossing of the rivers of Cush, My worshipers’* ...denoting those who are without knowledges, that is, the Gentiles."

AE 661 [2]

- "...external gifts signified internal or spiritual gifts, namely, such as go forth from the heart, and thence are of the affection and faith; and as by these conjunction is effected, in the spiritual sense ‘gifts’ in reference to God signify conjunction, and in reference to men consociation." *Zephaniah 3:10* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

"...I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they may call on the name of the Lord..."

- To "restore" signifies to render up spiritual truth without taint from the rational. (*AC 2532-2537*)
- To restore or "set right" signifies that heavenly goods and truths will re-emerge when a new church is established. (*AC 5620*)
- *AR 29* teaches that there is an inherent language in us from creation, a universal language. It is that inherent language that connects us with angels and spirits. The unity and purity of language speaks of a deeper and profounder language—the language of the soul—the unity of the utterance of the church. The people of the Ancient Church possessed one universal doctrine until they sought to build the tower of Babel to become gods.

- A "name" signifies the quality of all the affections. (*AC 143-145*) To "call upon the name of the Lord" signifies to call on the Lord to give us the affection to be receivers of His new church. (*AR 816*)

"...to serve Him with one accord."

- Serving signifies that externals must serve as servants. (*AC 5127*)
- Servants, or the act of serving, signify that external knowledge will serve the internal person. (*AC 1486*)
- *AR 380*, explaining *Revelation 7:15*, teaches: "'...and serve Him day and night,' signifies that they constantly and faithfully live according to the truths...the precepts, which they receive from Him. By 'serving the Lord' nothing else is signified..."
- To understand "with one accord," we can read *AC 1316*, which explains that "one" signifies that which is authentic, or genuine. "Accord" represents unity. Thus, the passage seems to mean that the Lord will raise up a church, a people, who will serve Him with genuine, authentic doctrinal worship.

"From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers..."

- Some of the synonyms for "beyond" are farther, over, higher, and superior.
- "Rivers" in *AC 107* signify a wisdom from love to grant intelligence.
- Rivers signify truths in abundance, serving the rational person. (*AR 683*)
- Rivers signify the opening and explanation of the *Book of Revelation*. (*AR 932*)
- "Ethiopia" signifies the mental faculty, or the understanding of knowledges of good and truth. (*AC 116*)
- *AC 349* teaches that Ethiopia signifies possession of celestial things such as love, charity, and the works of charity.
- Worship signifies humiliation and adoration from the heart. (*AC 9377*)
- "My worshipers" seem to connote a Divine possessiveness that is like that of a proud and loving Parent. It is like a Divine approval of those whose hearts are humble enough to listen, follow, and accept the ways of the Lord.

"The daughter of My dispersed ones..."

- A "daughter" signifies the church of faith in which there is good. (*AC 3963*)
- A daughter signifies the affection of a church. (*AC 3963*)
- The "dispersed," scattered, or outcasts signify those who are not in truths, but still are in the desire to learn them. (*AE 433 [7]*)

"...shall bring My offering."

- An "offering" represents worship of the Lord. We have cited *AC 349* before regarding *Zephaniah 3:10*. Note that this number also deals with various kinds of offerings.

Putting It All Together

P&P sets us on a prudent course to spiritually understanding these verses: "Then a new church made up of those who acknowledge the Lord will arise."

The literal sense employs an active voice of the Lord. "I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the Lord..." The Lord promises that His people will serve Him with "one accord." The Lord will gather together those who were dispersed. Those who were pushed out of the church by the evil blasphemers will be called and collected together to learn anew the ways of the Lord. The impoverished will and understanding (good and truth) of the righteous will be granted an intelligence that will extend beyond the rivers of Ethiopia. The Lord says that His worshipers, His daughters, shall bring Him offerings. These words of the Lord ring out with a sense of pride for His vindicated and reclaimed children.

The Lord's church will flourish with unity, clarity, honesty, genuineness, and righteousness.

"And all the people of the Lord shall answer and say 'AMEN!'" (*Deuteronomy 27:15*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Zephaniah 3:9-10*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. Do you feel uplifted with the Lord's promise to restore the dispersed outcasts? Do you identify with the outcasts at all?
2. In the course of our life, we are often rebuked for taking a stand on moral and spiritual issues based on the Word. Labels are placed on us. Names of derision are put on the thinking of those who seek to find answers in the Word. What encouragement can you find to remain steadfast from the teachings within *Zephaniah 3:9-10*?
3. Hell tries to cast us out of the church universal with the trick of making us think from person instead of state. Can you think of situations in which thinking from person and not state would taint the truth of the Lord?
4. The "Amen!" quote given above is taken from *Deuteronomy*. The children of Israel came to their senses after making a golden image to worship. They were called before the Lord to repent and to promise they would not do a similar thing again. Do you recall what the word Amen means? See *Doctrine of Faith 6* for an answer.

5. If you had a positive feeling about these two verses, wait until you read what comes next. There are words of encouragement for those who wonder, or worry, about good winning out over evil.

ZEPHANIAH 3:11-12

"In that day you shall not be shamed for any of your deeds in which you transgress against Me; for then I will take away from your midst those who rejoice in your pride, and you shall no longer be haughty in My holy mountain. I will leave in your midst a meek and humble people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Those who are in falsities of evil must be separated, and thus the few must be saved."

AE 405 [26]

- *Zephaniah 3:11* is cited with reference to the words "holy mountain." "...for the mountain of holiness,'...[signifies] spiritual good, which in its essence is truth from good, as can be seen from the following passages."

AR 704

- *Zephaniah 3:11* is cited as a passage where "...the Lord's coming and the New Church from Him at that time are meant by 'the day of Jehovah'..."

AC 9209

- *Zephaniah 3:12* is cited as an example of the meaning of "needy." "In these passages 'the needy' denote those who are in ignorance of truth and long to be instructed."

AC 10227 [20, 21, & 22]

- "...by the 'poor'...are meant those who are outside the church and have not the Word, and yet long for the truths and goods of heaven and of the church. From this also it is plain that by the 'rich' are meant those who have the Word, consequently Divine truths..." *Zephaniah 3:12-13* are cited.

HH 365

- "...the 'poor' in the spiritual sense signify those who do not possess knowledges of good and truth, and yet desire them..." *Zephaniah 3:12-13* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

"In that day..."

- *AC 488 [3]* and *AC 1839 [5]* tell us that the day of the Lord signifies a reckoning of the last time and state of the church. Thus, it seems appropriate to understand these words to mean that a day will come when a judgment and examination will be made by the Lord to determine the spiritual state of the church.

"...you shall not be shamed for any of your deeds in which you transgressed against Me..."

- "Shame" signifies a lack of power to resist evils and falsities. (*AC 10481*)
- Shame (disappointment) signifies having no power to resist evils from the proprium. (*AE 654 [59]*)
- Shame signifies unclean loves, which are infernal—said to those who will be of the Lord's New Church, to encourage them to learn truths and to retain them. (*AR 706*)
- Is this passage saying that deeds done while lacking power to resist are forgiven if we learn from them? Would this be likened to times when our "spiritual freedom" was impaired?

"For then I will take away from your midst those who rejoice in your pride, and you shall no longer be haughty in My holy mountain."

- Who are those in our midst who would rejoice in our pride? Might they be our inherited tendencies to do evils?
- Haughtiness and pride are similar. "Pride" signifies the love of self. Pride in the external person denotes self-confidence and reasoning from what is one's own. (*AC 1585 [4]*)
- The Lord's "holy mountain" signifies heaven, especially where love to the Lord prevails. (*AE 314 [4]*)
- Can you picture the demise of inherited tendencies to do evil in the holy mountain of the Lord?

"I will leave in your midst a meek and humble people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord."

- Meekness signifies those who are in the good of charity. (*AE* 304 [44])
- Humility signifies an acknowledgment that self is nothing but evil and falsity, and that the Divine is nothing but good and infinite. (*AC* 7640)
- To "trust in the name of the Lord" signifies to have confidence in the essence or qualities of the Lord. His name cheers and lifts our souls. (*AC* 2724)

Putting It All Together

Life's moments of reflection are powerfully essential for our spiritual growth. *The Spiritual Experience (SE) (Spiritual Diary)* reminds us of the importance of reflection. There are more heavenly arcana to be learned in the doctrine of reflection than in any other doctrine of the church. Given the importance of this teaching, we would do well then to reflect on the words of our text. **The Lord will not shame us for any of our deeds in which we transgressed against Him.** If we erred, if we made a decision in a moment of duress and our freedom or rationality was not functioning well, the Lord will forgive us. If we were weak and unable to resist the leading of our proprium, He will forgive us.

The intention to not commit sins against the Lord is an important doctrine of the church. If you need to reflect on the importance of intentions, read *Conjugial Love* 453. Note the two men. They dressed alike. They participated in the same forms of entertainment. They heard the same jokes about love affairs and lust. They both laughed. But one was excused and the other was condemned. What brought about the exemption? What brought about the condemnation? Intention. One did not intend to smear the conjugal principle, so he was excused. The other intended to bring shame on marriage love, so he was condemned.

For people who want to learn from mistakes and who long to overcome them, the Lord can take away the enemy that is in our midst. He can rescue and restore our meekness and humility. He can bring us back into a state where we trust in the name of the Lord. Without trust, we are cautious, timid, afraid, and hesitant to venture any rehabilitation of our motives.

Open the last volume of *AE*. Turn to *Divine Love* 17. "If a man by means of combats against evils as sins has **acquired anything spiritual** in the world, **be it ever so small, he is saved, and afterwards his uses grow like a grain of mustard seed...into a tree.**" (Emphasis added.)

Together, the harmony of these teachings gives us hope and strength to fight against feelings of spiritual inadequacy.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Zephaniah 3:11-12*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. How powerful do you think this section from Zephaniah is for your life?
2. Isn't the message of the Lord's forgiveness a happy one?
3. The quote from *Divine Love 17* is a powerful tool. Would you count this quote a "must" to be copied and shared with others?
4. Intentions: are they important? Is there a need to make this teaching more accessible to the church? What do we know about our own intentions?
5. Do you picture a meek and humble person as being "soft" and gullible? Why or why not?
6. Can the message of God's forgiveness in spite of our transgressions be abused? Might we get complacent about our daily regeneration process? How can this be prevented?

ZEPHANIAH 3:13-20

"The remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness and speak no lies, nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they shall feed their flocks and lie down, and no one shall make them afraid. Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away your judgments, He has cast out your enemy, the King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall see disaster no more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: do not fear; Zion, let not your hands be weak. The Lord your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing. I will gather those who sorrow over the appointed assembly, who are among you, to whom its reproach is a burden."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Then there will be a new church of those who will acknowledge the Lord, and He will remove evils and falsities from them; concerning this church."

AC 5201 [4-6]

- "As it has become customary to call teachers 'pastors' and learners a 'flock,' it has also become common to speak of 'feeding' when speaking of preaching,

or of instruction from doctrine from the Word..." *Zephaniah 3:13* is among the many passages cited.

AC 5897 [6]

- "In Zephaniah...3:13...are described remains in respect to their quality, and it is known that this quality never belonged to the people called 'Israel.' From this also it is manifest that by 'remains' are meant other things; and that these are goods and truths is clear, because these are what do no perversity, nor speak a lie, neither is a tongue of deceit found in their mouth."

AC 8908 [4]

- *Zephaniah 3:13* is cited. "In these as in many other passages 'a lie' denotes the falsity and evil of faith."

AR 383

- "'To feed' is to teach, because the church, in the Word, is called 'a flock' and the men of the church are called 'sheep' and 'lambs,' hence 'to feed' signifies to teach, and 'the shepherd' one that teaches..." *Zephaniah 3:13* is cited.

AR 624

- "By 'the mouth' is signified speech, preaching, and doctrine...and by 'deceit' is signified persuasion to evil by falsity, properly from cunning and design; for he who persuades to anything from cunning or deceit also persuades from design; for cunning or deceit proposes something to itself, conceals its purpose, and does it when opportunity offers. By a 'lie,' in the Word, is signified false speaking...as in the following passages..." *Zephaniah 3:13* is cited.

AE 482 [3]

- "As it is known in the church that 'to feed' signifies to instruct, 'pasture' instruction, and 'shepherd' an instructor, a few passages only in which 'feeding' and 'pasture' are mentioned shall be quoted..." *Zephaniah 3:13* is cited.

AE 677 [9]

- "...in Zephaniah...3:13...'Jacob' and 'Israel' mean those in the church who are in goods and truths; and 'none terrifying and making afraid' signifies that nothing of evil and falsity from hell shall infest them."

AE 866 [3]

- "In Zephaniah...3:13...'The remnant of Israel,'...means those who are in spiritual faith, because they are in the good of charity; 'to speak a lie' signifies to teach falsely from ignorance of truth; but 'deceit' signifies falsity that is not from ignorance of truth, but from deliberation, thus from the purpose of deceiving, as is the case with the wicked."

AC 2362 [2]

- "There are two affections, namely, of good and of truth...The former, or the affection of good, constitutes the celestial church, and is called in the Word the 'daughter of Zion,' and also the 'virgin daughter of Zion;' but the latter, or the affection of truth, constitutes the spiritual church, and is called in the Word the 'daughter of Jerusalem.'" *Zephaniah 3:14* is cited.

AR 612

- "In many places it is said 'the virgin and the daughter of Zion;' by whom is not meant any virgin or daughter there, but the church as to the affection of good and truth..." *Zephaniah 3:14* is cited.

AE 502 [7]

- "In Zephaniah...3:14...the establishment of the church by the Lord; 'trumpets,' 'sound of the horn,' and 'sounding,' signify joy on account of Divine truth coming down out of heaven."

AE 660 [4]

- "In place of joy exultation is...mentioned, because exultation, like joy, is predicated of good, because it relates to love, to the heart, and to the will; as in the following passages..." *Zephaniah 3:14* is cited.

AE 850 [7]

- "These passages treat of the Lord's coming and of His kingdom in the heavens and on earth, and as that kingdom is meant by 'Zion and Jerusalem' it is said that...Jehovah the Holy One and the King of Israel shall dwell there... 'Zion' means heaven and the church, in which the Lord reigns by Divine truth, and 'Jerusalem' heaven and the church as to doctrine from that Divine truth." *Zephaniah 3:14-15* is cited.

Doctrine of the Lord 4

- "...from the Word which contains the expressions 'that day,' 'in that day,' and 'in that time;' in which...is meant the Lord's advent." *Zephaniah 3:8, 11, 16, 19, 20* are cited.

Doctrine of the Lord 64 [5]

- "In Zephaniah...3:14-17, 20...[it] treats of the Lord and of the church from Him, over which 'the King of Israel' (who is the Lord) will be glad with joy, will exult with a shout, and in whose love He will rest, and whose members He will make a name and a praise to all people of the earth."

AR 880

- "In Zephaniah...3:14, 15, 17, 20...the Lord and the church from Him are treated of, over which 'the King of Israel,' who is the Lord, 'will rejoice with joy, will exult with shouting,' and in whose love 'He will rest,' and who will give them 'for a name and a praise to all the people of the earth.'"

Brief Exposition 100 [2]

- "...hence it is, that by 'Jerusalem' is signified the church. That by 'Jerusalem' is meant the church, is very clear from the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning a New Church to be established by the Lord, wherein it is called 'Jerusalem.' The following passages only shall be quoted, from which any one of interior reason may clearly see, that by 'Jerusalem' is meant the church..." *Zephaniah 3:14-17, 20* are cited.

TCR 782 [2&3]

- "That 'Jerusalem' means the church can be clearly seen from the prophecies in the Old Testament respecting the new church to be established by the Lord, in that it is there called 'Jerusalem.' Those passages only shall be here cited from which any one endowed with interior reason can see that 'Jerusalem' there means the church." *Zephaniah 3:14-17, 20* are cited.

AR 612

- "That by 'mount Zion' is signified heaven and the church where the Lord alone is worshiped, may appear from the following passages..." *Zephaniah 3:14, 16* are cited.

AR 664

- "The reason why the Lord, as King, is the Divine truth, is because this is signified by 'a king'. Hence it is that by 'kings' are signified they who are in Divine truths from the Lord...That the Lord is called King is evident from the following passages..." *Zephaniah 3:15* is cited as an example.

AC 4302 [4]

- "In Zephaniah...3:19...[that] by the 'lame' and the 'halt' are not meant the lame and the halt, may be seen by every one, for it is said of them that they 'shall leap,' 'shall be assembled,' 'shall be made for remains,' and 'shall be saved;' but it is evident that those are signified who are in good and not so much in truths, as is the case with well-disposed Gentiles, and also with those of a similar nature within the church."

AE 811 [25]

- "In Zephaniah...3:20...This, too, means the bringing back of the Gentiles from spiritual captivity."

Derived Doctrine

"The remnant of Israel..."

- These words in the larger sense signify the goods and truths stored up interiorly by the Lord. (*AC 2851*)
- When a church is vastated, a remnant always remains. (*AE 407*)
- "Israel" signifies in the highest sense the Lord in relation to the internal things of the church. (*AE 768 [15]*)

"...shall do no unrighteousness and speak no lies, nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth..."

- This passage indicates that they will not unrighteously alter goods and truths for their own personal gain.
- Speaking signifies expressing one's thoughts. Therefore, Israel will not teach, or speak lies of, what is evil and false. (*AR 582*)
- The "tongue" signifies opinions, principles, or persuasions. (*AC 1159*)
- A "mouth" signifies thought, as a person's speech comes forth from it; it also signifies various things from thought, such as teaching, preaching, and reasoning. (*AE 580 and AE 782*)

"...they shall feed their flocks and lie down, and no one shall make them afraid."

- Feeding signifies a desire for doctrinals and to have good and truth conjoined.(AC 3320)
- To "lie down" signifies conjunction and to be consociated to one another by love, and to enjoy eternal blessedness and felicity, and this from the Lord alone. (AE 252 [3])

"Sing, O daughter of Zion!"

- To "sing" signifies the glorification of the Lord on account of liberation from spiritual slavery. (AC 8261)
- To sing a new song signifies acknowledgment that the Lord alone is Judge, Redeemer, and Savior, thus the One God of heaven and earth. (AR 279)
- "Zion" signifies heaven and the church where the Lord alone is worshiped. (AR 612)
- The Daughter of Zion signifies those who are wise and intelligent in the church. (AE 637 [11])

"Shout, O Israel!"

- To "shout" signifies to worship from the delight of good. (AE 391 [11])
- To shout signifies to worship from the good of love. (AE 405 [11])
- "Israel" signifies in the highest sense the Lord.

"Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!"

- To "be glad" signifies pleasantness and enjoyment from the affection of truth which is of love. (AC 7002)
- Gladness signifies the enjoyment of truth and its love. (AE 660 [3])
- "Rejoice" and "gladness" are often mentioned together in the Word because of the marriage of good and truth. (AC 3118)
- "O daughter of Jerusalem" has to be seen in the context of the Lord and His church.

"The Lord has taken away your judgments, He has cast out your enemy..."

- Does "taken away your judgments" mean the eradication of all man-made concepts that have no place in the establishment of His New Church?
- "Cast out" signifies banishment of some kind. AC 2655 speaks of cast out as representing the banishment of the human rational.
- "Cast out" in AC 4728 indicates a process of exposing falsities.
- An "enemy" signifies the antagonism of our proprium against the Lord. (DP 211)

"...the Lord is in your midst; you shall see disaster no more."

- "Midst" signifies what is inmost and primary, the best and purest things. Therefore, we can understand why the Lord is in the midst. (*AC 9666*)
- With the Lord's perfection leading the New Church, disaster is a thing of the past.

"...let not your hands be weak."

- "Hands" signify ability and power, and confidence. (*AC 878*)
- Weakness signifies a feeble and wavering understanding. (*AC 3820*)
- To be "weak" signifies to be without supporting truths. (*AC 6344*)
- Weakness signifies a lack of nourishing goods and truths. (*AC 9050 [7]*)

"He will quiet you with His love..."

- "Quiet" signifies a state of peace when one is safe from evil spirits. (*SE 2344*)
- Quiet signifies a state of peace after a time of temptation, when a person is in a state of regeneration. (*AC 851*)

"I will gather those who sorrow over the appointed assembly..."

- Sorrow over the assembly seems to represent a momentary, temporary look at what had been in the church they had grown up in. Could it represent a brief anxiety over what was going to be new in the church under the Lord's direction?
- Gathering signifies truths in the memory. Remains of innocence are goods and truths that have been stored up interiorly by the Lord. (*AC 2851 [6]*)

"...who are among you, to whom its reproach is a burden."

- Reproach, or humiliation, is a burden. *AC 3969* uses "reproach" when talking about Rachel's barren state. The Lord took away her barrenness (deadness) with the opening of her womb. Is this closing verse a promise of the Lord's that His church will no longer experience feelings of emptiness? Can we hear instead a message that His church will be eternally fruitful? The New Church will never know reproaches that are burdens. There will be no sickness. There will be no pain. There will be no death anymore: "Behold I make all things new."

Putting It All Together

With the gentle leading of our derived doctrine and the direct teachings, a tangible picture emerges of the Lord's gentleness and love. He is going to give us rejoicing hearts. He is going to take away our spiritual disasters. He will remove our fears.

Our enemies will be cast out. The hands of our efforts will be strengthened. We will experience a sense of rejoicing. Gladness will lift up our spirits. The teaching of the Word, "Be still and know that I am God," will be a new song of comfort and encouragement. The Lord is in our midst. How can we possibly fail? He will awaken the remains of our innocence and goodness. Gone will be the feelings of inadequacy and hopelessness.

Don't worry about the newness of the Lord's church. The old ways we thought were comfortable and reassuring are nothing in comparison to what is ahead. The Lord is going to remove our reproach. He will take away our barren states. In His presence will be joy and gladness forever. Our moments with the Lord will produce a progeny of spiritual births. Isn't this reminiscent of the words found in the Psalms?

Psalm 127: 3-5

"Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord,
The fruit of the womb is a reward.
Like arrows in the hand of a warrior,
So are the children of one's youth,
Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them;
They shall not be ashamed,
But shall speak with their enemies in the gate."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Zephaniah 3:13-20*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. How did this closing chapter affect you?
2. Isn't it a work of comfort and encouragement? What are your favorite parts? What do you see at work in the life of your church?
3. The promise of the New Church is given so we might long for its arrival. How is your sense of expectancy doing? Is it alive and excited?

Epilogue: A Summary of the Book of Zephaniah

CHAPTER ONE

The Lord will come and gather together His church. Why is this gathering necessary?

1. The knowledge and truth of the former churches had perished.
2. Their doctrines perished because people loved falsities, and in the course of time, the worship of the Lord became ritualistic and empty of genuine emotional love for the Lord.
3. With the absence of the Lord in their hearts, the Word was adulterated, and those who willfully adulterated the truths of the Word chose hell in their minds and hearts.
4. The wayward condition of the church emptied the rich storehouse of spiritual truth. The proud and self-serving people within the church plundered and emptied out the goods and truths of the Lord.
5. The Lord sent the message that a day of judgment was at hand. His word to the church was clear. The defilers would not continue to preserve their seats of prominence. Their day was at hand. The cleansing of the church would happen. Who would overturn the ways of the evil? The Lord strong and mighty. The Lord mighty in battle.

CHAPTER TWO

With the certainty of judgment at hand, those who have not completely hardened their hearts need to be converted. Why? If the Lord's warning is not heeded, the evil will perish. Does the Lord want anyone to be destroyed? No. The Lord wants all to be saved. The evil will be the ones who cast themselves out of the Divine sphere. They falsified the knowledges of truth by means of reasoning and knowledge. Those who actively worked to destroy the church will utterly perish.

Some will listen. Some will be converted. The work of the faithful remnant is at hand.

CHAPTER THREE

The Lord will come to investigate the condition of the church. The perverted doctrine of truth and good will be seen and thoroughly exposed. Nothing will escape His cleansing work.

The new church will be made up of those who love and acknowledge the Lord. When the faithful emerge, they will be forgiven for any transgressions committed against

the Lord. The faithful will be humble, and they will trust in the name of the Lord. They will have a new song to sing. Their hands will be strengthened. Feebleness will be taken away. Gladness and joy will lift the hearts of the faithful. Songs will be sung telling of the Lord's might and power.

With the influence of the evil cast out of the defiled church, the purity of the Lord's New Church will return. The Lord will be returned to the midst of the new church. Barrenness will give way to productiveness. In place of hopelessness, there will be exhilarating confidence and assurance.

"Then there will be a new church of those who will acknowledge the Lord, and He will remove evils and falsities from them..." (*P&P*)

The Book of Malachi

How to Use This Study Guide

1. A careful, unhurried reading of Malachi is essential. Reading the chapter before looking at the notes, while working with the notes, and after finishing with the notes will give each researcher a powerful sense of the series of meanings within each chapter. It is important to be comfortable with all the names and places in the prophecy and to understand the announcements the prophet makes on behalf of the Lord. When possible, historical information will be included in the notes to increase reading comprehension and enhance application.
2. Our study of each chapter of Malachi will begin with quotes from a work of the Writings called Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms (P&P). This work includes a verse-by-verse overview of all four chapters of Malachi that provides general information about the internal sense. Our research will help move us from the generals to the particulars of the internal sense.
3. Another important reference tool is Searle's General Index to Swedenborg's Scripture Quotations. This reference is used to find passages in the Writings where a verse(s) from the Word is either explained specifically or used to illustrate a doctrinal point that we can use in our study. There is also another use of this work. As we study, each researcher will be led by the Lord's Providence in myriad ways, according to specific needs or states. Knowing how to use this book will help each of us to explore relevant topics and look up related passages to increase our knowledge of the three-fold Word.
4. You will soon discover that not every verse, word, name, etc. is directly quoted in the Writings. But there are often other references to the same name, place, or thing in the explanation of a different verse of the Word. The hope is that reflection on these other doctrinal explanations will help us see possible applications to our study of Malachi. We will need to use "derived doctrine" often. Please don't run away from this maligned term. If we use it properly and admit openly that it is derived doctrine, we bring no harm to the internal sense.
5. Keep some kind of notebook handy during your study times. Write out insights, questions, and any summaries you find helpful in organizing your thoughts about each chapter. The goal of this study guide is not to give a detailed summary of the internal sense but to start each researcher's quest for deeper insight.
6. At the end of each chapter in the study guide, you will find a study review. The review includes a summary of each section to help you reinforce and build on your understanding of several of the key points.
7. Begin each study unit with a devotional prayer asking the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts. Certainly, beginning in this sphere has the power to inspire and open our minds with a higher spiritual priority that will keep us in the company of the Lord's angels. As the Writings teach, we must seek to love truth for truth's sake. Such an approach will free each reader from

preconceived ideas that might limit his or her ability to “see” the intent and message of the Lord’s Word.

Introduction

Welcome to the study of *Malachi*. *Malachi* is the last book of the twelve Minor Prophets and the last book in the Old Testament. Malachi’s prophecy was followed by a period of four to five hundred years of prophetic silence before the Lord’s advent occurred.

This introduction will focus on the examination of the following points:

1. Malachi’s background.
2. The approximate dates of his life and prophecy.
3. The message of Malachi, the “Lord’s Messenger.”
4. The unique style of Malachi’s prophecy.

MALACHI'S BACKGROUND

" No one knows who the author of the book was; the name "Malachi" is simply a transliteration of the Hebrew word meaning 'My Messenger.' Nor can anyone be certain as to when the author lived, although modern scholarship tends to give much credence to the ancient tradition to the effect that he lived sometime about 400 or 350. (There are still authorities...who would date Malachi much later than this; and there are others who would date him as early as the eighth century.)" *Pre-Advent Churches*, by Ormond Odhner, page 308.

I cite this statement because there has been considerable scholarly debate as to whether or not "Malachi" is a proper name or a common noun. If it is a noun, then this book is by an anonymous writer who refers to himself as "My messenger" or the "Messenger of Jehovah."

The following background information about Malachi and his prophecy is derived from a series of online essays on "The Minor Prophets" authored by Al Maxey. The essay on *Malachi* is available at <http://www.zianet.com/maxey/Proph13.htm>.

The LXX (Septuagint) treats the word "Malachi" as a noun rather than as a proper name. The *Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel* (an Aramaic paraphrase of the prophetic books dating from the 4th or 5th century AD) includes this phrase: " My messenger who is Ezra the scribe." Josephus, when describing the major characters of the period, fails to mention Malachi among them. Even where Malachi is quoted in the New Testament (*Matthew 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:27*), his name is not mentioned in the citations. Is the omission of Malachi's name of spiritual significance?

Some scholars think Ezra was the author of *Malachi*. Others believe *Malachi* originally was part of the prophetic book of *Zechariah* but was made into a separate book to make the Minor Prophets amount to the sacred number 12. So much more could be pulled into this quest to know about Malachi's background but to what end?

APPROXIMATE DATES

If "Malachi" is a name and not a noun, it is possible to identify a general date when this work was written by noting the history of Israel's exile and the rebuilding of the temple. The Babylonian captivity of the Jews ended in 536 BC when Cyrus allowed the Israelites to return to their homeland. With the leadership of Haggai and Zechariah, the people rebuilt the temple. The dates of this happening are between 520 and 516 BC. Malachi, Ezra, and Nehemiah wrote about the same sad and deteriorating spiritual conditions within the temple and among its priests. Was Malachi a contemporary of Ezra and Nehemiah? If so, the book of Malachi might have been written in the period of 445 to 425 BC.

But eventually, we probably will agree with Ormond Odhner: "No one knows who the author of the book was...nor can anyone be certain as to when the author lived..." So if we don't know who the author was, how can we pinpoint a date? This is something we have had to face with many of the Minor Prophets. Our New Church perspective teaches us that we are not to focus on the person who wrote the prophetic book. Instead, we are to concentrate on the contents of the spiritual sense of the Word. Given the choice, what would we consider most profitable in the study of this book of the Word: knowing about the man who wrote it or knowing the spiritual sense of this prophecy in the Word?

THE MESSAGE OF MALACHI, THE "LORD'S MESSENGER"

The message of Malachi calls the hearer to consider the Lord's providential care in bringing about the great release from Babylonian captivity. He reminds his listeners that the temple had been rebuilt, the walls of the city fortified again, and the sacrificial system reinstated. They had a degree of security from foreign aggression. But their enthusiasm for worship had been replaced by mechanical, ritualistic practice that was far from spiritual. Other gods slipped into the services within the temple. The worshippers' hearts were not with the Lord but with themselves. Relationships with the Lord and with one another were falling apart.

Malachi sought to turn the people's enthusiasm to doing what was pleasing to the Lord. To do this, he had to speak hard words about the lapses within the priesthood and the temple. Malachi called for the priests and the people to hear and behold the error of their ways:

- The priests were not providing moral and spiritual leadership. They were contemptuous in discharging their duties. Their gifts to the Lord were lame, blind, and sick. Instead of giving their best to the Lord, they were offering Him their worst.
- The uses of supporting the work of the temple were neglected; tithing had ceased. The people neglected to make financial gifts or donate their time.
- Divorce and intermarriage with pagan wives were tolerated and sanctioned.
- The people had become disillusioned and doubtful of the Lord's love for them. They saw little use in serving the Lord. Cynicism and rebellion thrived within the heart of the nation.
- Editorializing, one might say the people were neither interested nor impressed with what the Lord had done for them in the past. It mattered more to them what they felt He was doing in the here-and-now of their lives.

THE UNIQUE STYLE OF MALACHI'S PROPHECY

The Book of Malachi uses the method of “disputation.” An **assertion** or charge is made against the church and people, a fancied (haughty) **objection** is raised by the hearers, and then a **refutation** of the objection is presented by the speaker on behalf of the Lord.

- The text of *Malachi* is a debate with those who call into question the Lord's goodness and justice. Let's get a quick overview of where this style is used: *Malachi 1:2* “I have loved you,’ says the Lord...‘In what way have You loved us?’ ‘Yet Jacob I have loved...’”
- *Malachi 1:6* “...To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, ‘In what way have we despised Your name?’”
- *Malachi 1:7* “You offer defiled food on My altar. But you say, ‘In what way have we defiled You?’ By saying, ‘The table of the Lord is contemptible.’ And when you offer the blind...lame and sick, is it not evil?”
- *Malachi 1:11* “...For My name shall be great among the nations...But you profane it, in that you say, ‘The table of the Lord is defiled...You also say, ‘Oh, what a weariness! And you sneer at it...’”
- *Malachi 2:11-16* “...He has married the daughter of a foreign god...You cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and crying...Yet you say, ‘For what reason?’...For the Lord God...hates divorce...”
- *Malachi 2:17* “You have wearied the Lord with your words; yet you say, ‘In what way have we wearied Him?...Where is the God of justice?’”
- *Malachi 3:7* “Return to Me...but you said, ‘In what way shall we return?’”
- *Malachi 3:8* “Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings.”
- *Malachi 3:13-14* “Your words have been harsh against Me...yet you say, ‘What have we spoken against You?’ You have said, ‘It is vain to serve God.’”

We would do well in our study of *Malachi* to reflect for a moment, at some point, on how we might turn all of the negative “disputations” into positive responses.

- You have loved Me, Lord, and **here are the ways I see that Love in my life.**
- I will seek to **offer the best sacrifices of my life** to celebrate Your name and divine qualities.
- I will work toward **the preservation of Your conjugal principles.** I will at all times seek to wed my will and understanding into a marriage that honors the Lord.
- **I will not arrogantly (haughtily) question your judgment and justice.**
- My time, my tithes will be given in **a daily thought and reflection period for You.**
- **The work I do for the Lord is not a vain thing.** The work of the New Church is vital work. It is a church that needs me to seek for the best understanding of the Lord’s truth in His Word.

Malachi 3:10-12 makes this promise to those who seek the ways of the Lord:

“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. And try Me now in this,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,’ says the Lord of hosts; ‘and all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land,’ says the Lord of hosts.”

This passage is packed with correspondences. It deals with remains being brought into the memory. It is a divine invitation to try the Lord and see that He is good. Notice the word “if.” If we try the Lord, if we allow the remains of good to feed us, the windows of heaven will open and in will be poured blessings we would never have dreamed possible. Our “cup” will “run over.” The Lord promises to rebuke the devourers of hell. He will increase our understanding and will. Others will call us blessed (happy) and will find us to be a delightful land.

Notice also the repetition of phrases in this verse. Repetition is not for effect. Repetition is not for poetical beauty. Repetition is for spiritual purposes. The phrase “**says the Lord of hosts**” occurs three times. One is for the will, one is for the understanding, and one is for uses. What does the phrase “says the Lord of hosts” represent? *Apocalypse Explained (AE) 453 [6]* gives us this insight: “Jehovah of Hosts’...signifies the arrangement of truths from good by the Lord against the falsities from evil...” Hence we have a promise from the Lord that He will fight for His church to save it and for all of the people within His church. The Lord’s zeal will win over the forces of hell. He will rescue and preserve the remnant so that a New Church will be born that will last for ever and ever.

The word “if” is a conditional word. The Lord awaits an answer from us. **If** we try Him, **if** we open the door (or window), He will come in and give us infinite blessings. What a great invitation the “Messenger of the Lord” brings to the church in *The Book of Malachi*.

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. **If** anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.” (*Revelation 3:20, emphasis added*)

Chapter One

MALACHI 1:1-2

"The burden [oracle] of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.

'I have loved you,' says the Lord. Yet you say, 'In what way have you loved us?' 'Was not Esau Jacob's brother?' says the Lord. 'Yet Jacob I have loved...'"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "The Lord has instituted a church with those who could be in external truth, but who were not in external good."

Arcana Coelestia (AC) 3322 [11]

- "In Malachi...1:1-3...'Esau' denotes the evil of the natural that does not admit spiritual truth which is 'Israel'...and what is doctrinal of truth which is 'Jacob'...and on this account he is vastated, which is being 'hated' (that 'hating' is nothing else, is manifest from what was adduced above from the Word concerning Esau and Edom in a good sense); but when truth does not suffer itself to be adjoined to good, then evil is on the other hand predicated of Jacob..."

Derived Doctrine

"The burden [oracle] of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi."

- A "burden" signifies infestations from falsities and consequent combats (AC 7109).
- What is meant by "oracle" is at first somewhat vague, but with some thought and reflection, a meaning begins to take shape. In AE 277, we read that an oracle signifies the inmosts. The inmost of the church? The inmost of the individual? The inmost of the Lord?
- According to AE 638 [8], an "oracle" signifies where the Lord is.
- AC 1574 [3] states that an oracle signifies a Divine response.
- In II Samuel 16:23, we read about "the oracle of God." Coronis 25 teaches that this signifies love and wisdom.
- So it seems that this reference to the "burden" or "oracle" of the Word of the Lord simply means that the inmost of the Lord, His love and wisdom, was about to make a divine response to the infestations from falsities that had entered Israel and the church.

- “Israel” signifies the church (*AC 3654*), the spiritual person (*AC 4402*), and goods and truths (*AC 4502*). Israel signifies that people who are of the church should hear the Lord, that is, hear Him in the Word (*AC 6340*). Israel signifies spiritual good(*AC 5595*), and it also signifies the quality of the church (*AC 6636*).
- Malachi’s name means “My messenger” or “My angel.” *AC 4239*, when explaining Jacob sending messengers to Esau, gives this representation: “...the subject here treated of is the conjunction of truth Divine of the natural (which is ‘Jacob’) with the good Divine therein (which is ‘Esau’) and therefore the enlightenment of the natural from the Divine...”
- *AC 1925* has a wonderful explanation of “messenger angels.” “They were angels who were sent to men, and **who spoke through the prophets**; yet what they spoke was not from the angels, but through them, for the state of the latter was then such that they knew not but that they were Jehovah, that is, the Lord; but as soon as they had done speaking, they returned into their former state, and spoke as from themselves.” (*emphasis added*)

“I have loved you,’ says the Lord.”

- What is the essence of the Lord’s Love? *True Christian Religion (TCR) 43 [5]* teaches us that His essence is:
 1. To love others outside of Himself.
 2. To desire to be one with others.
 3. To render others blessed from Himself.
- Other teachings, too many to quote, state that the Lord’s love is for the salvation of the whole human race and that this love is ardent. See, for example, *AC 1820*. The Lord’s love is mercy (*AC 1870*). The Lord’s love toward the universal human race is such that He wills that “not one of them may perish” (*AC 2023*). “The Lord’s love surpasses all human understanding.” (*AC 2077*) “The Lord’s love, that is His mercy, is constant and eternal.” (*AC 2177*)

“Yet you say, ‘In what way have You loved us?’”

- We have here a debate between human beings and the Lord. It’s not the Lord debating. When a negative debate comes from a person, the internals shut down and little or nothing can be seen. Please read in its entirety a passage in *AC 3428*. Here is the shortened version: “so long as men remain in debate as to whether a thing is, and whether it is so, they can never advance into anything of wisdom.” There are innumerable things they can never see; they are like people who stand outside of the magnificent palace of wisdom and merely knock at the door but never enter. They remain “in complete ignorance of what charity is.”
- Can we safely assume this “debating nature” is what kept the children of Israel from seeing or being aware of the manifold ways the Lord loved them?

"Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" says the Lord. 'Yet Jacob I have loved...'"

- The story of Esau and Jacob struggling together as brothers, as told in *Genesis* 25:24-25, is about primacy. It centers on the debate "as to whether good or truth is prior, or what is the same, whether charity which is of good, or truth which is of faith, is prior. From the earliest times there has been much contention in the spiritual church concerning this question..." (*AC 3289, emphasis added*)
- Esau and Jacob signify, respectively, the truth of good from which is truth in the natural and the good of truth in the natural (*AC 3677*).
- Esau, later in our study called the nation of Edom, signifies the (love) good of the natural to which the doctrinal things of truth have been conjoined. In the opposite sense, Esau signifies the evil of self-love adding itself to the (love) good of the natural (*AC 3322*). In *AC 3322 [8]*, we read further that Esau in the opposite sense signifies the evils of the natural person from the love of self, which despises and rejects all truth.
- Why does this verse say that the Lord loved Jacob and hated Esau? Esau, representative of the external love of the church, would not allow or permit truth (Jacob) to enter the church and be adjoined to good. When love becomes corrupted, it is a more serious offense than when truth becomes corrupted. Truth is more correctable because it is in the external realm of our being. A corrupted love has many more pathways connected to internal deceits. Therefore, when the Lord's zeal seeks to bring together a corrective love and wisdom, the corrupted love perceives the Lord's actions as "angry" when, in fact, they are acts of deep divine love seeking to lift the soul.

Putting It All Together

Our ability to pull these verses together hinges on our understanding of the information found in *P&P*: "The Lord has instituted a church with those who could be in external truth, but who were not in external good."

The external church became embroiled in infestations from falsities. Their mental and spiritual combats were not conducive to regeneration; instead, they prevented the people from progressing toward a love of truth. Can you picture great debates occurring within the church about the meaning and application of the Word? The "tradition of the elders," the rabbinical exposition of the Law of Moses, was hardened and without an openness to find and live a life based on a charitable love for the Lord and neighbor. The Lord noted this tendency in the church when He stated: "Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition." (*Matthew 15:6*) Tradition supplanted the Word of the Lord. The external church was filled with intellectual pride and self-love, which prevented the Lord from illustrating truths so as to show the way and warmth of His love.

When the Word of the Lord says “I have loved you...” and the reply from the church is “In what way have You loved us?”, we can sense how far the hardness of their hearts had moved the children of Israel from the Lord. They couldn’t name one loving act from the Lord. They felt that the Lord’s presence was gone from their lives. To Israel, He was invisible, untouchable, and they did not appreciate Him. It would appear that they believed all of the benefactions of life were self-derived, with nothing attributable to the Lord’s constant Love. Can we say the words of Israel again without feeling a sense of sadness? **“In what way have You Loved us?”** Do we not hear the spirit of negative debate keeping them outside the door of the temple of wisdom?

When the church argues about the primacy of good and truth, it errs greatly. The Lord directs the orderly progress and timing, or primacy, of good and truth in our lives. The story of Esau and Jacob illustrates this well. We need to visit this lesson when we hear such arguments in the church. The Writings teach that truth is first in time, but love is first in end. Truth must lead for a time, but love is to reign in the end. Both have a use. One is not more important than the other. However, in our text, self-love blocked the way of truth coming into the church. The blockage of truth was not by accident or from a state of ignorance. It was a hindrance of choice, a choice of serious spiritual consequences. So the Lord’s Word illustrated this mistake with words that appear, or sound, like Divine favoritism: “Yet Jacob, I have loved...”

Why would the Lord love Jacob and hate Esau? Let’s answer this question by reflecting on the example Jeremiah was given at the potter’s house. When clay, the good of love in the mind, is hardened, when clay bakes in the oven of self-love, it cannot be reshaped by the Potter. In contrast, the clay of truth, unbaked, can be reshaped. The imperfections can be removed by the Potter and the clay made into new vessels.

The Love of Jacob and the Hate of Esau are not the lesson to be learned. Being grateful, amiable, malleable, in the hands of the Lord is what is prized. This then is the opening message of Malachi’s “burden” or oracle to Israel. Good is to welcome and draw in the truths of the Word. The heart of the external church is to seek ardently the truths of the Lord. This is what makes for a healthy, growing church. This is what the Lord wants for His church.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 1:1-2*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Have you ever participated in a discussion about the primacy of love or truth? What side would you favor in such a debate? If you argued this point, was there any satisfaction about the outcome?
- Israel's debate with the Lord is sad. Do you recall talking with people who were bitter about the way the Lord was not doing anything favorable for their life? Did they express an anger that seemed to keep them from being interested in hearing about the love of the Lord?
- How well do you feel you could explain why the Lord said He loved Jacob? Do you have any examples that would clarify the meaning of this love in the spiritual sense?
- How well do you understand the meaning of Malachi's "burden" or "oracle"?
- Malachi's name means "My messenger." It also could mean "My angel." Does AC 1925, in the Derived Doctrine section, help picture the duties of a messenger of the Lord?

MALACHI 1:3-4 (A)

"...But Esau I have hated, and laid waste his mountains and his heritage for the jackals of the wilderness. Even though Edom has said, 'We have been impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places...' "

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "All external good has been destroyed and hence also external truth."

AC 7293 [5]

- "In these passages 'serpents' denote falsities from which are reasonings. The same are also signified by 'dragons;' but 'dragons' denote reasonings from the loves of self and of the world, thus from the cupidities of evil, which pervert not only truths, but also goods. These reasonings come forth from those who in heart deny the truths and goods of faith, but in mouth confess them for the sake of the lust of exercising command and of making profit..." *Malachi 1:3* is cited.

Apocalypse Revealed (AR) 537

- "...falsities devastate the church, since they take away its truths and goods, therefore they were represented by 'a dragon.' The reason is, because by 'a

dragon,' in the Word, is signified the devastation of the church, as may appear from the following passages...Malachi 1:3..."

AR 546

- "That by 'a wilderness' is signified the church devastated, or in which all truths of the Word are falsified..." *Malachi 1:3* is cited.

AE 714 [25]

- "In Malachi...1:3...'Esau' means such as are in good in respect to the natural man, here such as are in evil...therefore it is said, 'Esau I hated;' that the goods of love of the natural man will be destroyed is signified by 'I made his mountains a waste;' and that the truths of that good will be destroyed by the falsities of the sensual man is signified by 'I gave his heritage to the dragons of the wilderness.'"

AE 730 [21]

- "In Malachi...1:3...'Esau' signifies the love of the natural man; 'his mountains' signify the evils from that love, and 'his heritage' signifies the falsities from those evils, and 'the dragons of the desert' signify mere falsifications from which these come."

Derived Doctrine

"...But Esau I have hated, and laid waste his mountains and his heritage for the jackals of the wilderness."

- The meaning of hating Esau was covered in the previous section. In essence, this statement refers to the signification of Esau being a spoiled or falsified love of the natural person.
- "Mountains" signify the extension of worship within the heart. In the positive sense, a mountain represents where love to the Lord and the worship of Him prevails in the church (*AE 734 [2]*). In the negative sense, a mountain signifies the height or magnitude of evils that spring from the love of self and of the world (*AE 411*).
- A mountain being "laid waste" signifies the work of the Lord vastating the evil and falsities of the heart so that good and truth may return to the church. *AC 6141* defines being "laid waste" as being without truth that is visible.
- Note: the King James translation of the Word uses the wording "dragons of the wilderness" and the New King James translation "the jackals of the wilderness." Is there a conflict of meaning here in the spiritual sense? In the Writings, Swedenborg uses "IIM," "IJIM," "OCHIM," and "ZIIM," which are the

Latin transliterations of the Hebrew words meaning wild beasts of the desert, howling creatures, hyenas, jackals, and dragons. Essentially, all of these animals signify adulterated and profaned truths and goods.

"Even though Edom has said, 'We have been impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places...'"

- "But in the opposite sense by 'Esau' and 'Edom' are represented those who turn aside from good through the fact that they altogether despise truth, and are unwilling that anything of the truth of faith should be adjoined, which is chiefly owing to the love of self... This evil of the love of self, which is of such a nature as not to admit the truths of faith, thus neither the doctrinal things of truth, is described in various passages of the Word by 'Esau' and 'Edom'..." (*AC 3322 [7]*)
- *AC 775* explains the meaning of "impoverished" by showing "how almost non-existent human wisdom is, in that it hardly knows of the existence of spiritual good and truth, let alone what these may be."
- Is Edom's promise to return and build the desolate places a boast that it will restore the dwellings of self-love, or is it a promise to restore order to the Lord's external church? If it means the positive restoration of order, then Edom must change and allow the truths of faith and the doctrinal things to enter the heart and mind of the church. But if it is a selfish boast, then Edom intends to rebuild a life of pretense and sham. *Malachi 1:5* leaves no doubt as to what the answer is to our question.

Putting It All Together

The Writings help to explain what kind of spiritual disorder Israel had within its heart and mind when Malachi prophesied on behalf of the Lord. The problem exposed by the Lord was something only He could know with certainty. There were those in the church who spoke with what appeared to be sound "reasonings." What kind of reasoning did they use? The reasonings "come forth from those who in heart deny the truths and goods of faith..." "They confess them for the sake of the lust of exercising command and of making profit..." (*AC 7293 [5]*) We also have a quote from *AC 3322 [7]* that tells us they (Edom) "turn aside from good through the fact that they altogether despise truth, and are unwilling that anything of the truth of faith should be adjoined...owing to the love of self..." We now can see why *P&P* sums up the church's problems with these words: "All external good has been destroyed and hence also external truth."

The impoverishment Edom admits to is interesting in that, unwittingly, Edom was revealing what kind of spiritual state it was in. For "impoverishment" signifies "how almost non-existent human wisdom is, in that it hardly knows of the existence of spiritual good and truth, let alone what these may be." And yet, in spite of this impoverishment, Edom foolishly believes that it can return and build once again, by

its own power, in desolate places. The illusions of spiritual insanity are grandiose and without substance to fulfill their unrealistic promises. How sad and empty Edom is as portrayed in this prophetic lesson.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 1:3-4 (a)*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Looking back at the first verse of *Malachi*, can we now see why the people of Israel felt the Lord didn't love them? Their choices rebuffed all the love the Lord wanted to give them. Their rejection of the Lord blocked the entrance of His benefactions.
- The "serpent" or "jackals of the wilderness" are not from the Lord. Instead, they represent the devastation of the church brought about by the false reasonings of self-love within the people.
- Did you get a clear picture of what "impoverishment" represents? Isn't that quote from the *Arcana Coelestia* a great one to illustrate how human prudence fails to get the full picture of the Divine plan?
- What examples can we think of that show self-love boasting of its ability to build in desolate places?
- What kind of mountains have we built in our lifetime? Mountains of self-love or mountains of exalted love and worship for the Lord? Or can we see some of both kinds?

MALACHI 1: 4 (B) -6

"Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'They may build, but I will throw down; they shall be called the territory of wickedness, and the people against whom the Lord will have indignation forever. Your eyes shall see, and you shall say, "The Lord is magnified beyond the border of Israel." A son honors his father and a servant his master. If then I am the Father, where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is My reverence? Says the Lord of hosts to you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, "In what way have we despised Your name?"'"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Although the church is there, yet they do not acknowledge the Lord."

AC 3703 [10]

- “In Malachi...1:5, 6...‘father’ denotes those who are in the good of the church; and ‘master,’ those who are in the truth of the church; ‘father’ manifestly denoting the Lord as to Divine good; and ‘master,’ or ‘lord,’ as to Divine truth.”

AC 4973 [7]

- “Good is called a ‘lord’ relatively to a servant, and it is called a ‘father’ relatively to a son—as in Malachi...1:6...”

AR 527

- “...he who loves evils also loves to do evil to the Lord, yea to crucify Him. This lies inmost hid in all evil, even among those who confess Him with their lips in the world...That ‘to fear God’ signifies to love the things which are of God, by doing them, and by not willing to do those which are against Him, appears from these passages...Malachi 1:5...”

AE 696 [15]

- “In Malachi...1:6...The terms ‘honor’ and ‘fear’ are used because ‘honor’ is predicated of the worship from good, and ‘fear’ of the worship by means of truths...therefore, ‘honor’ is also predicated of Father, and ‘fear’ of Lord, for Jehovah is called ‘Father’ from Divine good, and ‘Lord’ here from Divine truth.”

Derived Doctrine

“They may build, but I will throw down...”

