

# Essays on the After-Life and on the Last Judgment

## **WARNING**

Tremendous! quantity of footnotes is posing a problem here

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## Preface

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) was granted to describe the angelic heavens and the hells "from things seen and heard, in the hope that ignorance may thus be enlightened and unbelief dissipated." (@HH 1[e])

This book of essays seeks to give a survey of Swedenborg's testimony, and some reflections on its many facets. It can give only samplings of the extensive and profound teachings of his Writings, and does not pretend to do more than hint at the underlying philosophy, and to emphasize the reality of the spiritual world. The subject of the Last judgment has been given special consideration with a view to arranging the many spiritual events recorded by Swedenborg into their chronological sequence and bringing out some of the laws distinctive of the spiritual realm. Wherever possible, reiteration of ideas has been avoided, but a certain amount of repetition has been inevitable for the sake of clarity and context, and to make the chapters readable as independent essays.

For help in preparing the typescript, and for proofreading and editorial assistance, the author is especially indebted to Mrs. Cora M. Smith, Mr. Lennart O. Alfelt, and Miss Beryl G. Briscoe. Two portions of the text (pages 22 to 55, 337 to 468) were previously published in NEW CHURCH LIFE, 1957 and 1960, and are here slightly revised.

The text has been furnished with footnotes giving references to the Writings, for the use of readers who desire to follow out the topics in greater detail, or students who require source material.

These essays do not cover all the aspects of the spiritual world which the Writings present. For example, the doctrine concerning the heavens as a "Grand Man" is only lightly touched upon, and demands a separate treatment. And for the teachings about the relationship of spirits with men the reader is referred to the book entitled "Spirits and Men," published by the Academy Book Room, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, in 1958 and 1960.

In this "post-Christian" era when the New Christian Church is as yet among a few, it is difficult for the impatient minds of men to detach themselves sufficiently from the concerns of this world to think spiritually and rationally about things beyond the grave or contemplate the essence of the

supernatural world. Our contemporaries, while demanding more than a blind faith in the letter of Scripture, have come to doubt that God could have spoken to mankind again to reveal something new. The message of Swedenborg is as yet known to few. But future ages will see more clearly. "The time is coming when there will be enlightenment." (@AC 4402)

Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania

HUGO Lj. ODHNER

#### ABBREVIATIONS used for titles of Swedenborg's Writings

AC - Arcana Coelestia (1749-1756)  
AE - Apocalypse Explained AR - Apocalypse Revealed (1766)  
Ath. - Athanasian Creed (posth.)  
BE - Brief Exposition (1769)  
Can. - Canons (posth.)  
Char. - Doctrine of Charity (posth.)  
CL - Conjugal Love (1768)  
CLJ - Continuation of The Last Judgment (1763)  
Conv. Ang. - Conversations with Angels (posth.)  
Coro. - Coronis to TCR (posth.)  
De Conj. On Marriage (posth.)  
De Ver. - The Word from Experience (posth.)  
DLW - Divine Love and Wisdom (1763)  
Docu. - Tafel's "Documents"  
DP - Divine Providence (1764)  
Ecc. Hist. - Ecclesiastical History of the New Church (posth.)  
EU - Earths in the Universe (1758)  
F - Doctrine of Faith (1763)  
5 Mem. - Five Memorable Relations (posth.)  
HD - New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine (1758)  
HH - Heaven and Hell (1758)  
ISB - Intercourse of Soul and Body (1769)  
Inv. - Invitation to the New Church (posth.)  
LJ - The Last Judgment (1758)  
LJ post. - Last Judgment and the Spiritual World (posth.)  
Life - Doctrine of Life (1763)  
Lord - Doctrine of the Lord (1763)  
Love - On the Divine Love (posth.)  
SD - The Spiritual Diary (posth.)  
SD min. - The Spiritual Diary Minor (posth.)  
SS - Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture (1763)  
TCR - The True Christian Religion (1771)  
WE - The Word Explained (Adversaria) (posth.)  
WH - Concerning the "White Horse" (1758)  
Wis. - On the Divine Wisdom (posth.)

Publication dates in parentheses.

**WARNING** | Footnotes are not well integrated here yet.

# Part One: From Earth to Heaven

In the life of the body, all thoughts and actions should have reference to eternal life - the life after death.

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG in his "Spiritual Experiences," no. 2809

## 1 THE REVELATION OF THE AFTER-LIFE

### THE BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY

History seems to testify that in all past ages there has been among men a belief in some kind of a life after death and in the existence of mighty, intelligent powers which operate unseen within, above or beyond the visible world. The ethnic religions of India, the Mohammedan faith, the old Babylonian, Egyptian and Graeco-Roman religions and many primitive cults, have or had their special eschatology or teachings about the after-life, although they differed widely, ranging from crude superstitions to elaborate philosophies. In many of these religions, there is a substratum of truth that may be traced to a common origin in the lost traditions of the Ancient Word>(\*1) but these remnants were overlaid with hideous falsities. And although ancient Israel knew virtually nothing of the life after death, beyond the vague idea that men, at death, were "gathered to their fathers" in some gloomy underworld, there grew up among the Jews, after the Captivity, sects like that of the Pharisees who developed sundry doctrines about a bodily resurrection of the dead and a final judgment.

The early Christians, from the Lord's teachings, had certain definite concepts of the reality of a spiritual world, which acted as a corrective to the pagan ideas of their neighbors. But it is no exaggeration to say that the myths and philosophies of pagan Greece in time infiltrated into Christian thought. In the Dark Ages of Europe, men's minds were divided between fear of the unorthodox ghost world of popular belief, a residue of heathen tradition, and dread of the purgatory of priestly invention. This mixture of superstition, dogma and classical legend is later apparent in the poems of Dante and Milton, in the mystical writings of Boehme, and in Goethe's "Faust."

(\*1.) SS 102f, @TCR 279, 11, @AC 1068, 8944:2, De Ver. 36-38

The Catholic church indeed formulated a comprehensive structure of doctrine and tradition about the supernatural realm. According to this picture the unseen realm consists of a heaven, presided over by the three "persons" of the Godhead and peopled by a graded hierarchy of angels created before the world, and of rebellious devils who under their chief, Lucifer or Satan, hold their court in hell. As to the fate of men, the common idea has been that the spirits of the dead would be kept in an intermediate state, separated from their physical bodies, until the unknown "last day" on which the earth is to be destroyed or purged by fire; when they would again be reunited to their bodies, now glorified, to live a happy life to eternity if they are judged to be worthy. Catholic textbooks often place this resurrection and judgment on the physical earth; and they defend the idea that the wicked will be condemned to suffer everlasting punishments in a hell of material fire, which they imagine to be located in the bowels of the earth.(\*2)

(\*2.) God and Creation, by Thomas B. Chetwood, S.J., 1928, pp. 250, 253, 259

Immediately after death, and before the judgment, Catholics believe, the departed spirits - if salvable - must undergo penance in the fires of purgatory for various sins for which they have not paid the debt. But those who pass out of life in actual mortal sin go down immediately into hell. Souls who have made satisfaction in purgatory or who have been released through the prayers of the faithful and the intercession of saints, are thereafter held in a state of happiness until they rejoin their bodies; and Catholic writers picture the joys of such spirits as those of companionship and pursuit of knowledge, although it would chiefly aspire to an ecstatic contemplation of God - a beatific vision.

Protestants have no belief in any "purgatory," and their ideas of the after-life are more diverse and usually less dogmatic, and indeed often verge upon skepticism and denial. Some sects in the Protestant world deny that there is a permanent hell; and it is unusual at this day to hear clergymen preach about a personal Devil. In each generation, a few sects arise which insist that the Last Judgment is at hand to be followed by a heaven on earth. Spiritistic ideas have also had a wide influence. But the tendency is not to dwell on this phase of Christian doctrine, and many modern Protestants do not encourage any belief in another world - in angels or spirits, or in any resurrection, whether of spirits or of bodies. They feel rather that their mission is one of social and moral reform, and that the only heaven that can be reasonably expected will be right here on earth.

But many of the erroneous ideas of Christendom stem directly from too literal an understanding of Scripture. So for instance, Ezekiel's vision of the valley of bones - where the Spirit of God caused the skeletons of the slain to revive and put on flesh - is supposed to picture a physical resurrection on the day of the last judgment; although it is clear from the context that it symbolized the restoration of the house of Israel to their land.(Ezekiel 37:11) The sudden appearance of "many bodies of the saints" to people in the "holy city" after the Lord's resurrection (Matthew 27:52) is also used to confirm the idea. Christian creeds ignore Paul's distinction between a spiritual body and a natural body (I Corinthians 15:44) and fail to note that John in his prophetic vision of the last judgment specified that it was "the dead, small and great," who were to be arraigned before the throne of judgment. (Revelation 20:12)

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The fact is that men generally have no concept of what the soul is or what a spiritual world is, or what heaven and hell really mean. Even in ancient times we mark how people confused the two worlds.

The men of the Golden Age of the celestial church indeed had open intercourse with the spiritual world, yet it is said that they only beheld it "in natural light"; which implies that they had no abstract thought, but saw spiritual things depicted in the symbolism of nature.(Inv. 52) The ancients of later millennia also expressed all their perceptions of spiritual realities in correspondential natural language - picturing the after-life as an indefinite prolongation of natural existence. Gradually the idea of a transmigration of souls added to the confusion as it became widely spread among the nations.

In the Christian Church no clear boundary line was drawn between the natural and the spiritual. The departed spirit was usually thought of as a purified natural body, or - in its intermediate state before the resurrection - as devoid of the human form, as a flame or breath in the atmospheres; and angels were imagined as at home in the stars. And while there have been philosophers who sought to show that the spirit of man is of a nature or substance widely differing from that of the

physical body, there has not been - before the revelations to the New Church - any clear idea of a spiritual world.

Indeed, if we consult an encyclopedia of religious or biblical knowledge, we might in vain look for any article on the "spiritual world."

The cause of this general ignorance is that men tend to think sensually about the soul and eternal life, and have had difficulty to associate reality with things beyond space and time. "For man in his thought has not penetrated beyond the interior or purer things of nature. And for this reason many have placed the abodes of angels and spirits in the ether, and some in the stars, thus within nature, and not above or outside it; when nevertheless angels and spirits are altogether above or outside of nature and in their own world which is under another Sun!" (@DLW 92)

Heaven and hell and life after death are scarcely at all known in the world and many born within Christendom, especially the worldly wise, refuse to believe in them. "Therefore" - so wrote Swedenborg in the preface to his work Heaven and Hell

"lest such a negative spirit .... should also infect and corrupt the simple in heart and the simple in faith, it has been granted me to associate with angels and to talk with them as man with man, and also to see what is in the heavens and what is in the hells, and this throughout thirteen years; also to describe what I have heard and seen; hoping that ignorance may thus be enlightened and unbelief dissipated. Such an immediate revelation exists at this day, because this is what is meant by the Advent of the Lord."

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The essential purpose of this new revelation of the spiritual world is that men might be enabled to think spiritually about the after-life. Actually, there is considerable information about the spiritual world to be gathered from the Word of the Old and New Testaments. We are given to understand that angels appeared frequently to the patriarchs; that Jacob saw the messengers (or angels) of God ascending and descending the ladder between earth and heaven (Genesis 28) that Moses saw the pattern of the tabernacle in heaven; (Exodus 25:40) that the spirit of Samuel spoke with Saul through the witch of Endor; (1 Sam. 28) that Elisha's servant had his eyes opened to see the guardian hosts of spirits around the mountain where they stood; (2 Kings 6:15) that the prophets experienced innumerable visions of spiritual judgments and angelic throngs; that Moses and Elijah - long dead - appeared with the Lord on the mount of transfiguration. (Matthew 17) There is "a cloud of witnesses"! Angels appeared, as young men, to announce the Lord's birth and resurrection.(\*14) In His parable of the rich man and Lazarus.(\*15) the Lord pictures men's souls as almost immediately transported to places in "hades" or in heaven - which were separated by a great gulf.

They are shown to be able to feel and speak as before. To the thief on the cross the Lord gave the assurance, "Today thou shalt be with Me in paradise."(\*16) And John, "in spirit" and under the guidance of angels, was shown "the souls under the altar" and many wonders in heaven.(\*17) Besides which we read in the Acts and the Epistles of many instances in which the early Christians had visions of angels, and of Paul that he was lifted up into the "third heaven" and heard ineffable things; whether in the body or out of the body, he did not know;(\*18) and of Christ that He, having died, "was quickened in spirit in which He also went and preached unto the spirits in prison."(\*19) Paul also mentions that man has a "spiritual" body distinct from his natural body.(\*20)

(\*14). Luke 24:4. In the Holy Scripture, angels are consistently represented as men - without the wings with which tradition has adorned them. Angels are not to be confounded with the "cherubim" and "seraphim" which were symbolic forms, often described as composite animals. Some had "wheels within wheels" and eyes in the wheels, to betoken the protective power and complexity of Divine Providence. (Genesis 3:24, Ezek. 10, Revelation 4:6, @AC 308, 4162:2, 9506, @AR 48[4]) (\*15.) Luke 16:19 (\*16.) Luke 23:43

(\*17.) Revelation 6:9 (\*18.) 2 Corinthians 12:2 (\*19.) I Peter 3:19 (\*20.) 1 Cor. 15

The Lord assured us that there are "many mansions" in His Father's house and that He was going ahead to prepare room there for His faithful. "If it were not so," He added, "I would have told you." He intimated that He had many more things to tell His disciples. But He said, "Ye cannot bear them now."(\*21) Certainly He speaks of a judgment to come, and of a heaven and a hell - both equally permanent.

(\*21.) John 14:2, 16:12, Matthew 25:19, Luke 16:19

All the teachings of Scripture are however couched in parables - in the language of earthly similes, symbols, and correspondences. Aside from glimpses of interior doctrine, as when the Lord said that the kingdom of God "is within you,"(\*22) it is only the external phases of the spiritual world that are revealed in the Biblical Scriptures - the appearances and representatives of the other world. It may thus be inferred that the literal sense of the Word portrays many external aspects of the spiritual world.(\*23)

(\*22.) Luke 17:21, cp. John 16:25 (\*23.) @AC 6048

It is apparent that the early Israelites had certain obscure concepts about an invisible underworld, or Sheol, where the dead dolefully relived their memories as shades of their former selves;

and later of an unseen realm (loosely identified with the sky) in which the "sons of God," and among them "the Satan," sometimes gathered in council, and from which they were sent down to influence men's lives.(\*24)

(\*24.) Job 1, 2, Dan. 10, 12. See "The Cosmology of the Bible", in The New Philosophy, April 1956; and a recent study by C. Ryder Smith, The Bible Doctrine of the Hereafter, Epworth Press, London, 1958.

The Writings of Swedenborg show that the Jewish people had little knowledge of the spiritual world, nor any clear assurance that they would live after death.(\*25) This was of Providence, lest they profane the truth. Yet various pagan ideas of the after-life influenced the Jews, and at the time of the Lord the Pharisees taught about a resurrection of the body at a coming "last day."

(\*25.) @AC 10490[2], 6963:2, 3479, 4289:2

The prophets of Israel indeed saw visions and dreamt dreams, but had no understanding of the spiritual meaning of what they experienced or of what they recorded under the constraint of Divine inspiration. Their testimony of their spiritual experiences therefore remained in the field of symbols rather than open truths, and sometimes it appears confusing, incomplete, inconsistent, and far from conclusive. Similarly the New Testament only gives assurance that there is a spiritual world but tells nothing definite about its nature.

When, at the end of the Christian Church, it was necessary for the Lord to restore to mankind a real knowledge of the spiritual world, it had to be done by means of a man who was prepared throughout his early youth and manhood by the investigation of the causes of things - a scientist and observer, a man who inquired philosophically into the laws and reasons of things, and who could view and analyze the phenomena of both heaven and hell dispassionately and calmly from a love of truth, and thus be led and enlightened by the Lord and inspired to recognize and describe the order and essence of the spiritual world.

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One of the facts we must accept before understanding the testimony of Emanuel Swedenborg is that every human being is from creation equipped to have commerce with spirits.

This is announced in the beginning of the *Arcana Coelestia*.(\*26) The human mind is a spirit dwelling in and operating through the physical body, and this spirit is unconsciously environed by other spirits - those living in the spiritual world. Man's spirit possesses all the senses which departed spirits have, and if mankind on this earth had not fallen into a sensual and corrupt state and so been separated from heaven, men generally would still enjoy the faculty of conversing with angels,(\*27) as is the case on many other planets. At the present day this is rarely granted, because it is exceedingly dangerous,(\*27)a except in certain cases, as with some who lead a solitary life or who brood on religious subjects and may occasionally be briefly addressed by spirits. Such exceptional experiences are disorderly, but not of much harm unless encouraged or unless men become habitual visionaries or place reliance in these spirits who are invariably of a corporeal and stupid sort.(\*28)

(\*26.) @AC 69 (\*27.) @HH 252f 27a. The danger of seeking open intercourse with spirits is discussed in *Spirits and Men*, Academy Book Room, Bryn Athyn, Pa., 1958, pp 20-41.

(\*28.) @HH 249, 253

Spirits who speak to men by the Lord's permission - and this has been granted to many for ages back - say only a few words and do not attempt to instruct men.(\*29) In fact they are mostly of the man's own religion, and can only confirm his opinions. That there are instances still of spirits addressing men and appearing before their mental senses is supported by too great a body of evidence to be doubted. But claims involving such personal experiences are difficult to judge of singly, since they may only be - and most commonly are - "the delusions of an abstracted mind," or akin to what the Writings call "phantastic visions"; to which must be added the hallucinations that attend those who suffer from mental diseases. That all these are caused by spirits is of course obvious, since even dreams are the results of the influx of spirits at times when man is not in active control of his memory. But spirits cannot operate in nature without the intermediation of natural organisms. Nowhere in the Writings do we find any real indication that a concentration of thought or mental effort can move physical objects by "telekinesis" or action at a distance.

(\*29.) @DP 135

On the other hand, the records of societies devoted to so-called "psychical research" contain much testimony about unexplained cases of apparitions and alleged conversations (through "mediums") with the dead, as well as other abnormal occurrences. Wherever professional "mediums" are involved, the suspicion lingers that the phenomena are produced by connivance or skill rather than by spirits, especially as the Writings do not grant to spirits the powers either of "materializing" or of



foreseeing the future, or of instructing men about the other life. Where the latter occurs, the information the supposed "spirit" gives is usually vague and confused or contradictory; but occasional descriptions are given which resemble the truth, but then always in cases where the medium or the interlocutor has had some direct or indirect knowledge of the testimony of Swedenborg, as in the famous instance of Sir Oliver Lodge. We may of course take it as quite possible that in an induced state of hypnosis the subconscious memory can become vocal. It is also worth noting that some men of science who have interested themselves objectively in this "psychical research" have not thereby been led to confirm a belief in a spiritual world, or a permanent survival of man's spirit in a heaven or a hell, but rather theorize that man's mental elements at death may take a long time to dissipate and in the meantime may leave active impressions upon living men's minds.

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It is therefore clear that the occasional intercourse of spirits with men is quite insufficient to supply mankind with a knowledge of the other world. This can be done only by an immediate Divine revelation, by the introduction of a man into the spiritual world - not for a few hours of trance or vision but for many years of wakeful experience. And to carry out such a Divine commission, a man must obviously be gradually prepared for his ordained task of communing with spirits and angels, and be surrounded with a special Divine protection, even as were the prophets of old.

Swedenborg had no desire of his own to enter into intercourse with spirits or to dabble in forbidden mysteries from idle curiosity. He was also strikingly devoid of spiritual pride.

When he was called by the Lord he had as yet little realization of what he was required to do or what lay ahead of him.

His introduction into the spiritual world was gradual.(\*30) There came first a period during which he experienced remarkable dreams in which he recognized symbolic references to the studies he was then making in physiology. At times he enjoyed states of extraordinary clarity of mind while writing, and confirmatory lights. Later he began to perceive the presence of spirits as if they affected his bodily senses, and this was sometimes accompanied by moods of temptation, despair, and horror, as when evil spirits attempted to obsess him when he wrote what was contrary to their pleasure. Sometimes, as he awakened in the morning, he would hear voices. And finally, one evening, a certain spirit addressed him in a few words on the subject that he was then thinking about. This was accompanied with a vision of the spirit, which frightened Swedenborg. He was also amazed and indignant that the spirit could thus read his thoughts; and the spirit was equally amazed at Swedenborg's surprise, since thought is spiritual speech. Yet "after some days," the new relationship with spirits in wakefulness became habitual and familiar to Swedenborg.(\*31)

(\*30.) @SD 2951

(\*31.) @SD 2951, 4726, 4390, @AC 6214, 5855. Journal of Dreams 242.

It was less than a year later that Swedenborg received his final solemn appointment to his spiritual mission by the Lord, who appeared to him in the middle of April, 1745. From that time, he describes himself as having conversed almost daily with the inhabitants of heaven (i.e., with departed spirits) while at the same time being among his friends on earth. And he writes: "In a certain manner I have been intromitted into heaven itself, not merely as to the mind, but also with the whole body as it were or with the sense in the body, and that, too, when I was fully awake."(\*32) He was suffused

with a humble gratitude, for he experienced states of ineffable happiness.(\*33) He speaks of himself as having joined speech with spirits "as though he were himself become a spirit."(\*34) He was present among them as to every sense, even touch.

But so inexplicable did this intercourse seem that even after many months he felt that he could not state the fact as absolute truth.(\*35)

(\*32.) WE 1003, 475

(\*33.) WE 541e

(\*34.) Hist. Crea. 24

(\*35.) WE 475e

Indeed, he learnt that he had to be very cautious. In order that he might understand the various relationships existing between the two worlds, he had to be introduced into a great variety of states. He came among spirits who loved to impersonate the Biblical patriarchs; he was led into both representative visions and illusory visions; he experienced visions like those of the ancient prophets, and even various forms of inspiration, such as that of the prophets when they wrote the Word. And sometimes spirits compelled him to write from them by oral dictation, at times automatically or unwittingly, so that he adds, "I abhor writing these things"!(\*36) And all this so that he might learn to discriminate between the myriad varieties of spiritual influxes which focused upon him, and to learn their sources, good or evil.

(\*36.) WE 1711-1712

It would not have served the Divine purpose for Swedenborg to act as a mere medium for spirit-dictation, or to write like the prophets without understanding the contents. In several instances, this is exactly what happened, in order to show how the Scriptures had been inspired in the past: but "the papers which were so written were deleted" or obliterated.(\*37)

(\*37.) WE 4477, 7006, 1892

During the many varied states which were superinduced upon Swedenborg, his own poise of mind, his own power to reflect on his experiences, were maintained. So, for instance, when he was - for the sake of our instruction - brought into the state of those who die and are raised into the other life, he was throughout always aware what went on, so as to be able to relate it in detail.(\*38) Sometimes also he was "obsessed" by spirits who then acted as it were through him; but all the while he was granted to be fully aware of their actions and never gave up his own rational judgment.(\*39) In other words, he was allowed to study the manner in which spirits operate upon man.

(\*38.) @SD 1092-1109, @AC 168ff, @HH 448ff

(\*39.) WE 4477, @SD 3963

Although, for more than twenty-six years, he conversed with spiritual beings and traversed both the heavens and the hells, he was never taught by spirits or angels, but by the Lord alone, who gave him a perceptive enlightenment to see clearly what came from the Lord and what from angels. "What has come from the Lord has been written," he testified, "and what has come from the angels has not."(\*40) The enlightenment was an influx or dictation interiorly into his thoughts.(\*41) And it took place especially "while reading the Word."(\*42) Even when he was in appearance seeking information from good or evil spirits or by the many representations of the spiritual world, he was

being taught from the mouth of the Lord alone.(\*43) He was introduced into the spiritual world, he states, that he "might imbibe immediately in light from the Lord the truths of faith by means of which man is led to eternal life."(\*44)

(\*40.) @AE 1183, AR preface, @DP 135

(\*41.) WE 7006

(\*42.) @TCR 779[e]

(\*43.) @SD 4034, 1647

(\*44.) Inv. vii, 55, Coro. Mir. iv

If we are to study Swedenborg's testimony as to the spiritual world, it is of course important to understand the unique state in which he was able to explore that world as no other man had. For although - for the sake of preparation and instruction - he was permitted to pass through many experimental states, and among these also to experience "visions" such as those of the prophets, he affirms solemnly that the things which he had seen habitually in the other life for so many years and described, were in no wise visions "but things seen in the highest wakefulness of the body."(\*45)

(\*45.) @AC 1885, @LJCont 35, @TCR 157, @HH 442

"Visions," such as those of the prophets of Israel, in which they saw symbolic beasts or angelic hosts or thrones of judgments, etc., were not possible while they were in bodily wakefulness. They occurred when the minds of the prophets were in a hypnotic or somnambulistic state. In such states the spiritual senses can be fully awakened into exquisite perceptivity, and the spirit as it were be withdrawn from the body, as was the case with the prophets when their interior sight was opened by the Lord. When the interior sight is thus opened, "the things which have actual existence" in the other life can be seen, "not merely representatives but also the spirits themselves."

And a true perception of who the spirits are and what they are like may then also be given - depending on the prophet's state.(\*46)

(\*46.) @DP 134a, @AC 46

But Swedenborg makes clear that he did not see spiritual things simply in "vision." Occasionally he did experience visions, but only that he might know their nature.(\*47) But it was his unique and apparently unprecedented privilege to be intromitted into the other world not merely as to the mind or spirit while the body was asleep, but as it were with the whole body, in full wakefulness. The reason for this might be that only when the body is awake can a man-still living on earth-retain his full freedom and exercise his human responsibility and judgment.

(\*47.) @AC 1882-1885, @HH 440-442

It is of course utterly impossible for the physical body to enter into the spiritual world! But Swedenborg explains: "The Lord has so united my spirit to my body, that I am in both at the same time."(\*48) "To me it is granted to be in both spiritual and natural light at the same time. By this means it has been granted me to see the marvels of heaven, to be together with angels like one of them, and at the same time to draw forth truths in light, and thus to perceive and teach them; consequently to be led by the Lord."(\*49) He declined to have this called a miracle. For "every man is in the spiritual world as to his spirit, without separation from his body in the natural world; I however, with a certain separation, though only as to the intellectual part of my mind, but not as to

the voluntary."(\*50)

(\*48.) @AR 484[e]

(\*49.) Inv. 52

(\*50.) Coro. Mir. v

Swedenborg was thus led through the realms of the other world, not by spirits but by the Lord, and not (as the prophets) by compulsion but by his own choice and with free exercise of his reason. His voluntary part was equally active while among men and spirits. His own free life as an inhabitant of earth was not given up. It is remarkable that he had lived consciously among spiritual beings constantly for at least fifteen years, had written down his experiences meanwhile in his private journal, and had published anonymously the Arcana and five other books, before it became known to his friends, among whom he moved as before, that he was in society with spirits.(\*51)

(\*51.) @SD 722

But as to his understanding, his spirit could as it were be separated from the body and its sensations and be elevated to various levels of spiritual light. His thought shifted between different degrees of clarity. He complains that once in a while when he had to attend to worldly affairs such as money matters, the spirits seemed absent from him, and could not address him.(\*52) But by the same token, by virtue of a certain separation of the understanding from bodily things, he could roam through the most distant parts of the spiritual world, and accordingly appear before spirits from other earths: which all took place by changes of state in his understanding.(\*53) He could journey in spirit among the celestials or visit the hells without fear.

(\*52.) @SD 185, 304, 1166

(\*53.) EU 125, 127

Yet the states of the understanding are, with man, tied up with the states of his bodily lungs and their breathing. The unique mission of Swedenborg required an ability to breathe by what he describes as a "tacit" or internal respiration, which was an aid to intense speculation about truths. From childhood, he had often fallen into such states when the breathing was almost withdrawn; and this type of respiration-during which sensations from the physical body could not disrupt the thought-became renewed when heaven was opened to him.(\*54) When Swedenborg was introduced into a state like that of the angels, his bodily respiration became tacit and the respiration of his spirit was made harmonious with that of the angels.(\*55)

(\*54.) @SD 3464

(\*55.) @DWis 7:3

It must be observed that Swedenborg had two kinds of intercourse with spirits. "I have talked," he writes, "with spirits as a spirit, and I have talked with them as a man in the body. And when I talked with them as a spirit, they knew no otherwise than that I myself was a spirit, in a human form as they were. Thus it was my interiors that appeared before them, for when talking with them as a spirit my material body was not seen."(\*56)

(\*56.) @HH 436

On the other hand, when spirits conversed with him as a man (and that was a unique experience not possible with other men) they saw him as he himself knew himself to appear in the world, and

talked to him in his own languages and even saw objects and events as they were occurring in the outer world and were imaged in his sensory; and indeed, it appears, they saw things there which Swedenborg himself did not notice!(\*57)

(\*57.) @SD 2843, 2247, 3963, @AC 1880

#### SWEDENBORG'S GRADUAL INFORMATION

Swedenborg was gradually introduced into full wakeful consciousness of the spiritual world. The Divine purpose in thus allowing a man living on earth to perceive the things of the other life was that this man might explore the world of spirits, the heavens and the hells, come to know and understand what he found there, to witness the Last judgment, and testify before men concerning the order and life and faith of the heavens and concerning the states of spirits outside of heaven.

Swedenborg was chosen for this exploration of the spirit-world partly on account of his love of truth and his experience in natural research.(\*58) It was necessary that he should approach his task objectively-discarding the preconceptions of his contemporaries. He had to gather his material patiently, and record with fidelity what he saw and heard and felt even when he did not understand it fully or at once. That he did not always understand the reasons or causes which lay behind the phenomena which he describes in the first years of his sojourn among spirits and angels, is clear from the early entries in his Diary where he frequently uses the expressions, "I do not yet know," or "I do not know."(\*59) Rather than jumping to quick conclusions he suspended his judgment in the manner of a mature student. And when the explanation came, he notes it with the phrase, "It was granted me to know . . . ." or "granted me to perceive. . . ."

(\*58.) @TCR 850, @ISB 20, Docu. 246 (\*59.) @SD 281, 278, 637e, 1011, 1005, 1042, etc.

Even spiritual experiences require time! He could not at once enter into the inmost heavens. In the first few years after his call, the spirits with whom he openly associated were largely "spirits such as are with man," or spirits recently deceased. There were many mixed strata of spirits in the unjudged spirit-world! These ranged in quality from very good to very bad. But owing to the state of the world of spirits at that time, most of them were very corporeal and in gross hallucinations, thinking that there was no after-life but that they were still in the material body. Since spirits are unable to use their own corporeal memory they usually did not know who they had been on earth; but they entered into agreeable parts of Swedenborg's memory-field so fully that at the time they believed themselves to be he, and thought that they were doing and writing and experiencing the things which he did and sensed in the natural world. Such spirits could not remain long with Swedenborg, for he often undertook to show them that they were not men. They spoke with Swedenborg in his own language, taking on the forms of his natural memory which they then felt as their own.

Spirits of this type helped to acquaint Swedenborg with the relationship of spirits to men-a communion, of which, under ordinary circumstances, both men and spirits are entirely unconscious. He thus learned how closely men and spirits depended on each other: how spirits had their ultimates of order in the "material ideas" or gross sensual concepts of men; how the thought of each spirit rested (or was terminated) in particular groups of preferred objects in a man's memory, in ideas of certain places and foods, garments and books, etc., to which the spirit had, by suggestion or correspondence, attached some pleasant meaning or association of ideas in which he felt satisfied or at home because they recalled the delights of his love. On the other hand,

Swedenborg's experience showed that every mood or mental state of a man was dependent on the spirits who attended him, although the man was still free to divert his mind by deliberately turning his attention elsewhere and thus change these unseen mediations by which the influx of life was modulated and attuned for his reception.

Swedenborg's situation would be misrepresented if we gave the impression that his early contacts were confined to the sphere of these external spirits. For he was at the same time given glimpses into the world of spirits itself-not only seeing representations of heavenly character and meeting groups of harmonious spirits in concourse with each other, but also coming to realize how vastly the spirits differed in type and contrasting character. He also made another discovery: "From experience," he wrote, "I have at length been taught that the spirits who speak with me are the subjects or, as it were, the concentrations, of many spirits; because all spirits, even the evil, are distinguished into their genera and species."(\*60) He found that the speech and thought of interior spirits could not reach him without some such "subject- spirit" or ambassador through whom they spoke and acted. When these spirits spoke among themselves in their spiritual language of ideas, they could indeed affect Swedenborg with gladness or melancholy or other emotional tone, but he could not hear or understand what they said.(\*61)

(\*60.) @SD 405

(\*61.) @SD 3631ff, 5778

That Swedenborg was raised interiorly into the light of heaven by degrees or stages, he himself testifies; and he adds: "As I was raised up my understanding was enlightened even so far that I perceived what I had not perceived before, and finally such things as I could in no wise comprehend by thought from natural light. Sometimes I was indignant that they were not comprehended when yet they are so clearly and plainly perceived in heavenly light."(\*62) At first he complains, "What spirits [in the world of spirits] did in particular, that I could feel, could hear and thus distinctly perceive; but not what occurred in heaven, except so far as they operate in common."(\*63) "Those things which I have seen in the world of spirits I have seen in clear light, but those in the heaven of spirits I have seen more obscurely, and still more obscurely those in the heaven of angels, for the sight of my spirit has rarely been opened to me so far. But by a certain perception, which is such that it cannot be described, it is given to know what they have said-often through intermediate spirits.

The things which are there have sometimes appeared in the shade of the light of heaven, which shade is not like the shade of worldly light, for it is light growing thin and faint from its incomprehensibility, equally before the understanding and before the sight."(\*64)

(\*62.) @HH 130

(\*63.) @SD 1611

(\*64.) @AC 1972

There is no doubt that Swedenborg's understanding of the things which he saw in the world of spirits was gradually clarified, during the years 1744 to 1748, as he was being equipped for the writing of the Arcana Coelestia. In His providence, the Lord inspired Swedenborg to write down his spiritual experiences in his Diary, sometimes from day to day, so that we may trace some of the stages of his journey of discovery.

Thus it appears that one of Swedenborg's first concerns was to dissuade corporeally minded spirits

from the notion that they still lived in a material body of spatial dimensions and physical weight. Spirits indeed appeared, before Swedenborg as well as before themselves, in a complete human form, with bodies and garments, and as living in houses in a world deceptively like ours, But what was the relationship of these appearances to the underlying reality? Surely, Swedenborg argues in the Diary, such things could not be predicated of spiritual and celestial things, of heavenly beings! They must be regarded as fallacies or phantasies. What need would spirits living a heavenly life have of arms or legs or stomach, lungs, and other viscera? Some spirits insisted that even if they did not have viscera, they surely have man's external form; since they actually feel shame unless they are clothed!(\*65) That spiritual essences also must possess some form, Swedenborg grants, and he also freely admits that he does not yet know what this form might be. Once he calls to mind the marvelous forms of the inmost substances within the brain and suggests them as an effigy of the form (not the shape) of the spirit.(\*66) When a spirit insisted that he spoke with actual lips, Swedenborg remonstrates that they were only a "representation of lips."(\*67) Yet that spirits had sensation, of this there was no doubt:

Indeed, their senses are keener than man's. For even with man, sensation belongs not to his body but to his mind or spirit. What is the understanding but an interior sensation, the objects of which are truths!(\*68) The spirit, he concluded, was not mere thought but was a substantial organic subject. If you deprive spiritual essences of sense and affection you also deprive them of all reality! "There can be no life, whether corporeal or spiritual, without sensation."(\*69)

(\*65.) @SD 355, 2917, 3472. Compare the argument in Swedenborg's Rational Psychology 521f.

(\*66.) @SD 355

(\*67.) @SD 1342

(\*68.) @SD 1719, 1718

(\*69.) @SD 1718

It is not mere phantasy, then, this sensory life of spirits! The phantasy in which corporeal spirits are immersed is merely due to their imagining that the things they sense are natural, and that their bodies are physical. This notion they retain from their life in the world, and it is with difficulty extirpated.(\*70) Swedenborg found that the angels have no such ideas, yet their sensory life is marvelously rich and varied.

(\*70.) @SD 1672 1/4, cp 4207, @AC 10758[e]

It seemed indeed astonishing to him "that such things as are merely corporeal should exist even in the world of spirits, namely that they appear to themselves to be bodies, yea, to be clothed in garments, that they perceive pain, and thus have the sense of touch, besides other things which are merely corporeal and would in nowise seem to belong to spiritual essences or spirits; that nevertheless they exist is so true that the whole heaven affirms it."(\*71) And when certain spirits doubted the existence of a spiritual world Swedenborg warned them that they should believe in their own sense-experience.(\*72)

(\*71.) @SD 1715

(\*72.) @SD 3058

In the early Diary it is noted that the garments of spirits are due to phantasies which do not exist in heaven, although angels also appear to spirits in beautiful garments representative of their character.(\*73) Later, in the Arcana, Swedenborg is able to testify that the garments of the angels

"are real substances, thus essences in form."(\*74) It is obvious that the problems in his mind were being solved. To corporeal spirits it was indeed a phantasy that they have lips and legs and use food and garments;

for their ideas of such things were drawn from space and matter, not from use and form. But to normal spirits, he soon finds, the same sensations are not phantasies but true or real appearances-a testimony that they possess spiritual equivalents to all material organs and externals. And to angels, this sensory life is not only a correspondent appearance but a sublime and profound reality.

(\*73.) @SD 1796f

(\*74.) @AC 2576

Thus Swedenborg came to recognize-i.e., "was given to perceive"-certain universal laws which governed the phenomena of the other life. As he assimilated the accumulating evidence he saw that spiritual things, sensed by a spiritual subject, i.e., by a spirit or angel, are indistinguishable in consciousness from the corresponding material things sensed by a material subject, or by the bodily sense-organs of a man on earth. "When what is spiritual touches or tastes what is spiritual, it is altogether as when what is material touches or tastes what is material."(\*75)

(\*75.) LJ post. 323, @HH 461, @AE 926[2], @DLW 91

Those who have once seen and accepted this simple law, need not be afraid to describe the things of spiritual sensation-i.e., spiritual phenomena-in terms of the corresponding natural sense-objects. Thus Swedenborg, when he had entered fully into the realm of angelic realities, nevermore hesitated to ascribe reality and substance to the "appearances" of the spiritual world, any more than we do when we describe our material world in terms of our sense-experience, or in terms of the "appearances" or phenomena through which we study the nature and substance of the world.