- To “build” signifies to form doctrinal things (AC 1187, 1302). Where will Edom rebuild in the future? On the rock or on the sand? In a place of abundance or a place of desolation?
- To “throw” or cast signifies to be among falsities (AC 4728).
- The “downfall” of any nation signifies what occurs to those who do good for the sake of personal profit or reward in heaven (AC 8002 [5]).

“...they shall be called the territory of wickedness...”

- “Call” signifies to have a given quality (AC 3421).
- The “territory of wickedness” signifies the realm or residence of all the falsities of evil, a place where there is a unified wish for the destruction of the Lord’s good and truth. Here are a few passages to consider when thinking

about the “territory of wickedness.” *AC 374*: Hatred is the source of all wickedness. *AC 1076*: Those without a conscience rush into all wickedness. *AC 1080*: Hatred lurks in every word spoken by the wicked. *AC 1182*: Wickedness residing in hatred and deceit makes worship unholy.

“...and the people against whom the Lord will have indignation forever.”

- Does the Lord really have “indignation” toward anyone? No! To the wicked, it appears so. They project the indignation they feel toward the Lord as the indignation they imagine the Lord has for them. They totally miss the quality of His love. Read *AC 963* for a description of the indignation of the evil.
- *AC 3839* has this explanation for the Lord’s “indignation”: “It is not of anger, but of zeal, in which there is nothing of evil, and which is far removed from hatred and revenge...indignation springs from good...”
- *AC 3909* defines the “indignation” of the Lord toward evil as a “certain sadness that is attended with a prayerful wish that it be not so...”
- Thus, we may conclude that the Lord’s love or “indignation” toward evil will be “forever.” He is not happy over the loss of one sheep.

“Your eyes shall see, and you shall say, ‘The Lord is magnified beyond the border of Israel.’”

- “Eyes,” in the positive sense, signify the perception of the understanding and the intelligence given (*AC 2701*).
- To “see,” in the positive sense, signifies to perceive the truths that are in the Word from the Lord and, through them, to know and acknowledge Him (*AR 938*).
- To “say” sometimes signifies to perceive and sometimes to think because “saying” involves both perception and thought (*AC 2619*).
- *Webster’s New College Dictionary* (1956 edition) defines “magnify” as “to exalt; to enlarge; to make something stand high; to call something great; to declare something as being all glorious.”
- When anyone seeks to “magnify” the Lord, they must do so from a state of humility from the affection of good. To “magnify” the Lord is to acknowledge His omnipotence (*AC 8280*).
- “Beyond the border of Israel” offers an interesting lesson for us to reflect on. The words “beyond the border (boundaries)” teach us that the things of the Lord are beyond, or exceed, the external forms of worship. External worship is dead in comparison to the things of the Lord and His celestial and spiritual truths. The Lord is Infinite. External worship is finite. The Lord is “beyond the border,” or boundaries, of our finite comprehension. See *AC 1212, 1866, and 2973*.

"A son honors his father..."

- *AC 5515* tells us that “sons of our father” signifies truths that are derived from good and so from one origin, “moreover, all truths are from one good.” A son, in the positive sense, represents truths that have their origin in genuine truths.
- To “honor” signifies to worship the Lord’s Divine Good (*AR 373*).
- “Father” signifies divine good from the Lord “...by whom is everywhere meant Jehovah, from Whom He was, and Who was in Him, and never any Divine separate from Him...” (*AR 170*)

“...and a servant his master.”

- A “servant” signifies external memory-knowledges serving the internal person (*AC 1486*). “Servants” signify things in the external that must render obedience to the interior person (*AC 1713*). Interestingly, *AC 3975* states that “serving” signifies “labor and study.” “Servants” signify being kept constantly in truths from the Lord(*AR 380*).
- “Master” signifies the internal person whom the external person is to serve (*AE 409 [8]*). A reference in *AC 2921* notes that the “name ‘Lord’” is used as to good and the “name ‘Master’” as to truth.

“If then I am the Father, where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is My reverence?”

- To understand the fuller meaning of the Lord’s questions, we need to draw from what was learned above to make a summary for ourselves of what is being asked in the spiritual sense. To accommodate the eye, the spiritual sense is in the darker print.
- If I am the Father – **If I am the one origin of good**
- Where is My honor? – **Where is the holy worship of My Divine Good?**
- If I am a Master – **If the external is to serve the internal**
- Where is My reverence? – **Where is the worship from holy fear? Where is the worship from charity? Where is the shunning of evils as sins against God? Where have you refrained from committing them?**
- Information about the meaning of “reverence” may be found in *AC 355, 5459*, and *Divine Providence (DP) 20*.

“Says the Lord of hosts to you priests who despise My name.”

- “Lord of hosts” signifies the Lord as to all goods and truths fighting against falsities and evils (*AE 453 [6]*). “Jehovah of hosts” signifies the church in its whole complex by which the Lord removes the hells in general and with everyone in particular (*AE 734 [8]*).

- “Priests,” in the positive sense, represent the Lord as to the Divine Good as to the work of salvation (*AC* 9809). “Priests” are to teach the goods and truths of life (*AE* 235 [7], 624 [17]). But the priests the Lord mentions in this text did not do these things. They cared little for the feeding of souls within the church.
- To “despise” signifies to look with contempt on the things of the Lord and to lightly esteem the conjunction of truth and good (*AC* 1911). “Despise” also signifies to consider the good of life, as a priority, to be of no account (*AC* 3336).

“Yet you say, ‘In what way have we despised Your name?’”

- Is there a degree of softness in their question? Is there a spirit of willing self-reflection? Are the priests open to hearing a Divine “review” of their work on His behalf? Or do we hear a spirit of rebellion and debate? Are these priests talking back as if the Lord was a “peer” of theirs?
- It would seem self-love wants no review from the Lord. With a casual wave of the hand, the questioners make light or little of the Lord’s words.
- The Lord, in His infinite Love, will now take time to answer them. Will they listen, or will they once again answer with a question laden with rejection? Read *AC* 963 to learn about evil’s indignation with the Lord’s truth.

Putting It All Together

“Although the church is there, yet they do not acknowledge the Lord.” (P&P)

The church was there. The services were being held as usual. There were priests, and there were people. Buildings were going up, nice-looking facades, too. Wasn’t that a good sign that the job of the church was being done?

Not in the eyes of the Lord. The Lord had important things to say regarding the spiritual quality of the church. The Lord said that He would throw down the edifice of respectability self-love had constructed. He promised to expose the falsities of the external church. The Lord likened the church to a “territory of wickedness.” Why did the Lord use such strong terms to describe the church? He wanted to point out the source of their wickedness. Lies and hatred lurked in every word they uttered. The church harbored indignation toward the Lord. The church didn’t have as its propriety a wholesome mission of uniting love and wisdom in the hearts and minds of the congregation. Instead, the people of the church went out of their way to block such a union.

In a usual way of defeating an opponent, the church accused the Lord of having indignation toward them. The Lord harbored no such indignation toward the church. Instead, He had a “certain sadness that is attended with a prayerful wish that it [evil in the church] be not so...”

To awaken in the church a degree of self-examination, the Lord asks them a series of questions. The heart of the questions is His intent to help them to focus on the source of their faith. Am I your Father?, He asks. Where is My honor? If I am Your Master, where is My reverence? As we outlined above, these questions were intended to get the people to see the Lord as the one and only source of good. The Lord wanted His church to worship that good. He wanted to help them bring their externals into order so as to strengthen their internals. The Lord wanted them to shun evils as sins against Him. The Lord wanted a committed and dedicated priesthood to care for the souls of the people and to teach and preach the goods and truths of the Word, so that lives might be amended in the process of regeneration.

Would the people listen? Would they change from a territory of wickedness to a territory of goodness? No; instead, they asked the question, “In what way have we despised Your name?” They issued a challenge to the Lord’s perception and assessment of the quality of spirituality within the external church. With such an arrogant attitude, is it not logical for the Lord to say of them, “Although the church is there, yet they do not acknowledge the Lord”?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 1:4 (b) -6*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Can you think of a way to illustrate the external signs of growth exhibited by something that lacks a solid and moral foundation for spiritual growth?
- Were you able to follow the series of questions the Lord asked regarding a father and son, a master and servant, and reverence? What did you take from this teaching?
- What is it about our proprium that thinks it can treat the Lord as a peer? Why is it unwilling to listen to the Lord’s call for change?
- The quote from *AC 3909* regarding the Lord’s “indignation” shows that He is soft, loving, and quite helpful. Doesn’t this description remove from our minds the feeling that the Lord is a stern taskmaster? Doesn’t it convey the message that He is sorry for our mistakes and that He wishes that it be not so with us?
- What did you learn from the Putting It All Together section to add to your understanding of the summary given in *P&P*?

MALACHI 1:7-8

"You offer defiled food on My altar. But you say, In what way have we defiled You? By saying, The table of the Lord is contemptible. And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably? says the Lord of hosts."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “They worship the Lord from evil and not from good.”

AC 2165 [2]

- “Now as ‘bread’ means all kinds of food in general, it therefore signifies in the internal sense all those things which are called celestial foods, as may be still more evident from the burnt offerings and sacrifices that were made of lambs, sheep, she-goats, kids, he-goats, heifers, and oxen, which were called in one word the ‘bread of the offering’...In Malachi...1:7...the hallowed things of the sacrifices, which they ate, were called ‘bread’...”

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- “That the burnt-offerings and sacrifices, which consisted of lambs, she-goats, sheep, kids, he-goats, and bullocks, were in one word called ‘Bread,’ is evident from the following passages...Malachi 1:7...”

TCR 707

- “To eat of the holy things was to eat of the flesh of the sacrifices, which is here called ‘bread,’ as well as in Malachi 1:7...”

AC 2383 [5]

- “As what is blind signified what is false, therefore in the representative Jewish Church it was forbidden to sacrifice anything that was blind (Lev. 22:22; Deut. 15:21; Malachi 1:8). It was also forbidden that any one of the priests who was blind should draw near to offer upon the altar...”

AR 48

- “By ‘eye’...is not meant the eye, but the understanding of truth. Since by ‘eye’ is signified the understanding of truth, therefore it was among the statutes of the sons of Israel...” *Malachi 1:8* is cited.

AE 152 [14]

- “Because the ‘eye’ signified the understanding it was among the statutes pertaining to the sons of Israel...” *Malachi 1:8* is cited.

AC 4302 [7]

- “By the ‘lame’ in the Word are...signified those who are in no good, and thence in no truth...And because such are signified by the ‘lame,’ it was forbidden to sacrifice anything that was lame...*Malachi 1:8*...”

Derived Doctrine

“You offer defiled food on My altar.”

- In the positive sense, Abel’s “offering” signifies worship grounded in charity (*AC 350*). In the negative sense, Cain’s “offering” represented the works of faith without charity (*AC 346*). “That by ‘offerings’ in general is meant worship, is evident in the Prophets throughout, as in *Malachi*...” (*AC 349*)
- “Defiled” signifies a conjunction that is not legitimate (*AC 4439*). “Defile” signifies the profanation of spiritual good in the natural. When faith is separated from the good of charity, it is either dissipated or initiated into and conjoined with what is evil and false (*AC 6348*).
- The construction of an “altar,” “My altar,” was quite specific. Its dimensions, namely “the height, breadth, and length, signified in general good, truth, and the holy thence derived...the stones...signified lower truths...the brass...signified natural good...the horns signified the power of truth from good...the fire upon the altar signified love...the sacrifices and burnt offerings signified celestial and spiritual things according to their various species...Hence it is evident that internal things were contained within these external ones...” (*AC 4489*)
- It appears that the priests became careless with the specifics of the offerings and their representations.

“By saying, ‘The table of the Lord is contemptible.’”

- *AC 9527* tells us that a “table” signifies “a receptacle for celestial things, thus heaven in respect to the reception of such things as are from the Lord.” This

passage describes the things on the Lord's Table as the source of "consequent blessedness and happiness."

- To understand the meaning of "contemptible," let's look at what it means to despise something. To despise signifies those who turn aside from good by utterly despising truth (*AC 3322 [7]*).

"And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, is it not evil?"

- We read above that the "blind" signified what was false and thus meant a blind understanding. "Lame" signifies one who is not in genuine good because of not having been taught what is good and true (*AE 518 [4]*). "Lame" signifies, in the opposite sense, those who are in natural good into which spiritual truths cannot flow because the fallacies of the senses will not admit truths (*AC 4302 [8]*).
- The Lord asks the people whether offering these flawed things is an evil act. Didn't they know the code of sacrificing? Did they do these things in spite of the spiritual directives?

"Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?" says the Lord of hosts."

- "Governors" signify "generals in which and under which are particulars." (*AC 5290*) The Lord asked the people if they would be satisfied if "general gifts" were given to them. He knew that because of their care for themselves, they would have wanted the very best "particular gifts." What a great question by the Lord. He got to the core of their ruling love and what quality it was. Love of self was of greater importance than love of the Lord.
- "The Lord of hosts" is used again to signify His zeal to remove the hells from every person and from the church to clean up its worship of His good and truth.

Putting It All Together

"They [the church] worship the Lord from evil and not from good." (*P&P*)

Offerings to the Lord that should have been the very best were compromised. Flawed sacrifices were routinely being put on the altar, or table, of the Lord. Careless attitudes were employed in the temple. Ritual, tradition, required the people to offer sacrifices, but theirs were vain oblations and were not sacrifices of willing hearts.

Those who acted in the priestly role cared more for themselves than for the Lord. They worried more about what others thought of them than about what the Lord thought of them. Worship was so empty that, within their hearts, they found the

Lord's Table "contemptible." The Lord instituted the sacrifice of "breads" so that the people might find it a "source of consequent blessedness and happiness" (*AC* 9527). The Lord told the people that the table and altar were a source of empty and sad worship. The ruling love of the people drove them to take the best for themselves and leave the rejects for the Lord.

What did Joseph tell his brothers when he revealed himself to them? "...you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good..." (*Genesis* 50:20) The Lord meant for the church to find goodness, blessedness, and happiness, but they meant to perform acts of evil against Him.

How do the people once again flaunt their contempt for the Lord? "In what way have we defiled you?" "The table of the Lord is contemptible." How sad this is, and how needy they are of the Lord's benefactions. Will they come to see the folly of their worship?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi* 1:7-8.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- In the face of Israel's persistent defiance, are you impressed with how patient the Lord is with them? If the comments made to the Lord were made to us by our children, would we be able to remain as calm?
- How about the custom of giving the Lord second best? Do we do the same thing today?
- Do we still worry more about what other people think of us than we worry about what the Lord thinks of us?
- How about the table of the Lord? We come to the table of Holy Supper periodically. Is our heart in the service? Do we leave the table with a sense of wonderment? Do we think, "What have I just partaken of? What was I supposed to get out of it spiritually?" Has the Holy Supper been a source of "consequent blessedness and happiness"?
- I couldn't bring myself to say the words "the Lord's Table is contemptible." Would you imagine there are some today who might say this about the Lord's Table? What brings a person to this attitude?
- I yearn that this might not be said, but I do have a feeling there are some who would say that the things of the Lord have no worth for them. Do you hear anything that would lead you to concur with my fear?
- What can we, as a church, do to invite a heavenly sphere into our worship in which we feel the conjunction of the Lord and all of His hosts with us?

MALACHI 1:9-10

"But now entreat God's favor, that He may be gracious to us. While this is being done by your hands, will He accept you favorably? says the Lord of hosts. Who is there even among you who would shut the doors, so that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain? I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, nor will I accept an offering from your hands."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Therefore their worship is not accepted."

AR 939

- "That by 'seeing the face of the Lord' is not meant to see His face, but to know and acknowledge Him as He is as to His Divine attributes, which are many; and that they who are conjoined with Him by love know Him, and thus see His face, may be evident from the following passages...Malachi 1:9..."

AE 412 [11]

- "In Malachi...1:9...'faces of Jehovah,' 'of God,' or 'of the Lord,' mean in the interiors of the church, of the Word, and of worship, because Divine good and Divine truth, thus the Lord Himself, are in these interiors, and from them in externals; but are not in externals, namely, of the church, of the Word, and of worship apart from these."

AC 8989 [4]

- "In Malachi...1:9, 10...'to shut the doors' denotes not to communicate with holy or Divine things."

Derived Doctrine

"But now entreat God's favor, that He may be gracious to us."

- *AC 7391* tells us that to "entreat" or to "supplicate" signifies humiliation, and to pray signifies entering a state of humiliation and seeking intercession. The reason supplication involves humiliation is that the angels do not attend to the supplication but to humiliation.
- "Favor" or "grace" signifies to seek comfort and relieve with hope in states of temptations (*AC 5043*).

- To be “gracious to us” is a petition to find the Lord’s unfailing care. Those who “are in humiliation of thought beseech His grace: ‘grace’ relates to spiritual things, which are of faith, or the understanding...and ‘mercy’ relates to celestial things which are of love or of the will...” (*AC 598 [3]*)

“While this is being done by your hands, will He accept you favorably?” says the Lord of hosts.”

- In the positive sense, “hands” signify ability and power and the confidence that attends them (*AC 878*). But in this verse, it appears that this power, ability, and confidence are mostly from self. Otherwise, why would there be a question about the Lord accepting the work favorably?
- What leads me to view this from the negative perspective is the added phrase “the Lord of hosts.” This phrase signifies the Lord’s goods and truths fighting against falsities and evils to remove the hells from everyone.

“Who is there even among you who would shut the doors, so that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain?”

- To “shut the doors” is to not communicate with holy or Divine things. “Doors” signify what introduces either to good or to truth or to the Lord (*AC 2356*). “Doors” signify admission to the arcana (secrets) of heaven (*AE 260 [1/2]*).
- “Kindle” in the positive sense signifies that nothing of self-love ought to appear in the things in a person from the Lord (*AC 10732*). In the negative sense, “kindle” signifies indignation on the part of natural good (*AC 3909*). So which is it? Is it a positive kindling or a negative kindling? The answer seems clear from the statement about closing the door and kindling “in vain.” If the door is closed and communication with holy things is cut off, how can anyone kindle a genuine holy fire on the Lord’s altar?

“I have no pleasure in you,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘nor will I accept an offering from your hands.”

- “Pleasure,” in the positive sense, signifies the acceptance of love. It also means to allow love to enrich with Divine truth the life of all who receive life from Him. See *AE 295 [4]* regarding what is meant by the Lord’s “good pleasure.” In the negative sense, we can see that the Lord wants no part of their evil and false hearts. The presence of these evil loves will not permit the Lord to enrich them with truth and life. “I have no pleasure in you” sounds hard and so final.
- The offering of their hands is unworthy and unacceptable. The ability, power, and confidence of their hands are tarnished, unacceptable gifts of self-love. If you heard the Lord say these things to you, wouldn’t you be in tears or in a state of fright and be anxious to change?

Putting It All Together

"Therefore their worship is not accepted." (*P&P*)

What brought the church to the point of not being accepted? The people closed the doors. They didn't let good and truth flow in, so the heavenly secrets of the Lord were not present in their worship. The fire on the altar was a vain thing. The work of their hands was to serve themselves and not to perform acts of charity. Thus, the pleasures of the Lord were not able to come to them. He couldn't accept their love, nor could He enrich their lives. This is the short summary. It is a sad commentary. It is not one that the Lord's New Church will ever have to listen to because the Word says the walls of the holy city have no gates. The doors are wide open, and they face the four quarters so that everyone who approaches the Lord may enter through His open gates with praise and thanksgiving.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 1:9-10*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- In the text above, I asked a question: If the Lord spoke these things to us, would we be in tears or in a state of fear? The judgment of the Lord comes from a true picture of what our motives are like. He sees through the shams of pretense. So if He declares that doors are shut and our fires are in vain, it must be so. This realization must be accompanied by some sense of urgency. But Israel doesn't react that way at all. Why?
- I still shudder when I read the words "I have no pleasure in you...nor will I accept an offering from your hands." The answer to this dilemma is not far from Israel's reach. Do you recall the opening? "Now entreat God's favor" that "He may be gracious to us." Without sounding like a born-again preacher, can we accept the urgency of getting straight with the Lord? Can we redouble our efforts to find ways to open doors?
- Prayer, humiliation, and supplicating the Lord are ways to find what? Grace and mercy. Grace for the understanding and mercy for the will.

MALACHI 1:11

"For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; in every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering; for My name shall be great among the nations,' says the Lord of hosts."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “Those who are outside of the church worship the Lord...”

AC 10137 [5]

- “That in [Malachi 1:10-11] by a ‘meat-offering’ is not meant a meat offering, nor by ‘incense’ incense, is plain, for the subject treated of is the church among the nations (with whom however there was no meat-offering); for it is said, ‘from the rising of the sun to its going down the name of Jehovah shall be great among the nations, and in every place is a clean meat-offering and incense’ (that ‘incense’ denotes adoration from the good of faith...”

AR 778

- “That the meal-offerings, which were of fine flour of wheat, were offered upon the altar together with the sacrifices...Malachi 1:10, 11...”

AC 2009 [5]

- “In Malachi...1:11...where by ‘name’ is not signified the name, but the worship; which is the quality of Jehovah or the Lord, by reason of which He wills to be adored.”

AC 6674 [5-7]

- “That the ‘name’ of the Lord is everything of faith and love by which the Lord is to be worshiped, is still more plain from the following passages...” *Malachi 1:11* is cited.

AC 9475 [4]

- “The reason why such things [as belong to the faith that is from the good of love and charity] are signified by ‘incense’ is that they belong to the thought and thence to the mouth; but the things which belong to affection, and thence to the heart, are signified by the ‘meat-offering’ in Malachi...1:11...”

AC 10177 [8]

- “In Malachi...1:11...‘a clean meat-offering’ is added, because by it is signified the good of love...”

AR 277

- "...worship by incense was worship from spiritual good. Whether you call it worship or confession, it is the same thing, for all worship is confession...Worship from spiritual good is signified by 'incense' in the following passages...Malachi 1:11..."

AE 102 [4]

- "The 'name of the Lord,' in the New Testament means the like as the 'name of Jehovah' in the Old, because the Lord there is Jehovah." *Malachi 1:11* is cited.

AE 324 [11]

- "In Malachi...1:11...'From the rising of the sun even unto its going down My name shall be great among the nations' signifies that the church and worship of the Lord shall be everywhere with those who are in good; 'from the rising of the sun to its going down' signifying every place where there is good; 'My name shall be great' signifying the acknowledgment and worship of the Lord; and 'nations' signifying those who are in good; 'incense shall be offered unto My name, and a clean meal-offering,' signifies the worship of the Lord from spiritual good, which is the good of charity towards the neighbor, and from celestial good, which is the good of love to the Lord; worship from spiritual good is signified by 'incense-offering,' and from celestial good by 'meal-offering.'"

AE 401 [28]

- "In Malachi...1:11...'From the rising of the sun unto its going down' signifies all, from the first to the last, who are in the good of love to the Lord, because all in heaven dwell according to quarters. Those who are in the good of love to the Lord dwell from the east to the west; those who dwell in the east are those who are in a clear good of love, and those who dwell in the west are those who are in obscure good of love. This is why 'from the rising of the sun unto its going down' signifies all, from the first to the last, who are in the good of love."

AE 422 [6]

- "In many passages the words 'from east to west,' ...are mentioned...these quarters involve the two others, because all who are in good are also in truths, for good and truth everywhere act as one...the same is true of the following passages. In Malachi...1:11..."

AE 491 [3]

- “‘Burnt-offering’ also signifies worship from the good of celestial love, and ‘sacrifice’ worship from the good of spiritual love; these two goods are signified also by ‘meal-offering and frankincense.’ The like is true of ‘meal-offering and incense-offering,’ for the incense-offering was chiefly of frankincense. In Malachi...1:11...”

AR 81

- “...by His ‘name’ is meant the all of doctrine, and, in the universal sense, the all of religion. The reason why these things are meant by ‘the name’ of Jehovah is because in heaven no other names are given but what involve the quality of any one, and the quality of God is all that by which He is worshiped...He that keeps in mind, therefore, this signification of the ‘name of Jehovah,’ wherever it occurs in the Word, will understand...what is signified by it in the following places...Malachi 1:11-13...”

TCR 298

- “In the spiritual sense, the name of God means everything which the church teaches from the Word, and by which the Lord is invoked and worshiped...That the Word and whatever the church has from it, and thus all worship, is the name of God, can be seen from the following passages...Malachi 1:11-13...”

Derived Doctrine

“For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles...”

- Consider this teaching in *AC 9031* about the rising and setting of the sun: “...the Sun of heaven, which is the Lord, concerning which it is said that it ‘rises,’ but in hearts, when man is being regenerated; and also when he is in the good of love and faith; and that it ‘sets’ when man is in evil and in the consequent falsity. And yet **the Lord is continually in His rising**, from which also He is called the ‘Sunrise,’ or ‘East,’ and **He is never in any setting**; nor does He turn Himself away from man, but man turns himself away from Him. From this arises the appearance that the Lord turns away His face and also brings evil...”
- “My name shall be great” is not a bragging statement from the Lord. Egotism is not part of His Divine character. Instead, what is being communicated in the spiritual sense is the following: “great” signifies glory (*AC 1415*); “great” signifies a semblance of humiliation from the affection of good (*AC 2421 and 2423*); “great” signifies successive increase or abundance (*AC 3403*); “great”

signifies infinity (*AC* 4645); “great” signifies that truth from good shall increase (*AC* 6286); and “great” signifies that truths and goods are joined (*AC* 6521). The Lord is talking about the growth of His new church and the wholeness and strength of its spiritual foundations.

- Why would the Lord establish His new church among the “Gentiles”? *AE* 447 gives us a valuable clue: “‘Gentiles’ signify the establishment of the church with those who are in the good of life and receive the truths and are thus in the conjunction thereof, and in combat against evil and falsity.”

“...in every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering...”

- “Incense” signifies “a representative of the grateful hearing and reception by the Lord of all things of worship which are from love and charity.” (*AC* 10176) “...‘incense’ signifies confession, adorations, and prayers which proceed through the mouth from thought.” (*AC* 10295) “Incense” signifies the uplifting of worship through prayers.” (*AC* 10198)
- A “pure” (clean) meat “offering” signifies “the worship of the Lord from spiritual good, which is the good of charity towards the neighbor, and from celestial good, which is the good of love to the Lord.” (*AE* 324)

“...for My name shall be great among the nations’, says the Lord of hosts.”

- We looked at the signification of “My name” as being a promise of the increase of good and truth. His name has reference to His infinity. The use of the word “nations” has significance when we read *AC* 409: “The church rarely, if ever, remains with those who when vastated have truths among them...but is transferred to those who know nothing at all of truths, for these embrace the faith much more easily than the former.”
- The “Lord of hosts” signifies the Lord’s zeal to remove the hells from everyone and the church to clean up the worship of His good and truth (*AE* 734 [8]).

Putting It All Together

How hard must it have been for the people of Israel to hear the words of Malachi telling them that the Lord was going to establish His church outside of their nation? Would the Lord transfer His care to the Gentiles? What about Israel being the chosen people?

In all likelihood, the children of Israel scoffed at this prophecy. Gentiles were hated and shunned by Israel. Didn’t Israel have scripture that told them to not take unto themselves strange wives from the Gentile nations? The tradition of Israel regarding the Gentiles was well formed. Gentiles were not to have the things of Israel’s religion. The people must have reasoned among themselves that the Lord couldn’t and wouldn’t go against the long-standing dictates of their spiritual heritage. Israel,

in effect, tried to put the Lord in a finite box, to limit Him. Israel believed they were chosen. The Lord's favoring them was guaranteed. He wouldn't abandon them for a bunch of Gentile nations. However, this was a wrong move on the part of the children of Israel.

Let's bring the internal sense into this discussion. *P&P* sums up this verse with these words: "Those who are outside of the church worship the Lord."

What substantial reasons are we given that support this statement?

1. The Lord is continually "rising" in the minds and hearts of those who love Him. Israel let the Lord's Sun "set." The Lord never turns Himself from a person, but people turn themselves away from the Lord. This turning is called the "setting of the sun."
2. The Lord wanted to make His name great in the church. His love and wisdom were not, in the church of Israel, being kept in a state of conjunction. Wholeness of doctrine was compromised. Genuine worship and the inquisitive need to know and discover the truths of the Lord were gone.
3. So the Lord called unto Him the "Gentile" nations where the hearing and reception of His Word would begin anew. In the Gentile nations, the "incense" of confession, adoration, and prayers had the potential to be an acceptable gift in the sight of the Lord. The gentile newness would bring clean or pure meal-offerings.
4. *AE 324* teaches that the Gentiles had within them the "good of charity towards the neighbor...and the good of love toward the Lord." *AE 447* teaches that the Gentiles had a desire to receive the good of life and truths so as to enter into "combat against evil and falsities." The Gentile nations would have a spiritual inquisitiveness and a desire to fight evil and falsity.

Israel's days of wanting to fulfill the goals of the Lord were over. This church was being vastated, and the work of the Lord was moving on to people and nations that would allow His name to be great. The Gentiles were being readied to accept the "Lord of hosts." Their hearts were ready to receive His zeal to remove the hells from everyone and the church. Good and truth needed to be conjoined in life so that love to the neighbor and love to the Lord would once again thrive in His church.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 1:11*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Can you think of personal examples of your experiences with the rising and setting of the sun of the Lord? The Lord never “sets.” He is always “rising.” Moments of disappointment or tragedy cause people to allow the setting of the Lord’s sun in their lives. In such moments, the light seems to be going down or out. What does it take to have a new dawn after this personal darkness?
- Israel’s obstinacy is remarkable in some ways. Their traditional teachings were firm about their “favored nation” status. Can you identify with them? How would you feel if it ever came to us that the Lord was going to bring the New Church to Gentiles? To make it a little more personal, would we be ready, and open, to hear this message?
- Since coming into the organized New Church, I have heard people say, “We need to allow ‘Gentiles’ to find us.” We are somewhat cautious about “outsiders” and with some justification. We need to be slow with our evangelism so that a genuine sense of spiritual discovery comes with the newcomer. We don’t want lip service or a joining for the wrong reasons. There have been those who say they are interested in the church but really wanted the benefits of school and its tuition breaks.
- Please consider the meaning of a pure (clean) offering and incense. The lack of these brought the Jewish church down. Do we have our acts of worship in better shape?
- I’m still feeling somewhat sorry for the church of Israel. I’m sorry that they didn’t listen. I’m sorry that they didn’t want to change. And I am sorry they drifted away from the Lord. But why do I feel sorry for them? I guess the sorrow has its base in the worry that I too get into patterns where I tend to become careless with matters of faith. Are there any ways we can inspire each other to offer the incense of prayer, confession, and adoration that will stay fresh and sincere?
- Again, I offer a personal feeling: Does a study of the Lord’s Word, such as this one, give us a means to keep the “sun rising” and to make the name of the Lord great?
- Study is hard. There will be times when we find the application of the Word escaping our grasp. But experience shows that a steady plodding will pay dividends. Our study will give Spiritual IRAs that pay eternal dividends. What are Spiritual IRA’s? Instruction, Reference, and Application of the Word to the good of life.
- If you find this kind of study guide useful, will you encourage others to use it as well?

MALACHI 1:12-14

“But you profane it, in that you say, ‘The table of the Lord is defiled; and its fruit, its food, is contemptible.’ You also say, ‘Oh, what a weariness!’ And you sneer at it,’ says the Lord of hosts. ‘And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand?’ says the Lord. ‘But cursed be the deceiver who has in his flock a male, and makes a vow, but sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished—for I am a great King,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘and My name is to be feared among the nations.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “...those who are within the church profane worship, and do not worship the Lord.”

AE 725 [11]

- “In Malachi...1:14...‘A male in the flock’ signifies the genuine truth of doctrine from the Word; ‘a corrupted thing’ signifies what is falsified; and ‘to vow and sacrifice’ signifies to worship, thus from things falsified when truth is known; that this worship being fraudulent is infernal is signified by ‘cursed be the defrauder.’”

Derived Doctrine

“But you profane it [My name] in that you say, ‘The table of the Lord is defiled...’”

- To “profane” “signifies to be led by one’s self and one’s own loves and not by the Lord.” (AC 10362) To “profane” signifies to defile holy truths (AC 5044 [7]).
- A “table” of the Lord signifies a receptacle. A table signifies “the reception of such things as are from the Lord, which are the good of love and the good of faith, and the consequent blessedness and happiness” (AC 9527).
- “Defile” signifies the effect of impure worship (AC 1292 [3]).

“...and its fruit, its food, is contemptible.”

- “Fruit” signifies good. Essentially, it signifies the good of life (AE 48).
- “Food” signifies things of use to a person’s soul (AC 5293).
- “Contemptible,” or contempt, signifies those who turn from good by utterly despising truth (AC 3322 [7]).

"Oh, what a weariness! And you sneer at [the fruit and food on the Lord's Table]..."

- “Weary,” in the positive sense, signifies to be in distress because there are no truths (*AC 8568 [9]*). The negative sense would be to be in distress because of the presence of truth.
- “Sneering” has an interesting description in *DP 318 [7]*. This number draws attention to the fact that there is nothing that cannot be confirmed and that “falsity is confirmed more readily than the truth.” Those who confirm themselves in falsity “sneer” at those who allow the “inflowing light of day” to dispel falsity. Is this not what is going on in this verse? Sneering at the fruit and food on the Lord’s Table is profane, but the people who are sneering won’t listen to the Lord’s warning.

“And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick...Should I accept this from your hand?”

- “Stolen” signifies to attribute to oneself what belongs only to the Lord, namely good and truth (*AC 4002 [2]*).
- “Lame” signifies those not in good, and so not in truth (*AC 4302 [8]*).
- “Sick” signifies those who are distressed by evils and falsities but don’t want to be healed by the Lord. See *Conjugial Love (CL) 4586* for the positive meaning.
- Should the Lord accept these inferior offerings? We know the answer from the literal sense. He will not. Nor will He acknowledge the self-power (hand) that brought them.

“But cursed be the deceiver who has in his flock a male, and takes a vow, but sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished...”

- Please note that most of this verse is explained in *AE 725 [11]*, as quoted above. We need just a few points to round out the correspondences.
- “Cursed” signifies the sensuous nature that averted “itself from that which is heavenly, turned itself to that of the body, and thus cursed itself...” (*AC 245*)
- A “deceiver” is someone who denies the presence of the Lord for the purpose of claiming self-merit (*AC 4077 [3]*).
- A “vow” in the positive sense signifies a willingness to acknowledge the Lord’s providence and allow Him to provide essentials. This is not the case with the deceiver. Deceivers give lip-service that is nothing but a sham.
- How do we know this? The Lord refuses to accept a deceiver’s “blemished” sacrifices. The Writings use the term “fraudulent” worship (*AE 725 [11]*).
- “Flock” signifies the church and those who are in the truths of simple good (*AC 6828*). “Flock” signifies an interior natural good (*AC 4244*).
- “Male” signifies, in the positive sense, the genuine doctrine of the Word (*AC 7829 and AE 710 [33]*). Therefore, we can see why the Lord exposed this deceiver among the flock. The deceiver put on the face of genuine doctrine

but wanted to offer fraudulent, blemished sacrifices that were not acceptable to the Lord.

“...for I am a great King...and My name is to be feared among the nations.”

- A “king” signifies one who is in truth from affection for what is good (AR 440). Our verse uses the capital K for “King,” signifying the Lord who is Divine Truth and Divine Love.
- As for His name being feared among the nations, we know from doctrine that the word “fear” signifies having adoration, a deep humility, a holy love of the Lord (AR 56).

Putting It All Together

The Lord, preparing the disciples for the day when they would have to go out and preach and teach without Him, warned them that they would be like sheep in the midst of wolves. He warned them to beware of wolves that put on sheep’s clothing. He illustrated what their role should be in their ministry. They were to remember that a disciple is not above his teacher, nor is a servant above his master. And where would they find the enemy? “A man’s enemies will be those of his own household.” (Matthew 10:36)

What has this to do with our summation? The cursed, the deceiver, the one with a “male in the flock” taking a vow, had little interest in the care of the flock. He put on the clothing of sheep. He came looking like he was making a sacrifice to the Lord, but instead, he brought defective goods to the altar. Love wasn’t there. He made a sacrifice to the Lord for show and not for the furtherance of genuine doctrine. The “male” averted himself from that which was heavenly. Instead, his real interest was to turn all things to the body. The “male” deceiver, in his heart, denied the presence of the Lord for the purpose of claiming self-merit. Such profane worship wearied the Lord. He noted the inward sneer in the deceiver’s heart. Yes, the enemy was really in the household of the external church. And so the summation in P&P makes sense:

“...those who are within the church profane worship, and do not worship the Lord.”

The cursed, the deceiver, the pretenders would not prevail. The Lord announced that He was a great King and His name would elicit a holy fear based on adoration, deep humility, and a genuine love of His great Kingship. Can you hear Isaiah 9:6 being sung in the “Messiah” chorus? “And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end.”

And the people shall say “Amen.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from P&P.

Read Malachi 1:12-14.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. At what point of pulling together the doctrine and derived doctrine did the spiritual sense of this passage begin to unfold for you?
2. Did you experience a kind of inner light?
3. Could you picture the cursed, the deceiver, and his profane offering of a blemished gift instead of the good gift that he could have given; are these images illustrating things for you in tangible ways?
4. What stands out in your memory that helps you get the feeling that the Lord is a great King? Is it looking back over your life to see how His providence has guided us over the years? Is it reading the Word to see how He wins out over evil? Does it occur with an act of kindness or the gentle sphere of innocence?
5. What does it mean to you that the Lord said He was wearied with the sacrifices of the evil?
6. Do you think your moment of reflection would be helped if you played a portion of the “Messiah” chorus? Music stirs the soul to feel the majesty and glory of our Lord. If you don’t have the music, read Isaiah 9 with the tune in your mind.

Chapter Two

MALACHI 2:1-4

“And now, O priests, this commandment is for you. If you will not hear, and if you will not take it to heart, to give glory to My name,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have cursed them already, because you do not take it to heart. Behold, I will rebuke your descendants and spread refuse on your faces, the refuse of your solemn feasts; and one will take you away with it. Then you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you, that My covenant with Levi may continue,’ says the Lord of hosts.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “Unless they worship the Lord, all worship will be perverted and profane.”

AC 10037 [4]

- “...‘to embrace dunghills’ denotes to learn and choose falsities...In Malachi...2:2, 3...‘to scatter dung upon the faces’ denotes to defile the interiors of life with the falsities of evil; ‘the dung of feasts’ denotes to defile the holy things of worship.”

AC 1038 [3]

- “In Malachi...2:4...‘Levi’ in the supreme sense is the Lord, and hence the man who has love and charity...”

AE 365 [26]

- “In Malachi...2:4...‘Levi’ signifies all who are in the good of charity towards the neighbor, and in the highest sense, the Lord Himself, because that good is from Him; here the Lord Himself is meant.”

AE 444 [12]

- “That ‘Levi’ in the highest sense signifies the Lord in relation to love and mercy, is evident in Malachi...2:4...Here ‘Levi’ in the highest sense means the Lord in respect to His Divine Human...”

Derived Doctrine

"And now, O priests, this commandment is for you."

- The word "commandment" needs our attention. Is the Lord referring to the Decalogue, or does He mean "listen to this command I am about to give you"?
- The Decalogue is "in a brief summary a complex of all those things of religion by means of which there is conjunction of the Lord with man and of man with the Lord." (*Doctrine of Life* 54)
- To "command" signifies to prepare and do, or to act according to the word of the Lord (*AC* 783). To "go and do" signifies to obey Truth Divine and to do so from the will (*AC* 7944-7945).
- "Priests" of Aaron and of the Levites represent the work of salvation in successive order. The priesthood of Aaron represents the work of salvation of those in the Lord's celestial kingdom, and the priests represented by the Levites are the work of salvation proceeding from the former. See *AC* 10017.

"If you will not hear and if you will not take it to heart..."

- "Hear," in the positive sense, signifies that one who understands should obey what the Word teaches. To "hear" is to perceive and to obey (*AR* 87). From this, we can see that to "not hear" represents an unwillingness to perceive and obey.
- To take to "heart" signifies doing the will of the Lord from love and freedom (*AC* 9460). Having a stony or stubborn heart signifies the presence of impurity and the presence of things that would impede the influx of good and truth (*AC* 7225 [2]).

"...to give glory to My name..."

- To "give glory" to the Lord signifies that the Lord desires the surrender of a person's heart and worship of Him from those who love Him (*AE* 175 [6-7]).
- His "name" signifies the sum of all His qualities, love and faith, by which He is to be worshiped (*AC* 2724).

"...says the Lord of hosts."

- Have you noticed how many times this phrase is used in the prophecy of Malachi? Please make note of this phrase because it signifies the church in its whole complex by which the Lord removes the hells in general and with everyone in particular (*AE* 734 [8]).

"I will send a curse upon you and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have cursed them already, because you do not take it to heart."

- The word “curse” appears three times in this verse. The number three signifies what is holy, and it signifies the state of repentance, which is essential (*AC 900 and 901*).
- Would it be appropriate for us to consider the trine of love, wisdom, and use in this context? Could the “curse” occurring here represent a statement of judgment by the Lord about their love, wisdom, and use?
- “Curse” signifies that the sensuous has “averted itself from that which is heavenly, turned itself to that which is of the body, and thus cursed itself” (*AC 245*).

“Behold, I will rebuke your descendants...”

- “Behold” signifies thought, reflection, acknowledgment, and confession. “Behold” what? The Lord and His presence. See *AC 2329 and 3711*.
- The Lord, in *Revelation 3:19*, said, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.” These words, “rebuke” and “chasten,” signify that those who are being regenerated must face temptations “because without them, negations and confirmations against Divine truth could not be extirpated.” (*AR 215*) In *AE 342*, we are taught that “rebuke” signifies the desolation of all truth.
- We can understand more of the meaning of “rebuke your descendants” when we read a passage in *TCR 103 [2]*. “Since the soul of man is the man himself, and is spiritual in its origin, it is evident why the mind, disposition, nature, inclination, and affection of the father’s love dwell in offspring after offspring and return and display themselves from generation to generation...**And it is only by means of the spiritual things of the church that this likeness is changed.**” (*emphasis added*) With this teaching in mind, can we see why the Lord needed to rebuke the descendants? Only the Lord, His Word, and His church can change the tendencies of hereditary evils that are passed on from generation to generation.

“...and spread refuse on your faces, the refuse of your solemn feasts; and one will take you away with it.”

- A “face” signifies the interiors of the mind (*HH 457 and AE 381*).
- “Dung” (refuse) signifies what is unclean, “consequently evil and falsity, for in the spiritual sense these are unclean because all that is useless and worn out of the food goes into dung.” (*AC 10037*) In *AE 617*, we read that “dung” signifies the adulteration of Divine truth.
- Putting these teachings together, we can see that the Lord was telling the people that all of the useless and wasted things of the interior of their minds would become plainly seen by all as if they were written on their faces. Their adulteration of truth would be exposed by the Lord.

- “Feasts,” in the positive sense, have various representations. Let’s look at two passages that seem to sum up the representation of feasts. *AC 2341* teaches that feasts represent nothing else than the Lord’s dwelling with people in the holy things of love. *AC 5161* teaches that feasts were held to signify the initiation into mutual love and thus conjunction with the Lord. Considering these teachings, can we then see the negative aspect of our passage? Their solemn feasts were not for the purpose of giving the Lord a dwelling place within their heart, nor were they interested in His holy things of love. They did not wish to be initiated into mutual love or conjunction. It was all a show and, therefore, the “refuse” of a solemn feast in the eyes of the Lord.

“...and one will take you away with it.”

- Who is the one who will take them away? Is it the Lord, or is it hell? “One” is almost always ascribed to the Lord. “One” is that which is perfect. To “take away” signifies to remove every good and truth of the church, leaving no power to resist falsities (*AE 727 [12]*). To “take away” signifies to destroy defending truths (*AC 10540*).

“Then you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you...”

- When it is revealed to the children of Israel that they have no power or defending truths left, will their feeling that they are acting from themselves change to awareness that without the Lord they are nothing?
- Is this verse a “wake-up call” for the church?

“...that My covenant with Levi may continue...”

- A historical note must be appended here before we look at correspondences. “My covenant with Levi” goes back to a time at Mt. Sinai when Levi was faithful to the Lord in spite of the sin of Israel and the golden calf. For Levi’s fidelity, the Lord made a covenant with him and his descendants. The Lord promised him life and peace and a name that would be feared. “The Lord set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister to Him and to bless His name, to this day. Therefore Levi has no portion or inheritance with his brothers; the Lord is his inheritance...” (*Deuteronomy 10:8-9*)
- So, in the historical sense, the Lord was making a spiritual contrast for Israel to reflect upon. What is the state of the fidelity of the priesthood? How far have you come from the pristine order of the priesthood as established by the Lord? Is the Lord still your **only** inheritance, or have you made profit and prestige your desired inheritance?
- We also have *Exodus 32:25-29*, *Numbers 3:45*, *Numbers 18:21-24*, and *Deuteronomy 33:8-11* as references to the Lord’s covenant with Levi.

- “That ‘covenant’ signifies nothing else than regeneration and the things pertaining to regeneration, is evident from various passages in the Word where the Lord Himself is called the ‘Covenant,’ because it is He alone who regenerates, and who is looked to by the regenerate man, and is the all in all of love and faith.” (*AC 665 and 666*)
- The phrase “That My covenant...may continue” speaks for itself. The Lord wanted the priesthood to serve Him and to make it a high priority to feed the people with the truths of the Word so that the Lord might be the “all in all” of their love and faith.

“...says the Lord of hosts.”

- This portion of the text is highlighted again. Why are these words used so often in Malachi’s prophecy? To remind us that the Lord has a zeal to remove the hells from everyone and the church. He wants purity to return to the forms of worship offered up by His children. He wants good and truth to inspire and lift all in their daily uses of life.

Putting It All Together

To pull things together, let’s pay close attention to the orders of the Lord as outlined in the literal sense. We will first look at the orders from the positive sense:

1. Priests, listen to My commandments.
2. Hear and take heart.
3. Rebuke your descendants.
4. Know My commandment.
5. Return to My covenant.
6. The covenant of the Lord is the “all in all” of love and faith.

Listening to and obeying the command of the Lord is essential for the priestly acts of worship within us. The Lord desires us to perceive the things of the Word with a willing heart. “All that the Lord has spoken, we will do and hear” is a song we have learned from childhood. We still sing it today. The words and meaning of that song preserve the simplicity of what the Lord wishes for us. He wants us to trust and obey Him.

The command to rebuke our descendants refers to the inherited tendencies toward evil that we all carry with us. The doctrines teach us that “only by means of spiritual things of the church” can these tendencies be changed by “inherited tendencies toward good.”

How are we changed?

“Know My commandments.” Return to “My covenant.” Let “My covenant” continue.

To have less than this spirit brings the negative aspects into focus. The Word offers this order of what happens to those who are obstinately negative:

1. If you will not listen and take heart, a curse will come upon you and your blessings.
2. Your descendants will be rebuked.
3. Refuse will be spread on faces.
4. Refuse will be spread on the solemn feasts.
5. Those with a stony heart and unwilling spirit will be carried away.

If we refuse the order of the Lord, the curse of the sensual takes over our priorities. The “curse” of the sensual person will “avert” us from the heavenly spheres of the Lord. The refuse or dung on the face signifies the defiling of the interiors of life with the falsities of evil, and the refuse or dung on the solemn feasts represents the defiling of the holy things of worship.

This then brings us to the understanding of what is meant by being “carried away.” The unwilling and obstinate spirit will not choose the Lord. That kind of spirit flees from the presence of the Lord. Away, away, away from the Lord is what the cold heart desires.

P&P calls us to consider the meaning of these passages: “Unless they worship the Lord, all worship will be perverted and profaned.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 2:1-4*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Is the priest within our earthly temple listening to the commandments of the Lord? Is the perpetual fire of worship burning? Have only holy embers kept the fire going, or have “strange” coals been added?
- Do we see the rebuking of our descendants going on as we regenerate? Resisting the tendency toward inherited evils is the battle of a lifetime. One by one, the Lord introduces them when we are ready to face them. “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten” seems like a necessary part of regeneration. But, it is not something we look forward to. How do you see the meaning of “rebuke and chasten”?
- “Command” is a loaded word. It has been noted by researchers that we have a built-in “command resistance” tendency. What they mean by this is that if authority comes on too strong, we zig when it tells us to zag. Do you remember a parable of the Lord about two sons? The father asked each son

to go work in the field. The first son said, "No." Later, he reflected on his negative reaction and went and did the work. The second son said, "Yes," but then he never went. I'm sure we all see the implications of this parable. Do we not only see it but live it as well?

- The image of dung on the face and solemn feasts is quite graphic. Without the internal sense, it might offend our senses. Is the Lord trying to awaken us with these references?
- How do you understand the references to "curses"? It sounds as if the Lord is doing the cursing. In fact, it is the people who bring the curse on themselves. It seems the hells want us to put blame on the Lord for everything. What is your understanding of these "curses"?
- By now, have you gotten the message of the meaning of "says the Lord of hosts"? It is a phrase we are not finished hearing, so we need to put a "book mark" on it as we read on with Malachi's prophecy.
- The Lord's covenant is to be the "all in all" of our love and faith. How can we do this? Worship, study, and application to life seem like the ways to do this. There are obstacles that block or interfere with good intentions to study—schedules, fear of our ignorance, looking for easier tasks, wanting others to explain it for us. Do these obstacles attempt to block you from doing a daily study?

MALACHI 2:5-7

"My covenant was with him, one of life and peace, and I gave them to him that he might fear Me; so he feared Me and was reverent before My name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and injustice was not found on his lips. He walked with Me in peace and equity, and turned many away from iniquity. For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and people should seek the law from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Through the Word it is granted them to have conjunction with the Lord, who is here meant by 'Levi.'"

AC 3875 [4]

- "...in the supreme sense 'Levi' signifies the Lord's Divine love or mercy, and in the internal sense spiritual love, therefore the tribe of Levi was made the priesthood; for in the internal sense of the Word the 'priesthood' is nothing else than the holy of love..." *Malachi 2:4, 5, 8, 9* are cited.

AE 701 [9]

- “The covenant of Jehovah with Levi’ signifies in the highest sense the union of the Divine with the Human in the Lord, and in a relative sense, the Lord’s conjunction with the church; for by ‘Levi’ as by ‘David’ the Lord is meant, but ‘Levi’ means the Lord in relation to Divine good, which is the priesthood of the Lord, and ‘David’ in relation to Divine truth, which is the royalty of the Lord...‘A covenant of life and of peace’ signifies that union and that conjunction...from which the Lord Himself became life and peace, from which man has eternal life, and peace from the infestation by evils and falsities, thus by hell. What is signified by ‘His fear’ may be seen above (n. 696). Those who live contrary to Divine truth are meant by ‘ye have turned aside out of the way, ye have caused many to stumble in the law, ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi;’ ‘to turn aside out of the way and to stumble in the law’ signifies to live contrary to Divine truth, and ‘to corrupt the covenant of Levi’ signifies to corrupt conjunction with the Lord.” *Malachi 2:7* is cited.

AR 306

- “...when man is in the Lord, he is in peace with his neighbor, which is charity; in protection against the hells, which is spiritual security; and when he is in peace with his neighbor, and in protection against the hells, he is in internal rest from evils and falsities.” *Malachi 2:4-5* is cited.

AE 365 [26]

- “In Malachi...2:4-6...‘Levi’ signifies all who are in the good of charity towards the neighbor; and in the highest sense, the Lord Himself, because that good is from Him...‘The covenant of life and peace’ signifies the union of His Divine with His Divine Human, from which union is all life and peace...”

AE 444 [12]

- “...that ‘Levi’ in the highest sense signifies the Lord in relation to love and mercy, is evident in Malachi...2:4-8...Here ‘Levi’ in the highest sense means the Lord in respect to His Divine Human, for it is said of Levi, that ‘the law of truth was in his mouth, and perversity was not found in his lips,’ and that ‘the priest’s lips they shall seek the law from his mouth, for he is the messenger of Jehovah of Hosts;’ therefore ‘the covenant of Levi’ means conjunction with the Lord through love and charity; ‘the covenant of life and peace’ signifies that conjunction; ‘fear,’ which is also predicated of Him signifies love. ‘The priest’s lips they shall seek the law from his mouth’ signifies that all truth of doctrine is from the Lord, and is with such as are in love to Him. He is called ‘the messenger of Jehovah’ because of the Divine truth that the Lord teaches in the Word and through the Word; ‘they turned aside out of the way and

caused many to stumble in the law, they corrupted the covenant of Levi,' signifies that the church that was among the Israelites perverted the truths of the Word and the goods of life therefrom, and thus destroyed conjunction with the Lord; 'way' signifying the truths of doctrine, 'law' its goods, and the 'covenant of Levi' conjunction with the Lord."

AC 3623 [2]

- "The reason why here and in other passages lives are spoken of in the plural, is that there are two faculties of life in man; one of which is called the understanding, and is of truth; and the other of which is called the will, and is of good; these two lives or faculties of life make a one when the understanding is of the will, or what is the same, when truth is of good..." *Malachi 2:5* is cited.

AR 527

- "...every one who loves also fears to do evil to him whom he loves. Genuine love is not given without that fear. Therefore he who loves the Lord fears to do evils, because evils are contrary to Him...That 'to fear God' signifies to love the things which are of God, by doing them, and by not willing to do those which are against Him..." *Malachi 2:5* is cited as an example.

AE 696 [16]

- "In Malachi...2:5...'Levi' means here the Lord in relation to the Divine Human, and 'the covenant of life and peace' signifies the union of His Divine with Himself, and 'fear' and 'to fear' signifies holy truth, with which there is union."

AC 2826 [7]

- "In Malachi...2:5, 6...where the Lord is treated of, who here in the internal sense is 'Levi;' 'Levi' signifies the priesthood, and signifies love; 'fear' here denotes the good of Divine love; the 'law of truth,' truth; and 'peace and uprightness,' both."

AE 97

- "That in the Word 'ways' signify truths or falsities, and 'walking' signifies living, may be seen from many passages..." *Malachi 2:6* is cited.

AC 1286 [4]

- “In Malachi...2:6, 7...This is said of Levi, by whom the Lord is represented; ‘lips’ denote doctrine from charity.”

AE 130 [8]

- “...in Malachi...2:7...He is said to be the ‘angel of Jehovah,’ because he teaches Divine truth; not that he is the angel of Jehovah, but the Divine truth that he teaches is. Moreover, it is known in the church that no one has Divine truth from himself. ‘Lips’ also here signify the doctrine of truth, and ‘law’ Divine truth itself.”

AE 701 [9]

- *Malachi 2:4-6, 8* is cited, followed by this explanation. “A covenant of life and peace’ signifies that union and that conjunction...from which the Lord Himself becomes life and peace, from which man has eternal life, and peace from the infestation by evils and falsities, thus by hell...Those who live contrary to Divine truth are meant by ‘ye have turned aside out of the way, ye have caused many to stumble in the law, ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi;’ ‘to turn aside out of the way and to stumble in the law signifies to live contrary to Divine truth, and ‘to corrupt the covenant of Levi’ signifies to corrupt conjunction with the Lord.”

Derived Doctrine

Almost all that we need to understand in the spiritual sense of these verses was given to us. There was just one short sentence needing our attention:

“...he...was reverent before My name.”

- There are no passages we can use for the signification of “reverent.” However, we know the qualities inherent in reverence. Reverence involves respect, honesty, humility, a sense of awe, and a spirit of willingness to obey the Lord. “Before My name” represents having reverence for the sum of all things that signify the Lord’s qualities (*AC 2724*). Reverence doesn’t include a competitive or combative attitude. Instead, there is a willingness to accede to the holiness of His Infinite qualities.

Putting It All Together

When you look over chapter two of Malachi, verses 5 to 7 of *Malachi*, note the use of pronouns—him, he, his, his mouth, his lips—and of “priest” and “messenger.” The

Writings clearly teach us that all of these pronouns have reference to the Lord. By "Levi," the Lord is meant.

As I read these verses, my mind turned to the wording of *John 1:1*: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Notice the use of the pronouns in that passage. Don't we have somewhat the same style of message in *Malachi*, too? Try putting the Lord's name in place of all of the pronouns of our verses from *Malachi*. Think of **love and wisdom** expressing to us how they **are conjoined** and ready to help us find life and peace through the Word.

My (**Love**) covenant was with the Lord (**Wisdom**) from His advent.

I (**Love**) gave it to the Lord (**Wisdom**) from His advent.

My **Wisdom** will **Love** Me.

The law was in the Lord's mouth.

Injustice was not found on the lips of the Lord.

The Lord walked in peace and equity

The Lord turned many away from iniquity.

People should seek the law from the mouth of the Lord.

The Lord is the messenger—He is the Lord of hosts.

AR 306 sums up the meaning of the prophecy of *Malachi* in this way: "When a person is in the Lord, he is at peace with his neighbor, which is charity, in protection against the hells, which is spiritual security; and when he is in peace with his neighbor, and in protection against the hells, he is in internal rest from evils and falsities."

P&P sums up these verses with these words: "Through the Word it is granted them to have conjunction with the Lord, who is meant by 'Levi.'"

This part of the Lord's prophecy is an invitation to be conjoined with Him through the Word. Those who desire such a conjunction will have **life and peace**.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 2:5-7*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Were you able to put the Lord in the place of Levi and the various pronouns? Did it help you see more of the spiritual sense?
- I found this exercise to be a wonderful opening of the Word. It helped me see the Glorification process being explained to the church.

- Did you find *AR 306* a passage worth keeping handy to quote? Peace, security, protection, and rest from evils and falsities: these are words of comfort when we feel overwhelmed with temptation.
- The Lord is inviting us to have conjunction with Him through the Word. I believe that what we are doing in this study guide is so important. How about you?

MALACHI 2:8-10

“But you have departed from the way; you have caused many to stumble at the law. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi,’ says the Lord of hosts. ‘Therefore I also have made you contemptible and base before all the people, because you have not kept My ways but have shown partiality in the law.’ Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously with one another by profaning the covenant of the fathers?”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “They have departed from the Word, and have thereby dissolved the conjunction.”

AE 412 [25]

- Showing partiality signifies “In Malachi...2:9...to have the mind better disposed towards, and to show more favor to superiors, the rich, and friends, than to inferiors, the poor, and enemies.”

AC 2005

- “In Malachi...2:10...To ‘create’ denotes to regenerate...”

AC 3704 [3]

- “In Malachi...2:10...where in the internal sense ‘to create’ signifies to regenerate...and as the Lord is the only Regenerator and Redeemer, it is He who is here called ‘Father’ and ‘God.’”

AE 294 [11]

- “In Malachi...2:10...‘hath created us’ signifies hath reformed that they might be a church; therefore it is said, ‘wherefore do we act perfidiously?’”

AC 8999

- Acting treacherously is acting “contrary to truth Divine, or what is the same, contrary to the laws of Divine order...In heaven the laws of Divine order are truths, for Divine order...proceeds from the Lord.” *Malachi 2:10, 11, 14, and 15* are cited as examples.

Derived Doctrine

“But you have departed from the way; you have caused many to stumble at the law.”

- When anyone “departs from the way,” a spiritual change occurs within that person. Consider this teaching from *AE 406 [2]*: “...all cognitions of truth and good and the confirming knowledges (scientifica) that man from infancy has imbibed from the Word and from teachers, will **change their places** and their state in the natural man and perish out of sight when falsities enter.” (*emphasis added*)
- “Way,” in the positive sense, signifies following doctrine by which one is instructed, or led, into a deeper understanding of truth (*AC 2231*).
- In *AE 444 [12]*, we have an explanation of the passage from *Malachi 2:4-8* that contains almost the same words as our present text: “they turned aside out of the way and caused many to stumble in the law, they corrupted the covenant of Levi,’ signifies that the church that was among the Israelites perverted the truths of the Word and the goods of life therefrom, and those destroyed conjunction with the Lord; ‘way’ signifying the truths of doctrine, ‘laws’ its goods, and the ‘covenant of Levi’ conjunction with the Lord.”
- “Stumble” signifies to change truth into falsities and to fall thereby. “Stumble” also refers to those who should teach truths from the Word, but teach falsities. See *AE 624*.

“You have corrupted the covenant of Levi...”

- Let’s pause long enough to notice where the responsibility for the corruption of the covenant rests. The Lord isn’t at fault. “You” represents priests. “You” represents Israel.
- The “covenant of Levi” was “the way” the Lord laid out for their regeneration. The priests changed the way. They stumbled by teaching falsities as truths and truths as falsities and, thus, broke the covenant.

“...says the Lord of hosts.”

- Here is that oft-stated phrase to call our attention to the zeal and intention of the Lord to remove hell from everyone and the church (*AE 734 [8]*).

"Therefore I also have made you contemptible and base before all the people..."

- “Contempt” signifies a state of mind. “Contempt” represents a spiteful mind that takes delight in turning from good and utterly despises the Lord’s truth (*AC 3322 [7]*).
- “Base” or “vile” signifies that the Lord was going to show the inward evil that had been covered in an external pretense of a good life. See the basket of figs example in *AE 403 [19]*.

The remaining portions of these verses were covered above in the direct quotes from the Writings.

Putting It All Together

What point should we start with to pull things together? The bottom line is that the priesthood and the church picked another “way” to follow and turned their backs on the Lord’s way. They chose a road of favoritism because they felt it was more advantageous to them. Their choices over the years changed what they had learned from childhood. What the Word taught, what their teachers had shared with them perished. Falsities had changed places with these truths in their priorities. The priesthood and the church were on a way that had but one end. They were going to perish if they didn’t return to the Lord’s Word and the Lord’s way.

As it was, the minds of the priests and the people of the church were growing hostile toward the way of the Lord. How could they do anything else but “stumble” with the contemptible perceptions they had? Meanwhile, they “wore” clothes of righteousness, but within, there were hideous and ugly forms of self-love and hatred.

In His zeal, the Lord wanted to show these people the folly of their way, so He posed a question to them through Malachi. “Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?” The spiritual sense of these words poses the question this way: Doesn’t the Lord know the one way for regeneration for all of His children? He doesn’t show favoritism. No one can buy or think their way into heaven and its order. We all have one Father. His way is the one way to walk. “But you have departed from the way.” As *P&P* states: “They have departed from the Word, and have thereby dissolved the conjunction.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 2:8-10*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Can you reflect for a moment on your journey through life? Can you see any roads where you departed from the Lord? Did you stay on that other road for long? At some point, do you remember coming to the conclusion that you needed to return to the Lord's way?
- The idea of the one way of the Lord might be misunderstood, so let's look at that point for a moment. There is one way, but that one way is individually set for each person. The Lord knows our individuality. He is fair and impartial. He doesn't show favoritism. So He is willing to work with us toward our regeneration. We need to walk with Him. His Word is the means for our conjunction. So the remains of our youth and the teachers of the Word have done much for us. What we need to take care to ensure is that we have not "changed" the spiritual structure within us, with falsity taking center place and truth pushed out.
- Can we handle the news that "You" have dissolved the covenant? The Lord is revealing to us that He has made our regeneration possible. If things fail, it will not be due to His inattentiveness. This is the case from the Lord. He asks only that we try to trust His covenant path.
- As I look back over the spiritual correspondences, I wonder what effect it might have had if He plainly spoke the inner sense to the priests? Might they have done greater harm to themselves by rejecting the "plain truths" of the Lord?

MALACHI 2:11

"Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem, for Judah has profaned the Lord's holy institution which He loves; he has married the daughter of a foreign god."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "They have worshipped another god, whence came profanation..."

AC 3024 [7]

- "That the Israelites were not to contract marriages with the daughters of the Canaanites also had regard to the spiritual laws that good and falsity, and evil and truth, are not to be joined together; for thence comes profanation. The prohibition was also representative of the matter concerning which we read in...Malachi...2:11..."

AC 3881 [11]

- "...when they did not remain in the rituals ordained by Jehovah or the Lord, but turned away from them to idolatries, they then no longer represented celestial and spiritual things, but the opposite, that is, infernal and diabolical things—according to the Lord's words in...Malachi...2:11..."

AC 9182 [8]

- "In Malachi...2:11...'to betroth the daughter of a strange god' denotes to be conjoined with the evil of falsity; 'a strange god' denotes falsity..."

AC 4434 [3]

- "In Malachi...2:11, 14...where 'to love and betroth the daughter of a strange god' is to conjoin one's self with falsity instead of truth..."

Derived Doctrine

"Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem..."

- "Judah," in the supreme sense, "signifies the Lord and the Divine of love; in the internal sense, the Word and also the Lord's celestial kingdom; and in the exterior sense, the doctrine from the Word which is of the celestial church." (AC 3880 [10])
- To act "treacherously" (with guile) signifies to have malice from the will with premeditation (AC 9013).
- "...the signification of 'abomination' [sacrilege] as being infernal foulness and filthiness...." (AC 7454)
- "Israel," in the highest sense, "means the Lord in relation to the internal of the church...‘Israel’ means the church with those who are interiorly natural, and have truths therein from a spiritual origin...‘Israel’ signifies the church that is spiritual-natural." (AE 768 [15])
- "Jerusalem" means the church and not the city, "...for about the time of the Lord's coming Jerusalem was not so great...for the church of the Lord is internal and external; in the internal church are those who are in intelligence and wisdom, and thus in the higher heavens, but in the external church are those who are in knowledges and cognitions of truth and good from the Word, and in no interior intelligence and wisdom, and who are therefore in the lower heavens; the former are called spiritual, the latter spiritual-natural, and the spiritual are meant by those who are 'in the midst of Jerusalem,' and the spiritual-natural by those who are 'in the suburbs.'" (AE 629 [6])

"...for Judah has profaned the Lord's holy institution which He loves..."

- What is the Lord's holy institution which He loves? Is it marriage? Is it the Sabbath day? In *AC 4171*, marriage is thought by human beings to be a heavenly institution. In *AC 8495*, the Sabbath is taught to be the holiest institution of the Lord. Let's read *AC 8495* (in the Elliot translation): "Anyone who does not know what the Sabbath represented, and what it was consequently a sign of, also cannot know why it was held to be **the holiest institution of all**. It was held to be the holiest because in the highest sense it represented the union of the Divine and the Divine Human within the Lord, and in the relative sense the pining together of the Lord's Divine Human and the human race. This is why the Sabbath was the holiest. And since it represented those realities it also represented heaven in respect of the pining together of goodness and truth, that is, the joining together called the heavenly marriage...since the joining together of goodness and truth is accomplished by the Lord alone and nothing at all by man, and since it is accomplished in a state of peace, people were strictly forbidden to do work on that day." (*emphasis added*)

Putting It All Together

The "messenger" announces to the church that the Lord's holy institution, which He loves, was profaned by Judah in the land of Israel and in Jerusalem. Was the profanation an accident or oversight on the part of the finite church? The messenger's use of the words "treacherously" and "abomination" answers our question. We are told that treachery, or guile, is the act of malice; it springs from the premeditation of the will.

What did the people do to profane the Lord's holy institution? They chose to break their conjunction with the Lord, and they turned to idolatry. They married the daughter of a foreign god. The ordinance of the Lord was clear that they should not marry good and falsity nor evil and truth.

What makes idolatry so appealing to people that they would choose idols over the Lord? Let's look at some numbers in the *Arcana* for an answer to this question; *AC 1094, 1205, 1357*, and *1363* provide the following information.

- Idolatry consists in a worship of externals.
- The externals—corporeal things—are what the idolater desires most.
- The idolater is unwilling to know internal things and eternal life.
- There are three universal kinds of idolatry:
 - Love of self
 - Love of the world
 - Love of pleasures.
- All idolatry has one or more of these three loves for its end.

- There are internal forms of idolatry.
- There are external forms of idolatry.
- Internal idolaters are capable of profaning holy things.
- External idolaters are not able to profane holy things.

On the basis of *AC 1363*, we can make a pretty good assumption that Israel had entered into an internal form of idolatry. They profaned the holy institution the Lord loved. "They have worshipped another god, whence came profanation..." (*P&P*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 2:11*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Do you get a sense of what made idolatry more attractive than following the Lord? Can we imagine why loving self, the world, and pleasures would seem more valuable than following the Lord?
- Why is external idolatry permitted? How does internal idolatry have the potential to destroy holy things?
- Are we in any danger of committing these idolatries?
- If you are studying this section in a class setting, what other points about idolatry that were mentioned in the discussion have added to your understanding of the spiritual meaning?
- Do those seeking their "fifteen minutes of fame and fortune" seem like idolaters? What kind would they be? Internal or external idolaters?

MALACHI 2:12

"May the Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob the man who does this, being awake and aware, yet who brings an offering to the Lord of hosts!"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...wherefore they will perish."

AE 573 [7]

- "...the truths and goods of heaven and the church are meant in the Word by 'hosts;' which makes clear why it is that Jehovah is called in the Word...'of hosts' ..." *Malachi 2:12* is cited among many references.

Derived Doctrine

"May the Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob the man who does this, being awake and aware..."

- A "tent" signifies the external person conjoined with the internal (*AC 1616*). "May the Lord cut off" signifies taking away the Divine truth from the church but with knowledge that it will live again in a new church (*AE 315 [23]*).
- "Awake" and "aware" reinforce the point that those who chose idolatry did so with their eyes open and with full knowledge of the consequences of their actions. Therefore, they needed to be "cut off" from the tents of Jacob.
- *AC 9594 [6], AC 10545 [8], and AE 724 [17]* are consistent in their explanation of the meaning of "the tents of Jacob" signifying the goods of the church and of worship. In the opposite sense, "the tents of Jacob" signify the evils of worship and the church. "Bringing back the captivity of the tents of Jacob...stands for restoring the external Church's forms of goods which had been destroyed..." (*AC 9594 [6]*)

"...yet who brings an offering to the Lord of hosts!"

- In the positive sense, an "offering" signifies internal worship by those who are holy (*AC 349*). A negative sense of an "offering" signifies worship from faith that is without charity (*AC 346*). Which kind of offering is the Word talking about?
- The "Lord of hosts" signifies the truths and goods of heaven. Are we being given a contrast between the idolater and the Divine? Picture the profaner marching in to offer vain and empty gifts lacking any charity, and the Divine not needing his gifts because He already has all the goods and truths of heaven.

Putting It All Together

Do we really need to do much pulling together? It seems quite clear that those who want idolatry are going to be cut off from the tents of Jacob. There is little pity for these idolaters. They chose this. They did so with a clear understanding of what they loved. They wanted the idolatry of self, the world, and their pleasures. The life and pleasures the Lord offered them were firmly rejected. They were awake and aware when the decision was made.

Once they made that choice, the Lord sought to protect the idolators from more grievous acts of profanation. He took away from them their ability to see ways of conjoining themselves with Him. He turned away from the pompous empty acts of their offerings. What the Lord took away from them was not to be lost or forgotten. His covenant with a new church will restore the perception of how to conjoin the Divine Human with the church in that holy institution the Lord loves.

But as for the church of Israel, “wherefore they will perish” (*P&P*).

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 2:12*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Do you feel any sympathy for those who were “cut off” from the tents of Jacob?
- Can you picture the idolaters being quite happy with their choice?
- Did the contrast of the empty offering and the bountiful Lord stand out in your mind in the closing portion of our text?
- Why do you think the idolaters continued the ritual of offerings? Did it fulfill their need for self love, fame, and merit?
- Hold on to this question (number 4) for *Malachi 2:13*. In this next verse, we will look at the extremes the idolaters went to in order to appear righteous before others.

MALACHI 2:13

“And this is the second thing you do: you cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and crying; so He does not regard the offering anymore, nor receive it with goodwill from your hands.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “...therefore their external worship is not accepted.”

AE 484 [3 & 4]

- “In both weeping and in shedding of tears water comes forth which is bitter and astringent, and this occurs through an influx into man’s grief from the

spiritual world, where bitter water corresponds to the lack of truth because of falsities, and to consequent grief; therefore those who are in truths grieve on account of falsities. From this it can be seen why it is that in the Word, where 'tears' are mentioned 'weeping' also is mentioned, namely, that it is on account of the marriage of good and truth in every particular of the Word. I will only adduce the following passages in evidence of this...Malachi...2:13..."

Derived Doctrine

"And this is the second thing you do..."

- The first offense against the Lord was their marriage of "the daughter of a foreign god." Their attempt to work a marriage of evil and falsity was an abomination before the Lord. Divorce among the priesthood, both literally and spiritually, was destroying their uses.
- What then was the second offense? A long dissertation could be written about the laws of the Lord regarding cleanliness and holiness. Suffice it to say the principles laid out by the Lord could best be described this way: Israel should reflect in her community and worship what she ascribes to the Lord. If the Lord acts in justice, the nation should be marked by justice. If the Lord's nature is steadfast love, then His people's love should be steadfast. **If the Lord is clean and holy, then Israel should be clean and holy. Cleanliness is a hallmark of Israel's faith.** Laws about what the priesthood should do regarding their own preparation for offering sacrifices are precise. Completion of the ritual of self-examination prior to entering the "holy of holies" was a must. The book of *Leviticus* (chapters 11, 13, and 15) details what priests had to do for the treatment of sores and leprosy. The priesthood was to be without blemish. Again, let's restate the principle of the law of correspondences. If God is pure, holy, and clean, Israel must reflect these qualities in her life and in the acts of worship.

The point of this brief summary is to illustrate the care and preparation that was expected prior to offering sacrifices to the Lord. The priesthood became careless. They put on a pious front with their clothing. But within their hearts, there was little to match their externals. Notice now how they acted in front of the people when offering gifts of oblation to the Lord:

"...you cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and crying..."

- AE 484 gives us the positive meaning of "weeping" and shedding tears. These honest forms of grief were to represent the sadness one feels from the lack of truth when dealing with falsity. Weeping and shedding tears were part of the process to bring about the marriage of good and truth.

- But the weeping described in this verse was not part of an attempt to bring about this marriage. It was a sham. It was an act, and the Lord was not pleased with the shoddy performance of His priests and people.
- So, the first grievance was their marriage to idolaters and the divorce of their wives, and the second grievance was with their lack of concern for true repentance. Both offenses were violations of the principles of the Lord that should have been reflected in their life and worship.

Putting It All Together

I feel quite sure you have the summary of this section in your mind. *P&P* states the case: "...therefore their external worship was not accepted." Clearly, Israel was not participating in the worship of the Lord for the right reasons. They were not looking for repentance and reformation. It was all about self and not about the Lord. They truly wanted to marry idolatry and divorce themselves from the Lord.

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 2:13*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Was the section on the duties of the priesthood clear? If you would like more information on this topic, read Bishop de Charms' book on the Tabernacle.
- Can you picture the scene at the altar? Such wailing and tears over what? What kind of actors must they have been to pull this off in front of the congregation?
- Through it all, didn't someone sense that it wasn't genuine? When Malachi spoke these words on behalf of the Lord, I can imagine that a remnant of the people must have heard and believed his message.
- What can be done to make our worship as individuals more sincere and reflective of what the Lord is in our lives?

MALACHI 2:14-16

"Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant. But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. 'For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence,' says

the Lord of hosts. ‘Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.’”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “They have severed themselves from the church...”

AC 255

- “In Malachi faith is called the ‘seed of God’ ...2:14, 15...In this passage the ‘wife of youth’ is the Ancient and Most Ancient Churches, of whose ‘seed’ (or faith) the prophet speaks.”

AC 9818 [8]

- *Malachi 2:15* is cited regarding the meaning of “spirit.” “It is very evident that in these passages by ‘spirit’ is meant the very life of man; that it denotes the intellectual life, or the life of truth, can be seen from the fact that by ‘spirit’ in the natural sense is meant the life of man’s respiration; and that the respiration of the lungs corresponds to the life of truth, which is the life of faith and from this of the understanding.”

Doctrine of the Lord 49

- “That by ‘spirit’ is meant the life of one who is regenerate, which is called spiritual life...*Malachi 2:15...*”

AR 565 [3]

- “That by ‘the seed of the woman’ are here meant those who are of the New Church, and are in the truths of its doctrine, may appear from the signification of ‘seed,’ in the following passages...*Malachi 2:15...*”

AE 768 [4]

- “In Malachi...2:15...‘Is there one that seeketh the seed of God?’ signifies that no one seeks Divine truth; evidently ‘the seed of God’ here signifies Divine truth; so ‘the born of God’ mean those who are regenerated by the Lord by means of Divine truth, and a life according thereto.”

Doctrine of the Lord 48 [5]

- “As man’s life varies according to his state, by ‘spirit’ is meant the varying affection of life in man. As...5. A life of various evil affections...Malachi 2:16...”

AC 6353 [8]

- *Malachi 2:16-17* is cited when the significance of violence covering one’s garment is explained. "...‘a man of violence’ denotes those who destroy the truths of faith and the goods of charity..."

Derived Doctrine

“Yet you say, ‘For what reason?’”

- This question carries with it a challenge. The people question the Lord’s reasoning for refusing their offerings. Their question suggests that they are being hurt or misunderstood by the Lord. Their question seems to carry a pretended acknowledgment and worship of the Lord. They maintain a pretense of obedience to Him while playing for the support and affection of the people.

“Because the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously...”

- The Lord is a true and faithful “witness” regarding testimony and evidence. As a witness, He sought to join them by love (*AC 4192*). As a witness, He sought to bring confirmation to their marriages. But now, the Lord bears witness or “certifies” that they have dealt treacherously with the holiness of innocence that was a gift from the Divine.
- A “wife,” in the positive sense, signifies the goods of truth. When she is dealt with treacherously, ravished, turned away, or divorced, it represents a perversion of goods and truths (*AC 8902 [5]*).
- *AC 255* explains the meaning of “wife of youth.” It refers to the remnant of the Ancient Church against which the Jewish Church acted treacherously (*AE 701 [29]*). In other words, Israel severed the conjunction and holiness of good and truth passed down to them from the days of the Most Ancient and Ancient Churches.

“...yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant.”

- She (affection) is your companion. “Companion” signifies, in the positive sense, the truth of love and charity toward the Lord and the neighbor. In the negative sense, it means the destruction of these acts of charity. See *AC*

10490. "Companion," in our times, indicates someone we feel close to and with whom we are willing to share certain aspects of our inner world.

- A "wife by covenant" signifies a conjunction of the church and heaven with the Lord through His Divine Proceeding (Holy Spirit). This "covenant" plan of the Lord's is an irrevocable marriage of good and truth. The ideas for the interpretation of the above are drawn from *AE 701 [10]* and *AC 10249*.

"But did He not make them one..."

- "One" signifies what is perfect, authentic, or genuine. "One" signifies the truth of faith, and "One" signifies doctrine. See *AC 1316* and *AE 374 [2]*.
- The Lord's question draws us to a truth about what He offers us. He gives the best, the perfect, the genuine, and the complete doctrine of the truth of faith. His "One" plan or covenant is to save and lead us to the eternal life of heaven.

"...having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one?"

- "Remnant" or "remains" signify the truths stored up by the Lord in our interiors(*AC 5113 [8]*). *AE 724 [29]* adds that remains signify the truths and goods stored up with us by the Lord from infancy.
- "Spirit" has many important representations. We cannot cite all of them, but here are a few. "Spirit" signifies the mercy of the Lord (*AC 19*). "Spirit" signifies the Divine truth (*AC 24*). "Spirit" signifies the Divine Proceeding (*Divine Love and Wisdom 100*). "Spirit" signifies an internal dictate or influx of good and truth (*AC 573*).
- The point is that the "One" goal of our remains is to lead, inspire, and enlighten us in the ways of the Lord.
- Why the "One"? It is a complete plan of the Lord's. The plan is not flawed, nor does it fall short in Divine effort.

"He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth."

- "Offspring" signify that which has birth from the marriage of good and truth and the marriage of the Lord with His church (*CL 121*). Therefore, the Lord is asking for spiritual accountability. He wants "godly" results. He wants unity of thought, genuine effort, a purity of doctrinal understanding, and a willingness to obey.
- Take heed. Be serious; be alert and ready to hear the Lord speak within your hearts.
- The command to remove treachery from our spirit is a reminder from the Lord for us to remove things that would hurt our spirit.
- Our caring for the wife of our youth may occur with the truths of the Lord's Second Coming. For they carry on, and enlarge, the marriage of good and truth that was started from the very beginning of creation (infancy).

"For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce..."

- “Divorce” signifies good being rejected by truth. “Divorce” involves the acceptance of a discordant good. See *AE 768 [19]*. “Divorce” signifies the falsification of the Word whence the church separates from the Lord (*TCR 314*).
- “Hate” is not part of the Lord’s nature. It is a term projected onto the Lord when He opposes the evil. The true nature of the Lord’s “hatred” is captured in *AC 3605 [3]*. “...good does not even know what hatred is...In the internal sense [hatred attributed to Jehovah is actually] mercy, for the Divine is mercy; but when this flows in with a man who is in evil, and he runs into the penalty of evil, it then appears as hatred and because it so appears, in the sense of the letter it is likewise so called.”

“...for it [divorce] covers one’s garment with violence...”

- A “garment” (raiment) signifies truth clothing good (*AE 543 [14]*). A “garment” signifies the truths in the ultimate form (*AC 9372 [8]*). “Garments” signify truths “wherein is good.” (*AC 5954 [7]*)
- Spiritual divorce “covers” what was supposed to be useful and protective with a tainted garment of violence. The literal sense is twisted and used to prove anything the proprium wishes to justify.

“Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.”

- This is a repetition of what was said in verse 15. Please note that repetition is not for poetical effect. *AC 707* reminds us that repetition is used in the Word when both the will and understanding are involved in a prophecy.

“...says the Lord of hosts...”

- I call your attention to the repetition of this phrase throughout Malachi’s prophecy.

Putting It All Together

Clever arguments have been contrived over the centuries against the ways of the Lord. His Word has been used to justify absurd things. Adultery is toned down with the “evidence” of David’s shameful affair. Polygamy had its roots in the many wives of the Patriarchs. Slavery had its justification in the curse placed upon Ham that he would be in a lifetime of servitude to his brothers. I suppose there is nothing that can’t be justified with the abuse of the literal sense of the Word.

So the Lord reviews and certifies the history of the “divorce” of the church from Him. He refuses to ignore the spirit of treachery and violence that covers the

garment of the church. He reviews it all and declares "I hate divorce." In His mercy, He wants us to cease and desist from this practice of spiritual divorce. Why? Is it for His benefit? Obviously, that is not the case. His mercy wants us to stop hurting ourselves. He does not want one soul to choose Hell. He sounds the Divine alarm. "Take heed" are His words of care and concern.

He urges us to return to the remains from our youth. Remains are a wonderful collection of goods and truths that span our lifetime from birth to death. He has organized them into a "One." They are carefully stored up from our infancy. Hell knows not where they are. Hell can't violate them. So, with a prayerful attitude, we need to ask the Lord to touch our remains and to give us a right "Spirit" within our heart and mind.

Accountability follows a proper marriage of our youth. There must be godly offspring. Barrenness is not an acceptable goal of regeneration. Spiritual "fruits" must come before the Lord as a sign and token of our regeneration and gratitude for all the benefactions of our lives. These offerings will be accepted from our hands. The offerings of the "divorced" are not gifts of the hands that He accepts at the altar of worship. Nor is He impressed with the fakery of weeping and tears streaming from moroseness, self-pity, and self-love. He will welcome the "bitter" tears and weeping offered up by those who have a genuine concern over any deficiency sensed in the desired marriage of good and truth.

What of the "divorced"? "They have severed themselves from the church." (*P&P*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 2:14-16*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- In the Putting It All Together section, several examples were given to illustrate how the literal sense can prove whatever the mind desires to justify. What examples might you cite to illustrate this truth? Can you recall a time you used this method?
- Did you understand what the Writings said about the Lord not being capable of hating? Those being punished accuse the Lord of hatred and fail to see His mercy. As a parent, do you recall your children thinking you hated them when discipline was called for?
- Were you struck with the call to remember the bride of youth? Remains are often talked about in the church, but do you remember any class or article that helped you tap into this spiritual resource?

- The command to “Take heed to your spirit” is repeated. Did you sense that the repetition was there to instruct us about the work we need to do with our will and understanding?
- Have you ever thought about the “godly offspring” you can offer to the Lord? What offspring come to mind?

MALACHI 2:17

“You have wearied the Lord with your words; yet you say, ‘In what way have we wearied Him?’ In that you say, ‘Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delights in them,’ or, ‘Where is the God of justice?’”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “...even by their calling evil good.”

Derived Doctrine

“You have wearied the Lord with your words...”

- “Weary” (labored) signifies to not see the door or access to truths that would lead to good (*AC 2385*). Also check the meaning of “weary” in *AC 3318*.
- “Words” refers to acting according to the word of the Lord (*AC 7406*). “Words” signify the primary truths that are to be remembered and done that representative worship may be instituted (*AC 10682*).
- What we get from this passage is that the priests and people “talked” about good and truth; they “talked” about the good of life; they “talked” about remembering and doing the things of the Lord. But their speeches were only words; they did not lead to action. Words in the understanding but not in the will “weary” the Lord.

“...yet you say, ‘In what way have we wearied Him?’”

- Is this question asked from a genuine sense of concern and inquiry, or is it a form of defiant rebellion and denial? Our answer comes in the next portion of this verse.

“In that you say, ‘Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delights in them...’”

- How far from the truth is this reply? The Lord will not call evil good in His sight. The Lord will not delight in the ways of the evil.

- So why are the people saying these things to the Lord? Isn't it the nature of the evil to call evil good and good evil? Therefore, we must come to the conclusion that they are projecting on to the Lord the thoughts which are in their hearts and minds.

"Where is the God of justice?"

- "Justice" signifies being endowed with the good of charity by which one can know what is true (*AC 615*).
- So were the priests challenging the good of charity from the Lord? Were they in effect, telling Him that He didn't know right from wrong? If this is reflective of their attitude, how sadly lost and misguided they were at this point. Is this a powerful example of how arrogance blinds one's judgment and heart even against the Lord?

Putting It All Together

Hearing someone drone on and on, ad infinitum, about some technical point can be tiring or wearisome. We tire quickly if we can't see some positive application coming out of the conversation. Our patience is limited because we are finite, time-and-space beings. The Lord is beyond time and space, and He has infinite patience. Why would the Word indicate to us that the Lord was wearied with the words of Israel?

The Writings give us a hint what "weary" signifies. The Lord saw the absence of basic and fundamental truths that would lead to good. "Weary," in this context, represents a loving concern that progress in spiritual growth had little chance of coming to fruition. He wanted less talk and more sincerity in finding truth in His Word.

Not only were the truths that lead to good absent, but the people's attitude was argumentative and combative. They picked away at the Lord. They challenged His motives. They accused Him and projected on Him things that were not true. Imagine announcing to the church that the Lord's judgment was faulty in that He did not know right from wrong. They accused Him of countenancing the evil and calling them good. Preaching that the Lord delights in evil must have been a wearisome thing to listen to. Who wants to hear these words? And yet, if we reflect for a moment, we still hear such things being said about the Lord. He is blamed for calamities and absence in moments of physical need. The charge is that the Lord did not intervene appropriately to relieve the plight of His people. "Where is the God of Justice?" rings out like endless words from those whose hearts are convinced the Lord doesn't care. Why didn't He care and provide for those caught in horrific conditions such as the tsunami in Asia that caught many in a rushing tide of death? He cares. He doesn't forget. But the arrogant rail on and use words that contain little truth that leads to good. Such people will never see or believe that the Lord brought

the horrific events to a positive end. They will never see the welcoming angels taking the hands of the newcomers to the spiritual world.

What did the Lord say to the church of accusation and denial? "They have severed themselves from the church, even by their calling evil good." (*P&P*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 2:17*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- We have the expression "talk is cheap." What do we mean when we say this? Are we not pointing to empty words with little value to them? Some talkers we describe as having "running mouths." What does that expression convey? They have an unending flow of words that seem to overwhelm us with their content. They talk constantly with few breaks and keep us out of the discussion. Does any of this seem to fit in with our text?
- What is your response to the charges leveled at the Lord about His lack of Justice? Have you ever kept your tongue quiet listening to someone accusing the Lord of indifference to the tragedies of the world?
- Projection is a human tendency. What we have within our hearts can come out when we deal with emotional situations. Should we do more examination of our projections onto the Lord and the neighbor? Are we always right when we put onto someone else what our feelings tell us about them?

Chapter Three

MALACHI 3:1-3

“Behold, I will send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,’ says the Lord of hosts. ‘But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like launders’ soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “The Lord will come into the world, and will teach the Word in its purity.”

AC 1925 [6]

- “In Malachi...3:1...it is here plainly evident that the Lord is signified by the ‘Angel,’ since He is called ‘the Angel of the covenant’ on account of His advent.”

AC 3142 [2]

- “In Malachi...3:1...to ‘sweep the way’ signifies to make themselves ready and prepare to receive truth. The subject treated therein is the advent of the Lord, for which they were to prepare themselves for receiving the truth of faith, and thereby the good of charity, and by this eternal salvation.”

AC 4973 [5]

- “The Divine truth, which the Lord was when in the world, and which thereafter proceeds from Him, that is, from the Divine good, is called also ‘the angel of the covenant,’ in Malachi...3:1.”

AC 6804 [3]

- “That the Divine Human is a ‘covenant,’ that is, conjunction itself, can be seen from many passages in the Word, as...Malachi...3:1...”

AC 9167 [2]

- “In Malachi...3:1...speaking of the coming of the Lord, and He is called ‘Lord’ from Divine good and ‘Angel’ from Divine truth...”

AC 10528

- “...that here ‘angel’ denotes the Divine of the Lord with him is plain in Malachi...3:1...that the Divine of the Lord is here meant by ‘angel’ is because John the Baptist represented the Lord in respect to the Word, even as Elijah did, and the Word is Divine truth which is from the Lord...And whereas in the supreme sense the Lord as to the Divine Human is the ‘Angel,’ therefore it is said, ‘the Lord shall come to His temple, even the Angel of the covenant;’ ‘the temple’ denotes His Divine Human...The reason why He is called both ‘Lord’ and ‘Angel,’ is that He is called ‘Lord’ from Divine good, and ‘Angel’ from Divine truth. As ‘Jehovah’ in the Word denotes the Lord Himself, therefore it is said, ‘I send Mine Angel, who shall prepare the way before Me.’ This is said by Jehovah.”

Doctrine of Life 60

- “The reason why the Law was called the ‘covenant,’ is that ‘covenant’ signifies conjunction; and it is therefore said of the Lord that...He is called...‘The messenger of the covenant’ (Malachi 3:1)...”

AR 191

- “By ‘temple,’ in the supreme sense, the Lord is signified as to the Divine Human, in particular as to Divine truth; but, in the representative sense, by ‘temple’ is signified the Lord’s church in heaven, and likewise the Lord’s church in the world. That ‘temple,’ in the supreme sense signifies the Lord as to the Divine Human, and in particular as to Divine truth, is evident from these passages...Malachi 3:1...”

AR 344

- “That the Lord’s Divine Human is meant by ‘an angel,’ in the highest sense, is manifest from these passages...Malachi 3:1...”

AR 529

- “By that law called ‘a covenant,’ conjunction is signified; the reason is, because covenants were entered into for the sake of love, of friendship, of consociation, and conjunction. Therefore...He is called...‘The angel of the covenant’ (Malachi 3:1).”

AR 882

- “The reason why the tabernacle, in the highest sense, means the Lord’s Divine Human, is because this is signified by ‘the temple,’ as may appear from...Malachi 3:1...and elsewhere; the same is meant by ‘the tabernacle.’ With this difference, that by ‘the temple’ is meant the Lord’s Divine Human as to the Divine truth or the Divine wisdom, and by ‘the tabernacle’ is meant the Lord’s Divine Human as to the Divine good or the Divine love. Hence it follows, that by ‘behold the tabernacle of God is with men,’ is meant that the Lord will now be present with men in His Divine Human.”

TCR 92

- “The Lord also called Himself ‘one sent by the Father,’ for the reason that sent and angel have the same meaning, angel meaning in the original one sent. For it is said...in Malachi 3:1...‘And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in.’”

AE 220 [3]

- “In Malachi...3:1...Here also ‘temple’ means the Lord’s Divine Human; for the Lord’s coming is here treated of, therefore ‘coming to His temple’ signifies to His Human.”

AE 701 [3]

- “In Malachi...3:1...the Lord’s coming is proclaimed. The Lord is called ‘Lord’ from Divine good, and ‘the angel of the covenant’ from Divine truth...From this it can be seen that ‘covenant,’ in reference to the Lord, means either Himself or the union of His Divine with the Human in Him, and in reference to those who are in heaven and in the church it means conjunction with Him through the Divine that proceeds from Him.”

AC 666

- “That a ‘covenant’ signifies nothing else than regeneration and the things pertaining to regeneration, is evident from various passages in the Word where the Lord Himself is called the ‘Covenant,’ because it is He alone who regenerates, and who is looked to by the regenerate man, and is the all in all of love and faith...” “In Malachi...3:1, 2...where the Lord is called the ‘Angel of the Covenant...The Sabbath is called a ‘perpetual covenant’...because it signifies the Lord Himself, and the celestial man regenerated by Him.”

AC 9303

- "...in the original tongue 'angel' means one who is sent, which is the derivation of the word; and by 'sent' is signified proceeding, as can be seen from the...following passages...Malachi 3:1..."

TCR 285

- "...'covenant' signifies conjunction...Malachi 3:1..."

TCR 688

- "It is written in Malachi...3:1, 2..."he shall prepare the way before Me' ...it is clear that John was the prophet sent to make ready the way of Jehovah God, who should descend into the world and accomplish redemption; and that he made ready that way by baptism, and by announcing the coming of the Lord; and that without such preparation all on earth would have been smitten with a curse and would have perished."

AE 242 [9]

- "In Malachi...3:1-3...these things are said of the Lord's coming. It is said that Jehovah is to send a messenger (an angel) who will prepare the way before Him; and the messenger (angel) meant is John the Baptist, as is known. 'Before Me,' or before Jehovah, means before the Lord's Divine Itself; 'the temple to which He is to come' means His Divine Human; that is also called 'the messenger (angel) of the covenant,' because through it there is a conjunction of men and angels with the Divine Itself, for covenant means conjunction. 'The silver that He shall sit refining and purifying' means truth from good; 'the sons of Levi' mean all those who are in the good of charity and in the truths of faith therefrom; it is therefore said, 'He shall purge them as gold and silver.' This is because 'gold' signifies good, and 'silver' the truth therefrom. 'Bringing to Jehovah an offering in righteousness' means worship of the Lord from the good of charity...Therefore 'to bring an offering in righteousness' signifies worship from the good of love."

AC 8159 [2]

- "The temptations of those who were of the spiritual church, which they were to undergo after the Lord came into the world, and could then from the Divine Human fight for them against the hells, are meant by these words in Malachi...3:1-4...clearly speaking of the Lord's coming; 'the sons of Levi' here denote those who are of the spiritual church, for by 'Levi' is signified charity or spiritual good...'the refiner's fire' is temptation, whereby is effected

purification, which is here meant by ‘purifying and refining them as gold and silver;’ ...”

AR 357

- “That the tribe of Levi signifies the love of truth, which is the essential love from which the church is a church, and thence intelligence, may appear from these passages...Malachi 3:1, 3...”

AE 414

- “And who is able to stand?” signifies, who shall sustain and live?...the evil...come not only into tremors from fear, but also into torments from interior conflict, consequently unless they flee away and cast themselves down they cannot live, for from fear and torment death as it were befalls them, for the presence of the Divine brings death to the evil as it brings life to the good. From this their state it is then said, ‘Who is able to stand?’ As...in Malachi...3:2...”

AE 444 [8]

- “In Malachi...3:1-4...‘the sons of Levi’ here mean all who are in the good of charity, and thence in the good of faith. This treats of the Lord who was to come; his Divine Human is what is meant by ‘His temple’ to which Jehovah the Lord was to come; that He will purify those who are in the good of charity, and thence in the good of faith, is meant by ‘He shall purify and purge the sons of Levi.’ Evidently the sons of Levi are not meant, for it is said that ‘He shall then purify and purge them’...”

AC 3875 [4]

- “They who are in spiritual love are...called the ‘sons of Levi,’ as in Malachi...3:2, 3...”

Derived Doctrine

With more than twenty-five direct quotes, you would imagine that there would be no need for derived doctrine. This is true. We have a wonderful array of passages explaining the spiritual sense of *Malachi 3:1-3*. As I look over all of the passages, I find only one correspondence that needs to be expanded in our resources. That is the correspondence of “soap.”

- “Soap” is described in *AE 475 [11]*: “...if one attempts to purify himself by his own efforts, although by means of truths and goods that are or that appear to be genuine, he will yet lead himself into falsities; ‘to wash oneself’ means to

- purify oneself; ‘waters of snow’ mean truths that are or that appear to be genuine; **‘soap’ means the good from which they come...’**
- *Jeremiah 2:22* also refers to soap: “For though you wash yourself with lye, and use much soap, yet your iniquity is marked before Me,’ says the Lord God.”
 - From these sources, we note that “soap” signifies spiritual washing that uses good from truth to remove falsities. But it is not a thorough washing process because it is done apart from the Lord.

Putting It All Together

Just imagine for the moment that you are living during the time of Malachi’s prophecy. You have survived a period of brutal captivity, and you are now trying to make a new life for yourself and your family in Israel. Your love for the Lord is sincere. You attend services regularly. But you feel weighted down with what is going on in the temple. The priests and elders have overlaid the Word of the Lord with so many traditions it’s hard to feel uplifted. It’s hard to comply with the confusing rituals, rites, and regulations of the priesthood. In fact, your feeling is that worship is more for the priests and their comfort than it is to preach the good and truth of the Lord. Things are going on in the temple that look and sound like idolatry. Divorce and marriage to foreign wives is occurring all around you, and few seem worried. You wonder, “What happened to the days when we were unified in our opposition to certain disorders?”

A messenger named Malachi appears and points to things you sensed and worried about. He talks of the demise of the church and its priesthood. He sounds a warning to change and foster a spirit of obedience. Then, half-way through his oracle, he mentions the coming of the Messiah. Oh, how you have longed for that day!

Certain of his words just burn within your heart. “I am sending My messenger to prepare the way. He will suddenly appear in the temple.” The messenger announces that there will be delight and joy at His arrival. He is coming. “Who will endure the day of His coming and who can stand when He appears?”

The messenger tells all that the Messiah will come and correct the errors of the temple. He will educate all in the truths of the Law. This will mean being washed. It will mean purification of the gold and silver and the sons of Levi. All of this will happen, he says, so that an offering of righteousness may be made to the Lord.

Now let’s bring ourselves to the present again. We, as members of the New Church, need to hold and celebrate our sense of joy at the Lord’s second coming. He has promised us a new conjunction. That conjunction is called a holy “perpetual covenant” of the Lord. The opening of the Word with its spiritual sense is a joy and a hope for our church. Evil will not be able to endure what is opened by the Lord. Hell trembles and quakes and falls down at the mention of the Lord’s name. “Who can

endure the day of His coming and stand when He appears?" Not the evil. But His promise is that the good will be uplifted and encouraged. Why will the Lord enter into a covenant with His New Church? He does so for the sake of love, of friendship, of consolation and conjunction (*AR* 529).

Traditions have value. Habits have value. But if either of these overlay the Word of the Lord and make His Word of no importance, then we need to wash with the soap of good from truth. If issues of disorder are so blurred that we feel alone and out of step with the popular opinions of the world, we need to side with the truth of the Lord. Searching His Word is essential. Giving the Lord our obedience is a must. Nothing in this world will impede the coming of the Lord's New Church. Can we be inspired with the words of the Messenger? Can we make the worship of our heart "an offering in righteousness"?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 3:1-3*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Did the "Pulling It all Together" section "pump you up"? It did it for me. We often carry around with us a feeling of smallness. What impact can we have on the world? When will the New Church really come to fruition? On and on we go with a sense of our frailty. It's time to think positively. Where are you in this message? To be small in the hands of the Lord is good. Look at some of the most momentous moments in the Word. The Lord selected a few to win over the larger evil. With God, all things are possible. He can save by many or by few.
- Did you catch the "who can stand" message? Hell can't stand. Those who follow the Lord will stand before Him with a loyalty and hope for eternity.
- Spiritual washing is important. Our lesson reminds us that if we try to do it alone, we can use lye and lots of scrubbing, but it will be of no use unless the Lord is involved.
- There are so many points to be discussed in this section. I will trust that you will have lots to talk about and discuss. Let your reflection carry you into the realm of the spiritual world where angels behold the face of our Father and where they love to share the spiritual sense of the Word.

MALACHI 3:4

"Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to the Lord, as in the days of old, as in former years."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “The church, doctrine and worship will then be as they had been among the ancients.”

AC 8159 [2]

- In Malachi 3:4 “...‘the meat-offering which they shall bring to Jehovah’ is faith and charity; ‘the days of eternity’ and ‘the former years’ denote the ancient churches, and the states of worship of the Lord at that time.”

AC 2906 [6]

- In Malachi 3:4 “...where the advent of the Lord is treated of...the ‘days of an age’ denote the Most Ancient Church; ‘ancient years,’ the Ancient Church; the ‘offering of Judah,’ worship from celestial love; and the ‘offering of Jerusalem,’ worship from spiritual love; that Judah is not meant here, nor Jerusalem, is plain.”

AC 3881 [8]

- “In Malachi...3:4...where the subject treated of is manifestly the Lord’s advent. It is known that the meat-offering of Judah and Jerusalem was not then pleasant; but that worship from love was pleasant, which is the ‘meat-offering of Judah;’ and worship from faith derived from love, which is the ‘meat-offering of Jerusalem.’”

AC 6280 [7]

- “In Malachi...3:4...the subject treated of is His coming; the ‘offering of Judah and Jerusalem being then sweet to Jehovah’ signifies that worship from love and faith in Him will then be sweet. That by ‘Judah’ here is not meant Judah, nor by ‘Jerusalem’ Jerusalem, is clearly evident; for neither then nor afterward was the offering of Judah and Jerusalem sweet. That the ‘days of eternity’ are the states of the Most Ancient Church, which was celestial; and that the ‘former years’ are the states of the Ancient Church, which was spiritual...”

AR 350

- “That by ‘Judah’...is signified the celestial kingdom and its love, which is love to the Lord, is evident from these passages...” *Malachi 3:1-4* is cited.