Sensation is necessary to consciousness for spirits as well as for men. As to its external face, the spiritual world resembles the natural, for both are perceived by the same human mind and in the same "appearances" of time and space.(\*76)

(\*76.) @DLW 163, @DWis 7:5

Swedenborg therefore was commissioned, in his descriptions of the other life, to give us a definite pictorial basis for our own thought about the spiritual world. He insistingly teaches that all things of earth's four kingdoms do also exist in heaven, delusively the same yet from a more direct or spiritual origin-atmospheres, minerals, plants, animals; human bodies with brains and blood and viscera; and also works of art and artifice;

things invisible as well as visible. In all spiritual creations, it is taught, the "substantial," or spiritual, takes the place of the natural.(\*77)

(\*77.) LJ post. 314-323, LJ 27, @DLW 321, @DWis 2:3:4

Yet the spiritual, as to internal face and essence, is of a different origin and substance, an essence which can only be defined in the terms of life or states of mind. And the quality of this inner essence of the spiritual world can be known only from the unique laws of love and wisdom which are displayed in the life of spiritual beings - a life utterly different from the activities of nature.



It is this spiritual world that is revealed in the pages of the Writings. Swedenborg's information had to be gradual. But this information, gained through his intercourse with spirits and angels and even devils, and through his observing the unique representations, processes, and events of the other life, was but the means of furnishing his mind with the material from which the Lord, in making His second advent, could by inspiration construct through Swedenborg's mind and pen a doctrine concerning the spiritual world for the use of the New Christian Church. This is the reason why Swedenborg insists that "what has come from the Lord has been written, and what has come from angels has not."(\*78)

(\*78.) @AE 1183, @DP 135, @SD 4043, 1647, @TCR 779

It is therefore not Swedenborg's opinions, but the revealed doctrine, which we attempt to present and discuss in the following pages.

## 2 IMMORTAL MAN

### BIRTH, DEATH AND SURVIVAL

#### The Fact of Death

In this our age there is a constant insistence on facts. The sternest, most recognized fact of human experience is that all men are mortal. Death strikes young and old with equal finality. There is no arguing with death as a fact which all must be ready to face.

Yet facts are elusive. Facts, however actual, are appearances, phenomena which sometimes endure and sometimes vanish away. The solidity of a piece of ice is a fact real enough, but while we look away it has disappeared. The ice has left a pool of water which eventually evaporates into an invisible gas. This gas, or steam, might be recaptured, and by electrolysis be turned into elements still more evasive. And these in turn might themselves be resolved into tiny bundles of measured energy in forms which imagination cannot picture, but which science generally holds to be the final constituents of that which we know as material substance.

Death is a fact. Yet it, too, is only the appearance of a change, whereby the body functions become disordered and inactive, and the organs and members no longer exhibit those mysterious yet familiar reactions which testify of sensation, consciousness and will, or in short, of life.

The substance of the body still remains, as far as man can tell, destined to rejoin the elements in one way or another. This is but one phase of the fact of death.

#### Ideas of Immortality

But since time immemorial men have generally felt assured that the death of the body could not mean a destruction of that personality which is built up through a lifetime of human experience and effort. For if so, what was the purpose and intent behind life itself? Why should man pass through so many arduous stages of learning and analytic understanding-such as animals never attain - if the human mind, so marvelously formed, was destined to sink back into dissolution and never put its acquired powers to permanent use? In the primitive celestial church, this necessity of man's immortality was a basic perception flowing from the instinct order of its life, confirmed by every experience of nature. Later, it took the form of doctrine, incorporated in the symbolic

histories of the most ancient Scriptures. And when these Scriptures-the Ancient Word-were mostly lost, the idea and hope of an immortal life survived in myth and legend. Classical philosophy purged away some of the grosser features of the myths, but retained in general the concept of the soul's survival, debating its possibilities pro and con. And when Christianity became dominant throughout western civilization, it not only taught of man's immortality, but it borrowed both from legend and philosophy to amplify the picture of the soul's after-life. It became a picture confused and contradictory, bemuddled by the persistent feeling that the eventual heaven was somehow possible only on earth at the end of the world.

And in recent times, after the faith of Christendom had been undermined by new modes of thinking which centered men's attention upon worldly goals-upon a heaven on earth more immediately attainable through scientific research and without the help of God-the concept of personal immortality has increasingly come under indictment as an unnecessary assumption or as an unlikely possibility.

It is necessary for the New Church man from time to time to review the teachings of the Writings about man's immortality, with a view to seeing that his understanding of these teachings is not so vague and indefinite that it cannot stand up against the doubts that are current in the world around him.

We need to have the clearest possible ideas about what is the immortal part of man - what there is in man's constitution that cannot be dissolved or destroyed by death.

### The Fount of Immortality

What is it that makes man immortal? The Lord said: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."<sup>1</sup> The Writings say: "Man is so created that as to his internal he cannot die." And the reason is that "he can believe in God and also love God and thus be conjoined to God by faith and love; and to be conjoined to God is to live to eternity."<sup>2</sup>

1. John 11:25

2. @HD 223, @ISB 8, @HH 39

From this passage of doctrine it might sound as if only those who believe in God will become immortal. But a closer reading shows that it is because man is so created that he can believe in God and love Him that he also will live to eternity. Every man has the faculty or potentiality of believing and loving because his inmost soul receives life continually from the Lord. The Lord pours His own life into every man's soul, whether a man's mind turns itself against the Lord or not. The Lord's love is unceasing, and He never takes back the gift of life from any man; not even from the devils of hell, whom He continually seeks to save from their own evils. In the inmost soul, which is above the conscious mind of either angels, spirits or men, and which can therefore never be perverted by human vice or folly, the Lord can find an abode or receptacle even with the evil.<sup>3</sup> 3. @AC 1940, 1999, LJ 25:5,6

### Two Conditions for Immortality

It is from this inmost soul or "human internal" that man has the faculty of conjoining himself with God, and also the responsibility of using this faculty. Animals, although they have sensation and a certain analogue of reason, do not have such a faculty, and cannot conceive of God, because their

souls are merely natural affections.

Hence they are not immortal, nor responsible for the use which they make of their life, a life of specific instincts which they cannot change from free choice. This is not merely because the animals are in ignorance of spiritual things. For human infants who die as such are also in such ignorance; and yet, because they are born possessing a human internal, they can grow into rational adults in the other life and be conjoined with God.

We note that there is a second condition for immortality. The first is the possession of the human internal. But the second condition is that man shall be born into the natural world. This implies that no human being can be created immediately into the spiritual world, as has been imagined by Christians in general, who speak of God creating a host of angels and archangels before the earth was ever formed. These angels were described as purely spiritual beings, and tradition pictures them as living a life of ecstasy continuously glorifying God. It is even claimed that some of these angels, under Lucifer their leader, rebelled and formed an empire of their own, and that this is what is meant by the Devil and his crew which have troubled mankind since the time of Paradise.

Similarly, many ancient philosophers, including some of the Christian church fathers, believed that human souls were first created to inhabit the stars, and that it was when these souls began to long for a more corporeal life that they were born into the world as men.

In ancient times, as still among many Orientals, it was thought that the pre-existing soul could remember something of its previous life and could indeed be born again and again, by transmigration-born in different forms, either human or animal!4 4. @HH 256, @SD 3285, 3917, @AC 5858, 2478

The Writings indeed teach that the Lord creates the human soul and by the agency of that soul forms the body. The soul is prior, as a cause is prior to its effect. The soul is not an effect of the body, but the body of man is formed by the soul; or rather, by the Lord through the soul or "human internal."

In a remarkable passage in the Arcana Coelestia, it is said, among other things, that "man's internal is that from which he is a man.... By means of this internal he lives after death and to eternity as a man.... The very heaven that is nearest the Lord is from these human internals but this is entirely (usque) above even the inmost angelic heaven, and therefore these internals are the Lord's alone. . . ." Yet they are forms receiving the Lord's life, and do not have "life in themselves."5 5. @AC 1999[3], 4

This inmost degree of man which immediately receives the Lord's life is also called the dwelling place of the Lord in heaven and in the angel, "for what is there transacted an angel does not know."6 The Spiritual Diary notes that it lacks a name7 but in the later Writings it is sometimes contrasted with the lower degrees of man's spirit or mind, and is then called the "Soul."8 Thus the angels are said to have a soul, a mind and a body, the inmost being called the soul; although in a general sense the entire spirit or mind which departs from the body at death is commonly called "the soul" in the Writings. 6. @SD 5548, cf 3474, @AC 1940 7. @SD 4627[3] 8. @ISB 8

The Arcana does not state that the human internals existing above the inmost angelic heaven were created before mankind and are there waiting until proper parents are available for incarnation on earth. "What is there transacted" not even an angel knows! The soul is "a superior spiritual

substance" which must not be thought of from either time or space. Certainly the Lord foresees from eternity all the possible needs of mankind. In His view, creation is already as it were completed, "according to the idea of an infinite heaven."<sup>9</sup> With Him there is no time. In the Divine, proceeding to create, are contained all the possible uses of the Grand Man of the heavens-and what are human souls except the first expression of such potential uses? 9. Cp @SD 4845

The creative process of the Lord is continual. And His creative urge or conatus is transferred into the souls which He creates. Hence the soul, which in its essence is spiritual, from an implanted effort to self propagation, wills to procreate itself;

not only to form a body for itself, but also to form offshoots of itself in the form of human seed so as to multiply some of its uses in its descendants. And since "the soul is a spiritual substance which does not have extension but impletion, and from which there is no taking away of a part but a production of the whole without any loss of it," this can be done innumerable times, generation after generation.<sup>10</sup> 10. @CL 220, cp @TCR 103

### Creation of Human Minds

The effort within the soul is not only to receive life immediately from the Lord,<sup>11</sup> which it does unconsciously, but also to form more and more such immortal receptacles which can receive this life consciously, so as to appreciate the Lord's love and wisdom and co-operate with His will and His laws of truth. And this conscious reception of life can come into being only by the soul forming itself into a human mind, which not only receives and transmits life passively but reacts in freedom. 11. @ISB 8

The inmost soul does not have this kind of freedom because it does not have consciousness. These two, freedom and consciousness, go together. Without these two-or without the faculties of rationality and liberty-there can be no reciprocal conjunction with God, and therefore no permanent individuality, no eternal life. Thus the doctrine stresses again and again that it is the human mind that is the spirit which lives after death. And this mind, which constitutes man's individual reaction to life, cannot be formed except on the basis of that experience which we call birth into the natural world.

We may well ask why this is so. One answer which the Writings give is found in the little work Divine Wisdom: "One who knows what the substances of the spiritual world are like compared to the material things in the natural world can easily see that no procreation of angelic minds is possible or can occur except in those and from those who inhabit an earth, the ultimate work of creation.... Substances in the spiritual world appear as if they were material, but still they are not; and because they are not material, therefore they are not constant.

They are correspondences of the affections of the angels, and they remain as long as the affections or the angels, and with these they disappear (disparantur). It would be the same with the angels if they had been created there. Among the angels, furthermore, there is and can be no procreation and thence multiplication other than a spiritual one, which is that of wisdom and love, such as pertains to the souls of men who are born anew or regenerated. But in the natural world there are matters through which and out of which procreation and afterwards formations can occur; thus multiplications of men, and thence of angels."<sup>12</sup> 12. @DWis 8:3, @HH 311, LJ 14

Note here that the angels, although they are spiritual substances, do not disappear or dissolve,

although the creations around them do so if the angelic states change or the angels go away.<sup>13</sup> The reason is that the angels were born on earth and thus acquired a permanent individuality. The spiritual substance of their souls was as it were anchored in time and space. The soul had by birth been made aware of its separate existence! It was no longer an unconscious part of the flux of life, as it was in the embryo, which lives solely from the Lord and has no conscious sensation or action. 13. Cp @DLW 344

### Birth and Immortality

The Writings thus show us that the miracle of birth is a one with the miracle of immortality. By birth man enters not only life on earth but also eternal life. But we must still consider how this is effected. How does the soul become an immortal spirit at the moment of birth? For all things have many beginnings. The soul of a child, we are taught, commences as an offshoot or graft from the soul of the father.<sup>14</sup> Such offshoots are transferred into the innumerable paternal seeds from one of which conception of a new individual takes place. The soul of the offspring thus may be said to have its inception (inchoct) - or second beginning - in the ovum of the mother, and it is "afterwards perfected in her womb" while its tender body is being formed.

It is now distinct and carries with it a distinct heredity different from that of any other being. The soul dwells in the whole body, since it is a spiritual substance of which we can predicate "impletion," but not extension. As the supreme formative essence, it is active in every fibre, cell and tissue.<sup>15</sup> But it is not yet appropriated to the future child. It is merely a loan from God. It is present in the ultimate organics of the body, but is not yet wedded to the flesh, not yet appropriated by the body which it has fashioned. 14. @TCR 103, @CL 172, 183:4, 220:2, 315:11, @DP 277[3]. The paternal heredity includes not only the 'inmost' or 'human internal', but also the form or inclination of the father's loves and affections-thus his mind as to its interiors. This heredity "remains to eternity." (@AC 1573[3]) That the sex is from the seed of the father, is known. 15. @AC 3570[4], @DWis 7:2:4

We read in Genesis that the Lord God formed man out of dust of the ground, and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man "became a living soul." Only by the first breath of earth's air, or, as the Writings say, by the opening of the lungs, does the soul obtain immortality. For the respiration of the lungs is a condition of consciousness. No feeling of self-life is possible, no sensation is felt, as long as the lungs are inactive. The cerebrum, in which we consider consciousness to operate, must be stimulated by the oxygen breathed into the lungs and carried up to the brain by the bloodstream. The brain, which in prenatal life has been conjoined with the motion of the heart, becomes instead harmoniously attached to the rhythm of breathing, and takes up the conscious government of its body.<sup>16</sup> Life, which had hitherto been directed solely to the formation of the body, is thus short-circuited in the intricate organic network of the cortical cells and fibres of the cerebrum, and the soul begins to realize its individual independence for the first time! The body is born-but also the spirit! 16. @DLW 401, 407, @DWis 3:5, 6, v, vi. 8, 9

### Memory and Personality

Why individuality cannot commence except in the world of nature, is worth some reflection. For what is the basis of our individuality? Is it not memory of sensory experiences? - a memory built up from defined beginnings in time and space? I am "I" because born at a definite time, in a particular place; and all my experiences, gathered up into a vast complex of memories, were basic to every reaction of my will, marked the external limitations of my thoughts, the field in which my personality gradually formed itself.

And so it is with all - even with the infant who drew only a few breaths before its spirit departed!<sup>17</sup>  
17. @HH 345

And memory, the memory of an earth experience, therefore limits or finites one's life; but note, only from below. It makes every person uniquely different, a vessel of life precious in the eyes of the Lord. It provides a ground in which all the states of a man's life are preserved as eternal. In it every feature of a man's character is represented. It is ordered not only chronologically, but according to all man's affections-his valuations and interests, his ruling loves. The Writings call this ultimate plane of man's life "the corporeal memory." The ideas of which it consists are derived directly from bodily sensations and are called "material ideas." For it is the record of man's corporeal life in this world.

But how is this corporeal memory held permanent? Ideas, even though they may be ideas of material things, are not themselves material, but are spiritual states of mind, states of a spiritual substance. But as we have read, spiritual substances are not permanent in form, but change. Memory is permanent, we know, as long as the texture of the brain is intact. Things long forgotten can be recalled perfectly if the right parts of the brain are given some physical stimulus. But what happens to it at death, when the body, with all the visible organisms of the brain, dies and decays? Is the memory then also dissolved, to vanish as the objects around the angels sometimes do?

#### The Doctrine of the "Limbus"

The answer to this question lies in the doctrine concerning the "limbus." This Latin term is used in a special sense in True Christian Religion, n. 103. It means a border, or fringe, or hem, or edge. The reference is to the border substance of the natural world, the inmosts of nature; where nature as it were touches the spiritual world, or where the body is immediately responsive to the influx of the spirit. Unless we know something of the function of this border substance we cannot come to understand why man's memory and thus man's spirit can be preserved from dissolution when the body dies.

As an introduction to the teachings about this link between the spirit and the flesh we shall cite the following from the work The Divine Love and Wisdom:

"Man's mind is his spirit, and the spirit is the man, because by the mind is meant all of man's will and understanding, and these are in principles in the brains and in principiates [or derivatives] in the body; therefore they are all things of man as to their forms .... For the first thread of the human form or the human form itself with each and everything thereof, is from the beginnings from the brain continued through the nerves. . . . It is this form into which man comes after death and which is then called a spirit and angel, and who is in all perfection a man, but a spiritual man. The material form that is added and superinduced in the world is not a human form from itself, but from the spirit to which it is added and superinduced that man may be able to perform uses in the natural world, and also to draw unto itself from the purer substances of the world a fixed containant of the spiritual things, and thus continue to perpetuate life . . . ."18 18. @DLW 387,388

Thus man is born in an earthly body not only to perform uses in the world, but-and this is of primary importance-in order that his spirit may draw a subtle natural substance unto itself and fashion it as a permanent containant for his spirit. Concerning this we read in the work The Divine Providence:

"The conjunction of temporal and eternal things with man is the Lord's Divine providence. . . . It is from Divine providence that man by death puts off what is natural and temporary, and puts on what is spiritual and eternal.... Extremes and ultimates are containants; and these are in the natural world. Hence it is that no angel and spirit was created immediately but that they were all first born men. . . . From this they have extremes and ultimates which in themselves are fixed and stable (stata), within which the interims can be held together in connection. But man at first puts on the grosser things of nature; from these is his body. But these things he puts off by death, and retains the purer things of nature which are nearest [or next] to the spiritual things, and these then are his containants.

"Inasmuch as the extremes or ultimates of nature cannot receive spiritual or eternal things ... he retains only the interior natural things, which agree and conform with spiritual and celestial things and serve them as containants . . . ."19

#### 1. @DP 220

It is clear that it is by birth that man first puts on and appropriates these interior natural things in which his spirit may dwell not only during life on earth but forever. But whence are they derived? What function do they serve during man's life? And what is their relation to the spirit after death?

These questions we shall consider in our next section.

#### THE "LIMBUS"

In beginning a consideration of what there is in man's constitution that is immortal, it was shown that immortality has its origin in the Lord, who has created man with an inmost soul which is appropriated to him at his birth in the natural world. Man's spirit is thus born at the same time as his body.

Through this fact, the birth of a man may be seen as a very important event! It is the beginning of his mind, the beginning of consciousness and of the formation of the memory, which is the basis of individual or proper life. Without memory, man's life could not be marked off from all the currents of life which affect him. Nor could his spirit awaken after death as the same person, if he had not carried with him all the mental experiences that had occasioned the formation of his character.

Yet the question left unanswered was: How is this memory preserved after the body has died and his brain has decayed? We indicated that the answer lies in the doctrine of the "limbus," which speaks of the existence of a plane of substance taken from the inmost of nature to serve as a "containant" for the spiritual things that compose man's mind or spirit. The need for such a containant is shown in the work *The Divine Providence*;20 and other teachings indicate that an angel created directly into the spiritual world-not having obtained, by a life on earth, such a containant or "limbus" from nature-would not be any more permanent than the correspondential objects around the angels. But whence does this containant come? And how is it formed?

#### 1. @DP 220

#### The Source of the Substance of the Limbus

The general source of the substance of the "limbus" is said to be "the inmosts of nature";21 "the purer substance of the world";22 or "the purer" or "purest things of nature,"23 "nearest to spiritual

things."<sup>24</sup> But what could this mean? Doctrine tells us that nature's substances are created in discrete degrees, one composite of the other. Some scientists have assured us that the matter we handle is indeed composed of masses of molecules held together by mystical bonds which no one really claims to understand, and that these molecules are in turn constituted of elemental "atoms" which can be compared to miniature solar systems in which incredibly mobile electrons whirl like planets around a center of nuclear particles. The Writings speak of three successive physical atmospheres from which three degrees of matter originated.<sup>25</sup> These atmospheres are the active forces which are the mediate causes of all natural phenomena. The highest, most universal of these spheres originates the force of gravity,<sup>26</sup> and may thus be taken as the "inmost" of nature; for in theory, the original form of matter must be conceived as gravitational fields of force. However this sphere may be conceived, it would somehow answer to what is called the "purest things of nature" out of which the "limbus" is said to be formed. 21. Wis. viii: 4 22. @DLW 388 23. @DP 220, @TCR 103 24. @DP 220 25. @DLW 302 26. LJ post. 312

But how can the spirit of man draw unto itself, from the inmosts of nature, such a substance? Obviously this formation of a "containant" of the spirit must be an organic process, a process begun even before birth.

That there is such a type or degree of substance in the seed from conception is, in fact, indicated in the work *Conjugal Love*,<sup>27</sup> where it is stated: "In the seed of man is his soul in a perfect human form, veiled over with substances from the purest things of nature, out of which the body is formed in the mother's womb." And a further teaching is given in *The True Christian Religion* to the same effect:

"I shall add this arcanum, that the soul . . . is the very man. The body is only a covering of the soul, composed of such things as are of the natural world, but the soul indeed from such things as are in the spiritual world. Every man, after death, puts off the natural which he had from the mother, and retains the spiritual which he had from the father, together with a certain border (limbo) from the purest things of nature around it. . . ." And it explains that "in the seed of every one from which he is conceived, there is a graft or offset of the father's soul in its fullness, within a certain covering from the elements of nature through which the body is formed in the mother's womb . . . ."<sup>28</sup> 27. @CL 183 28. @TCR 103

The substance is thus at hand in the very seed for the formation of what later is to be the "limbus" of the eternal spirit. It is the purest substance of nature - able to convey the soul and serve as its first embodiment. But what use does it serve during man's life on earth?

To understand this we must realize that the soul, as a spiritual substance, forms itself into three discrete degrees, which in the Writings are called the celestial, the spiritual and the spiritual-natural. These three degrees are in every man from birth, and are meant to be opened successively.<sup>29</sup> The lowest, which is called the spiritual-natural or ultimate spiritual degree,<sup>30</sup> operates in the organics of the physical brain and body, and there it prepares for itself the natural mind - the mind which man consciously uses in the world and which is the basis of his character. It is this natural mind which contains the memory of earthly things. It is in that degree of the mind that man has sensation, memory, imagination and reason, and that he forms his attitudes towards good and evil, by an exercise of conscious choice. 29. @DLW 236 30. @DLW 345

The two higher degrees of the mind-the celestial and the spiritual-are beyond man's consciousness while on earth, even though they can be opened by regeneration and furnished to receive the



Lord's influx. It is told that these higher degrees derive their form "solely from the substances of the spiritual world."<sup>31</sup>

But "the natural mind consists of spiritual substances and at the same time of natural substances."<sup>32</sup> It is "woven from the substances of both worlds, in the brain where the mind resides in its primes. . . ."<sup>33</sup> Here-in the natural mind-the spiritual substances of the spirit are closely associated with the inmost natural organics of the brain, and make thought and sensation possible. The changes of state in the physical structures of the brain give the soul an occasion for interpreting their meaning and use. And volitions and intentions in the spiritual substance of the mind are also able to direct the energies and movements of the body with the states of the spirit. 31. @DLW 270 32. @DLW 257,260 33. @DLW 273

All through man's life on earth, the subtlest natural substances distilled in the inmost recesses of the brain and the nervous system act as the agents of the spiritual substances which think and will. The spirit, through these most subtle essences of nature, is present throughout the body. Hence we read: "The spirit of a man is not a substance that is separate from the viscera, organs and members of the man, but it cleaves to them in conjunction; for the spiritual accompanies every stamen of them from the lowest to the inmost. . . ." "That man after death is equally a man ... is because his spiritual is adjoined to his natural, or the substantial of the spirit to the material of the body, so aptly and unitedly that there is not a fibrilla, stamen, or least thread from these where the human of the spirit is not a one with the human body . . . ."<sup>34</sup> Death is nothing but a separation of the natural substance from the spiritual.

1. Wis. vii:2, 4

The spirit or mind is, in one sense, present throughout a man's body. But the common center towards which all sensations travel, and from which all motor impulses proceed, is the brain. Within the subtle organics of the brain the natural mind becomes conscious of the states of the body and the world and organizes a memory of all its sensations. And in the brain the lowest or ultimate spiritual adapts the purest things of nature into a permanent basis, in which the mental states of memory, thought and affection are represented in an image by corresponding motions.

It is therefore said: "Man's natural mind consists of spiritual substances and at the same time of natural substances. From the spiritual substances, but not from the natural substances, comes thought. . . ."<sup>35</sup> And to make it clear that these natural substances - which are thus for all practical purposes an operational part of the natural mind while man is living in the world - are not destroyed along with the body, which, brain and all, decays in the grave, it is added: "These [natural substances of the natural mind] recede when man dies, but not the spiritual substances; wherefore, after death when man becomes a spirit or angel, that same mind remains in similar form in which it was in the world."<sup>36</sup> 35. @DLW 257 36. @DLW 257

Thus the spiritual substance - which is the real natural mind - remains, while the natural substances associated with it, "recede" or fall back. Being natural they can certainly not enter the spiritual world!<sup>37</sup> But they do not perish. Instead they "recede" - withdraw from that intimate relation which they had with the spiritual substances while in the life of the body. For in the material body, all man's conscious thought was tied in with changes in these natural substances of his brain. But after death the spirit is freed from this dependency, and can perceive things apart from nature; can directly perceive his spiritual environment, to which he formerly had been blind! He can see other spirits and can commune with them through a spiritual medium which has

nothing in common with space or natural substance. He is released into "another world where there are other functions, and other powers and abilities, to which the quality of his body there is adapted."38 For he is now in a spiritual body. 37. @DLW 83, 88 38. @AC 5078[4]

What this spiritual body is like, as described in the Heavenly Doctrines, we shall consider more fully in our next chapter. But our interest at this point is in the question as to what happens to "the natural substances of the natural mind" when they so gracefully "recede" to allow the spirit a fuller freedom. The teaching in The Divine Love and Wisdom thus continues:

"The natural substances of that mind, which, as was said, recede by death, make a cutaneous covering of [or for] the spiritual body in which spirits and angels are. By means of this covering which is selected out of the natural world, their spiritual bodies subsist, for the natural is the ultimate containant: thence it is that there is not any angel or spirit who was not born a man. These arcana of angelic wisdom are here adduced, that the quality of the natural mind in man may be known ...."39 39. @DLW 257

It is clear from this that the purest things - or inmost things - of nature, selected and organized in the interiors of the brain as the natural basis of the memory, are the very substance which is elsewhere called the "limbus." "Every man, after death ... retains the spiritual which he had from the father, together with a certain border (limbo) from the purest things of nature around it. . . ."40 40. @TCR 103

The departing spirit retains this "border." Nowhere do the Writings say that he takes it along into the spiritual world! For nothing natural can enter, or be a part of, the spiritual world. Yet he retains it, and its use is likened to that of a cutaneous covering for (or around) the spiritual body-which seems like a very intimate function. If we were literalists we might here evolve a rather grotesque picture of a spiritual body which, being spiritual, is not in space, but which has a skin made of natural substance!

It is reasonably clear, however, that the Writings here employ a comparison, The living flesh which we carry is surrounded by a skin, or cutaneous covering. The skin is our boundary, the nether limit of our individuality. And as long as the body is living, the surface of the skin, or cuticle, consists of cells of flattened epithelium which gradually are deprived of life and dry up like scales and flake off. Yet without this covering of almost lifeless skin our bodies could not withstand the impact of the world or be protected from undue influences. In a parallel way the spiritual body is protected by the "limbus" as by a cutaneous envelope. Its obvious use is negative-to fix the corporeal memory so that it can no more change!

But another teaching makes this more clear. Speaking of the necessity that man be born on an earth, the little work Divine Wisdom goes on to say:

"That spirits and angels thence derive that they can subsist and live to eternity, is because an angel or spirit, from the fact that he was first born a man in the world, draws with him that he subsists; for he draws with him, from the inmosts of nature, a medium between the spiritual and the natural, through which he is limited so that he might be subsistent and permanent. Through this he has a relationship (*est illi relativum*) to those things which are in nature, and also something correspondent to them." Why the "limbus" is called a "medium" between the spiritual and the natural, is then explained: "Through this it is also possible for spirits and angels to be adjoined and conjoined with the human race. For there is [such] a conjunction, and where there is conjunction

there must be a medium. That there is such a medium the angels know. But because it is from the inmosts of nature, and the expressions of language are from its ultimates, it cannot be described except by abstractions."<sup>41</sup>

1. Wis. Viii. 4,5

Let us note well that the "limbus" is not here given any role in the spiritual world as a medium in the intercourse of one spirit with another. It has a definite role in fixing the personality of a spirit. But it is a medium between spirits and men. We presume this to mean that when a spirit is exerting an influence on, or influx into, the mind of a man, there is an activity in the limbus of the spirit and a communication set up in the inmost sphere of nature which affects the natural substances of the natural mind of the man, or those inmost organics of his brain which are on the same level or degree and in a receptive state. But all this is in the realm of speculation, since little is known factually of the innermost substances of the brain or the inmosts of nature.

Indeed, the "medium" is from the inmosts of nature, and this "cannot be described except by abstractions." In recent times many scientists seem to have been forced to a similar conclusion. The hypothetical ingredients of the atom are admittedly mental constructs. Science shies at any mechanical models, but describes the inner sphere of nature in "a sheaf of mathematical formulae" - to borrow a phrase from Sir James Jeans.

But the New Church man must attach importance to the teaching that the immortal persistence of our personality depends on an inmost natural substance which is organized during his bodily life on earth. What natural substance is this?

This question occupied Swedenborg's mind at least ten years before he was called to his spiritual office. The growing skepticism among the learned led him to attempt to prove that there existed within man's body an inmost substance which was so subtle and perfect that it could not be affected by the destructive forces of disease or death. It was the purest substance, derived from the highest or universal aura of nature and organized by man's mind into a correspondent form. In *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom* he called it "the spirituous fluid," and asserted that "no corporeal language could adequately express its nature." "I should," he wrote, "be obliged to resort to analogues and eminences, by abstraction from the things brought out by sense, in which case even truths savor of hypothesis."<sup>42</sup> 42. 1 Econ. 650, 2 Econ. 167

This eminent and transcendental fluid was next to the soul or spirit, and was the soul's agent in the body. But after death it would be "emancipated from the bonds and trammels of earthly things," and, immortal, retain its organization. On its substance would be impressed a form corresponding to the man's character as to his reception of love and wisdom. It would even retain the record of all his earthly life.<sup>43</sup> 43. 2 Econ. 314

Swedenborg's speculations in his *Economy* were, of course, not final. Yet he clearly perceived that man was born on earth because he needed to procure from nature "a containant" for his spirit. And he realized that the nature of this inmost containant could be grasped only by abstractions and by a sort of "mathematical philosophy of universals"!

There are so many things in nature beyond our understanding that we cannot afford to scoff at the idea that the inmosts of our brain substance can be organized into an image of our entire sensory history, a permanent record of our sensations and actions. A lecturer's words may be transferred to

a magnetic tape, where they are stored in the form of magnetic stresses ready to be retranslated into words at any time.

Our brains also are charged by all the sensations we experience, year after year. Is it so hard to believe that these sensations, by the intent and power of the Creator, are also preserved for an immortal record in a substance which defies even death itself?

### Death and the Limbus

The question might be asked, "Where then does the 'limbus' go at death?" That it remains in nature is not to be doubted. Yet what does its locale matter, if its substance is not affected any more by the changes of nature, but remains, independent, in a realm of simples, beyond the corpuscular universe of atoms and molecules which are within the narrow range of our sensory experience? At least, so we may surmise on the basis of what we now know of doctrine and of science. For all we know, the "limbus" might be a structure of wave-patterns, the form of which we can describe only by abstractions, and which is perpetually re-integrated without losing its characteristic uniqueness. If any one thinks this to be impossible, let him reflect on the fact that the whole pattern of a future man and his hereditary peculiarities are actually contained within the microscopic germ-plasm, which is not in the form of the body, yet in a perfect human form which, as to its interior structure, is known, it is said, to the Lord alone!

In one of his early commentaries, Swedenborg speaks of death in these words: "First of all there is released, from its connection with the earthly things which are properly called the body, that substance whose essence is mediate between the natural and the spiritual. This takes with it, because it encloses, that superior substance whose essence is spiritual and which is called the intellectual mind.... This, in turn, encloses man's principal and purer substance the essence of which is supra-celestial and which is properly called the soul .... "44 44. WE 3058

And the Spiritual Diary notes that at death "that of man which is vital is gathered together in a moment even if parts of the body were scattered over a thousand miles."<sup>45</sup> "As soon as the interiors of the body grow cold, the vital substances in the man are separated from the man, wherever they are, even if enclosed in a thousand labyrinths. . . .

Nothing of the vital substance can remain in corporeal and material things. . . ."46 45. @SD 1099 46. @SD 1104

The vital substances here spoken of seem to refer to the limbus as well as to the spirit itself. For the limbus is still living, even as the body was living, from the soul. Yet the limbus is a natural substance, and thus has no spiritual attributes, no mental powers. It is not the mind, not the soul: its only attributes are those of nature, thus of motion; even though these motions, or potentialities to motion, are like the magnetic Stresses on the recording tape which may be referred to as invisible wave-patterns rather than movements.

The limbus is physical and can never be said to enter the spiritual world. The angels never see it, they only know that it exists.<sup>47</sup> It is not to be identified or confused with the spirit or even with the spiritual body. Yet it serves the spiritual body of man as a natural basis and gives it a certain "permanence" and "fixity." We also read that through it the spirit has "a relativity to those things which are in nature." In this life, such "relativity" is possible because the memory-which is the ultimate of the mind or spirit - has a basis in the natural organisms of the brain. The limbus must

therefore be that which fixes the order of the corporeal memory for the after-death man. 47. @DWis 8:4, 5

Let us, then, dismiss any idea that the "limbus" is identical with the mind we use in this world, or with the spirit which lives to eternity in the spiritual world. We must learn to think spiritually of the immortal soul which is raised into the world of life on the third day after death. Man rises into that world, not in a limbus, but in a spiritual body, which has been formed during earthlife "by the truths and goods which flow in from the Lord through the spiritual world and are received by man within such things as are from the natural world and are called civil and moral."48 48. @TCR 583

That the limbus takes no real or active part in the life of spirits among themselves - as it would if it were the actual skin or cutis of their spiritual bodies - is clear. And since the limbus gives fixation to the corporeal memory of man, which marks the lowest or spiritual below!49

Not that the evil spirits live below their own skin! But by them the natural ideas and delights which once belonged to the life of their corporeal memory, are valued above spiritual things. That the hells are within the sphere of the natural degree of the mind only - the degree formed in juxtaposition with natural substances - is doctrinally certain.50 49. @TCR 103 50. @DLW 345, 270, 274, 275

The Writings are given that we may see spiritual things in the light of heaven. In the next section we shall cite some of the revealed teachings about the spiritual body - the real immortal man. What is this spiritual organism? What is its relation to man's memory? What are its powers and functions in the eternal life? Far from being mystifying, these questions are clearly and simply answered in the Writings.

## THE SPIRITUAL BODY

Man's natural thought is so focused on physical things that he finds it difficult to ascribe reality to anything which is not measurable in terms of space and weight and material values. Although most religions have acknowledged that man's spirit lives after death, people have often thought of spirits as flitting spectres or transparent bodies in the air or ether, awaiting the Last judgment, when they would rejoin their bodies. The learned have defined a spirit as abstract thought, as an incorporeal essence, or as a simple substance or monad; and some, as a spark of the Divine. Others deny that it is a substance, calling it a process in the material body which perishes with the 'flesh.

But the simple, both among Christians and Gentiles, who are not confused by reasonings or false doctrines, can usually see from a common perception that the spirit is the real man, and lives as a man after death. This idea pervades human speech and literature. Yet such a bare acknowledgment without definite knowledge is unable to withstand the worldly wisdom which is continually infecting the simple and sincere with a spirit of doubt and denial;

and therefore the Lord has given an "immediate revelation" concerning the spiritual world - a revelation which is to enlighten our understanding to perceive what man is after death.51 51. @HH 1[e]

## The Mind of Man is Organic

Spirits and angels, the Writings reveal, "are nothing else than human minds and souls in a human form, stripped of the coverings which were composed of elements found in waters or soils and of

the exhalations diffused thence into the air. When these are cast off, the forms of men's minds are seen such as they had been inwardly in their bodies. . . ."52 Man's spirit or soul is thus the interior man. It is his mind, which was organized on earth, interiorly of spiritual substances, and exteriorly of natural substances, and finally from material things.<sup>53</sup> The affections, the thoughts, and the memory of man are nothing but changes in, and states of, the "purely organic substances of the mind."<sup>54</sup> 52. @CL 192 53. @TCR 38, @AC 1594[5] 54. @DP 279

The whole concept of man's regeneration given in our doctrine springs from the fact that the mind is organic. It is impossible to change the quality of one's mind suddenly. The shunning of evils and the formation of new and better habits of thought are a work of years - yea, of a lifetime. For all our confirmed states are inwoven into the web of our spirit. The natural mind, which from birth carries with it hereditary evils, has to be reformed and regenerated until it no longer resists the action of the spiritual mind. This reformation is likened to the untwisting of a spiral until the gyres of its habitual action coil in the same direction as those of the spiritual mind.<sup>55</sup> For the mind, or what is the same, the spirit of man, is organic. It must not be thought of as something simple, without constituents, for it is far more complex than the physical body. 55. @DLW 270, 263, @AE 1168[3], @DP 319[3]

But when we say that the mind or spirit is "organic," this might easily be misunderstood. For it is usual for men to think only of the vegetable and animal forms on the earth as organic; meaning material forms so organized that they manifest the signs of what is vaguely called "life," such as feeling, growth, propagation and purposiveness.

Yet the term "organic" includes far more than earthly organisms. By an organic form we mean any vessel receptive of life and responsive to life. Natural organisms are organic only by virtue of their souls, whether vegetative, animal or human. Their material bodies react to life only by manifesting motions Matter cannot respond to life. It is the soul, or the spiritual, that responds. The real organ of life in man is the spirit or mind.

### The Bodies of Spirits and Angels

Now the Writings reveal in unmistakable terms that the spirit which had lived in the body of a man has, after death, "a form like that in which the man was before; there is only a separation of the spiritual substance from the material. For this reason the spirit has a heart and lungs the same as the man in the world, and for the same reason it has like senses and like motions, and also speech; and there can be no senses or motions or speech without heart and lungs." Spirits also, it is added, "have atmospheres, but spiritual."<sup>56</sup> And - to dismiss the idea that a spirit is a disembodied and fleeting ghost - the doctrine continues: "He is just as much a man as before he died, except that after death he becomes a spirit- man."<sup>57</sup> 56. @DWis 7:2:4 57. @DWis 7:4

After death, then, "man appears to himself in a body just as in the world, with a similar face, members, arms, hands, feet, breast, belly and loins; so that when he sees and touches himself he says that he is a man as in the world. But still it is not his external which he carried about in the world that he [now] sees and touches, but it is the internal which constituted the human itself which lived and which had an external about it or outside of every part of it, by which he could be in the world and be adapted to act and carry on functions there. This earthly corporeal is no longer of any use to him, he being in another world, where there are other functions, and other powers and abilities, to which his body there is adapted. This body he sees with his eyes, not by those he had in the world, but by those ... of his internal man.... This also he feels with the touch, not with

the hands or the sense of touch which he enjoyed in the world, but with the hands and the sense of touch which he there enjoys, which is that from which his sense of touch in the world had existed.