AE 433 [12]

- “In Malachi...3:4...‘The offering of Judah and Jerusalem shall be agreeable unto Jehovah’ signifies that then there will be acceptable worship from the good of love to the Lord; ‘the offering of Judah’ signifying such worship; it is evident that the worship of the Jewish nation and of Jerusalem was not acceptable, for they did not acknowledge the Lord, but utterly rejected Him; ‘according to the days of an age, and according to former years,’ signifies according to the worship in the ancient churches; the Most Ancient, that was before the flood, and was in love to the Lord, is signified by ‘the days of an age,’ or of eternity, and the Ancient Church, that was after the flood, and was a spiritual church, is signified by ‘former years.’”

AC 349 [2]

- “That by ‘offerings’ in general is meant worship, is evident in the Prophets throughout, as in Malachi...3:2, 3, 4...An ‘offering in righteousness’ is an internal offering, which the ‘sons of Levi,’ that is holy worshipers, will offer. The ‘days of eternity,’ signify the Most Ancient Church, and the ‘ancient years,’ the Ancient Church.”

Doctrine of the Lord 64

- This is a long number regarding the meaning of “Jerusalem.” This number cites *Malachi 3:1, 4* as a representative example as to why “Jerusalem” means the church in respect to worship and as to doctrine. This number notes that “the Lord was present in Jerusalem, and taught in its temple, and afterwards glorified His Human there.”

AR 880

- This number cites *Malachi 3:2, 4* along with many other passages from the prophets regarding the meaning of “Jerusalem.” The number is long and does not give scriptural exposition of passages from *Malachi*, so it has not been quoted here.

Brief Exposition 100

- This passage cites *Malachi 3:1, 4* regarding the meaning of “Jerusalem.” The number is quite long and doesn’t give us the spiritual exposition of these verses from *Malachi*.

TCR 782

- The meaning of “Jerusalem” is treated of in a lengthy series of sections. *Malachi 3:1, 4* is cited in the context of verifying the meaning of “Jerusalem” as stated in the literal sense.

AC 9293 [6]

- “In Malachi...3:3, 4...by ‘a gift offered to Jehovah’ is signified the good of love and of faith, therefore it is said that ‘they may bring to Jehovah a gift in righteousness,’ and that ‘then it will be sweet to Jehovah’...‘Judah’ denotes the good of celestial love, thus those who are in this good...”

AC 10248 [10]

- “...‘according to the days of the generation of ages’ denotes according to the states of love and faith in the Ancient Church.” *Malachi 3:4* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

There is no need for us to use derived doctrine. Our lessons from the Writings are quite full and clear.

Putting It All Together

Have you noticed we are no longer involved in a dialogue between the Lord and the priests? There is instead a positive message about the Lord’s advent and what positive spiritual things will come to His church. The Lord is speaking words of truth and certainty. Debate and insolence have no part in this discourse. Isn’t it much more fulfilling to listen to what the Lord’s advent will do for the church?

There will be a return to worship services filled with love and wisdom. They will be the culmination of the love and wisdom that filled the Most Ancient Church and the Ancient Church. What does that mean? The Most Ancient Church worshiped the Lord in the Divine Human. He walked among them, giving them inspiration drawn from His Celestial Love. He walked and talked with them. If they had any questions, He spoke to them directly. They saw the Lord in some angelic form. He was not invisible to them.

The Ancient Church saw the Lord in the Divine Representatives of the world. The trees, the mountains, the brooks, the streams, and the oceans—all of nature—opened their minds to see the wisdom of the Lord. And the Ancient Church loved that wisdom. The Lord was not invisible to them. He was visible through Divine Representatives.

The Ancient Churches, in their prime, did not have their worship of the Lord overlaid with self-serving rules. Profit and self-love were not a hindrance to worship. The offerings were meal-offerings of righteousness. Both churches saw the Lord. He was not invisible. The promise of the New Church carries with it the message that what was “invisible” will be made “visible” again. Like the Ancients, we will see the Lord as the Divine Human, and there will be an everlasting conjunction of life and peace with Him.

Can you feel the uplifting words of the messenger sent by the Lord? Probably, those who heard it in the days of Malachi were anxious. “When, O Lord, will this happen? We have waited many, many years. Why do You tarry? Come quickly with cleansing of the temple and our souls!”

The answer as given in the Word is: “Wait patiently for the Lord.” “Be thou strong and courageous.” It will happen in the fullness of times. We need to trust and rely on the Lord as to the fulfillment of the promise. In the meantime, we can read His Word and trust in the providential leading of His wisdom. Why? Because the words and promises, like those of Malachi and the Writings, tell us:

“The church, doctrine and worship will then be as they had been among the ancients.”(P&P)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 3:4*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Does it feel good to be away from the negative debate between the people and the Lord?
- There is a comfort when the Lord is in charge. He steadies the course. He gives a view from eternity. But for some reason, we, at times, resist giving in to His providence. Why? Is it just our proprium, or is it a fear of letting go? We do get comfortable with our ways. Change is not easy for us.
- Have you ever had a celestial experience? What is meant by that is: have you ever “sensed” that something was right or wrong? You couldn’t speak words to explain why you felt this or that. It just was a powerful feeling. Not all of these experiences are celestial, but when we look back and see that one of these feelings was correct, we rejoice in the fact that we listened.
- Have you ever looked at the magnificent sunset or a view from the mountain and felt the presence of the Lord? Do you, in the quietness of a walk through nature, think about the correspondence of things? If you do, what insights did you get? If you don’t, what keeps you from trying to do so?

- Do you ask the Lord to hurry with His New Church? Do you find your heart aching for its arrival?
- In the fullness of times, the Lord says, it will happen. Maybe we need to concentrate on the job of preparing the way of the Lord.
- The passage from *Malachi* has a message we might reflect on: "Then the offering...will be pleasant to the Lord..." I like the wording. It doesn't emphasize the offering being pleasant for us, or for other people. It will be **"pleasant to the Lord."**

MALACHI 3:5-6

"And I will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness against sorcerers, against adulterers, against perjurors, against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans, and against those who turn away an alien—because they do not fear Me,' says the Lord of hosts. 'For I am the Lord, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.'"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "The Lord will then execute judgment upon all who have adulterated and destroyed the truths of the church."

AC 4844 [5-9]

- "...by 'widows' in the good sense are signified those who are in truth without good, but still desire to be led by good...by the 'sojourner' are signified those who wish to be instructed in the truths of faith...by the 'orphan' are signified those who are in good without truth and desire to be led to good by means of truth..." *Malachi 3:5* is cited.

AC 7297

- "By 'sorcerers' and 'enchantments,' when mentioned in the Word, is signified the art of presenting falsities so that they appear as truths, and of presenting truths so they appear as falsities, which is especially done by means of fallacies..." *Malachi 3:5* is cited.

AR 764

- "By 'a widow' in the Word is meant one who is without protection, for by 'a widow' in the spiritual sense is signified one who is in good and not in truth. For by 'a man' is signified truth, and by 'his wife,' good; hence by 'a widow,'

good without truth is signified, and good without truth is without protection; for truth protects good..." *Malachi 3:5* is cited.

AE 608 [7]

- "As the ancients were allowed to swear by Jehovah God, it follows that it was an enormous evil to swear falsely or to swear to a lie, as is evident from these passages. In Malachi...3:5..."

AE 695 [20]

- "In Malachi...3:5...Hired servants were forbidden to eat of the Passover and of things sanctified because they represented those that are natural and not spiritual, and the spiritual are of the church, but not so the natural...Nevertheless, as those signified by 'hired servants' still do good, although not from a spiritual affection but from a natural affection, which is obedience, and then think of heaven as a reward, they are mentioned with the 'poor,' the 'needy,' the 'sojourners,' 'the fatherless,' and 'the widows,' because they are in spiritual poverty; for genuine truths are obscure to them, because light from heaven does not flow in through their spiritual man into the natural..."

Derived Doctrine

"And I will come near you for judgment..."

- To come "near" signifies the perpetual conjunction" of love (*AC 5911*). Why would the Lord draw "near us" with His love when judgment takes place? *AC 8159 [3]* gives us a powerful answer: "the hells fight against man, and the Lord [fights] for man; to every falsity the hells inject, there is an answer from the Divine." So judgment requires that the Lord be perpetually "near us" to keep all things balanced. The good and the evil will get a fair hearing in the time of judgment because love brings a fair resolution to each judgment.
- *AC 2335* describes "judgment" as twofold. "The faithful are judged from good, but the unfaithful from truth." "The Lord never judges any one except from good...Mercy itself and good itself can never condemn any one; but it is the man who condemns himself, because he rejects good."

"...I will be a swift witness against sorcerers, against adulterers, against perjurors..."

- "Swiftness" in the Word has reference "to intelligence, signifying the affection of truth." (*AE 281 [7]*)
- "Swiftness," in the negative sense, refers to "their avidity for reasoning against truths and destroying them, and pleasure in it...‘swiftness’ and ‘haste’ in the Word signify being stirred by affection and lust..." (*AE 281 [10]*)

- “Sorcerers” signify the abuse of divine order. They represent the perversion of law by practicing cunning and deceit (*AC* 7296).
- “Adulterers” signify those who deny the Lord and profane the Word (*Doctrine of Sacred Scriptures* 67).
- “Perjurors” (liars) signify those who “scrutinize those things which are called goods and truths...which nevertheless are evils and falsities.” (*AR* 79) In other words, liars give the impression that they seek good and truth, but their lives are otherwise—they love falsity and evil.

“Against those who exploit wage earners...”

- We have no direct teaching on the meaning of these words. But a story in the Word comes to mind that might illustrate the issue. Was Laban’s deceit of Jacob an example of the misuse of a wage earner? Laban used Jacob’s love for Rachel to trick him into marrying Leah before winning the hand of Rachel. Do the hells trick people into believing they can win, or merit, heaven through “good works” apart from repentance and regeneration? What would you call using the “good intentions” of others for personal gain? Isn’t this a form of exploiting “wage earners”?
- This now brings us to our consideration of the Lord as the swift “witness.” The Lord, in the Word, is called “the faithful and true witness.” “Witness” signifies the Lord in respect to the Divine truth and the church (*AE* 228). The Lord will not twist or misuse truth. He is able to see clearly intentions, motives, and affections. What might appear to us to be a paradox, an oxymoron, a black hole, an unexplainable mystery, is to the Lord clear, lucid, and knowable. He is the light of heaven. There is no darkness in His presence. He views the totality of the universe. Nothing escapes His notice. This true and faithful witness of heaven will show us, from beginning to end, the motives, intentions, and desires of our hearts. There is no misreading or projection in the Lord’s report to us of the core of our feelings and choices. Our “ruling loves” will unfold before Him with accuracy and impartiality. Is this a scary thought? Or is it a truth that brings a sense of comfort? Maybe we feel a sense of both fear and comfort.

“...widows and orphans, and against those who turn away an alien—because they do not fear Me...”

- “Widows and orphans” signify those who are in good and not truth and desire to be instructed in the truths of faith. What then is the meaning of turning away an alien, foreigner, or stranger? *AC* 10287 has sixteen subsections dedicated to explaining why the Lord warned Israel to keep strangers out of the church, their homes, their lives and marriages. Strangers (foreigners) signified the evils of falsity and profanations of all kinds. Why then would the Lord come swiftly in judgment against Israel for turning aliens away? Weren’t they doing what He had told them to do?

- As a representative church of the Lord, what was to be Israel's use in the world? Isolationism? Jonah believed he was not to preach repentance to Nineveh. What happened to him? When he finally did go to those strangers of Nineveh, what happened to them upon hearing the Word of the Lord?
Repentance occurred in spite of Jonah's dislike of his mission. The point here is that we need a goal of protection and profession to all who desire instruction. We need to protect against and shun the falsities of profanation from aliens, **and** we need to spread the Word of the Lord to areas of alien falsity and profanation. Israel wanted exclusivity of the Word. They had a nationalistic pride that they were the favored people of the Lord. Aliens, strangers, and foreigners were anathema to them. Love (fear) of the Lord goes beyond a favored nation. The New Church will be inclusive. It is to become the crown of all churches.

"...says the Lord of hosts."

- Please note the repetition of this phrase. Why? Because it signifies the Lord's zeal to save all and to redeem His church.

"For I am the Lord, I do not change..."

- Is there any question about the spiritual meaning of these words? The Lord is the same today as He was in the past and as He will be in the future. He does not have alternating states. His nature is not capricious. He doesn't say one thing but mean another thing. As finite beings, this is hard for us to grasp in its totality because of our fickle nature. But here are the words of the Lord: "I am the Lord, I do not change..."

"...therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob."

- "Consumed" signifies the last time of the church when there is no longer any good left (*AC 1857*).
- "Sons" signify truths as they were in the Ancient Church, which had genuine truths (*AE 724 [11]*).
- "Jacob" signifies various things. In the beginning, Jacob represented the Lord's natural as to truth, in the progress, the Lord' natural as to the good of truth, and in the end the Lord as to good (*AC 4538*). Jacob represents the doctrine of the church (*AR 137*). In essence, the Lord is announcing that in spite of what had been done to the church by evil and falsity, the "remnant" of good and truth was still alive and present because of Him.

Putting It All Together

The Lord's prophecy informed Israel of a coming judgment. What issues were significant enough to have the Lord send Malachi as His angel messenger?

Our text focuses the reader's attention on sorcerers, adulterers, perjurers, exploiters, those who ignored widows and orphans and extended harsh treatment to aliens (strangers). In reality, the Lord was exposing the lack of respect for His Word and the spiritual effects it was having on the minds and hearts of the people. Israel just wasn't giving the Word serious attention. They were not zealously studying the Word and were not feeding the hungry souls with eternal truths.

How vital is the Word for us? Let's look at two passages that answer the question with simplicity and directness:

- *AC 1361* states that the Word "was established...that heaven might be joined in some measure to the earth."
- *AC 1775* states that "it has been necessary that of the Lord's Divine Providence some revelation should come into existence, for a revelation or Word is the general recipient vessel of spiritual and celestial things, **thus conjoining heaven and earth; and that without it they would have been disjoined, and the human race would have perished.** And besides it is necessary that there should be heavenly truths somewhere, by which man may be instructed, **because he was born for heavenly things, and, after the life of the body, ought to come among those who are heavenly; for the truths of faith are the laws of order in the kingdom in which he is to live forever.**" (*emphasis added*)

How much of an idea do we have regarding the amazing power of the Word and what our lives would be like without the Word? The connection of heaven and earth, through the Word, is essential. Without the Word, "disjunction" would occur. Our spiritual life is vitally tied to the Word. We were born for heavenly things. That being a truth from the Lord is quite a powerful point. We must have the Word to survive spiritually.

So let's look at and reflect on the examples given by Malachi and question the ways we need to heed the words of the Lord and amend our lives. Here is the list:

- Sorcery: the clever art of presenting falsities so they appear as truths.
- Adultery: unfaithfulness to the good and truth of the Word.
- Perjury: giving lip service to the Word with the mouth but denying, within the heart, that the Word reigns.
- Exploiting: using the Word for one's own ends to justify falsity.
- Widows: the affection longs to be instructed in the truths of faith. The affection of the widow lacks its helpmate—truth.
- Orphans: innocence is unable to be cared for by father (truths) and mother (affections).
- Strangers or aliens: carrying the Word to the external church (outsiders) for those who lack a spiritual conjunction but long for it.

- Lack of fear of the Lord: Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Loving the Lord and not wishing to do anything that would harm Him is essential.

We need to reverently hold the Word in great esteem; searching it for the connections between heaven and earth; studying it because we know that this is what we will read to eternity; the Word has the laws of order that will make up our eternity. Ignoring the Word is serious. The rippled effect of spiritual ignorance is incalculable.

The love the Lord has for us will press to touch us. The Word is for the amendment of our mind and heart. The Word is for the building up of His Church. If we remain aloof and violate good and truth, these words indicate what will happen to those of a hard heart:

“The Lord will then execute judgment upon all who have adulterated and destroyed the truths of the church.” (*P&P*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 3:5-6*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Can you evaluate what your loyalty is to the Word?
- Next, can you estimate how well you are dealing with sorcery?
- How about the adulteration of the Word?
- Have you experienced events in which perjury of the Word might have occurred?
- Are you able to identify with the widow or orphan state?
- Can you think of a time when you exploited the “wage earner” of the mind?
- What is your view or feeling about the stranger in the external church?
- The Word teaches that fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Fear means love, in this context. Do you have a healthy fear of the Lord? An unhealthy fear is not what the Lord seeks. He wants us loving Him so much that we don’t want to do anything that would do harm to Him and His Word. Is your love healthy or unhealthy?
- Use your imagination; what kind of reception do you think Malachi got from the people when he spoke these words of judgment? He was the last of the 12 Minor Prophets. The people had heard things like this from other prophets. Do you think they might have built up a feeling of immunity to the judgment warnings?

- The feeling of spiritual immunity is a kind of “numbing out” state. We hear the words, we sing the words, we speak the words, but not much is going on in our affections. What is the best way to break out of the immunity state?

MALACHI 3:7

“Yet from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you,’ says the Lord of hosts. But you said, ‘In what way shall we return?’”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “They have done this from the beginning, and do not desist from it...”

Derived Doctrine

“Yet from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them.”

- Before we look at derived doctrine, let’s review some of the ways Israel went away from the Lord’s ordinances:
 - The worship of the golden calf.
 - Israel’s bitter complaining about the lack of water.
 - Their complaints about the manna and quail.
 - Their wish to go back to Egypt.
 - The rebellious nature of their hearts, as reflected by the Lord calling Israel a stiff-necked people.
 - The desire to have a king like all other nations, a desire that showed they had rejected the Lord as their King.
 - Every man doing that which was right in his own eyes.
 - The mistakes of Saul and David.
- “Days” signify the successive state of regeneration (*AC 6*).
- “Fathers” in this instance seem to reflect that which is negative. Therefore, it appears that the spiritual sense is drawing our attention to the rebellious nature of inherited **tendencies** toward evils and falsities.
- “Ordinances” are all things of the Word in general such as precepts, statutes, and laws that provide a framework for order (*AC 3382*). Any departure from the commands and “ordinances” of the Word “turns the Word into a wilderness.” (*AC 3900*)

"Return to Me, and I will return to you..."

- Let's consider the meaning of this verse in the context of an important universal law: There is a "**universal law** that influx adjusts itself according to efflux, and if efflux is checked influx is checked. Through the internal man there is an influx of good and truth from the Lord, and through the external there must be efflux, namely into the life...in the exercise of charity. **When there is this efflux then there is continual influx from heaven...through heaven from the Lord;** whereas if there is no efflux, but **resistance** in the external or natural man...it follows from the universal law...that the **influx adjusts itself to the efflux**, consequently [if] the influx of good draws back...influx is closed." (*AC 5828, emphasis added*)

"...says the Lord of hosts."

- Is there a need to restate the meaning of this phrase? We have given the meaning often. Check your memory regarding the intent of the Lord.

"But you said, 'In what way shall we return?'"

- We are **back to the rebuttals** of the people of Israel. Do the questions signal a return to the negative doubt state? What part of "Return to Me" do they not understand? It is almost as if they felt put off by the Lord's audacity to question their loyalty to Him and their worship of Him.
- Spiritual affirmativeness (sanity) would have inspired a different attitude; the people would have asked the Lord to show them how they needed to change.

Putting It All Together

The long tradition of being rebellious and stiff-necked had not worked well for Israel. Their ignoring of the Lord's ordinances carried the Word into a wilderness state. Now it was time to change their ways. Israel needed to give up on their "traditions" and focus on the ways of the Lord.

To help Israel find a new direction, the Lord offered a "universal law" as the framework for spiritual reformation. "Return to Me and I will return to you." *AC 5828* gives us the words "influx" and "efflux." Essentially, we are taught that influx is proportional to efflux. If the heart gives little to the Lord, then little comes into the heart. The Lord doesn't limit our influx—we set the adjusting controls. "Return to Me and I will return to you" is an important spiritual "ordinance" to know and to love. Forget all of the other traditions we have followed from our "fathers." Rebellious ways lead the Word into a wilderness state. Now it is time for new beginnings. *Isaiah 35:1* offers a picture of what the Lord's influx can do for our wilderness states:

"The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them,
and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;
It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 3:7*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- When we discuss "inherited tendencies toward evil," we must also be ready to talk about "inherited tendencies toward good." Both are passed on to us by our fathers. The presence of the good tendencies helps us pull out of rebellious states. Do we spend enough time thinking of both, or do you think we spend too much time focusing on the negative tendencies?
- It seems prudent to have as a rule of thumb that we will not discuss the evil tendencies without also discussing the good tendencies. Do you think this might be a guideline the church could follow more often?
- Did you notice the return of the negative questions from Israel? Any reaction to the presumptuous arrogance of the people? How might they have asked positive questions?
- Please read *AC 5828* again. How many insights are you able to pull forth from this number? There are many. This is a great universal law to commit to memory.
- "Return to Me and I will return to you" is a positive message. We need to keep it positive because the hells will surely try to paint a negative picture of the process.
- Israel didn't listen to the invitation of the Lord, as we will see in the next verses. How can we learn from their resistance and adjust and change our directions?
- *P&P* records for us a sad summary: "They have done this from the beginning, and do not desist from it..." We need to commit ourselves to the rewriting of this spiritual legacy: "They did this from the beginning, **and now desist from it...**"

MALACHI 3:8-9

"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...nor do they desist from adulteration, therefore this will bring about their ruin."

Derived Doctrine

"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me!"

- When we consider the meaning of the word "rob," we must carry with our thoughts the words "plunder," "steal," and "theft."
- "Rob" signifies priests who teach but do not lead to the life of good (*AC 10794*). "Rob" signifies the profanation of the church and of worship (*AE 325 [10]*). "Rob" signifies the evil of life validated by the twisting of doctrine in the church (*AE 410 [8]*).
- Is it right that "man" robs the Divine? We know the answer to this question.
- "Yet you have robbed Me!" The priesthood and the church taught for doctrine the commandments of people and made the Word of no importance. This was a serious theft of spiritual goods. The blind were leading the blind, and both were falling into the pits of ignorance.

"But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?'"

- *Isaiah 55:8-9* reminds us of our limitations: "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts higher than your thoughts.'"
- Given this as a truth, why couldn't Israel humble itself to ask for forgiveness and the leadership to correct their failings? Apparently, their robberies were not a concern to them and they intended to follow their own prudence.

"In tithes and offerings."

- "Tithes" signify "the goods and truths which are stored up by the Lord in man's interiors, and which goods are called 'remains'..." (*AC 3740*)
- "Offerings" signify worship grounded in charity (*AC 350*).

"You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation."

- The Lord is not the one putting a curse on Israel. The curse occurs when the sensuous yearnings of this world avert themselves from the celestial (*AC 245*). To be "cursed with a curse" seems to signify what is presented in *AC 378*, where a curse is defined as referring to schisms. Being cursed with a

- curse seems to speak of a schism within a schism working to turn away from the order of the Lord.
- “Even this whole nation” denotes the enormity of the spiritual problem.

Putting It All Together

The meaning of this passage is clear. The church and its priesthood were not concerned about the good and truth of the Word. Nor were they concerned about the souls of the people. Status and man-made rules were of greater importance to them. The New Testament shows us that the Lord saw the same condition in the Scribes and Pharisees. He remarked how they loved to be seen. He noticed how they sought to take the higher seats in church and at public events. They made every effort to distance themselves from the laity. Learned in the laws, they used their knowledge to court and favor their own riches. They feigned piety with mourning, sackcloth, and ashes. But their hearts were not on repentance and obedience. Robbery, fraud, stealing, and plunder came from their ministrations in the sanctuary of the Lord.

When the Lord called these things to the attention of Israel, the people acted as if they did not know what He was referring to. The schisms of disunity brought curse upon curse to the people and the church. Is it any wonder that the collective conscience of the people saw no wrong in what they were doing? The words “How have we robbed You?” are symptomatic of the deeper problems within.

The answer from the Lord was couched in the words of “tithes and offerings.” Tithes signify remains. These forms of innocence, guarded and protected by the Lord, were not being appreciated nor encouraged to come into worship and charity. Deceit and hatred abounded, filling the minds of the people so that there was no “room for the Lord” in the goods and truths of the offerings.

P&P sums up the results of their opposition with these words: They did not “desist from adulteration; therefore this will bring about their ruin.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 3:8-9*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Do we have customs and man-made rules in the church today that seem to supersede the Word?
- Is there the influence of fame, fortune, and prestige present in the church?

- If you are thinking of the church as a building, try expanding your idea to that which we carry around with us all the time. This internal church has a priest and values that influence our thinking and choices. Does this give us a different perspective on these questions?
- Did the passage about being cursed with a curse (schism upon schism) bring any examples of real-life situations to mind?

MALACHI 3:10-12

“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,’ says the Lord of hosts; ‘and all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land,’ says the Lord of hosts.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “If they had lived according to the statutes, they would have been in the good of the church.”

AC 576 [3]

- “Hence it appears also that ‘tenths’ represent remains. And so in Malachi...3:10...‘that there may be booty in My house,’ signifies remains in the internal man, which are compared to ‘booty,’ because they are insinuated as by stealth among so many evils and falsities; and it is by these remains that all blessing comes. That all man’s charity comes by the remains which are in the internal man, was also represented in the Jewish Church by this statue: that when they had made an end of tithing all the tithes, they should give to the Levite, to the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow...”

AC 680 [5]

- “...in Malachi...3:10...‘tithes’ denote remains.”

AC 9408 [3]

- *Malachi 3:10* is cited with this explanation: ‘In these passages, and in many others, by ‘the heavens’ are signified the angelic heavens; and as the Lord’s heaven on earth is the church, by ‘heaven’ is also signified the church...”

AR 101

- “As ‘ten’ signify what is full, they also signify much and many...for by this was signified that thus all they had was from Jehovah, and was sanctified (see Malachi 3:10).”

AE 675 [19]

- “That the ‘tenth’ signified a blessing in all things, thus that every thing was holy and blessed, is evident in Malachi...3:10...‘To open the windows and pour out a blessing’ signifies the inflowing Divine from which is intelligence and life eternal; the like as is signified by ‘rain’...and this also is properly meant by the ‘blessings’ that would be given if the tithes were brought; so ‘tithes’ here signify that every thing was thus blest.”

AC 5113 [9]

- “In Malachi...3:11...the ‘vine’ denotes the intellectual part; the vine is said ‘not to be bereaved’ when the intellectual part is not deprived of the truths and goods of faith; on the other hand, it is said to be ‘empty’ when there are falsities therein and consequent evils...”

AC 566 [4]

- “In Malachi...3:11, 12...where ‘land’ denotes the containant, and therefore it plainly denotes man, who is called ‘land’ when ‘ground’ denotes the church, or doctrine.”

AC 9325 [5]

- “In Malachi...3:11, 12...by ‘the vine in the field not miscarrying’ is signified that the truths and goods of faith with those who are in the church shall proceed in their order; for ‘the vine’ denotes the truth and good of the spiritual church...and ‘the field’ denotes the church...‘A well-pleasing land’ denotes a church that is pleasing to the Lord; for everyone within the church who has been regenerated through the truth and good is a church; which shows what is meant by ‘ye shall be a well-pleasing land.’”

AE 304 [39]

- “In Malachi...3:11, 12...These things are said of those with whom is the church; and because ‘the fruit of the ground,’ and ‘the vine in the field,’ signify the goods and truths of the church (‘fruit’ goods, and ‘the vine’ its truths), therefore they are called ‘a land of good pleasure.’”

AC 1066 [2]

- “That by ‘earth’ or ‘land’ is signified man, may be seen in Malachi...3:12...”

AC 9334

- “A regenerate man is called ‘a land’...in Malachi...3:12...”

AR 285

- “...by ‘earth’ here and elsewhere is meant the Lord’s church in the heavens and on earth...It is important that it be shown from the Word that the earth signifies the church...this may be seen from the following passages...Malachi 3:1...”

Derived Doctrine

“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be food in My house...”

- “Bring” signifies to be conjoined (AC 5543). “Bring” indicates some kind of introduction or offering (AC 5645).
- A “storehouse” signifies “the first state of the man who is being regenerated, or in whom truth is being conjoined with good...and in its storehouse called the memory, there are amassed the doctrinal things...” (AC 3316 [2]) A storehouse signifies things stored up in the memory (AE 427 [4]). AE 790 [5] relates that the spiritual mind has a storehouse from which it draws supplies.
- “Food” signifies spiritual and celestial nourishment, which is faith in the Lord (AC 680 [4]).
- “My house” signifies the Lord’s house (kingdom) in the ultimate of order (AC 3739).

“...and try Me now in this,’ says the Lord of hosts...”

- To “try” means to test or to make a trial. “Try” means to settle by a test so as to come to some conclusion. “Try Me now” seems to indicate that the Lord saw that the state of humanity was such that “now” (and not later) was the moment to take action.
- “...says the Lord of hosts” signifies the zeal of the Lord to save all people and the church.

“...If I will not open for you the windows of heaven...”

- “Windows” signifies the thorough investigation of truth (*AE 282 [5]*). *AE 675 [19]* teaches that “to open the windows of heaven” signifies the Divine inflowing from which comes intelligence and eternal life.

“...and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.”

- So that we may understand what “pour out” represents, we need to note the various kinds of “pouring out” mentioned in the literal sense. The Lord says He will “pour out” His Spirit; He promised to “pour out” water upon the dry desert; He promised to “pour out” broth for the hungry; He said He would “pour out” indignation on the evil; He said that He would “pour out” the anger of His people; He promised to “pour out” whoredom; for those who lived the life of evil, He promised to “pour out” His wrath. Now our text says that the Lord will “pour out” **“such blessing.”**
- “Blessing” signifies a wish for happiness and success (*AC 3185*). A “blessing” signifies to enrich with spiritual and celestial good (*AC 981*). A “blessing” signifies fructification and multiplication (*AC 43 and 273*).
- How much will the Lord “pour out” in His “blessing”? The literal sense gives us the answer: “There will not be room enough to receive it.” This same idea is present in the Twenty-Third Psalm, in the words “my cup runneth over...” The Lord’s wish for our happiness and success knows no limit.

“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground...”

- The word “rebuke” carries with its meaning a sense of making right or vindicating wrongs.
- A “devourer” signifies one who wants to destroy goods and truths (*AC 9348 [4]*). A “devourer” signifies the destruction of doctrine at its inception (*Revelation 12:4; AR 542*).
- The Lord promises to do this “for [our] sakes.”
- “...so that [the devourer] will not destroy the fruit of your ground...” “Fruit” signifies everything that has life from the Lord (*AC 43*). “Fruitful” signifies the increase of goods in the interior man (*AC 1018*). “Fruit of the ground” signifies the mind of each individual of the church—each one in the church is a church (*AC 872*).

“...nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field...”

- A “vine” signifies the Lord. A “vine” signifies the spiritual church in charity in which the Lord is present, and the branches are the people of the church (*AC 1069 [5]*). The “harvest of fruit” signifies the church bringing forth truth and good (*AE 374 [4]*).

- A “field” signifies the church as to good, for the church receives the seeds of good and truth (*AC* 3766). The “harvest of the field” signifies the church related to the reception and bringing forth of truth and good (*AE* 374 [4]).

“...says the Lord of hosts...”

- This phrase occurs three times in the section under study. Question: is the occurrence of this phrase correspondential? The number three corresponds to love, wisdom, and use. Is the Lord calling our attention to His zeal to save all and especially the church?

“...all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land,’ says the Lord of hosts.”

- “Blessed” represents the state of being happy, peaceful, and enriched with celestial and spiritual good. “Delightful” represents the consequent joys that come to an orderly church. Thus, the Lord is indicating to the people that others shall see their works and how the fruit of the Lord is in all that they do.
- Who says this? The Lord of hosts. He is the one who has the zeal to save the church and all who are within it.

Putting It All Together

The summary from *P&P* starts out with the word “If.” If Israel had lived according to the statutes of the Lord, they would have been in the good of the church. What good things would they enjoy “if” they complied with the Lord’s words?

- The windows of heaven would open.
- There would be a pouring out of blessings.
- So many blessings would come to them there would be no room capable of holding them all.
- The devourer, hell, would be rebuked. The church would be vindicated.
- The fruit of the ground would not be destroyed.
- The fruit of the vine in the field would yield a great crop. All nations would look at them as a blessed (happy) land. Other nations would notice their blessedness and delightfulness.

The Lord said to them, “Try Me. Give Me the opportunity to bless you. Let me show you the results of making a commitment to follow Me.” How would they get started on this blessing? By “bringing” all of their remains to the storehouse of the mind. They were to let the remains, or tithes, be food for the Lord’s House out of which the spiritual mind could draw its supplies (sustenance).

“If”: A conditional word that indicates Israel had a big decision to make. Would it be their way or the Lord’s way? Their way led to spiritual death. The Lord’s way led to eternal bliss.

We can’t leave this summary without applying the same “if” condition to our internal church. If we “try” the Lord “now,” the Lord will make us a blessing the likes of which no room can contain. Every day, in millions of ways, the Lord blesses us with manifold gifts. How can we know this is so? Because thus “says the Lord of hosts.” These oft-stated words serve as a reminder that the Lord has a Divine zeal to save His church and all who are in the church.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 3:10-12*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- The opening portion of verse 10 starts out with the command to bring tithes into the storehouse. How do we bring “remains” into the mind? Isn’t this what the Lord does for us? He alone knows where remains are. Do we need to help Him bring them to mind?
- “Try Me now” has a sense of urgency to it. Do we let the Lord show us His power? Or do we allow the hells to minimize His awesome power? Give Me a test trial and I will show you, says the Lord.
- Opening the windows has wonderful correspondences. What thoughts or images come to mind with opening windows?
- The “pouring out of blessings” is a Divine promise. Looking back over our lives, can we see any of these blessings? How about the “there will not be room enough to receive them” statement? Anything come to mind that testifies to this point?
- How have you fought against the “devourer” of fruit of the ground?
- Are you able to identify with the meaning of the vine and fruit correspondences?

MALACHI 3:13-15

“Your words have been harsh against Me,’ says the Lord, ‘Yet you say, ‘What have we spoken against You?’ You have said, ‘It is useless to serve God; what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked as mourners before the Lord of hosts? So now we call the proud blessed, for those who do wickedness are raised up; they even tempt God and go free.’”

Passages from the Writings

P&P

- “They have confirmed themselves in this, that good is of no profit and that evil does no harm, because the good and the wicked are alike prosperous.”

AE 372 [6 & 7]

- “Since in the churches before the Lord’s coming, which were representative churches, mourning represented spiritual grief of mind on account of the absence of truth and good, for they mourned when oppressed by an enemy, on the death of a father or mother, and for like things, and oppression by an enemy signified oppression by evils from hell, and father and mother signified the church in respect to good and in respect to truth, because with them these things were represented by mourning, they at such times went in black. As in...Malachi...3:14...That ‘to be made black’ signifies spiritual grief of mind...”

Derived Doctrine

“Your words have been harsh against Me,’ says the Lord...”

- “In its origin...the good of love and of charity is most gentle, consequently it is so in its advance into heaven; but when it sinks down to the hells, it becomes **harsh and severe**, because **it is turned into this** by those who are there...” (*AC 7679, emphasis added*)
- Falsities “...if applied to good...become mild, but if to evil, they become **hard [harsh]**...” (*AC 8311, emphasis added*)
- These numbers are cited so that we can picture the gentleness of the Lord’s providence being turned into harshness by hearts that are opposed to Him. The “harshness” is not representative of the Lord but of the people speaking offensively about the Lord.

“Yet you say, what have we spoken against You?”

- One would think that if the Lord, who knows all and sees all, said these things to anyone who had a sense of humility, the person would feel remorse for the misspoken words. You would think the people would want to put on a cloak of “black” to mourn the loss, or lack, of good and truth. Instead, the people of Israel took on a confrontational attitude. They questioned the Lord and doubted His assessment of their intentions. Their question “What have we spoken against You?” carries with it a sphere of hardness and disrespectful pride.

"You have said, 'It is useless to serve God; what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance and that we have walked as mourners...'"

- What constitutes a life of usefulness? Let's consider this quote from *AC 503*: "The life of love...is life while in the performance of use...in the good and truth of use: from use, by use, and according to use, is life given by the Lord; **there can be no life in what is useless, for whatever is useless is cast away.**" (*emphasis added*)
- Consider also this teaching from *AC 1100*: "It is utterly useless for a man to know many things if he does not live according to what he knows. For knowing has no other end than that the man may thereby become good. When he has become good, he has much more than one who knows innumerable things and yet is not good; for what the latter seeks by much knowledge, the former already has."
- What then are we to glean from the above quoted passages? The people of Israel, because of their cold hearts, felt it was useless to serve God. They saw no end. They saw no rewards. Keeping the ordinances of the Lord was meaningless to them. Therefore, what had no meaning to them in life was being cast way as superfluous.
- The question "What profit is it that we have kept His ordinances?" seems to indicate they felt no gain or enrichment coming to them from the Lord. "Profit" or gain has a signification of a love of the world that destroys a person's soul (*AE 750 [5]*). Gain, in a negative sense, signifies falsity from evil **perverting judgment** (*AC 8711*).
- To "walk" signifies to meditate on doctrine (*AR 137*). To "walk" signifies to live by enlightenment from the Lord (*AR 75*). Apparently, these things were not happening with Israel. The people walked in their own prudence and failed to seek the Lord, so their hearts grieved with the requirements of repentance and regeneration. Spiritual work wearied and stressed them to the point of "mourning" because the Lord did not validate their desire for power, ease, and profitability.

"So now we call the proud blessed, for those who do wickedness are raised up; they even tempt God and go free."

- Their flimsy charges against the Lord are listed: the proud are happy (blessed); the wicked are heroes among the people; the wicked "try" the Lord and get away with it. Can't we hear a "poor me" attitude? The people saw themselves wearing sackcloth with their faces darkened by ashes, and what did they get for their efforts? Nothing. So they asked, what's the point of serving the Lord? They thought, He doesn't care, nor does He punish the proud, the wicked, and their derision of His ordinances. *Psalm 73* carries the same theme, except that in this *Psalm*, a resolution occurs in the case of arrogance: "It was too painful for me—**until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end.**" (*emphasis added*)

- Israel was into complaining but not going into the sanctuary, so they never saw “the end” of the proud, the wicked, and those who tempted the Lord.

Putting It All Together

We have an expression, “Try to convince a man against his will, and he will be of the same opinion still.” Israel’s will wanted to confirm the belief that being good was not advantageous. To Israel, good and evil seemed no different in terms of profitability. They believed the evil were not being checked or punished by the Lord. They saw arrogance flaunt itself before the Lord and get away with it. So, they asked, what benefits do we get for being “faithful” to the Lord? We follow the rules and mourn before the Lord, and we see no advantages coming out of our adherence to God’s laws. “It is useless to serve the Lord.”

Don’t we hear some of this in our day? When tragedy strikes, it plays no favorites. The Lord causes his sun and rain to fall equally upon the just and the unjust. A church will burn down just as easily as a den of iniquity. No special Divine intervention for the faithful. Why isn’t it different? Couldn’t the Lord spare the good and punish the wicked? That certainly would restore some order and get worldwide respect for the Lord. With the Lord’s Divine power, He could easily bring the arrogant and evil under His control. But He doesn’t move toward such ends for a good reason: Spiritual Freedom.

Harsh words are still spoken against the Lord. False perceptions get formed in the mind and heart of those who doubt His providence. The rigidity of falsity perverts judgment. What this lesson illustrates for us is the need to put aside extreme cases and poor examples and to read about the love of the Lord and how He seeks to protect our freedom. Forced belief, forced protection, and favoritism to the faithful would not preserve freedom. A forced love removes spontaneity from us. How many times have we melted when a child, on their own, told us they loved us? The thrill of their words comes from the open response that is free and genuine. This is also what pleases the Lord the most.

Let’s be done with the harsh words. Let’s be done with the thoughts of profit (what’s in it for me?). Instead, let’s be committed to walking in the way of the Lord, taking on whatever life brings our way. We need to overcome the “poor me” syndrome. We need to believe that whatever happens to us, the Lord will bring good out of it. Life needs less comparing of who gets the most or least. The Lord’s providence specifically has us in mind in all the incidents of life. Hell sends evil to us. It is not a gift from the Lord, but He can turn the experience of evil into a joy. How can we think about this happening?

Can you recall the words of Joseph to his brothers? “...you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good...” (*Genesis 50:20*) These words of truth are like one of David’s

smooth stones that can slay the mocking giant of falsity that seeks to pervert and make our judgments harsh.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 3:13-15*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- A stubborn will can be hard to change. If our will wants to remain unchanged, how can we learn to soften its harsh stance?
- The “poor me” attitude seems to hit us the hardest when we are tired and irritable. Do you have a policy of not making important decisions when tired?
- Have you ever watched or noticed if others get more, or are blessed more, than you?
- Does it seem that the evil get away with much, and do you wish the Lord would put them in their place?
- Is the profit motive (what’s in it for me?) present in your spiritual value system?
- If health, wealth, and happiness were granted to only the faithful, would that be a good thing for us? Might health, wealth, and happiness become a means to brag and finger point at the “evil” people? If so, then a danger would exist when a proud state took over within. Our health, wealth, and happiness would immediately be taken away. Would that be a good system?
- The words “It is useless to serve the Lord” are harsh and devoid of any spiritual hope. Do we hear these words being expressed in our times? Is the assumption that the Lord is not there, not caring, and not responsive?

MALACHI 3:16-18

“Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who meditate on His name. ‘They shall be Mine,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘on the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.’ Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “It is otherwise with those who trust in the Lord: they will be blessed of the Lord when He comes. Then the difference will be seen.”

Derived Doctrine

“Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another...”

- The fear mentioned is a positive “fear.” It is a holy fear that good people experience because of longing for the Lord and also because they have a desire not to offend the Lord (*AC 3718*).
- “Speaking” signifies influx and compliance from faith and love, or living as the Lord taught in the Word (*AC 9312*). Note, too, that their compliance was shared. They did not hide or hoard their faith and love.

“...the Lord listened and heard them...”

- Listening and hearing when spoken of the Lord signify the Divine Providence bringing help. He brings help to the will of faith that inspires perception and obedience in the things of the Word. See *AC 2691, 3869*, and *AR 87*.

“...so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who meditate on His name.”

- The words “book of remembrance” are not explained in the Writings. However, we can use references to the “book of life” or “the little book” that was to be opened and eaten as a reference point. *AE 306* explains that the “book” signifies all things with man, spirit, and angel, or all the states of their life in respect to love and faith; therefore ‘to open the book’ signifies to know these things; ‘to read the book’ signifies to recognize them, and ‘to look upon the book’ signifies to explore them.”
- To “meditate” means to think, to recall, and to reflect. The “name” of the Lord signifies the essence or qualities of the Lord. In other words, those who love the Lord will think, recall, and reflect on the sum of all by which the Lord is to be worshiped. See *AC 2724*.

“They shall be Mine,’ says the Lord of hosts...”

- Do we need to search for the signification of these words? The Lord will draw near to Him those who love (fear) His name.
- “...the Lord of Hosts” signifies the zeal the Lord has to save His church and the people within the church.

"...on the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them..."

- “The day of Jehovah” signifies the Lord’s vastation in the last time and state of the church (*AC 488 [3] and 1839 [5]*).
- The meaning of “My jewels” might be best understood by reading *TCR 618*: “There are three means whereby man is regenerated, the Lord, faith, and charity. These three [are] like the most costly jewels...”
- “Sparing them” signifies the Lord’s intercession from love (*AC 2253*). “Sparing” signifies salvation (*AC 2262*). “Sparing signifies the destruction of falsities before they are confirmed (*AE 573 [11]*).

"...and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him."

- To “serve” signifies an intention to subjugate (*AC 6650 and 8169*). What seems to be at issue in these passages is the difficulty that exists with a corrupted church in serving the Lord. The corrupted church seeks to obliterate the truth. But our verse talks about a remnant of “sons” who wanted to and intended to subjugate themselves to the (father) Lord. The Lord knew of and accepted their intentions and therefore was able to spare, and correct, the actions of their ignorance.

"Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him."

- Is there any doubt as to the spiritual sense here? *AC 3428* notes the difference between those who debate with the Lord and the “simple people.” Anyone who is devoid of good is unable to have an intelligent discernment of truth and doesn’t even wish to know. Whereas simple people in whom good is present have a common-sense discernment of truth.
- Discernment shows up the righteous and the wicked, the one who serves the Lord and the one who serves not. This discernment is a gift from the Lord.

Putting It All Together

Out of a long series of negative attitudes toward the Lord there comes a bright note of optimism for the church and the future. **There are people who fear the Lord.** They communicate their love for the Lord to each other. The Lord makes note of it, and He is going to make them His jewels. Even though it has been hard to meditate on the things of the Lord, this group has an intention to serve the Lord with gladness. To encourage them, the “messenger” of the Lord tells them that the Lord is going to spare them. In the day of the vastation of the church, the Lord will help this remnant. He is going to enhance their discernment. They will know the difference between the righteous and the wicked. They will know who wants to serve the Lord and who doesn’t want to serve the Lord.

We need this message, too. We live in a time where discernment of right and wrong is called narrow-mindedness. Speaking to a disorder is viewed as not being “charitable.” One writer described our times with the word “whatever.” Users of this word seem to mean that it is preferable to let everything pass by without any concern. “Whatever,” they say, and with that, they go on about their own agenda.

The “simple,” who trust in the Lord and fear breaking His laws, have the gift of discernment. Providence will lift them up and spare them from ignorance. Those who follow the good and truth of the Lord will become “His jewels, precious jewels.” The prophecy of the Lord announces the coming of the sparkling rays of hope for the New Church. The son that serves his father will be spared from the mistakes of ignorance. The book of remembrance will have all the names of the faithful, and they will meditate on the name of the Lord.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 3:16-18*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Those who trust in the Lord will be blessed when He comes. How does trusting in the Lord carry more commitment than the “whatever” attitude?
- Discernment is a necessary tool when doing battle against evil. Fearing the Lord is the beginning of a discerning influx. What kind of fear exists within your heart and mind? Is it a fear that freezes you up, or does it free you from the tyranny of hell?
- Jewels are part of the prophecy of the New Church. How do you understand the meaning of their correspondence?
- The Lord’s zeal is to save the church and all who are within the church. Can you share some of the ways you see this happening?
- Being “spared” is a gift from the Lord’s Providence. Do we have a feeling of protection and specialness when we read these words?
- How about the book of remembrance? Do you see it in a positive light? Is it an aid to reflection? It contains all of the good and truths we have loved in our life. If we intend to do the will of the Lord, will we be remembered by the Lord?

Chapter Four

MALACHI 4:1-3

"For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,' says the Lord of hosts, 'that will leave them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this,' says the Lord of hosts."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...and the good will be saved, and then the evil will be cast into hell, because they have annulled the Word."

AC 1861 [5]

- "In Malachi...4:1...A 'burning furnace' here denotes [burning cupidities]...the 'root' denotes charity; the 'branch' truth, which shall not be left."

AC 7519 [5 & 6]

- "...the evils of cupidities are signified by 'fire,' they are also signified by a 'furnace,' which is the containant, and this frequently involves the same...Malachi 4:1...'burning as a furnace' denotes the cupidities of evil, 'setting them on fire,' a kindling with cupidities."

AC 9141 [5]

- "...in Malachi...4:1...'the day that cometh' denotes the last time of the church, when the loves of self and of the world shall reign, and shall consume all the truths and goods of the church, until nothing survives in the man's internal and external, which is signified by 'shall leave them neither root nor branch.' The 'root' of good and truth is in man's internal, and the 'branch' is in his external. From this then it is evident that 'to desolate' signifies to consume through cupidities, as is the case elsewhere in the Word."

HH 570

- "Infernal fire [and love of self], therefore, is the lust and delight that spring from these two loves...The evils flowing from these loves are contempt of

others, enmity, and hostility against those who do not favor them, envy, hatred, and revenge, and from these fierceness and cruelty; and in respect to the Divine they are denial and consequent contempt, derision, and detraction of the holy things of the church...Such is the meaning of 'fire' in the Word...some passages from which I will here quote in the way of proof...Malachi 4:1..."

AE 540 [3]

- "In Malachi...4:1...This, too, was said of the last time of the church, and the Last Judgment at that time; both these are signified by 'the day that cometh.' The 'oven' means the hell where those are who confirm themselves in falsities by doctrine, and confirm themselves in evils from earthly and corporeal loves by their life; that such on account of their own loves will perish is meant by 'all who sin presumptuously, and every worker of wickedness shall be stubble, and the oven shall set them on fire,' 'all who sin presumptuously' meaning those who by doctrine confirm themselves in falsities, and 'the worker of wickedness' those who by life confirm themselves in evil."

AC 9263 [5]

- The righteous are they who "are in the good of love from the Lord; for the Lord is the sun in the other life, and that which is from the Lord as the sun there is the good of love ...Hence the Lord is called 'the Sun of Righteousness' (Malachi 4:2)."

AC 9391 [5]

- "...in the prophetic Word, it is usual to treat of truth wherever good is treated of, on account of the heavenly marriage...and also to speak of external things where internal things are spoken of. Moreover the 'stall' [used for fattening] and 'fat' signify the good of interior love...Malachi 4:2..."

AR 242

- "In Malachi...4:2...They are compared to 'fatted calves' because by them are signified those who are filled with the knowledges of truth and good from the affection of knowing them."

AR 245

- "That by 'flying' is signified to perceive and instruct, and in the highest sense to look out for and provide, is also evident from these passages...Malachi 4:2..."

AE 279 [5]

- “In Malachi...4:2...The ‘Sun of righteousness that shall arise to them that fear the name of Jehovah’ signifies the good of love; and ‘healing in His wings’ signifies the truth of faith; therefore ‘to go forth, and grow up as fatted calves,’ signifies the increase of all good, ‘fatted’ and ‘fat’ also signifying good.”

AE 283 [9]

- “In Malachi...4:2...‘The sun of righteousness’ signifies the good of love, which is the celestial Divine; and the ‘wings of Jehovah, in which there is healing,’ signify truth from that good, which is the spiritual Divine; ‘healing’ is reformation thereby.”

AE 401 [28]

- “Because ‘the sun’ signifies the Lord in relation to Divine love, He is called ‘the Sun of righteousness’ (in Malachi 4:2)...”

AE 632 [10]

- “In Malachi...4:3...‘To trample down’...signifies to destroy, which is done by those who are corporeal-sensual, for those who are such ‘trample down’ all things of heaven and the church, for they are in what is lowest, and their thoughts cannot be elevated by the Lord, for they themselves let them down to the earth, and there they lick the dust. Such are all those that deny the Divine...unless he suffers himself to be elevated out of them [corporeal-sensual things] by the Lord, which is effected by Divine means...he tramples down the celestial and spiritual things belonging to heaven and the church.”

Derived Doctrine

“...and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.”

- Who are the proud? Are they the people who seek the power of dominating over the things of the church? See *AC 8678*. Are they those who glory in their learning? See *AE 376 [31]*. Are they the people who love to confirm falsities that favor self-love? See *AE 518 [34]*.
- Wickedness is far more than evil. “Wickedness” signifies a desire to have complete destruction of good and truth within a person (*AE 257 [7]*). “Wickedness” signifies a deep malice with those who infest (*AC 7590*).
- “Stubble” denotes such truth as is accommodated to memory knowledges (*AC 7131*). “Stubble” being devoured signifies the consequent devastation and damnation the wicked bring upon themselves (*AC 8280*).

"...for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this,' says the Lord of hosts."

- "Ashes" signify something condemned because the fire from which the ashes came signifies infernal love (*AE 441*). "Ashes" signify lustful falsities excited by the presence of infesting spirits (*AC 7519 and AE 962 [8]*).
- The meaning of the words "Under the soles of your feet" presents us with a challenge. *AE 632 [2]* teaches that "the soles of the feet" correspond to the external sensual of a person which is what tramples down. *AC 4943* teaches that "The soles of the feet are also those who have placed merit in good deeds and in works." *AC 4944* teaches that "they...who have led a good moral life, and have had something of charity toward the neighbor, but have had little concern about spiritual things, are for the most part sent into the places under the feet and the soles of the feet." **Question:** Is the Lord telling us how simple it will be to overcome the burning lusts of the hells? Is all of their intense desire to destroy the Lord not a real threat if the lower external sensual of a person is able to trample them down? The comparison seems to be there for us to see the message of hope and redemption in the day of the Lord.
- Please note "says the Lord of hosts." What does it mean, and why is this phrase used so often in *Malachi*? It states the zeal of the Lord to save His church and all who are in the church.

"...that will leave them neither root nor branch."

- "Roots" signify the proprium as the source of infernal falsity (*AR 410*). *The Doctrine of the Lord 93* teaches "this Own [proprium] of man constitutes the first root of his life...And this root is not removed and a new one set in its place unless the man regards the evils that constitute the root as injurious to his soul..." This "root" needs to be plucked up.
- A reference to the "root and branch" teaches about the internal and external person. The "root" signifies good and truth in the internal person, whereas the "branch" represents good and truth in the external person (*AC 1861 [5] and AC 9141*).

Putting It All Together

AC 8214 describes a series of laws that are important to the understanding of the verses we are now studying: the law of retaliation, the law of order, and the "Law and the Prophets."

The law of retaliation: "...the evil who by means of injections of falsity and evil desire to inflict violence on the good cast themselves into the penalty of retaliation, which is, that the falsities and evils which they endeavor to inflict, fall back on themselves."

The law of order: This law is stated in *Matthew 7:12*. “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them...”

“This is the Law and the Prophets”: The laws of retaliation and of order are complementary. Those who are in order do to others what they wish to have done to themselves; those who break the law of order still experience the results of what they intended for others. The verse from *Matthew* is followed by the words “This is the Law and the Prophets.” This suggests that we need to apply these laws to our understanding of Malachi’s prophetic message as to why the evil will be “burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.” Their self-love desired to totally violate the good and faithful things of the Lord’s church. Every negative wish they had returned to them. “Stubble” is the left-over useless part of a plant. A contributing use of life is gone, and the remaining stub of the stem is a symbol of uselessness. As a dried-up stalk, what is useless is vulnerable to the heat and fire of self-love.

We need to be reminded that the above laws have a positive side as well. The good we wish to the Lord and the neighbor will also return to us. Doesn’t this also apply to the passage in the Word that teaches us we will reap what we sow?

Following the way of the Lord will bring us to the “stall,” and we will be “fattened” with the good of interior love. There will be “healing” in the wings of the Lord, and the “Sun of righteousness” will warm the very depths of our souls.

The power of self-love is not as strong as it would have us believe. Our daily external walk through life, the moral deeds and charity toward our neighbor can trample down evil. Like ashes under “the soles of our feet,” the wicked will be overcome with the Lord’s help.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 4:1-3*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- What do you think about the Law of Retaliation? Is it a fair law? Does that law put any pressure on us in our daily interaction with others?
- Remember the positive side of the law, too. If we have love for the Lord and the neighbor and wish well toward them, we have nothing to fear. The good we intended returns and blesses us. How do we do these things without a sense of earning “merit”?
- The “oven” of self-love sounds intense. Like a fever burning within, it must put a tremendous strain on the soul. The soul wants to serve the Lord and

delight itself in the fatness of the Lord's truths. But the fire rages out of control, consuming all that stands in its way. Have you ever experienced this fire in some way? Didn't it want to have free reign? If anyone sought to speak words of warning, did it seem to add fuel to the fire?

- Did the words of the Lord about His healing and lifting us up in His wings offer encouragement to renew our efforts of reformation?
- Being led to the stall and becoming fatted calves—did that correspondential imagery catch hold in your mind?
- What did you draw from the teaching about the “soles of your feet” tramping down the ashes and stubble of the evil?

MALACHI 4:4

“Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Hereby for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “...because they have annulled the Word.”

AR 3

- “By servants, in the spiritual sense, are meant those who are in truths; and because truths are from good, by servants are meant those who are in truths from good...Now as truths are serviceable to good by teaching it, therefore, in general, and properly, by servant, in the Word, is meant what is serviceable...in this sense not only the prophets are called the servants of God, but also the Lord as to His Human...[this] is evident from the following passages...Malachi 4:4...”

AR 662

- *Malachi 4:4* is cited, among other examples. “It may be evident from these passages, that by ‘Moses’ in the wide sense is meant the Word that was written by him, which is called the Law. It follows from this that the Law which is the Decalogue is meant by ‘Moses’; and the more so, because Moses hewed out the tables after he had broken the former ones...”

AE 409 [6]

- “Since the Lord in respect to Divine truth is called in the Word ‘a servant’ from serving, so those who are in Divine truth from the Lord and thereby

serve others are there called ‘servants,’ as the prophets are in these passages...Malachi 4:4...”

Derived Doctrine

“Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel with the statutes and judgments.”

- “Remember” has reference to recalling, reflection, a reminder and reassessment. To what end? A renewal of the covenant between the Lord and His people. This was a command to assess their commitment to the laws of the Lord. Was there a need to fix any breaches? Did they need to clear away blockages to facilitate conjunction in every way possible? Did they have a desire for the preservation of the church? And, lastly, were they looking for those things of infinite and eternal value?
- “Horeb’ signifies the Lord as to the truths of faith.” (AC 8572) “...Horeb signifies the external things of worship, of the church, and of the Word.” (AC 10534)

“...for all Israel with the statutes and judgments.”

- We need to note the word “all.” The Laws were for the Northern and Southern kingdoms. The Laws of the Lord know no boundaries. They are universal laws for “all” people of the church.
- “Statutes” signify externals of the Word, the rites of the church enjoined by the Lord. “Statutes” signify continual revelations from the Lord (AC 3382). “Statutes” signify the external goods and truths of the church while laws signify the internal goods and truths (AC 8706).
- “Judgment” relates to the doctrine of truth, whereas justice relates to the doctrine of good (AC 2231).

Putting It All Together

P&P points the way to understanding the Lord’s call to “remember the Laws” given to Moses. The dead church had “annulled the Word.” The faithful remnant was being called back to the essentials of the Commandments. Because the Decalogue is “in a brief summary a complex of all things of religion by means of which there is conjunction of the Lord with man and of man with the Lord, **they were so holy that nothing is more so.**” (*Doctrine of Life 54, emphasis added*) The two tablets teach the proper way to love the Lord and love the neighbor.

The call to remembrance was a Divine injunction to review and repair the conjunction between the Lord and the church. Disjunction was evident, and the quality of spiritual life in the church was dead. The remnant, all of Israel, must

renew its commitment to the essentials of faith. Out with dead and uninspiring ritual and in with vivified and inspiring forms of worship.

The Lord, as the Servant, promises to renew the truths of faith, first in the external things of worship, then the church, and then the Word. His statutes and judgment, the doctrine of truth and good, will be brought to their rightful place in the center of the church.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 4:4*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- What ways would be effective for us to “remember the Laws” of the Lord? We teach the commandments in the church’s elementary schools. They are studied briefly in high school. There is the course of study called “Rise Above It,” but not all adults have a course of study to review the inner meaning of the Decalogue. So what incentive might get us to read either *Apocalypse Explained* or *Doctrine of Life* wherein the spiritual meanings of the Commandments are taught?
- The Lord’s Word makes it clear that His Law is for all of His people. His commandments are the epitome of all things of religion. There is nothing more holy. So what keeps us from the study of them? Do we believe we know everything about the Decalogue? Is there a subconscious feeling that keeping all of the commandments is impossible? Do we shy away from them because we feel like a failure in keeping most of them?
- Our study of doctrine and derived doctrine makes it clear that annulment of the Word brings disjunction and death to the spiritual church.
- The New Church has more to offer regarding the Decalogue than other religions have provided. Do you think the Commandments suffer in the churches outside the New Church?
- We have had a recent legal case in several states to remove replicas of the Ten Commandments from display in public places. The physical removal of them brought reaction from Christians. Does it seem to you that the initial concern has died down and the order to remove them has achieved tacit acceptance? What will be the consequences of this?

MALACHI 4:5-6

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “John the Baptist will be sent before the Lord, lest that nation should then perish.”

AC 5620 [12]

- “As John the Baptist represented the Lord as to the Word, which is the Divine truth on earth, in like manner as Elijah...he was therefore the ‘Elijah who was to come’ before the Lord...” *Malachi 4:5* is cited.

AC 9372 [7 & 8]

- “That the Word was represented by John, as by Elijah, is signified by his being ‘Elias who is to come.’ ...From all this it is now evident what is meant by the prophecy about John in Malachi...4:5...”

AR 704

- “That ‘the great day of God Almighty’ signifies the coming of the Lord, and then the New Church, is evident from many passages in the Word as from these...*Malachi 4:5*...”

AC 3703 [9]

- “In *Malachi 4:5, 6*...the goods and truths of the church, which the Lord was about to restore.”

TCR 688

- “It is written in *Malachi...4:5, 6*...that...John was the prophet sent to make ready the way of Jehovah God, who should descend into the world and accomplish redemption; and that he made ready that way by baptism, and by announcing the coming of the Lord; and that without such preparation all on earth would have been smitten with a curse and would have perished.”

AE 624 [22]

- “That Elijah represented the Lord as to the Word is evident from the miracles done by Him, all of which signified such things as belong to Divine truth or the Word; and as John the Baptist in like manner represented the Lord as to the Word he was called ‘Elijah,’ as can be seen in Malachi...4:5, 6...”

AE 724 [7]

- “...in Malachi...4:5, 6...John the Baptist was sent before to prepare for the reception of the Lord by baptism, because baptism represented and signified purification from evils and falsities, and also regeneration by the Lord by means of the Word. Unless this representation had preceded, the Lord could not have manifested Himself and have taught and lived in Judea and in Jerusalem, since the Lord was the God of heaven and earth under a human form, and He could not have been present with a nation that was in mere falsities in respect to doctrine and in mere evils in respect to life; consequently unless that nation had been prepared for the reception of the Lord by a representation of purification from falsities and evils by baptism, it would have been destroyed by disease of every kind by the presence of the Divine Itself; therefore this is what is signified by ‘lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.’”

AC 6752 [10]

- “And as both Moses and Elias together represented the whole Word, therefore where it is said of Elias that he should be ‘sent before the Lord,’ mention is made of both...Malachi 4:4, 5...these words involve that one would go before to announce the advent according to the Word.”

AE 937 [6]

- “Because Moses and Elijah taken together represented the Word, where Elijah is spoken of as the one sent before the Lord, both are mentioned, as in Malachi...4:4-6...Elijah the prophet means John the Baptist; because he, like Elijah, represented the Word...”

Derived Doctrine

“Behold...”

- This word is defined in the dictionary as “to have or keep in sight; look at; watch; to view or survey; to discern.”
- In the Writings, “behold” is used when there is a call to reflect on “an interior acknowledgment and confession of the Lord’s Divine Human...” (AC 2329)

“...I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.”

- The Lord sending angels, prophets, or disciples signifies a revelation from the Lord to “those who are in the good of love...” (*AE 8 [2]*)
- Elijah “represented the Lord as to the Word.” (*AC 2762*)
- “The prophets represented those who teach, and hence the teaching of good and truth from the Word.” (*AC 3540*)
- “The great and dreadful day of the Lord” is a message for those who are not in good. “The ‘dread’ is mentioned because the Divine truth is meant, for the Divine truth carries with it fear, dread, and terror to those who are not in good; but not so the Divine good, which terrifies no one.” (*AC 4180*)

“And he [Elijah] will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers...”

- *AC 10490* explains a teaching of the Lord regarding hating father, mother, wife, and children. It cites a passage in *Matthew* stating that unless people hate these members of their family, and their own soul, they cannot be a disciple of the Lord. The Lord was not teaching hatred for people, *AC 10490 [6]* tells us; He was referring to “...things belonging to man” and the origin of evils and falsities and the lusts that arise from the beginnings of one’s own (*proprium*).
- Turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers represents the plucking out of the first root of the *proprium* and the implanting by the Lord of a new root, or His *Proprium*. The coming of the Word is a spiritual day of the Lord when all things will be put into a loving family of order.

“...lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”

- In *Exodus 3:20*, the Lord said that He would “strike [smite] Egypt with all My wonders...” which “signified that they would be overcome by power from the Divine, and by the means of this power.” (*AC 6908*)
- The “earth” signifies “the external man.” (*AC 89*)
- “To be a fugitive and a wanderer in the **earth** signifies not to know what is good and true.” (*AC 380, emphasis added*)
- The “earth” signifies “the love of self and whatever is contrary to the celestial church.” (*AC 636*)
- The word “curse” has a negative and positive correspondence. In the negative sense, it means “to turn one’s self away...” (*AC 927*) This same number uses “curse” in the positive sense to mean that the Lord will provide “for man’s upbuilding...that he might be reformed and regenerated in respect to the second or intellectual part of the mind, in which there might be implanted a new will which is conscience, and through which the Lord might work the

good of love...and the truth of faith. Thus of the Lord's Divine mercy has man been restored."

Putting It All Together

Why was it necessary for the Lord to send Elijah (and John the Baptist) prior to the coming of the day of the Lord? *AE 724 [7]* states that "unless this representation had preceded, the Lord could not have manifested Himself...unless that nation had been prepared for the reception of the Lord..." The Lord's baptism signified the work of purification He would win for us over evils and falsities. If the Lord had not prepared the way for His advent, humanity's spiritual life would have been destroyed with diseases of every kind.

So we need to "behold," to have or keep in sight, to view and discern what the Lord does for us every day. How much does the Lord's infinite preparation do for us? Consider this teaching in *AC 3854*: "...how greatly the man errs who believes that the Lord has not foreseen, and does not see, the veriest singulars appertaining to man, and that in these He does not foresee and lead; when the truth is that the Lord's foresight and providence are in the very minutest of these veriest singulars connected with man, in things so very minute that it is impossible by any thought to comprehend as much as **one out of a hundred millions of them....**" (*emphasis added*)

We do well to reflect on the Lord's great love for each of us. This is especially so when the hells work on us to feel hopeless and beyond the Lord's power to save and redeem us. The Lord comes to pluck up the first root of life. He wants to remove our selfish, unregenerate proprium. In its place will be a new and magnificent Proprium from the Lord.

For the unregenerate proprium, it is a "great and dreadful day of the coming of the Lord." It is a day to be feared. For the soul, it is a day of great joy and liberation. It is a day of release and spiritual cleansing from evils and falsities. It is a day of new beginnings.

Our view of the Lord's care and attention to the details of our life is limited. We see maybe "one out of a hundred millions." Is there a way we can come to see more of the Lord's ways of purifying our hearts? Can we believe that His power is in the very minutest things of our life? The pursuit of seeing more of the millions of spiritual benefactions from the Lord could be time well spent. Let's begin the process of discovery with a heart filled with a sense of how great and merciful the Lord is in the ways of His salvation. No detail escapes His cleansing work. No hidden connection of evil and falsity escapes the "disconnecting" work of His hands. Thorough and meticulous are the redemptive ways of the Lord. The coming of the Lord's New Church is a certainty. Let the people hear the "messenger" of the Lord say "Behold."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Malachi 4:5-6*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

- Our verse begins with the word “Behold.” The Lord calls us to take notice of His message. About how long do you think we will do the work of beholding? This is not a criticism. It is a call to begin expanding our period of reflective beholding.
- Did you notice that for the evil people, the day of the Lord is a day of great dread? But it is not so for the good and faithful. The removal of the “first root of life” may appear to be an unpleasant occurrence, but it is not as traumatic as imagined. The Lord has a “painless” procedure that is thorough and effective. What do you think about this preparation of root removal in the day of the Lord?
- Have you ever done any counting of your blessings from the Lord? Did the “one out of millions” teaching come as a surprise to you? Could we even be missing much within the one that we see?

Epilogue: A Summary of the Book of Malachi

The following summary draws and expands on the outline given in the Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms.

CHAPTER ONE

After the destruction of Solomon's Temple and the return of the exiled people, another temple was built. Was it as beautiful as Solomon's temple? Probably not. But Israel once again had a temple to worship in. There it stood before the children of Israel as a symbol of their religious heritage.

Did the years of Babylonian captivity and depravation strengthen Israel's resolve to be a faithful people of the Lord? Had they learned important lessons of what happens when a proud heart strays from the ways of the Lord? Were the worship of the Lord and the rejoicing of freedom central in the services at the temple? Were the ministrations of the priests and people for the Lord and to the Lord?

The external ceremonies, sacrifices, and rituals abounded with great detailed pomp and circumstance. The Lord, looking within the hearts of the people, saw evil and falsity thriving under the cloak of tradition. He sent Malachi the "messenger" to expose the sham and spiritually dangerous things going on in His temple. What did Malachi report to them was the Lord's assessment of worship? From the *Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms*, we have the following summation of chapter one: It is the Lord who institutes a church. The Lord said that although the church was there, the people in it did not acknowledge the Lord. He told them they worshiped from evil and not from good; therefore, their worship was not accepted. Those outside the church worshiped the Lord, but those within the church profaned worship. External good had been destroyed, and therefore, their external truth was destroyed as well.

CHAPTER TWO

Things within the church had to change. If the people of Israel didn't listen to the Lord and change their ways, all worship would be perverted and profaned. The Word was given to them that they might have conjunction with the Lord. They departed from the Word and, therefore, dissolved the conjunction. They were worshipping another god, whence came the profanations. Following other gods would not lead to life but death. Therefore, their external worship was not accepted, and they were severing themselves from the church by calling evil good.

CHAPTER THREE

The destructive choices of the people would not go unchecked by the Lord. The Lord's advent into the world would be to teach the Word in its purity. The church, doctrine, and worship would be like they were among the ancients. The Lord would execute a judgment upon all who adulterated and destroyed the truths of the church. Those who had done this from the beginning, and who would not desist from it, nor would they desist from adultery, now would bring about their own ruin. If they had lived according to the Lord's statutes, they would have been in the good of the church. Instead, they confirmed themselves in the belief that good is of no profit and that evil does no harm because, to them, it appeared that the good and the wicked prospered equally.

Those who trusted in the Lord would find it otherwise. They would be blessed by the Lord when He came. When the Lord came, the difference would be seen.

CHAPTER FOUR

The good would be saved by the Lord. The evil would choose to leap into hell because they annulled the Word. The Lord's preparation of the way by John the Baptist made it possible for the Lord's purification of evils and falsities. The Lord's foresight and providence enter into most minute singulars of human life. He takes care of things so minute "that it is impossible by any thought to comprehend as much as one out of a hundred millions of them..." (*AC 3854*)

The Lord's New Church will bring us a church that not only is present but will offer sincere services of praise, purity, and devotion to the one God of heaven and earth.

The Book of Habakkuk

How To Use This Study Guide

1. A slow unhurried reading of *Habakkuk* is essential. Reading the chapter before looking at the notes, while working with the notes, and after finishing with the notes will give each researcher a powerful sense of the series of meanings within each chapter. It is important to be comfortable with all the names and places in the prophecy and to understand the announcements the prophet makes on behalf of the Lord. When possible, historical information will be included in the notes to increase reading comprehension and enhance application.
2. Our study of each chapter of *Habakkuk* will begin with quotes from a work of the Writings called Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms. This work includes a verse-by-verse overview of all three chapters of *Habakkuk* that provides general information about the internal sense. Our research will help move us from the generals to the particulars of the internal sense.
3. Another important reference tool is Searle's General Index to Swedenborg's Scripture Quotations. This reference is used to find passages in the Writings where a verse(s) from the Word is either explained specifically or used to illustrate a doctrinal point that we can use in our study. There is also another use of this work. As we study, each researcher will be led by the Lord's Providence in myriad ways, according to specific needs or states. Knowing how to use this book will help each of us to explore relevant topics and look up related passages to increase our knowledge of the three-fold Word.
4. You will soon discover that not every verse, word, name, etc. is directly quoted in the Writings. But there are often other references to the same name, place, or thing in the explanation of a different verse of the Word. The hope is that reflection on these other doctrinal explanations will help us see possible applications to our study of *Habakkuk*. We will need to use "derived doctrine" often. Please don't run away from this maligned term. If we use it properly and admit openly that it is derived doctrine, we bring no harm to the internal sense.
5. Keep some kind of notebook handy during your study times. Write out insights, questions, and any summaries you find helpful in organizing your thoughts about each chapter. The goal of this study guide is not to give a detailed summary of the internal sense but to start each researcher's quest for deeper insight.
6. At the end of each chapter in the study guide, you will find a study review. The review includes a summary of each section to help you reinforce and build on your understanding of several of the key points.
7. Begin each study unit with a devotional prayer asking the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts. Certainly beginning in this sphere has the power to inspire and open our minds with a higher spiritual priority that will keep us in the company of the Lord's angels. As the Writings teach, we must seek to love truth for truth's sake. Such an approach will free each reader from

preconceived ideas that might limit his or her ability to “see” the intent and message of the Lord’s Word.

Introduction

What the Lord said to the disciples was “said to all who are of the church, for the twelve disciples represented all such...” (*Arcana Coelestia [AC] 3354*) “The twelve disciples’ signify all who are of the church, and in an abstract sense all things of the church, which are truths from good.” (*Apocalypse Explained [AE] 851*)

Why begin this introduction to the book of *Habakkuk* with these quotes about the representation of the disciples? Each disciple represents some aspect of the quality of the spiritual life within us. The disciples are a complex of our spiritual life. Their complex seeks to reach out and touch us at some level of our spiritual development. The states and activities of this development are not static; they are ever changing. So, too, I believe, the prophets form a complex to touch our state. Each prophet we study has a unique prophetic style and message. The Lord inflows into that uniqueness and unfolds His plan to overcome the falsification and adulteration of His Word, and **calms us** with the news of the birth of the New Church. What we need to do is listen to the message of each prophet without getting caught up in his personage. “Unless the internal sense were to teach what these words signify and unfold within them, **the investigators and interpreters of the Word might be led away and fall into opinions altogether foreign to the truth;** or it might even happen that those who at heart deny the holiness of the Word might come to the conclusion that...” (*AC 3651, emphasis added*)

Habakkuk’s prophetic style is one of not talking to the people. He, like Job, asks the Lord hard questions. His questions are complaints. Listen to the “woes” he addresses:

- Injustice is rampant.
- The righteous are surrounded by the wicked.
- The law is powerless to stop the wicked.
- The Lord appears to be allowing evil to go unpunished.

With anguish Habakkuk cries out, “How long, O Lord, will I call for help, and You will not hear?” Habakkuk continues his list of woes:

- Woe to the proud. (2:4-5)
- Woe to the greedy. (2:6-8)
- Woe to the dishonest. (2:9-11)
- Woe to the violent. (2:12-14)
- Woe to the sensual. (2:15-17)
- Woe to the idolater. (2:18-20)

The Lord responds to Habakkuk, “Look among the nations and watch—be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe though it were told you.” (*Habakkuk 1:5*, emphasis added)

So, like Job, Habakkuk complains, argues, challenges, and questions the Lord’s methods of bringing order to the church. But in the end, Habakkuk comes full circle, confidently praising the Lord’s providence and looking forward to the establishment of the New Church.

Is there some part of our spiritual life in which we can identify with Habakkuk’s argumentative approach to the Lord? When we read, watch, and see things going on in the world, don’t we want to cry out, “How long, Lord, will it be before you do something with this world of ours? Our laws are being made a mockery. Our politicians are misusing their offices for personal gain. Political correctness is pulling down the Ten Commandments from buildings. Displaying crèche scenes is being found unacceptable and offensive. Murders, pillage, and attacks are perpetrated with minor penalties.”

Habakkuk’s name means “to embrace” or “to wrestle.” He seems to be representative of our worrisome feelings. He wants to talk with the Lord and not the people. Isn’t Habakkuk’s style a great example for us? We need to talk more with the Lord and have less concern about public opinion.

Let’s pause again with the Lord’s answer to Habakkuk’s doubting state.

- **Watch.** Like a watchman on a tower, we are to be alert and look intently for answers from the internal sense of the Word.
- **Be utterly astounded.** Can we ask ourselves a question? Are we in a state of anticipation? Or are we in a spiritual rut going around in circles with little hope or belief in the reality of the New Church? Can we be astounded, or are we somewhat jaded in our philosophy of life?
- **I will work a work in your days which you would not believe though it were told you.** I don’t know about you, but these words fire me up to believe the Lord. I want to come into a state that will open my eyes to see things that the doubter and nay-sayer will never see or believe. May the Lord help us learn truth through the continuous degree so that we will be found worthy to have the Lord lift us to the see the beauty and enlightenment of discrete degrees.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT HABAKKUK?

We know almost nothing about Habakkuk’s life. He gives us no clue to his parentage. No home village is mentioned. Was he from the northern or southern kingdom? He gives us no clue about his work. We don’t know who was reigning over Israel during his lifetime. The only clue historians note is in *Habakkuk 1:6*, where the Lord says: “I am raising up the Chaldeans.” The Chaldeans are the Babylonians. On the basis of this reference, historians offer an approximate date of 620 B.C.

Once again, we need to ask the question, "Why does the Word of the Lord give so little information about the prophet?" The answer comes back each time that the Lord wants us to study His Word apart from the person conveying it to us. "Unless the internal sense...were to teach...the investigators and interpreters of the Word might be led away and fall into opinions altogether foreign to the truth..." (*AC 3651*). What the Lord does for our salvation is by far more important than background information about Habakkuk's life.

With this teaching as our beacon, may the Lord guide and direct our study of *Habakkuk*. We pray that He will hear our concerns and that He will speak those wonderful words of advice to us: Watch. Be astounded. You are about to be astonished by My work of salvation; even if you have doubts and fail to see it all, the Lord's New Church will come to fruition. SELAH!

Chapter One

HABAKKUK 1:1-5

*"The burden [oracle] which the prophet Habakkuk saw.
O Lord, how long shall I cry, and You will not hear? Even cry out to You, 'Violence!' and
You will not save. Why do You show me iniquity, and cause me to see trouble? For
plundering and violence are before me; there is strife, and contention arises. Therefore
the law is powerless, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the
righteous; therefore perverse judgment proceeds. Look among the nations and
watch—be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not
believe, though it were told you."*

Passages From The Writings

Prophets and Psalms (P&P)

- “Justice and truth perish. Grief on the part of the Lord, and directed to the Lord.”

Coronis 56

- “From all these passages [*Habakkuk 1:3* being one of them] it may be seen what ‘vastation’ and ‘desolation’ are; and that it is not a vastation and desolation of the peoples of a land, and of cities, but of the goods and truths of the church, whence there is nothing but evils and falsities.”

Derived Doctrine

"The burden [oracle] which the prophet Habakkuk saw."

- *AE 208 [7]* explains what is meant by to “bring in no burden through the gates of this city.” It means to “not admit [permit] that which is from man’s own [proprium], but that which is from the Lord.”
- *AC 9254* explains that “‘burden’ signifies falsity not agreeing with the good of the church by reason of which they were about to perish.”
- *AE 172* explains that “burden” is a person’s proprium, “which is to love self above God and the world above heaven, [and which] offers resistance.”
- *Apocalypse Revealed (AR) 144* explains that “burden” means or represents “what they should be aware of.”
- To understand the word “oracle,” as it is used in some passages of the Word, we must refer to a description of Solomon’s temple and the word “adytum.” The adytum, or oracle, was the place where the ark was, and it represented “where the Lord is” as to His Divine Truth. (*AE 638 [8] and 700 [39]*)

“...which the prophet Habakkuk saw.”

- *AC 7268* defines what a “prophet” of the Lord does. A prophet is “one who utters in a form adapted to the understanding the Divine truth which proceeds immediately from the Lord, and which transcends all understanding...a ‘prophet’ also denotes the doctrine of the church...”
- The name “Habakkuk” means to “embrace” or “ardent embrace.” Does the name “Habakkuk” have anything to do with the spiritual message? There are no references in the Writings that say what “Habakkuk” signifies or represents or denotes.
- *AC 937* has a wonderful explanation of the Word and what the Lord “sees.” The Word has such great arcana as to be “inexhaustible even as to the one ten-thousandth part of it...the angels—from the Lord—can see, in illimitable variety, the whole process of regeneration, and the state of the man who is to be and who has been regenerated, while man can see scarcely anything.” Did the Lord help the prophet Habakkuk to “see” the illimitable process the people needed to experience in regeneration?

“O Lord, how long shall I cry, and You will not hear?”

- What is the prophet expressing here? Impatience, fear, anxiety, confusion, and doubt? Is Habakkuk questioning the Lord’s providential care and concern for Israel? After all, hundreds of years had passed since the prophecy of the Lord’s advent had been given, and there was no sign of the Messiah yet. Was the prophecy of the Messiah a reality? *John 10:24* tells of a time when “...the Jews surrounded Him and said...‘How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.’” *Revelation 6:9-10* quotes the words of those “under the altar...who had been slain for the word of God...” crying “with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, until you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’”
- *AR 327*, explaining the meaning of *Revelation 6:10*, says that this “signifies, why is the Last Judgment delayed...and why in justice are they [who do violence to the Word] not condemned...?”
- The Lord employed the “How long” question, too. “How long, O sons of men, will you turn my glory to shame? How long will you love worthlessness and seek falsehood?” (*Psalm 4:2*)

“Even cry out to You, ‘Violence!’ And You will not save.”

- “A ‘voice crying’ and ‘the voice of a cry’ are common forms of expression in the Word, and are applied to every case where there is noise, tumult, or disturbance...[or] accusation.” (*AC 375*) To “cry” out to the Lord has a “signification of...imploration, and also interior lamentation...consequently it also denotes supplication from grief.”

- *AE 734 [17]* describes “a man of violence” as those who “from a depraved intention” pervert the truths of the Word by “thinking evils in the heart...”
- “The earth is said to be...‘filled with violence’ because of...foul cupidities...‘Corrupt’ is predicated of the things of **the understanding** when it is desolated; ‘violence,’ of the things of **the will**, when vastated. Thus ‘to corrupt’ is predicated of persuasions; and ‘violence,’ of cupidities.” (*AE 734 [17], emphasis added*)
- The phrase “You will not save” is an appearance the prophet believed to be true. However, we know and can cite many passages from the Word that tell us of the Lord’s perpetual care. If the Lord, for the least of moments, were to ignore or care less for anyone, it would be all over for that person. (*AC 2410*) We have to see Habakkuk’s statement for what it is: a moment of finite internal anguish in which the prophet sees no hope and is grieved by his blinded understanding.

“Why do You show me iniquity, and cause me to see trouble?”

- In the positive sense, we can see “the signification of ‘showing,’ when by Jehovah, that is the Lord, as being to give perception, and as this is affected by means of influx, it denotes to inspire...” (*AC 8354*) We can surmise that the prophet’s being shown iniquity may represent humanity’s momentary lack of perception and lack of influx.
- “Iniquity” comes about when there is a state of lawlessness (wickedness). *AC 3488 [6]* describes for us how iniquity multiplies. When the falsities of faith grow cold, this denotes “the expiring of charity, for they keep pace together; where faith is not, there charity is not, and where charity is not, faith is not; but charity is that which receives faith, and no charity is that which rejects faith; this is the origin of every falsity and every evil.”
- The prophet speaks of seeing trouble. What does this represent? “Trouble” in the positive sense “denotes labor...because it is predicated of temptations, for in these they who are tempted have labor against falsities and evils, and the angels also have labor with them to keep them in the faith, and thus in the power of conquering...” (*AC 8670*) For the hells, “trouble” would seem to represent their loss of power and the Lord’s conquering victory over evils and falsities.

“For plundering and violence are before me; there is strife, and contention arises.”

- “Plunder” or “plundering” has a positive and negative meaning. When the Word talks about the Lord “plundering,” it means “the rescue and deliverance of the good by the Lord.” (*AC 6442*) “Plundering” by the hells signifies “to destroy the doctrine.” (*AC 4503*) “...the cupidity of gain and avarice has within it the desire not only to possess the whole world but also to plunder and even kill everyone for the sake of gain.” (*AC 4751 [2]*)

- “Violence” signifies “offering violence to the good of charity.” (*AE 175 [10]*) “Violence” in the “internal sense is bearing hatred against the neighbor.” (*AC 1010*)
- “Strife” occurs when the internal and external aspects of a person disagree about the ends of worship. “...for when in worship the internal man desires to regard the ends that belong to the kingdom of God, and the external man desires to regard the ends that belong to the world, there thus arises a disagreement which manifests itself in the worship...The smallest bit of such disagreement is noticed in heaven...This is what is signified by...strife...” (*AC 1571*)
- *AC 3425-7* illustrates the nature of “contention.” What a person acknowledges for the sake of gain is denied in the external and debated in the internal. The opposites of the external and internal become involved in “contention.” Note this teaching in *AC 3427*: “...‘contention’ or ‘dispute’...is derived from a kindred word which means oppression and injury.”

“Therefore the law is powerless and justice never goes forth.”

- As we turn our attention to the words “law” and “power,” let’s first consider these words in the positive sense. “...all precepts, indeed the Law and the Prophets, are founded on **the one Law**, to love the Lord above all things and the neighbor as one’s self...” (*AC 1038, emphasis added*)
- If this “one Law” is voided in the will or heart, does it not make sense that “the law is powerless”? If this “one Law” is ignored in the will, does it not make sense that “justice never goes forth” from the heart? Until the internal person worships the Lord and leads the external person, law and justice are powerless forms of the one Law.

“For the wicked surround the righteous; therefore perverse judgment proceeds.”

- Hold fast to the terms “wicked” and “surround” when reading *AC 830*. “They, who beguile men by subtle deceit, wearing a pleasant face and manner of speech, but concealing envenomed guile within, and thus captivating men for the purpose of ruining them, are in a hell more dreadful than the hells of others, even more dreadful than the hell of murderers. They seem to themselves to live among serpents; and the more pernicious their deceit has been, the more dreadful and venomous and the more numerous the serpents appear which **surround** and torment them.” Wickedness hates the Lord and the neighbor. Wickedness “burns” to destroy the Lord and all those who follow Him.
- From the wicked we can expect warped judgment. The wicked cannot think clearly. The wicked twist and turn truth to their own ends.

"Look among the nations and watch—be utterly astounded!"

- AC 622 has a short, but important, explanation of the meaning of “nation.” “Here, as in other places, ‘nation’...denotes evils which are of the will or of cupidities...” Is the Lord giving us an insight as to how many evils reside in the will?
- “Watch”; “keep awake”; “be alert.” These are words used to urge us to live life according to the precepts of faith. AC 4638 [10] prefaces this teaching with “assiduous application of life in accordance with the precepts of faith, which is ‘to watch.’”
- What revelation from the Lord will “utterly astounded” the watchful? Is it, as AC 231 describes, the great number of “nations” that “do not believe the Lord or the Word, but themselves and their own senses”? AC 232 continues, “At this day, however, it is much worse than in former times, because men can now confirm the incredulity of the senses by memory-knowledges...and this has given birth to an indescribable degree of darkness. If men knew how great the darkness from this cause is they would be astounded.”

“For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe though it were told you.”

- The “I” in this verse is the Lord. What work will the Lord do? AC 88 notes, “Hence it is evident that the new creation, or regeneration, is **the work of the Lord alone.**” (*Emphasis added.*) AC 9965 states, “the work of the Lord is salvation.” *Spiritual Experiences [SE]* 1639 says, “The **work of the Lord** is turning evil into good.” (*Emphasis added.*) *True Christian Religion [TCR]* 640 states that knowing the merit and righteousness of the Lord is impossible. But “what His merit and righteousness are must be known. The merit of the Lord...is redemption...it is described as the subjugation of the hells, the orderly arrangement of the heavens, and the subsequent establishment of a church, and thus as being a **work purely Divine**. It is also there shown that the Lord by means of redemption took to Himself the power to regenerate and save those who believe on Him and do His commandments; also that without this redemption no flesh could have been saved. As redemption therefore was a **work purely Divine**, and a **work of the Lord alone**, and constitutes His merit, it follows that His merit can no more be applied, ascribed, or imputed to any man than the creation and preservation of the universe.” (*Emphasis added.*)
- If we were able to see the full “work” of the Lord, we would be amazed. His care and detail for each moment, even the least of moments, and the series of those moments on to eternity would overwhelm us. It would be a staggering task for our finite minds to comprehend the “work” of the Infinite. And yet, we must try to grasp a piece or portion of that Divine work.

Putting It All Together

The work of regeneration seems like an awesome burden. There are so many things to watch for and to work on. The battle against hell pits us against forces that enjoy cunning and deceit. There are subtle nuances we fall prey to. Do things that seem like harmless choices turn back on us in devastating ways? We do things, for what reason, we have no idea. Our inclination is to wish for an easier way. Why doesn't the Lord take the upper hand and simplify the whole process? Why couldn't He make the hells go away and leave us alone? If He would only "forcefully" slap down the evil, all would quickly come around to His way of life. But He doesn't do it that way, and consequently, strife and contention enter into our spiritual decisions. Because inequities exist, hell tempts us to believe there must not be a caring God. Evil spirits suggest that He cares little for our confusion and pain. Whatever happened to the promises in the Word that said, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light."? So the temptation arises to "numb out" on spiritual issues and go with the necessities of natural living.

Our lesson from *Habakkuk* instructs us that ignoring our spiritual burden is not the answer. "Where faith is not, there charity is not, and where charity is not, faith is not." (AC 3488 [6]) The church within every person needs growing goods and truths. Every stage of our life needs new and larger insights from the Lord. We cannot live with the goods and truths we had as children. Truth is organic and not static. Hell wants to bring us strife and contention. Hell wants to surround us with the impression that it is invincible and mightier than the Lord. Hell counts on the fact that we might wilt in the day of conflict. Hell seeks to strip us of every truth so we capitulate in the warfare against the plundering violence of disorder.

"Look among the nations and watch—be utterly astounded..." The Lord promises that He will sort through all of the affections of our lives and that He will work a work that will astound us. He will "disconnect" the maze of proprial loves that support and strengthen hell's resolve to resist the Lord.

The work of the Lord is a work that He alone can do. His is a work of new creation (regeneration). His work is the work of salvation. The Lord's work is to turn evil into good. The Divine work is to subjugate hell and to bring an orderly arrangement of the heavens.

There is so much more involved in the work of the Lord. We will never perceive the extent of His care and benefactions. Hell will try to discourage us. Why not? It did the same thing to many of the heroes in the Word. The Psalmist had his moments of doubt. Read *Psalm 73:1-17*. Listen to his words about being envious of the boastful. He speaks of the successes of the proud. He notes how their tongues speak against the Lord. He tried to be good and faithful. For his efforts, he felt plagued. When he was almost at the point of giving up, he went into the sanctuary of God; "Then I understood their end."

The list given above about the work of the Lord is a start, and it is enough to “embrace,” to “hold on to tightly,” and to use in our “wrestling” over weighty issues. “Watch” and “be utterly astounded” with what the Lord can do and is doing for us in the burden of our spiritual growth.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 1:1-5*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. Is Habakkuk over-stating the violence, plundering, and imagined power of hell?
2. With all due respect, did you feel the urge to tell Habakkuk to get over it? We may think that things were not as bad then as they are now. He saw things regionally. With television and other instantaneous news reports, we get a global picture of how bad things are in the world.
3. Are we in bigger trouble than Habakkuk?
4. How easy is it to “numb out” the importance of spiritual growth? Do you believe that putting off spiritual growth hurts and destroys one’s inner church? How?
5. Have you experienced any astounding work of the Lord? How many more works of the Lord can you add to the partial list given in our study?

Habakkuk 1:6-11

“For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans, a bitter and hasty nation which marches through the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful; their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves. Their horses also are swifter than leopards, and more fierce than evening wolves. Their chargers charge ahead; their cavalry comes from afar; they fly as the eagle that hastens to eat. They all come for violence; their faces are set like the east wind. They gather captives like sand. They scoff at kings. And princes are scorned by them. They deride every stronghold, for they heap up earthen mounds and seize it. Then his mind changes, and he transgresses; he commits offense, ascribing this power to his god.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “The Jewish church profaned all the truths and goods of the Word and of the church.”

AC 1613

- "...in Habakkuk...‘the Chaldeans’ denote those who are in falsity; ‘to walk in the breadths of the land,’ denotes to destroy truths, for this is predicated of the Chaldeans."

AC 4482 [2, 3]

- "In Habakkuk...where by ‘breadths’ nothing else is signified than the truth of the church. The reason why ‘breadth’ has this signification is that in the spiritual world, or in heaven, the Lord is the center of all things, for He is the sun there. They who are in a state of good are interior in proportion to the quality and quantity of the good in which they are, and therefore ‘height’ is predicated of good. They who are in a like degree of good are also in a like degree of truth, and therefore are as it were at a distance, or, so to speak, in the same circumference, and hence ‘breadth’ is predicated of truths; and therefore when a man is reading the Word this is what the angels who are with him understand by ‘breadth.’"

AC 9487 [3]

- "That by ‘breadth’ is signified truth, is very manifest in the following passages...Habakkuk 1:6...‘to walk in the breadths of the land,’ when said of the Chaldeans, denotes to destroy the truths of faith."

Heaven and Hell (HH) 197 [3]

- "Because ‘the New Jerusalem’ here signifies a new church these measures signify the things of the church, ‘length’ its good of love, ‘breadth’ truth from that good, ‘height’ good and truth in respect to degrees...That ‘breadth’ in the Word signifies truth is evident...in Habakkuk 1:6..."

AR 861

- "The reason why the ‘breadth of the earth’ signifies the truth of the church, is because in the spiritual world there are four quarters, east, west, south, and north, and the east and west constitute its length, and the south and north its breadth; and because they dwell in the east and west who are in the good of love, and thence by ‘east’ and ‘west’ is signified good, therefore the same is meant by ‘length;’ and because they dwell in the south and north who are in the truths of wisdom, and thence by ‘south’ and ‘north’ is signified truth, therefore the same is meant by ‘breadth;’..." *Habakkuk 1:6* is cited among many passages from the Word.

AE 799 [19]

- “That a ‘tent’ [dwelling place] signifies the church in respect to the truths of doctrine is evident from passages in the Word where a ‘tent and tents’ are mentioned (as in...Habakkuk 1:6...).”

AC 1368 [4, 5]

- “In Habakkuk...1:6-9...The Chaldean nation is here described by many representatives that are significant of the profanations of truth in worship. Moreover, Babylon and Chaldea are described in two entire chapters in Jeremiah (chapters 50 and 51), where what is signified by each is plainly evident, namely, by Babylon the profanation of celestial things, and by Chaldea the profanation of spiritual things, in worship. From all this therefore it is evident what is signified by ‘Ur of the Chaldees,’ namely, external worship in which there is inwardly profane idolatry.”

AC 3901 [7, 8]

- “That in the opposite sense an ‘eagle’ signifies rational things that are not true, and thus false...In Habakkuk...1:6, 8...By ‘eagles’ in these passages is signified falsity induced by reasonings, which is induced from the fallacies of the senses and external appearances. That by ‘Chaldeans’ in the Prophet last cited are signified those who are in a holy external, but interiorly in falsity...also that they who vastate the church are like Babylon...that the ‘breadths of the land’ denote truths...Vastation is signified by ‘marching through the breadths of the land.’ Their ‘horses’ are their intellectual things...What the ‘eagle hastening to devour’ signifies, is evident, namely, the desolation of man in respect to truths; for the desolation of the church is there treated of...”

AC 6534 [6]

- “...in Habakkuk...1:6, 8...the ‘Chaldeans’ denote those who are in falsities, but in externals appear to be in truths, thus the profanation of truth, and ‘Babylon’ the profanation of good...‘Going into the breadth of the earth’ denotes to destroy truths...‘the horsemen who spread themselves and come from far’ denote the things that belong to perverted understanding, thus falsities.”

AR 298

- “That ‘a horse’ signifies the understanding of the Word...‘horses’ in the opposite sense signify the understanding of the Word and of truth falsified by

reasonings, and likewise destroyed...Habakkuk 1:6, 8-10...in the spiritual world...'a horse' signifies the understanding of truth from the Word..."

AE 355 [24]

- "In Habakkuk...1:6, 8-10..."The Chaldeans' mean those who profane truths and thus vastate the church, therefore they are called 'a bitter and hasty nation, that marcheth into the breadths of the land,' 'breadths of the land' meaning the truths of the church...Their lust for and dexterity in perverting truths and destroying them by reasonings from falsities altogether remote from truths are signified by, 'her horses are lighter than leopards, and more fierce than wolves of the evening, so that her horsemen spread themselves; yea, her horsemen shall come from afar; they shall fly as an eagle that hasteth to eat.' Lust is signified by 'her horses are lighter than leopards,' and dexterity by 'her horses are more fierce than the wolves of the evening,' and both by 'they fly as an eagle.' Because the lust and dexterity are for destroying truths therefore it is said, 'she shall come wholly for violence;' their scoffing at truths and goods is signified by 'she shall mock at kings, and rulers shall be a derision unto her,' 'kings' signifying truths, and 'lords' and 'rulers' goods."

AE 811 [7]

- "In Habakkuk...1:6, 9, 10..."The Chaldeans' signify those who destroy the truths of the church; 'the breadths of the land' signify the truths of the church; that they will destroy all truths by falsities is signified by 'it shall gather captivity like the sand;' that the truths and goods of the Word will be derided and blasphemed is signified by 'that nation shall mock at kings, and rulers shall be a derision unto it,' 'kings' signifying the truths of the Word, and 'rulers' its goods."

AE 780 [8]

- "In Habakkuk...1:8...the devastation of the church by the adulteration of truth, which is signified by the Chaldean nation, of which these things are spoken. 'Whose horses are lighter than leopards' signifies the eagerness to seduce by reasonings, and a consequent expertness in seducing; such eagerness and expertness are signified by their 'lightness' or 'swiftness;' 'horses' here signifying reasonings from the natural man. And as 'horses' and 'leopards' have a like signification it is said, 'whose horses are lighter than leopards.' 'More fierce than the wolves of the evening' signifies craftiness in deceiving by fallacies; the fallacies of the senses are here signified by 'the wolves of the evening' because the fallacies are from the sensual man, which in darkness sees falsities as truths. 'So that her horsemen spread themselves' signifies that the truths of the Word by adulteration become heresies;

'horsemen' signify heresies because 'horses' mean reasonings by which falsities are confirmed."

AR 244

- "...eagles in the opposite sense signify the knowledges of what is false, from which the understanding is perverted...Habakkuk 1:8, 9..."

AE 281 [11]

- "...in Habakkuk...1:8, 9...'eagle' stands for the reasoning from falsities against truths, which is from self-intelligence."

Derived Doctrine

Please note that *AE 780 [8]* and *AE 811 [7]* give us the most comprehensive insight into the overall spiritual meaning of *Habakkuk 1:6-11*. And yet, we need to turn to derived doctrine to help us focus on certain words and phrases not explained.

"For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans, a bitter and hasty nation..."

- The literal sense seems to imply that the Lord was calling the Chaldeans to "punish" the Israelites. It appears He was calling a bitter and nasty nation to smash their self-esteem. Let's consider three teachings in the *Arcana* regarding the meaning of "I am raising up."
- *AC 1999*: "True adoration or humiliation of heart, carries with it prostration to the earth upon the face before the Lord, as a gesture naturally flowing from it. For in humiliation of heart there is the acknowledgment of self as being nothing but filthiness, and at the same time the acknowledgment of the Lord's infinite mercy toward that which is such; and when the mind is kept in these two acknowledgments, the very mind droops in lowness towards hell, and prostates the body; nor does it uplift [rise up] until it is uplifted by the Lord. This takes place in all true humiliation, with a perception of being uplifted by the Lord's mercy." Question: Is the Lord describing the whole process of humiliation Israel will face through the Chaldeans that will enable Him to raise Israel up?
- *AC 2857*: "...the signification of 'rising up,' ...when mentioned in the Word, being some elevation...the elevation of the rational after temptation...Every temptation in which a man overcomes, elevates his mind..."
- *AC 2913 [3]*: "...the new church that the Lord sets up anew when the former church expires...the raising up by the Lord of the spiritual church in general, after the former ceases or is consummated...in the process of time a church decreases and is contaminated...it recedes from charity, and produces evils and falsities...then the church is said to be laid waste and desolate..." Can we

not see why the Lord needed to start the “raising up” of the church through a process of sincere humiliation and restoration?

- “...a bitter and hasty nation” refers to what was done to the Word. “Bitter (or bitterness) signifies what is undelightful because of adulterated truth, and therefore ‘to make bitter’ signifies to render undelightful, because what is sweet becomes bitter and thus undelightful by a mixture with something offensive...” (*AE* 618)
- The word “hasty” is described in *AE* 455 [19] as meaning “those who readily seize upon and **believe whatever is said**, thus also falsities...” (*Emphasis added.*) *Conjugial Love* (*CL*) 305 [2] teaches about the need for an unhurried building of conjugal love from the lowest to the highest regions so that it can be cleansed of unchaste thoughts. A “hasty” premature union may bring coldness and distaste for a partner.

“...to possess dwelling places that are not theirs.”

- “It was customary among the ancients to speak of ‘journeying’ and ‘dwelling in tents,’ by which was signified in the internal sense holy worship...Hence...‘to dwell’ signified in the internal sense to live.” (*AC* 1102)
- Like many of the enemies who attacked Israel, the Chaldeans picture a spiritual problem that Israel was confronting. We can conclude that Israel introduced things into the holy worship that were not from the Lord but from themselves. Their lives were not from the Lord but from themselves. The idea of possessing that which was not theirs is quite clear in the meaning of the literal sense.

“They are terrible and dreadful; their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves.”

- *AC* 9348 gives us a vivid picture of the “terrible” and “dreadful” things that happen to the person who is in the love of self. “...these loves, like the unseen currents of a river, continually draw the thought and the will of man away from the Lord to self, and away from heaven to the world, thus away from the truths and goods of faith to falsities and evils. Reasonings from the fallacies of the senses are then of especial force, and also the literal sense of the Word wrongly explained and applied...‘Dread’ and ‘fear’ denote a disturbance and commotion of the mind when it hesitates between evils and goods, consequently between falsities and truths...”
- “Dignity” in the positive sense means to attribute all things to the Lord, from whom alone holy things originate. (*AR* 854) “Dignity” is serving the Lord and not self. (*Charity* 172)

"Their horses also are swifter than leopards, and more fierce than evening wolves."