Every sense, too, is more exquisite and more perfect there. . . ."58 His body in the other life "is designed for uses in that life, and does not consist of bones and flesh, but of things which correspond to them."59 58. @AC 5078

1. @AC 3813[5]

It is not to be wondered at that spirits when they awaken into the spiritual world have at first no realization that they are not still in a material body. They learn this only when they find that all the phenomena of the other life arise from spiritual causes rather than from natural causes such as could be observed on earth. Some, when they realize that they are spirits, become utterly frightened, thinking themselves to be in an empty world. Yet it appears much the same as the world they left, and is sensed with exquisite reality. Indeed, the law is soon taken for granted, that "when what is spiritual touches or sees what is spiritual, it is altogether as when what is natural touches or sees what is natural." In fact, this law, the key to understanding the spiritual world, is repeated again and again in the Writings.<sup>60</sup> And "nothing in the spiritual world is material, but everything there is spiritual." Nor can the spirit any more see or touch the material environment, or any man or object therein! "Those who are in the one world cannot see those who are in the other world. For the eyes of a man, who sees by natural light, are from the substance of his world, and the eyes of an angel are from the substance of his world."<sup>61</sup>

1. @HH 461; LJ 24, @AE 926, @TCR 79, LJ post 323

2. @DLW 91. In a letter to Oetinger Swedenborg wrote: "As regards the bodies of angels, they do not appear as luminous but as fleshy; for they are substantial and not material, and in the sight of the angels things substantial are not transparent. In its origin every material thing is substantial. It is into this substantial that every man comes when by death he puts off the material exuviae . . ." (Letters and Memorials of Em. Swedenborg, by Doctor A. Acton, SSA, Bryn Athyn, Pa., 1955, p. 646)

Here we meet with the warning that we must not think that the spiritual is only a "purer natural." For "the natural can never by subtilization approximate the spiritual so as to become it."<sup>62</sup> The spiritual body is not a "purer natural," like the "limbus" of which we treated in a previous chapter, nor is it a further refinement of the limbus.

The spiritual body is, like the inmost soul, of spiritual substance. An angelic teacher, in Swedenborg's presence, therefore said to his youthful disciples: "The material body does not live and think, but the spiritual substance in that body; and this you called the soul, whose form you did not know. But now you have seen and do see it. You all are souls, about the immortality of which you heard ... so much.... The soul is the human form, from which nothing can be taken away and to which nothing can be added; and it is the inmost form of all the forms of the entire body. And because the forms which are without take both essence and form from the inmost, therefore you, just as you appear to yourselves and to us, are souls. . . ." And another angel, from ancient Athens, chided some newcomers with having thought of the spiritual world as empty, because spiritual. For to them anything that was abstract from the material appeared as empty, when, in truth, in the spiritual world "is the fullness of all things." "All things here," he said, "are substantial, not material; and material things derive their origin from the substantial. We who are here are spiritual men because substantial and not material."<sup>63</sup> 62. @TCR 280[3], 695:3, @DLW 350, @ISB 9[4],17:2 63. @CL

## Formation of the Spiritual Body

The teaching is also given that man's soul or spirit "is a spiritual substance which does not have extension but impletion." It "has nothing in common with space or extension," "nothing in common with the changes of nature."<sup>64</sup> This is said of the soul when it is present in the body. Yet it is true of the spirit after death that it has no extension except a spiritual extension; which has to do with the limitations, not of space, but of qualities and states. The spiritual world, like the human mind, is devoid of space, yet it has limitations and distances which appear as space. It is such appearances that limit and thus finite and distinguish spiritual things.<sup>65</sup> These spaces and spatial forms under which all spiritual things-including the bodies of spirits-appear, "are called appearances because they are visible, and they are said to be correspondences, and are real, because they spring from creation. . . ."<sup>66</sup> 64. @CL 220, @TCR 103, @ISB 11 65. @TCR 29, Wis. vii:5 66. @AE 553

It is hopeless to attempt to understand what is meant by a spiritual body unless we are willing to reflect on what composes it; that is, on what it is that appears as such a body or such a human form, in the other life. The first thing to note is that "as far as the spirit of man is concerned, it also is created from finite things. . . . The finite things from which it is [created] are spiritual substances which are in the spiritual world. . . ."<sup>67</sup> But these spiritual substances - which, we are assured, are far more real than material things - are organized in a marvelous fashion into vessels responsive to the influx of life as this is channeled and modified through heaven or through hell. They are organized into ideas and thoughts combined into states of affection and delight; into knowledge, intelligence, and wisdom, or into their opposites - into phantasies and corruptions. And because both good and evil spirits have an overruling human soul, this organization of all man's states of life is unified into a human form, which appears perfect and beautiful if there is a ruling love of what is true and good, but decrepit and ugly if the dominant love is evil.<sup>68</sup> 67. @TCR 470,583 68. @AC 6605

Even in the natural world we can discern at times how a man's mind and character will flash out in self-revelation, and transform the countenance into lovely beauty or contort it with repulsive hatred. The human body is indeed built to express the soul, but the mind can modify the Creator's intent; and when the spirit or mind has been released from the physical body, it is seen in a form corresponding to its inner quality, yet mercifully held by the Creator in the human form just so far as man has not perverted its order. And indeed, man or spirit has no power to destroy in entirety the order of his spiritual body. It is maintained by the Lord for the protection of his freedom.

Is the Spiritual Body only an Appearance?

What is this spiritual body? Is it a mere appearance? and if so, an appearance of what?

When Swedenborg first considered the question, he was inclined-as was everyone else-to treat the spiritual body as a product of phantasy; for what need could there possibly be of legs and arms in a world devoid of space! But when he had become accustomed to the spiritual world, he confessed that this was not a phantasy or mere appearance. It was an appearance, yes; but the appearance of a spiritual reality. The natural body is also an appearance-an appearance of a material reality. Spirits are indeed in phantasy when they mistake their bodies for material bodies and think that they are still in the natural world! But in the year 1748 Swedenborg notes in his Diary, "Let it not seem astonishing that such things as are merely bodily exist also in the spiritual world, namely, that



they there appear to themselves to be bodies, yea, to be clothed with garments, that they perceive pain, consequently possess a sense of touch, besides other things which are merely corporeal such as it would seem could never occur in spiritual essences or in spirits. Nevertheless, that still they do exist, is so true that the whole heaven affirms it."<sup>69</sup> "Hence it may now appear that there are senses in spirits or in the spiritual essences of man, and moreover that these survive in souls after death. . . ." <sup>70</sup> <sup>69</sup>. @SD 1715 <sup>70</sup>. @SD 1719

At first one might suppose that it is a man's habitual sight of nature that survives after death. His memory is filled on earth with natural objects and human shapes. Is the spiritual world perhaps a mere survival of his memory? But what shall we then say of infants who, dying at birth, had no such memories of this world, yet grow up in the other life as to both body and mind and see all spiritual things in the same natural forms; see all their companions in human forms, and see the gardens and lakes and mountains around them as clearly as other angels? Clearly the faculty to perceive all life in such mental terms, is inborn in them!

The secret law which is now revealed is that the terms of consciousness are the same in both worlds because the same mind senses objects in both worlds. Hence the spirit "neither sees nor feels any difference. But his body is then spiritual ... and when what is spiritual touches and sees what is spiritual, it is altogether as when what is natural touches and sees what is natural."<sup>71</sup>

1. @HH 461, LJ post. 323

### The Components of a Spirit

The doctrine points out that "it is an error [to think] that a soul can exist without a body."<sup>72</sup> Angels have a body, a rational and a spiritual.<sup>73</sup> As to their body and its sensations, angels are in "a lower sphere."<sup>74</sup> Their bodies have sensations and pleasures, their minds have affections and thoughts.<sup>75</sup> Thus the spirit, like man on earth, consists of degrees - substantial degrees. "Exterior spiritual things are so created by the Lord as to clothe or invest interior spiritual things." And the exterior spiritual things are in forms like those in the natural world. Into these exterior spiritual forms the interior spiritual things - such as those of the angelic mind - close and have their ultimate existence.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, "his whole spiritual body, from head to heel, is completely such as his mind."<sup>77</sup> <sup>72</sup>. @DLW 14 <sup>73</sup>. @DLW 334 <sup>74</sup>. @AE 926[2] <sup>75</sup>. @CL 273, @AC 5078 <sup>76</sup>. @AE 582 <sup>77</sup>. @AE 775[4]

The changing states of affection and thought of spirits are represented as a spiritual flora and fauna around them, and these are said not merely to "appear" but to be "created" in correspondence with these states. They are real "because they spring from creation."<sup>78</sup> But the ruling states which compose the character of each spirit are manifested as a spiritual body, permanent and complete. For the spirit is a man; and "that man may be man there must be no part lacking." Nothing is lacking, not even the genitals. The male remains male and the female female.<sup>79</sup> This spiritual body is not a superficial appearance, but contains heart and lungs and brains and digestive organs. It is nourished on spiritual food. Spirits feel with their external senses, but think with their internal sensories or their brains!<sup>80</sup> The body of a spirit contains substantial organs, fibres, nerves and vital fluids, answering to those in the material body. For the human mind has similar formations to the natural body. The reason given is that "there is a perpetual correspondence of all things of the mind with all things of the body."<sup>81</sup>

There could be "no living thing in the natural world or in the spiritual world" without substances which are forms adapted for the reception of life. Such forms are constituted of the purest

filaments like fascicles or bundles.<sup>82</sup> In the natural body we see fasciculated fibres, especially proceeding from the cortical substances of the brain, arranged into intricate series and connections. And they are so created "because they correspond to the series in which the organism of the mind is disposed." For "the truths which are of faith are so arranged in the human mind." "Unless there were such an arrangement in the human mind, man would not have any analytical faculty of reason, which every one has according to the arrangement and ... abundance of truths cohering as it were in a bundle; and the arrangement is according to the use of reason from freedom."<sup>83</sup> In general, good and truth together "make as it were one body, the soul of which is, good, the truths in that good being as it were the spiritual fibres which form the body."<sup>84</sup> "What is said of the natural forms of the body can be said similarly of the spiritual forms of the mind."<sup>85</sup> 78. @AE 553, 582 79. @CL 51, 32, 33, @DLW 389 80. @DLW 135, 389 81. LJ post. 316, @DP 181, @TCR 38 82. @AC 7408 83. @TCR 351, cp 38e 84. @AC 5435 85. @DP 181

We tend to forget how complex our minds are - how ideas are, inwoven into each other in remarkable series of kinships, how marvelous the order through which we can recall the various elements of our thought. We seldom reflect on the laws of the association of ideas and how the most rational and logical processes can yet be upset and reversed by the sudden awakening of some affection or passion! We strain our mental muscles a times; and we digest knowledge in order to obtain its inner essence, the meaning that is of use in building our minds. Our minds feed on intellectual substances and are poisoned by falsities, and by phantasies of self-love.

These are not mere comparisons or metaphors! The spirit after death has inner degrees, answering to all the invisible interiors within the viscera and the brains. It has also its ultimate, which is the spiritual body.

### The Spiritual Body and the Memory

We do not think with our bodies. Neither is the body of a spirit employed by the spirit in his thinking processes in the other life. Yet it is spiritual. It was indeed organized within the material body and "formed through goods and truths which inflow from the Lord through the spiritual world" and are received in civil and moral states.<sup>86</sup> All man's states are preserved in the form of memory. This is the ultimate of man's mind, the sensual degree, which embodies his entire mind. And in it is inwoven his moral fibre, which we call character.

#### 1. @TCR 583, 454

This sensual degree is the first of man's mind to be awakened into consciousness at birth. It exists at birth, ready for use. In it are organized all sensations, which are gradually formed into a memory. It exists also with infants who die at birth; exists as a "spiritual-natural plane"<sup>87</sup> which can develop and grow in the other life. But a man who grows up in the natural world develops that sensual degree into a corporeal memory, a "relatively fixed" plane which he takes with him into the spiritual world. "What sort of fixity it is can be known only by this, that all things which are on earth are also in the heavens, but there they are not fixed, but still they appear as fixed."<sup>88</sup> The corporeal memory, or ultimate degree of the mind, thus cannot be changed after death, nor added to; and this means that he "remains to eternity" such as he had been in the world. "He has this plane with him, but it becomes altogether quiescent. Still, his interiors close in it. . . ."<sup>89</sup> 87. @HH 345 88. @SD 5552 89. @SD 5552

Let us again ponder the fact that all the contents of our memory are organized by our special

interests and affections, and ordered to reflect the image of our ruling loves, our whole personality.<sup>90</sup> And this order imposed on our corporeal memory is fixed after death by the fact that it is devoid of physical sensory organs and thus cannot grow. "New harmonies and correspondences cannot be formed" with the interiors of the mind which rest in it.<sup>91</sup> And the reason that it cannot change is also found in that mystical structure, the "limbus," which was the subject of our last section.

For the limbus gives a natural fixation to the corporeal memory. It closes the chapter of earthly life - or binds the book of memory. 90. @AC 3539[2] 91. SD min. 4645f, @SD 4037

It is therefore stated in the doctrine that "the organization taken on in the world remains to eternity."<sup>92</sup> "No one's life can be changed after death, because it is organized according to his love and faith, and hence according to his works.... A change of organization can take place only in the material body, and by no means in the spiritual body after the former is rejected."<sup>93</sup> 92. @DP 326[5], 319 93. BE 110, @CL 524[2]

"Where the tree falleth, there it shall be."<sup>94</sup> Not that all progress stops after death. He who is in good can be "perfected immensely, even to angelic wisdom - but correspondingly to the concordances and correspondences that exist between internals and externals while he lived in the world."<sup>95</sup> 94. Ecclesiastes 95. SD min. 4645, cp. @SD 5552, @AC 4588, 3293

The general teaching is that after death a man takes along his whole natural memory "but is not allowed to use it," that is, recall its contents. It is closed, quiescent, like the body when it is asleep. If it were not, and its material ideas were reproduced in the other life, the spirit could not progress into spiritual thought, which is abstracted from persons, spaces and times, If the corporeal memory of a spirit were activated, his ideas would also mix themselves into the thought of the man with whom he was.<sup>96</sup> But the spirits have full use of their spiritual or interior memory, in which they store all their experiences in the spiritual world. 96. @HH 461, 464, 256

All these teachings strongly suggest that the corporeal memory becomes, after death, a body for the spirit; or rather, that the memory of man is impressed on that spiritual-natural plane which becomes his spiritual body. Man does not live in his brain only, but his soul and mind are present in every part of his body. His memory, even on earth, is impressed on his body, especially as to all acts and habits. (@HH 345, @TCR 583)

Thus we are told that if it becomes necessary to confront a spirit with his earthly misdeeds which he denies having committed, angelic examiners "inspect his face; and their search extends through the whole body, beginning with the fingers of each hand. . . .

The things that are inscribed on the memory from the will and its thought are inscribed not only on the brain, but also upon the whole man, and there they exist in an order according to the -order of the parts of the body. . . ."97 97. @HH 463, @SD 5492

Such spiritual palmistry would be impossible unless the spiritual body were formed in accordance with the thoughts and acts of man's will.<sup>98</sup> The external memory with its inactive material ideas, seems thus to be represented in those basic structures such as bones and skin and sinews which have relatively little life, while the viscera and brains of the spirit are formed according to his internal memory, which he employs in his thinking and from which the immaterial sphere of his life unconsciously flows forth.<sup>99</sup> 98. @HH 463[e] 99. @AC 2489,10130,1504, @DLW 291

Immortal man has not only a substantial body-which was the sensual degree of his natural mind-but also all the interior degrees which go to constitute his inner being. In his Diary, Swedenborg sums up the successive "interiors of man which do not die": the sensual, the natural, and the spiritual-natural, all of which constitute the external man; the celestial of the spiritual, the celestial, and the inmost, which make up the internal man; and the spiritual of the celestial which acts as a medium between the external man and the internal. All these immortal degrees really exist in every man, one of them being dominant. And in general, these seven degrees constitute three heavens.<sup>100</sup> Celestial angels have the celestial degree organized and opened for use; the spiritual angels have the spiritual degree. All spirits have a natural mind or degree, which with the evil remains perverted and consists of "spiritual substances such as are in hell."<sup>101</sup> <sup>100. @SD 4627, cp. 5547-5552</sup> <sup>101. @TCR 38, cp @SD 5547, 2157f</sup>

Yet all angels have a natural degree of the mind as well as a spiritual body. The body is the outward form of the mind and makes one with it.<sup>102</sup> But since hereditary and other evils of man remain in his spiritual body like scars, there are things in the angel "so depraved that never to eternity can correspondence occur, did not the Lord continually bring it about."

For the Lord makes it possible for the natural to become as it were "transparent" or removed so that the interiors can be displayed.<sup>103</sup> The humiliating fact is that even with angels, there is correspondence only in a few things of the mind!<sup>104</sup> <sup>102. @HH 340, @DLW 369, Inv. 14, @DWis. iv</sup> <sup>103. @SD 2157-2159</sup> <sup>104. @SD 2292</sup>

It is therefore a law in the spiritual world that a state becomes apparent, either in the features of the visible spiritual body or in the corresponding environment which is created about spirits and angels, only if it is an active state. Here again the mercy of the Lord is seen. For who could stand if all the inner turmoil of his heart were always apparent, or the dormant hereditary passions which man had never measured were always exposed to view?(<sup>105</sup>)

(<sup>105</sup>). Psalms 130:3

What are seen in the spiritual world are the active states of spirits and angels, perceived in the mental forms which correspond to them. These mental forms are the same as those into which we interpreted our natural environment, and thus appear the same.

## Summary

The objective in our last three sections has been to examine what there is in man that is immortal. We found three things which do not perish at death: the soul, the mind within a spiritual body, and the "limbus" from the inmosts of nature. We also found that through the isolation of the "limbus" the corporeal memory was reduced to quiescence so that its material ideas are not used in the thinking processes of the spirit, but only those things which he had drawn out of the memory as conclusions and rational concepts.<sup>106</sup>

### 1. @HH 364[2]

Many fields of study are opened up through the Writings for those who are willing to think spiritually about the spiritual world and to realize that the spirit is an organization, not of physical elements but of states of good and truth. But no treatment of the subject of the bodies of spirits and angels would be adequate which did not point out the teaching that "a spirit does not subsist upon a basis of his own, but upon a common basis, which is the human race."<sup>107</sup>

This might seem surprising, since every spirit has his character engraved upon his own corporeal memory, and in his own spiritual body; and since this corporeal memory is closed and fixed by means of a permanent "limbus" from nature, which individualizes him.

1. LJ 9

But the spirit cannot use the ideas of his corporeal memory, any more than we can think with our hands or feed. Instead of this - as the Writings repeatedly show - spirits can be with men and can use the contents of our memories as if they were their own. Their common basis - on which the external phases of their mental life are founded - is the whole human race. "The angelic mansions are indeed in heaven, to the sight separate from the habitations of men, but still they are with man in his affections of good and truth. That they stand forth to the sight as separate is from the appearance."<sup>108</sup> "The spiritual world is where man is, and in no wise away from him."<sup>109</sup> This conjunction of the two worlds is a unique doctrine of the New Church.

1. LJ 9

2. @DLW 92

### 3 DEATH AND RESURRECTION

#### DEATH<sup>1</sup>

1. The general teaching is given in @HH 445-452, @AC 168-189, SD 1092-1109

#### The Necessity of Death

Death is necessary in this narrow world of ours. Despite the appearance that it is a harbinger of misfortune and grief, yet it is needed for human happiness.

We are not referring to the fact that our globe cannot conceivably hold the offspring of mankind if the harvester Death was not ever at work in the vast field of human life, mowing down the rotating crops as they mature. There are indeed limits to the numbers which an earth is capable of supporting; as we see from statements concerning the planet which Swedenborg identified with Jupiter. There the life spans of the inhabitants are generally only about thirty years-by a providential adjustment to their multitude and fertility.<sup>2</sup> There they love nothing more than to have offspring.<sup>3</sup> The entire cycle of life is there quickened; growth and ripening are more swift; death as well as birth is more frequent. The celestial race on that planet regards birth and death as equally important and necessary.

Except some who are wicked, they rarely die from disease, "but die tranquilly and as it were in sleep, so that they go by sleep into the other life."<sup>4</sup> 2. @AC 8851, @SD 546f 3. EU 84:2 4. @SD 580, 4592, @AC 8850[e], 5726

The Jovians are wise. For fear of becoming indocile, they do not hanker after great age. They understand better than Paul that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God"!<sup>5</sup> 5. @SD 546, @AC 8851, 1 Corinthians 15:50

Imagine eternal existence in the flesh! Even granting a body continually healthy, could everlasting happiness be captured in a life within the bonds of earthly space? As generation after generation

risers around a man, will he not wish to withdraw from a society of younger minds who view the uses of the world from a different perspective? Even in a race not so burdened by sin as is ours, there must come a friction of ages and attitudes. Age should normally grow away from the trivial and the external. It must encourage youth to take on responsibility. But it wearies of tasting of youth's mistakes and must leave to new generations to solve the recurrent problems of life. It is less interested in experiment and more in realization. And on our sinful globe the aged become increasingly conscious of their declining bodily strength, and find difficulty in keeping up with modern innovations and the catch phrases of each new generation.

But if they are blessed with the innocence of wisdom those of advanced age come to see how little we can depend on human ingenuity or on the artifices used to prolong physical life for happiness. They come to look to eternal values and view things in the more serene light of spiritual truths. Indeed, they have a patient longing for another world, where their spirits may renew their strength to partake again in the uses of society.

As long as we live in the limited space here below, there is no withdrawal from the busy world of earthly affairs. The world is too narrow to allow for the segregation of different generations, still less of different genius or different basic interests. It cramps development, cramps the individualization to which it has given birth. It promotes social cooperation, but hinders realization. For it is only a world of beginnings.

The world of fixed time and space seems to negate the infinite, eternal purposes of God.

It serves indeed for a realm adapted for the exercise of choice, But when the choice has been made and man's individuality has been fixed, there is need for a liberation of the spirit from the bonds of extraneous circumstances.

This need is engraved in human nature. The instinct of realizing one's fixed love or ambition is stronger than the fear of suffering or of death or of hell itself. The chance of death is no deterrent to one who loves fame or has pride in his reputation for courage.<sup>6</sup> The love of a mother or a lover or a patriot greets the moment of supreme sacrifice with a smile. Even with animals the herding instinct-the implanted blind instinct for racial preservation-is stronger than the fear of individual death. The reason is that the purpose of the Creator always extends to the realization of a goal beyond death. And in man, the crown of creation, that realization is still individual, because man's soul is individual rather than merely racial: man's instinct, which he strives to realize beyond death, is that of free choice. 6. @SD 1238

### The Dread of Death

It is only in moments when man's inner will overrules him, that he overcomes his natural fear of death, which is an implanted instinct for self-preservation. Man loves life. Even those who, in a rebellious mood, argue that they wish they had never been born, yet love life. The regenerating man does not feel the dread of death so much, for he does not love the world for the sake of self; and when death impends-unless his physical disease affects his thinking or he is concerned for his family - his thoughts are mostly about eternal life. Those who are led by the love of self rarely show piety in the face of death, although the worldly-wise often manifest a spurious death-bed repentance.<sup>7</sup> 7. @SD 1235-1238, @AC 177

Irrespective of a man's character, he may dread the pain which, in many diseases, seem to attend

the demise of the body. But it is doubtful whether there is any pain connected with the actual death. Death is but the "twin sister of sleep." Consciousness ceases in the body before the heart stops: and until the heart has ceased functioning, death is not complete.<sup>8</sup> 8. @DWis 7:4:2, cp @HH 446f

### The Physiology of Death

It is of importance to know what is involved in the death of the body. The Writings describe it as a process by which the spirit is released. The general teaching is that the conjunction of the body with the spirit depends on the motions of the heart and the lungs of the body being conjoined with the corresponding pulsations and animation of the spirit. For the spirit also has a body with a pulse and respiration. Death occurs when, from any kind of disease or accident, the body comes into such a state as to be unable to act in unison with its spirit and carry out its behests. What is called Death occurs when the vital motions of the lungs and the heart cease and the correspondence with the activities of the spirit's heart and the spirit's lungs is broken.<sup>9</sup> 9. @DLW 390f, @DWis 7:4

The breathing or animation of the spirit is thought, and the pulse of the spirit is affection; and thought communicates with the breathing, while affection-or love-communicates with the motion of the mortal heart.<sup>10</sup> That such a conjunction exists, common sense can easily confirm. Our spirit's heart, or the will, can quicken the throbbing of our mortal heart and express our emotions. And our spirit's lungs, which is the understanding, control the natural lungs in order to express our thoughts in speech. In fact, man's bodily consciousness, or thought, is constantly tied up with the breathing. The unborn babe has no consciousness. The moment our lungs cease to respire in their own independent rhythm, as in suffocation, the mind slides into vacancy. <sup>10</sup>. @HH 445f, @DLW 390, @DWis 7:4:2

We are accustomed to think of our mind or spirit as lodged in the head-in the cerebral substance. The ancient gentiles used to think of it as in the heart or the diaphragm. But we have good confirmations for our modern habit of thought, since physiology proves that the brain is the organ which controls all motions in the body; and we become impressed by the fact that when we exert a mental decision the body responds through the brain and the motor nerves. Should it not be imagined, then, that death - the severance of the body from the spirit - would take place in the brain rather than by the ceasing of the motions of the heart and the lungs?

We cannot escape this problem by nullifying the doctrinal statements. For they are quite clear. "Those are greatly deluded who assign a particular place to the soul, whether in the brain or in the heart; for the soul of man which is to live after death is his spirit."<sup>11</sup> It is not enough to regard the soul as a vague abstraction and to say merely that the soul dwells within the body and that the body invests it. For "the spirit of man is in his body, in the whole and in every part of it; and it is its purer substance, both in its organs of motion and in those of sense, and everywhere else; and the body is the material part that is everywhere annexed to it, adapted to the world in which he then is."<sup>12</sup> "The spiritual accompanies every stamen [of man's viscera and organs] from ultimates to inmosts, and therefore also all the minute structures and fibres of the heart and the lungs. When therefore the connection between man's body and spirit is dissolved, the spirit possesses a form similar to that which the man had before; it is merely a separation of the spiritual substance from the material."<sup>13</sup> <sup>11</sup>. @DWis 7:2e <sup>12</sup>. @AC 4659 <sup>13</sup>. @DWis 7:2:4, cp @CL 315[11], @TCR 793, 583

Thus the spirit has heart and lungs, and obviously also a brain with cortex and fibres, corresponding in function to the mortal brain. While on earth the spirit is spiritually coextensive with the mortal organism and acts into it by influx according to correspondence. In the other life,

the spirit thinks and wills in his spiritual brain as we in our natural brain. But the activity of his heart and lungs make a one with his will and understanding - which he also regards as dwelling in his head!

The spirit's heart and lungs are nothing but the organization, in his spiritual body, of his mind or his will and understanding which in their primes reside in his cortical substances.<sup>14</sup> All things of the body of a spirit "from head to foot" are "derivatives" (principiata) constructed through fibres from the beginnings in the brain which are receptacles of love and wisdom.<sup>15</sup> 14. Cp. @DLW 369 15. @DLW 369, 387

It is the spiritual heart which is the constant formative cause of the mortal heart's growth and functioning. If the mortal heart ceases to throb, the spiritual heart cannot by means of the brain stimulate it to action.

The connection of the natural body and the spiritual body is broken - the circuit of life is cut off, not in the brain, but at the heart.

In one of his early treatises on psychology, Swedenborg notes that death occurs from below: the forms or connections which first dissolve are the most external - those of the red blood.<sup>16</sup> And the Writings also show that life in the body depends on the circulation which supplies the tissues with vital heat. Physiology takes account of the fact that in organic bodies heat is being maintained in calculable degrees of temperature and amounts of energy, through the consumption of oxygen by the tissues. But it becomes 'vital heat' only by its receiving from the soul a living conatus which in its essence is love, or spiritual heat, and which directs it for the maintenance of the uses of the body.<sup>17</sup> When the heart stops and the body grows cold - which differs as to time according to the fatal disease - the bond between the spirit and the material body is dissolved.<sup>18</sup> 16. R. Psych. 488-492, 512, cp. 521, 524; WE 5081 17. @DLW 379f, Love xx 18. @AC 179, 2119, @HH 447

What of man's life perishes by death? The Writings answer, Nothing.<sup>19</sup> 19. See Appendix, page 469

Nothing of man's life remains in the dead body. "Everything that lives in the body and acts and feels from life, belongs exclusively (unice) to the spirit and nothing of it to the body. . . . Whatever lives and feels in man is of his spirit, and everything in man, from his head to the sole of his foot, lives and feels . . . . 11 The body is only the material and this is in itself devoid of life. "And because the material does not live, but only the spiritual, it can be seen that whatever lives in a man is his spirit."<sup>20</sup> "All the life of sense that man has does not belong to his body but to his spirit. . . ." <sup>21</sup> "The life which is felt in the body belongs to the spirit, wherefore spirits take it with them. . . ." <sup>22</sup> 20. @HH 433, 432, cp @AC 1436, 4373, @SD 2386, 2355 21. @HH 434 22. @SD 2355

In some early study notes, Swedenborg called the body "the ultimate natural" and wrote:

"When the ultimate natural perishes the life adhering to it does not perish but remains in the higher mind as a latent ability (indoles)" - an ability to sense spiritual things.<sup>23</sup> 23. WE 5081, cp @AC 4622

Thus when the spirit has been liberated from the body, nothing is lost, but its senses are exercised in the spiritual world instead.<sup>24</sup> Man rises as to his spirit or his spiritual body; and this includes everything in the body that lives, feels, thinks, thus everything except the dead corpse which consists of material substance. Only the Lord rose from the dead as to His body also. This doctrine is distinctive of the New Church: that the Lord, while in the world, made His whole Human Divine



and, differently from man, rose again both as to His Spirit and as to His body. This He indicated to His disciples when He said, "Behold My hands and My feet that it is I Myself: touch Me and see. For a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have."<sup>25</sup> 24. @HH 434, 461, 463:2, cp. @AC 6322, 6948:3 25. Luke 24:39, @HH 316, @AC 2083[2], 2658, 3318e, 10252, @HD 286, Lord 35, @AE 66[3], 1112:2, @DLW 221[2], @TCR 109, LJ post. 87, 129:2

Specifically, the Lord, after He had dissipated or extirpated the hereditary forms imposed on His body through Mary, "rose as to the whole body which He had in the world"-so that "that of the body which with those who are born of human parents is rejected and putrified, was with Him glorified and made Divine."<sup>26</sup> Nor did He leave anything of the body in the sepulchre, "as is the case with every other man who rises only as to his spirit and never as to his material body."<sup>27</sup> 26. @TCR 109, LJ post. 87 27. LJ post. 129, cf @SD 5244, @AC 5078

## THE RESURRECTION

### The Process of Resuscitation

Paul, in his famous but somewhat vague description of the resurrection, given in the First Epistle to the Corinthians (ch. xv) , imagined that the quick and the dead, on the sounding of the judgment trumpet, would all be changed and put on immortality "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." For Paul, in his youth, sat at the feet of Gamaliel, the celebrated Jewish rabbi, and he reflects much of the doctrine of the Pharisees, who believed in a last judgment day common to the living and the dead.<sup>28</sup>

#### 1. Cp 1 Thessalonians 4:15 seq., Philippians 3:21

In the Writings, however, it is revealed that the resurrection of man is individual, and that it occurs not in the twinkling of an eye but as a process, a gradual change of state. Death is indeed sudden, in the sense that there is a moment when the spirit's departure is unavoidable. But the resurrection is a process-a gradual adjustment of the spirit to conscious, free life in the eternal world.

Death occurs when the two vital motions, the respiration of the lungs and the beating of the heart, cease, and the body, deprived of the life of the spirit, grows cold and begins to decay. But until the heart's motion is entirely stopped the spirit continues in the body "for a short time."<sup>29</sup> And even after the body is apparently cold, life may with some persist as conscious thinking. The spirit can of course not have any sensation of its natural environment - since respiration has stopped - nor can it move even a particle of the gross matter of the body.<sup>30</sup> The spirit, though definitely severed from the body, may still abide in it, by virtue of the "finest substances of nature" which are not affected by death but are retained by the spirit as a "limbus" which eventually "recedes" as a cutis-like covering.<sup>31</sup> These substances would not leave the body until the "interior corporeals" grow cold. The thought here described would be tranquil and unaffected by the state of the body.<sup>32</sup> 29. @AC 179, 2119, @HH 446 30. @HH 433 31. @DLW 257, @TCR 103, @DWis 8:32. @AC 179, 4622:4, cp 177f, @SD 1102, @HH 449

Death is, in a manner, like sleep; for in sleep celestial agencies are at work to relax and restore man's body and mind. But the celestial angels who attend man's resuscitation are concerned with preserving the sense of the continuity of life. They are drawn to man on the faintest notion of the approach of death, or whenever the proprium of man is awe-struck with fear or paralyzed by uncertainty. Their presence is felt in the spiritual world as an aromatic odor, which causes evil

spirits to flee.<sup>33</sup> And it is due to their wise ministrations that the spirit of a dying man is held in the last thought which he entertains as he is expiring - a thought which is commonly about eternal life.

The celestial angels have the effect of quieting all man's own affections - all his anxiety, impatience, revenge, lust, and ambition. This the Lord accomplishes by temporarily cutting off any communication with the attendant spirits which man had himself invited while on earth, or with any societies in the world of spirits or in hell. Man thus becomes passive, as if in sleep. Indeed, these spirits then suppose that man is dead. For as the poets have noted, Death is but the somber sister of Sleep.<sup>34</sup> And the angels breathe no accusation, no reproach, whatever man's quality had been. For "they love every one," seeing not his proprium, but the "remains" of celestial good with which the Lord has endowed every man from childhood.<sup>35</sup> 33. @AC 175, 179, 17 1, @HH 449, @SD 1096, 1100 34. Of Lazarus, who was raised to new bodily life on the fourth day, the Lord said that "he sleepeth." And despite Martha's fears, no decomposition seems to have set in. (John 11) 35. @AC 315

Thus man's mind becomes docile as a babe's. His thought, guided by angelic affections, is drawn out- vaguely but persistently-while a blissful feeling of security enwraps him. This single thought, sensed as a soothing monotone, is like a narrow bridge whereon the spirit is borne up without sense of time or self-consciousness, and is carried across the abyss which we call Death, into the land of Resurrection.

### The Three Stages of Resuscitation

All those who die, whether good or evil, are received in the spiritual world as welcome guests.<sup>36</sup> But their introduction is gradual, by orderly stages. 36. @AC 2119, 1631

That he might learn something of these successive stages, Swedenborg was reduced into a state resembling that of a dying person.<sup>37</sup> This occurred on the morning of March 1, 1748, His spirits then withdrew, thinking that he was dead, because his, proprial affection was taken away. His heart beat was normal while his respiration became tacit; he became insensible of the world and yet remained conscious so that he remembered what occurred. 37. @AC 168f, 182ff, 314-316, @SD 1092-1109, 1115-1120, @HH 449f

By means of this experience he was instructed how a spirit is prepared for his resurrection-how he is received first by celestial angels, later by spiritual angels, and finally by good spirits more akin to his own life; and how, "on the third day," he awakens into the world of spirits, to take up his own life where he left it off.<sup>38</sup> 38. @AC 314ff, @HH 450

These three states of resuscitation precede his final awakening in the world of spirits which takes place "on the third day."<sup>39</sup> There is need for such an introductory period and for a brief recapitulation of the spiritual history of his life. The Lord needs to reorient the spirit around the celestial and spiritual remains and surviving moral states which evil has not destroyed and which were the Lord's own creations in his mind. Soon enough the spirit will resume control of his own life, follow the biddings of his proprial affections, and begin the journey towards the goal of his ruling love. But first the Lord needs to revive and integrate what is of the Lord's own with man, and thus marshal the saving elements in the rising spirit. And this-the gathering and organizing of all "remains" and the removal and quieting of the trivial worries of natural life, must be done for the evil as well as for the good. 39. @HH 451, 457, 452

It is the Lord who is the Resurrection and the Life. (John 11:25) The resuscitation of man's spirit is effected by the living and mighty attraction of the Lord's mercy, who said, "And I, if I be lifted up, shall draw all men unto Me."<sup>40</sup> 40. John 11:25, 12:32; @SD 300, 1104, @AC 179, @HH 449,447

The inmost "soul" of man is the abode of the Lord and the medium of His unimpeded influx by which He, by Himself, organizes and builds both spirit and body. He needs no angelic assistance in that work, or in the gathering of such "human internals" to Himself.<sup>41</sup> Neither angel nor man is aware of His secret labors. 41. @AC 1999[4], LJ 25, @HH 38, @ISB 8

But the "spirit," or mind, is formed in the sphere of angels and spirits. And in the order of its building, the celestial angels came first to assist. It is through them that the interiors of the minds of every man are furnished in infancy with those celestial "remains" which made a beginning for all that is orderly and rational and human in man.

It is these same angels "of the province of the heart"<sup>42</sup>-who are now the first to assist in the reconstruction of the mind of the spirit from within, from the innocent states of infancy, for its adaptation to a purely spiritual environment. 42. @AC 170, 172

With every one who dies, two celestial angels also generally appear seated near his head.<sup>43</sup> These seem to be in meditation - communicating their thoughts without words or images, and by as it were "inducing their faces" upon the spirit; and when their thoughts are recognized as theirs, and not the spirit's own, they know that the spirit can be withdrawn from the body.<sup>44</sup> They maintain man's final thought, however, lest man's identity be lost in the transition. For in all change there must be an inner connective. And for all their own desire to hold the spirit in their sphere the celestials will nothing more than the freedom of man. And after a time the spirit begins to gravitate towards externals - unable to sustain the profound peace of innocence and selfless love.<sup>45</sup> 43. @SD 1096, @AC 172ff, @HH 450. Some variations seem indicated in Mark 16:5, Luke 24:4, John 20:12 44. @AC 173, @HH 449, @SD 1097 45. @AC 182

The celestial angels do not leave the resuscitating spirit, but act more remotely.<sup>46</sup> But the spirit now requires something they cannot give. His first need was one of spiritual warmth, for a revival of that inmost motivation of innocence from which his infant heart had begun to beat. His new need is one for spiritual sight. And even as in each child and youth, the spiritual heavens superintend the storing up of spiritual "remains" of truth and intellectual sight, which intimately correspond to the societies of the second heaven,<sup>47</sup> so now these remains must be revived for use in the new spiritual environment. 46. @AC 182, @SD 1105 suggests that they may stay near for some weeks. 47. @AC 5344, 5342

So far, in the background of the spirit's thought, there was a dim idea that he was still living in the body.<sup>48</sup> But when spiritual angels approach from the province in the Grand Man which answers to the tunics of the eyes, they seek to communicate by visual representations and thereby to give spiritual light-the light which reveals the spiritual world.<sup>49</sup>

The appearance to the spirit is as if they gently rolled off a tunic from his eyes, until dim light begins to show through - like the light of the newly awakened before the eyelids are opened; or like what took place with the blind man whom the Lord cured and who at first saw only "men, as trees, walking."<sup>50</sup> Various types of imagery present themselves as their vision clears-presaging a new sight which sees in concrete fashion that which man before had perceived only as abstractions. This is effected by a removal or sinking back of corporeal ideas.<sup>51</sup> Something seems to be unveiled

from the spirit's face - which represents his passing from natural thought into the type of thinking that is common to all in the after-life. And with this a new sense- perception is given by degrees. In some cases the spirit is enveloped by a golden light and he is given a feeling of happiness and gladness-a feeling of the commencement of a new life. And he is then told that he is a spirit!<sup>52</sup> He can look about him and see spiritual things in the customary symbolism of his thought - as if they were natural.<sup>53</sup> But the spiritual angels delight to inform him about eternal life and, if he had been in faith or at least in some external belief in heaven, they will show him the wonders of the heavenly mansions-as if in a prophetic preview.<sup>54</sup>

1. @AC 178
2. @SD 1106, @AC 183f, 4411f, @HH 450
3. Mark 8:24
4. @SD 1116
5. @HH 450, @AC 185f 53. @AC 314
6. @AC 314f, 186, @SD 815f

The Arcana Coelestia reveals concerning the dying, that "scarcely a day intervenes after the death of the body before they are in the other life."<sup>55</sup> And on the cross the Lord said to the penitent robber, "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise."<sup>56</sup> Perhaps this refers to the paradises which the spiritual angels show to the rising spirits! In one case Swedenborg may have been present with other angels at this stage of the resurrection process.