- What is meant by "horses" being "swifter" or "lighter" than leopards? The answer seems to be in degrees of intensity with which the Word is falsified. Correspondentially, swift horses signify **an eagerness** to seduce by reasonings; **an expertise** in seducing by misusing the things of the Word. (*AE 355, 780 [8]*) "Leopards," on the other hand, signify reasonings that are **discordant and yet appear as if they cohere.** (*AE 779, 780, 781*)
- Their "horses" are more "fierce than evening wolves." What does this teach us? "Evening" signifies "a state of waning faith and charity, which is man's state when he comes into the exercise of his own judgment, and is extinguishing in himself the things that he imbibed in childhood..." (*AE 187 [20]*)
- "Wolves" signify "those who are against innocence." (*AC 2130, 3994, 10132 [4]; AE 314 [4]*) A "wolf" is one "who seizes and scatters." (*AC 6441*)
- *AE 780 [8]* explains that "wolves of the evening" signifies "the subtlety of deceiving by fallacies; the fallacies of the senses being here signified by the wolves of the evening because they are fallacies from the sensual man, who, being in darkness, sees falsities as truths."
- "Wolves" are spirits who infuse despair and fear of being carried away from the rescue of the Lord. (*AC 2130*)
- *SE 699* gives us a larger picture of the kind of despair and fear infused by "wolves." "When I awoke, certain societies of spirits, one after another, began to declare in a singing loud voice, that the wolf had wanted to steal them away, but the Lord snatched them from the wolf, and they were restored to the Lord. On this account they rejoiced from the depths of their heart. For they had been in despair, extremely afraid that the Lord had rejected them, and that the wolves would therefore seize them and the Lord no longer wanted to keep them. They feared that there was an overabundance of spirits or angels in heaven, so that no room was left to receive more. This was the generally shared thought, which I perceived clearly."

"Their chargers charge ahead; their cavalry comes from afar..."

- The *King James Version* renders this verse as "and their horsemen shall spread themselves and their horsemen shall come from afar..." This is also what the Writings have in *AE 780 [8]*, and this number explains the signification as the adulteration of the Word and the spreading of heresies.
- Armies of horsemen (cavalries) signify "reasonings concerning faith alone, with which the interiors of their minds were filled, from the abundance of mere falsities of evil." (*AR 447*)

“...the eagle that hastens to eat...”

- *AC 3901 [7, 8]* teaches us that this signifies the desolation of truths with people and the desolation of the church.

“They all come for violence; their faces are set like the east wind.”

- *AC 621* teaches the following things about corruption and violence. The word “violence” has reference to “the things of the will.” The word “corruption” has reference to the desolation of “things of the understanding.” “Thus ‘to corrupt’ is predicated of persuasions; and ‘violence,’ of cupidities.”
- The “face signifies the affections...” (*AC 9049*) The “face signifies the interiors...” (*AE 64*) The “face signifies the interiors of the mind...” (*HH 457*)
- “East wind” has both a positive and negative sense. In the positive sense, it signifies “the good of love and of charity, [and is most gentle] because in the supreme sense the Lord is signified...but when it sinks down to the hells, it becomes harsh and severe, because it is turned into this by those who are there.” (*AC 7679*) This number also describes the negative “east wind” as “dry and tempestuous,” bent on destruction and eager to break things into pieces.

“They gather captives like sand.”

- Consider the meaning of being led away “captive.” *AC 9164* teaches “to be led away captive” is predicated in the following circumstances: “When a man is in truth from good, then that truth in which he has the greatest faith is in the middle, next follow the truths in which he has less faith, and finally those which are of doubtful faith...**But when falsity usurps the place of truth, the order is inverted**, and the truths pass off to the sides, and form the circumference, while the falsities of evil occupy the middle.” (*Emphasis added.*)
- “...like sand” has an interesting meaning in *AE 644 [24]*. “...‘sand’ signifies Divine truth received only in the memory, and somewhat therefrom in the thought, and thus in a scattered and disconnected way, because intermixed with falsities, and falsified by notions.”
- When falsity usurps the place of truth, is it any wonder that the “sand” with its scattered and disconnected notions of truth in the memory gets gathered and carried away captive?

“They scoff at kings. And princes are scorned by them.”

- Scoffing at “kings” and scorning “princes” signifies mocking the good and truths of the Word. (*AE 355 [24]; AE 811 [7]*)

"They deride every stronghold, for they heap up earthen mounds and seize it."

- *AE 717 [18]* offers us this explanation of what “strongholds of fortresses” signify. They “signify the things of self-intelligence confirmed by the sense of the letter of the Word, which is such that when it is not interiorly understood it may be so drawn as to confirm any heresies whatever.”
- The meaning of “deride” is explained in *AC 1080*. “For with those who are in no charity, there is continual contempt for others, or continual derision, and on every occasion a publishing of their errors...hatred lurks in every word they utter...”
- Heaping up “earthen mounds” is perhaps captured in Bruce Rogers’ translation of *CL 126 [7]*: seeking to put truth over charity (the intellect over the will) is like burying the will “in a mound of earth, so to speak, and some have...thrown dirt on them, as though on dead men, to keep them from rising again. The good of charity is...the primary thing in the church...” In *AC 5567*, Swedenborg describes a spirit who was bound by “no principles” approaching him with “an earthen jug in his hand...there was in the jug, from phantasy, something that would take away the understanding of those who drank.”
- *AE 177* describes “earthen vessels” as signifying “the things in the natural man that are from self-intelligence, in matters of heaven and the church, and that these things are falsities...”

"Then his mind changes, and he transgresses; he commits offense, ascribing this power to his god."

- Do we not feel and see what this closing portion of our passage means? When the mind seeks to change the true order of things—usurping truth for falsity—the mind changes. It falls into a state of derision and fault-finding. Disorder causes transgressions, offenses, and eventually the unregenerate proprium offers itself as the substitute “god.” Such is the spirit that is bound by “no principles” that brings its “earthen jug” of fantasies for us to drink. And what is the outcome? The **understanding is taken away** and the **will buried in the mound of earth** with the hope that it will never rise again.

Putting It All Together

Picture in your mind a messy liquid spill on a table top. The liquid has an acidic content and could peel the finish off the table. You quickly get a paper towel and lay it over the liquid. The absorption process begins immediately and continues until the entire paper towel is filled with the liquid. But if the towel remains on the table, it will add to the problem. The dangerous liquid now threatens a larger portion of the table top. Instead of quickly removing the problem, the paper towel has compounded the problem.

Such is the example that comes to mind regarding Israel's profanation of "all the truths and goods of the Word and of the church." (*P&P*) Their misuse of the Word and the conclusions they drew about it were spreading rapidly throughout the land, and the hearts of the people were in an "evening state," a state "of waning faith and charity, which is man's state when he comes into the exercise of his own judgment, and is extinguishing in himself the things that he imbibed in childhood." (*AE 187 [20]*) The people were being led away into captivity. Spiritual truth that should have been in the center of their hearts was being pushed to the side. Evil and falsity usurped the centrality of truth, bringing the presence of "swift horses" and "evening wolves." These spiritual enemies had a plan of "seizing and scattering" the goods and truths of the Word. The horses represent "an eagerness to seduce by reasonings" that misuse the truths of the Word. They were not only eager to seduce, they were experts in such tactics. The intent was to disconnect the Lord's truth so that people would hastily accept and believe whatever they were told by human authority.

The swiftness of the seduction brought the people into areas that were not theirs. They were convincing themselves that they were clever, dignified, and god-like. The will was being "buried" in earthen mounds. The old ways were believed to be dead and useless. The "new" ways wanted to bury the "will" with the hope that it would not come back to life. The priests and leading thinkers offered the concept of "Out with the old ways of the Lord, and in with the new concepts of human prudence."

To illustrate how serious Israel's profanation of the Word was, the Lord called to their attention the Chaldeans, "a bitter and hasty" nation. The "bitter and hasty" is an important beginning in this prophecy. Israel was not honoring the conjugal principles of the conjunction of good and truth. They were forming premature unions of falsities that seemed to cohere but were dangerously discordant. Their hasty unions were bringing a coldness and distaste for the chaste ways of the Lord.

What was happening to the people of Israel? Their minds were being changed. They were becoming transgressors of the laws of the Lord. They were deriding every stronghold of spiritual truth. They were scoffing at the love of the Lord and scorning the wisdom of the Lord. Finding fault with everything the Lord did was quite prevalent among the people. Their hearts were harboring hatred toward the Lord. Israel's offenses were dangerous, and worst of all, they ascribed all power to the "god" of their self-love.

The Lord wanted to act to save Israel. As Habakkuk continues, how will the Lord save His people? As we read on, we can be assured of one thing. His way will be loving, thorough, and saving. The preparation and the ultimate birth of the New Church is His end. What happened yesterday affects today and is a great part of eternity. The "bitter and hasty" Chaldean nation has to be exposed and overcome. That's to be part of the process of our regeneration, too. So let's listen, learn, and fight against the eager, expert deriders and seducers who misuse the Word. They

want to bury the will in earthen vessels that take away the understanding of the Lord's love for each one of us.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 1:6-11*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. *AE 355 [24], AE 811 [7], and AE 780 [8]* are key passages for understanding *Habakkuk 1:6-11*. You might have to read them over several times and make some notes, but if you do this, the spiritual sense will shine forth. What did you find when you read them carefully?
2. What struck you in the points made about the Chaldeans, the horses, leopards, and evening wolves? They represent dexterity, expertise, lust, craftiness in deceiving by fallacies. The sensual person is “smooth” and easily led. Sensual people are in danger of believing whatever is said if it is immediately pleasing and rewarding. Don’t we do battle with these tendencies every day?
3. What insights did you have regarding the scoffing, scorning, and burying of spiritual things in earthen mounds? Did you see how the natural person in us wants to bury the spiritual “will” so that it will not rise again? I felt some of this with Swedenborg’s experience of the earthen jug. To drink from it numbed the “understanding” and took away any sense of the holiness of the Word.
4. Another point made in our study is the danger of “halting” between good and evil. “Limping” is another way of expressing this action. The world is pushing us to be accepting of all kinds of questionable ideas. Political correctness has taken a toll on stating convictions. We waffle on things that call for internal restraint. Divine Providence (DP) 81 and 134 are important numbers regarding the importance of developing strong and healthy internal restraints. How strong are we on internal convictions? What strengthens or weakens us?
5. I know many of you are not ministers, but did you see a sermon outline pushing itself to the forefront of our attention? Could you see a lesson that you might share with a friend, students, or grandchildren?

HABAKKUK 1:12-17

“Are You not from everlasting, O Lord my God, my Holy One? We shall not die, O Lord, You have appointed them for judgment; O Rock, You have marked them for correction. You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, and hold Your tongue when the wicked devours

a person more righteous than he? Why do You make men like fish of the sea, like creeping things that have no ruler over them? They take up all of them with a hook, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their dragnet. Therefore they rejoice and are glad. Therefore they sacrifice to their net, and burn incense to their dragnet; because by them their share is sumptuous and their food plentiful. Shall they therefore empty their net, and continue to slay nations without pity?"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “The Lord’s grief continued, that the evil prevail over the good, and destroy them.”

AC 991 [2]

- “In Habakkuk...1:14...where ‘making man as the fishes of the sea’ means that he is altogether sensuous.”

AR 405

- “Fishes’ here are for those who are in general truths, and in faith separated from charity.” This quote follows a citation of *Habakkuk 1:14-16*.

AE 513 [13]

- “In Habakkuk...1:14, 15, 17...This was said of the Chaldean nation wasting and destroying the church; and the Chaldean nation signifies the profanation of truth, and the vastation of the church. ‘To make men as the fishes of the sea, and as the creeping thing that hath no ruler,’ signifies to make man so natural that his knowledges (scientifica) are devoid of spiritual truth, and his delights are devoid of spiritual good; for in the natural man there are knowledges by which come thoughts, and delights by which come affections; and if the spiritual is not dominant over these, both thoughts and affections are wandering, and thus man is destitute of the intelligence that should lead and rule. That then every falsity and every evil has power to draw them over to their side, and thus wholly destroy them, is signified by ‘Let him draw out all with the hook, and gather into his net, and afterwards slay,’ ‘to draw out’ meaning out of truth and good, ‘into his net’ meaning into falsity and evil, and ‘to slay’ meaning to destroy.”

Derived Doctrine

"Are You not from everlasting, O Lord my God, my Holy One?"

- Is the purpose of this question to have us reflect on the Infinite nature of the Lord? Are we being called to think about His “everlasting” qualities so that we will remember Him as the “always,” so we might reflect that He has no beginning or end? Will the question open for us the perpetual, indestructible, and eternal essence of the Lord? This paragraph uses a repetitious format, but it is a repetition well worth presenting to the finite mind. How often does hell attempt to convince us that our “God is too small”? We need the “bigger” everlasting concepts of the Lord to quiet hell’s felonious representations of a powerless Lord.

"O Lord my God, my Holy One..."

- If you are willing to read more about the meaning of names, I’d like to recommend the following passages.
- *AC 144* tells us that “...to ‘call by name’ signifies to know the quality...”
- *AC 2009* states that “...in heaven no attention is paid to any one’s name; but when any one is named, or when the word name is spoken, there is presented the idea of the person’s quality, that is, of **all things...that are connected with him, and that are in him; hence in the Word ‘name’ signifies quality.**” (*Emphasis added.*) Read this whole number. It is helpful to our understanding of the Lord’s name.
- *AC 2724* notes, “For it was a common thing for the ancients to add something to the name of Jehovah, and thereby call to mind some benefit or attribute of His...”
- *AC 7091 [4]* teaches that “From all this it is also evident that by ‘Jehovah’ in the Word of the Old Testament, no other is meant than the Lord, for He is called Jehovah God and the **Holy One of Israel**, the Redeemer, the Saviour, the Maker...” (*Emphasis added.*)

"We shall not die, O Lord, You have appointed them for judgment..."

- *AC 198* defines what is meant by “lest ye die” as a state when “faith, or all wisdom and intelligence, would perish.” *AC 494* describes death as a state when “perception” ceases to be such as it has been.
- *AR 429* explains that those who “desire to die” signify those who wish to have the will and understanding closed, or shut up.
- “We shall not die, O Lord...” gives testimony that the Lord will prevent spiritual death or dying for the faithful remnant.
- For the evil, “judgment” refers to the visitation of Divine Truth to examine the quality (or lack thereof) of doctrines in their life. (*AC 9905*) Divine Truth will not cause “the righteous to die with the wicked....” Why? Because good

cannot die. Evil can be separated from good within those who love the Lord. (*AC 2254*) The Lord will not let the righteous die with the wicked. Here is another quote worth remembering when we feel threatened by the hells. Those in the stream of Providence are survivors. Our life is drawn into the protecting sphere of the Lord's love and wisdom.

"...O Rock, You have marked them for correction."

- *AC 10580* defines "rock" as signifying a "state of faith in God..."
- *AC 795 [3]*: "The 'mountain of Jehovah' denotes the Lord with reference to the goods of love; the 'Rock of Israel,' the Lord with reference to the goods of charity."
- *AC 3703 [3]* notes that the Lord as "to Divine truth is called a 'rock'..."
- *AC 2832 [2]* explains that "rock" is "significative of the power of truth."
- To gain insight into what it means to "mark them," let's turn to *AC 396*. When Jehovah set a mark on Cain, it signified "that the Lord distinguished faith in a particular manner in order that it [faith] might be preserved..."
- *AE 838* describes "...the signification of a 'mark,' as being a sign or attestation of acknowledgment...that they are of that church...A 'mark' signifies a sign of acknowledgment..."
- *AC 4749* has this very interesting teaching regarding "correction." Truths from the memory-knowledges, as represented by the Ishmaelite, "cannot be corrected and made sound by any other means than by the memory-knowledges of the genuine church, thus by instruction in these."

"You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness."

- "Pure" signifies that which is "free from evil." (*AC 10289*)
- 'Pure" signifies that which "has been clarified from the falsities of evil." (*AC 10296*)
- "...the eyes signify the Divine intellectual of the Lord." (*AC 9052*)
- "By 'eyes' in the Word is meant the understanding, and thence, by the sight of the eyes, intelligence; therefore, when spoken of the Lord, the Divine wisdom is meant..." (*AR 48*)
- "Eyes" signify the understanding. (*AE 68, 152*)
- The Lord's "purer eyes" could not possibly see evil. Evil has nothing to do with that which is infinite and eternal. *DP 52* teaches, "The Infinite and Eternal...must needs look to what is infinite and eternal from itself in things finite." Evil does not seek nor want infinite and eternal things. In essence, because the evil reject the Lord and His ways, they have nothing within them that would reflect the truths of the Lord. Their lives are shallow/invisible entities that thrive on finite time-and-space values.
- The same principle applies to the Lord not looking on "wickedness." *AE 653* teaches that "wickedness signifies to persist in the evils and falsities of doctrine." *AE 730 [18]* teaches that "wickedness signifies the falsification of

the truths of the Word by evils that have come to be of life." The Lord is not in, nor can He compromise with, the person who delights in the falsification of doctrine and the Word. Wickedness separates and removes itself from the presence of the Lord. It is wickedness that does not want to see the Lord.

"Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, and hold Your tongue when the wicked devours a person more righteous than he?"

- Those who "deal treacherously" with the neighbor are thoroughly described in *AC 9013*. Their minds are filled with deceit. They have "malice from the will with forethought or premeditation, thus from set purpose." They do what they do from "enmity, or from hatred, or from revenge...and take delight in...destroying everything...which belongs to life from the good of faith and of charity."
- The literal sense speaks to the attitude the natural sensual person has regarding the disasters and hardships of the world. It appears to such people that the Lord tolerates and "looks on" treachery with a sense of indifference. The natural person assumes that the Lord is cruel, unconcerned, or too busy with other things to care about the plight of the righteous. The natural person queries why bad things happen to good people. With this negative attitude, the natural person never seeks or finds answers and so solidifies his or her antagonism toward the Lord. Natural people never read or hear that the Lord is in each and every least moment of the events of our lives. Missed is the picture of Him lifting, modifying, and bringing good out of each ripple of disorder hell sends out to thwart our journey through life.
- Let's read the literal sense again to see if a calming voice of the Lord might give us an answer. "Why do hold Your tongue when the wicked devours a person more righteous than he?"
- A "tongue" in the internal sense "signifies opinion, thus principles and persuasions..." (*AC 1159*)
- *AE 455 [2, 3]*: "In the Word, the lip, mouth, and tongue are frequently mentioned; and the lip signifies doctrine, the mouth thought, and the tongue confession...tongues signify confessions from religion and according to the tenants of religion..."
- *AR 282 [4]* tells us that the "...tongue signifies doctrine..."
- What is involved in the act of devouring is explained in *AC 9348*. Evils are alluring and deceptive. Like an "unseen current," they continually "draw the thought and will of man away from the Lord to self, and away from heaven to the world, thus away from the truths and goods of faith to falsities and evils." In section 4 of *AC 9348*, we are taught "devour denotes to destroy truths and goods..."

"Why do You make men like fish of the sea, like creeping things that have no ruler over them? They take up all of them with a hook, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their dragnet."

- Please go back to the Passages From The Writings section and read *AC 991 [2], AR 405*, and *AE 513 [13]*.
- To these numbers, let's add *AE 802 [3]*. A "dragnet" is like a giant web, a weaving of strong twine fishermen use to allow water to pass through but not fish. "This is their web by which they induce the simple to believe that out of the treasures of wisdom or interior perception, that are **stored up only with the teachers and the learned**, they have brought forth clear evidences to establish the doctrine of faith separated from any manifest endeavor of man (which is the will) to do what is good. Thus for themselves and all the people of the church they **give license and free rein to acting and living according to the bent and trend of all lusts**; and as this dogma is **pleasing to the flesh and to the eyes**, the common crowd gladly receives it...[but these ideas are] conjunctions fallaciously contrived...that gush forth...in a constant stream." (*Emphasis added.*)
- What do we get from this teaching? The great dragnet web of deception described here reflects the tendency to go with the crowd and end up in the web of popular opinion because it is pleasing to the flesh and the eyes.

"Therefore they sacrifice to their net, and burn incense to their dragnet; because by them their share is sumptuous and their food plentiful."

- Is there any question about what is meant by "they sacrifice to their net"? The web of deception is so appealing to the natural person because it offers license to do whatever is pleasing and rewarding to self.
- The verse says they burn incense to their dragnet. "Burning incense upon bricks" denotes "worship from things fabricated and false..." (*AC 1296*)
- Their perception that they were dining sumptuously and had plenty of food was only true of the physical aspect of their lives. Spiritually, they were starving and lacking the true "bread of heaven."

"Shall they therefore empty their net, and continue to slay nations without pity?"

- Will the sensual people get rid of their eye-pleasing and self-gratifying beliefs? Will they see and give up the worthless self-contrived concoctions of good and truth?
- Will the falsified church continue to slay nations without pity? Pity and compassion are what the Lord seeks to offer. The compassion of the Lord will be directed toward "those who are in need of good and who...long for it; and His 'compassions,' toward those who are in ignorance of truth and...long for it." (*AC 9182 [7]*)

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes this section with the teaching that the Lord's "grief continued, that the evil prevail over the good, and destroy them." In His great love, the Lord worried and cared about what was going on in the church and in His people. Our Lord is committed to saving the lost and the confused. This is a story about His great love.

Through the words of Habakkuk, questions were posed to help the church sort through its convoluted thinking. Striking images were offered in detail. The prophecy talked about fish of the sea and creeping things with no ruler over them, of hooks, dragnets trapping people, and offerings of incense in celebration of such entrapments. Could they not look into the ways of their heart and worship and see how far they had strayed from the Lord?

The sensual church was not pursuing the good and truths of the Word. They were interested in establishing a church of comfort and simplistic ease. The hard sayings of the Word—those things that were intended to help them fight and overcome inherited tendencies toward evil—were seen as impractical, hard, threatening, and unfair teachings.

The Word of the Lord was being tailored to the popular views. Teachings were not given with the Lord in mind but were for the adulation and consensus of teachers and leaders instructing the people. The Lord grieved over this evil and the effect it was having in His church. There was no interest in the infinite and eternal things of heaven.

In the minds of the people, God was reduced to ineffective stature, and they believed He was unconcerned with the plight of the common folk and the simple-hearted. The Lord put this concept right before their eyes. He said in Habakkuk's prophecy what was hidden within their hearts. They blamed the Lord for things that were of their own choosing.

But placed in all of these negative representations was a shinning truth: "**We shall not die.**" Divine Truth will not cause "the righteous to die with the wicked..." Good cannot die, and it will be separated from evil. In the end, as always, the Lord and His New Church will prevail. The mission of the New Church is eternal, and nothing will stop its fruition. Those called to the Lord and His church can say with joy: "We shall not die" in the dragnet and on the hooks of hell. We have a Leader who will not leave us nor forget us in our moments of peril. He is our eternal rock, and He has pure eyes that can see through the thickest and darkest plans of the wicked.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 1:12-17*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. Did you grasp a sense of how great the Lord's grief is for the church? What brought this home to you?
2. What did the images of the hooks and dragnets show you about what hell seeks to do?
3. Popular consensus can be a powerful net or web. Have you ever heard someone give in and be swayed by the thinking of someone they respected? "So-and-so is so much more educated in these matters than I am." We have a doctrine warning us against the "persuasive faith."
4. Are there some hard teachings in the Word that bother you? Do you look for some "smooth" way to get around those "hard" doctrines?
5. Have you dealt sufficiently with the world's stated view that God is indifferent to the hurts and injustices of the innocent? Have you had a conversation with someone who wants to know why bad things happen to good people? What did they say? What did you say?
6. "We will not die" is a rallying cry. Such a statement will strike terror in the heart of the hells. It seems right and useful that we carry these words in our heart when we do battle with hell. What do you think?

Chapter Two

HABAKKUK 2:1-3

"I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart, and watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am corrected. Then the Lord answered me and said: 'Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come. It will not tarry.'"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “The coming of the Lord: what will then take place.”

AC 9416 [3]

- “Moreover, ‘writing’ and ‘engraving’ on ‘tables’ signify in the Word those things which must be impressed on the memory and on the life, and which are therefore to be lasting, as in the following passages...Habakkuk 2:2, 3...”

Doctrine of the Lord 4

- “...I shall in this first chapter merely adduce passages from the Word which contain the expressions...‘in that time,’ in which by...‘time’ is meant the Lord’s advent.” Among the many citations given, *Habakkuk 2:2-3* is quoted as an example.

Coronis 60

- “Now follow some passages concerning the Coming of the Lord, collected from the prophecies of the Old Word; which are these...” *Habakkuk 2:3* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

"I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart..."

- “Watch therefore...signifies an assiduous application of life in accordance with the precepts of faith, which is ‘to watch.’” (*AC 4638 [10]*)
- To “be watchful” signifies that they should be in truths and in a life according to them. By ‘watching’ in the Word, nothing else is signified; for he who learns truths and lives according to them, is like one who is awakened out of

sleep and becomes watchful. But he who is not in truths...is like one who sleeps and dreams." (*AR* 158)

- To "stand over Moses...signifies to consult truth Divine, to await an answer from it, and to do according to this, that is, to obey." (*AC* 8686)
- "...the expressions 'to walk,' 'to stand,' and 'to sit,'... 'to walk' pertains to the life of thought from intention, 'to stand' to the life of the intention from the will, and 'to sit' to the life of the will, thus it is life's being (*esse*)."
(*AE* 687 [6])
- "By 'standing before God', is signified to hear and do what He commands..." (*AR* 366)
- "Ramparts" in the Potts translation of the *Arcana* is rendered "outworks." The *King James Version* calls "ramparts" "towers." *Webster's Dictionary* adds the words "tower," "bulwark," and "protective barrier" as possible synonyms. In Elliot's translation of *AC* 5149 [3], the word "ramparts" is used: "For falsity attacks the truths which are defenders of good, those truths being so to speak the ramparts behind which good resides."
- *AE* 278 describes a "tower" as signifying "the Lord's guard and providence."
- *AE* 922 describes a "tower" as signifying "interior truths from...good which look to heaven."
- *AC* 8581 describes a "bulwark" as "the truth of faith, for combat is waged from this truth both against falsities and against evils."

"And watch to see what He will say to me..."

- Can we see what is being said here? Habakkuk is preparing himself to take directions from the Lord.
- The emphasis is on listening. There is not a dialogue going on at this moment. Habakkuk is showing obedience to the Lord and readiness to follow the precepts of the Lord's Word.

"...and what I will answer when I am corrected."

- *AE* 471 gives the meaning of "answering and saying" as "being influx and perception, 'to answer' meaning influx..."
- To be "corrected" involves the maintenance of equilibrium. "...no evil can befall anyone without being instantly counterbalanced; and when there is a preponderance of evil, the evil or evil-doer is chastised by the law of equilibrium...for the end that good may come. Heavenly order consists in such a form and the consequent equilibrium; and that order is formed, disposed, and preserved by the Lord alone, to eternity."
(*AC* 689)
- "I will answer when I am corrected" illustrates a heart willing to be corrected by the Lord's law of equilibrium.

"Then the Lord answered me and said: 'Write the vision and make it plain on tablets...'"

- *AC 8620* teaches that the command to write a memorial in a book “signifies...perpetual remembrance...”
- To write the words of the Lord signifies “truths Divine impressed on the life by the Lord.” (*AC 9386*)
- To “write to teach...signifies for remembrance and for instruction...” (*AC 9418*)
- *AR 63* teaches that “writing” signifies that the things being revealed are for posterity.
- *AC 1784* teaches that “a vision’ denotes inmost revelation, which is that of perception.”
- *AE 684 [21]* describes a vision as prophetic arcana concerning the Lord.
- Why must the writing be “plain” on the tablets? Consider this passage from *AC 39*: “That man cannot even think what is good, nor will what is good, consequently cannot do what is good, except from the Lord, **must be plain to every one from the doctrine of faith...**” (*Emphasis added.*)
- The meaning of “tablet” was given in *AC 9416 [3]* above.

“...that he may run who reads it.”

- *AE 558* explains the positive meaning of “running to battle” as being “the ardor in fighting...for which they must fight ardently...from a series of arguments and conclusions...” In other words, when the Word is given and understood, we are to “run” with the Lord and fight ardently using the truths of the internal sense.

“For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie.”

- *AC 2620* teaches that “the appointed time” signifies “when the rational was such as to receive...”
- *AC 2625[3]* teaches the “appointed time” means “the state when the rational was such that it was receptive...”
- “...it will speak and it will not lie...” Do we not see what is being taught here? The Lord’s Word is truth, and it never teaches that which is false. The Lord promises us that we shall know the truth and the truth shall set us free.

“Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come. It will not tarry.”

- As you read these words, did *Psalm 27:14* come to mind? “Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.”

- “Wait” signifies to long for the Lord’s coming. (*AE* 514 [11]) “Wait” signifies a sense of expectation that truth will be given. (*AE* 526 [11])

“Waiting” for the Lord’s knock on the door of our heart “signifies that the Lord is present to every one in the Word, and is there pressing to be received, and teaches how.” (*AR* 217)

Putting It All Together

P&P’s summary focuses our attention on the message of the Lord’s advent and what will then take place.

What do we note in the content of Habakkuk’s words? There is respect, dignity, an active sense of obedience, quietude, and a readiness to listen and make amends. Habakkuk is called by the Lord to be a faithful scribe. He is to write plainly what is good and true. The words he was to write were for the purpose of running with the Lord’s Word “into battle” with a series of arguments and conclusions to overthrow evil and falsity.

Patience, waiting on the Lord, being of good courage is required. For the advent of the Lord will come about. When it comes at the “appointed time,” the rational mind will be ready and receptive. How do we know this will happen? The Lord says so, and He does not lie. So, be of good courage. Don’t tire or grow weary waiting for the completion of the prophecy. “It will not tarry.” So, too, will be the fulfillment of the promise that the Lord’s New Church will be the crown of all churches.

The summary is “The coming of the Lord: what will then take place.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk* 2:1-3.

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION

1. Did you appreciate the word-image of Habakkuk standing watch on the tower, rampart, and bulwark?
2. Did his words, “I will watch and see what He will say,” inspire you to adopt the same attitude? How can you do this?
3. Asking for correction, for equilibrium from the Lord, for balance is a worthy prayer to have in the heart. Have you sensed or experienced the Lord bringing equilibrium to your life?

4. Getting the plain facts from the Lord requires a sustained effort. We need to read and reflect on the things of the Word regularly. Without this dedication, the “appointed time” of the rational mind becoming receptive will be delayed. Can we inspire ourselves and friends and family to read more often?
5. “Running with the Lord”: what a concept! Picture doing battle with evil and hell from sound principles and conviction. What example comes to mind that might explain the meaning of running with the Lord’s Word?
6. *Psalm 27:14* contains wonderful words. Have you heard Lori Odhner’s song using these words? “Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait I say, on the Lord!”
7. Patience carries with it a sense of trust in the Lord’s providence that all things will work toward a good end. “Be patient” is easier said than done in some cases. But when it comes to the Lord, His way is best for us. Like Habakkuk, we are called to obedience and a readiness to comply with what is good and true. We need to pray for patience so we can run with the Lord to fight off evil and hellish ways.

HABAKKUK 2:4-5

“Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith. Indeed, because he transgresses by wine, he is a proud man, and he does not stay at home. Because he enlarges his desire as hell, and he is like death, and cannot be satisfied, he gathers to himself all nations and heaps up for himself all peoples.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “The love of self: it grows, and man grows vile therefrom.”

Derived Doctrine

“Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him...”

- The “proud” and those who have a negative pride are described as “drunkards” or those who are steeped in the “crown of pride.” *AE 376 [31]* illustrates them as “insane in things spiritual because they believe themselves to be intelligent of themselves, and glory in it...in the other life [they] become like drunkards...and to confirm oneself in falsities is to confirm from oneself and not from the Lord.”
- “Pride” in the external man rises up “against the goods and truths of the internal [man].” (*AC 1585 [5]*)

- The ““waters of the proud”...signify falsities favoring the love of self and confirming it, also the falsities of doctrine from self-intelligence...” (*AE* 518 [35])
- “...his soul is not upright...” A soul not being upright reminds us of the “upside down” person. There are many references in the Writings describing such a state. *AC* 9128 is one that represents that teaching: “...with those who are in evil and thence in falsity, the internal man is closed above and open beneath. From this it is that they see all things upside down; the world as everything, and heaven as nothing. It is also for this reason that before the angels they appear upside down; with the feet upward, and the head downward.”
- Not being “upright” is another way of saying they were not honest, moral, just, conscientious, straightforward, or fair and honorable with the truths of the Lord.

“...but the just shall live by his faith.”

- The “just” are also called the “righteous.” *AE* 458 [6] describes the “righteous,” or the just, as signifying “those who are in good, for by the ‘righteous’ in the Word those who are in the good of love are meant...”
- To “live” or to have life signifies to have the Lord within one’s spiritual life. (*AC* 6672, 9124) In *AR* 1 and 60, we read that the Lord is “He that is living...who alone is life, and from whom alone life is...”
- There are many passages in the Writings defining “faith.” What one would you pick? I’d like to share my favorite passage from *AC* 3863 [12]:
- “...‘seeing’ signifies having faith, for the Lord is seen only by faith, because **faith is the eye of love, and love being the life of faith...**” (*Emphasis added.*)

“Indeed, because he transgresses by wine, he is a proud man...”

- To understand the meaning of “transgresses by wine,” let’s first look at the meaning of “wine.” In the good sense, “wine” represents **a wish** to investigate what belongs to faith. (*AC* 1071) “Transgression,” we are taught, is to be in evils that are contrary to truth. (*AC* 6563) Combining these teachings, we get a sense of a proud, self-centered person, wishing to twist the things of faith for self-advantage. Pleasing self and ignoring the Lord is a transgression of faith.

“...and he does not stay at home.”

- *AC* 9481 speaks of the meaning of “home” or “habitation” as denoting “heaven where the Lord is...”

- We get a picture of a restless soul who goes on a hunt to find other “gods” to serve. That journey away from the Lord is wayward and impetuously fickle in the choices of life.
- Now, look at what happens, in the remaining portion of this verse, to the wayward heart moving away from heaven and the Lord.

“Because he enlarges his desire as hell, and he is like death, and cannot be satisfied, he gathers to himself all nations and heaps up for himself all peoples.”

- This person “enlarges his desire **as hell**.” Hell wants to take everything from the Lord.
- Hell is a skeleton, a lifeless form that truly is death.
- Hell is never satisfied with what is given by the Lord. It desires everything and wants to take from and plunder the Lord.
- Recall the lot of those in hell who hoarded things. They sit in their dingy quarters counting out their gold. It is “fool’s gold” of no actual value but so very important to them, heaps of worthless nuggets representing the sum total of what they did with their lives.
- *AE 724 [27]* speaks of the “nation from afar” as signifying “the falsity of evil, which is the falsity of the sensual man, destroying truths...”
- The image of heaping up “all peoples” gives us a view of the persuasiveness of sensual people as they wander restlessly from their home—heaven and the Lord.
- How did *P&P* sum it up for us? “The love of self: and man grows vile therefrom.”

Putting It All Together

This portion of the prophecy of Habakkuk paints for us a picture of the desires of love of self. Love of self begins with pride; the transgression of wine; the loss of a zeal to study and follow the Lord; the absence of interest in staying at home with the Lord; a deep unhappiness with what is available from the Lord; a restless, wandering quest that has no end in view except the enlarging desire to “heap up” things; an attempt to legitimize personal beliefs with the gathering of other people who share these opinions. Thus, the sensual person pits human prudence against the Divine Prudence.

What does the Lord see within this “proud” person? He sees spiritual death, unhappiness, and the insatiable desire for things that will bring no satisfaction to the “soul.” Habakkuk’s prophecy provides us with a powerful contrast to call our heart and mind to a state of humility and change so we can “stay at home” and be content with the Lord and heaven.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 2:4-5*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- This portion of our study has the words “**the just shall live by his faith...**” But these words can be missed or forgotten with the detailed description of the proud man. As with so many things in life, our eye is pulled to the negative. Do you see the importance of taking the affirmative “just faith” with us when we visit and consider the ways of the proud man?
- Impatience, intolerance, and dissatisfaction with our lot in life can be fodder for the sensual side of our being. A feeling of restless can set in if we allow the “proud” hells to lead our thoughts. Looking for satisfaction elsewhere causes us to “leave home.” Does this description strike a responsive chord? Have we done this kind of mental wandering? Wanting to get out on our own may call us to leave town and home. Jobs might call us from home. On that level, it is necessary to leave home. But our lesson is dealing with the spiritual distancing of heart and mind from the Lord and heaven. Such a decision does not work well for the care and health of our soul. What are your thoughts on this last point?
- In our lesson, transgressing by wine refers to the loss of that sense of discovery and curiosity about the things of faith. Has that been an experience of yours? How have you dealt with this problem?
- Justification of action and choices is a daily occurrence with the sensual person. How do sensual people quiet their consciences? They turn to the world and other people to validate their choices. They seek out morose examples that seem to overwhelmingly prove their point. “The just shall live by his faith” is the attitude that keeps us from “heaping up” falsities. Keeping true to the faith of the Lord keeps us “upright” and focused. Can you picture the “upside down” person? Their head is in hell and their feet pointing upward toward earth. The upright have their head in heaven and feet on the earth. This is the way the Lord wants His people to live. Hell wants the opposite. Habakkuk’s message calls us to be “upright.” As we hear Habakkuk’s words, are we motivated, and cheered on, to keep an upright spirit and a “just heart”?

HABAKKUK 2:6-7

“Will not all these take up a proverb against him, and a taunting riddle against him, and say, ‘Woe to him who increases what is not his—how long? And to him who loads

himself with many pledges'? Will not your creditors rise up suddenly? Will they not awaken who oppress you? And you will become their booty."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “He is held in contempt by others...”

AC 6669 [2]

- This passage refers to *Habakkuk 2:6-7* and notes that “to lade himself with clay’ denotes with evil.”

Derived Doctrine

“Will not all these take up a proverb against him, and a taunting riddle against him...”

- Who are “all these” who will take up a “proverb and riddle” against the proud? Will there be a turning of popular opinion within the nations against the “proud”? Or is it a teaching regarding the vulnerability of falsity to the corrective nature of the Lord’s infinite truths? The latter appears to be closer to the heart of what the spiritual sense would want us to know and believe. The lies of hell will catch up with the proud. They will be exposed before all people who love the Lord and seek His New Church. The Lord will use a myriad of truths to combat the falsity of the sensual person. The diversity of the Lord’s truth will be within “the just” who live by their faith. It will be a network of truths forged by the Lord to stand up against the enemies of the Lord, an arsenal so well suited for battle that hell will not know how to defend itself. There will be many minds, many truths, and outstanding order within the Church of the Lord.
- *AC 7236 [3]* offers us this thought regarding the countless variety of truths. “Seeing then that truths are so countless, it can be seen that by means of the conjunctions so many varieties arise that one thing can never be the same as another...What then may not arise from thousands and myriads of various things such as truths. And this is confirmed by the common maxim, ‘many men many minds,’ that is, there are as many diversities of ideas as there are men.”
- A “proverb” is a profound maxim. It is truth couched obscurely. But like a medicated time-release capsule, the truths within the epigrammatic saying release their spiritual antidotal remedies to overcome all the diseases of falsity the proud had believed invincible or incurable. One after another of their lies will be exposed in the presence of Divine truth. Spiritual health will be restored within the Lord’s New Church.

- The unfolding and dismantling of falsity is a simple task in the ways of the Lord. Hell will see the Lord's truth as a "taunting riddle." Why a riddle? Webster's Dictionary sheds some light on the meaning of the word "riddle." Consider this interesting explanation: A **riddle** is a "sieve with coarse meshes...to separate, as grain from chaff, with a riddle; to sift..." How could a riddle be like a sieve? What would it separate? To answer our questions, let's look at how Swedenborg uses this word (*chiydah*, in the original language) in the Writings. It is translated as "enigma" in many places, and less frequently as "subtle," "mocking," and "interpretive" in discussion of verses from several books of the Word. When we consider this word in connection with the internal sense explained to us in the passage from *P&P*, it seems to mean a way of speaking that is indirect, somewhat like the Lord speaking in parables to the children of Israel so that they would not do harm to truth they were not prepared to receive. This leads us back to the word "riddle," which we use to refer to words that are indirect, that have a hidden, "enigmatic" meaning. A riddle can separate those who understand its inner meaning from those who are puzzled by it or misinterpret it. Where an angel might see evidence of the Lord's love, evil spirits will see only a "taunting riddle."

"Woe to him who increases what is not his—how long?"

- The signification of the word "woe" is manifold. In *AC 3755*, we are taught: "'Woe' is a form of expression signifying the danger of eternal damnation..." *AR 416* teaches, "By 'woe' is signified lamentation over the evil with any one and thence over his unhappy state..." *AE 1165* explains that "'woe, woe, that great city'...signifies lamentation over their doctrine and religious persuasion..."
- "Increasing," in the positive sense, means to "ask for nothing but what contributes to the Lord's kingdom and to himself for salvation..." (*AE 815 [10]*) In the opposite sense, we can see that the disorderly do not wish for the increase of the Lord and His kingdom. Instead, the self wants everything to serve its worldly ambitions to "increase" in power, wealth, and prestige. Underlying the increase of self is a wish to be "godlike." There is only one God, and we cannot take from Him that which is rightfully His.
- "How long?" The Lord is Infinite. We are finite. The Lord "is," and mankind "is not." There is no ratio between **what is** and **what is not**. Therefore, the question "how long" is easy to answer. A person's ambitions for self are not something that has any extension into eternity. The sensual person's choices are like a blink of the eye in comparison to the infinite choices of the Lord.

“...And to him who loads himself with many pledges? Will not your creditors rise up suddenly? Will they not awaken who oppress you? And you will become their booty.”

- We have three questions to consider. What does it mean to load self with many pledges? What does it mean to have creditors that rise up suddenly? And who awakens to oppress?
- To understand the answers to these questions, let's begin with an understanding of the “conjugal principle.” The “conjugal principle” is present in the tiniest details of each human being, both male and female...The male's conjugal principle is designed to be linked with the female's and vice versa, even in the tiniest details...The reason for this duality is that one belongs to the will, and the other to the intellect, and they work together so wonderfully that they act as a one.” (*CL 316 [4]*) See also *AC 3610 [4]*. This reference teaches that those who are to be “born again” have this conjugal principle hidden within them, but it is necessary for the endeavor to be vivified and made anew in the process of regeneration.
- “Pledges” in the positive sense are given as “memorials” to be “suspended in sight” to help remind conjugal love of its promises of everlasting faithfulness; to help the mind to be exhilarated at the sight of the pledges; to remind one that the favors of the conjugal are “dearer and more precious than all other gifts...**pledges are stabilizers of conjugal love...**” (*CL 300 [3]*, *emphasis added*) In the negative sense, one can see that the overloading of **empty** words, memorials, promise of faithfulness, and fake zeal would be a sad weighting down of the heart and mind so that the tiniest hidden conjugal principle would fail to elevate the person into the spiritual process of regeneration. Instead of vivifying the heart and mind, the negative deadens promises and cuts off a person's spiritual life. In place of a free-will offering of heart and mind to bring about spiritual conjunction, there is an emphasis on external praise and pomposity that leads to the disjunction of heart and mind.
- A “creditor” is someone who lends. In our world, a creditor is essentially someone who lends money or materials. On a deeper level, a “creditor” is someone who communicates and shares truth. A teacher, preacher, parent, or peer may be a gifted communicator of ideas and may inspire those who listen to or read their words. As individual and unique as the presentation of truth may be, none of us may lay claim to being the originator of a truth. The inspiration and originality of all truth is from but one source. The Lord alone is truth. Our text makes a profound point. Will not the Lord, as our Creditor, rise up suddenly to bring us to accountability? Will not the Lord judge us according to what we have done with what we have known? His judgment is not based on what we have not yet mastered. His demand for accountability will come from what we did with what He loaned us. How often did we come to the source of all truth? Did we hunger and thirst for His Word, or did we satisfy the longing of our souls with the words of temporal and finite things?

- Hell sees itself as a “creditor.” Hellish spirits remind us often of how indebted we are to their imagined power. If any truth of the Lord comes into our love system, these spirits become uncomfortable. Combats and temptation are inspired by hell. War is declared with the goal to oust any truth of the Lord’s. The goal of hell is to take away our “booty.” What is the meaning of “booty”? Consider these teachings. *AC 576* describes “booty” as “remains in the internal man...because they are insinuated as by stealth among so many evils and falsities, and it is by these remains that all blessing comes.” Is it any wonder then that hell wants to do away with our booty? *TCR 117* describes hell as an “army of robbers or rebels which invade a kingdom or a city...set fire...plunder...divide the spoil...rejoice and exult...” But redemption “...may be compared to the lawful king who advances against these rebels...recovers the booty, and restores it to his subjects, thereafter establishing order...and [rendering the kingdom or city] secure against like assaults.”
- The message here is that hell, the sensual person, the unregenerate will be held up in contempt by those who follow, and everyone will see a glimpse of reality through the eyes of the Lord. The contemptuous feeling is not from a state of being uncharitable. Instead, it comes from a clear-sighted view of the attempt of hell to make truth seem like falsity and falsity seem like truth.

Putting It All Together

To grow spiritually, we need the Lord’s parables, proverbs, and riddles. Why? Only those who seek the meaning of the inner sense will find the truth. Insincere efforts to study the Word will offer little help in fighting off falsities. The hidden and profound spiritual sense has a power to find hell’s weak spots. The “riddle” of the Word—the coarse meshes and sieves—separates the sand from the gold. Sand represents the falsities of hell, and gold represents the pure love of the Lord.

- “Woe” to the person who prefers the unhappy state of hell.
- “Woe” to the person who wants to replace the Lord with self. Such a choice has little life or extension into heaven.
- “Woe” to the person who loads empty platitudes in the mouth and follows through with none of the pledges or covenants made with the Lord.
- “Woe” to those who make the human traditions of greater importance than the words of the Lord. Popular consensus will not sway the ways of the Lord and heaven. The Word of the Lord will rise up “suddenly.” The Lord, as a Creditor, will rise up and make the determination as to who was sincere in the gathering of truths for the use of heaven and the Lord.
- “Woe” to the hellish spirits who want to suppress and carry away the “booty” of remains. Remains are hidden and are the source of happiness. The Lord as a “legal king” will rally His truths to advance against hell. He will recover all “booty” and restore it to His subjects. His army will establish order. He will render all remains secure against like assaults. (*TCR 117*)

The spiritually secure will feel contempt toward hell. They will feel a loathing and distaste for the twisting of truth into falsity and the attempt to make falsity seem like truth.

The Lord says "Woe" to the ways of hell.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 2:6-7*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- How well are you able to look at the literal sense of these verses and draw out the spiritual sense to apply it to life situations?
- Are the "woes" powerful as you look at them from the Lord's perspective?
- How about the meaning of the word "riddle"? Had you ever heard or thought of a riddle being a coarse sieve to separate the grain from the chaff?
- How well do you picture the "booty" as remains? Note that the Writings also define our "booty" as the source of all happiness.
- The description of the Lord as a "legal king" of His subjects and of His return of the "booty" was quite comforting. What was not said, but felt, was that His work is selfless. He returns every one of the stolen goods. He does not claim a "finder's fee." In addition, He restores order and confidence, and He guarantees that hell will not return to plunder again.
- How strong is your contempt for hell's disorder? The Writings teach us that the "greater the horror that is conceived for evils and falsities...the less do evil spirits dare to approach, for they cannot endure aversion and horror..." (*AC 1740 [3]*) It is necessary to take a stand for the way of the Lord and disavow the ways of hell.
- Read once again the explanation of "pledges" in *CL 300 [3]*:
 - Pledges are memorials.
 - Pledges are "suspended in sight" to remind us of and help us to keep our promises of everlasting faithfulness to the Lord.
 - Pledges are to help exhilarate the mind.
 - Pledges are to remind us that the conjugal principles are "dearer and more precious than all other gifts."
 - Pledges are "stabilizers of conjugal love."Don't these points cause us to look at our pledges more carefully?
- When are we loading too many pledges? When we are doing things for show? When we are doing things to fulfill empty tradition?

HABAKKUK 2:8

"Because you have plundered many nations, all the remnant of the people shall plunder you, Because of men's blood and the violence of the land and the city, and of all who dwell in it."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...and they pervert the goods and truths of the church."

Derived Doctrine

"Because you have plundered many nations, all the remnant of the people shall plunder you..."

- *Jeremiah 30:16* teaches, "Those who plunder you shall become plundered, and all who prey upon you I will make a prey."
- "Nations" represent goods that stem from charity. (*AC 1259 [4]*)
- "Plunder" or plundering represents "taking away." (*AC 6920*) But taking away what? Those who seek to take away the goods that stem from charity are skilled in the art of "mussitation." (*AR 655*) Mussitation, or sophistry, is a purposeful blurring of facts. It is turning things this way and that way to prove a point. Loyalty to truth is not a goal of this activity. "Mussitators" want to show how clever they are by proving whatever suits their fancy. This is more important to them than finding the Lord's truth. When the Lord plunders the perverted, His purpose is to remove, or take away, "from those steeped in falsities and evils arising from them..." (*AC 6920*)
- The remnant, or residue of truth stored up by the Lord in the interior person, will be the means by which He will expose and take away the crafty and twisted sophistry of the false and evil. Their tricks and deceptions will no longer hold together. Falsity and evil will be thoroughly taken away.

"...Because of men's blood and the violence of the land and the city, and all who dwell in it."

- "Blood" in the positive sense has reference to charity, or love of the neighbor, and love to the Lord. (*AC 1001 [2]*) To do violence to the land: "Land' signifies the man of the church...it also signifies that which is essential, namely, love to the Lord and charity toward the neighbor, for on this they all hang." (*AC 2571*)
- Does everyone do violence to the land and the city? These words are directed to the violators who **dwell in the land and city**. Those dwelling outside of the land and city are not included. Why should we make a point of this? A

dwelling represents where one's heart resides. The Lord is seeking to get us to consider what kind of dwelling place we have. Is our dwelling place a place where spiritual good carefully nurtures the truths of the church? Is the dwelling place of our inmost natural mind a place where memory-knowledges dwell to serve the Lord? (AC 6101) Is our dwelling place full of discordant things, in which Divine good is, that are not in any agreement with the Lord's truths? (AC 3154 [2]) The dwelling place of the evil is an active love that is dedicated to doing violence to the things of charity (blood) to the Lord and the neighbor.

Putting It All Together

Those who pervert the goods and truths of the church will be "taken away." Those who sought to plunder and drain the life's blood of the church and its doctrines of charity shall not prevail.

These words must be stored in the remnant of our dwelling places. Our heart needs to hold fast to the Lord's promise regarding the ultimate outcome of hellish efforts. How diligently is hell trying to convince us that it is more powerful than the Lord? With its "mussitations"—its bag of tricks and insane reasoning—black is made to look like white, and white is made to look black. Hell brags of its versatility, its ability to prove both with equal zeal. Hellish spirits care little for the propriety of truth, so within their dwelling place, there is a sad and dismal discordant sphere. The Lord and His order have no standing in their value system.

We have been given a vision from the Lord that He will "take them away." Those who wish to plunder will be plundered. Those who wished to make others their prey will become the prey. The Lord's remnant will victoriously be the last ones left standing in the day of battle against evil and falsity.

"And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen!'" (*Deuteronomy 27:15*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 2:8*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Have you ever been dazzled by someone's ability to form "logic" that will allow them to get what they want? It is amazing how quickly we can conjure up "legitimate" reasons why we did what we did. It doesn't matter that it had overtones of selfishness; we can still find a way to justify it.

- What hell wishes upon the Lord and the neighbor returns to hell's self. We have looked at this law of retaliation before. Do you think it is a "fair" law?
- Having confidence in the Lord is essential in our regeneration process. Can we build up that confidence with the reading of *Habakkuk*? Do you think you might share some of this story with a friend or family member?

HABAKKUK 2:9-10

"Woe to him who covets evil gain for his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of disaster! You give shameful counsel to your house, cutting off many peoples, and sin against your soul."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "They are in their own intelligence, owing to which they are puffed up."