For he tells that he spoke to Eric Brahe twelve hours after the latter had been executed.<sup>57</sup> 55. @AC 70 56. Luke 23:43 57. @SD 5099

When a spirit is informed by the spiritual angels that he is a spirit, this does not seem to cause him any surprise. His state seemingly is still passive-as man is in a dream. But with the consciousness of life there usually comes also "self-consciousness" - with a revival of old desires. Even instruction about heaven wearies him eventually, and so he withdraws himself from the spiritual angels.

Next, he finds himself in a society of good spirits-presumably angels of the natural or lowest heaven, where truths are taught by representations. The spirit man seems to himself to be in the flower of his youth and riding a horse which, strangely enough, cannot move a step although he is directing it towards hell!<sup>58</sup> He then dismounts and walks-being instructed that his reasonings would lead him astray unless he was guided by knowledge which distinguishes between right and wrong. The good spirits among whom he now is, do not at first know his quality.<sup>59</sup> But they delight to show him every kindness-evoking so far as possible the states of moral good and the virtues which he had made his own.<sup>60</sup> 58. @AC 187f, @SD 1118 59. @SD 1107 60. @AC 316

But actually the spirit is sinking back towards the state of life in which he was when death overtook him. The process of resuscitation is not complete until he has returned into his customary sphere of thought, and "associates himself with those who are in full agreement with his former life in the world, among whom he finds as it were his own life. . . ." . . . After sinking back into such a life, he makes a new beginning of life. . . ." <sup>61</sup> 61. @AC 316, @HH 450

### Resurrection on the Third Day

The Lord's death and resurrection are often taken as a model of man's transition. The Lord suffered

a violent death on the cross at about three o'clock on a Friday afternoon, and rose from the sepulchre in His glorified Human at dawn on the following Sunday; thus after about thirty-eight hours had elapsed.

This period is referred to in the expressions "on the third day" and "after two days."<sup>62</sup> The Hebrews sometimes used the phrase "three days" counting each part of a day as one day; and, in a hyperbole, the Lord once predicted His abode in the tomb as lasting "for three days and three nights"-the significant number "three" being emphasized to indicate completeness.<sup>63</sup> 62. Compare the expression in Hosea 6:2 63. Matthew 12:40, Jonah 1: 17

It might be observed that the apostle Peter states that the Lord, being put to death in the flesh, was "quickenened by the Spirit; by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison."<sup>64</sup> The implication is that "when He rose again" He descended "into the lower regions" of the world of spirits and liberated these captive souls.<sup>65</sup> The Lord may have been present spiritually and indeed visibly with them even during His sojourn in the tomb. No such activity is shown by the spirit of man during the process of his resuscitation. For man is then in a state of passivity. 64. 1 Peter 3:19 65. Compare @AC 7932a, 7828, 8018, 9229:10; Matthew 27:52, 53

The consistent doctrine of the Writings is that man rises into the world of spirits on the third day. All that befalls before this is a preparation. And of this preparation, described above, we read in the work Heaven and Hell:

"This opening (exordium) of man's life after death does not last more than some days. . . ." "I have talked with some on the third day after their death, and then those things which were described above (nos. 449, 450) had been accomplished." The spirit's entrance into the world of spirits "takes place shortly after his resuscitation, as described above."<sup>66</sup> 66. @HH 450, 451, 457. "Exordium" means a groundwork, a warp, or an introduction.

The separation of the spirit from the body is said to be completed mostly "on the second (altero) day after the last agony," and thus most are introduced into the spiritual world "after a period of two days,"<sup>67</sup> or "on the third day after he has expired."<sup>68</sup>

The spirit, on the third day, thus awakes into the state of his corporeal memory, and it appears to him as if he was still in the body and "that the time elapsed since death has been only as a sleep," with lingering memories of dreams beyond recapture.<sup>69</sup> 67. @DWis 7:4:2, @DLW 390[e], @HH 312[4]

1. 5 Mem. 4, @AR 153, @HH 452, @TCR 138, @AC 8939, 2119, cp @SD 5492

2. @TCR 797

He now begins to attract to himself such spirits, good or evil, as agree with his own affections or cupidities, He has forgotten the premonitory instructions of the angels.<sup>70</sup> His corporeal memory of earthly events becomes again active in a brief revival. This is necessary in order that death may be shown to be a continuation of normal life and thus assure the continuity of his personality. He begins his own life de novo by taking up the pattern of his memory as it existed at the moment of his death.<sup>71</sup> Thus 70. @TCR 80 71. @SD 885,1337, 1289f, 5 Mem. 4,5, @AC 8991

"every one, in the first days after death, knows no otherwise than that he lives in the same world in which he was before. For the time since passed is as a sleep, from which, when he is awakened, he

does not perceive otherwise than that he is where he was."72 72. @TCR 160[7], cp 797

## Resuscitation of Infant Spirits

The expression "on the third day," as used in connection with the Lord's resurrection, meant only about thirty-eight hours. With men in general, this period may not always be distributed over three days; nor can we suppose that the process is one of exact solar time, but may be rather akin to the physiological and mental periodicities which govern the human body.

But there are other reasons for allowing for exceptions. Infants who have died at a tender age lack the ultimates of a natural memory with its wealth of material ideas, but have only "a spiritual-natural plane" ready to receive spiritual sensations.<sup>73</sup> Their transition into the other life must therefore be quite different. Since they have no spiritual remains nor any moral goods to be aroused we presume that they do not-during their resuscitation-need the ministrations of other angels but may be retained within the charge of the celestial<sup>74</sup> and "taken into heaven" more directly.

Certainly they are spared the progress through the three states of the World of Spirits, although they too are in the state of spirits as they grow towards maturity.<sup>75</sup> 73. @HH 345, @AC 5857 74. @HH 332, cp @SD 1022, 1035 75. @AC 5174f, cp @SD 5162, seq., @HH 342f, 514f

## The Awakening

The entrance of man as a spirit into the world of spirits is described in a memorable relation:

"When any man after death enters into the spiritual world, which mostly occurs on the third day after he has expired, he appears to himself in a life similar to that in which he had been in the world, and in a similar house, chamber and bedroom, in similar coat and dress, and in similar companionship within the house. If he was a king or a prince he would appear in a similar court, if a peasant in a similar cottage; rustic things would surround the latter, splendor the former.

"This happens to every one after death in order that death shall not appear as death but as a continuation of life, and that the last of the natural life may become the first of the spiritual life, and that from this [point] a man may progress to his goal which will either be in heaven or in hell.

"Such a similarity of all things appears to those just deceased because their mind remains the same as it was in the world. And because the mind is not only in the head but also in the whole body, therefore [a spirit] possesses a similar body; for the body is the organ of the mind and is continued from the head, wherefore the mind is the man himself, but then no longer a material man but a spiritual man. And because he is the same man after death, there are given him-according to the ideas of his mind-similar things to those which he had possessed at home in the world; but this lasts only some days. . . ."76 76. 5 Mem. 4, 5

The angels testified of Melanchthon<sup>77</sup> that 77. The German reformer who died in 1560.

"as soon as he entered the spiritual world, a house was prepared for him, similar to that in which he lived in the world. This is also the case with most of the newcomers. . . . In his chamber also all things were similar, a similar table, a similar desk with drawers, and also a similar library.

Therefore, as soon as he came thither, as if he had just awakened from sleep, he sat down at the

table and continued with his writing."78 78. @TCR 797. "Those things first of all occur which took place at the point of death, and during the disease or at the end of life" (@SD 885). "For whatever happens in the last hour of death remains a long while before it vanishes . . ." This is illustrated in the case of a suicide. (@SD 1337, 1336, cp 1289f)

The risen spirit may thus find death imperceptible, and at first nothing seems to indicate that he is not still on earth. Spirits "are nothing else than human minds and souls in a human form stripped of coverings (exuviae) . . . which being cast off, the forms of men's minds, such as they had been inwardly in their bodies, become visible."79 The spirit finds himself the same as to age and looks and even the tone of his voice seems the same.<sup>80</sup> He retains all his personal traits, his prejudices, beliefs, and attitudes. His natural memory is complete and functioning; but since it is not fed by any new impressions from the world, it soon sinks into quiescence. Physical ailments could perhaps persist for a few days in so far as the mental habit of regarding them has been ingrained. But "there are no natural diseases among spirits in the spiritual world." Those who in the world were idiots or retarded are likewise so on their first arrival in the other world; but when externals are removed and internals opened they receive an understanding in accord with their genius and previous life.<sup>81</sup> 79. @CL 192 80. @HH 457 81. Docu. 243, "Letters and Memorials . . ." (Acton), 1955, page 696

We need not think that the things and persons which are seen by the novitiate spirit during these first few days are merely phantasies, mere memory survivals or insubstantial illusions. The spirit actually sees and handles spiritual things. The illusive features which distort the inner truth come solely from the fact that he interprets spiritual things as material, and sees them through the spectacles of his earthly past. Yet angels, visiting a newcomer in his little home of memory, would see that home almost as the spirit did. For what the angels would see as a spiritual object is the state of that spirit.

All spirits on their awakening entertain this first impression that they are still on earth. They may also seem "very dull," to other spirits, as if they "knew almost nothing"; for they remain at first in gross ideas.<sup>82</sup> They also feel some confusion of thought, for as yet they are not gifted with any reflection.<sup>83</sup> And this reflection may have to be induced by others. 82. @SD 400, 5163 83. @SD 2031

It is indeed said in the Spiritual Diary that in the other life it is impossible to be quite alone!<sup>84</sup> But the novitiate is always being shielded from strange spirits by angels who are secretly his "overhead" guardians, and by others who attend him openly.<sup>85</sup> But these latter are said to approach him when he is out of his house; for within only those can converse who are of one opinion.<sup>86</sup> 84. @SD 1484, 1864 85. @TCR 797, @SD 2030 86. @AC 9213[5]

It is therefore angels who greet the newcomer and engage him in conversation with the view of renewing that vanishing thread of thought about eternal life-not salvation or even heaven, but eternal life-which has been maintained like a diapason during the states of his resuscitation. As wise teachers, they first draw out the spirit's own opinions about the after-life. Usually, at this day, with disappointing results!<sup>87</sup> For the faith in the immortal life, where it exists at all, is vague, filled with absurdities, or admittedly mere guesswork. The spirit is imagined as a winged being in the stars, hovering in dark space as mere thought, or as an ethereal breath or a volatile flame-like form that will be rejoined to its material body at the end of the world. Nothing daunted, the angels joyfully bid them welcome, telling them the good news that they have come into another world, and that they now live in a spiritual body, altogether as before in a material body. 87. @TCR 160, 5 Mem, 6, @AC 4527

The spirits-thus drawn out of their home of memory-are astounded. But they are asked to examine their bodies, touch the objects around them. By a thousand proofs the novitiate spirits are made to recognize the reality and substantial concreteness of their present existence, and to see that they are no longer in the natural world.<sup>88</sup> 88. 5 Mem. 7, 10, @CL 44: 1, @HH 412, @TCR 568

Occasionally some newcomer might be utterly panic-stricken at this revelation, and rush away, crying out (as Swedenborg once relates), "I am a spirit, I am a spirit!"<sup>89</sup> But in the presence of the angels, the new guests are ordinarily filled with relief and gratitude, and cry out their thanks to God.<sup>90</sup> 89. @AC 447, @SD 2288 90. 5 Mem. 7

One of the things that surprises newcomers is that there is light-and indeed a far superior light-in the spiritual world.<sup>91</sup> The newcomer begins to notice what he had not before realized: that he sees others in a brighter light, and objects in greater distinctness and splendor.<sup>92</sup> He draws a fuller breath of air like nectar. His senses are keener.<sup>93</sup> His bodily movements are more effortless, his mind more active, despite some confusion in his memory. His speech immediately becomes more acute, expressing in a minute what would take an hour on earth.<sup>94</sup> The objects of his surroundings look like natural objects; "but still they are not like them, for they have in them what is living, which those things which properly belong to the natural world do not have." Yet spirits seldom reflect on the difference.<sup>95</sup> 91. @AC 4415, 4527, cp 1533 and @SD 4293 92. @CL 44, @AC 4527, 2367 93. @AC 4622[3], 5078, @SD 4166 94. @AC 1641, 3957

1. @AC 5079[2], @SD 4716, 5177, 2142e

2. @AC 5079[2], @SD 4716, 5177, 2142e

The angels assist the novitiate spirit in every way, and tell him about heaven and the Lord, the God of heaven, and about the angelic life. They show that he is now in the World of Spirits - with heaven above them and hell below. But the spirit is as yet in the state of his externals.<sup>96</sup> And what is told him repeatedly about the spiritual world, may fade from his mind as there recurs the anxiety about his daily bread and about the worldly possessions he left behind. It is related in much detail how one spirit, when he realized that the Lord was providing everything for him, pondered how he might repay kindness so great. And since his life had been one of charity, he was then taken up into heaven.<sup>97</sup> 96. @CL 44, 461, @SD 299, 5 Mem. 6, 7, @HH 495, F 41ff 97. @SD 2030-2039, @AC 318

At first all his needs are provided for-as for a new guest. A few days after their resurrection they usually leave their first abode (which was so illusively like their natural home) and they begin to wander about, in the company of other novitiates, perhaps with good spirits as guides, and then settle down briefly in some society of newcomers-to resume their ordinary habits of life, social, forensic, and moral.<sup>98</sup> They find some employment similar to their own occupations, seek out the kind of people with whom they were accustomed to associate, converse with acquaintances and simulate friendships as before. 98. @AR 153

Swedenborg, in company with an angel, once saw represented a paved road leading from the "North" and terminating at the center of the world of spirits. It was so crowded with spirits that there was hardly room to step between them. And it was shown that all newcomers must travel by this road. It led from the North, because the North in the other life stands for spiritual ignorance; and it terminated in the middle which indicates a state of freedom amidst the externals of civil life, from which point the spirits are able to progress into interiors-towards the East of love, the South of wisdom, or the West of hatred.<sup>99</sup> 99. @TCR 160; cp @SD 5798, @HH 534; @DLW 119-134



Novitiate spirits at first are in much the same habits of life and thought as on earth. Good and evil jostle each other there as here. For the externals of decent behavior and prudent speech are equally important to both. Roads in the other life mean habits of thought. All spirits therefore travel by the same road, at first. And it is in one's own familiar externals that one can feel free.<sup>100</sup> This first external life serves the purpose of harmonizing externals with internals.<sup>101</sup> 100. @SD 886 101. @SD 5688 seq.

The development which now commences is a reorganization of the spirit's natural affections. The world of spirits is indeed arranged into innumerable societies according to various natural affections, good and evil.<sup>102</sup> It is a state wherein the natural affections of the spirit are explored by good spirits, to discover what groundwork there may be for his regeneration.

Unless something of a spiritual conscience has begun to control and purify these natural affections, there is no correspondence in his life with heaven, and no means whereby heaven can lead him. The way to salvation lies through vastation and through judgment. This judgment comes to him through his relationship with others. For the World of Spirits which he has entered is a vast society—a world of human relations. <sup>102.</sup> @SD 885, @AR 153/@TCR 281

### Every Man's Desire

But what are the "natural affections" and longings which had motivated these spirits—both good and evil—who now enter this new world? What did they conceive in their hearts to be the kind of world they would like to live in?

Does not every reasonable man, even on earth, desire long life devoid of illness? Does he not wish for every protection against disturbance of the peace, against foreign invaders and domestic criminals? Does he not want assurance against an oppressive government and lawless mobs? And the right to worship whatever God he knows? Personal liberty to follow out his talents and carry on the uses which he cherishes—to taste of the fruits of his labor and to embellish his life with legitimate comforts and a variety of diversions? A place in the society of his like? A sufficiency of food and clothing, and a guarantee against economic disaster? Does he not wish for a partner and a home where these things can be realized? A freedom to progress—to seek knowledge, pursue education, and to practice and enjoy the creative arts? Does not human research constantly look to a conquest of the limitations of space and time—to produce a freer communication of minds, and a more universal understanding among nations and races, as well as to solve the riddle of the stars? These are the things men dream of and think fit to strive for.

And in an eminent way, all these things which seem to men to make life worth while on earth are freely offered by the Lord in the spiritual world! "For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."<sup>103</sup> 103. Matthew 6:33

### CONTRASTED WORLDS

#### What Is Meant by "The Spiritual World"

"The universe in general is distinguished into two worlds, the spiritual and the natural."<sup>104</sup> By the spiritual world is generally meant the realm in which angels and spirits are.<sup>105</sup> But the spiritual world was prior to the creation of angels and spirits, and since all angels and spirits were once men, and were born on some earth in the natural world, we must widen the concept of "the

spiritual world." Thus whenever the creation of the universe is spoken of, the Writings show the spiritual world as the world of causes from which all the things in nature are derived as effects or results.<sup>106</sup> "All things that exist in the world of nature-atmospheric, aqueous, or earthy-as to every particle thereof, are effects produced by the spiritual as a cause. . . ."<sup>107</sup> The spiritual world is thus prior to the natural as to substance and degree-for the natural draws its origin from the spiritual.<sup>108</sup> In *The True Christian Religion* it is shown that the creation of the universe began with that of the spiritual Sun from which three atmospheric degrees were produced as the substantial planes in which all future heavens were to be founded; and at last proceeded to the formation of a natural sun with its corresponding atmospheres and earths, so that spiritual things might be clothed With material swathings.<sup>109</sup> The natural world is thus created by the Lord mediately through the spiritual world.<sup>110</sup> 104. @DLW 163 105. Lord 62, @DLW 83-92 106. @DLW 154, 340, @AE 1206[3], 1207:4, @SD 4585f, Coro. 19 etc. 107. @AE 1207[3] 108. @CL 320,328, 207, @SD 4066, Can., God iv, @HH 89 109 @TCR 76, 33 110. Can., God iv

In order that there may be a habitable world, there must be a sun, the heat and light of which can sustain the derivative planets. The physical universe of space and time requires many suns and stellar systems. But the spiritual world is beyond space and the Sun of that world is thus everywhere present and the same for all.<sup>111</sup> The spiritual world is also called "the expanse of the center of life" and is said to subsist from its own Sun.

This expanse around the Sun of the angelic heaven is not an extense; yet it is present by influx in the extense of natural creation and is with the living subjects there according to reception, and reception is dependent on the forms and states of such living organisms.<sup>112</sup> 111. @HH 116-124 112. @TCR 35[11]

The causes and the "souls" of all natural things are therefore in the spiritual world.<sup>113</sup> We speak of our mind, our soul, our thoughts, etc., being in our body or brain. Actually, however, the mind or spirit is not in the material body or in the natural world; only the effects of our spirit's activities are there. These effects we see, and can describe, only as motions in space and time. If we should inquire "where" the spiritual world is or "where" angels and spirits are, the Writings can only give the answer that the spiritual world is where man is, and that spirits abide or dwell in man's thoughts and affections, and in no wise remote from him. The reason for this statement is that "the spiritual world is not in space."<sup>114</sup> 113. @AE 1206, @DLW 119 114. @DLW 92, 343e, LJ 9

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The fact that the spiritual world acts by influx into the natural world and causes certain things there to seem alive, must not be taken to mean that there is only one world. It was one of the errors of the ancients that they failed to distinguish between the spiritual and the natural. The spiritual with men became so immersed into bodily and worldly things that they began to think of the spiritual as a finer or purer natural, and of the soul as a body of purer natural stuff which had its abode high up in the ether or in the region of the stars, thus within nature and its spaces and times.<sup>115</sup> In all things of the natural world the spiritual and the corresponding natural are indeed so conjoined as to appear as a one, like the hand and the glove may appear as one. Yet this appearance of identity is dissipated in the Writings. 115. @DLW 85, 92, 350, @ISB 9[4]. Additions to TCR, n. 15.

"There are two worlds," they state. "The spiritual world does not derive anything whatsoever from the natural world, nor the natural world anything from the spiritual world!" The two are altogether

distinct, in fact "so distinct that they have nothing in common between them;

yet are so created that they may communicate, yea, be conjoined, through correspondences." Therefore the spiritual world is under another Sun, which in its essence is love proceeding from the Lord God. The natural sun is "pure fire in which there is absolutely nothing of life."<sup>116</sup> Nothing of its heat or light can pass over into the spiritual world, for "solar fire is death itself."<sup>117</sup> <sup>116</sup>. @DLW 90 <sup>117</sup>. @DLW 88f

When man dies his spirit therefore "entirely withdraws from the world of nature and leaves all of it behind, and enters a world in which there is nothing of nature; and in that world he lives so separated from nature that there is not any communication . . . except through correspondences."<sup>118</sup> "Those in the one world cannot see those who are in the other world. For the eyes of man. . . are of the substance of his world, and the eyes of an angel are of the substance of his world.... each formed adequately for the reception of his own light."<sup>119</sup> <sup>118</sup>. @DLW 83 <sup>119</sup>. @DLW 90, 91

These two worlds, which are so utterly distinct, are of course both necessary, that the Divine ends of creation might be carried out. It cannot be said that the spiritual world is limited by the natural or is confined within the limits of nature's extense; for the spiritual is not in space, and what is not in space cannot be so confined.<sup>120</sup> But it can be said that the spiritual world cannot act out its effects or uses, and thus stand forth, without a natural world.<sup>121</sup> Nature was created that creation might be carried to a completion and subsist in ultimates; and that the spiritual might be terminated and clothed with correspondent forms, and that through new births and generations its uses may persist and endure.<sup>122</sup> <sup>120</sup>. @AC 7381[3], @TCR 35: 11 <sup>121</sup>. @TCR 76[3], Can., God 4:10, LJ 9 <sup>122</sup>. @AE 1196[2], 1207:4, 1218:2, 3, LJ 9, @DLW 167

We can conceive of a cause without an effect or prior to it. But not of an effect without any cause! "Because the natural arises from the spiritual, as the material from the substantial, they are together everywhere"-i.e., everywhere "in this world" of nature.

"The spiritual and the natural are thus united in each and everything of the world"; for here the spiritual is the soul or cause while the natural is the embodiment or effect.<sup>123</sup> <sup>123</sup>. Can., God 4:10, @AE 1196[3], 1197:2

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To sum up the teachings we thus note that the spiritual world is to be defined not only as the world wherein the souls of men continue to live, and, as angels and spirits, carry on their conscious life; but also as the realm of the causes of all the things which exist in nature. It is a world beyond the limitations of space, yet present by influx. It originates from the Lord through His "spiritual Sun," the first and only substance of creation, which is non-material, being the source of love and of spiritual light which is wisdom.<sup>124</sup> It includes several descending ranges of atmospheres, which, though spiritual, terminate in their order and form the heavens in which the angels dwell. Nothing natural (or physical), from the heat and light of any of nature's suns, can enter the spiritual world.<sup>125</sup> Since neither space nor time can be ascribed to the substance and essence of the spiritual world, there is no distance, no spatial dimensions, nothing material in that world.<sup>126</sup> It is a world of spiritual realities such as we experience in this world only as mental states, or perceive in our inner being as affections, thoughts, perceptions, memories, and delights. Yet it is of such elements, in themselves entirely devoid of material reality, that our human lives consist. It is these elusive

spiritual things that we gather and compact into our "character" and "mind"-throughout our years here on earth. And it is these, and these alone, that we can take along when our bodies die; it is these that come to constitute our immortal spirit, our real "self." 124. @DLW 300, @DP 6, @TCR 24 (5), 76, 280:5, Ang. Id., @AE 1218, @AC 7381[3] 125. @DLW 88, @HH 116 126. @DLW 7, 71, @AC 5658[1]

In this immaterial spiritual world lie concealed the causes of all material existence, and in its bourne our inner life is even now being carried on. If it is indeed designed for eternal life and everlasting progress, its perfection must be marvelous. Yet to all appearance it will offer us much the same kind of sensory experience as our life on earth.

Sensory appearances of spaces, distances, and times, and objects of sight and touch, will still make up the terms, the language, the forms, in which our conscious life is transacted. But the difference is also vast. For all the objects surrounding us then will no more testify of a fixed physical world as on earth, but will be the symbols of states of spiritual life representations of the shifting and ripening states of our mind and the minds of others. The objects about us will be the living forms of our own affections and those of other spirits, and will make up an environment which will become permanent and secure, as an abode in which our ruling love can find its most complete expression and a delightful repose.

#### MANY MANSIONS

Since men-both good and evil-differ as to their ruling love, there must be spiritual environments suited to every such love. This is the meaning of the Lord's saying, "In My Father's house are many mansions." The spiritual world is clearly distinguished, yea, divided, into regions visibly apart and strikingly different.

The testimony of the Writings about the spiritual world furnishes us with a distinct word picture in which our reflections about the after-life may find a basis.

We are first of all assured that the spiritual world, as to external aspect or sensory appearance, is much like this natural world of ours, although indeed far more perfect and varied. This is of course true also of our minds, in that the life of our thoughts is freer and more varied than our physical experience itself. But our thoughts are often dim and indistinct. Our imagination is seldom as clear as our actual sensation. Our emotions are usually also confused and undefined, and more or less blunted by the grosser appetites and demands of the body. This vagueness and dullness of our mental life will vanish when we pass into the other world. There we will perceive spiritual things or mental objects in a clarity which surpasses the light of nature beyond any comparison.

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It may be safely said that we human beings can see or know only a tiny, infinitesimal part of the natural world although we are affected by the radiations from billions of stars and unthinkable numbers of galaxies, and can surmise in the least grain of matter the existence of inconceivable complexities of parts within parts.

Our life is laid upon the surface of one tiny planet and we experience only a small part of what it offers to our senses. Only the Lord the Creator can see the cosmos in its entirety.

How much more true this is about the spiritual world! The Lord alone can vision the wholeness, the

depths and heights and supernal expanse of the spiritual world. Each inhabited earth has its heavens, its world of spirits and probably its hells; and to the spirits of that earth these three parts usually appear quite separate from the spiritual worlds of other planets. The reason for this is that the races of each planet have a certain community of genius-certain mental characteristics based on heredity and on the environmental conditions of their particular earth. The testimony of the Writings does not indicate any very essential physiological divergencies among the various planetary races, or note the existence of any of those dominant insect breeds or monstrous "Martians" which recent Science Fiction loves to conjure up; but the differences are mainly confined to mental development and spiritual type and thus to the potential spiritual uses of each planet-enough to hold its spirits within a specific spiritual world of their own. There can indeed be a certain communication among spirits from widely separate parts of the universe, for in the spiritual world there is no space except in appearance. Thus the knowledge of the Lord's advent can be made manifest to spirits and angels even from other earths.<sup>127</sup> Spirits from the earth and from Mercury and other planets-even evil spirits-are able to meet whenever there are spiritual intermediations and a mutual adaptation of states. Yet the spiritual differences are so profound as to make such intercourse exceptional. Nonetheless our spirits receive spiritual influxes from other planets.<sup>128</sup> And it is even taught that "when the Word on our earth is read and preached," its supreme and inmost sense is presented before "angels in heaven from whatever earth they come."<sup>129</sup> <sup>127. @AC 9356 128. Cf @SD 4742 129. @AC 9357</sup>

Order would seem to demand that there be a unifying factor which conjoins these spiritual worlds of all the planets. And we should find this in the highest of the heavens of each earth-in the celestial heaven where the Lord's inflowing love is most immediately received, and through which the heavens are conjoined.<sup>130</sup> <sup>130. @AE 744, @AC 6701, 7078, @SD 522, 1200</sup>

Thus it would appear that even an angel cannot see heaven as a whole. But the Lord can reveal-to him as to us-the general order of the unseen world. The Writings describe the spiritual world of our own planet, which no doubt, follows a universal pattern:

"The arrangement is such that the heavens are like expanses one above another, and under the heavens is the world of spirits, and under this are the hells, one below another. Influx from the Lord takes place according to this successive order, thus through the inmost heaven into the middle one, and through this into the ultimate one, and from these in their order into the hells which lie beneath. The world of spirits is between, and it receives influx both from the heavens and from the hells, each one there according to the state of his life."<sup>131</sup> <sup>131. @AE 702</sup>

Here, then, we meet up with the vast differences between the spiritual world and the world to which we are accustomed here on earth! The same objects that we are familiar with exist in the other life. But the order and combination in which these sensory elements are seen is utterly different-their connections and sequences do not follow what we so often call "natural law." What we perceive in terms of sensation there, is the relationship of spiritual states, the relative positions of spiritual beings in their orientation to each other and to the Divine source of life and to the media by which that life is communicated. In the natural world, men see each other in relation to physical orientations, or with respect to their proximity in space and their place on earth in relation to the physical sun. Our bodily senses testify of changes in our physical environment and the objects we perceive in our sensual mind correspond most nearly to actual physical things around us.

All men, good and evil, live here on the same earth and mostly mingle with each other irrespective

of internal character or motivations.

Contrast this with the spiritual world! For this appears divided into levels of existence - as a series of expanses, each of which is like an earth or a world of its own. As a whole, this arrangement of spiritual levels is visible only to the Lord's sight. Yet when necessary it can be suggestively represented in various ways so as to reveal the mutual relationship between various states. Ordinarily, the higher heavens may thus appear, either as mountain ranges in the distance, or as unattainable expanses in the clouds.<sup>132</sup> This appearance is before the eyes of the spirit, and spiritual sight conveys the truth in the form of natural imagery that "corresponds" to inner spiritual realities. 132. @CL 11, 42, @AE 1133[6], @HD 4, Coro. 16, cp 5 Mem. 21

Correspondence is an inevitable law of the human mind. What is as yet unattainable we mentally picture as distant, or as above us, as high, as superior, as lofty. We speak of higher motives, superior intelligence, sublime wisdom, superb skill, transcendent meanings and supreme delights. We think of a government as above us, and in society we often recognize social strata distinguished by those of greater or less education or social influence. Even though democracy has sought to guarantee that men shall be enabled to start life with nearly equal educational opportunities or on the same general level, the differences in men's character and genius causes some to climb or be elevated to higher uses than others, owing to their willingness to assume greater responsibilities and submit to stricter self-discipline and training.

Even in this world, therefore, we find in various fields of skill and learning-groups whose common interests and superior development set them apart as living on a level or plane above the average man. They are not necessarily segregated from others in a social sense. But they live in a mental world into which others cannot easily enter. We also observe that there is a world of social outcasts-an "underworld" of convicted criminals and derelicts-in most human communities; who have sunk too low to take part in the normal life of society.

In the natural world many external, hereditary, educational and artificial factors contribute to the formation of the levels of society.

But in the spiritual world, the discrete levels of life are determined solely by the ruling loves which move men to seek their heaven among those who delight in similar uses and a similar mental environment, that is, in a kindred charity and a corresponding intelligence. This is the reason why the heavens appear in three distinct "expanses," seemingly separated from each other. For there are three loves that rule in heaven, and these three are quite discrete. The highest is love to the Lord, the middle one is love towards the neighbor, and the third is a love of obedience to the things of faith. The life of an angel is built around one of these loves, which serves him as an inmost motivation in all that he wills, thinks, and does. Yet within the love of obedience there must be an influx of charity and love from the higher heavens. And into the love towards the neighbor there must inflow a love to the Lord; for this is what conjoins all the heavens into a one, and directs all towards the same ends.

### The Expanses of Heaven

To the teaching that there are three expanses of the heavens, and under the heavens a world of spirits and beneath this the three hells, one below the other, must be added another remarkable statement which is made to illustrate how the Lord, by His infinite power and wisdom, holds the affections of all in an equilibrium or balance. The statement is, that "good affections, which are

angels, dwell on a globe that is called heaven, and evil affections, which are spirits of hell, dwell at a great depth beneath them. The globe is one, but is divided into expanses, as it were, one below another. There are six expanses. In the highest dwell the angels of the third heaven, below them the angels of the second heaven, and beneath these the angels of the first heaven. Below them dwell the spirits of the first hell, beneath these the spirits of the second hell, and beneath them the spirits of the third hell . . ."133 And the passage goes on to explain that the lowest hell is held in bonds by the good affections of the highest heaven, and so forth-a government by balanced opposites. 133. @AE 1133[6]. See pages 85, 98ff, 394-397, 437

What interests us especially at this point is that each level or expanse appears as a globe, and all the expanses are pictured as concentric spheres.

We note also that there are other appearances in the spiritual world which are quite frankly inconsistent with the attempt to picture that space-less world in a single and complete spatial framework. For the spiritual Sun, in which the Lord abides and whence He radiates the light and heat of wisdom and love, is said to remain in the "East" of heaven and to be constantly sensed by the angels as before their foreheads, no matter toward which quarter the angel might turn his attention! It is explained that the Sun of heaven is the inmost or first substance of creation, and is therefore universal; that is, it is not in space. It is also revealed that that Sun does not appear to rise and set, as ours does; nor does the earth or globe on which the angels dwell, revolve like ours, but the heavens maintain always a permanent situation in reference to their Sun-to indicate the permanent relation of each angel's ruling love to the Lord.

It is clear from all this that the spiritual world is not under the rule of what we usually call "natural law", nor can that world be crammed into any unified fixed geographical concept. The living relationships of spiritual states, of affections and perceptions and spiritual uses, cannot be represented by the fixed order of the natural world. Yet the phenomena of sensation are the same. It is their sequence and order that differ.

And if we reflect we must realize that something similar is true also in our mind. The stream of changing imagery which marks the course of our conscious thought when this is not interrupted by new sensations from the outside world, is a representation, not of the events of the natural world but of the states of our mind. One mental object is not the cause of the next, but all are the results of an inner sequence of states, desires, and directing affections which bring up these objects from the memory as if by magic, to reveal new connections or ideas. And we feel no surprise at all when the pageantry of our imagination shifts from one field to another, or when we select some new series of mental objects as a basis or an ultimate connective for our thoughts. In our memory there appear to lodge series within series of ideas or concepts, one within another, and all associated with the others, yet there is no interference between them. We think, for instance, of the human body, by a mental picture.

Yet our thought proceeds to make that body transparent, and we see before us the various organs in their connection with the bloodstream. The next moment we might see instead the nervous system and its cells and fibres as if enlarged by a microscope. We can even think of all these series at once without any sense that they block each other out or are inconsistent.

In the other life all must have certain basic and more or less permanent sensual concepts without which there could be no appreciation of the relationships of spirits and angels. These concepts form a common connection between spirits. Spirits in the World of spirits coming from all parts of the

world thus feel that they live on a globe-an earth as before; and their mental kinships and differences due to race, culture, or nationality, are perceived in terms of proximity or distance. The world of spirits is ordered into societies according to the natural affections, good and evil, that still activate those who have recently died. And as a rule spirits of each nation and each race and religious communion have their separate societies there, in situations and quarters which are relatively permanent, although their populations are constantly moving on towards heaven or hell.<sup>134</sup> But because spirits in the world of spirits are in general in the same state of life, their mental world is on a common plane of thought and affection, and they can therefore all come into contact with each other as if they lived on the surface of the same globe. 134. @SD 5240, 5244, LJ post. 126, cp @AE 1133[6]

It was mentioned that the three heavens appear as discrete expanses-worlds of their own-above the world of spirits. The reason is that angels are in spiritual ideas and spiritual affections which make their whole life so distinctly different that it cannot be understood by spirits in the world of spirits. The only entrances by which adult spirits can be elevated into heaven lead therefore from societies of instruction in the world of spirits, and into these good spirits are introduced when their state is ready and they have been vastated from external evils. Here they learn how to think by spiritual ideas, and their natural affections are ordered to correspond with the spiritual uses of intelligent charity. When this is accomplished they are led by certain roads into heaven; and heaven then does no longer seem to them as an expanse in the sky but as a higher country reached by an easy ascent.

It is the function of the Lord's special church on earth to serve the use of preparing men to think spiritually-to think from spiritual loves rather than from merely natural affections. So far as men are prepared so to think while on earth, they will be able to avoid much vastation and delay in the world of spirits. They will not be captivated by merely natural spirits and will come into greater spiritual freedom. This instruction in spiritual truths -i.e., the truths of spiritual charity-is meant by coming to the wedding properly clothed in "wedding garments." None can be received in heaven or partake of its life unless he is spiritually prepared.<sup>135</sup> 135. @CL 10

And this need-of thinking spiritually rather than from the light of nature-becomes obvious when we attempt to understand what the Writings say about the nature of the spiritual world. What, for an instance, can purely natural thought make us see in the statement that "each expanse [of the heavens] is like an earth under the feet of those who are there"? To angels, it is indeed solid ground, which they can stamp with their feet, and on which their houses are securely founded. Their gardens and fields and forests are not mere appearances, their bodies are not phantoms.<sup>136</sup> 136. @AR 260, 876, @AE 702[2]

## SPIRITUAL ULTIMATES

When we deny the properties of nature, such as space, to spiritual things, we do not deny that spiritual things have spiritual properties and proportions, and indeed spiritual "extension"! We cannot think of the spiritual world unless we predicate of it spiritual "ultimates"-in which the living spiritual terminates and comes to rest, yet which are not part of the physical universe.

But our own mental life supplies an adequate illustration of what is meant by spiritual ultimates. For what is the ground on which our conscious spirit walks? After all, we are spirits! Our conscious life is conducted in our minds-within the confines of our knowledge and cognitions.

Beyond our mental concepts we cannot reach. They are what serve as objects of thought, as the



objects of our present spiritual world-the world of our conscious existence. We could not even take a step in the physical world around us until we knew about it, learned its nature and had faith in our knowledge!

Our spirit walks and stands upon the firm ground of accepted knowledge-upon the convictions and principles that we have made our faith. We live in the habits of thought we have made our own. We build our spiritual home on the level of our confirmed and ruling love. And this love, whatever it may be, is the soil, fertile or barren, which must bring forth the delights of our life as the final flower and fruit in the harvests of eternity.

And these things are not mere similes or oratorical metaphors. They are spiritual facts. The outstanding difference between our mental life here and our spiritual life after death, is that when our body dies we shall meet other spirits whose loves and affections we can openly share and whose intelligence or wisdom we can partake in as if it were our own.

The contents of our minds likewise becomes apparent before others in the form of correspondences, and this even if we should endeavor to hide it. "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed or hid that shall not be known." And what we here on earth had perceived in the mind as objects within ourselves, or as subjective and abstract states, can in the other world be seen by ourselves and by others as our objective and tangible environment, amplified by the appearance of what comes from the minds of other spirits and angels also. The heaven or hell within us becomes revealed as the fitting abode of our spirit.

The very soil of each heaven, which appears to those below as an expanse in the sky, a cloud land, is formed by the Lord as the ultimate correspondent of the love that rules there. The Writings therefore state concerning the spiritual world: "In that world there are all things which exist in the natural world in its three kingdoms, and they are correspondences of the affections and thoughts ... as well as of the ultimates of the life of those who are there." "The correspondence of man's affections and of the thoughts thence is with all things of the animal kingdom; of his will and the understanding thence with the plant kingdom; and of the ultimates of his life with the mineral kingdom."<sup>137</sup>

An angel "knows that they are representations of himself; yea, when the inmost of his understanding is opened, he recognizes himself and sees his own -image in them, hardly otherwise than as in a mirror."<sup>138</sup> <sup>137</sup>. @DLW 52, @AE 1226[2] <sup>138</sup>. @DLW 63

"Affections appear formed into animals by the spiritual in its intermediates and . . . into plants in its ultimates, which are the lands there . ." Plants and animals are changed as the affections change, "but this occurs outside of the societies."<sup>139</sup> Certain angels, having shown Swedenborg that even the furniture of their homes and the jewels which adorned their wives were all correspondences, added, "From all these things we perceive what each one is as to love and wisdom. Those things which are in our homes and serve for uses, constantly remain there; but to the eyes of those who wander from one society to another, such things are changed according to consociation."<sup>140</sup> <sup>139</sup>. @AE 1212[2], 3 <sup>140</sup>. @TCR 78, 66

Here it should be observed that a spirit or angel, when he first approaches, may often be seen, not as a man but as an animal "corresponding" to his natural affection or appetite-thus as a sheep or a Wolf, a dove or a hawk, or even as some composite animal like a dragon.<sup>141</sup> <sup>141</sup>. @SD 4705-4707, cp @AE 1199[2], 1200:3, 1212:3

Animals born on earth do not have immortal souls. And since they are ruled by general influx and cannot depart from the order of their connate nature, they have no need of attendant spirits, as do men.<sup>142</sup> Their souls are indeed spiritual in origin, but "spiritual-natural", and when an animal dies, its soul "relapses into nature."<sup>143</sup> In animals, the forms which had been receptive of the influx of life "cannot but be dissipated; for with them the influx passes through their organic forms all the way into the world, and there terminates and vanishes, and never returns."<sup>144</sup>

1. @SD 2378
2. @DLW 346, @DWis 8:2
3. @AC 5114[e], LJ 25:3

The animals and plants appearing in the spiritual world are therefore not the surviving souls of individual beasts or plants on earth, but the active affections of some spirit or angel, represented in a correspondential form. Such animals or plants are not mere phantoms. It is related that a beautiful bird appeared in the other life to a noted scientist, who fondled it and examined it to show that it was real and substantial and did not differ from a similar bird on earth; although he knew that it was nothing but an affection of some angel represented outside of him as a bird, and that it would vanish or cease with the affection that produced it.<sup>145</sup> 145. @DLW 344

To novitiate spirits or corporeal spirits, the things seen in heaven are seen as appearances of spaces and times. But they are not appearances of spaces or times. They are appearances of the loves and perceptions of the angels: "for these objects are created in a moment by the Lord," and if the state of the angels should change, they are immediately dissipated. The angels "do not think of them from space" or "from their appearance, but according to the things from which these appearances spring."<sup>146</sup> Note the statement that these things are created by the Lord. 146. @DWis 7:5

"There are interior and exterior spiritual things. Interior spiritual things are all those that are of affection and thought thence . . . and exterior spiritual things are so created by the Lord that they might clothe or invest interior spiritual things. And when these are clothed and invested then there stand forth forms like those in the natural world . . ." Thus there are in heaven representative animals and other forms like those in the world.<sup>147</sup> Such things are often described in the visions of the prophets. For "the Word was written from such things as were seen and heard in the ultimates of heaven, thus by pure correspondences and representatives, in each of which lie concealed innumerable and ineffable arcana of Divine wisdom."<sup>148</sup> 147. @AE 582 148. @AE 369

"Because there is nothing which does not have its ultimate where it ceases and subsists, so also the spiritual.

This its ultimate is in an earth (tellure), in its lands (terris) and waters . . ."<sup>149</sup> "In everything spiritual . . . there are three forces"-the active force, the creative force, and the formative force-and these "progress continually to their ultimates . . . Hence it is that there are lands equally in the heavens, for the lands there are those forces in ultimates. There is this difference-that the lands there are spiritual from their origin, but here they are natural; and that the productions from our lands are effected from the spiritual by means of nature, but in those lands without nature."<sup>150</sup> "The idea of state and thence the idea of the appearance of space and time, is not given except in the ultimates of creation there, and from them; the ultimates of creation there are the lands on which the angels dwell . . . "<sup>151</sup> "The matters of the lands of our earth are fixed, and the germinations from them permanent; while the matters, or substances, in the lands which are in the

heavens are not fixed and consequently neither are the germinations thence permanent."152 "Ultimates and terminations in heaven differ from ultimates and terminations in the world in this, that in the world these have respect to spaces, but in heaven they have respect to goods conjoined with truths."153 149. @AE 1210[e], 1209, 1208:5

1. @AE 1211
2. @AE 1219[5]
3. @AE 1211
4. @AC 9499

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These and similar teachings show that the very forms which surround spirits and angels, yea, the lands or globe on which they dwell, correspond intimately to the states of these spiritual beings, and concur with their ruling loves. But they also make plain that they are not creations of the angels. They are created by the Lord by means of the forces that are present in the spiritual in all its degrees, and are presented in the ultimates of the spiritual world in objective reality.

And these same spiritual forces are what produce and sustain the elemental substances of natural creation-suns and atmospheres and planets - with which all spiritual degrees can, as living "souls," become clothed and perpetuated as organic forms in nature.154

And as the last and foremost among such organic natural forms the Lord created immortal man - in His own image and according to His likeness-that through man the uses of all creation may ascend and as it were return to God the Creator.155 154. @AE 1206, @DLW 219 155. LJ 9, @DLW 61-68, @AC 3702

## 4 THE WORLD OF SPIRITS

### Relation of Spirits to the "Grand Man"

The angelic heaven is the end of creation and manifests the purposes of the Creator. It is therefore in the very image and likeness of the Lord. The Writings describe the heavens as a Grand Man-a Maximus Homo. For viewed spiritually, it has the human form, in that it reflects all the possible uses or functions of which human life is capable.

The World of Spirits, on the other hand, is as it were outside of the Grand Man, for it is not a permanent state or a final end in itself. It is a preparatory state-an entrance gate or vestibule, such as the alimentary canal is for the human body.1

1. @AC 5173ff, @SD 1742, 5162-5169

The experiences of a spirit after death are strangely paralleled in remarkable detail in the digestive process. As food is first greeted by the soft lips, so the celestial angels of the resuscitation welcome the new spirits; and as the tongue then tastes and gently disjoins the parts of the food, the spiritual angels assort the spirits and instruct them through the universal spiritual language of ideas.

The food is then loosened by the saliva even as friendly good spirits free the new soul from external entanglements with other spirits. Good spirits of a blunter sort will inform the novitiate of the

sterner truth that he has passed the "jaws of death" and is now a spirit, and under spiritual laws of judgment; somewhat like the teeth close on the food and break it up into smaller portions.

The bolus of food that is swallowed passes into the stomach; like novitiate spirits, good and bad together, enter the world of spirits-the forum of all states, the place of preparation and gradual judgment.<sup>2</sup> The gastric juices and their enzymes seem to function much as the angels of the first heaven who instruct newcomers by arousing a desire for interior truth, thus separating the good from the evil.<sup>3</sup> 2. @AR 791, 204, @AC 5174 3. @HH 496, @AR 153

Evil spirits also arouse disturbances in the world of spirits, just as indigestion and anxieties affect the stomach and intestines. Food which cannot be digested in the stomach represents spirits who are confined in "the lower earth" of the state of arrested development.<sup>4</sup> 4. @AC 5392f, 4805, 4728

Spirits in the world of spirits usually undergo three states. The first is one of externals, much like that in the world.<sup>5</sup> The second state is one of internals, when the interior aims and confirmed loves of the spirit's life gradually become manifest, and the good are separated from the wicked. The third state is one of instruction. This is confined to the good, and is directly preparatory for life in an angelic society. These states have their analogies with the process of digestion. Evil spirits, upon whom instruction and discipline fail to have effect, correspond to the refuse which is cast off through the large intestines and the kidneys. But good spirits are represented by the aliments (like by the veins and led by the portal system into the liver; as well as by the chyle which is gathered up by the lacteals and which then, through the thoracic duct, is poured into the bloodstream. The liver, where many important uses are carried on for the blood, seems clearly to correspond to the places of instruction which are at the entrances to heaven; and the same seems true of the lacteals and chyle-duct. 5. This state may last for nearly a year. @HH 498

The Intermediate World The world of spirits is not heaven, nor is it hell, but is a place or state intermediate between the two; a world in which spirits are explored and prepared. "The time of their stay there is not fixed. Some merely enter it, and are soon taken into heaven or are cast into a hell; some remain only a few weeks (septimanas), some several years, but not more than thirty. These differences in time depend on the correspondence or non-correspondence of man's interiors with his exteriors."<sup>6</sup> 6. @HH 426

Ideally, the preparation of a spirit for heaven should be completed during his life on earth. And mention is made in the Writings of spirits who enter heaven immediately after their resurrection is accomplished. There are also cases of men whose evils are so confirmed and uninhibited that their passions at once overpower them and they plunge themselves into hell a few days after death.<sup>7</sup> 7. @HH 491, 513, @AC 2595, @SD 5495

But such instances are rare. Therefore there must be a state of preparation in which departed spirits may remain until their character is so unified that they can join a society in heaven or in hell, according to the ruling love which they have made their own in their bodily life. Even the literal sense of Scripture alludes to such a state: as when John at Patmos tells of "the souls under the altar" who were awaiting redemption.<sup>8</sup> An impassable gulf between heaven and hell is mentioned in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. And in the Epistle of Peter it is hinted that Christ after His crucifixion "went and preached unto the spirits in prison."<sup>9</sup> The Apostolic Church believed in such an intermediate state in which the spirits of men were held in abeyance until the Lord should return to judge the quick and the dead. 8. Revelation 6:9 9. Peter 3:19

As previously noted, the Christians developed many strange ideas about this intermediate state. Some teachers conceived that spirits before the day of bodily resurrection would only be flitting and formless breaths.

Some taught that man slept in the grave till the "Last Day." Others, with the authority of the Roman church, taught that spirits had a distinct existence and that before they could enter heaven the souls of the pious had to be tormented in the fires of "Purgatory" until they were purged of carnal impurities or until they were released because of the intercessions of their friends on earth. In either case, it was thought that the heaven of the faithful would not become a complete reality until after the day of judgment, when the earth would be destroyed and renewed. Since Swedenborg's time-and through the influence of his Writings-there have been many attempts to spiritualize these concepts, but with little effect on the official dogmas of the churches.

Only from the Writings can we learn the real nature of this intermediate state and the need for it. And the first thing we learn is that spirits, when they rise from death, find themselves in a world as real as ours to every sense, and in the company of vast numbers of other spirits who live in communities or towns as on earth. The appearance of this world of spirits varies. In this it is like the mind of man, the contents of which is marvelously ordered in many interlinking spatial series which yet do not interfere with each other. In the spiritual world, "not only have all the things which are in the natural world an existence," but "innumerable others besides" which mortal eye has never seen nor ear heard.<sup>10</sup> 10. LJ 27, LJ post. 314-323. Some of the arcana of the spiritual world which novitiate spirits learn, are noted in @AC 4321

Spirits live in social intercourse, and indeed in communities which resemble towns or cities, where a variety of uses are carried on. Christians often imagine that spirits flit about in some indefinite cloud-land; and if you tell them what the Writings reveal, they might cry out, "What! cities and houses in the air?" They are afraid that if they think of spirits as complete men and women living in a tangible environment, they would make the spiritual world too gross and material. Hence they prefer to think of that world as empty and dark.<sup>11</sup> But the non-material world is not empty. It is more truly substantial and more perfectly equipped than ours.

It is not a dream world or a state of ecstasy, but a busy human world of mutual uses, of effort and achievement, and all the means whereby soul can serve soul and communicate the wealth of wisdom and the joys of love.<sup>12</sup> 11. @CL 207[5], @AC 1533 12. LJ 27, LJ post. 314-323

In outward aspect, the world of spirits may appear to the newcomer as a valley which winds between hills and mountains and stretches out into various plains.<sup>13</sup> From this world there is a path and entrance to each heavenly society, and on the sides openings, like caves or dark abysses, leading down to the gates of the hells. These gates and paths are closed and inaccessible except when some spirit is ready to enter. The breath of heaven-the sphere of angelic delight-which is felt when an entrance to some heaven is opened, is torture to the nostrils of evil spirits, or spirits not prepared. And similarly, the delights of hell ascending from the openings of the underworld are felt as nauseous and fetid stench from which good spirits flee.<sup>14</sup> "The heavens are visible to spirits in the world of spirits only when their interior sight is opened; although they sometimes see them as mists or bright clouds" above them. Angels, being in an interior state of life, "are above the sight of those who are in the world of spirits. But spirits who dwell in the plains and valleys see one another."<sup>15</sup> 13. @HH 429 14. @AC 7161[4], 5394e, 4628e, @CL 431[e], @HH 429 15. @HH 583

A newcomer may thus be informed that this world into which he has entered is situated between

heaven and hell-heaven being above, hell underfoot. For it appears as a place. In fact it is a place, but a spiritual place.<sup>16</sup> And its reality is to every sense greater than that of the physical world. The senses of the spirit are keener than man's, even though the spirit can no longer sense earthly things, but only spiritual things in earthly forms.<sup>17</sup> 16. @HH 421f, 428 17. @AC 5078[3], 4

The World of Spirits is not a physical place. What there appears as travelling from place to place is really only a change of state.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the world of spirits, inwardly viewed, may be described as the composite natural mind of mankind. All the countless societies there are wonderfully ordained according to natural affections, good and evil, and communicate either with some heaven or some hell.<sup>19</sup>

And the spirits of all men still living on earth are present (though generally invisibly) among the departed spirits of these societies. It is however told that if a man is deeply immersed in abstract thought, so that he is as it were in the spirit, his spirit may appear among those of his society, walking about silently meditating without noticing the other spirits. But as soon as he is addressed by them, he vanishes.<sup>20</sup>

1. @AC 1376f, 10734, @SD 4087, 3941, 5646, @HH 534[3]
2. @AR 153[2]/@TCR 281
3. @DLW 252, @HH 438, @SD 5645, @DP 307[2]

Man has spiritual freedom-or freedom of choice-by virtue of his rational mind which is the third or highest degree of the natural mind in which his conscious life is active during earth life. And while the interior degrees, or the spiritual and celestial minds, opened by regeneration, correspond to the heavens, the rational mind, in the process of its formation, corresponds to the World of Spirits.<sup>21</sup> For the rational mind is at a middle point from which the ways to heaven and hell diverge. It is as it were the rudder or balance wheel of man's life. Yet man is not born rational, although he has the faculty to become rational. He is born corporeal and sensual, and as he progresses in knowledge he becomes natural and at length rational.<sup>22</sup> As to his hereditary sensual will every man is from birth in some infernal society.<sup>23</sup> But as to his rational mind, which is his real and responsible self, he is in the midst of the World of Spirits. He is not confined to any one society; for his affections and thoughts extend their roots into innumerable societies which are indirectly connected, some with heaven and some with hell; and to these he is bound as if by elastic cords of sympathy and dependence.<sup>24</sup> Through them he draws the life which directs and stimulates his mind. To change his state, and thus his place in the intermediate world, he must break some of these bonds and strengthen others. If he insists on leading himself he becomes more and more enmeshed in the cupidities and false persuasions which draw him towards hell; although the Lord still "as it were leads him by the hand, permitting and withholding as far as man is willing to follow in freedom."<sup>25</sup>

But if he suffers the Lord to lead his affections and thoughts he is eventually extricated from evil societies and drawn towards heaven. 21. @DLW 237, @HH 430 22. @DLW 67 23. @DP 83[2] 24. @AE 1174[2] 25. @AE 1174[2]

Nothing of this appears to man while in the world. But when he becomes a spirit, his spiritual companions become visible and audible, and he lives among spirits of his own kind as among friends or neighbors.

The Function of Memory

We must ponder the fact that even on earth our real life is mental: for man actually lives among the knowledges of his memory. They are the solid ground on which the house of his life is built.<sup>26</sup> If one reflects one must realize that these knowledges mark the borderlines of each man's consciousness, which is widened continually by new experiences and by what he learns from others. His mind becomes a little world - a microcosm - in which there are all manner of changes and new creations, but which still possesses a certain basic stability, continuity, or individuality, which never greatly changes because it is imbedded in his irradicable memory. But it is also true that a man interprets whatever he experiences in terms of his own memories and concepts. It is colored by his prejudices and beliefs. As he walks through life, much that he sees and hears he simply ignores because he is not interested in it. Certain other things, however, such as ideas of places, often acquire a symbolic meaning and overtone because they are closely associated with his own loves, endeavors, and delights; and these ideas become fundamental to the life of his thoughts. He returns to them again and again, and dwells on them and in them. They come to correspond intimately to his life, his use, and his states of natural affections. Without this familiar field of ultimate mental objects he would feel lost and distressed. It is his mental environment in which alone he feels at home. 26. SD min. 4645f, @AC 4588, Cp @SD 3635, 3672. For a general treatment, see @AC 2469-2494.

It would be a cruel thing if death suddenly and ruthlessly deprived us of this basic foundation of memory which seemingly connects our mental life into a whole.

Our spirit, waking from death, would then not feel any continuity or identity with his former self, nor any responsibility for his past performance.

It is for this reason, in the mercy of the Lord, that the spirit is only by degrees weaned from his earthly environment. His first experiences, on awakening into the World of Spirits to resume his life on the third day after death, are so deceptively like his former life that he knows no other than that he is still on earth.

There seems to be little reason to doubt but that this preliminary state is due to the persistent activity of the spirit's "corporeal memory." But this memory with its associated corporeal affections, soon grows dim. It remains indeed. It is not really lost. But it becomes quiescent, as if asleep. It no longer figures as an active factor in the spirit's mental and sensory life. In other words, the spirit-before long-ceases to recall the things which the physical environment impressed upon his senses or mere custom made him remember. Instead, his spiritual senses begin to take in the things of the spiritual world about him. And his experiences in that new world are retained in what the doctrine calls "the interior memory," of which man on earth had been unaware.

The closing of the corporeal memory does not imply that its use is over. It still serves as the ultimate record of his life, which can never change. Indeed, it is inscribed on the very body of the spirit.<sup>27</sup> For this corporeal memory is so organized during our life on earth that in it the whole of man's acquired character and ruling love are rooted.<sup>28</sup> Only for the sake of examination and judgment is it opened in the other life. Nothing of it is reproduced there "but the spiritual things which have been adjoined to the natural ones through correspondences; which, however. . . . appear in a form altogether as in the natural world . . ."<sup>29</sup> Natural objects as such "cannot be reproduced in the spiritual world," but they can be represented. Yet with spirits from other earths it is sometimes reactivated when speech with men is permitted them.<sup>30</sup> 27. @HH 461, @SD 5493 28. SD min. 4645f, Ecclesiastes 29. @HH 463f, 461, @SD 5552

Normally no spirit from our earth whose corporeal memory is active, is allowed to be with men. If spirits were to use their own corporeal memory while with men, dire consequences would follow. The spirits would become foolish, and be reduced to "a state of death." Men would become obsessed (as in Old Testament times). Eventually, the human race would perish.<sup>31</sup> Utter confusion would result in a man's mind, because the sequence of man's thinking would be disturbed and ideas would suggest themselves without order, conscious intent, or association. Occasionally this occurs—perhaps because of the aroused memory state of some newly risen spirit. And the man would then think the spirit's thought to be his own or feel as if he had already, some time in the past, experienced what he is seeing, although he had never seen it before. This deceptive "second memory" led some of the ancients to the idea that their souls, after some thousands of years, would be reincarnated and "return into their former life, and into every thing they had done."<sup>32</sup> Some spirits are indignant that they cannot recall much which they had known. Yet nothing of their memory is lost, and by permission it can be recollected.<sup>33</sup> 31. @AC 2477f 32. @HH 256,298, @AC 2478, @SD 3285, 3917 33. @AC 2479, seq., @HH 464, seq.

When the corporeal memory of a spirit has become quiescent, his interior memory is opened. He enters thereby into a more vivid and abundant life and into new faculties which make spiritual life unique and almost indescribable in its perfection. So for instance, he comes into the ability to perceive the thoughts of other spirits whose ideas are within his range, and thus comes to know the quality of their faith and disposition at their first approach, Without any communication by spoken words.<sup>34</sup> In this way spirits can share each other's knowledge as if it was all their own; although some do not retain what they thus learn.<sup>35</sup> 34. @AC 1388 35. @AC 6813, 5853, 5857, 1388-1394. The general doctrine is given in AC 5846-5866, 5976-5993. The topic is discussed in *Spirits and Men*, Academy Book Room, Bryn Athyn, Pa., 1958.

### Spirits with Men

But the spirit also spontaneously acquires the peculiar "prerogative" of using the memories of men as if they were his own!<sup>36</sup> He comes into this marvelous faculty unawares and does not know—unless instructed—that he is constantly borrowing the ideas of men's minds. He does not even know that he is present with men. He hardly realizes that his field of knowledge suddenly widens immensely to include at least a passing knowledge of things he never before knew. All this seems instinctive to the spirit, and creates in him no surprise. And it should be noted that the ideas and concepts which he thus gains from men do not generally appear as coming through his own spiritual senses or from his environment, but are felt as products of his own thought. Such is the case even with angels. For "man's natural thought is a plane in which all the things of angelic wisdom terminate. It is a foundation like that of a house. Into this plane all the things which the angels think fall."<sup>37</sup> 36. @AC 5853, 5857, @SD 5607, 5617 37. @SD 5608, 3022, LJ 9

This is an arcanum which is revealed only in the Writings. It is said that the angels can benefit from the intelligence of a man whether he is awake or asleep, and also that many men can at the same time serve as a "plane" for one angel, what is absent in one man being supplied from another, by the Lord's provision.<sup>38</sup> 38. @SD 5617

But a spirit who is thus sharing human ideas, perhaps from many men widely apart, at the same time feels himself in the company of other spirits, conversing with them and gaining from them further information and other ideas. He partakes with them in various occupations, exactly as on



earth. In other words: besides enjoying a mental life of thought and affection which is as it were "telepathically" communicated both from his companion spirits and from every changing human mind with which he is more or less closely associated, the spirit has a complete and full sensory life from his spiritual environment. His surroundings usually appear relatively stable and permanent, except when the spirit changes his state and thus progresses from one society to another-which often appears to him as a journey from place to place.<sup>39</sup>

In the world of spirits this environment bears a remarkable resemblance to the cities or communities in which he lived on earth. "They who dwelt in cities in our world, dwell also in cities there," while country dwellers find themselves in rural surroundings.<sup>40</sup> 39. @TCR 78[2] 40. LJ post. 12, @SD 5092, 5716

"Well," some one might be tempted to exclaim, "that is easily explained: The other life is only a sort of memory-survival. The material ideas-the memories of the familiar objects we used to sense on earth-simply persist as an echoing background for our spiritual experiences after death."

It was so that the ancient Greeks pictured the life of the departed shades who relived their earthly recollections in Hades or the Elysian Fields. And this may in a sense be true of that introductory state (mentioned above)<sup>41</sup> which lasts a few hours or at most a few days after the resurrection-before the corporeal memory sinks into a permanent sleep because it is no longer fed by the bodily senses. But it is not true of the environment of the world of spirits proper, in which the newcomer is likely to remain, perhaps for a year, perhaps for twenty or thirty years.<sup>42</sup> The Writings do not give sanction to the idea that what a spirit sees and feels around him in his settled abode-objects such as houses, forests, mountains, and fields, as well as other spirits-is any mere projection or revival of his own corporeal memory. They give instead a totally different explanation, as may appear from the following entry in the Spiritual Diary: 41. 5 Mem. 5 42. @HH 498, 426, @AR 866

"There appear, with spirits, cities similar to the cities in the world-a London, an Amsterdam, a Stockholm, etc. The cause of this is that every man has with him spirits [who are] in the other life, and these possess the interiors of the man, thus all the things of his memory. They do not indeed see the world through his eyes, but still [they see it] inwardly in him from his ideas. Hence there appear to them the ideas of similar houses, edifices, streets; and they appear just as if they were the very things.... Hence it is that spirits who are with men of some one city have the idea of the same city."<sup>43</sup>

1. @SD 5094, cp 5716

This is the case with the spirits who are most nearly attending some particular man and who constantly dwell in his ideas to the point that they put on a great part of his memory. In the state of their externals, the novitiate spirit's surviving natural affections tend to bring him into close but unconscious spiritual association with the men on earth who are in the same affections and who endeavor to carry out similar uses. He remains with those of his own religious community, his own family, function, city and nation. But all spirits seek resting-places for their thought in material ideas. Swedenborg (whose relationship with spirits was of course unique) relates that certain spirits wanted him to remain in one room which they preferred to the others. Some spirits chose one, some another of his journals as their special focus of thought or "ultimate of order." Others tried to induce him to wear a certain garment or to use a special tea cup!<sup>44</sup> But especially he found that all spirits were attached to some idea of a definite place, around which their sensory life and thus their thoughts and affections could center. If they are unable to find such an ultimate of order,

they are bewildered, not knowing where they are.<sup>45</sup> So strong can such an attachment to a place be that they may instill in a man who is away from home a feeling of nostalgia or home sickness. 44. @SD 3753, 3894, cp 4530 45. @SD 3605, 3644, 3857

## Cities in the Other Life

The cities which spirits inhabit are never in detail identical with their earthly counterparts, or even the same as any one man's conception of them. What is derived from the men on earth is only a certain raw material unconsciously selected by the spirit, out of Which the Lord creates the environment which best corresponds to the spirit's mental state. The houses, like the inhabitants, are constantly changed. Swedenborg realized that the existence of such spiritual cities would seem incredible to men, "because such a thing does not fall into sensual ideas, but only into rational ideas enlightened by spiritual light, and that neither did they then know that the spiritual appears before a spirit as the material does before men, and that all things which exist in the spiritual world are from a spiritual origin. . . .

It is the same with the houses of a city, which are not built as in the world but rise up in a moment created by the Lord, like all the rest . . . ."46 46. LJ post. 12

It is the Lord that builds the house;<sup>47</sup> but it is the spirits who according to their states determine its form and character, its beauty or squalor. A spiritual city is a composite representation of the states and thought-settings of thousands of spirits who have some natural affection or use in common. Each spirit visions not only the image of his own affection therein, but also the concrete forms corresponding to the other spirits who at that juncture are his associates. 47. @AC 6487, cp. SD min. 4692

Even while we live on earth our mind or spirit never actually touches or sees the world of matter: we only know and see the inner world of sensation, imagination, and reflection. We live in a sphere of ideas, although these ideas are as yet tempered by an environment of space, matter, and time, and thus bound down to the inexorable sequences of physical effects. In the other life, however, this dependency is broken, and the spirit's sense of reality is based on his mutual relationship with other spiritual beings-other minds.

It is therefore a mental relationship which a newcomer into the world of spirits sees and senses as a city-partly familiar, partly new-into which his life is fitted in so far as his active natural affections lead him. Spirits first settle down in societies of their own nationality, race, or religious practice, and there they seek occupations resembling those they had on earth. Such occupations are as objective as those on earth, filled with details and no doubt with natural anxieties. Each individual occupation, trade, or profession is a form either of charity or of selfishness. Those who are selfish develop an extraordinary cunning and a desire to control other spirits. But so long as they are bound to some office or use and are not openly wicked they are able to join in the life of the spiritual commonwealth.

Each "city" represents a network of mutual uses and activities which stem from habits and sociable affections which have been ingrained in the inhabitants. National traits are also marked even after death. Yet there is a striking fact to be noted: spirits have lost all recollection of their native tongue or the language of "words."

Instead their thought flows spontaneously into the universal spiritual language of ideas.

Cities in the world of spirits may be found very different from their earthly counterparts. Certain Dutch cities had streets covered with roofs to protect them against inspection.<sup>48</sup> Other cities are described as double or triple, formed in levels, one below the other.<sup>49</sup> Some cities, like London, appear in duplicate, one above, the other below. In the tipper city the good live in the middle but the evil in the circumference; while in the city below (which is much the same as to the layout of the streets) the evil would occupy the center which periodically sank down towards hell.<sup>50</sup> At the time of the last judgment in 1757, Swedenborg was conducted to a strange mountain which enclosed a city containing an immense multitude of spirits, mostly monks - far too many for the apparent "size" of the mountain. The inhabitants were from various ages since the first rise of papacy. Those from the Dark Ages lived on the lowest level from where they ruled the rest.<sup>51</sup> Seemingly these spirits all had the same city (which changed considerably during the centuries) as the ultimate basis of their sensory life. But there was no interference between the activities of those of older and more recent ages, for the spiritual law is that when spirits differ in opinions and manners they "turn to different quarters" and disappear from each others' sight; and then even their houses may vanish with them.<sup>52</sup> This explained why so many spirits could appear in the same space-as if passing through each other!<sup>53</sup> 48. @TCR 805 49. LJ post. 12, 19, @SD 5249ff 50. Ibid., @SD 5039 51. @SD 5249 52. @SD 5252, 5531f 53. @SD 2338, cp 5249

Societies in the world of spirits are in constant flux or change, especially after a general judgment such as occurred in 1757. Since that time, the increase in travel and communication has supplied men in the world with a broader outlook, and local loyalties and provincial and national customs are less distinct. Most large modern cities have their cosmopolitan and international colorings, and few have any religious homogeneity.

Even in Swedenborg's day, he reports, there was in the world of spirits no city corresponding to Hamburg, because of the cosmopolitan nature of that ancient trading and shipping center.<sup>54</sup> 54. @TCR 816

The close connection between the inhabitants of these spiritual towns and countries and their earthly counterparts, is indicated by Swedenborg's testimony that on a certain occasion a conspiracy in the earthly city Where he was, was quelled by the Lord who caused the seditious spirits of the corresponding city in the world of spirits to be driven out, and other spirits brought in in their place.<sup>55</sup> 55. @SD 5093

### Spirits - and Man's Memory

Enough has been said in the above paragraphs to indicate that the life of spirits is based on that of mankind, even as the life of man depends on that of spirits. When man leaves the natural world, "then, because he is a spirit, he no longer subsists on his own basis, but upon a common basis, namely, the human race."<sup>56</sup> "Many men can at the same time serve as a plane for one angel" or one spirit. "The Lord so arranges things that what is absent in one may be present in another."<sup>57</sup> Spirits may have access to all the immeasurable riches of men's memories to use as their own. They enter into the peculiar power of using our knowledges without disturbing our own thinking or evoking our consciousness of the items of memory that they borrow.<sup>58</sup> If closely conjoined with men the spirits think and will all that man thinks and wills, and whatever the spirits think and will the man then also thinks and wills. Yet both are utterly unconscious of this participation. Spirits do not see the man, except in cases of open intercourse as with Swedenborg.<sup>59</sup>

But it is specially provided that although spirits can insinuate their special affections or cupidities,

they must adopt man's persuasions while they are with him!60 And, after all, it is man who through his choice "summons to himself" the spirits who agree with his affections.61 In dreams they may stir up the contents of our imagination without our feeling their affections or seeing any logic or order in the dream; or-we may be quite unconscious of the ideas which the spirits use as their own. For several spirits may use our memory or parts of it at the same time, each taking from its mazes what he needs for perfecting his thought. Spirits can speak among themselves "from man," unaware that they are not using their own memory.62 And in certain cases, each of these spirits may so fully take on the memory of a man-with all his persuasions, civil and moral and religious-that each at the moment believes himself to be the man! This is ordained as a protection for man, lest spirits become aware that they are with men, and do them harm.63 56. LJ 9 57. @AC 5857ff, @SD 5608-5617 58. @SD 5607, 5617. The remarkable fact seems to be that the spirits most closely associated with us are often doing what we are doing at the time. They sleep (@SD 3231f, 3418), dream (@SD 7, 664, 2436, 3792), and eat (@SD 3566) at the same time as man. But guardian spirits who insinuate dreams into a man, are awake while the man sleeps. (@SD 3231f., @AC 1977ff) To confirm, this, Swedenborg-as a spirit-was allowed to induce dreams upon a man who was sleeping. (@SD 3181) 59. @AC 5853, 1880 60. @SD 4001, 3782f, 4114 1/2, @AC 5858ff 61. @AC 5851, De Ver. xiii, @HH 298 62. @HH 292[2] 63. @SD 1928, 1938, 2928, @AC 5853, 5858ff, 5862, @TCR 137

It might seem that such a use of man's memory might result in a man's having a divided mind - a fragmentation of his identity, a double personality - or cause other symptoms such as attend schizophrenia, a disease of the brain. But only bodily disorder can now bring this about. Besides, the integrity of the spirit's personality is always preserved even when he adopts a man's memory; for this is much like our own experience when we temporarily identify ourselves with a sympathetic character or with an author's point of view while we are reading a book. The widening of our range of knowledge derived from many sources does not cut up our mind or life into incoherent bits.

Yet, in the course of their "vastation," spirits do undergo all manner of unusual states - temptations and penalties, phantastic visions, even hypnotic obsessions by other spirits. Such states are samples of clinical methods available in the other life for spirits whose minds need correcting.

Eventually a spirit may even forget his own position in the world, whether that of king or pauper. But it is specially noted that when a spirit adopts a man's memory so that he "seems to be the man" and "comes into his faculty of understanding," it is "with this difference that he retains his own life, that is, the life of his love or cupidity, which causes him to feel in a different manner."64

#### 1. @SD 400, 4259

The continuity of our personality is derived from our ruling love. In this world it may appear that our natural thought is what gives us individuality. But in the other life the truth becomes evident-that the real person, the spirit, is the distinctive affection which selects and organizes the thought. The spirit's thought does not travel by associations of space and time, as ours does when one memory suggests another. He thinks from affection or cupidity or from the interior memory, which is his inner nature or character. By an indescribable mode, there comes to his mind's sight all that in man's memory, which harmonizes with his affection. And he suddenly knows all the ramifications of man's ideas far more acutely than the man.65 Indeed, man's unique power of analytic thought is due to the subconscious association of his mind with spirits, and the influx of spiritual light into the minds of all rational creatures.66 65. @AC 6200 66. @TCR 454, 475, @DP 317

The spirits who are "with man" do not see the man.<sup>67</sup> But in assuming things from his memory they may see and adopt the idea which the man has of himself. They may also adopt the whole field of conceptions that the man may wrongly or rightly entertain of some other person, living or dead. And so they may for the time believe themselves to be a certain apostle or saint or prophet or famous character-such as Paul or Mohammed or even the Holy Spirit! Thus they can come to feel themselves admired and perhaps worshipped, often to their great delight. 67. @AC 1880, 5862, @HH 292

The underlying law is that in the spiritual world one appears as to one's active state, and the active state of spirits proximately attending men is presented in forms taken from the man's memory. Such an impersonating spirit thus appears to other spirits like the person with whom he is consociated-similar in dress, in looks, in demeanor, and in opinions.

Simple spirits may thus often be deceived by the make-belief that they are dining with the apostles or are received in audience by Mohammed.

Normally, spirits do not know the man with whom they are consociated. But an exceptional case is related by Swedenborg. He attended a council of prominent Christians in the world of spirits, and found that the presiding prelate was consociated with a Doctor [Ernesti] of Leipzig, the editor of a theological review in which Swedenborg had been attacked.<sup>68</sup> Swedenborg asked him to inform his earthly counterpart that by attacking the New Church doctrine he was robbing the Lord of Divinity. To this the spirit quite properly replied, "I cannot do this, because I and he, as to this matter, make almost one mind. But he does not understand the things that I say, while I understand clearly all that he says; for the spiritual world enters into the natural world and perceives the thoughts of men there; but not vice versa. . . ." <sup>69</sup> 68. Neue Theologische Bibliothek, Leipzig 1766, no. 8 69. @TCR 137[8], 12

What interests us in this case is not that Swedenborg-in a facetious challenge-gave the spirit a message for the man on earth which he knew could not be delivered; but that the spirit knew all but the name of the man with whom he was consociated. For this he could not convey except from the memory of Swedenborg who uniquely was both a spirit and a man.

#### MEETING OF FRIENDS IN THE OTHER LIFE

When spirits first enter into the world of spirits, they appear as they did in the world. Their face and tone of voice, their dress and manners, and even their opinions, are the same. For they are as yet in a state of their externals.<sup>70</sup> While in this "first state"-which seldom lasts more than a year-a spirit can be recognized by those of his children, relatives, friends, and acquaintances who have gone before him. The very sphere of his life conduces to this recognition.<sup>71</sup> And since there is no such thing as space or distance in the spiritual world, any mutual affection or longing can bring them together.