Derived Doctrine

"Woe to him who covets evil gain for his house, that he may set his nest on high..."

- To "covet" is to have an inordinate desire for things that belong to someone else. It could be a desire for someone's wife or husband, or for possession of wealth, reputation, and standing within the community. Instead of feeling joy for the successes of others, as angels would, people who covet feel sadness that they do not have what their neighbors have.
- *AC 7374* describes coveting, noting that "Those are in the love of the world who desire to possess themselves of the goods of others **by artful devices**, and still more those who do this **by cunning and deceit**." (*Emphasis added.*)
- *AC 8909* warns that "one must beware of the love of self and the world...lest the evils [of coveting]...become of the will..." This same teaching appears in *AC 8910 [3]*, where it is noted that by "thou shalt not covet" is signified that **one must beware** lest evils become of the will..." (*Emphasis added.*)
- "Gain" is described in *AC 8711* as "the falsity and evil which persuade and draw away from truth and good. By 'gain' in general is signified **all the falsity from evil that perverts the judgments of the mind...**" (*Emphasis added.*)
- A "house" signifies remains in the internal person. (*AC 576 [3]*) A "house" signifies the things that are of the will, and a "house" signifies the church. (*AC 710*) A "house" signifies that which has been collected; a "house" is accumulated memory-knowledges. (*AC 1486, 1488*)

“...that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of disaster!”

- Setting one’s nest “on high” is explained in *AC 10582* as representing “those who exalt themselves above others, believing that they are more learned than all others, when yet they are in falsities, and even cannot see truths...”
- What could appear more calamitous or disastrous to the proud, who have exalted themselves above others, than to be pulled down from their lofty heights by the Lord? All of their falsities are then exposed and shown for what they “are not,” and the Lord’s truth is shown for “what it is.” We get from the literal sense the sadness of the evil position. They imagined themselves secure from any “pulling down” by the Lord.

“You give shameful counsel to your houses, cutting off many peoples, and sin against your soul.”

- This verse sums up the spiritual problem of a “puffed-up” self-intelligence. It gives shameful counsel to your houses. Instead of helping people find conjunction with the Lord, it severs this conjunction, and lastly, it brings harm to the soul.
- Israel’s choices portray the antithesis of the Lord’s wish for His church and the people within His Church. He longs to give good counsel for each and every soul. The self-centered ignore and devalue the importance of eternal ends. The Lord seeks out souls to be conjoined eternally to Him. “Behold all souls are mine, says the Lord.” (*Ezekiel 18:4*) Hell doesn’t want the Lord to have any part of its soul; it wants to cut Him out—permanently.

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes the verse under study with these words: **“They are in their own intelligence, owing to which they are puffed up.”**

Hell and its legion of falsifications become forms of covetousness and gain. Hellish spirits want everyone to bow down to them. Their greatest desire is to get the Lord to fall before them. They want to dominate others so that they may be served. To accomplish this feat of ultimate self-love, they construct lofty systems of thought that justify their position. They become so enamored with their thoughts that they insanely believe they are “untouchable.” They have no fear about the “day of the Lord.”

As always, the Lord gets the last word. He will bring down the lofty nests. He will deliver truth from the disastrous path of hell. The Lord, rightfully, points to the shameful counsel a “puffed-up” self-intelligence gave to the internal person, to the church, to the collection of memory-knowledges. The people in the church languished under such leadership. Instead of a church that cared for and loved the

souls of the people, there was the presence of hell working to sever the conjunction between the Lord and His people. Falsity and evil perverted “the judgments of the mind.”

The resounding good news from the Lord is that the efforts of hell will not work; hell will not succeed. Such words have to be heard, repeated, and believed so that the Lord can use us in the battle of regeneration. Hell can’t stand such convictions of confidence in the power of the Lord.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 2:9-10*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Have you ever confronted someone with a “puffed-up” self-intelligence?
- If people are wrapped up in the pride of self-intelligence, do their forms of clever reasoning make them skillful at justifying their own ends?
- Is self-intelligence, in your experience, sure of its safety from disaster?
- Do you see self-intelligence as a form of covetousness and a desire for gain?
- What examples might you site of “shameful counsel”?
- What examples might you use to show how self-intelligence could cut off the relationship of the people with the Lord?
- How does a person sin against the soul? The soul is indestructible. Only the Lord knows where the soul is. Do we sin against the soul by allowing a hard core of resistance and neglect to be built around the soul to keep the Lord from touching our remains? What do you think?
- Nests are a series of individual twigs interlaced with great care and patience. What does a nest mean in the positive sense? What does a nest represent in the negative sense? To answer these questions, read *DP 317* about thinking analytically and forming conclusions.

HABAKKUK 2:11

“For the stone will cry out from the wall, and the beam from the timbers will answer it.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “They judge from externals alone.”

AC 643 [2]

- “The ‘stone’ denotes the lowest degree of the understanding; and the ‘wood’ the lowest of the will, which ‘answers’ when anything is drawn from sensuous knowledge (scientifico sensuali).”

AR 774

- “...that ‘wood’ signifies good...may be in some degree evident from these passages...Habakkuk 2:11...‘wood’ in the opposite sense [signifies] what is evil and cursed...”

AE 746 [16]

- “That ‘wood’ signifies good, and in the contrary sense evil, may be seen in the Arcana Coelestia, numbers 643, 3720, 4943, 8354, 8740...Moreover, in some passages ‘beam’ is mentioned, and it signifies the falsity of evil (as in...Habakkuk 2:11...)...”

AE 1145 [8]

- “In Habakkuk...2:11...This means that evil confirms and incites falsity; the ‘wall out of which the stone crieth’ signifies man devoid of truths, and thus wishing to be taught falsity; ‘the beam that answereth from the wood’ signifies man destitute of good, ‘wood’ signifying the evil that confirms falsity and agrees with it.”

Derived Doctrine

“For the stone will cry out from the wall...”

- “That a ‘cry’ denotes falsity, and ‘sin’ evil, is evident from the signification in the Word of a ‘cry.’ That a ‘cry’ signifies falsity can be evident to no one unless he knows the internal sense of the Word. The word sometimes occurs in the Prophets, and when vastation and desolation are there treated of, it is said that men ‘howl and cry,’ by which is signified that goods and truths have been vastated...by which in the internal sense falsity is described...” (AC 2240)
- A “wall” in the positive sense signifies “the Word in the sense of the letter from which is the doctrine of the New Church...for that sense protects the spiritual sense...as the wall does a city and its inhabitants...” (AR 898) A “wall” in the negative sense “signifies falsity assumed as a principle, and by application of the Word from the sense of the letter made to appear as truth...” (AE 237 [5])

Putting It All Together

The key to pulling this verse together is found in the combination of teachings from *P&P* and *AE* 237 [5].

P&P calls us to notice how the proud and self-centered make decisions: “they judge from externals.” These are quick decisions based on appearances and the expediency of the moment. Such people look to what works for the short term and ignore the decisions that work toward eternity. In a word, they are people who are governed by effects and not ends.

To describe what spiritual effects come from external judgments, a wall is mentioned. Why a wall? A “wall” in the negative sense is described as “falsity assumed as a principle, and by application of the Word from the sense of the letter made to appear as truth...” A “stone” crying out from the “wall” denotes the lowest degree of understanding and the “wood” (timbers) answering denotes the “lowest of the will which ‘answers’ when anything is drawn from sensuous knowledge.” (*AC* 643 [2])

Can we put some kind of example in place to illustrate how we can understand and use the spiritual meaning of this passage? Each reader will be able to draw an example when they consider how easy it is to pull whatever we want from the Word to prove a point. Jacob skillfully stole, with his mother’s help, Esau’s first-born rights. Jacob got even with his father-in-law, Laban, by subtlety building and enriching his wealth through clever breeding techniques. David stole another man’s wife. Abraham lied about his wife being his sister. Lot had children with his daughters. Using these external examples, one could work up a case for clever deception, lying, adultery, and incest. If Biblical heroes employed these tactics for their own ends, the external wall-builders ask, why can’t we do the same when the immediate moment calls for lying, stealing, deception, and self-preservation?

Or, one could cite all of these examples to question the holiness of the Word. After all, the Word repeatedly describes war, killing, cruelty, and failure in its teachings. The hells try to convince us to devalue the Word with the idea of “Who wants to fill their mind with such depressing topics? Healthy minds must shun depression and failure.”

False principles made to look like truth will build walls between people and the Lord. When the walls are in place, it is only “logical” that there would be a cry from the “wood” or “timbers,” the lowest things of our will (affection), to justify falsified external reasoning.

What does the Lord want us to do with this passage?

- Tear down all mental and spiritual altars at which we worship and justify falsity.
- Build spiritual altars with stones not hewn (cut or shaped) with human tools.
- Use that which is internal, spiritual, and eternal as a positive wall against hell and its insane falsities.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 2:11*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Thinking and judging from externals alone happens often in our lives. Without being morose, I'm sure we can recall a time when we made an impetuous and poor decision. With our pride at stake, we probably did our best to tenaciously defend the mistake. Do you recall erecting "walls" to defend decisions? It is a common tendency to build "walls" of excuses to justify ourselves and to erect "timbers" of emotions to support our reasoning. It isn't easy to admit to others our errors. Is it any easier to admit them to the Lord? Do we take the time to ask the Lord to help us with our choices?
- Our country just experienced two devastating storms. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita catastrophically leveled homes and businesses and took lives. New Orleans was on its way to recovering from Katrina when Rita hit, tearing open the temporary levee and re-flooding streets and homes. Amid the confusion and contamination, one of the residents was interviewed while standing in his house filled with toxic mud and the chaos of lost personal goods. He remarked to the reporter: "I have tried to live a good life. I have always treated my neighbors with honesty and respect. What did I do wrong to deserve these two floods?" Implied in his question was a belief in God's anger and punishment directed at him. He seemed to be asking, "Why is God punishing me, a good man, for something I didn't consciously do wrong?" Many people in hard circumstances experience this feeling. Why do you think this happens? What might be the source of the belief implied in this man's statement?
- A false wall is under construction in the interview quoted above. How can we tear this negative wall down in the face of the obvious emotional and personal distress? The loss of life and personal belongings offer apparent evidence to support this man's view. What will build a positive wall based on eternal ends? Is it a matter of "time heals all wounds"?
- Lastly, what important message is this portion of the prophecy giving about the building up of the New Church? The Holy City of the New Jerusalem has walls. The walls are adorned with precious jewels. The walls are for the protection of all within.

HABAKKUK 2:12-13

"Woe to him who builds a town with bloodshed, who establishes a city by iniquity! Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts that the peoples labor to feed the fire, and nations weary themselves in vain?"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “A curse rests upon those who hatch doctrine out of falsities.”

Derived Doctrine

In a slight departure from our usual format, let us first consider some derived doctrine concerning the meaning of “curse” and “hatching” (mentioned in P&P, above) so that the verse in Habakkuk 2:12 can come more fully into our understanding.

“A curse...”

- “A ‘rain’ in general signifies a blessing, and in the opposite sense a curse; when a blessing, it signifies the influx and reception of...truth that is of faith and of the good that is of charity...but when it [rain] signifies a curse, it signifies falsity that is contrary to the truth of faith, and evil that is contrary to the good of charity, for these are a curse.” (AC 7553)
- “...eminence may be a blessing or may be a curse, and that eminence as a blessing is from the Lord, and eminence as a curse is from the devil.” (AE 1188)

“...rests upon [resting, ideas based on] those who hatch doctrine out of falsities.”

- “...those who, from their own intelligence, have hatched for themselves dogmas from the Word...[and who] excel in cleverness from natural light (lumen), hatch dogmas for themselves...This is the origin of all heresies and all falsities in the Christian world. Intelligence from man’s proprium is from himself, but the intelligence which is not from his proprium is from the Lord...those...in the love of self who read the Word and collect dogmas [do so] for the sake of fame, glory, and honors. And as they are unable to see any truths, but can see falsities only, they collect and hatch such things from the Word as favor their loves and evils...”(AE 714 [10])

"Woe to him who builds a town with bloodshed..."

- "Woe signifies lamentation over calamity, danger, hardship, destruction...as the aversion from good and truth becomes successively more grievous in the church." (AE 531)
- "Woe signifies grievous lamentation over misfortune, unhappiness and damnation." (AR 769)
- "In the spiritual sense of the Word, a city and town signifies doctrine." (*The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine [NJHD]* 6)
- "...those who from the evil of the love of self...confirm...from the sense of the letter of the Word, then whatever evil they do from this false doctrine and others built upon this as a foundation...destroys the internal man, preventing any conscience from ever being formed...These are they spoken of in the Word who are said to be 'in bloods,' [bloodshed] for they are in cruel rage against the whole human race..." (AC 4818 [4])

"...who establishes a city by iniquity!"

- AE 1057 [3] provides us with a possible insight into the meaning of this verse. The Lord establishes a covenant with His church and people. He desires to plant within heaven and earth internal and spiritual things, and to earth He wants to give the stability of external or natural order. His covenant and laws are to "establish" a basis upon which truth can lead and govern the will of His people toward spiritual happiness. The opposite of this would be an endeavor to "disestablish" and destroy the Lord's covenant and order by "hatching" and by supplanting divine truth with human prudence.

"Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts that the peoples labor to feed the fire and nations weary themselves in vain?"

- "Behold" means keep in sight, look at, watch, survey, discern, consider.
- It is not the Lord of hosts who feeds the fire of self love. Instead, He desires to keep such fires from raging within our hearts and minds.
- The "Lord of Hosts" signifies all the goods and truths fighting against falsities and evils. (AE 453 [6])
- It is not the Lord of hosts who wearies the mind and soul of the disobedient.
- Who then is to blame? The "hatchers"; those who seek the eminence of self; those who trust human prudence above Divine order. It is the "themselves" who stoke the oven fires of disorder.
- To take the Lord's name "in vain" means "to profane and blaspheme...to turn truth into evil..." (AC 8882)

Putting It All Together

AE 714 [10] provides the key to the summation of this verse with this thought: Those who “hatch” dogmas for themselves from their own intelligence are “the origin of all heresies and all falsities in the Christian world.” And how do they hatch dogma for themselves? With “cleverness from natural light,” using passages from the Word, collecting what “favor[s] their loves and evils.”

Innovation, like so many other things in life, can be positive or negative. One’s intentions will determine whether innovation will lift up or pull down, whether it will lead to worship of the Lord or self. Self-examination is a hard process to undergo. We don’t like finding fault with ourselves. If anything, we like self-validation, praise, compliments. Hell knows this. Hellish spirits and people who are allowing themselves to be influenced by hell will quote others and will quote (misquote) Scripture skillfully in order to get what they want. This is what the evil spirits did with the Lord in the wilderness. So, why wouldn’t they do the same with us?

Do you recall a story in *II Kings 4:38-41*? Elisha returned from a trip to be with the sons of the prophets. There was a famine in the land. Elisha told them to put on the “large pot” and brew some stew. One of the prophets went out into the field and gathered a lapful of “wild” gourds, sliced them up, and put them into the pot of stew. When the stew was served, the sons of the prophets cried out, “Man of God, there is death in the pot!” What brought on the death in the pot? “...an ill-assorted mass of memory-knowledges” hatched in such a way from the wild gourds as to bring death into the pot. Elisha saved the pot of stew. He added a meal to it—truth from good—and nourishment returned to the stew. See *AC 3316 [4]* for further explanation of this passage.

Did the one son of the prophets go out into the field to purposely “poison” the stew? Didn’t he go out with the goal of adding some flavor to the contents? Didn’t he want to put some “body” into each bowl-full? Although we are not told what his intent was, we do know the results. There was death in the pot. The Lord had to make it right. The contents of the large pot were not thrown away; it was purified with the love of doctrine as drawn from the Lord’s Word. Innovation—hatching—the ill-assorted mass of memory-knowledges, all of these things can be cured and saved by the Lord alone. I think I am getting the message of our text. What ideas has it brought to you?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 2:12-13*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Does this lesson cause you to worry about being innovative in your life of worship?
- What innovative things have you seen come into the life of the church?
- Are there safeguards one can point to that will keep the “large pot” from becoming a pot of death?
- Traditional forms of worship can be just as deadly as innovative ones. How can we get the “meal” thrown in the pot to keep it spiritually healthy and nourishing?
- What are your thoughts about the son of the prophet going out into the field and gathering wild gourds? Do you identify with him, or do you find yourself suspecting his motives?
- There was a famine. There was a scarcity of foods. Any similarity of this to our day?
- Woe to him that builds a town with bloodshed.” What does this represent?
- *AC 1408 [3]* gives us a principle that must be remembered and applied **whenever we study the Word**: “...many things in the Word are said according to appearances, and indeed according to the fallacies of the senses, as that the Lord is angry, that He punishes, curses, kills, and many other such things; **when yet in the internal sense they mean quite the contrary**; namely, that the Lord is in no wise angry, and punishes, still less does He curse and kill...those [who] from simplicity of heart believe the Word...no harm is done...therefore with them the fallacies taken from the sense of the letter are easily dispelled.” (*Emphasis added.*) We need this quote to correct the impression given in our text that the Lord inspired the people to “feed the fire” and to “weary themselves in vain.” Looking at this verse again, were you able to read and then make the proper (contrary) interpretation of the literal sense?
- We will always need to overcome the “appearances” of the literal sense. Hell loves to seize such quotes from the Word to worry us about the “Lord’s anger and spirit of retribution.” Hell wants us to view the Lord as volatile and unfair in His dealings with people. The simplicity of heart of a believer can be inspired to overcome such false appearances. Therefore, it might help each of us to memorize *AC 1408 [3]*. Without the spiritual sense, we too might “labor to feed the fire” and “weary ourselves in vain.” What do you think about this important doctrinal point?

HABAKKUK 2:14

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “When the Lord comes...”

Derived Doctrine

“...the earth will be filled...”

- “The ‘earth’ is a term very often used in the Word; and by it is signified the ‘land’ where the true church of the Lord is...” (*AC 620*) “Earth” is used to denote the whole human race with respect to **their state as a church, or not as a church.** (*AC 1066*)
- When the earth is spoken of as being “empty and void,” it signifies a person before regeneration. (*AC 17*) Filling the earth, then, would seem to signify endowing a person with the necessary goods and truths to regenerate. In place of emptiness and darkness, the Lord bestows delight and power to regenerate. It is a “conatus,” a striving, an endeavor to become an earth (church) that values the spiritual realities of the Lord.

“...with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord...”

- *AE 513* defines what a “living” knowledge is: it is “a knowledge that derives life from spiritual affections; for that affection gives life to truths, and gives life to knowledges, for knowledges are containants of spiritual truths...”
- The “glory of the Lord” represents the Word in its spiritual sense. (*AR 24*) “Glory” signifies to make the Human Divine known. (*AC 10655 [2]; AE 224, 226 [2]*) “Glory” signifies the conjunction of good and truth, and it also signifies the expelling of hereditary evils the Lord had received from Mary (the wonderful story of glorification). (*AC 1603 [2]*)

“...as the waters cover the sea.”

- “It is a very common thing in the Word for ‘waters’ to signify knowledges (*cognitions et scientifica*), and consequently for ‘seas’ to signify a collection of knowledges.” (*AC 28*) What this teaching implies is that the collection of spiritual and natural knowledges in the memory will be called into use by the Lord.

Putting It All Together

Our selection from *P&P* begins a sentence, and we now must finish it within the context of what the literal sense just unfolded. “When the Lord comes...”

- The church will be filled and enlivened with His presence.
- The church will be His church because of His revealed knowledge.
- The church will be given “living” knowledges that will be Dynamic and Powerful tools for its spiritual life.
- The church will be glorious and happy because its message will make known the story of, and importance of, the glorification of His Divine Human.
- The Lord will collect and order the “waters” that cover “the sea.” In other words, the goods and truths in the memory-knowledges of the church will be ordered by the Lord so that the implementation of them will bring the elements of worship to a state of honesty and integrity.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 2:14*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- The above statements somewhat complete the *P&P* sentence. As you read the explanation, did you wrestle with some “but” questions?
- “But” when will the Lord institute these things?
- “But” what will it take to make the news of the Lord’s second coming so interesting that it will be heard and believed by all the churches on earth?
- “But” we have had the news of these things in the Writings for over 200 years, and it just doesn’t seem to be catching on. What is keeping the news from being accepted?
- The organized New Church has four major branches, and we have trouble trusting and agreeing with one another. How can we become more cooperative so we can grow into a dynamic and powerful force for the Lord’s New Church?
- What will it take to unify the waters and seas of our memory-knowledges?
- Our numbers are not increasing. We are in a downward state of membership. More and more, we are talking about strategic planning to make the church more user-friendly for newcomers. Is this planning part of the Lord’s enlivening the church with His presence? Will He use this as a way to present the world with the story of His Divine Human?
- Or do we need to do that strategic planning as an aside while we read and study the Word as our main focus?
- What has kept you loyal to and enthusiastic about New Church doctrines?
- Has the Lord’s glorification of His Divine Human been one of your interests?

HABAKKUK 2:15-17

"Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor, pressing him to your bottle, even to make him drunk, that you may look on his nakedness! You are filled with shame instead of glory. You also—drink! And be exposed as uncircumcised! The cup of the Lord's right hand will be turned against you, and utter shame will be on your glory. For the violence done to Lebanon will cover you, and the plunder of beasts which made them afraid, because of men's blood and the violence of the land and the city, and of all who dwell in it."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...he who leads others astray, will then be ashamed..."

AC 1073

- "In this verse, because it is said that he lay uncovered, it is signified that he stripped himself of the truths of faith by desiring to investigate them by means of the things of sense and by reasonings therefrom." *Habakkuk 2:15* is cited.

AR 721

- "'To be made drunk with...wine' signifies to be insane in spiritual, that is, in theological things..." *Habakkuk 2:15* is one of many passages cited.

AC 9960 [15]

- "Again...[in] *Habakkuk 2:15*...by 'being drunken,' by 'being made naked,'...and by 'the foreskin'...these expressions are to be spiritually understood...spiritually, 'drinking' denotes to be instructed in truths, and in the opposite sense in falsities...'being drunken' denotes to be insane...And 'being made naked' denotes to be destitute of truths...'to uncover the foreskin' denotes to defile celestial goods by these loves. (...Consequently 'circumcision' denotes purification from these loves...)"

AE 235 [6]

- "In *Habakkuk...2:15, 16*...‘To drink even making him drunken’...signifies to drink in truths and mix them with falsities; the ‘nakednesses’ upon which they look, signify the deprivation of truth and of intelligence therefrom...The ‘foreskin that shall be uncovered’ signifies the defilement of good...‘glory’

signifies Divine truth, thus the Word...which shows what is meant by 'disgraceful vomiting upon their glory.'"

AE 240 [9]

- "In Habakkuk...2:15, 16..."To make a companion drink, and drunken,' signifies to so imbue one with falsities that he does not see the truth; 'to look on nakedness' means so that falsities which are of the understanding and evils which are of the will are seen; 'that the foreskin may be uncovered' means so that filthy loves are seen...That 'to be made drunken' means to become insane from falsities, thus to not see truths...'the foreskin' signifies corporeal and earthly loves..."

AC 5120 [11]

- "In these passages [*Habakkuk 2:16* is cited.] also a 'cup' denotes insanity from falsities and the evils thence derived. It is called...also 'of the right hand of Jehovah,' for the reason that the...people, believed evils and the punishment of evils and falsities to come from no other source than Jehovah, when yet they are from the man himself, and from the infernal crew with him."

AE 960 [5]

- "In Habakkuk...2:16..."Cup' stands for falsified truth, which in itself is falsity, and of this 'shameful vomiting' is predicated; therefore it is said 'upon thy glory,' signifying the Divine truth in the Word."

AE 650 [64]

- "In Habakkuk...2:17..."The 'violence of Lebanon' signifies the violence done to the truths perceived by the rational man from the Word, for 'Lebanon' signifies the church in respect to the perception of truth from the rational man; 'the devastation of the beasts' which shall dismay them signifies the destruction of truths by the cupidities of evil; 'bloods' signify the violence offered to the truths of the Word by evils; and 'violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein' signifies violence done to the truths and goods of the church and to its doctrine from the Word by falsities."

Derived Doctrine

"Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor..."

- *AR 531* teaches us that "woe" signifies "lamentation over calamity, danger, hardship, destruction...as the aversion from good and truth becomes successively more grievous in the church." *AR 769* teaches that "woe"

signifies “grievous lamentation over misfortune, unhappiness and damnation.”

- To “drink” in the positive sense signifies to receive instruction in spiritual things. (*AC 2704*) To receive a drink in the negative sense means to care nothing for the Word and to be unwilling to know anything about faith; it represents those who think themselves wiser than others and who deny the first principles of faith. (*AC 1072 [6]*)

“...pressing him to your bottle, even to make him drunk...”

- “Pressing” indicates forcing, being persuasive, using popular opinions apart from the truths of the Word. “Your bottle” signifies the human mind. (*AE 376 [34]*)
- Pressure to follow human prudence can lead to but one end—drunkenness, spiritual insanity, and the falsity of an evil life.
- “...that you may look on his nakedness! You are filled with shame instead of glory, you also—drink!”
- When innocence is gone, “...nakedness is a scandal and disgrace because it is attended with a consciousness of thinking evil.” (*AC 213*)
- Looking at another’s nakedness indicates having a delight in seeing others lose their innocence. (*AC 5433*)
- Delighting in the ruination of others comes back on the self. “**You are filled** with shame instead of glory...” A sad commentary on a person’s life and choices.

“And be exposed as uncircumcised!”

- Exploring the meaning of **exposing** oneself causes us to revisit the “law of retaliation” as explained in *AC 8214*: it is the “return upon them of the falsities from evil which they were endeavoring to inflict on those who were in truth and good.”
- Circumcision signifies purification from filthy loves. (*AC 2041*) Circumcision signifies the removal of what defiles celestial love. (*AC 2039*) Thus, we can see and understand what is meant by “exposing” their “uncircumcised” spiritual state.

“...violence done to Lebanon will cover you...”

- “Violence” has some interesting meanings in the spiritual sense. “Violence” signifies a condition in which there is no longer an interest in good will. (*AC 632*) “Violence” signifies a coalition of falsity and evil against goods and truths. (*AC 4502 [2]*) “Violence” signifies the end of disagreement between the natural and spiritual person. (*AE 365 [41]*) “Violence” signifies those who purposely pervert the truths of the Word. (*AE 734 [17]*)

- “Lebanon” denotes the spiritual church. (*AC 5922 [12] AE 650 [64]*) teaches that when violence is done to Lebanon, it represents **force being inflicted** by the rational person on truths perceived from the Word.
- “Cover you” is a description of what happens to those who are committed to violence. The negative meaning represents the extinguishing of charity. (*AC 795*) Covering with a fake adornment signifies the dissipation of interior truths because of pride. (*AR 90*)

“...the plunder of beasts...”

- *AE 650* has some 80 references to the word “beast.” The correspondence of “beast” is defined as the love or affection of the natural person. The word “plunder” signifies the intent of that natural love, which is to kill and harm all of the remains of good and truth.
- And how much does the beast intend to plunder? It wants an end to all who dwell in the land and the city.

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes this section with these words: “...he that leads others astray will be ashamed...” What follows in the passage from *Habakkuk* we are studying is an expansion of insights (reflection) into the nature of the deeds of deceivers: those who **purposely** lead others astray enjoy doing it. When they convince someone to abandon the Lord, they sit back and laugh at the duped neighbor’s spiritual nakedness. With a disguised smirk on their faces, they outwardly do and say things in a convincing way to bring harm to others. They picture themselves as being so clever. The truth of the matter is that they are spiritually insane, drunk, destitute of truth, and pathetic. How do we know this? The Lord announces His “Woe.” He reveals to us what their end is: what they wished upon the neighbor will come back on them. Their nakedness and drunken state will be exposed. The Lord will do this so that all may see the folly and futility of hell’s imagined power and cleverness.

As we read this summary, can you picture people who knowingly mislead others? Let’s do so by moving from generals to particulars. News reports tell us of those who use “smooth talking” scams to rob elderly people. There are those predators who use “chat rooms” to meet victims and lure them out of the security of their home and away from the supervision of parents. Popular opinions (trends) have led some people along perilous and treacherous physical and mental paths. That first cigarette, the first drink, and the first use of a chemical substance: deceivers offer some apparently rational or emotional idea to support the beginning of that “recreational” habit. A false idea is submitted to convince or give compelling reasons why it would be OK to do it. An attendant, as-of-self idea bolsters the temptation with the belief that this new experience will not be harmful. People giving into such temptations begin to feel that they are strong enough to control things, so no harm will come to them. Sadly, those who become dependent find that is not the case.

Freedom and rationality may become weakened and impaired. Anyone trying to give up a “habit” will attest to the struggle that is involved in breaking a dependency.

Hell, the great promoter of disobedience to the order of heaven, loves to neutralize our remains. Hell uses the ploy that we are only human. “Look around you; everybody is doing what is pleasing in their own eyes. Why not? Have fun! Loosen up.” As the Psalmist wrote, the evil love to say, “How does God know...is there knowledge in the Most High?” (*Psalm 73:11*)

So the Lord speaks the truth. “Woe to those who love to lead others astray.” They will be shown that they are drunk, insane, naked, and without substance. Their thinking is exposed, and they are unclean in their failure to adhere to conjugal principles.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 2:15-17*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Have you met and dealt with someone who loved to deceive others?
- Was this person a “smooth talker” whose logic seemed overpowering?
- If we use tobacco, alcohol, or chemical substances, are we doing any spiritual harm to ourselves? This question is not taking issue with prescriptions. Instead, it is taking aim at those things that we choose that are known to harm us, especially those things that harm freedom and rationality. I don’t think there is a smoker or drinker who started out saying to themselves, “I am going to do this so that I can get cancer of the throat or cirrhosis of the liver.” The abuses of these things are what finally catch up with us. So will health abusers rue the day they started a habit?
- Do you think the Lord will have us face the results of our abuses? How about those who manufacture, distribute, and advertise things that hurt our physical and spiritual capacities?
- Will the casual use of profanity be exposed for its insidious effects within the mind? A passage in the *Spiritual Experiences (Spiritual Diary)*, number 2307, indicates that in the spiritual world, profanity will slip out at inappropriate times and will cause embarrassment for the “habitual” user. Is that scary?
- What other applications of these verses can we bring into the discussion?

HABAKKUK 2:18-20

"What profit is the image, that its maker should carve it, the molded image, a teacher of lies, that the maker of its mold should trust in it, to make mute idols? Woe to him who says to wood, 'awake!' To silent stone, 'Arise! It shall teach!' Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, yet in it there is no breath at all. But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...falsities will then profit him nothing. This, when the Lord is in His Human."

AC 586

- "...in Habakkuk...2:18...a 'graven image' signifies false persuasions originating in principles conceived and hatched out by one's self; the 'fashioner' is one who is thus self-persuaded, of whom this 'imagination' is predicated."

AC 9424 [8]

- "...'graven image' and 'molten image' denote doctrinal things from man's own intelligence, which in the external form, because from the external sense of the Word, appear like truths, but in their internal form are falsities; therefore such a man is said to be 'foolish from knowledge, and his molten image a lie,' and that 'there is no breath in them;' they are also called 'vanity,' and 'a work of delusions.'" *Habakkuk 2:18* is cited.

AC 10406 [8]

- "In Habakkuk...2:18...it is evident that by a 'graven image' and a 'molten image' are not meant a graven and molten image; but falsity which is invented, and evil which falsity defends; for it is said 'the maker of his invention,' and 'the teacher of a lie.'"

AC 8869 [3]

- "In Habakkuk...2:18, 19...the 'graven image' denotes those things which are hatched from self-intelligence, wherein there is nothing of life from the Lord."

AR 459

- “By ‘idols’ in the Word, are signified the falsities of worship, and therefore to adore them signifies worship from falsities...All these falsities exist in those who do not do the work of repentance, that is, shun evils as sins against God. These things are signified in the spiritual sense by idols which were graven images and molten images, in the following passages...” *Habakkuk 2:18-19* is cited as an example of this in AR 459 [2].

AE 587 [8]

- “In Habakkuk...2:18-20...As a ‘graven image’ means the falsity of doctrine, of religion, and of worship, in which there is nothing of spiritual life because it is from self-intelligence, it is said ‘What profiteth the graven image? For the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image and the instructor of a lie? In which the former of the lie trusteth;’ a ‘lie’ signifying falsity, and ‘the instructor and former of a lie’ signifying him who frames it; that there is no intelligence or life in it or from it is signified by ‘he maketh dumb gods, and there is no breath in the midst of it;’ that every truth of doctrine, of the church, and of worship, is from the Lord alone is signified by ‘Jehovah is in the temple of His holiness;’ ‘temple of holiness’ meaning heaven, where and from which is Divine truth.”

Derived Doctrine

“Woe to him who says to wood, ‘awake!’”

- Reminder: AE 531 teaches “That ‘woe’ signifies lamentation over calamity, danger, hardship, destruction...**as the aversion from good and truth becomes successively more grievous in the church.**” (*Emphasis added*)
- “Woe to him who says” as opposed to “Him who says.” The “woe” then draws our attention to the problem: human self-intelligence or prudence is and was falsely hatching finite spiritual concepts.
- “Wood” signifies “good conjoined to truth in the natural man.” (AE 1145 [2]) “Awake” signifies enlightenment in the natural person. (AC 5208) A man saying “awake” to the wood clearly implies that the natural person is trying to direct the Word to say what the sensual person wants it to say over and above what the Lord requires for spiritual enlightenment.

“...a teacher of lies...mute idols...”

- When we allow the Lord to be our “teacher,” He intends to liberate us by removing ignorance. He works toward enlightenment through the Word, so that good and truth can bring us freedom. A “teacher of lies” does not care

about infinite things, nor does the “teacher of lies” want to help us experience liberty or freedom.

- A pupil who confirms the things learned from the “teacher of lies” seems to be captured in this quote from *CL* 233: “When they are alone [they] are not able to think anything nor thence to speak, but that they stand dumb as machines and as if in profound sleep...Heavenly light cannot flow into them from above, but only a somewhat spiritual through the world...”

“...to a stone, ‘Arise! It shall teach!’”

- In the positive sense, a “stone” signifies truth. (*AE* 655) In the positive sense, “arise” signifies the elevation of the mind to more interior things. (*AC* 3050)
- Now we must ask ourselves, are these the goals of the “teacher of lies”? Not really. Instead, like the builders of the Tower of Babel, a “teacher of lies” lives in a world of fantasy and illusions. Such people truly believe they can construct a tower whose top “is in the heavens; [to make]...a name for ourselves...” (*Genesis* 11:4)
- The “teacher of lies” imagines that it is possible to be god-like through one’s own efforts and prudence. Such an idea is contrary to the doctrine of continuous and discrete degrees. The Writings emphasize clearly that all growth into a higher degree (a discrete degree above the original state) is a gift from the Lord to those who sincerely love Him and seek truth and good from Him alone. Human prudence and human educational systems cannot force the elevation of heart and mind into the realm of heavenly light. It is a gift from the Lord alone.

“...overlaid with gold and silver, yet in it there is no breath at all.”

- “Gold” signifies that which is founded on good. (*AC* 9484)
- “Silver” signifies the truth of good. (*AC* 5731, 5950) Overlaying something with gold and silver therefore represents that all aspects of worship will be founded on good and truth. Is that the case with those who are “teachers of lies”? Our answer is given in the Word. With the idol-makers, it is all a facade. There is “no breath [life] at all” underneath the overlay. This describes something that is bright and gaudy in external ways but with no substance, no eternal values.

“But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him.”
(Emphasis added.)

- *AE* 587 [8] brings meaning to the word “**But**.” In spite of the work of those who love to deceive; in spite of those who want to make people naked and then mock them; in spite of those who deceive themselves and make idols of stone and wood; in spite of all of the spiritual insanity and spiritual drunkenness—the Lord is in His holy temple. He will fill every truth of

doctrine of the church and of worship with life and vitality. There is stability amid the chaos caused by hell. Those who trust and believe in the Lord's promises will stand in awe of His order and majesty. His care and protection of His church and His people are magnificent. Sensing this, His church will feel no need to worry. Confidently, His flock of believers will stand—radiantly silent—in His presence.

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes these verses with the words “...**falsities will profit...nothing.**” (*Emphasis added.*) The “teacher of lies” will build idols of wood and stone. Such idol-makers will cover their idols with an overlay of gold and silver. They will cry out to them “awake” and “arise.” But their idols will remain mute and lifeless in the presence of the Lord. Why? The idols represent the inventions of falsity in their mind. Their idols were wood and stone without a will and understanding to participate in uses. These forms will profit a person nothing.

But the Lord is alive. He will sit in His holy temple, directing infinite uses toward His church and people. His actions will not be mute and lifeless. There is no need to cry out to Him “awake” and “arise.” He knows and sees everything even before it happens. Everything He does is profitable to the whole of His universe. The least of the least things He does has an impact on all facets of the universe. There are no wasted motions, no gaudy things without value, no actions just for showing off. His Love and Wisdom bring vital returns.

Recall the words of *Isaiah 55:11*:

“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”

Those who believe this with all of their heart stand in awe before Him. They don't feel the threat of hell nor the need to defend the ways of the Lord. In respectful and assured silence (calm), we, as a church, will honor our Heavenly Father and praise His name continuously.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 2:18-20*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Please note that in this portion of the prophecy, there is a shift in the “woes.” The first sets of woes were directed to those who enjoy deceiving others. In this section, the woes are directed to those who deceive themselves. Which form of deception do you think we are vulnerable to the most?
- Can we put a modern face on the idols that are called to awake and arise? What might it be?
- Recall for a moment a story in *I Kings 18*. Elijah and the prophets of Baal had a show-down. The call went out from the prophets to Baal to consume the altar with fire. They cried, wailed, leapt, cut themselves, but no response came from Baal. Elijah called for 12 water pots to be poured on the wood and sacrifice dedicated to the God of the Israelites. A fire from heaven fell and consumed everything on and near the altar. Elijah said, “Choose you this day whom you shall serve...” Wouldn’t you love to have a clear-cut shown-down today with hell and its lying teachers? How do you imagine that happening?
- Having studied this section, do you feel that you will have a new reaction to the words “The Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him.”?
- I can picture hell quaking before the person who believes that the Lord is in His temple and speaks such words in holy worship. Can you?

Chapter Three

HABAKKUK 3:1-4

"A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth.

O Lord, I have heard Your speech and was afraid; O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy. God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah

His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise. His brightness was like the light; He had rays flashing from His hand, and there His power was hidden."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Prediction that the Lord will come into the world, to whom belongs Divine truth and good."

AC 482 [2]

- "In Habakkuk...3:2...the 'midst of the years' signifies the Lord's advent. In lesser intervals it signifies every coming of the Lord, as when man is being regenerated; in greater, when the church of the Lord is arising anew. It is likewise called the 'year of the redeemed,'..."

AC 893 [2]

- "...in the Word a 'year' is continually used with the meaning of a time and a state. As in...Habakkuk...3:2...where 'years' denote a time and state."

AC 2906 [7]

- "That a 'year' and 'years' denote the full time of a church, is plain in Habakkuk...3:2, 3...This is said of the Lord's advent; 'in the midst of the years' denotes in the fullness of times..."

AC 2714

- "That 'Paran' is illumination from the Lord's Divine Human, is evident from the signification of 'Paran,' as being the Lord's Divine Human, which is manifest from the passages in the Word where it is named, as in the prophet Habakkuk...3:2-4...Where the Lord's advent is plainly treated of, which is

signified by ‘reviving in the midst of the years,’ and by ‘making known in the midst of the years.’ His Divine Human is described by ‘God coming from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran.’ He is said to ‘come from Teman’ as to celestial love, and ‘from Mount Paran’ as to spiritual love; and that illumination and power are from these is signified by saying that there shall be ‘brightness and light,’ and by His having ‘horns going out from His hand;’ the ‘brightness and light’ are illumination, and the ‘horns’ are power.”

AC 1675 [4, 6]

- “...Mount Paran, signifies neither mountains nor their inhabitants, but Divine realities, thus the celestial things of the Lord’s Human essence...[and] in the opposite, the love of self.”

TCR 93

- “...it will be shown by the following passages from the Word that the Lord in respect to His Human is called the Holy One of Israel...” *Habakkuk 3:3* is cited.

AC 2832 [6]

- “In Habakkuk...3:3, 4...Where the Lord is treated of; that ‘He had horns out of His hand, and there was the hiding of His strength,’ plainly denotes the power of truth; that ‘Mount Paran’ is the Divine Spiritual or the Divine Truth of the Lord’s Human, may be seen above (n. 2714), which also is the ‘brightness’ and the ‘light.’”

AR 270

- ““A horn” is frequently mentioned in the Word, and by it is everywhere signified power; therefore when ‘a horn’ is predicated of the Lord, it signifies omnipotence...That ‘a horn’ signifies power, and when applied to the Lord, omnipotence, may appear from the following passages...” *Habakkuk 3:4* is one of the many passages offered.

AE 316 [7]

- “In Habakkuk...3:4...Because ‘horns’ signify Divine truth with power, it is said, ‘the brightness of Jehovah God shall be as light,’ and ‘in the horns is the hiding of His strength;’ ‘the brightness of Jehovah’ and ‘light’ signify Divine truth; and ‘the hiding of His strength in the horns’ signifies the omnipotence of Divine good through Divine truth, for all power of good is through truth, and in Divine truth lies concealed the omnipotence that is of Divine good.”

Derived Doctrine

"A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth."

- Let's begin our derived doctrinal study with the word **Shigionoth**. We have no mention of its spiritual meaning in the Writings. Biblical dictionaries offer us the following explanations.
 - "Shiggaion is from the verb shagah, "to reel about through drink'...the plural form, Shigionoth...denotes a lyrical poem composed under strong mental emotion; a song of impassioned imagination accompanied with suitable music; a dithyrambic ode." (*WebBible Encyclopedia*. www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/home.html)
 - "Shiggaion from the verb shagah, 'to reel about through drink,' occurs in Psalm 7. The plural form, Shigionoth, is found in Hab 3:1. The word denotes a lyrical poem composed under strong mental emotion; a song of impassioned imagination accompanied with suitable music; a dithyrambic ode." (*Easton's Bible Dictionary*. www.sacred-texts.com.)
- We need to exercise some caution with the above references. Since the Word is authored by the Lord, I cannot accept Habakkuk "reeling due to strong drink" as an explanation. Revelation does not occur through someone who is intoxicated. Habakkuk might not have fully understood the words. He might have received these words in such a way that he "reeled" in a sense because of their "staggering" importance, but I don't think these words came to him while under the influence of "drink." A lyrical poem composed under "strong mental emotion" pushes the reader also to think more about Habakkuk's human emotions than of Divine emotions. "Impassioned imagination" focuses on Habakkuk's mental state and away from heavenly correspondences. Could we not picture the Lord's omnipotence inspiring a deep emotional influence within the prophet's soul that took on a poem-like expression and also lent itself to a song? Singing signifies the glorification of the Lord on account of liberation from slavery. (*AC 8261*) Isn't that really what this book of the Word is revealing to us? The "teacher of lies" is being exposed and overcome with the news of the advent of the Lord and the establishment of the New Church. This news could definitely cause reeling and staggering; it is strong emotional news to the insanely drunken residents of hell.

"O Lord, I have heard Your speech and was afraid; O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years!"

- Why would Habakkuk become afraid of the Lord's speech? He had been talking with the Lord from the beginning. Why have fears now?
- To "hear" signifies to understand (perceive) truth and to obey it. (*AR 356*) *AE 588* explains to "hear" as signifying perception from the will of good. *AE 808* adds this insight: to "hear" signifies both to understand truth and to perceive good.

- To be **afraid** of the Lord's speech, or voice, represents many things. "Speech" or voice represents the enunciation of the Lord's precepts from the Word. (*AC 8360*) A voice from the throne signifies instruction from the Lord. (*AR 236*)
- *AC 6849* explains what being afraid to look upon the Lord means. "That this signifies lest they should be injured by the presence of the Divine Itself is evident from the signification of 'being afraid' as being fear lest they should be injured, namely, the interiors, for this was the cause of the fear...Lest therefore the angels in heaven should be injured by the influx of heat from the Lord as a sun, they are each of them veiled over by a certain thin and suitable cloud, whereby...that sun is tempered."
- Is the source of Habakkuk's fear an overwhelming sense of what he saw the Lord was about to do? Were the "word-pictures" of Divine instruction so awesome that the prophet trembled with fear and anticipation of what he had to give in prophesy? Was he wondering when these things might come about? Did he have a holy fear about who might be left standing in the presence of the Lord? "If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?" (*Psalm 130:3*)
- "...'revive' Your work in the midst of the years!" is a prayer for enlightenment. It is a specific request that the Word, Divine truth, might vivify the church. It also signifies every coming of the Lord and to have a longing for the Lord's Advent. (*AC 2714*)

"...in wrath remember mercy..."

- The word "wrath" in the literal sense can be misleading. One could be led to imagine anger, indignation, and retaliation coming **from** the Lord toward His people. Instead, it represents **people** turning away from truth. (*AC 6359*) "Wrath" represents human opposition (*AC 5798 [6]*), the fury of the hells to inflict violence on those whom the Divine protects (*AC 8284*), and the advent of the Lord to bring judgment (*Divine Love and Wisdom 5*). This petition for mercy is a prayer for Divine protection to help us (rescue us) when we err and stray from His order.

"God came from Teman...the Holy one from Mount Paran..."

- These words (Teman and Paran) in their spiritual and celestial sense are meant to call our attention to the mission of the Lord's Divine Human. *AE 400 [10]* teaches us that "Teman" in the negative sense represents the change in the church brought about by evils and falsities. "Teman" represents the church perishing. The Lord, in order to correct this "death", assumed the Divine Human to rescue, vivify, and redeem the church. "Paran," we are taught in *AC 2711*, signifies the Lord's illumination from the Divine Human to bring us out of obscurity.

"Selah."

- The correspondential meaning of the word “Selah” is not given in the Writings. The *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (volume three, page 460) gives a glimpse of its use as follows: “Selah...is probably a direction for the conductor that now a signal of the cymbals should interrupt the even flow of chant. Probably Selah was originally a marginal gloss...It [Selah] occurs seventy-one times in thirty-nine psalms and in Hab. 3:3, 9, 13...Most expressive [at]...the end of the main thought by a soft whispering of strings, followed by a clash of cymbals.”

“His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise.”

- The petition for His glory to cover the heavens and the earth to be full of His praise is a prayerful anticipation of the Lord’s Divine Truth proceeding from Him in fullness and in judgment. All of this glory will come from the Word as the internal sense is revealed. There are approximately 49 passages in the Writings that speak of this when explaining the meaning of “glory.” Here are but a few citations to point the way for anyone wanting to check out the fuller explanation: *AE* 235 [6], 253 [5], 270 [3], 282 [7], 288 [4]; *TCR* 780; *NJHD* 260.
- “Praise” signifies the love of truth. (*AC* 3880 [5]) “Praise” signifies to worship the Lord from internals and externals. (*AE* 406)

“...He had rays flashing from His hand, and there His power was hidden.”

- This passage speaks of the infinite power of the Lord’s Divine truth. The “rays flashing from His hand” signify the strength that is involved in Divine Uses and the omnipotence of His Divine Good and Divine Truth. The fullness of these Divine attributes is hidden from human comprehension. *AC* 3854 gives us this clue: **“...it is impossible by any thought to comprehend as much as one out of a hundred millions of them [the Lord’s minutest involvements in our lives]...a series extending to eternity...each moment being as a new beginning...”** All of His love, care, and attention to the tiniest details of our life escape our comprehension. “His power was hidden.” It is hidden from us, hidden from the angels, and wonderfully hidden from the hells so they can do no harm to the Lord’s infinite plan for the New Church as promised in the book of *Revelation*.

Putting It All Together

“A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth.” (*Habakkuk* 3:1)

“Predication that the Lord will come into the world...” (*P&P*)

What do these quotes reveal? Every prophet, at some point in his prophecy, had the privilege of predicting the Lord's advent. When the revelation came to each prophet, there was invigorating excitement, anticipation, and humbleness. Not one of them acted as if this was old news. They were overwhelmed with what their spiritual eyes saw. They trembled in the presence of the Lord's awesome power. "O Lord, I have heard Your speech and was afraid; O Lord, revive Your work..." All thought of human prudence and power was removed, and a full reliance on the Lord brought Habakkuk to his knees.

"Shigionoth" means having a strong mental and emotional reaction. Like reeling and staggering visionaries, all the prophets couldn't wait to tell everyone about the Lord's advent. This was news too good not to share. And yet, what will it take to get people to listen and amend their ways? How can this prophecy teach the people to sing a new song unto the Lord? How can the church be made to see the power and brightness of the Lord with wonderful things coming from His hand? We can't comprehend fully one out of one hundred millions of the Lord's ways. The Lord is involved in the minutest matters of our life. He is working new beginnings for everyone. To those who speak of the Lord as being beyond comprehension, the message of the prophet must say, you err if you think He is indifferent and uninvolved in your life.

When it was revealed to John the Baptist who the Lord was, he uttered these words: "He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all..." (*John 3:31*)

The Lord is coming to rescue, vivify, and redeem the church. To this prophetic reality, let the people of the church, with great joy and trembling anticipation, say "Amen." The word "Amen" carries with it a prayer of consent: "so may it ever be."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 3:1-4*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Are you able to identify with Habakkuk, with his reeling and staggering experience of seeing the meaning and effect of the Lord's advent?
- The Lord's New Church is so important in overcoming the death experience of falsity. What would your life be like if you didn't know the doctrines of the Second Coming?
- Can you envision the teaching about the Lord being involved in our lives? What about the one out of one hundred millions of things He does for us to bring about new beginnings? Doesn't that teaching bring hope for our minute

happenings? A new beginning out of the mundane events of our life is an impressive truth to offset times when we think we are in a rut.

- The Lord hiding His ways—is this OK with you? A certain amount of trust frees us. Trusting that the Lord will give us insights when we are ready to use them is comforting. On the other hand, if the Lord revealed too many of His ways to us, don't you think it would weigh us down with more than we could handle?
- Have you ever questioned how much of the Lord's good and truth is enough for you?

Habakkuk 3:5-7

"Before Him went pestilence, and fever followed at His feet. He stood and measured the earth; He looked and startled the nations. And the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills bowed. His ways are everlasting. I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; the curtains of the land of Midian trembled."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "He will examine the church; it is not a church."

AC 6435 [9]

- "In Habakkuk...3:6...the 'mountains of eternity' denote the good of love of the Most Ancient Church, which was celestial; the 'hills of an age,' the mutual love that belonged to that church; the former being its internal, the latter its external. When that church is meant in the Word, seeing that it was the most ancient one, 'eternity' is sometimes added, as here the 'mountains of eternity,' and elsewhere the 'days of eternity' (n. 6239); and an 'age' also is added, as here the 'hills of an age,' and also in the prophetic utterance of Israel: 'to the desire of the hills of an age.' Hence it is evident that by the 'hills of an age' are signified the goods of mutual love, which are of the celestial church, or of the Lord's celestial kingdom."

AR 486

- "...by 'measuring' it and the things which are of it, is signified to know the quality." *Habakkuk 3:6* is cited as an example.