"Whenever any one ... thinks about another he brings his face before him in thought, and at the same time many things of his life; and when he does this the other becomes present, as if he had been sent for or called."<sup>72</sup> "That man's spirit is his ruling love, is shown in all intercourse in the other life, for as far as one acts and speaks in accord with another's love, so far he appears entire, with full, joyful, and lively countenance; but so far as he acts and speaks against the other's love, so far his face begins to change, be obscured and indiscernible, and finally it totally disappears as if it had not been there."<sup>73</sup> 70. @HH 457, 493, @CL 355 71. @HH 494, 498, @AC 1114, 3815, 10130, @CL

406 72. @HH 494, @AR 937[2], @TCR 64, @AE 628, SD min. 4618e. Called the "presence of internal sight", @HH 121. 73. @HH 479[4], 194

It is also taught that there is a substantial sphere being exhaled from every part of a spirit or angel which conveys his activities to the spiritual atmospheres about him and "produces a perception as of his presence with others." This is similar to the sphere encompassing every man; yet it is "not material" but spiritual.<sup>74</sup> 74. @DLW 291, @AC 10130[2]

When the spirit first resumes his life after death, his natural affections, his habits, tastes, beliefs, longings and loyalties are aroused. The Lord in His mercy provides that such affections, which are often contradictory and conflicting, often cherished without understanding and tied up with errors and falsities, should not be removed or suppressed suddenly. For man's whole personality is inwoven in these affections. In the world of spirits the Divine providence therefore operates-not to destroy man's natural affections-but rather to gently unravel the tangled web of human life and revamp its many loose threads into well-matched and integrated patterns. This is meant in the prophecy, "A bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not quench. He shall bring forth judgment unto truth."<sup>75</sup> 75. Isaiah 42:3

Thus it is quite a matter of course that spirits after death should be drawn into communities of their like. And since a novitiate spirit would otherwise miss the friends and relations which he had on earth, he is brought into association with such as have died and with many whom he knew only by reputation.<sup>76</sup>

1. @SD 2771, @CL 273

It is revealed concerning the people of some celestial races that when they died they rejoined their families in heaven, and so were, literally, "gathered to their fathers." Those of such a celestial genius were distinguished by the hereditary characteristics common to families.<sup>77</sup> But those who, like our own race, are of the spiritual genius, are further individualized by the formation of their understanding, and thus by features derived from the environment, from education and association, by which family traits are varied into great diversity.<sup>78</sup> Relatives will indeed - if the desire is present - meet and greet each other in the world of spirits with deep emotion. But unless there are found spiritual affinities or common ruling loves, they can be together only in the "first state" of the world of spirits-which is the state of externals. We are told of a tearful encounter of an adult with his brother who had died as an infant and grown up in heaven. In such a case there could be no recognition; and it is allowed only as the Lord grants, for some special purpose.<sup>79</sup> As a rule, however, those already in heaven or in hell do not meet newcomers, unless these are tied to them by interior sympathies or similitudes. It is possible for an angelic spirit who is already in heaven to meet friends, relatives, and others in the world of spirits, by his being remitted into a state similar to his life in the world-"which is easily done."<sup>80</sup> 77. @AC 2732, 2739, 483e; cp @AE 988[e], @SD 834, @CL 205 78. Cp. @DP 277a:4 79. @AC 2304[2], @HH 340, @SD 3545 80. @HH 427, cp @SD 1331f, @AC 1636

What causes such a meeting of spirits is a meeting of minds - an intent thought that springs from a strong affection, The one thought of then becomes instantly present "before the internal sight."<sup>81</sup> But life in the other world might become unbearable if the wish-thought of any irresponsible spirit could at any time compel one's presence. It is only "when the Lord permits" angels or spirits to call another to mind, that this spirit "unfailingly" appears present to sight and touch.<sup>82</sup> No doubt a responsive affection is then aroused. And when this affection ceases, or "as soon as a spirit

disagrees in opinion with another, he vanishes," perhaps along with the houses and surroundings of that spirit.<sup>83</sup>

It is however a common occurrence that spirits meet from a mutual desire to discuss their differences; as is described in many of Swedenborg's "memorable relations." <sup>81.</sup> @HH 494,194,121, @AE 628, 282e, @DP 29, @AC 6893, @SD 4139a <sup>82.</sup> @DP 326, @AC 5229 <sup>83.</sup> @AC 9213[5], @HH 194, @SD 5252

The Writings warn us against the tragedies that might ensue in the other life for those who on earth have nurtured a smoldering O hatred for some one. For an evil love may arouse a wish to see or pursue one's enemy, and this also leads to spiritual encounters of various sorts.<sup>84</sup> <sup>84.</sup> @SD 2771, @AC 6893

### The Friendship of Love

Whether interiorly conjoined with a society of heaven or with some society of hell, all who have been friends or acquaintances on earth, and especially wives, husbands, brothers or sisters, generally "meet and converse together whenever they so desire."<sup>85</sup> Very commonly there is mutual rejoicing over such reunions.<sup>86</sup> The newcomer is of course eager to know something of this strange new world into which he has come, and his friends might then answer his questions so far as they can, and conduct him as a guest to various places, such as cities and parks, to please him.<sup>87</sup> And they might also seek to introduce him into their own society. <sup>85.</sup> @HH 427 <sup>86.</sup> @HH 494f <sup>87.</sup> @HH 495

Here certain dangers lurk. External friendships are formed in the world for various reasons, such as personal admiration, pleasant companionship, business advantage, similarity of taste and common interests. Such relationships can be broken off if internal incompatibilities, rooted in character, should become manifest.<sup>88</sup> <sup>88.</sup> @TCR 446

But the case is different if a person has become so enticed by flattery or become in some other way so dominated by another as to blind himself to the inward quality of his friend. And he is thus committed to a "friendship of love" which accepts a person without any proper judgment as to his character or any realization of his dissimilitude. The tragedy here lies in the fact that, owing to man's heredity, evil is contagious like a plague.

"Evils can be inspired into the good, but not goods into the evil."<sup>89</sup> Through a friendship of love, a spirit may, by misplaced loyalty, family pride, storge, hero worship, sexual enticement, or sentimental pity, be bound to another even some time after death.

1. @TCR 120, 448, @SD 2774f

In such a case the interiors of a good spirit may be shut up and he may follow his evil friend or relative into some hell where he may for a time "suffer hard things," until at last his eyes are opened and the impossible hope of infusing good into an evil spirit is dissipated; so that he can be led back upon the way of reformation-"but with more difficulty than others."<sup>90</sup> <sup>90.</sup> @TCR 448, @SD 4524, 2774

The possessive storge of a parent may be such that he utterly disregards whether his children be angelic or satanic. One case is mentioned in the Writings when the father had to be "bound" before his children could be released from his dominating influence.<sup>91</sup> <sup>91.</sup> @CL 406f

Societies of Friendship There are many "societies of friendship" among newcomers in the world of spirits. Such are composed of many who are associated solely from a delight in conversing-not caring whether their companions are good or evil so long as they are entertaining!<sup>92</sup> These think only of their own pleasure, and tend to induce stupor and take away other people's enjoyment.<sup>93</sup> An internal contempt for others, a lascivious lust, or a love of idleness may for a time be concealed by social modesty among such spirits.<sup>94</sup> 92. @AC 4804, 4054, @SD 4439, cp @CL 5 93. SD min. 4716, @SD 4796 94. SD min. 4777

And "societies of interior friendship" may also be formed - pietistic groups who call each other brethren and believe themselves the "elect," but who despise and condemn all outside of their communion.<sup>95</sup> 95. @AC 4805, SD min. 4749, @SD 4796, 4801

Among good people true friendship stems from a charity which acts from justice and with judgment<sup>96</sup> and is attended by mutual respect for each other's freedom.

It does not lead to domination or mental subjection. Nor does it judge the internal state of another, but loves each one according to the civil, moral, and spiritual good to which that man's life testifies.<sup>97</sup> 96. @TCR 448, 459:13 97. Char. 46-71

### The Meeting of Husbands and Wives

Special teachings are given in the Doctrine concerning the meeting of married partners in the other life.<sup>98</sup> "Almost everyone who has lived in marriage in the world, after death either meets with his wife, if she died first, or awaits her."<sup>99</sup> Usually they then "congratulate each other" that they are now safely past the death which had beforehand seemed such a frightening ordeal.<sup>100</sup> Having so much in common, they remain together and mutually explore each other's affections. This seems to be the case even with those whose minds are discordant; but these sooner or later feel a growing uneasiness and difficulty in breathing; and as they pass into "the state of their internals," they may break out into open enmity, quarrelling, and even combat! For some feel delight in having a partner to blame or at least to foil and outwit. 98. @CL 45-54 99. De Conj. 50 100. @HH 494

As the internal affections become manifest, the couple perceive the nature of the love and inclination which they had for each other.<sup>101</sup> If this is concordant and sympathetic the marriage is confirmed by a far deeper conviction that they had been born for each other, and with a tender joy such as they had never known before. "The marriages of the angels of heaven are all provided by the Lord, who alone knows the similitude of souls that is to endure to eternity; and then the consort at first glance recognizes his mate. . . ." <sup>102</sup> 101. @CL 47-49, @HH 494, cp 427 102. Ibid., @CL 316[3], 229, De Conj. 53

In a marriage of love truly conjugal, the partners "think and breathe what is eternal." Even if one such partner dies, his or her spirit still "dwells continually with the spirit of the one not yet deceased, and this until the death of the latter, when they meet again and reunite and love each other the more tenderly in that they are in a spiritual world."

One may speculate that the one already in heaven may have to be reduced into a state of his externals for his first meeting with the other partner who as yet is a novitiate spirit.<sup>103</sup> 103. @CL 321, 216. That this is possible is indicated in note 80, page 113 above, and in another connection in @SD 1321-1331.

But since genuine conjugal love is so rare on earth and the marriage choice is often very limited;



and since marriages and other sex relations present such wide varieties, including marriages of convenience and external allurements, as well as sexual promiscuity or perversion, strange things may happen in the world of spirits. A man who has married again meets his partners in succession and may resume his life with the first wife while in the state of externals, unless their discordance is plainly evident; in which case he may look for his second wife. It is to be presumed that this floundering uncertainty is absent with those who have been in a marriage truly conjugal, for such a marriage is not broken by death, since their spirits still cohabit, and are interiorly conjoined with the same heavenly society.<sup>104</sup> 104. @CL 49, 321

The doctrine indeed states of heaven, that "there are no marriages elsewhere; beneath heaven there are only wedlocks [connubia] which are joined and dissolved." The love of sex so strongly dominates some spirits that they cannot await the other consort, whether male or female, but are conjoined meanwhile to another spirit who simulates the partner.<sup>105</sup> 105. @CL 192[e]; De Conj. 52, cp @CL 320,321

Such simulation, or impersonation, is also common in the case of famous characters such as Mohammed, Abraham, Jacob, and the apostles.<sup>106</sup> There are simple spirits who love to act or pretend or who enjoy being honored or who have a sincere hero-worship. These, from various motives, enact such roles and sometimes even come into the phantasy that they are such personages. In certain cases they are in position to impart needed instruction to their deluded audience. For the sake of this use are they suffered so to act.<sup>107</sup> 106. @TCR 829f, 834, cp @CL 6 107. LJ post. 71f, 79-83, @TCR 829, cp @CL 6[3]

Obviously, such pretense is possible only before spirits who are still in the state of their externals. Yet spirits more advanced may again and again slip back into external states, and this especially if they seek to hide their real nature and delay the inevitable judgment. Such a delay was possible before the Last judgment was performed at the end of the Christian Church - possible especially for spirits who in the world had gained status and influence and who were held up as patterns of moral conduct, of piety and of learning.<sup>108</sup> But since that judgment every spirit has become subject to an inexorable evolution of character which he cannot long stay or disguise.<sup>109</sup> 108. LJ 69-71 109. @AE 754[3], LJ 64, LJ Post. 176f

## COMMUNICATION BY THOUGHT AND SPEECH

Among the peculiar powers into which the novitiate spirit enters, is that of instinctively knowing the quality of other spirits at their first approach, even if they do not speak.<sup>110</sup> He "perceives" their good and their evil, their faith and disposition. And within a society, what is known to one spirit is also at once communicated to the rest - and this "not by speech but by influx." But some spirits retain what is thus communicated, while others do not.<sup>111</sup> 110. @AC 1388 111. @AC 6813, 1390

At first this suddenly acquired faculty fills novitiate spirits with astonishment.<sup>112</sup> But there are so many marvels confronting the newcomers that they soon come to accept them as the norm. Even in this world of ours there are so many things beyond comprehension which we accept as commonplace. Each rising generation dismisses with boredom many new inventions which still astound and mystify their elders. After all, it is life itself that is the great mystery-the fact of consciousness and the marvel of human desire and the rational processes of thought. Our knowledge of the eye's construction and of the electro-chemical changes within the optical centers help hardly a whit to explain why the mind can receive a meaning out of the sensory impulses. And how are the tremblings of the tiny bones of the ear somehow interpreted by us into perceptions of

the states of emotion and thought which our neighbors entertain? 112. @AC 1389

Essentially, all communication of knowledge or thought or beauty or joy is a mystery which we have ceased to wonder over. Here on earth we are accustomed to regard such communication as impossible unless conveyed through the natural world of spatial forms and fixed matter. Yet the fact is that the sentient mind lives above the physical changes within the sensories of our brain. The mind is the interpreter and supreme judge of the world of outward sense. It stands within its memory-world, and evaluates its meanings, accepting its testimonies or rejecting them. Nor can the immortal mind be thought of as forever boxed up in solitary confinement within the limited individual experience of its corporeal memory. But when it becomes a spirit, its horizon is no longer confined by spaces, but opens to spiritual extensions limited only by the finite affections in accordance with which the spirit selects his objects of thought.

Thus the barriers of ignorance which on earth cast men into artificial groups, are lowered in the other life; and a new kind of society is formed, bound by a community of affections.

Since thought, in the other life, is conveyed directly and as it were inadvertently, it may be surprising to learn that spirits and angels also have speech. Although "before a spirit speaks it is known from the thought alone what he intends to say; for the thought inflows more quickly than the speech."113 113. @AC 1640[e], 443

It is a law of the spiritual world that no one can speak except as he thinks.114 Nevertheless, thought has one use, speech another. Thought is freely communicated among spirits in a variety of ways, especially where there is a community of affections.115 Even on earth, we sometimes-sympathetically and perhaps telepathically-know the thoughts of those whom we love. But spirits feel this thought of their earthly kindred as an enrichment of their own thought-as if they originated it. Speech, on the other hand, is necessary to convey a thought as coming from another.

If the ideas of others should always appear as our own, there would be utter confusion in our thinking! And for the same reason, spirits, in order to converse, must look directly at each other; otherwise no ideas are communicated.116 114. @HH 498. The speech of hypocrites always betrays them. @AR 294, DP 224:3 115. @AC 5383, 4126, 1389ff, @AE 674[3], 675:3 116. Inv. 42, @AC 10130[5]

The spiritual world, in contrast to the world of nature, may indeed be described as a purely mental world; for it is the mind of man that becomes the spirit after death. Yet in itself that spiritual realm is quite as completely furnished with spiritual things as the corresponding natural world is with material things. It is a world, not a dream or a phantasy. The immortal spirit is there present as a complete spiritual man, having body, brain, and senses, as well as every spiritual organism of thought and affection.117 He lives in a world which has all the discrete degrees and planes necessary for life- including spiritual ultimates which are seen as lands and waters, and spiritual "intermediates" or atmospheres which consist of discreted substances or least forms originating in the spiritual Sun.118 117. @TCR 38, @DP 279[6], 319 118. @DLW 174-178, @AE 1210[e], 1211e

Even as the minds of spirits and angels are not identical with their spiritual bodies, neither is the thoughts of their minds identical with their speech. Their speech indeed originates from their minds, but it "proceeds from the whole of them, thus not only from the thought but also from the whole body, for the entire spirit is his love, whence their speech comes."119 Their bodies and senses are spiritual. For there are both interior spiritual things (of affection and thought) and exterior spiritual things (of knowledge and sensation). And these latter are created by the Lord to

invest and embody the interior things. They not only form that body by which every spirit can sense spiritual things; but when the love and wisdom of angels "descend into the lower sphere in which angels are as to their bodies and sensations,"<sup>120</sup> they also cause to come into existence extensive representative creations around the spirits, which seem like replicas of nature.<sup>121</sup> Thus the oral instruction which good spirits give to the well-disposed is often accompanied by marvelous visualizations or representations which affect the interior sight.

It seems to unfold before them in pictorial forms appearing in utmost reality and vividness, in colors and forms and as objects which by their symbolism convey interior perceptions and heavenly moods which even the spirits fail adequately to express in words.<sup>122</sup> These representations seem, however, to be distinguished from the spiritual creations which surround the spirits as a real environment.<sup>123</sup> 119. @SD 5557, cp 5564 120. @AE 926[2] 121. @AE 582[2], @AC 1764 122. @AC 4528[2], cp @SD 5943 123. @SD 4214f, @DLW 322,432, @TCR 78; Can., God iv, 12 (margin); AE 1211:4

Speaking is a bodily function. But spiritual speech is utterly different from earthly languages. It is "not one of material words, but of spiritual words, which are ideas modified into words in a spiritual aura"- indeed, in the lowest atmosphere there, which serves as the spiritual air.<sup>124</sup> "It is distinguished into words equally as is human speech; it is also uttered and heard with equal sound"; yet "it affects not only the ears but also the interiors of the mind."<sup>125</sup> 124. @AC 7089[2], @DLW 176 125. @HH 235, 238

The speech of ideas is universal among all spirits, good and evil, of every age and from every habitable spot in the universe.<sup>126</sup> It is not learnt but is instinctive with every one, because it is implanted in all men.<sup>127</sup> Yet there are differences in types and degrees of ideas, which make the speech of some spirits and angels unintelligible or obscure to others. As a rule, spirits cannot hear angels.<sup>128</sup> 126. @AC 2476, 2472, 6996:2, @SD 5589, 5591 127. @AR 29, @HH 236, 243 128. @AC 6996[2]

Subconsciously, a man is continually using this "speech of ideas" in his interior rational thinking. Special attention should be paid to that very important factor in the human mind which is represented by his "subconscious intellection" - the hidden faculties of thinking. All mental proficiency comes from the spiritual world, from the fact that spirits and angels stimulate and guide what goes on in those inner recesses of the memory which we cannot ourselves consciously control, Whatever of genius there is in a man comes from his ability to utilize the spontaneous operations of that "super-conscious" level of the mind.

Whatever we make as it were of second nature enters into the interior memory and is no longer a matter of worry or stress. And this makes for ease and smoothness in our mental life, and relieves our energies for new conscious efforts.

But a man cannot analyze the contents of the subconscious parts of his memory, although he may feel that his wisdom of life resides thus beyond scrutiny. Even the ideas of man's "interior natural memory," or his memory of rational abstractions (which are presented to spirits as immaterial ideas in visual appearances)<sup>129</sup> are with man indistinguishable. Yet these ideas are the "initiations" or primitives of words and terms with men, and constitute "the universal of all languages." "Such as is our thought apart from words, such is the speech of spirits with each other, and it is in fact not only thought (which they also have) but is their speech with one another."<sup>130</sup> 129. @AC 6987[3], 3223, 4408, cp 10604:2, @SD 5589 130. @AC 1641, 6987:2, @SD 2142, 5585. On the

language of spirits and angels, see further, @SD 5585-5597.

It is therefore an error to imagine that man thinks in words.<sup>131</sup> He thinks in ideas which may or may not fall into corresponding words. This was the reason why, when spirits conversed with Swedenborg, their ideas usually fell into the words of the earthly languages with which he was familiar.<sup>132</sup> 131. @SD 5102, 5588, 3637 132. @SD 5590, 5585, 2137, @CL 326[4], @AC 1637[2]

The ideas of a man's mind are like vast spheres of associated concepts within every word we use; and they become quite distinct and "discreted" or divided up into untold particulars when man becomes a spirit.<sup>133</sup> They serve as spiritual "words," in which every least sound or articulated letter has a distinct meaning, so that more can be conveyed in a moment than man can utter in an hour. This enables spirits to speak upon various subjects with marvelous acuteness and perspicuity, and to reason with incredible power and persuasiveness.<sup>134</sup> Indeed, spirits can also make calculations at incredible speeds.<sup>135</sup>

1. Ibid., @AC 6599, @SD 3050, 5588, 4342, @CL 329

2. @AC 1641, @SD 5589

3. @SD 5956. @AC 10771, cp 10708, EU 167

Swedenborg testifies that when he was among spirits in the state of a spirit, he also could speak with them in their own speech, and was then ignorant of his own languages or his own sphere of ideas.<sup>136</sup> But when he returned into his natural state, the spirits, if still with him, communicated in his own vernacular. If he then strove to retain in his memory the spiritual expressions, whether as sounds or as alphabetic writing, he found them utterly meaningless. But he learnt that each letter or sound in the language of spirits had a distinct correspondence and that their words were formed spontaneously. The letter L, for instance, meant both "a horse and chariot" and "the understanding of doctrine." Not one angelic expression coincided with any earthly word. Yet some spiritual expressions-like other spiritual objects-had an external resemblance to some natural words of different meaning-as was the case with the words "bono," "vita," "vitam velle"-or only as to sound, as "rua raha" or "scapuleja." The name of a certain nuptial garden was, for instance, "Adramandoni."<sup>137</sup> 136. @CL 326, De Ver. 5, 6, @SD 5102[3], 5770, 5589, @AC 9094, 3346, cp 6210, @AR 961, @HH 255, 239:2 137. These instances are given in @SD 6063, 6090, 4866, LJ post. 324, De Ver. iii (9), xxvi, and @CL 183

In a sense "it is impossible to be alone" in the spiritual world.<sup>138</sup> Not only is one's thought attended to by spirits far and near, but the immaterial sphere which wells forth spontaneously from each spirit is irrepressible, beyond one's control, and reveals one's character to others.<sup>139</sup> Yet spirits, like men, enjoy a degree of personal privacy. They do not only have an active or "speaking thought," the ideas of which form the words of their speech. But they have also in their minds a realm of silent thought which they do not necessarily reveal, although it is involved in all that they say. While it is a law in the spiritual world that one must "speak as he thinks," yet he may choose to be silent.<sup>140</sup> 138. @AC 816, @SD 1484, 1864 139. @AC 10130[2], 9606, @AR 294 140. @AC 9283, 6987, 8250:2, @SD 5588, 1483

A spirit speaking from his reason, and one speaking from his memory, may sound much alike. And spirits may thus pretend to learning as in the world.<sup>141</sup>

Yet "there is nothing covered which shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known."<sup>142</sup>  
141. @SD 5589 1/2 142. Luke 12:2

The whole tendency of life is to express itself in its own corresponding forms. The laws of the other life lead spirits to that state in which their inmost affections shall be known. Spiritual speech is adapted to reveal, not to conceal. And this is aided by the fact that it is the interior memory from which the spirit now reflects - a memory which is not ordered in the categories of space and time, but in the order of the delights of his affections.<sup>143</sup> Every event or new contact in the world of spirits conduces to a further self-revelation.<sup>144</sup> Insincere speech soon becomes impossible; it is seen as futile and foolish, since the real intent easily shines through.<sup>145</sup> Yet in the places where newcomers gather there occur many phantasies which deceive the uninstructed or unwary.<sup>146</sup> Premeditated deceit is not permitted in the world of spirits. The deceitful have a "tacit speech" which however can be recognized as such.<sup>147</sup> 143. @AC 9386, 9723, 4901, 2469 seq., @DP 193, @HH 461ff 144. @SD 1169 145. @AC 830 146. @AE 575[3] 147. @SD 2848, 2046f, cp @AC 1695

And good spirits, like the angels, "have no desire to conceal from others what they think, since they think nothing unkind toward the neighbor."<sup>148</sup> 148. @AC 5695, 4799:2, 6655:2

It is difficult to describe how much fuller and richer the mental life of a spirit becomes when the interior vistas of his memory are opened. For while his "corporeal memory" is rendered quiescent, his "interior natural memory" is aroused into consciousness. And-as shown above-it is the interior ideas and abstract concepts (which man on earth can with difficulty hold in focus) that constitute the speech of spirits-audible as "words."

Yet this "interior natural memory" is but the servant of another memory which the Writings generally refer to as "the interior memory." This memory is entirely unconscious to man while on earth, and makes a one with his real affections and interior character. Into it are gathered, unbeknownst to man, all that has ever affected him, even though he has never bestowed any reflection upon it.

All his past states, attitudes, thoughts and rational experiences, all that he has confirmed or accepted as allowable, all the wealth of his various moods and reactions - all are inscribed with incredible accuracy in this book of his inner life which is gradually opened after death.<sup>149</sup> All things spoken or done from the will are preserved in the interior memory in organic and spiritual reality.<sup>150</sup> It is beyond the sphere of fear, embarrassment, prudence, shame or compulsion. It has no external inhibitions, for it is the memory of a man's love. It is this most perfect interior memory which spirits use to store all their experiences in the spiritual world to all eternity." And when spirits become angels, this memory becomes even more perfectly retentive.<sup>152</sup> The inner purpose of life is not the enrichment of the memory or the multiplication of knowledges or the creation of a form of society that is maintained without the labor of man; nor is it the constant refinement of thought or even the quest of truth. But the purpose of human life-to which all lesser ends minister-is the communication of love. And this communication of love is the object for which the spiritual language, into the use of which spirits pass unawares, is adapted.<sup>153</sup> 149. @AC 3020, 2473f, 3843:2, 9386, 9394:5, @SD 2594, @HH 463, 467 150. @AC 9386, @DP 279 151. @AC 9922[2], @SD 3143f

1. @SD 3234, @AC 6931, 2493

2. @AC 1388

The character of the interior memory of a good man was described by the Lord when He said, "Lay

up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."<sup>154</sup> And since all states return after death, these spiritual treasures are then opened to conscious realization.

1. Matthew 6:20

## 5 THE DISCLOSURE OF INTERNAL STATES

### Returning States

An expectation of punishment after death is often mentioned among religious people. But it should be observed that no one is punished after death for things done in the world. Man enters eternal life with entire forgiveness for the past. His sins are remitted him. Yet such a law of mercy can fully benefit only the good; since "their evils do not return." Indeed, their evils were not committed with any deliberate purpose of opposing the truth "or from any badness of heart other than that which they received by inheritance from their parents, and they were borne into this by a blind delight" when carried off by external circumstances.<sup>1</sup> 1. @HH 509

Yet the Apocalypse records that John heard a voice from heaven saying, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."<sup>2</sup> And the spiritual law is that all the active states of thought or deed, which a man has entertained from infancy to old age, "not only remain in the other life, but return exactly as they were while he lived in the world."<sup>3</sup>

They recur in various ways, if not as repeated acts yet as vivid recollections-"to the life." But "when states of evil and falsity recur . . . they are tempered by the Lord by means of good states"-that is, by "the remains" of innocence and charity.<sup>4</sup> 2. Revelation 14:13 3. @AC 561, 1906, @SD 4109 4. @AC 561, 2284, 2256

Through this return of states from childhood on, the spirit is given the opportunity gradually to judge himself, to re-evaluate his past in the light of his confirmed outlook on life. If well-disposed, he may see and renounce the sins of his youth and his later transgressions, and recognize that from himself he is nothing but an intricate mass of evils from which he now recoils in horror and disavows with aversion. They are judged by himself, in the light of truth.<sup>5</sup> Thus 5. @HH 487[3]

"there is granted to every man after death ample means to amend his life, if possible. They are instructed and led by the Lord through angels. And then, because they know that they live after death and that there is a heaven and a hell, they at first admit truths. But those who in the world had not acknowledged God and shunned evils as sins, soon feel weary of truths and withdraw. And those who acknowledged truths with the mouth and not with the heart are like the foolish virgins who had lamps with out oil, and who begged oil from others and who went and bought and yet were not admitted to the wedding. 'Lamps' signify truths of faith, and 'oil' signifies the good of charity. . . ." (@DP 328[9])

"The Lord has the power to separate and remove from infernal societies, that is, from evils, anyone He may wish; but such a change can continue only for a few hours, after which the evils return. 1 have frequently seen this done, and seen that an evil one continues evil as before. In the whole spiritual world there is not an instance of any one's having been removed from evils except

through combat or resistance as of himself; or of any one doing this except from the Lord alone."  
(@AE 1164[e])

With an evil spirit, his deeds and thoughts return, and with such realism that persons whom he had hated are actually presented before him, and his concealed enmity is openly revealed, along with shame and grief and terror.

But it is not so with the upright.<sup>6</sup> They too may have regarded some others with enmity and contempt, but they have not confirmed themselves in either hatred or revenge or deceit, wherefore they are open to reconciliation, since inwardly they will good even to their enemies.<sup>7</sup> 6. @AC 823, @SD 4109f 7. @SD 4384, @AC 1079f

Thus it may be said that "good spirits, although they have done evils in the world, are never punished, because their evils do not return"-that is, the return is not accompanied with great anguish, for they feel the Lord's forgiveness. Angels minimize the faults of a well-disposed spirit, especially if he is unduly discouraged by his evils, or if he is unaware of them. The states which "return" with an upright spirit are those of friendship and love, and these are recalled with a new delight and a far deeper happiness.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, the "states of holiness" which moved his heart during times of worship on earth "are preserved to him by the Lord for the use of eternal life. . . ."<sup>9</sup> 8. @AC 561, 823 9. @AC 1618

#### Remains with the Evil

Evil spirits, like evil men, are not all equally wicked. Each may have some lingering quality that makes them in some way attractive. Even criminals may "draw the line" against some forms of perversion. The Arcana Coelestia reveals the reason for this.

Even the evil were once innocent babes, with whom the Lord insinuated goods and truths. These states were stored up and preserved by the Lord entirely without man's knowledge, in the interiors of his mind, and are withdrawn from the evils and falsities which man later confirmed; and they are therefore called "remains."<sup>10</sup> Only through such gift states which temper his evils is it possible for man to become rational." In fact, man is human in proportion to the "remains" which have set limits to his evils. With wicked spirits, these remains continue to establish a communication with heaven, sufficient to enable them to reason and act as human beings when they so choose.

In general, the truths which an evil spirit has abused or denied, are removed from his active thought by vastations. But since there are still remnants of religious knowledge and moral habit which were not direct obstacles to his particular evils, there may - even in the hells - be some who still retain the idea of a God, whom some of them might blame for all their ills and perhaps think of as an impersonal force of interior nature. And the spirits in some of the hells speak of the Creator of the universe without hatred, from a habit formed in the world. "But all the hells are against the Lord" with bitter hatred. They are unwilling, and indeed unable to express the idea of "the Divine Human," or to utter the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>12</sup> An important spiritual law here applies: "The good and the truth which have not been adjoined to falsities and evils, are not vastated."<sup>13</sup> And another such law prescribes that no one shall become worse after death than he was in this world.<sup>14</sup> 10. @AC 561, 1906, 1618 11. @AC 7556, 7560, 7601; 2284:2, 3; cp 2256 12. Ath. 201, @TCR 297, 111, 380:3, 799; cp @AC 1798[2], 2049:3 13. @AC 7556 14. @AC 6559

It is true both of the good and the wicked that hereditary evils also remain within man's immortal

spirit, and are not exterminated even with the regenerate. Especially the paternal heredity and genius remain to eternity.<sup>15</sup> In order that good spirits may learn the truth about themselves, they may if necessary be let down into the hidden life of their connate nature, and its sphere of domineering and lust.<sup>16</sup> But this lesson is for those who come into the idea that they are good from themselves. Hereditary inclinations may thus be recalled, but do not "return" in the other life. 15. @AC 868, 2307, 4564, @DP 277a, 79; @AC 1414[2], @TCR 103 16. @HH 342, @AC 2307f, cp @AE 989[e]

"It is from Divine justice that no one should be punished for the evils of his parents, but for his own. Therefore the Lord provides that hereditary evils shall not return after death, but one's own evils; and it is for those that return that a man is then punished."<sup>17</sup> 17. @AE 989[e], @AC 966

### The State of Internals

In the "first state" of the World of Spirits, the newcomer is in his externals. By this is meant that he thinks, speaks, and acts-and looks-such as he was in regard to his spirit while in company with others in his earthly life. His speech may therefore still be full of social dissimulations.<sup>18</sup> 18. @HH 504, @DLW 415, 404:3; @SD 2775, @TCR 147, @AC 3993[12]

But this condition seldom lasts more than a year.<sup>19</sup> For in the other life "no one is allowed to think and will one Way and speak and act in another." The spirit must become an image of his own love. His externals must come to correspond to his internals. The spirit therefore unconsciously glides into a state in which he thinks freely and without restraint from his interior will, which he had previously never been able to articulate.<sup>20</sup> But there may still linger some fear of expressing this in words before others.<sup>21</sup> Yet he seeks a social sphere where he can do so. 19. @HH 498 20. @HH 502 21. @HH 503

Good spirits seem now to pass into a fuller wakefulness-a new day when the light of heaven dawns upon them, and they can worship the Lord in an internal sanctity.<sup>22</sup> But spirits who are devoid of conscience begin to appear foolish, as their inward lusts break out, although they seem to themselves wiser than others because of their cunning intrigues. They lose their fear of loss of reputation. Some indeed are sometimes let back into the state of their externals and the contrast then makes them ashamed and angry that they are not permitted to remain permanently in the outward semblance of honesty. Yet the spiritual law forbids this for "there is nothing covered up that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known." "Every idle word that man shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."<sup>23</sup> 22. @HH 506 23. @HH 507, Luke 12:2. Matthew 12:36

### Delights and Correspondences

One spirit, newly arrived in the world of spirits, was told that heaven was above his head and hell beneath his feet, but was not told what they were like. He now came into a state of anxiety from constant thought about them.

Finally he fell on his knees and prayed the Lord to instruct him. An angel then came and raised him up and said, "Inquire and learn what delight is, and you will know what heaven and hell are." Wandering about, the spirit could at first find no answer as to what this meant. But presently he was introduced to some angels who taught him that since man is a man according to the quality of his love, he can be known by that in which he takes delight. In heaven there is a delight in good and



truth, in hell a delight in evil and falsity. This was confirmed by some devils who then providentially emerged from their hells and who openly declared that what they delighted in was committing thefts and whoredoms and blasphemies-which others perceived as the putrid odor of excrements but which they regarded as delicacies. These devils soon returned to their hells. But the spirit, now enlightened, was given a laurel wreath as a token that from childhood he had meditated on heaven and hell. (@CL 461. Cp. @DP 340[e])

One peculiarity of the spiritual world is that when a spirit enters upon the state of his internals, he forgets many of the natural delights which he had enjoyed in the world. These delights are instead changed into spiritual delights which may appear in quite different forms, according to the law of correspondences.<sup>24</sup> Evil spirits-meticulously neat and clean in their first state-may reveal a decided preference for unclean places. Although in the world fond of a sophisticated urban life, they might come to crave a life among barren rocks, in caves or on sandy wastes; or, strangely enough, develop a liking for darkness and magical arts. Those who once lived for the palate may turn to the most disgusting fare - for which they would feel very ashamed if let back into their externals. It is their mental predilection for disorder, filth, dishonesty and perversion, or for barren knowledge, that takes these repulsive forms as soon as the spirits recognize the complete satisfaction which is gained by an environment which really corresponds to their interiors.<sup>25</sup> 24. @HH 485ff 25. @HH 488f, DP end

By the same laws of correspondence, some of the learned, who loved to construct false and incoherent doctrinal systems, may find a sudden yearning to build houses-although what they build one day may fall down the next!<sup>26</sup>

Such an occupation they take quite seriously as an intellectual endeavor, not a child's play: for it is really spiritual structures that they labor on. 26. @AR 153[8]

With good spirits, this metamorphosis of natural delights into the representation of spiritual delights, involves no reversion, but is nonetheless a startling change. Their natural delights fade while their spiritual delights-which on earth had rarely been sensed-are sometimes represented by blessings of beauty and wealth, to correspond to the glories of spiritual usefulness. This beauty shines forth even from the humblest things, and what is Divine is seen concealed therein. "The objects they indeed see with their eyes; but the corresponding Divine things inflow immediately into their minds and fill them with a blessedness by which all their sensations are affected."<sup>27</sup> 27. @HH 489

Yet good spirits learn that the wealth, the lovely surroundings, the houses, the heavenly treasures that they may acquire as their interiors are opened, are not rewards, but the provided means by which their spiritual uses may be carried out. In this world it is one's fellow-men who estimate a man's uses and determine his rewards by faulty measures. But in the spiritual world the government of the Lord's justice and wisdom is more obvious, providing the means to carry out uses in an eminent way for those who have the love to do so.

The real means of use are truths. This is what is represented in the rich surroundings of regenerating spirits. But in the world of spirits these things are still not permanent, but signify the truths which they are offered. For as yet these spirits are transients, lacking a stable perspective or fixed point of view. This they will attain only when they reach their spiritual home. But in the meantime they often change societies, and while they may be allowed to visit their final heaven, they cannot stay there unless their preparation is completed.

The progress of spirits into the state of internals is not sudden. Man's faults and evils are not always easy to put away if they have become habits of thought. In the other life, habits of thought are seen and felt and used as paths or roads over which the spirit likes to roam. Evil habits bring him into all sorts of spiritual dangers, making him vulnerable to the attacks of mischievous, brutal and deceptive spirits.

In the spiritual world, "man's thoughts, which are born from his intentions or will, are represented as roads."<sup>28</sup> Contrary to the common saying, it is the road to heaven that is "paved with good intentions." But none can reach heaven unless he actually walks therein. <sup>28.</sup> @HH 534[3], LJ 48e, @AE 206, @DP 60[e]

These individual ways are most complicated and devious, for each spirit walks in ways "according to his truths," ways which no one else sees. But the Lord alone knows all these roads, and He alone can lead the spirit on the paths by which he can reach his heaven.<sup>29</sup> For the spirit is attached as if by elastic cords to various societies in the world of spirits, and among these societies he "walks free, although bound." "The Lord as it were leads him by the hand, permitting and withholding so far as the spirit is willing to follow in freedom."<sup>30</sup> <sup>29.</sup> @AE 940, 1153:8, @SD 5986, @AC 10422, 3477, cp Wis. i.5 <sup>30.</sup> @AE 1174[2]

The novitiate spirit, if he is affected by truths, is introduced to various societies, both good and evil. But after being explored, he is inducted into a society of his own type of natural affection where he can lead an agreeable life. His interiors then begin to open more and more. But salvation (or heaven with its spiritual safety), can be reached only when a spirit has been purged from such false principles and evil habits as had affected him while in the world.

Consequently he must undergo states of vastation or of temptation, by which he puts off his merely natural affections; and, eventually, comes into a state of instruction in which spiritual truths are perceived in new light.<sup>31</sup> <sup>31.</sup> @AR 153[4]

## 6 JUDGMENT AND INSTRUCTION

### THE SECOND STATE IN THE WORLD OF SPIRITS

#### Temptations in the Other Life

So far as a man has entered the regenerate life on earth, he is exempt from severe "vastations" in the other life. Nor does he have to undergo temptations, "for he who is tempted in the world, is not tempted after death."<sup>1</sup> No one is regenerated without undergoing temptations. And "all who are let into temptations are saved." But those who are brought up in churches in which there are no genuine truths, may yet live a good life according to their religion, and thus be saved. For "the good of life holds deep within it the affection of knowing truths," and when such come into the other life they easily receive truths and drink them in.<sup>2</sup> They can therefore be instructed in genuine truths and be confirmed by states of spiritual temptations which they formerly could not have sustained on account of the falsities of their religion. <sup>1.</sup> @AR 185 <sup>2.</sup> @AE 474, 452

The evil, who have no conscience, do not feel spiritual temptations. In the course of their vastation they gradually reject the truths they once pretended to believe, and forget them or contort them.

Thus they are deprived of their intelligence and led to accept the falsities which match and express their evil loves.

## Vastations

Vastation, when suffered by good spirits, is simply a gradual removal of external evils, fallacies, and faults, which would make their companionship with angels impossible.<sup>3</sup> But with the wicked, vastation consists of a removal of the external truths and natural goods by which they have disguised their evil purposes. Thus in both cases the object of vastations is that the character of the spirit may be integrated so that his external behavior and appearance may accord with his inward quality. 3. @AC 9763, 1106-1113, 7984, @SD 4038f

Vastations take greatly different forms. To illustrate their need the Spiritual Diary records how personal enmities and jealousies can pursue spirits and adhere, to their sorrow, long after death, until overcome. An instance is also given of a well-disposed spirit who on earth had habitually exploded into cursing, calling everything disagreeable "infernal" and constantly using the name of "the Devil."<sup>4</sup> The spirits around him were indignant at such expressions, and he came to suffer agonies-feeling himself as if wrapped in a veil or net from which he could not escape. But eventually he was delivered not only from the phantasy of the veil but from the habit itself, which was represented by the veil. For man is actually enshrouded by a spiritual veil which cuts off the light of heaven, when his thoughts are ruled by some cupidity, such as prompts impatience or contempt of others. 4. @SD 4056

Another form of vastation occurs with those whose habit it has been to use passages of the Holy Scripture to evoke laughter or derision, thinking that this is a form of elegant wit. Such holy things are profaned when by habit immersed in worldly and corporeal ideas, and have to be separated by a method which feels like a tearing apart of their spiritual bodies! "Let men beware, therefore, how they mix holy things with things profane. . . .

Let this suffice for a warning, for these things can scarcely be cured except by painful methods." "Then their comedy turns into tragedy."<sup>5</sup> 5. @SD 1304, @AC 1878, @DP 231, @TCR 148[e]. Many spirits-especially from Christendom-suffer grievous vastations to free them from the spiritual consequences of profane cupidities entertained in the world, such as that of practicing venery for the sake of lust alone, without any desire for offspring. @SD 1202f, 3697.

A thousand different phantasies are caused in the spiritual world by the return of corporeal states. States of the mind, which seem so abstract and vague in our earthly life, there become clear, objective, and tangible in representative forms. Many of our faults and cherished persuasions which here condition or contort our thinking, may there bind our spirit or submerge it as if in a vat, to the point of suffocation.<sup>6</sup> Many of our wish-thoughts, if stubbornly maintained, may in the other life bring us into a spiritual captivity-a life where our progress is arrested. 6. @AC 948, @SD 1398

This is also the case when false doctrines or mistaken notions about spiritual duties or the way of salvation have brought men into needless fears and unsound inhibitions, or into reliance on their own "merit." Good spirits may thus linger for long periods in what the Writings describe as a "lower earth," beneath the World of Spirits-in societies connected with heaven but surrounded by the hells.<sup>7</sup> They live an obscure life, but sometimes a cheerful one, for angels are occasionally sent to comfort them. Some seem to themselves to be cutting wood, thinking to merit heaven by their labors. Eventually they are redeemed from their vastation period and instructed in heavenly life. It

is recorded about Melancthon that he was repeatedly permitted to resume his writing about salvation by "faith alone," although what he wrote by day was obliterated by night. Other novitiate spirits who had been incurable bookworms and anxious for a reputation for learning, seemed to themselves in a cellar full of books where the candles continually blew out.<sup>8</sup> 7. @SD 1771f, LJ post. 156, @AC 1106, 7090 8. @AC 4943, 6928, 1111, 1113, @TCR 797, @SD 385

One reason why good spirits may have to suffer such spiritual vastations is that old habits and false beliefs may be seen for what they are-as obstructions to heavenly life; and that conceits and feelings of merit may be softened and removed.

Novitiate spirits generally entertain the idea that heaven is a place where any one who is admitted comes, automatically into a state of joy. But since this concept partakes not of ignorance only, but of selfishness, one impatient spirit was told "that he could not come into heaven until he had lost the cupidity of entering it."<sup>9</sup> 9. @SD 2049, 1962

And spirits have very different notions of what heavenly joy is - ideas often based on biblical descriptions. Many imagine it as a paradise, or a festive garden with banquets or sensual pleasures. Some think of it as a social gathering where all converse to their heart's content, eager to talk or listen on the subject of their choice. Others, of pious or mystical bent, believe that heavenly life consists in an ecstatic worship of God in a phantasmal cathedral resounding with continual praise, with nothing to disturb the elevated mind. Again, some think of heaven as a reward, where "the elect" may sit on thrones as judges or kings.

And indeed there are "heavens"-probationary heavens-for those who seek to satisfy the joys of their imagination. Any one may enter such a "heaven," but none may leave until he is convinced by sad experience that a life of pleasure, or of mystic abstraction, or of continual praise of God, or of personal glory, will pall in a few days and turn into mental torture.<sup>10</sup> 10. @CL 2-9

Those who think of heaven as a "place" may also, if insistent, be permitted to visit some society of heaven, and be shown its marvels. If unprepared, the light of heaven would blind them, their heart would palpitate, they would be unable to breathe. They would perhaps recall the parable of the man who came to the wedding without a wedding garment.<sup>11</sup> They might feel as if stripped naked, or like an owl of the night, and might throw themselves out of heaven, to return to their home in the World of spirits. Their inordinate desire for heaven would be modified, and they would be ready to learn that "the joys of heaven and eternal happiness are not the enjoyment of a place, but of the state of a man's life"-from the conjunction of love and wisdom in a life of use.

#### 1. @CL 10

Good spirits, having been made to realize the false conceptions they have of heaven, are imbued with renewed zeal to return to their own place and find their happiness in active uses.

#### Progress into Interior Uses

A good spirit's approach to "the state of his internals" would take the form of his entering more interiorly into his use.<sup>12</sup> It is legitimate to imagine that a spirit in a city of newcomers would first enter into his customary activities among his fellows and into civic relations as on earth. An optician, for example, would want to provide lenses to correct faulty vision. Indeed, he would find that many novitiate spirits have experienced unbelievably strange things in their new life which they might, in their recurring doubtful states, attribute to their own eyesight! The optician would

then, perhaps, examine their spiritual spectacles. If he had entered somewhat interiorly into his use, he might procure a real adjustment, a focusing of the blurred vision of those spirits to the perspectives of the spiritual world. He might do this by a gentle leading into the light of truths hitherto unknown, or by a kindly philosophy which opened new vistas of understanding. 12. Love xvii

A merchant, with whom charity would take the form of honesty, trust in the Divine providence, and a shunning of avarice as the root of many evils, would enter interiorly into his use when he comes to act from the faith that all the fruits and profits which he reaps, are really derived from the common good. He sees that the good of his fellow citizens, the public welfare and civic order, must be loved and protected because they all look to the treasures of wisdom, truth, and sustaining delight which the Lord provides out of heaven. He sees that the real trading of spiritual life is the exchange of spiritual truths and goods.<sup>13</sup> 13. @DP 217[4], @TCR 801, Love 6:2, Char. 167, @SD 3523, @AC 5527

We may surmise that similar experiences befall those in other uses. And if some occupation is such that it does not conduce to a progression into interiors, a good spirit would find no difficulty in finding some employment which can be a better means to express an interior charity.<sup>14</sup> 14. @HH 394, Char. 142, 137ff, 158ff, @AE 1191, @DWis 7:5:3, Love xii

### Exploration by Angels

In the "first state" of the world of spirits, newcomers are examined as to their external acts. Evil doers who cannot control their vices are separated in various ways. Some cast themselves into the hell of their delight within a few days.<sup>15</sup> Yet, if any doubt appears-certain signs of external amendment or self control or some remnant of religious acknowledgment - they are permitted to return into the world of spirits and adjust themselves to society with other unjudged spirits. 15. @HH 491, 513, @AC 2595, @SD 5495

But when they enter the state of their internals, and resume their life of vice, they are subjected to an exploration by angelic examiners-who may be the invisible governors of the society. The exploration takes many forms. Sometimes, when a spirit denies his guilt and pretends innocence, the contents of his memory is opened up-in an unveiling, before other spirits, of his past deeds and intentions. His thoughts can be reconstructed without error, as they had been in their order, day by day, for any period of his past; and even letters and documents can be reproduced visually when necessary.

Every detail of a murder by poison can, for example, be recounted as it appears in the memory of the criminal-even to his superstitious fears that the victim would haunt him.<sup>16</sup> And since the spiritual body is the product of all his moral and civil life, and the very substance in which his memory and character are inwrought, the exploration may involve an examination of the whole body, member by member, beginning with the fingers of each hand, The angels can thus "read him like a book"; for the memory is man's immortal book of life.<sup>17</sup> As spiritual physicians, they can thus uncover the unwholesome rationalizations and subconscious complexes which are hidden behind the material symbols and associated ideas of the spirit's memory, and so compel him to admit his real intentions and loves. When guilt is finally confessed, the spirit is separated from the society and wanders about until he finds a home. After many vain attempts to join with good spirits, with a view to master them by some subterfuge, he will tire of pretense and fling himself into some open hell where he can indulge his phantasies without censure.

## Separation of the Evil

The entrance into the "second state" marks a gradual separation between good and evil spirits. In part, this separation-or at least distinction-begins earlier, through the simple fact that evil spirits are generally not interested in internal things such as the truth of the Word or the uses of the church, while the good listen attentively to such information.<sup>18</sup> After the separation, good spirits are not visible to the evil spirits, while the latter can still be seen by the good, who turn away from them and thus become invisible.<sup>19</sup> 18. @HH 496 19. @HH 583

But the evil are not punished or removed except when they transgress the decorum and order which their society requires, As long as they live morally, they can remain in their cities.<sup>20</sup> In the suburbs there are usually present both good and evil spirits who have recently died and have not yet suffered vastation, but serve men for communication with heaven or with the hells. Some, although cast into hell, may for this reason return repeatedly into the world of spirits.<sup>21</sup> Outside the cities, spiritual "robbers" often roam, who sometimes come into the streets. But they have no power there, for "in the cities law always reigns, and hence there is security, as in the cities of the world."<sup>22</sup> But with general changes of state, as during the Last judgment which Swedenborg witnessed in the year 1757, when most of such cities were usurped by the evil, the houses as well as the spirits disappear, and reappear in a different situation.<sup>23</sup> 20. @SD 5714, 5034f, 4930 21. @SD 5529 22. @SD 5361, 5365, 5714, 5711 23. @SD 5252, 5531

## The Fate of the Wicked

In a memorable relation, in the work *The Apocalypse Revealed*, the dismal story is told of what happens to evil spirits who are not affected by truth but by falsities. For he who loves falsities cannot but love evils also.

Since in the world they had feigned good affections, they continue to be kept in orderly externals when they at first come into the world of spirits. But by turns their inner contempt of truth and justice comes out, and even if they at first be set over societies in the world of spirits, they lose their position after a few days. Indeed, they are given chance after chance to perform some office or employment, but are as often dismissed for dishonesty or laxity. "After frequent dismissals, some out of weariness will not, and others from the fear of losing reputation dare not, seek for offices any more, wherefore they withdraw, and sit in sadness; and then they are led away into a lonely place where there are some huts which they enter, and some kind of work is given them to do, and if they do it, they receive food, but if they do not do it, they go hungry; wherefore necessity compels . . . ." <sup>24</sup> They try begging, but to the idle nothing is given in the other life. They are reduced to menial labor in some cavernous workshop. The evil spirits, after their work is done, are permitted to walk about and converse and afterwards to sleep. They are permitted to associate with harlots-but must remain in their infernal prison, appearing among themselves as men, but to the angels as ugly monsters. And some no longer remember in what offices they had been in the world. 24. @AR 153[5]-11

## The Fork of the Road

The real touchstone by which the evil reveal themselves as to character and thus begin to separate themselves from the good, is spiritual truth. This is the truth derived from the acknowledgment of

the Divine Human of the Lord. All of heaven is in the worship of the Lord in His glorified Human. The knowledge of the Lord is the universal of all things of doctrine and hence of the church, and is essential for entrance into heaven. Although there are many gates into the New Jerusalem, each gate is the same pearl of truth-the acknowledgment of the Lord as the God of heaven and earth.<sup>25</sup> @AR 916, 727

This fundamental truth through which there is introduction into heaven, was also called, in the Word, "the stone which the builders rejected" but which "is become the head of the corner."

"Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken," the Gospel continues.<sup>26</sup> 26. Psalms 118:22, Luke 20:17f, Matthew 21:44

Swedenborg was shown a broad way where many novitiate spirits were travelling, both good and evil together, talking with each other like friends. At some distance there was a great stone or rocky ledge where the broad way turned obliquely down towards hell, while a narrow path forked off to the left and led up towards heaven. The rock at the corner where the roads forked represented the acknowledgment of Peter, on which, the Lord said, "I will build My Church."<sup>27</sup> The truth concerning the Divinity of the Lord's Human becomes a stumbling block to the evil who do not see it, and who turn away to the broad way "that leadeth to destruction." And "many there be which go in thereat." <sup>27</sup>. Matthew 7:13, 14, 16:16-18, @HH 534

#### THE THIRD STATE OF MAN AFTER DEATH

Good spirits do not find their final abode without some special preparation. When they enter the state of their internals-called "the second state after death"-well-disposed spirits usually have to undergo certain states of "vastation" through which they are divested of the falsities of doctrine, the social insincerities or pretenses, and the bad habits which cling to them.<sup>28</sup> They are then separated from the evil and led to societies which represent good natural affections. Evil spirits disdain any instruction in spiritual truths, but plunge instead into the phantasies of their ruling loves; and their "second state" is therefore also their "third state."<sup>29</sup> But good spirits, before they can enter heaven, must enter a third state in which they learn to think like the angels-by spiritual ideas. This state of instruction, with adults, is of relatively short duration, for spiritual ideas are universals, which comprehend innumerable particulars within single concepts.<sup>30</sup> Besides, such instruction is to be continued in heaven. Those taught are all in the love of truth for the sake of uses.<sup>31</sup>

The cognitions they imbibe are not committed to memory, but are shown in their relation to life, whereby matters of morality and justice and civil duty are made into spiritual virtues which have the love of the Lord as their inner motive. <sup>28</sup>. @HH 513 (ref's) <sup>29</sup>. @HH 512 <sup>30</sup>. @HH 519 <sup>31</sup>. @HH 517

To obtain such instruction, the spirits are introduced into special societies presided over by angels. There the newcomers learn to think, speak, and act in "choirs"-that is, in the rhythm of angelic uses. The Writings sometimes call these novices "angelic spirits."<sup>32</sup> For each one, the Lord prepares uses, suited to his genius, for him to love; and that love is exalted by his hope of becoming an angel. Those being instructed are therefore said to "dwell apart," for each one is connected with the society of heaven for which he is being prepared.<sup>33</sup> <sup>32</sup>. @DLW 140, @AR 875[4], @HH 517 <sup>33</sup>. @HH 514

In reference to the Grand Man, these places of instruction seem to be represented by the "province"

of the liver, which receives and prepares the aliments which are to enrich the blood and feed the body tissues, and by the "province" of the mesentery and the lacteals where the digested food from the intestines is converted into chyle-both streams of nutriments to be eventually refined and purified in the lungs for the use of the brain.<sup>34</sup> 34. @DP 164, @AC 5173, 5180, SS 66

These outposts of the heavens are spread out widely in the world of spirits, There are places nearest heaven, for the instruction of those who have died in childhood and were brought up in heaven; there are places where Christian adults are taught; other places for Mohammedans, others for gentiles and pagans of different cults; among whom, it seems, "the best are from Africa."<sup>35</sup> Those who had died as infants are taught by angels of the interior heavens. Their affections are stimulated by various representations of heavenly uses which bring with them interior delights. Some of these representations are taken from the literal sense of the Word.<sup>36</sup> Adults are instructed mainly by angels of the ultimate heaven. Mohammedans and gentiles are under the tutelage of angels who had been of those religions and later accepted Christianity. Christians are taught from "the heavenly doctrine" which is the soul of the Word and which contains inner vistas of meaning beyond exhaustion.

All others are taught from doctrines adequate for their comprehension - the spiritual life being taught by means of moral precepts agreeing with the good tenets in their own religion.<sup>37</sup> 35. @HH 514 36. @HH 515, 335 37. @HH 517

### The Homecoming

When their preparation is completed the angelic spirits are given garments, mostly of glowing white, to signify their state. A profound longing for heaven possesses them, and they are brought to the way that leads upwards to their final abode.<sup>38</sup> Two such ways pass from each of the places of instruction, and these winding roads are bordered and adorned by corresponding fruit trees, or by vines and laurels. The heavens formerly had seemed to be far above them and beyond attainment, but now for the first time they see the way. 38. @HH 519f

Still, the novitiates do not necessarily find their own final home at once.<sup>39</sup> Instead they might be given a general commission as "disciples of the Lord," and sent out from their situation in the "northern quarter" towards various directions, until they find those with whom they are in interior conformity, But everywhere, the angels greet them with joy and hospitality, and furnish them with angel guards. And they taste of the blessedness of all the societies in which they are received. 39. @HH 519, @CL 261

Their reception is orderly. For each heavenly community has its gates or barriers where examiners meet visitors, and-in the name of the governor-invite them in to inquire whether there are houses anywhere which they can recognize as theirs.<sup>40</sup> If not, some wise man may examine them more intimately, as to whether they are adjusted to stand the heat and light of that society. When this is not the case, they are not given a permanent welcome, but depart again by "ways that open among the societies of heaven"-through lands and scenes which indicate the nature of each heaven.<sup>41</sup> 40. @AR 611 41. @AR 611, @HH 520, cp @CL 75[2], 3

When at last they find the house of their ruling love, all doubt vanishes and there are tender greetings. For they feel at once that they are "among their own as among relatives and friends" whom they love from the heart, amongst whom they may live and work in full enjoyment "from peace of soul." Indeed, "good spirits, on coming into a heavenly society, take on and possess all the



wisdom of all in the society ... although in the life of the body they had known nothing at all of such things as are talked about."42 One reason for this is that their internal memory had already on earth been furnished unconsciously with the receptacles of such wisdom, and is now opened. 42. @AC 5859, 5649:3, 1390

Their interiors-within and above their rational mind-are opened.43 While they were still in the world of spirits, the rational of their natural mind was in process of formation, and their thought was held in a state of balance and choice.44 But now their ruling love itself guides them-the confirmed love that is peculiar to their own heaven. 43. @HH 519 44. @HH 430

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It was previously noted that ideally a spirit's preparation for heaven should be completed on earth. And some, who are regenerated and instructed in spiritual thinking in the world need simply to "cast off natural impurities along with the body."45 Swedenborg saw some such spirits taken up into heaven immediately after their resurrection had been effected. This is also the case with infants. Others, who have been sufficiently instructed while on earth, are taken up without entering "the third state."46 45. @AC 2960[e], @HH 491 46. @HH 513, 426

But such instruction in spiritual truth is far removed from the kind of teaching that men now obtain on earth. The spheres of modern Christendom spread a pall of darkness over any spiritual thinking.47

Yet the Heavenly Doctrine-the internal sense of the Word-is now revealed even for men, and all who are affected by a love for its truth may become the Lord's disciples and learn to think together with angels, in rhythms of purpose which accord with the gyres of the New Heaven.48 47. @TCR 619, @AC 3489 48. @AC 2595, 5173, 4041, cp 3350; @SD 3494

The New Church on earth is indeed established to serve as a society of instruction, to train our stubborn minds to think in terms of spiritual-rational ideas, ideas that flow from the love of the Lord and the charity of heaven, and open our understanding to view all things in the light that streams from the Sun of heaven.49 49. See pages 146, 398f

## 7 CHILDREN IN THE OTHER LIFE

There is nothing in man that makes him worthy of entering heaven. But all good is measured by the innocence which it contains. For real innocence is the willingness to be led by the Lord rather than by self-will. The helplessness and humility of an infant touches our hearts because the babe is asking for love, leading, and security. Even his hereditary evils and bodily appetites-for which the infant cannot be held responsible-are overlaid by a borrowed good or by an external innocence-the innocence of ignorance.1 This innocence is what makes the child docile-so that he can be taught to see things in the light of truth rather than from his inherited inclinations which he feels as his real self or "proprium." 1. @AC 4563[2], @AE 989[3]

The infantile innocence which so attracts and charms adults is from an influx of good from the Lord through the celestial heavens. Therefore the Lord said, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father who is in heaven."2

Angels from those heavens attend tender infants. And if such an infant should die, those angels at once take charge of him. As soon as they are resuscitated<sup>3</sup> they are thus taken into heaven and brought to angel women who in the life of the body had tenderly loved children and at the same time had loved God.<sup>4</sup> These receive them as their own, loving them much more than their earthly parents did.<sup>5</sup> Such a "mother" may in some cases take into her home three to five children.<sup>6</sup> Under the Lord's auspices these are "in their first age" educated in the inmost heaven. Afterwards they are transferred to another heaven where they are instructed and grow in intelligence and stature.<sup>7</sup> All infants who die as such are saved and become angels.<sup>8</sup> 2. @CL 396, @HH 277[4], @AC 5054; Matthew 18:10 3. @CL 410, @HH 332 4. @HH 332 5. @AC 5052 6. @SD 5660 7. @CL 410f 8. @HH 4, @HD 3; the general teachings are given in @HH 329-345, @AC 2289 2309

Strange to say, the common Christian idea has been that infants who die remain babes to eternity—an idea which might stem from the fact known to the ancients that the celestial angels sometimes appear as infants.<sup>9</sup> Catholics speak of unbaptized infants as excluded from heaven and held in a limbo near the hells. Many Protestants think that all who are not baptized are condemned or even annihilated; or that some are predestined to hell.<sup>10</sup> Yet the Word clearly teaches that "the fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers."<sup>11</sup> "It is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."<sup>12</sup> Children are certainly not condemned for the evils of their inheritance.<sup>13</sup> 9. @AC 2304, @HH 340, @CL 413 10. @HH 329 11. Dent. 24:16 12. Matthew 18:14, @DP 328[8], 324:9, @AC 1059 13. @AC 2307f, 828, @SD 2710, 3899, @AE 989, cf @DP 281, @TCR 521

"All children (infantes), whether born within the church or not" and whatever their heredity, "are adopted by the Lord and become angels. And their number reaches to a quarter or a fifth part of the whole human race on earth."<sup>14</sup>

This shows the immensity of heaven; especially when we reflect that the human race is not confined to this earth alone, but extends to all the untold planets of the universe.<sup>15</sup> From infants comes "a third part of heaven." And "these are all initiated into the acknowledgment and faith that the Lord is their Father, and afterwards that He is the Lord of all, thus the God of heaven and earth."<sup>16</sup> And it is especially said of the new heaven when this was organized at His second coming, that it was composed of "both Christians and gentiles, but chiefly of all the infants from the entire world who have died since the Lord's advent."<sup>17</sup> Yet it is also stated that "infants. . . who are born outside of the Christian Church, after they have received faith in the Lord, are introduced by other means than baptism into the heaven assigned to their religion; but they are not commingled with those who are in the Christian heaven."<sup>18</sup> It is significant that while the infants of Mohammedans and gentiles are taken up into heaven immediately after death, their boys and girls are first transferred to spirits of their own religion, who teach them spiritual life by such moral truths as they can receive.<sup>19</sup> (@SD 347, cp. @HH 516) 14. @HH 416 15. @AC 2289, @HH 416 16. @HH 4, 416 17. @HD 3, cp @AR 876[e] 18. @TCR 729, @CL 352, 340, De Conj. 48, LJ 50 19. @SD 347, cp @HH 516

Since all children are saved by the Lord through an angelic education, the question may arise whether this means that they are deprived of their human faculty of free choice! And the same question might be raised about those of the celestial church who were born before the Fall, and whom we might be tempted to envy, as being assured of an easy salvation obtained without having "borne the burden and heat of the day."<sup>20</sup> But the Lord draws all men unto Him.<sup>21</sup> Only those are lost who resist His invitation and refuse His leading by confirming evils of life by deliberate falsities. Every one does not have the same temptations. Freedom does not depend on the presence of evil.

Wherever there is a choice offered between a greater good and a lesser good, there is an ample sense of freedom.<sup>22</sup> And the wakeful life of man or angel is every moment attended by alternatives, judgments, and decisions-and this long after the initial choice between good and evil has been made. 20. Matthew 20:12 21. John 12:32 22. @CL 444

Why so many die as infants, is partly seen from the general law that the Lord allows men to live only so far as they can be held in spiritual freedom.<sup>23</sup> Yet every one "is born such that he can enter heaven. . . ." "All can be regenerated, each according to his state."<sup>24</sup> It is not to be thought that when a child dies it is because his parental heredity is so evil that he could not be held in freedom. For the Lord calls men to the other life for various reasons; perhaps because they can best be perfected in the other life, or because they can supply some use known to the Lord alone, for the maintenance of the equilibrium of uses in the Grand Man. "Wherever forces fail they are balanced." This teaching is given in the Spiritual Diary: 23. Cp @AC 828, @SD 2710, 3899 24. @DP 324[9], @TCR 580, @AE 989[3]

"Concerning the durations of the life of men: why some live long, and some not so long.

"The life of every man is foreseen by the Lord, as to how long he will live, and in what manner; wherefore he is directed from earliest infancy with a regard to a life to eternity. The providence of the Lord, therefore, commences from earliest infancy.

"The reasons why some die as children, some as youths, some as adults, some in old age, are: 1st, on account of use while he is in the world to men; 2nd, on account of use, while he is in the world, to angels and spirits: for man, as to his interiors, is with spirits; and he is there as long as he is in the world, in which all things there terminate; 3rd, on account of use to himself in the world, either that he may be regenerated, or that he may be let into his evils lest they lie dormant and afterwards break out, which would result in his eternal ruin; 4th, therefore, on account of use afterwards in the eternal life, after death, to eternity; for every one who will be in heaven has his place in the Grand Man, or, on the other hand, he has his place in hell:

wherever forces fail they are balanced, and, in the Divine providence of the Lord, [men] are brought thither. Thus also, the kingdom of the Lord is cared for, the welfare of which is universal Providence."<sup>25</sup> 25. @SD 5002f

Infants, when they die, enter heaven by a shorter way than other spirits do. This is represented by the fine atmospheric aliments which are absorbed through the skin and tongue and are passed into the bloodstream without having to be broken up in the digestive canal.<sup>26</sup> 26. @SD 1021f, 1035, cp @AC 5174f

Since infants have not as yet had their proprium aroused, and have not attached themselves to many societies in the world of spirits, they do not have to pass through the same states as older spirits when they are resuscitated from death.<sup>27</sup> Instead they remain with the celestial angels. One reason for this difference is that 27. Cp @HH 450

"those who die in mature life have a plane acquired from the earthly and material world, and this they carry with them. This plane is their memory and its natural corporeal affection. This remains fixed and then becomes quiescent, but it still serves their thought as an ultimate plane, for the thought inflows into it. Hence it is that such as that plane is and such as is the way in which the rational corresponds with those things which are in it, such is the man after death. But infants who

die as infants and are brought up in heaven, do not have such a plane, but a spiritual-natural plane; wherefore they derive nothing from the material world and the earthly body. On this account they cannot be in such gross affections and thence thoughts: for they derive all things from heaven. . . "28 28. @HH 345, cp SD min. 4645f

Until they are told they do not know that they were born on earth.<sup>29</sup> Swedenborg once met an angelic couple from the heaven of innocence, who had grown up in heaven; and he found that they did not even know what evil was.<sup>30</sup> 29. @HH 345, @AC 2293, @SD 5668[12], 4726 30. @CL 444

It is however possible for a man who lives out his span on earth to come into as perfect a state as that of those educated in heaven: provided only that he removes the loves of self and the world and receives spiritual loves in their stead. "For there is the same in him as in the infant."<sup>31</sup> 31. @HH 345[e], @DP 324[9]

The angelic "mothers" of the inmost heaven are said to belong to the province in the Grand Man which corresponds to the genital organs of both sexes.<sup>32</sup> We are also told of certain chaste and modest virgins, corresponding to the supra-renal capsules and the thymous gland, who care for babes and attend pregnant mothers.<sup>33</sup> But the infants themselves are said to be in the province of the eyes, and in "rainbow heavens" among paradisaal delights and surrounded by ineffable beauty.<sup>34</sup> Such paradises are in the ultimates of heaven, or at the threshold of the superior heavens.<sup>35</sup> 32. @AC 5053f, De Conj. 100, 106 33. @AC 5391, 5172, @SD 969f, 1004, 1048 34. @AC 1621, 1623, @SD 3213, @AE 831[e] 35. @AC 4528, @SD 3213, 5668:5

The innocence of ignorance is a natural good.<sup>36</sup> Infants are not angels, but angels in the making.<sup>37</sup> They are with their angelic "mothers" and teachers, and receive the influx of the heaven of innocence,<sup>38</sup> but their own state is as yet natural, and their spiritual situation, while they are being educated, is at first in the "north-east" of the world of spirits, and later more and more towards the "south."<sup>39</sup> Thus while spared a lonely progress through the world of spirits, they are as yet in the state of spirits.<sup>40</sup> 36. @AC 3504 37. @AC 2304 38. @CL 410, @HH 332 39. Cp @HH 513f, @TCR 476 40. @SD 5167

In heaven as on earth education is adapted to successive states. Infants there learn to walk and talk without any training, but their speech (which is the universal spiritual language of ideas) is at first expressive only of general affections rather than of thought. They are, however, quickly initiated into more particular ideas, and their speech becomes more distinct.<sup>41</sup>

Thus in one sense they "learn to speak from their instructors," and this "within a month."<sup>42</sup> Much is also said of the introduction of children into "choirs"-that they may learn to think and act together. Evil spirits cannot come near to infants because these have not as yet in their memory or their acquired Proprium anything that the spirits can take on. Yet later they also must learn to resist being led by any other than the Lord, and so to foil the attempt of evil spirits to direct them. This constitutes their first "temptations."<sup>43</sup> 41. @HH 331 42. @CL 411, @HH 334, @SD 5668[14] 43. @AC 2290, 2294, @HH 343

As the children grow and their infantile ideas and affections mature and become rational, they also grow in stature. For the increase of intelligence and goodness-which is mental nourishment-is also the growth of their spiritual body in strength and beauty. Understanding and judgment make them appear as young men and virgins.<sup>44</sup> When those brought up in heaven reach a stature similar to that of fifteen year old girls and eighteen year old boys, they have attained marriageable age and

their external growth stops.<sup>45</sup> In terms of our years this goal may even be reached much sooner.  
44. @SD 4297, @AC 2289, 5576, @HH 340, @CL 44[2], 5, 411, 444 45. @CL 444[8], cp 42:2, 3

Like other spirits, those who die in infancy possess spiritual bodies and spiritual senses. Their experiences enter into their interior memory and are translated into ideas devoid of the notions of space and time.<sup>46</sup> But those brought up in heaven have a more plastic and adaptable character, and the special uses which they can perform may correspond to the softer and more liquid tissues of the body. They "become more celestial and spiritual than others," and "are nearest to the Lord"-as are the inmost angels. The speech of one such is described as "love itself speaking."<sup>47</sup> 46. @SD 4726, 5623f, 5668:13 47. @SD 3545, @HH 280

But this does not necessarily imply that all who die in infancy become equally celestial. The main differences are those of inherited genius. In general, the races surviving the "Flood" are of a spiritual genius.<sup>48</sup> But even at this day, some men are, as to disposition, like the antediluvians who would not listen to instruction, while others "can easily be regenerated."

Different races may be of different genius. The Africans are of the same genius as the angels of the celestial kingdom, while Europeans are of a spiritual genius and think more exteriorly.<sup>49</sup> "Connate inclinations, varied by education, associations, and imbued persuasions," may cause conjugal similitudes or dissimilitudes.<sup>50</sup> There are also differences in boys and girls who die at an older age.<sup>51</sup> Those who have acquired "a good disposition from their education in the world" are taught in heaven.<sup>52</sup> But children who have acquired bad habits of thought, speech, or immoral behavior and been persuaded that there is no evil in such conduct, must be restrained in the world of spirits under an instructor who is quite severe with them until they are "vastated" of the evil.<sup>53</sup> 48. @AC 608[e] 49. @AC 736, @SD 5518 50. @CL 227 51. @SD 2454, cp 362le 52. @HH 391 53. @AC 1113, 2307f

In several memorable relations Swedenborg describes how children are brought up in heaven and instructed in adaptation to their hereditary genius.<sup>54</sup> It is shown that their first instruction is by representations delightful to the eyes - such as gardens with trees laden with rich fruit and beds of spring flowers which seem to sparkle with joy when the children pass by or when they are used as wreaths to adorn them. Indeed, the gates of the garden might move as if living, and every object around them seems alive; even as children on earth think of their toys as living, since they have as yet formed no idea of any thing inanimate.<sup>55</sup> But in the spiritual world this infantile perception is profoundly true, since the substance of that world is living. And sometimes their childish affections lead them to want to help the Lord ascend from the sepulchre by means of invisible cords.<sup>56</sup> Within such innocent fancies they sense as it were the presence of the Lord. 54. The general teaching is given in @CL 411, 17:2, @HH 329-345, AC 2289-2309, @SD 5660-5668, @HH 342[2], 343. 55. @HH 337f, @SD 2844 56. @HH 335, @CL 412, @AC 2299, @SD 233ff

The most universal difference in genius faces us in the fact that sex is predetermined from conception. The male is masculine in every least part of his body and his mind.

It is equally true of the female, that the feminine enters into every cell of her body and every state of her mind. Nor can one be changed into another to all eternity.<sup>57</sup> 57. @CL 32, 33

Therefore the education of boys and girls in the heavens is very different, although hard to describe. While infants they are both under the care of angel nurses. But later the boys are placed under masters who teach them to think and act in manly ways. Boys and girls have sufficient association to enable them to appreciate each others' virtues and skills as these develop. The girls

no doubt watch with delight and applause the competitive sports and discussions of the boys and young men. And a chaste love of the other sex arises, devoid of allurements; in which the beauty of the maidens is matched with the morality of the young men.<sup>58</sup> 58. @CL 17, 44

Swedenborg describes the life of some maidens who lived together, each having their own bedroom with cupboards and a chest of drawers wherein they stored their treasured possessions. They were kept busy with embroidering linen, either for their own use or as gifts for others.<sup>59</sup> They cared also for their gardens which flourished when they thought well; and they were sometimes given coins of silver or gold, not for trading, but as tokens of industry or virtue. If they thought ill or had done something wrong, their garden might disappear, or else they would find their garments indelibly spotted or missing. And if they still did not understand such portents a wife came and explained what was wrong. On the other hand, if they did well, a new garment would appear in their wardrobe.<sup>60</sup> 59. Cp @CL 207 60. @SD 5660 ff

Even as infants, they learn the Lord's Prayer and attend worship.<sup>61</sup> Sometimes preachers visit them and examine them. The daily reading of the Word, of which they have their own copies, is a requirement without which their life languishes.<sup>62</sup> Even girls of a celestial or celestial-spiritual genius need this. It is mentioned of certain ones that they understood the Word according to the internal historical sense, where no names of persons or places appear.<sup>63</sup> 61. @SD 5668[3], 5666f 62. @SD 5666, 5618 63. @SD 5618

The instruction of boys would presumably also be based on a knowledge of the Word. Boys are taught by masters who introduce them by representations and by discussions into more abstract truths of intelligence and wisdom, and call forth their latent abilities. Swedenborg relates that some boys in the world of spirits watched certain evil spirits who were cast down from heaven and were seen as dead horses! They asked their master what this peculiar appearance might mean, and were told that dead horses represented spirits who understood the Word materially and who thought of God only from person-indeed as three persons-rather than from His essence. The boys confessed that they, too, thought of God from person rather than from His qualities. Would they also, they wondered, appear as dead horses? The master comforted them, explaining that they were only boys and could not yet think otherwise; but since they had a desire to understand, their thought partook of a spiritual quality. He then admonished them to try to think of the Lord's Person from His Essence or qualities - such as His omniscience and omnipresence, His mercy and love and wisdom.<sup>64</sup> 64. @AR 611/@TCR 623

There are "gymnasia" or colleges conducted by masters "in the upper northern quarter near the east" where young men are initiated into matters of wisdom.<sup>65</sup> Here discussions are held among the pupils - some of whom had been brought up in heaven - on such topics as the three universal loves of heaven, the nature of the soul, the distinction between the spiritual and the natural, etc. <sup>65</sup>. @CL 261, 315, 326ff, @AR 839

Maturity involves the ability to tell good from evil. When children brought up in heaven have become adults, they are now and then let down into the awareness of the terrible evils to which they have an inherited tendency; until they acknowledge that whatever good that is in them is solely from the Lord's continual influx.<sup>66</sup>

Yet no one is punished in the other life for the dormant evils of his inheritance; and such evils do not "return" after death, although the paternal heredity is never actually expunged.<sup>67</sup> 66. @HH 343, @AC 2307f 67. @AE 989, @AC 1414, 1573:3

This immersion into the life of the proprium causes a temporary separation from heaven and makes for contacts with evil spirits. Thus it takes the place of the temptations which every one on his way to heaven must undergo if they were not experienced on earth.<sup>68 68.</sup> @AE 452, 474:2

As the education of a spirit nears its conclusion he must have learned to think in spiritual ideas - which spring from love and charity.<sup>69</sup> Their tutelage over, they are clothed in angelic garments and assume the name of the Lord's "disciples."<sup>70</sup> By ways unknown they are led to their own society of heaven where they are immediately recognized and received with joy.<sup>71 69.</sup> @HH 519 70. @CL 261 71. @HH 519f, @AR 611

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Another phase of the story needs to be shown. For when the young approach maturity they begin to feel an inclination to marriage.<sup>72</sup> Heaven cannot be well imagined apart from a conjugal partner with whom to share the gift of life in its fulness and completion. <sup>72.</sup> @CL 187

"The marriages of the angels are all provided by the Lord, who alone knows the similitude of minds (animorum) which will endure to eternity . . ." <sup>73 73.</sup> De Conj. 53

That conjugal pairs are born and, unknown to both, are continually educated for marriage, an angel confirmed to Swedenborg by the conjugal similitude seen in their faces.<sup>74</sup> When they have reached marriageable age, the maiden and the youth <sup>74.</sup> @CL 316: 3, 229

"meet somewhere as if by chance and see each other. As if by instinct, they instantly know that they are mates; and, as though from a kind of inner dictate, think within themselves, the young man, 'She is mine,' and the maiden, 'He is mine.'