AE 629 [9]

- "In Habakkuk...3:6 [it] is said of visitation and the Last Judgment by the Lord when He should come into the world. 'He stood and measured the earth'

means exploring at that time of what quality the church is, ‘to measure’ signifying to explore, and ‘the earth’ the church; ‘He saw and drove asunder the nations’ signifies the casting down into hell of all who are in evils and falsities therefrom, ‘to drive asunder’ signifying to cast into hell, and ‘nations’ those who are in evils and in falsities therefrom; ‘the mountains of eternity were scattered’ signifies that the celestial church, such as was with the most ancient people, who were in love to the Lord, had perished, ‘the mountains of eternity’ signifying that church and that love; ‘the hills of the age did bow’ signifies that the spiritual church perished, such as was with the ancient people after the flood, who were in love towards the neighbor, ‘the hills of the age’ signifying that church and that love; ‘His goings are an age’ signifies according to the state of the church at that time, which was a perverted state.”

AC 3242 [5]

- “In Habakkuk...3:6, 7...the advent of the Lord is treated of. The ‘tents of Cushan’ denote a religiosity from evil; the ‘curtains of the land of Midian,’ one from falsity.”

AC 9595 [4]

- “In Habakkuk...3:7...‘the curtains of Midian’ denote truths with those who are in simple good (n. 3242, 4756, 4788, 6773, 6775).”

AC 1566

- “...in the opposite sense ‘tents’ signify worship not holy...[as in] Habakkuk 3:7, 8...”

Derived Doctrine

“Before Him went pestilence, and fever followed at His feet.”

- “Him” signifies the Lord. The things mentioned as going “before Him” represent the state of disorder the church had fallen into prior to His advent.
- “Pestilence” signifies the vastation and consummation of good and truth. (*Last Judgment* 73)
- “Pestilence” signifies total devastation. (*AC 7536*)
- “Pestilence” signifies those who by the Word and those who by knowledges (scientifica) have confirmed themselves in falsities and evils. (*AE 388 [19]*)
- Every disease signifies some evil that destroys the life of the will of good, and falsities that destroy the understanding of truth. Thus, disease means destruction of the spiritual life which is of faith and charity. (*AC 8364*) A “burning fever” denotes the cupidity of evil. (*AC 8364 [3]*)

- “At His feet” signifies the natural. It signifies instruction. (*AC 2714 [2]*) “Feet” represent the lowest part of the body, externals that were to be under the Lord’s watchful care. (*AR 470*)

“He stood...”

- *AE 407*, explaining the meaning of *Revelation 6:15-17*, addresses the question “who is able to stand” in the presence of the Lord. The answer is given: “no one.” Evil runs and hides in caves and under rocks. With His advent and the Last Judgment, the Lord alone stands above all else. He Stands for Good and Truth in the midst of the fallen evil and falsity.

“...the tents of Cushan...”

- *AC 3242* explains that this stands for a religion raised up out of evil.
- “Tents” signify holy worship (or not holy). (*AC 1102, 1566*)
- “Tents” signify the goods of love and of worship. (*AE 365 [40]*)

“...land of Midian trembled.”

- “Midian,” in the negative sense, represents the perversion of good and evil. This representation grows from the fact that they made for themselves dens in the mountains and caverns. The sons of Israel were possessed by the spiritual example and ways of the Midianites. (*AE 410 [11]*)

Putting It All Together

Is there any question about the meaning of our lesson? The Word gives us a review of the demise of the Most Ancient Church, the Ancient Church, and now the Jewish Church. In each case, the people of the church lost that which was celestial, spiritual, and natural. A “pestilence and fever” swept through and consummated everything of the church. The Word was being used for self-promotion. Knowledges were crafted to advance the goals of self-love. *P&P* summarizes these passages this way: “[**The Lord**] will examine the church; it is not a church.” (*Emphasis added.*)

What spiritual failings cause a church to be “not a church”? The external church was not engaged in worship that was holy. It was not measuring up to the Lord’s standards of good and truth. Nor were its acts of charity and faith acceptable. It had a fever of self-love that was burning away the core of its spiritual health. The Lord’s advent was absolutely necessary. He had to come and stand before His people to save and redeem them. Hell and its legions were responsible for the demise of the church. So the Lord came to “bow” and subject all things to His will and understanding. *The Doctrine of Faith 34* sums it up this way: “The Lord from eternity...came into the world to subdue the hells and to glorify His Human; and

without this no mortal could have been saved; and they are saved who believe in Him."

The church to be a church must have a balanced grasp of holy worship and humility. It needs to have within its tents a passionate voluntary response of love, wisdom, and use to keep its faith and charity free of pestilence and burning fevers. Put another way, we need to be passionate about the church and the doctrines. Lukewarm approaches will not work. A teaching of the church states that we must let truth be truth. The essence of this teaching is that we need to not play games with the Lord's Word. Compromising, equivocating, deleting teachings we don't like from the truth of the Word, all make a church "not a church."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 3:5-7*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Do the churches in our times seem to be going through states of pestilence and fever?
- If pestilence and fever-like conditions exist in any church, do we understand why "it is not a church"?
- The Lord coming to measure the earth reminds me of the book of *Amos*. Amos was sent with a "plumb line" to measure the church, and it was found deficient. What valuable tools do we have to measure the health of our church? Are size and growth, doctrinal classes, home study (reading) of the Word, or educational enrollment statistics good measuring tools?
- The scattering of the mountains and the bowing of the perpetual hills are representative of humbling self-love and overcoming conceit. What kinds of self-love and conceit exist in the church that we might have to do battle against every day?
- Have you ever heard someone say, or indicate, that a given teaching from the Word is no longer valid or applicable in our lives? The Lord did abrogate certain Levitical requirements for us. He did the abrogating. Popular opinion votes did not. So the church, to be a church, must be alert to the dangers of man-made prudence deciding questions of faith and worship.
- When we think about some issues, where there are no direct teachings to guide us, what do we do? We can't put our head in the sand and hope the issues will go away. Can you picture making a tentative decision with a prayerful attitude of "I'm willing to change my mind if I see that I am wrong and the Lord shows me how to rectify my thoughts"?
- In question 5, it was mentioned that the Lord abrogated certain Old Testament requirements. Do you know which ones were abrogated? Check

out AC 2180 [7], AC 4489 [3], AC 10637, AC 9349 [4], AC 10360 [8], and TCR 670 [2]. But after you read these, consider this teaching: "Although abrogated they are still holy things of the Word." (AC 8972 [2], 9349 [2])

HABAKKUK 3:8-9

"O Lord, were You displeased with the rivers, was Your anger against the rivers, was Your wrath against the sea, that You rode on Your horses, Your chariots of salvation? Your bow was made quite ready; Oaths were sworn over Your arrows. Selah. You divided the earth with rivers."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "He will by His Divine truth dissipate the falsities of evil."

AC 5321 [6-8]

- "...by 'horse and chariot,' [are signified] the things of the understanding and of the doctrine of good and truth." *Habakkuk 3:8* is cited in section 8.

AR 409

- "That 'rivers' signify truths in abundance may be evident from the following passages..." *Habakkuk 3:8* is cited.

AR 437

- "...'chariots' signify doctrinals... 'horses' signify the understanding of the Word...and 'many horses,' what is plenary...That 'a chariot' signifies doctrine, is plain from these passages..." *Habakkuk 3:8* is cited.

AE 518 [25]

- "In Habakkuk...3:8...[there is] a supplication that the church may be guarded and not perish; the 'rivers' and 'the sea' signify all things of the church, because they are its ultimates... 'to ride upon horses,' in reference to Jehovah, that is, the Lord, signifies the Divine wisdom which is in the Word; and 'chariots' signify doctrinals therefrom."

AC 2686 [3]

- "In Habakkuk...3:8, 9...the 'bow' is the doctrine of good and truth."

AR 299

- "...by 'a bow' is signified the doctrine of truth and good from the Word fighting against evils and falsities. To fight against falsities and evils is also to fight against the hells, because evils and falsities are from thence...That 'a bow,' in the Word, signifies doctrine combating...may appear from these passages..." *Habakkuk 3:8-9* is cited.

AE 357 [7]

- In *Habakkuk...3:8, 9*..."Thy bow shall be made bare' signifies that the doctrine of truth shall be laid open."

Derived Doctrine

"O Lord, were You displeased with the rivers, was Your anger against the rivers..."

- Can the Lord ever be displeased, angry, furious, irritable, or annoyed with any of His children? Our heart and mind needs to respond with a resounding "No!" Does He act to correct, remove, and lift His church out of falsities and mistakes? Yes! Will He calmly, lovingly overcome and defeat the work of the hells? Yes!
- Please note that we will have to deal with the appearance that the Lord is displeased, angry, and wrathful, and that He swore an oath to undo Israel. To fully understand these things, we must note that these words have a positive sense and a negative sense. Only the positive things represent the Lord. The negative sense comes from hell, and hellish spirits attempt to project the negative as coming from the Lord.
- *AC 6288* gives us a clue about the true meaning of this image of the Lord being "displeased." "What is higher can perceive how the case is with what is done in what is lower, thus also whether it is truth that is being thought there, or not. For as what is higher sees from the light of heaven, it sees the things that are below...thus the internal celestial which is 'Joseph,' saw that the spiritual good from the natural...was in error, and therefore it displeased him." Seeing the lower choose what will separate it from Divine ends is displeasing in the sense that this choice will turn what is lower away from the Lord. The Lord doesn't want that to happen. He wants all to enter heaven. He is not satisfied that one soul should be lost. So the Divine in His compassion is unhappy, saddened, or displeased with the straying of His sheep.
- In the **positive sense**, "rivers" signify truths in abundance. In the **negative sense**, "rivers" represent falsities in abundance. So the answer to the question "O Lord, were You displeased with the rivers, was Your anger against the rivers..." depends on which spiritual state Israel was living.

- The perception of the Lord's "anger" against the rivers comes from hell's point of view. Evil wants its falsity to prevail and be free from disapproval. The least opposition from the Lord is perceived by hell as anger, and hell sees nothing of His zeal or love to protect and save.

"...was Your wrath against the sea, that You rode on Your horses, Your chariots of salvation?"

- *AE 887* offers this insight: "...anger and wrath are mentioned in many passages of the Word...**anger** means the love and desire for evil in man and **wrath** the love and desire for falsity..." (*Emphasis added.*)
- *AR 532* explains that "wrath signifies a lamentation over those in the churches who are in untruths of faith and consequently are in evils of life..."
- *AR 558* explains that "wrath signifies a lamentation over those who are in things internal and external of the doctrine concerning faith alone, and are consequently in evil."
- *AE 518 [25]* summarizes this passage as "a supplication that the church may be guarded and not perish; the 'rivers' and 'the sea' signify all things of the church, because they are its ultimates...'to ride upon horses,' in reference to Jehovah, that is the Lord, signifies the Divine wisdom which is the Word; and 'chariots' signify doctrinals therefrom."

"...Oaths were sworn over Your arrows."

- "Oaths" that are sworn by the Lord signify that which is divinely irrevocable. (*AC 2842*)
- "Arrows" imply the necessity of a bow. *AR 299* explains that "...by the 'bow' is signified the doctrine of truth and good from the Word fighting against evils and falsities..."
- "Arrows" signify selected truths to be used to combat evils. (*AE 684 [15]*)

"Selah."

- Picture in your mind the ringing sound of cymbals. They crash, breaking or interrupting the flow of the words so as to alert all listeners to the importance of what is about to be said.

"You [the Lord] divided the earth with rivers."

- "Dividing" signifies the Lord distinguishing between the internal person and the external person. (*AC 24*) "Earth," in many of passages in the Writings, signifies the church. The dividing of the earth with rivers indicates the Lord setting boundaries between spiritual and natural truths (the internal and external person). This prophecy announces that the Lord's abundant truths (rivers) will illustratively distinguish that which is from the Lord from that

- which comes from human beings. The “Selah” announces the truth that “He (the Lord) will dissipate the falsities of evil.” (*P&P*)
- *Isaiah 55:8* speaks of such boundaries: “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways...My ways are higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”
 - The Selah cymbals need to dramatically chime this message so that all will sit up and listen alertly.

Putting It All Together

Falsity will be dissipated. The sound of the Selah cymbals needs to clash loudly to catch our attention with this important Divine announcement. The showy, pompous veneer of the natural person will be peeled off. The Lord’s Word will establish clear and precise spiritual boundaries. The Word will provide the bow and arrows necessary to combat falsity. When will all of this happen? The slow but sure ways of the Lord’s Providence have started the cleansing of the church with the Lord’s abundant rivers of revelation. Years of proprial resistance have built up the walls of ignorance. These must be knocked down. Evil and falsity will thoroughly be emptied and cleansed. Only the Lord is able to unravel the widely spreading tentacles of evil. Each connection, each subtlety, each evil appearance of acceptance and propriety has to be brought to the Lord’s light. These things will happen under the Lord’s direction. Can we wait and trust in the Lord’s timing?

With the gift of the Writings, the process has begun. We need to cooperate with the Lord and hone the use of the spiritual “bow and arrows” He provides to fight and overcome the legion of hellish ideas. Our prayers need to supplicate the Lord for help so that our aim is sure and steady. We need to ask for His help so that our church may be guarded; we need to ask Him to bless us so that we will be useful vessels in the growth of His church.

When will the work of the Lord’s New Church begin and be completed? We don’t know. This lesson emphatically says, “**He will by His Divine truth dissipate the falsities of evil.**” Hell hopes that we will not read and believe these words. Hell hopes we become lethargic and negative about the coming of the New Church. But if we gain confidence and become resolute in the promises of the Lord, hell will tremble and flee from our presence. The hellish spirits flee, not because of us, but because of the Lord’s power and thorough justice.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 3:8-9*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Are you familiar with the propaganda hell uses to try to convince us why and how the Lord and His church are failing? Some of the usual points are declining membership, declining participation in Friday doctrinal classes, and low attendance in church each Sunday morning. What positive things will we use to counterbalance the views of hell?
- What “bow and arrows” of faith can we use in the fight against hell and its disorders?
- What are some of your favorite spiritual arrows? David, with his bag of stones, picked one that was “smooth” and probably well-suited to do battle against Goliath. Do we carry around stones or arrows every day to maintain our spiritual safety?
- Do you recall the historical explanation of “Selah” as the notation of the effective use of cymbals to call attention to something extraordinary in worship services? In other words, a “Selah” was a kind of wake-up call to arouse people from their spiritual lethargy. What teachings act as a “Selah” for you?
- The Word calls us to trust in the Lord; He calls us to be of good courage, to wait on Him, to be still and know that He is God. These are some fundamental requirements. We could add many more. But let’s close with this one from the *Psalms*. “Let me not be ashamed of my hope. Hold me up, and I shall be safe.” (*Psalm 119:116*) What other quotes might you add to this list?
- “He will by His Divine truth dissipate the falsities of evil.” (*P&P*) That sounds positive. There are no conditional words in that quote. Might you hear the clash of the cymbals? Selah! The Lord has spoken. He will win, and hell will lose. Does this teaching get our attention and build our confidence?

HABAKKUK 3:10-15

“The mountains saw You and trembled; the overflowing of the water passed by. The deep uttered its voice, and lifted its hands on high. The sun and moon stood still in their habitation; at the light of Your arrows they went, at the shining of Your glittering spear. You marched through the land in indignation; You trampled the nations in anger. You went forth for the salvation of Your people, for salvation with Your Anointed. You struck the head from the house of the wicked, by laying bare from foundation to neck. Selah. You thrust through with his own arrows the head of his villages. They came out like a whirlwind to scatter me; their rejoicing was like feasting on the poor in secret. You walked through the sea with Your horses, through the heap of great waters.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “Judgment upon them, combat with them, their destruction, and their being cast into hell.”

AR 53 [5-6]

- “This is said of the Jewish church, which was ‘to breathe out its soul,’ that is, would perish; ‘the sun shall set,’ signifies that there will be no longer any love and charity...something similar is also said in Habakkuk...3:10, 11...”

AE 401 [17]

- “In Habakkuk...(Hab. 3:10, 11). This chapter treats of the Lord’s coming and of the Last Judgment then accomplished by Him; ‘the mountains were moved, the overflowing of waters passed by,’ signifies that those who were in the love of self and the world were cast out by the falsities of evil into which they were let; ‘mountains’ signifying the loves of self and the world, and ‘the overflowing of waters’ to be let into falsities from these loves, ‘waters’ meaning falsities, and ‘overflowing’ to be let into them. That by those in that state genuine truths and goods are not seen, but instead of these, fatuous truths and goods, which in themselves are falsities and evils, is signified by, ‘Thine arrows go forth in light, the lightning of Thy spear in brightness,’ ‘arrows’ or ‘lightning’ signifying fatuous truths, which in themselves are falsities, and ‘the lightning of the spear’ signifying fatuous goods, which in themselves are the evils of falsity...those who are in falsities from the loves of self and the world, when the Last Judgment takes place, and these are cast out.”

AC 2709 [3]

- “...a ‘quiver’ denotes the doctrine of good and truth. In Habakkuk...3:11...The arrow of salvation...signifies arcana concerning the doctrine of good and truth.”

AC 3542 [3]

- “In Habakkuk...3:13...where ‘smiting the head out of the house of the wicked’ denotes destroying the principles of falsity; ‘laying bare the foundation even unto the neck’ denotes intercepting the conjunction thereby.”

AR 258

- “That ‘a horse’ signifies the understanding of the Word, may also appear from the following passages...Habakkuk 3:8, 15...”

AC 9954 [10]

- It “...is evident from many passages in the Word (as...Habakkuk 3:13...and elsewhere)...The reason why they anointed the kings was that these might represent the Lord in respect to judgment from Divine truth; therefore in the Word by ‘kings’ are signified truths Divine...”

AR 779

- “That they anointed the kings with it [oil], and therefore the kings were called ‘the anointed of Jehovah’...Habakkuk 3:13...because they thereby represented the Lord as to the Divine Human.”

AE 375 [16]

- It “...is evident from many passages in the Word (as...Habakkuk 3:13...and elsewhere)....Kings were anointed that they might represent the Lord in relation to judgment from Divine truth; therefore in the Word ‘kings’ signify Divine truths...”

AR 485

- “‘A staff’ signifies power, because wood, of which staffs were made among the ancient people, signified good; and because it is instead of the right hand, and supports it, and by ‘right hand’ is signified power; hence it is, that a scepter is a short staff and by ‘a scepter’ is signified the power of a king...That a staff signifies power, is evident from these passages...Habakkuk 3:14...”

AE 727 [7]

- “...the rod of Jehovah’s mouth’ signifies Divine truth or the Word in its natural sense; and ‘the breath of His lips’ signifies Divine truth or the Word in the spiritual sense, both destroying the falsities of evil in the church, which is signified by ‘smiting the earth and slaying the wicked.’...(Habakkuk 3:14)...[has] a like signification.”

Derived Doctrine

Please go back and read **AE 401 [17]**. That number gives us direct teachings regarding the general meaning of the internal sense of *Habakkuk 3:10-11*. We will focus here on the rest of *Habakkuk 3:12-15*.

"You marched through the land in indignation; You trampled the nations in anger."
(Emphasis added.)

- Marching involves organization, order, cooperation, a willingness to follow a similar cadence and to be in step. Disorganized marching is called “rout step,” in which each marcher follows a different cadence so that the cadence of the group is dissimilar or chaotic. Rout step is useful for safety when an army walks across a bridge, but once the army is over the bridge, it returns to its organized marching cadence.
- The Lord organized the “tents” of Israel in a specific Divine order and told them they were also to “march” in that order. These commands show that obedience, order, cooperation, and following the Lord’s truths were to be extremely important as they “marched” through the desert on their way to the Promised Land.
- Apparently, the church was spiritually in “rout step” in Habakkuk’s time, marching to its own man-made rules that were full of self-love and evil. When the Lord’s Last Judgment neared the church, they perceived His way as a way of “indignation.” The church had a sense of resentment. Those who thought they were wise did not want to be told about their disorder. As usual, they tried to turn the blame for their self-centered “rout step” on the Lord. “You marched through the land in indignation.”
- The church was “trampling,” perverting goods and truths, with the light of their natural intelligence. (*AC 250 and 2162 [16]*) The Lord’s pure zeal and love for His people and church was misdiagnosed by the church. They didn’t see love. They projected the opposite on Him. The church saw none of the Lord’s softness, care, and concern. So they cried out: “You trampled the nations in anger.”
- *AC 249* mentions that the word “nations” in the negative sense represents “those who trust in their Own (proprium)...” From the perspective of the evil proprium, the Lord is believed to be out of control with His anger. What is sad is that the people believed this.

"You went forth for the salvation of Your people, for salvation with Your Anointed."

- *The Doctrine of Sacred Scriptures 12* gives us a clue as to what “went forth” might signify. The Lord “went forth” for what purpose? To look at and examine the successive states of the church, “from its beginning to its end...”
- Salvation is a process of putting off (shunning) evils as sins against the Lord. To accomplish this, each person needs to actively pursue the Lord. With His

guidance and inspiration, we are to engage our heart and mind in the goals of repentance, reformation, and regeneration. *AE 340 [4]* explains salvation as signifying “to glorify the Lord from spiritual truths...and spiritual good...” Salvation is not an utterance of faith alone. It is a life-long work in process—a going hand-in-hand with the Lord to fight and to rid our life of evil, falsity, and sin.

- Note that the first part of this verse speaks of the Lord’s mission as going forth **“for the salvation of Your people...”**
- This next portion speaks of the Lord’s mission as **“salvation with Your Anointed.”** Why did the Lord specify the **for** and **with** missions of salvation?
- Let’s note first the words “salvation **with** Your Anointed.” This calls our attention to the Lord assuming our nature. It points us to the Lord as the Divine Human. Doing what? Facing hell and subduing it all **for us** while glorifying His human and uniting it with the Divine. His infinite mission was to make that which had become invisible, in the hearts and minds of people, visible again so that the church might worship the Lord God Jesus Christ as the one and only God of Heaven and earth.

“You struck the head from the house of the wicked, by laying bare from foundation to neck. Selah.”

- To unfold the meaning of the spiritual sense, let’s look at the word “head.” In the positive sense, we read that the “head” signifies the whole Human of the Lord.(*AC 10011*) In the opposite sense, the “head” signifies the whole of the person.(*AC 10044*) The “head” signifies intelligence. So our text deals with a question. What will prevail—the intelligence of the Lord or the intelligence of people? We know the answer. The Lord’s will and understanding has no equal; therefore, there is no chance that it would lose to (the head of) human prudence.
- In the earliest prophecy of the Lord’s coming (*Genesis 3:15*), the trampling on the “head” of the serpent is mentioned. This signifies overcoming the dominion of evil in general and self-love in particular. Our lesson then teaches us that “the house of the wicked” (hell) and its disorderly conditions will be subdued by the coming of the Lord. (*AC 250*)
- “...‘smiting the head out of the house of the wicked denotes destroying the principles of falsity...’ and ‘laying bare from the foundation to the neck’ denotes intercepting the conjunction” (desolation) of falsity so that it will “no longer [be] admitted into the rational man.” (*AC 3542 [3-4]*) A “neck” signifies influx and communication of higher things with lower things, such as the communication of people’s interiors with their exteriors as the head communicates with the body through the neck. (*AC 3695*)
- **Selah.** Please recall what we read regarding the use of a “Selah.” It probably signaled the clashing sound of cymbals to mark a dramatic event. It was a way to call everyone’s attention to an important teaching. Wake up and

listen! Things are about to change! The Lord is going to prevent evils from polluting the interior of His Word and church.

"You thrust through with his own arrows the head of his villages."

- "Villages" mean the external aspects of the church. (*AC 3270*) "Villages" denote natural cognitions and knowledges. (*AE 405 [12]*)
- The thrusting through "**with his own arrows**" clearly illustrates how falsity contributes to its own end. Those who oppose the Lord fall prey to their fallacious external cognitive doctrinal arrows. We can put this into the adage: He who lives by the sword (of falsity) will die by the sword (of falsity).
- Note once again the appearance that the Lord is angrily doing this. The truth is just the opposite. Falsity has no love, concern, or unity. Like cowards, lovers of falsity flee at the presence of the Lord. Do you recall the number of stories in the Word where a multitudinous enemy of Israel, fleeing in panic from the angels of the Lord, fell on their own swords? So, too, evil falls victim to its own doctrinal arrows of falsity.

"They came out like a whirlwind to scatter me; their rejoicing was like feasting on the poor in secret."

- A "whirlwind" has an interesting correspondence. Picture vain and inconsequential things swirling around, disturbing the peace of the church. (*AC 9147 [2J]*) Do any present whirlwinds come to mind that are sweeping or scattering us? The whirlwind wants to "blow" us away from the essentials of the Word and leave us confused and separated from one another and the Lord. If we face such stormy threats, we must remember we love a Lord who calmed the boisterous winds and steadied the course of our doctrinal boats of faith.
- "Feasting" in the positive sense signifies being nourished by the good of charity. Such a feast gladdens the heart and mind and nourishes (enriches) the soul with good things. (*AC 2371 [4J]*) In the opposite sense, "feasting" signifies the adulteration of good and truth, thus making one's soul poor.
- The poor spirit, the poor feast, always happen in secret. How did the Lord put it? "Everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest their deeds should be exposed." (*John 3:20*) The darkness of evil rejoices with a plan to feast on the poor in secret.

"You walked through the sea with Your horses, through the heap of great waters."

- "Horses" in the positive represent a love of understanding the Word. (*AR 298*) A horse signifies the love of learning or intellectual things. (*AC 3727*) The opposite sense (like the red horse, pale horse, and black horse in *Revelation*) signifies the varying degrees of the understanding and the will being destroyed by self-love and falsity.

- The horses mentioned in our text are the Lord's. His horses are in the highest sense the perfect blending of the celestial, spiritual, and natural levels of the Word walking through the sea. Walking represents living (and applying) the Word according to the doctrine of truth and faith. What are some of the adjectives that come to mind when thinking about the Lord's horses? Genuine, forthright, honest, pure, caring, powerfully useful, unselfish, and everlasting/eternal concepts for heavenly living.
- The Lord's horses cut right through the "heap of great waters." In the Lord's sight, there is no "red-tape" nor profoundly unanswerable issues. He is able to sort through and resolve things that confound us. Our text shows that the great heap of water cannot knock His horses off stride.
- We need to take comfort in the Lord's mercy sorting through and resolving things. Good and truth will have dominion over all things. Human prudence will not stump Him nor slow down His restoration of the New Church.

Putting It All Together

Let's pull up several direct teachings in the Writings to put us on the path to understanding the internal sense. Like a powerful story, let's follow the thread of continuity from beginning to end so we can remember the theme in our own times of struggles and doubts. To do so will help us be strong and very courageous.

- *P&P* sums up the meaning of *Habakkuk 3:10-15* this way: "Judgment upon them [the Jewish Church/hells], combat with them, their destruction, and their being cast into hell."
- *AE 401 [17]*: "This chapter treats of the Lord's coming and of the Last Judgment...those who were in the love of self and the world were cast out by the falsities of evil into which they were let..."
- The church was chaotically out of step with the Lord's truth. They marched to their own cadence and cared little for others. To excuse themselves, they blamed the Lord for the mistakes, the pain, and the trampling of the things of the church.
- The Lord answered by telling them that the head of the house of the wicked would be struck. The intelligence of human beings was faulty. It could not stand in the presence of the Lord. To prevent the inflowing of evil into the spiritual rational person, the "neck" of the church was going to be closed off. The disorderly conditions of the church were to be subdued by the coming of the Lord.
- The evil were going to be thrust through by their faulty doctrinal arrows. As hard as the evil sought to stir things up with the whirlwind of controversy, the Lord was not going to be blown off course. He steadied the ship of doctrine, and the winds obeyed His voice.
- The horses of the Lord will be surefooted in the heap of great waters. Nothing said, thought, or implemented by evil reasoning will ever knock the Lord's

horses over. His Word is everlastingly sure. His Word will be studied to eternity and will never be exhausted.

- The former mocking of the Lord and the feasting on the poor will be over. That evil which was being done in secret will be brought to light. The Lord will expose the intent of evil; everything will be overcome by His advent and Last Judgment, and hell will be cast out.
- **Selah.** Let the reader of this prophecy hear the clash of the cymbals. Let the heart and mind hear the Lord's message clearly. The true church of the Lord will be established. The church of the evil will flee in panic when it faces the Lord. There will be combat. There will be destruction. Hell will be cast out. The enemy will be thrust through by its own arrows.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 3:10-15*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Was there a favorite scriptural image in this lesson that will help you with your fight against the hells and the dead church of self-love? What was it?
- How do you think we are doing, as a church, in the cadence of our march toward the Promised Land? Are we together or in rout step?
- What kind of whirlwind of vain and inconsequential thinking is disturbing the peace of the church in our times?
- Isn't it useful to think about evil falling on its own arrows of doctrinal deceit? Did you ever pick up on this point in stories such as the one about Gideon's fight with the Midianites? Three hundred men with pitchers and candles caused a whole army to run and cry out in fear while fleeing.
- Blaming the Lord is a constant theme. How do you deal with the plethora of accusations that the Lord is insensitive and unfeeling in the lives of the unfortunate?
- Do you have a positive feeling for the important use of the word "Selah" as found in our text and the *Psalms*?
- The steady horses, the balanced progress against hell are encouraging themes in the books of the prophets. The Lord will not be deterred. The chicanery of the hells will be dealt with, and the spiritually poor will be fed and nourished by the Lord. Do we hear this theme loud and clear?
- Are there any other points you want to add to this summary?

HABAKKUK 3:16-17

"When I heard, my body trembled; my lips quivered at the voice; rottenness entered my bones; and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble. When he comes up to the people, He will invade them with his troops, though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls..."

PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS

P&P

- “Grief on account of their state, that there is no longer anything of the church.”

AE 622 [9]

- “In Habakkuk...3:16...‘My belly trembled’ signifies grief of thought, therefore it is added, ‘My lips quivered at the voice,’ which signifies a consequent stammering of the speech...”

AC 5113 [13]

- “As in the genuine sense a ‘vine’ signifies the good of the intellectual part; and a ‘fig-tree’ the good of the natural man, or what is the same, that a ‘vine’ signifies the good of the interior man, and a ‘fig-tree’ the good of the exterior man, therefore a ‘fig-tree’ is often mentioned in the Word at the same time as a ‘vine;’ as in the following passages...Habakkuk 3:17...”

AC 9277 [3]

- “In Habakkuk...3:17...where ‘the fig-tree’ denotes natural good; ‘the vine,’ spiritual good; ‘the olive,’ celestial good; and ‘the field,’ the church.”

AC 9780 [9]

- “In Habakkuk...3:17...neither fig-tree, nor vine, nor olive, nor fields are meant, but heavenly things to which they correspond; as also every one is able to acknowledge from himself who acknowledges that the Word treats of such things as belong to heaven and the church, thus as belong to the soul. But they who think of nothing but worldly, earthly, and bodily things, do not see the internal things, and even do not wish to see them, for they say within themselves, What are spiritual things? What are celestial things? And so, What is heavenly food? That these are such things as belong to intelligence

and wisdom they indeed know when it is so said; but that they belong to faith and love, they do not desire; for the reason that they do not imbue their life with such things, and therefore do not attain to the intelligence and wisdom of heavenly truths and goodness."

AC 10261 [8]

- "...the 'vine' and the 'olive' are mentioned...as in these passages...Habakkuk 3:17...The 'fig-tree' also is here mentioned because the 'fig-tree' signifies the good of the external...but the 'vine' the good of the internal spiritual church, and the 'olive' the good of the internal celestial church..."

AE 375 [37]

- "In Habakkuk...3:17...here fig-tree, vine, olive, and fields, are not meant, but heavenly things, to which they correspond. 'The fig-tree' corresponds to and thence signifies natural good; 'the vine' corresponds to spiritual good, which in its essence is truth; the 'olive' as the fruit from which oil is derived, corresponds to the good of love in act; and 'fields' correspond to all things of the church; 'produce' and 'foods' thence signify all things pertaining to spiritual nourishment; from which it is clear what these things signify in their order."

AE 403 [10]

- "In Habakkuk...3:17...'The fig-tree shall not blossom' signifies that there shall be no natural good; 'neither shall there be produce on the vines' signifies that there shall be no good; 'the labor of the olive shall dissemble' signifies that there shall be no celestial good; 'the fields shall yield no food' signifies that there shall be no spiritual nourishment."

AE 638 [21]

- "In Habakkuk...3:17...The 'fig-tree' signifies the externals of the church, 'vines' its internals; the 'olive-yard' its goods; and the 'field' the church itself with man."

Derived Doctrine

"When I heard, my body trembled; my lips quivered at the voice..."

- *AC 2691* explains what is meant when the Lord hears the voice of a child "as being in the internal sense to bring help [because Ishmael]...was in a state of the greatest grief on account of the privation of truth..." Is it possible that something of this teaching applies also to the vision that Habakkuk saw?

Perhaps the Lord was telling him how needy the Jewish church was? As the Lord opened his eyes to see the coming of the Last Judgment, was Habakkuk overwhelmed with the sense of the church's spiritual void and its need for obedience and compliance? The state of the church at that time was not open to the order of the Lord. Seeing what was coming could cause one's body (belly) to tremble in fear and anticipation. How could his lips not quiver with the awesome task of giving this prophecy? His lack of words to explain these things to the indifferent church could have caused him to wonder, "Where do I begin to make them understand what spiritually lies ahead?" *AE 622 [9]* explains that quivering lips represent a "stammering of the speech." Why are the lips mentioned? "Lips" signify confession and thanksgiving from the heart. (*AE 279 [3]*) "Lips" signify the doctrine of good and truth. (*AE 391 [8]*) Do these quotes help us see why the lips quivered at the prospect of delivering this Divine message to a dead church?

"...rotteness entered my bones; and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble."

- "Bones" signify truths in the ultimate, thus truths in the whole complex. (*AE 364[5]*) "Bones" signify the falsity which is from a person's own (*proprium*). (*AC 3812 [8]*)
- "Rottenness" signifies a vital perishing. (*AE 637 [17]*) "Rottenness" signifies that in which there is nothing of life. In place of perception, there is an affection of falsity from evil. (*AC 10254 [4]*) "...in various places in the Prophets, a kind of reciprocity is expressed, which is such that one finds evil in place of truth, meant by 'rotteness' instead of 'judgement,' and falsity in place of good, meant by 'a cry' instead of 'righteousness'..." (*AC 2240*)
- Why did Habakkuk's prophecy speak of rotteness entering his bones? Could it have been inspired by the message of the Lord's Last Judgment? Did that vision cause a sense of reflection so that a truly humble state caused him to feel inadequate or worthless? Seeing the Lord's power and plan to purify and redeem the church had to have been breath-taking. Examining his role in the whole process of reciprocity, he saw that his *proprium* and evil had a place in his telling of the truth when they shouldn't have.
- "Trembling" signifies a great alteration and change of state when truth gives place to good. (*AC 3593*) "They who are in good do indeed tremble at the presence of the Divine, but it is a holy tremor which precedes reception...The evil are in terror at the presence of the Divine, and therefore flee away..." (*AC 8816*)
- "...in the day of trouble" seems to represent being in a state of temptation. The word "trouble" "denotes labor...because it is predicated of temptations." (*AC 8670*) The plea, and hope, is that rest may be found in the day of trouble. "Rest" signifies finding a state of peace. (*AC 9279*)

"When he comes up to the people, he will invade them with his troops."

- Who is the “he” in this quote? The fact that the “he” is in the lower case suggests that it is not the Lord coming up to the people. Is it referring to the invasion of the Chaldean nation? If so, that would tend to put this prophecy in a time-and-space lock. The Word is written for eternal purposes.
- Most likely, the reference to “he” represents the hells marshaling an all-out attempt to intimidate the church and drive away the truth that the Last Judgment was at hand. We have examples of hell using this battle plan. In *Genesis 2:4*, when Adam and Eve were tempted to eat of the forbidden fruit, the wily serpent used the argument: “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
- See also *AC 6405* where “A troop shall ravage him” is explained as truth being driven away by illusions, and with respect to truth, an attempt to obscure the understanding.

N.B. Verse 17 deals with **the fig tree; the vines; the olive tree; and the field**. These correspondences are explained in seven quotes cited in the Passages from the Writings section. Please review them as they deal with the demise of natural good, spiritual good, and celestial good within the church. With the lack of spiritual fruit and their failure to provide food, we are taught such things relate to heaven, the church, and the soul. This revelation is a summation of what led to the demise of the Jewish Church. But this verse is like the dark cloud behind which is seen a great silver lining. Verses 18 and 19 end the prophecy of Habakkuk with a glimpse of what lies ahead. There are given “words to live by” regarding the bright future of the New Church after the Last Judgment.

So what we will look at now are the portions of verse 17 not explained above.

“...though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls...”

- A “flock” signifies those who are led and taught. (*AC 343*) A “flock” signifies the church and those who are in truths of simple good. (*AC 6828*)
- A “fold” signifies good from celestial things of love, in which innocence may rest. (*AC 415*)
- A “herd” signifies goods in general. (*AC 3154 [2]*) A “herd” signifies interior and exterior goods of truth. (*AC 6108*)
- A “stall” signifies to imbibe the knowledges of external good, and to do violence is to live contrary to charity. (*AE 279 [4]*)
- What then is the summary of these things? The church as to its simple good was not being fed, that is, taught and led. This neglect led to a process of separation from the fold of celestial good. The violence of self-love did great harm to the “stalls.” Such an attack on the goods of truth caused there to be “no herd in the stalls.”

Putting It All Together

As we have consistently done before, let's begin our summation with the overview *P&P* gives us regarding the meaning of the spiritual sense. The Church will have "Grief on account of their state, that there is no longer anything of the church."

What kind of reaction does this summary elicit? It sounds like pretty glum stuff, downright depressing; is there anything that can come from this that will lift our spirits and inspire us?

Look again at the literal sense:

- Habakkuk reports that his body (belly) trembles and quivers at the voice of the Lord.
- In comparison to the Lord, Habakkuk feels like rottenness has entered his bones. While trembling with this thought, he wishes, indeed longs for the day of temptation to be over so that he might feel at rest, or peace, again.
- Hell doesn't want to hear of the Lord's Last Judgment, so its "army" invades the mind to offer up contrary, illusional information. While hell was boasting of the improbability of a judgment happening, there were clear signs all around the people of the spiritual demise of the church. The Lord spoke about hell's determination to not see spiritual reality in *Matthew 13:15*: "...their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears...so that I should heal them."
- What was the evidence? The fig tree (natural good) was not blossoming. There was no fruit (spiritual good) on the vines. The olive tree (celestial good) failed. The crops of the fields (the church) gave no food. And lastly, the flock had been cut off from the fold, and there was no herd to be found in the stalls.

Can we put a specific illustration into this lesson? As a reader of this study guide, it would be more powerful if you were able to focus on a personal issue. To get some reflective thought going in this process, let's pick a universal issue. As hard as we try to be open and honest with our life, do we find times when it seems impossible to be totally honest? Backed into a defensive corner, has telling a "white lie" ever seemed not only prudent but absolutely necessary? What effect does that white lie have on our natural good? Does the lie momentarily prevent the "fig-tree" from blossoming? In turn, what does the lie do to the "vine"? Does it keep fruit, or spiritual good, off of the vine? Like a chain reaction, the lie causes us to lose a degree of our natural good, spiritual good, and celestial good. The lie separates us from the flock. A flock signifies those who are led and taught. A flock signifies affections of innocence.

Hell with its "army" of illusive thoughts will try to convince us that the Lord will not judge us for these minor offenses. We are human, and to be human means to err, and erring means telling harmless lies. Is that what the Lord taught? What was the

ending in the lesson? The church had no fruit and produce, and the stalls were empty. No herd was to be found. How can we learn from this so that we can have some spiritual maintenance to keep our growing productive?

It seems that our lot is to be open with the Lord by doing self-inspection. We need to willingly confess our indiscretions to the Lord, ask (supplicate) the Lord for help, and seek (expect) to attain a new life. These things keep our fruit growing, our fields full of produce, and the stalls with a herd present.

Don't let despair settle in. Wait and read the closing two verses of this prophecy. Be prepared to listen to the joy and conviction they express regarding the total victory the Lord will give to those who trust in Him and His power.

In the opening chapters, Habakkuk argued with the Lord. He asked hard questions and made assumptions that the Lord was being unfair and indifferent to Israel. Habakkuk assumed the Lord was using the enemy to persecute His church. Each question, each charge was answered, and the message was and is awesome. The Lord will establish His New Church.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 3:16-17*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Trembling, quivering, and feeling as though our bones are full of rottenness seem like an overwhelming theme. Do such states, if experienced with a degree of humility, bring us to bended knee or being prostrate before the Lord?
- The quivering of the lips touched me somewhat. How many times have we had the experience where we just don't know how to talk about the church? Think about telling people about the Second Coming; telling them about the Writings; telling them about things seen and heard in heaven and hell by Swedenborg. Does it seem to you that we hesitantly pick and choose our time to speak of such things? We try to ascertain whether this is the right person and time to speak about spiritual pearls. What success have you had in deciding such matters?
- Looking forward to the day and hoping for peace in matters of temptation is necessary. Will we ever have full peace, or will we have intermittent, alternating states of temptation and peace?
- These verses have great illustrations of natural, spiritual, and celestial good. The trees, the vines, the fields, and the stalls are easy to remember. How

- about thinking through the process with specific issues? Will we use these Divine parables in our fight to enliven the New Church within?
- Before moving to the last two verses of Habakkuk's prophecy, what things might we do to prepare adequately for the ending? Prayer? Reaching inward to prepare ourselves to see and hear what the Lord is promising?

HABAKKUK 3:18-19

"Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills.

To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Then those who at heart acknowledge the Lord will be saved."

AE 660 [4]

- "...exultation, like joy, is predicated of good, because it relates to love, to the heart, and to the will; as in the following passages...Habakkuk 3:18...In all these passages, 'exultation' signifies delight from love and from the affection of good, and 'gladness' signifies pleasure from the love and affection of truth."

AC 6413 [2]

- "...in Habakkuk...3:19...'to make the feet like those of hinds' denotes the natural in the freedom of the affections...to make the feet nimble and active to run like those of hinds is not anything spiritual; and yet that something spiritual is involved, is plain from what immediately follows, that 'Jehovah will set him and cause him to march upon his high places,' whereby is signified spiritual affection, which is above natural affection."

Derived Doctrine

"Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

- *AC 7093 [3]* defines rejoicing as a "joy from good and truth from man's inmost to his external."
- *AC 8672* explains that "rejoicing" is a state when Divine good (love) in all things succeeds. This goes well "beyond [human] comprehension, because it

belongs to the Infinite...there is infinite joy on account of the reception of good by those who are in heaven and the church...from the Divine love, which is infinite toward the human race...for all joy, is of love."

- "...the God of my salvation" signifies "that He must be worshiped by means of truths from good, from which is salvation." (*AE 411 [9]*)
- "Salvation" signifies "conjunction with Him by truths and by a life according to them, for thereby there is salvation." (*AE 365 [30]*)

"The Lord God is my strength..."

- *AC 3921 [3]* teaches that when "God" is mentioned, the regeneration of the spiritual person is the subject. When Jehovah or the "Lord" is mentioned, the subject is the good of love of the celestial person.
- *AE 689* teaches us "the signification of 'the Lord God,' as being the Lord in respect to Divine good and truth; for where Divine good is meant in the Word the names 'Lord' and 'Jehovah' are used, and where Divine truth is meant the name 'God' is used, therefore 'the Lord God' and 'Jehovah God' means the Lord in respect to Divine good and Divine truth."
- "Strength" signifies the Divine truths fighting. (*AC 9809 [4]*)
- Putting these teachings together, we get the picture of the Lord God uniting His Divine Love and Divine Truth for the salvation of humanity and the angels, and that His omnipotence will bring those mighty force to bear for our rescue. His Divine Truths will fight off any and all of what hell seeks to marshal.
- We need to confidently spread the good news: Victory is at hand because "the Lord God is my strength."

"He will make my feet like deer's feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills."

- The Writings use the word "hind" in place of "deer." A "hind" is a "red deer." Could this distinction be of importance to the spiritual meaning? Red signifies the good of love and of life. (*AC 3300*) A "hind" signifies natural affections. Giving the hind a fleetness of feet, that is, making it nimble and active, denotes a freedom of the affections. (*AC 6413 [2]*) The word "spontaneous" brings to mind a kind of child-like openness to the Lord, acting and worshipping with a state of innocence instead of hidden selfish agendas. Boredom is gone. Excitement comes into the heart and mind. How may we know this? The words "**nimble and active**" speak to the liveliness of the heart in responding to the Lord.
- He will make me walk" sounds forced and demanding. Instead of this image, think of the word "make" as meaning: He will enable, allow, permit, and encourage me to walk. With this insight, a sense of freedom comes back into the prophecy.

- To “walk” signifies to live according to the doctrines of the Lord. (*AC 519*) To “walk” signifies to view and perceive the nature of the Lord’s heavenly kingdom. (*AC 1613*)
- Where will our nimble, active, and lively feet take (walk) us? “...to my high hills.” The reference from *AC 6413 [2]* explains that “my high hills” represents walking in a place of “spiritual affection which is above natural affection.” Please note that the word “my” is not capitalized. Could this denote that the Lord will leave us in an “as-of-self” state of freedom during this period of new discoveries?

“To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.

- We have no explanation in the Writings as to why we have these seemingly fragmented sentences following the end of the prophecy. Can we make sense of their placement?
- A skilled musician knows how to make proper use of various kinds of musical instruments to highlight the theme and stir the affections of the audience. He will use the wind, percussion, and stringed instruments masterfully. *AC 418* gives us a long quote illustrating this plan. Please read it.
- Harpers and musicians relate to spiritual affections and spiritual truth and good, and they represent interior and exterior joys. (*AE 1184*)
- “To the Chief Musician.” Should we note the capitalization of “Chief” and “Musician”? If so, are we considering the Lord as the Chief Musician? It makes sense to do so when we consider that He is the one who wrote the “musical score” and that He knows best how to arrange the sequencing of instruments to touch the affections of the listening church (audience). He directs the tempo, the level of sound, and the timing of when the brass, reeds, cymbals, drums, and strings make their entrance in harmony or in solo.
- Do you recall the word “Selah”? It is believed that the Chief Musician would call for the clashing noise of cymbal or chime to get everyone’s attention so they might alertly note an important transition. The Last Judgment certainly was emotional, and it required the church to pay attention. The new transition, the New Church, is a reality. Selah.

“With my stringed instruments.”

- *AE 323* and *AE 1185* teach that “stringed instruments” signify such things as belong to the affection of truth and wind instruments to affections of good.
- Do the “stringed instruments” called for by the Chief Musician harmonize with the “Nunc Licet” message found in *TCR 508 [3]*? “It is now permitted to enter understandingly into the mysteries of faith.” Such words touch our deep innocent remains that belong to our affections of truth. Only the Lord knows where these remains reside. But at His direction, they will come forward and play their “strings” with a clarity and a beauty that will stir us into performing better than we ever imagined possible.

- May we, as the Lord's children, stand and clap cheering: Bravo! Encore! For the Lord has produced, directed, and provided us with a heart-felt message of eternal care and love. Praise to the "Lord God of our salvation."

Putting It All Together

"Then those who at heart acknowledge the Lord will be saved." (*P&P*)

I do believe there is little need to pull these verses together. The above exposition in the light of doctrine is quite moving and provides us with a melody that we can robustly sing together:

"The Lord God Jesus Christ reigns! This is the hour He comes with power to loose our captive chains. Hell's legions reel before Him. The victor's crown He gains."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 3:18-19*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- "I will joy in the God of my salvation" are words that lift one's spirit. To yourself, or within a study-group setting, speak about your joy for the Lord. How many blessings can you recount?
- "The Lord is my strength." Do you feel the Lord's strength frequently, occasionally, or just sometimes? There is no doubt from this section that we need to feel and use the Lord's strength often. "Those who at heart acknowledge the Lord will be saved."
- Are you at a point in your spiritual life where you feel your feet are nimble, active, and free to climb the high hills?
- What musical pieces stir your heart? Are there any hymns that lift you?
- Can we picture the Lord as our Chief Musician conducting the orchestra of our heart? Reflecting on the melody of your life, can you see times when He called for stringed instruments to be played? How about wind instruments? Were there any cymbals called for?
- We visited many spiritual states in *Habakkuk*. There were ponderous questions. There were those states of nagging doubts. Now that we have come to the uplifting conclusion of *Habakkuk*, do you feel that a day of peace has been given to us by the Lord? Following temptations, the Lord gives us rest so that we get invigorated enough to face the next obstacle. May we rest a "day" and recuperate with our Chief Musician to be ready when the call comes for us to play our strings or wind instruments for the Lord.

Epilogue: A Summary of the Book of Habakkuk

The following summary draws and expands on the outline given in the Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms.

CHAPTER ONE

The Jewish Church was in serious spiritual trouble. Interest in the things of the Lord had been replaced by superficiality. The church had become sensual. The people were interested in their own comfort and security. Justice and truth perished. The Lord grieved over their choices. Instead of the church coming to its senses to see that their problems were of their own choosing, they turned to find “compelling” ways to blame the Lord.

While blaming the Lord for all misfortunes, the church continued to actively profane all the truths and goods of the Word. To illustrate the depth of Israel’s choices, “a bitter and hasty nation” of Chaldeans rose up against Israel. The Chaldeans came with horses swifter than leopards and more fierce than wolves. The Chaldeans’ pride caused them to scoff at kings. They took many captives. The attitude of the Chaldeans reflected that which resided in the hearts and minds of Israel.

Israel didn’t get the message. They failed to see the application of what they were doing to the spiritual things of the church. The Lord’s grief continued because their evil prevailed over the good, and they were destroying the last vestiges of good.

CHAPTER TWO

Israel’s disregard for spiritual things necessitated the Lord’s coming. The Lord spoke through Habakkuk to tell the Jewish Church what kind of battle would take place with His advent. The Lord spoke about spiritual issues from what other nations saw. In reality, the other nations represented how distanced the Jewish Church had become from Him. The love of self was growing. Alongside of this growth, the people of the church were growing vile. Other nations (the Lord) noted these changes, and it caused them to hold Israel in contempt. What did the other nations see? They saw Israel’s pride puffing up their own intelligence. The other nations saw that the church judged from externals alone. They noted that Israel was hatching doctrine out of falsities.

When the Lord comes, He tells the church that those who lead others astray will be made ashamed. The Lord tells them that the self-serving falsities will profit the evil nothing. What will last to eternity? The Divine Human.

CHAPTER THREE

Chapter Three continues with the prediction that the Lord will come into the world. When the Lord comes, He will bring with Him the things belonging to Divine truth and good. He will examine the church. In the light of His judgment, it will be shown that the Jewish Church was no longer a church because of its actions and choices.

The Lord's presence will dissipate the dead church's falsities of evil. Judgment will come upon those who hate and oppose Him. Those whose hearts are intent on self-love will suffer spiritual destruction, and they will cast themselves into hell.

Did the Lord enter into this combat with anger? He maintained His grief on account of their state. He grieved because there was no longer anything of the church left.

When evil is overcome, the Lord will rebuild His church. "Those who at heart acknowledge the Lord will be saved." What church will come out of this combat and disorder? The New Church will rise up out of the ashes of falsity and evil. In the words of Habakkuk, that new church will sing: "rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."