And after this thought has dwelt for some time in the minds of both, they deliberately address each other and are betrothed. It is said, 'as if by fate', and 'as if by instinct,' but what is meant is 'by the Divine Providence'; because when not known, Divine Providence has this appearance."<sup>75 75.</sup> @CL 316[3], cp 229, 44:6, @HH 383

A wedding in heaven is described in some detail by Swedenborg.<sup>76</sup> And in other passages he shows that the wedded couple generally settle in the home society of the wife.<sup>77</sup> It is explained that in heaven betrothals are solemnized by a priest, as is proper also on earth; for "the consent is the essential of marriage." But at weddings, the angelic couple simply exchange pledges after which the invited guests call down a blessing from heaven.<sup>78</sup> The wedding took place in a society which was devoted to the education of the young, and the emblem of which was an eagle brooding over her young in a nest on top of a tree.<sup>79</sup> Thus is symbolized the most obvious obligation of the church in both worlds - the preparation of spirits for heavenly life. If this use of instruction in spiritual truths could be accomplished on earth, the way to heaven would be shortened.<sup>80 76.</sup> @CL 20-22, cp 316 77. @CL 411[2], cp @SD 6027[16], @HH 378 78. @CL 301, 21:4, @SD 6027: 10 79. @CL 15 80. @HH 491, 513

## 8 SPIRITS FROM THE STARRY HEAVENS

There is no physical space to intervene in the spiritual world. It is therefore possible for those in our "world of spirits" to communicate with spirits from inhabited orbs in the farthest bounds of the universe. Even evil spirits, with wrongful zeal to spread their falsities, may be permitted so to

communicate, having a delight in travelling.<sup>1</sup> 1. EU 169, 172, @AC 10785

Spirits are however represented as "near" their own earth,<sup>2</sup> because they are conjoined with the men on their earth, serve them in many unconscious ways, and base much of their conscious life upon the memories of men.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore said that spirits are about men and in touch with the earth, "because the spiritual world is not in space, but is where there is corresponding affection." "The angelic mansions are indeed in heaven, and to appearance separate from the mansions where men are; and yet they are with man in his affections of good and truth. Their presentation to the sight, as separate, is from appearances. . ." <sup>4</sup> 2. EU 1, 47, @AC 9968, 9578, Ath. 115 3. LJ 9 4. @DLW 343[e], 92, @AC 10604[e], LJ 9

To represent this spiritual relation further, each planet, "in the idea of spirits and angels," is seen in a constant situation relative to spirits from our earth.<sup>5</sup> This separate appearance also expresses the relation of each planet to different provinces in the universal Grand Man, which cannot be made up from one earth alone but from all the planets of the universe.<sup>6</sup> 5. EU 42, 86, 105 6. EU 5, 9, 86, 47, @AC 6807, cp @DP 326[10]

Since the Fall of man, spirits from our earth serve a very lowly use in this Grand Man. Because our race is so involved in mundane and material affairs, the uses which it can perform in heaven are those of the senses, the skins and membranes.<sup>7</sup> Yet the senses are the ultimate gateway and foundation for the mind. And the most essential function which they have performed is to testify of the Lord's coming in the flesh, in that "we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."<sup>8</sup> To propagate this truth by voice and printed word, and to announce His birth, His glorification, and His second advent-not alone to men but to spirits and angels even from other earths- is the sublime mission of our race. Hence it is noted in the Spiritual Diary: 7. @AC 9793, 8630, 9107, @SD 1531, 1741, 1435, 4781f 8. John 1:14, EU 113-122

". . . The inhabitants and spirits of our earth are of the external sense . . . They are corporeal and thus approach the nature of beasts rather than the human . . . Yet they possess cognitions of the truths of faith which can serve for a ground, as it were, in which spiritual and celestial truths of faith can be sown. Without such a ground the truths of faith are not easily inseminated . . . For this reason the spirits of our earth enter more easily the interior and more interior heaven after the exteriors have been vastated; and since they take with them something from the life of the body, they may also serve as a ministering means for instructing others who do not possess such cognitions from Revelation. On this account the Lord loved our earth above others, since for perfect order to exist, celestial and spiritual truths must be inrooted in natural truths . . ." <sup>9</sup>

1. @SD 1531

Swedenborg was privileged to communicate with spirits from extra-terrestrial earths by being transferred as to his spirit, by variations of states of mind, his natural body still remaining in its place.<sup>10</sup> Occasionally, however, owing to their great differences in genius, the spirits of other earths had to be brought to him, by intermediate steps.<sup>11</sup> And there are other spirits - from an earth called Mercury - whose nature it is to wander about in groups to explore the knowledges possessed by spirits of other planets throughout the starry heavens. Their interest is not in physical things like cities, houses, and sensual imagery, but in matters of laws and of government, and in differences of genius, manners, and beliefs. They therefore have reference to the memory of immaterial ideas in the Grand Man.<sup>12</sup> 10. EU 1, 126f, Ath. 115 11. @AC 10585 12. EU 11, 14, 43, @SD 3258, 3265, @AC 6808ff, 10585



It is told of one planet-called "Venus"-that it has people of greatly different types, whose spirits were therefore represented as dwelling on opposite sides of the spiritual planet. One was a race of savage giants who delighted in plunder and violence, and who were stupid and worldly.<sup>13</sup> Those of them who were saved had to undergo states of despair, vastation and suffering before being taken up into heaven. Yet, after deliverance and instruction, they are capable of a deep tenderness of joy.<sup>14</sup> The other kind of spirits from that earth are humane and mild in disposition, and told Swedenborg that during their abode in the world - and more so since they became spirits - they acknowledged our Lord as their only God.<sup>15</sup> These spirits have relation to "the memory of things material agreeing with memory of things immaterial" - thus are in fullest agreement with the spirits of "Mercury."<sup>13</sup> EU 105, 108 <sup>14</sup>. EU 110 <sup>15</sup>. EU 107

There is no written Revelation or Word on any other planet than ours. For this reason the spirits of most (if not all) of the other earths in the universe, can to differing extents talk with the inhabitants of their own earth.<sup>16</sup> So, for instance, spirits from "Jupiter" often speak with the inhabitants and instruct them.

Some also chastise them by inflicting various pains and inspiring threats, if they should intend evil. The man thus addressed by spirits is not allowed to speak to the spirits, except to give a promise not to do evil again; nor must he tell others that a spirit has spoken to him.<sup>17</sup> <sup>16</sup>. @AC 9358, 10833, @HH 309 <sup>17</sup>. EU 71-75

Evil is insinuated by certain evil spirits who had been banished from their society and who try to insinuate contrary notions into men.<sup>18</sup> Certain inhabitants of "Jupiter" call themselves "saints" and forbid the worship of the Lord of the universe telling the people that they will mediate and present their supplications to the Overlord whose face is seen in the sun. These men attribute to themselves merit and sanctity. They are held in aversion by others, and are not addressed by any chastising or instructing spirits. After death these "saints" go into the "lower earth" for vastation - where they seem to themselves to cut wood to keep themselves warm.<sup>19</sup> The Jovians have relation to "the imaginative of thought."<sup>20</sup> <sup>18</sup>. EU 77 <sup>19</sup>. EU 70, 78 <sup>20</sup>. EU 64

The spiritual Sun is ordinarily seen in the other life only by angels of the inmost or third heaven. Others see only the light thence derived. Occasionally, however, other spirits are allowed to see the Sun. In one such case some doubted whether it could have been the Lord God, since they had not seen a face; but then the Sun again appeared, and in the midst of it the Lord encompassed with a solar circle. Then also the Lord was seen out of that Sun by spirits of our own earth who had seen Him in the world and who all confirmed that it was the Lord Himself, And the spirits of the planet Jupiter "declared aloud that it was He Himself whom they had seen on their earth when the God of the Universe appeared to them."<sup>21</sup> <sup>21</sup>. EU 40

It seems probable that the Lord's appearance "on their earth" as well as on other planets is effected by some angel who is then infilled with the Divine and is seen when the spiritual sight is opened; even as occurred when the "angel of Jehovah" appeared to the ancient prophets on this earth.<sup>22</sup> <sup>22</sup>. EU 91, @AC 1925, 1745, cp 1594:5 <sup>23</sup>. EU 50, 55, 56

The Jovian spirits just mentioned are wiser and more upright than our spirits, and have a gentle and sweet effect when their influence is felt. Even when meeting with others with whom only an apparent friendship is possible, they act with sincere courtesy which yet does not dissemble.<sup>23</sup> They are in innocence without shame in nakedness, and much resemble the celestial people of the Golden Age on earth.<sup>24</sup> These spirits, because of their humility, "are seen to walk, not erect like

others, but almost like persons swimming, seeming to assist themselves with their hands, and by turns look around them." In fact, the Diary notes, "the erect posture of the body is not natural but artificial" and acquired.<sup>25</sup> 24. EU 49 25. EU 55, @SD 567, 3488, cp @AC 8371; WLG 31, @DP 275

The differences between various extra-terrestrial spirits is illustrated by the spirits from the moon, who are small, are shaped like dwarfs, have pleasant faces, but a thunderous speech; and those from Mars, who are of a celestial genius and are not unlike those from the most ancient church of our earth.<sup>26</sup> 26. EU 111f, 85, 87

The spirits of Mars use an "internal respiration" and a speech not sonorous or articulate, but almost tacit, and aided by the expressions of the face which have nothing of concealment. But those inclining to evil are skilled in a speech which conceals their ideas from other spirits that are present.<sup>27</sup> 27. EU 87, 95

Some Martians are among "the best" of any spirits from our solar system, many of them being still in celestial love. But "at this day" many are beginning to recede from this love and place heavenly life in cognitions.<sup>28</sup> 28. @AC 7476, 7622, 7743

It was suggested to Swedenborg that "if the inhabitants of Mars should not remain in their state . . . others will succeed, from a new earth, who would be like them; for when one perishes, another succeeds.

There cannot be anything lacking. So does the Lord provide."<sup>29</sup> 29. @SD 3250

Spirits from "Saturn" relate to "a sense mediate between the spiritual and the natural man" - which recedes from the natural. They seem to be carried into heaven and presently be let back again. Our spirits who relate to the corporeal sense, may infest the spirits of Saturn, but these fear nothing, but remain tranquil and secure. They are not in self-esteem, and appear small in stature. They acknowledge the Lord as the one only God. But some of them are separated from the rest because they call the nocturnal light from the great belt of Saturn "the Lord."<sup>30</sup> 30. EU 102, 100

Many remarkable things are told in the Writings concerning spirits from "the starry heaven" outside our solar system. Many of these are of a celestial genius, and have open intercourse with the men on their earth.<sup>31</sup> If we suppose that their heavens resemble their earthly abodes, it is of interest to note that some have sanctuaries and dwellings admirably formed of the intertwining branches of living trees.<sup>32</sup> Certain of these spirits are so unwilling to think of the body that they seem nebulous in form.<sup>33</sup> 31. EU 120, 160f, 169, @AC 9438 32. EU 151 33. EU 149

Not all are good. On certain earths any one who thinks or does evil is reproved by a chastising spirit and, if he persists after repeated warnings, he dies in a swoon, apparently from fright.<sup>34</sup> "In this way the men of that earth are preserved from the contamination of evil." The world of spirits of some earths has a "lower earth" where spirits undergo vastation.<sup>35</sup> Some - who on earth had believed that man's spirit was from eternity - were taught that this was an erroneous idea.<sup>36</sup> 34. EU 154

1. EU 70f, 110, 171

2. EU 149

The same planet may have different types of people. There are idolaters. Monogamy seems to be universal, yet there is mention of harlots who become "enchantresses" after death,<sup>37</sup> and of hells

from various earths.<sup>38</sup> 37. Cp @AC 10837, 10165 38. @AC 9972, 9794, EU 137, 147, 109, 171, @SD 4663

How the wisdom of the spirits from some of these earths of outer space compares with that of mankind here, is difficult to describe. The highest wisdom on any planet is the wisdom of how to live and how to share happiness - and this depends foremostly on a love to God and an understanding charity towards men. While our globe is sorely lacking in such essentials, its spiritual potential is in a unique way crystallized in its Divine revelations. The Lord was born on this earth because the Scriptures and the Heavenly Doctrine concerning the Lord can here be preserved forever and communicated.<sup>39</sup> For "when the Heavenly Doctrine is known in one earth, the rest are thus able to know it, when they become spirits and angels."<sup>40</sup> It is noteworthy that after True Christian Religion had been finished, on the nineteenth day of June in the year 1770, the Lord sent out His apostles into "the universal spiritual world," to preach His new gospel.<sup>41</sup> 39. EU 113ff

1. @SD 4781

2. @TCR 791, 108

While our earth, when seen in the searching light of heaven, may seem like "a stagnant pit",<sup>42</sup> and while the spirits of our earth correspond in general to the skin and the external senses of the Grand Man, <sup>42</sup>. @SD 1588

"they nevertheless have the cognitions of the truths of faith, which serve as it were for soil in which the spiritual and celestial truths of faith can be inseminated . . . wherefore they easily come into the interior and inmost heaven after their exteriors have been devastated. And as some bring with them such things from the life of the body, they serve as ministries for the instruction of others who have not such cognitions from revelation; wherefore the Lord has loved our earth above others; for to the end that order may be perfect, celestial and spiritual truths must be rooted in natural truths."<sup>43</sup> 43. @SD 1531

Only on this earth are the natural sciences cultivated in both concrete and abstract forms, as well as such mechanical arts as writing and printing, shipbuilding and inventions through which the means of communication and of mundane comforts are perfected.<sup>44</sup> On other earths there is no desire to travel - if we except such explorers of abstractions as the spirits of Mercury!<sup>45</sup>

Nor is there any knowledge of writing - "so far as is yet known."<sup>46</sup> Some spirits of Mercury at first ridiculed our printed books - claiming (with some truth) that with us knowledge was separate from the man himself. But Swedenborg took trouble to explain to them how truth can be preserved and communicated by writing. And it is notable that "spirits retain what they see and are told in the other life and ... in this way can be perfected . . . And this goes on to eternity . . ."<sup>47</sup> 44. @AC 9793, EU 136, @SD 4663[11], 4781 45. @AC 10785, EU 169, @SD 4781 46. @SD 4663 47. @AC 6930f, @SD 3235

But the heavens of all the earths may also benefit from a contact with spirits of our earth in another way. For when the Word as it exists on earth is read and preached by men, it passes into a spiritual form and is presented as such before the angels of heaven "from whatever earth they come."<sup>48</sup> 48. @AC 9357[e]

One kind of superior intelligence that spirits of other earths possess is suggested. For certain spirits "speak according to the use," in that their thought does not linger on the immediate use of an object but on its remoter uses, progressively more interior; so that they perceive in an instant to which

degree the thought is directed - the ninth, fifteenth, or even the fiftieth!49 49. @AC 10709, @SD 3270f, 3901

But there is no wisdom without an idea of God. Swedenborg testifies, from reading the memories of spirits,<sup>50</sup> that men on every planet have the human form, although with different features; and that universally they worship God as visible under the human form, unless evil has led them astray into idolatry.<sup>51</sup> 50. EU 160 51. EU 154, 142, cp @TCR 8, @AC 9972, 6700

The need for the historical knowledge that the Lord of the universe took on a body of flesh and glorified it, making it Divine, is not equally urgent for all men. In fact, "If the most ancient church had remained in its integrity, the Lord would have had no need to be born a man."<sup>52</sup>

It was the desperate plight of our race, in forsaking the Tree of Life, that made it necessary for the Lord to teach men through external ways by the written Word, and at last to assume a Human on earth. The way to heaven, for our race, thenceforth lay through the Word of prophecy fulfilled in Gospel and Heavenly Doctrine. <sup>52</sup>. @AC 2661[2], cp 2523

Thus we are informed that only "a very few" on other earths know that the Lord assumed a Human on this earth and made it Divine. But when they are told after death that God was actually born a Man in the flesh, they accept this and rejoice that it is so.<sup>53</sup> 53. EU 121, 118, @AC 6700, @HH 321[e]

#### THE LORD IS THE GOD OF HEAVEN

Before we begin to consider the distinctive character of the various angelic heavens, we must stress that the Lord alone is the God of heaven.<sup>54</sup> Throughout the heavens none other than the Lord is acknowledged as God. And by the Lord is meant Jehovah in His Human-the Lord incarnate, glorified, and possessing "all power in heaven and in earth."<sup>55</sup> The angels acknowledge the unity of the Lord's Human with the Divine from eternity, and see the "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit" as one in essence and Person - as the Soul, the Body, and the Operation of the One infinite God-Man.<sup>56</sup> 54. @HH 2 55. Matthew 28:18, @HH 5, @AE 726[2] 56. @TCR 166 seq.

"Each one is admitted into heaven in accordance with his confession of God." "The first and primary thought that opens heaven to man is his thought about God."<sup>57</sup> For it is the Divine of the Lord that makes heaven.<sup>58</sup> Man's inmost ideals, loves, and potential uses are involved in his idea of God. It is therefore said that each of the gates leading into the New Jerusalem is a single pearl - a jewel which signifies the truth concerning the Divine Human of the Lord.<sup>59</sup> 57. Ath. 147, @AE 1096f 58. @HH 7-12 59. Revelation 21:21, @AR 916, @AE 1097[2], 3

As was previously noted, the spirits from various earths, when shown the Lord's countenance in the Sun of heaven, confess Him as identical with the Only Lord, the God of the universe, whom they had seen as Man on their earths when their internal sight had been opened.<sup>60</sup>

"Since they adore the Divine under the human form, they adore the Lord."<sup>61</sup> 60. @AE 7173, @SD 3292 61. EU 40, 91, 65, 158, @AC 7477, 6700, 10377

The Lord appears above the heavens as a Sun. But frequently He also appears in heaven in the form of an angel yet distinguished from angels by the Divine shining through from His face. He is not there in Person, for "in Person the Lord is constantly encompassed by the Sun"; but He is present by "internal sight."<sup>62</sup> Thus the Lord often appears to angels from our earth. And it is told that when a judgment has to take place among the spirits of certain other earths, so that the good

may be separated from the evil, there is seen a bright cloud in the human form, with a flamy radiance; which is then recognized as an angelic society in the midst of which the Lord reveals Himself. This is reminiscent of His prediction to the apostles, that He would come with the angels in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.<sup>63 62. @HH 121, 55, @AR 938, @AE 412[16] 63. EU 170f, @AC 10809ff, Matthew 24:30</sup>

## Part Two: The Angelic Heavens

### 9 THE SUN OF HEAVEN AND ITS ATMOSPHERES

Nothing of nature or of the suns and stars of nature is visible to spirits and angels. But the Sun of heaven is the Lord, and it is as a Sun, inexpressibly bright, that He is seen constantly by the celestial angels.<sup>1</sup> This does not mean that this Sun is identical with the Lord, for the Lord is Divine Man.<sup>2</sup> But He appears before the angels in the Sun or encompassed by a solar circle. This Sun is from the Lord and is not only the first substance of creation "but is also the only one, from which all things are; and as it is the one only substance, it follows that it is in every created thing . . . ." <sup>3 1. @HH 116ff, @DLW 83, 85 2. @DLW 103-107, 86, 93, 97, 290f, 151-156 3. @DLW 300, @DP 5</sup>

Thus the Sun of heaven, as an underlying spiritual substance, is universally present in both worlds, yet apart from space. It is through this medium that the Lord's Divine love and wisdom proceed into the heavens in the form of heat and light-but spiritual heat, which is love, and spiritual light, which is truth or wisdom.

The Sun of heaven is as it were girded by two or more "radiant belts" which accommodate the Divine life for reception by the angels.<sup>4 4. @AC 7270, Ang. Id., @TCR 33, 76, @AE 726[2], Ath. 190. As to the function of the spiritual Sun in creation, see Creation, Academy Publication Com., Bryn Athyn, Pa. 1964.</sup>

From the heavenly Sun there proceed by creation three spiritual "atmospheres," formed "one from another and one after another," thus in three discrete substantial degrees, for the angels of the three heavens, according to their ability to receive love and wisdom.<sup>5</sup> Thus we read: 5. Ibid.

"The angels of the three heavens dwell in the regions of these atmospheres: the angels of the supreme heaven in the celestial aura which most nearly accompanies the Sun where the Lord is; the angels of the middle heaven in the spiritual ether below them; and the angels of the lowest heaven in the spiritual- natural air below those two. Thus are all the heavens established - from the first, to the last one which is at this day being founded by the Lord."<sup>6 6. Coro. 17 (Italics added.)</sup>

This teaching seemingly allocates each heaven to one specific atmosphere. But, lest we misunderstand, there are other teachings: Angels are complete human forms, and therefore have hearing, sight, and - it is suggested - an interior perception requiring still purer organics, sensitive to more subtle atmospheres. This is so with men, and therefore there is in nature not only the air which men breathe and by which sound and speech are possible, but an ether which carries light-waves to which the eye is attuned. And "still purer atmospheres" may be needed to excite the natural substances which are associated with the natural mind.<sup>7</sup> And point by point, these things are correspondingly true of the angelic body and its mental organics. For every angel breathes, hears, sees, thinks and feels. Moreover, all the three natural atmospheres exert a pressure upon the bodies of men or upon their interior organics, and without such pressures these organisms would

perish. And the same is correspondently true of the spiritual bodies of the angels, of whatever heaven or degree.<sup>8</sup> 7. @DLW 176, 257 8. @DLW 176, LJ post. 314, @SD 4063, 4066

How then can it be said that the angels of each heaven "dwell" in one specific atmosphere? Certainly every angel needs all three.

A spiritual atmosphere is a medium for the Lord's influx of life. We speak of this life as spiritual heat and light which are really the Lord's love and wisdom, proceeding, It is infinite love and truth - offered to the angel without measure, yet adapted to the angel's needs by accommodation in a finite vehicle which is called - for lack of a better name - "atmosphere."

To mortal man it may appear as if these spiritual accommodations could be called "atmospheres" only in a figurative or poetical sense! But this is because it is difficult for us to feel the reality of spiritual things, and also because we know so little of the nature and marvelous functions of our own natural atmospheres. Yet the atmospheres are the means by which we perceive physical things, and the media by which all these things are energized and sustained. There could be no conversion of energy into new forms without atmospheres as the means.

It is the same in the spiritual world. There no life could be communicated except through the Divinely created media which serve as atmospheres. These media are "outside" of the angels. They exist as real substances - as "discreted substances or least forms, originating from the Sun," conveying spiritual heat and light and adapting these to the angels and the spirits under heaven.<sup>9</sup> They are not parts of the angelic constitution, nor do they exist merely in the minds of the angels! But through these atmospheres of heaven there operate spiritual farces corresponding to the various physical forces which are displayed in nature. The heat or activity of the highest spiritual atmosphere, or the "celestial aura" of the highest heaven, is received as celestial love - for to the angels of the highest heaven life or heat means a love to the Lord, and light means the perceptions of the wisdom of mutual love. Even the celestial angels "possess an external, like all spirits." They possess all the lower degrees.<sup>10</sup> But their real mental life is from the realization of love; and that which gives them a plane of consciousness is therefore "the celestial aura." 9. @DLW 174 10. @SD 5548, 2157f

And even as the highest of the natural atmospheres - "the purer ether, which is universal" - is the source of all gravitation in the physical world; so the "celestial aura" - the atmosphere of love - is the origin of all spiritual gravitation, by which everything in the other world finds its relation to the Lord and its true weight and place in the Divine economy.<sup>11</sup> 11. LJ post. 312, cp @AC 5658

The "spiritual ether" has a different function. Even as the "middle ether" of nature is the medium of light and the source of magnetism, so we find in the "spiritual ether" a plane for the magnetism of charity and for the radiation by which spiritual thoughts and affections diffuse their enlightenment. Thus it becomes the plane of life and consciousness of the second heaven. Yet it is also noted that spiritual light does not pass through spaces "but through the affections and perceptions of truth, thus in an instant to the last limits of the heavens."<sup>12</sup> 12. LJ post. 312, @LJCont 14

The good spirits of the first or ultimate heaven find the stimulus of their life in the plane of the "spiritual-natural air." The air of earth serves as the means of sound and hearing. And man early learns to hearken to parental commands - even if he does not understand why they are given. The "historical faith" which man accepts on the authority of others, and which marks the beginning of

reformation, leads a man's spirit into the "spiritual-natural air," the sphere of the first heaven, the heaven of obedience to the doctrine of his religious faith. In this lowest spiritual atmosphere - in which ideas are modified into words - are lodged the forces of spiritual loyalties, and it exerts the imperceptible pressure of natural loves - which betimes are turned into the winds of judgment.<sup>13</sup> 13. @AC 7089[e]

### The Spheres of Spirits and Angels

"The spiritual-natural air," like the two other atmospheres, is present in each of the heavens. But in different degree of purity, and with different degrees of pressure - even as on earth at different altitudes. Each angelic society has its own type of breathing, and an air of different clarity.

In the highest heaven it appears "like the pure aura which is called the ether; in the lower heavens as one less pure, almost like the atmosphere which is called the air; in the lowest heaven it has a thin watery appearance above which there is vapor like clouds." In fact, the natural heaven, as viewed from the spiritual, appears often like a vast sea.<sup>14</sup> 14. @AE 594, @AR 238

The origin of this variety lies with the angels, just as our air is contaminated with dust and fumes, or rendered delightful with the fragrance of flowers, so the spheres of societies of spirits or angels cause modifications of their atmospheres.

"Around every angel there is a sphere ... of his life, which spreads abroad to a great distance from him. This sphere flows out . . . from the life of his affection or love. It is therefore an extension outside of him of such life as is in him. This extension is effected by means of the spiritual atmosphere or aura which is the aura of heaven."<sup>15</sup> 15. @AE 392[2]

By this sphere, which of course is nonmaterial, spirits can perceive each other's qualities at a distance. It is "as it were" an atmosphere in which spirits live.<sup>16</sup> It wells forth from everything of a spirit's body, like a stream of substances set free therefrom and actuated by the beat of his heart and the breathing of his lungs. These waves of effluvia are concordant with his life, yet are not the spirit but are (so to speak) devoid of his life. For they pour forth unconsciously from his interior memory and are not under his control. Although called the sphere of the spirit's affections and thoughts, it is not in any sense insubstantial or separate from the sphere of his spiritual body.<sup>17</sup> 16. @AC 10130[2], @SD 3817 17. @DLW 291-294

This sphere, which is perceptible as odors, or colors, or sounds, becomes the medium by which representative creations take place around the spirit, in the forms of vegetation or animal life. It can evoke delight or loathing, peace or terror, persuasion or phantasy. By this sphere, when received by evil men, the hells can even contort the creative influx of the Lord into nature, resulting in diseases or in the appearance on earth of evil and hurtful forms of life, both vegetative and animal.

For "within everything spiritual there is an endeavor (conatus) to clothe itself with a body. The hells are about man, and therefore in contact with the earth, because the spiritual world is not in space, but is where there is a corresponding affection."<sup>18</sup> 18. @DLW 343

While man is living in the world, his spirit is affected by the atmospheres and spheres of heaven and hell. We are taught that in addition to the three spiritual atmospheres of the discrete heavens, there are also three spiritual atmospheres which are operating "below the sun of the world." These constantly accompany the three natural atmospheres and enable men to think and feel.<sup>19</sup> 19. LJ

Every spirit must eventually seek and remain with his like, for he cannot bear to be outside of a sphere which accords with his own. He can find no freedom, cannot breathe or think normally and happily unless he returns to his own congenial sphere and into an atmosphere which belongs to his own degree of life.

### The Light of Heaven

Before Swedenborg's, spiritual sight was opened, he, like other Christians, had no idea that there could be light and visible objects in the other life. Yet it is a common thing to speak of the light of intelligence and to say that we see mental objects when we recall them. The gospel speaks of the creative Word - the Logos - as "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Frequently the Lord referred to Himself as "the Light of the world." And - after "the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light"<sup>20</sup> - the New Jerusalem would descend, a celestial city which "had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb was the light thereof."<sup>21</sup> <sup>20. Matthew 24:29 21. Revelation 21:23</sup>

When our mortal eyes are darkened to the sun and moon of nature, we enter a world of the mind where truth is the only light.<sup>22</sup>

And this light emanates from the Sun of heaven, in which the Lord appears in glory. When it is said of the New Jerusalem that the Lamb is the light thereof, it means the Lord in His Divine Human. <sup>22. @HH 116f, Wis. i</sup>

All in heaven turn their faces (and this means their interiors) toward the Lord, where He appears as a Sun in the "East" of heaven, at middle height. From this the other "quarters" of the spiritual world are determined, and spirits and angels have their spiritual situation in the four quarters according to their reception of love and wisdom from the Lord.<sup>23</sup> <sup>23. @DLW 120, 122, 124ff, 132</sup>

"An angel can see God, that is, the Lord, both within himself and outside of himself: within himself when he thinks from love and wisdom; outside of himself when he thinks about love and wisdom." For God is not in space. Nor is the spiritual Sun in space. Angels may therefore turn themselves about and see all their surroundings, while the Lord as a Sun appears constantly before their face, with the South to the right and the North to the left, "at every turn of their body."<sup>24</sup> <sup>24. @DLW 130ff</sup>

The Sun of heaven never sets. But in the sight of the angels, the light dims and brightens. When it is morning in the inmost heaven, it is evening in the second or spiritual heaven. When a state corresponding to "sunset" comes to the lower heavens, the mountains on which the celestial dwell and which are enshrouded with deep blue clouds, seem to sink down to a lower level. Those of the celestial kingdom see the Lord constantly as a Sun, fiery and flaming, while the spiritual see Him "as a moon," - that is, of a light similar to moonlight, white and brilliant - but far exceeding any earthly sunshine.<sup>25</sup> But compared with the light of the celestials this is like that of moon and stars at night. They see Him as a Moon, sometimes encompassed by many moonlets almost solar in brilliance. The reason is that the spiritual heavens receive the influx of charity and love into the truths of faith which mediate this influx in much the same way in which the moon reflects the sunlight.<sup>26</sup> Such faith may contain many fallacies in which no evil is involved - and which are accepted by the Lord as truths.

And since, before the Lord's advent, there was a Divine influx by the mediation of the angelic



heavens, but after the Lord's glorification an influx immediately from the Divine Human, the Sun of heaven after the Lord's coming "shone out with greater effulgence and splendor than before"; even as the prophet had promised, "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold as the light of seven days."<sup>27</sup> 25. @SD 4639, 2219, cp 4933, @AC 9684[2] 26. @AC 2849, 1531, @HH 118, @SD 4219 27. @AE 401[10], @AC 6371ff, @DLW 233, Isaiah 30:26

The angels of the spiritual or second heaven frequently also see the Lord as a Sun, and this is sometimes granted even to those of the ultimate heaven. But generally, those of the lowest heaven only perceive Him as a light far surpassing that of the physical sun, or else as a Moon.<sup>28</sup> 28. @DLW 85, 429, 182, @DP 166, cp @AC 1531, 6832

## 10 THE WORD IN HEAVEN

"The entire Word, from beginning to end"-"the same Word that was manifested through Moses and the prophets and through the evangelists"-" this same Word which is with men in the world, is also with the angels in the heavens; yet in the world with men it is natural, but in the heavens it is spiritual." When an angel reads his Word, written in a spiritual language, he "knows no otherwise than that it is like the Word which he read in the natural world." The angels "read it equally as do men on earth; their doctrinal things are from it and their preachings are from it. The Word is the same; its natural sense, however, is not in heaven, but a spiritual sense."<sup>1</sup> 1. Lord 2, @SD 5603f, De Ver. 31, @HH 259, @AE 831[e]

"The angels confess that they have all their wisdom through the Word." "All the wisdom of the angels is given by means of the Word, since in its internal and inmost sense it is the Divine wisdom, which is communicated to the angels through the Word when this is read by men, and when thought is exercised from it. . ." <sup>2</sup> 2. SS 73, @SD 5187; expl. @SD 5607 seq., De Ver. 30

Since the Word exists in written form in heaven, it is to be expected that the angels also gather for common religious worship. But because the spiritual state of an angelic community does not change by the calendar, the priests there proclaim a Sabbath whenever they sense the needs of their congregation. Swedenborg describes such an occasion.<sup>3</sup> The temple in this particular heaven was semicircular in shape and held about three thousand people. The back seats were higher than those in front, and the pulpit was near the center, with a door to the left. Every one who entered knew his own place from an innate perception. If he sat elsewhere, he could neither hear nor understand, and the priest, because order would be disturbed, would become confused. 3. @CL 23, 24

The sermon was followed by a votive prayer. The service seemed to last about two hours. It is of interest to note that the subject of the discourse preached on this occasion was the holiness of the Sacred Scripture and the conjunction of the Lord with both worlds, the spiritual and the natural, by means of this "Holy Book" in which the Divine wisdom "lies concealed beneath the sense of the letter." And the priest later referred to Paul's declaration that in Jesus Christ "dwelleth all the fullness of Deity bodily" - showing that the Epistles also are known in some heavens.<sup>4</sup> 4. @CL 24, Colossians 2:9

We are further informed that "the Word is in every heaven and with almost every angel, in its own sense," and that it is read by them every day.<sup>5</sup> But this statement needs some explanation. For other teachings show that it refers specifically to the heavens of this earth, where the Word was couched

in writing and later printed. On our globe successive churches received the Word in differing forms. It is therefore said that those angels read the Word in heaven "who have delighted in it here." Certain heavens are separate "because they possess another Word."<sup>6</sup> The Ancient Word - now mostly lost and unknown on earth - is still preserved in heaven and read among those angels who had it on earth. We are assured that "the Ancient Word is still with them." Parts of this ancient Scripture were known to Moses and others of the Hebrews.

Moses - we are told in the Spiritual Diary - "knows about the following Word which exists at this day, but he does not read it."<sup>7</sup> 5. SS 70, @AE 1024, @SD 5603 6. @TCR 279[e] 7. SD min. 4736, SS 103, @TCR 279, @SD 6107, 5605

How far the angels of the Ancient Church learn of the Old Testament and of the New, or of the Writings of the second advent of the Lord, can only vaguely be inferred from the modes of instruction by which the doctrine of heaven was conveyed to certain gentile spirits, who received the Word and read it, and afterwards were given copies of some of the Writings for them to draw from according to need under the guidance of tutelary angels, who had promised them "a Bible, but a new Bible, from the Lord."<sup>8</sup> 8. @SD 4775, 5517, 5946f, LJ post. 116, 123

Referring to the heavens from our earth, the doctrine states:

"Whereas the Divine truth, when it passed from the Lord through the three heavens even to men in the world, was written in each heaven and made the Word, therefore the Word is the union of the heavens with each other, and the union of the heavens with the church in the world-for the Word is the same everywhere and only differs in perfection of glory and wisdom according to the degrees in which the heavens are."<sup>9</sup> 9. @AE 1073f, @HH 259, @AR 959

The Word, in heaven as on earth, appears as a written or printed volume. "A copy of it, written by angels inspired by the Lord, is kept with every larger society of heaven in its sacred repository, lest it should be changed as to any point." The script or type differs in the various heavens. It bears some resemblance to old Hebrew, Arabic, or Roman lettering; but with points or marks over the characters to exalt the sense for the wiser angels.<sup>10</sup> 10. @TCR 241, SS 72, cp De Ver. 62, 33

In angelic writing, every consonant has a meaning and every vowel expresses a distinct affection. The vowels which the celestial especially use are the open sounds of ah, oh, and oo, for these carry more affection.<sup>11</sup>

1. De Ver. 14, 33, 62, @DWis 7:5:3

The Word - or the written revelation which was known to them in the world - is differently written and accommodated for the angels of each heaven, although couched in the same universal spiritual language. It is true that this language is implanted the same in all spirits.

But the understanding of the angels of the three heavens differs, and the perception of the different forms of writing is exclusive to each heaven; although the angels are not conscious of the difference unless their states are changed. Besides, the Word is read by spirits in different ways. The celestial look for the uses in the Word, the spiritual see the doctrinal aspects, while the natural are delighted only with its holy external. And there are, "at the threshold of heaven," those who, like some textual critics, attend only to the words.<sup>12</sup> 12. De Ver. 7, 12, @CL 327, @SD 5606, 1950ff

The fact that the entire Word of Divine revelation exists in objective spiritual forms in the other life,

is illustrated by the teaching that after death man's interior memory preserves a record of all his mental experiences on earth, even to the slightest details. "Many things which in man take the form of ideas are there presented as objects of sight." Thus angels can see, in the Word which they loved, every single thing, even "as to all the words, so that nothing at all has perished, and this although they had only read it hastily in the life of the body."<sup>13</sup> 13. @SD 5602, 5606, SD min. 4736, @HH 466, 462-464

But now they see it spiritually. They see nothing of the natural sense. What they perceive is the spiritual sense "in such series, in such connectedness, and thus in such wisdom as cannot be expressed in human words, or described."<sup>14</sup> There are three discrete degrees of meaning within the angelic Word. There is no ratio or comparison between the Word in the celestial heaven and the Word in the spiritual heaven, nor between the Word in the spiritual and in the natural heaven. But by "real correspondences continuous through the three heavens from the Lord" they make one Word.<sup>15</sup> 14. @AE 17 15. De Ver. 4, 5, @AC 4442[e]

Among the more external spirits of the first heaven, the Word is present not as the spiritual sense but as an "external sense" which, however, is more spiritual than our literal sense.<sup>16</sup> It is seen as a spiritual-moral or internal-historical sense, in which no names of persons or places are found, but wherein the internal and moral aspects of the churches and nations treated of in the letter are described.

It is the truth Divine in the "fifth degree" which is perceived in the ultimate heaven and also - in glimpses - by enlightened men.<sup>17</sup> 16. @SD 5561 17. @AC 4279, 8443

When conversing with Swedenborg, spirits and angels could sometimes refer to chapters from the Sacred Scripture and cite passages which were in his memory.<sup>18</sup> Novitiate spirits apparently also have an idea of biblical personalities-from the memories of the men with whom they are associated. For example: some newcomers wish to pay homage to, or curry favor with, certain patriarchs and apostles, and frequently they seek Mary or Peter.<sup>19</sup> It is said that since "the sense of the letter of the Word is most holy and even more powerful than its spiritual sense," spirits who quote any passage according to the sense of the letter immediately evoke some heavenly society to conjunction with them -while "the spiritual sense without its companion, the natural sense, does not communicate with heaven." For in the literal sense the Divine truth is in its ultimate order, in which the spiritual and the celestial Words are both contained.<sup>20</sup> 18. Cp @TCR 625,136f 19. @CL 6 20. @AE 816[2], 3, 356e, De Ver. 35, 47f, 54f, 57, @TCR 235

Even though the letter itself in the original languages is not known by angels, a sense of the letter seems to exist in the spiritual world. The Word in heaven "is, as to the literal sense, similar to our Word, while at the same time it corresponds to it, so that they are one."<sup>21</sup> They correspond as ideas correspond to words. Instead of names of men and places are the "things" or the spiritual states and qualities which they signify, or the character of the person or church, named in the Letter. Within this "external sense" which good spirits perceive, there are interior senses perceived by the higher angels. Thus by the names "Abraham" and "David" are perceived phases of man's regeneration, or of the process of the Lord's redemptive work, or of the glorification of His Human.<sup>22</sup> 21. @AC 2470, @TCR 241[2] 22. @AC 64, SS 71, De Ver. 34, 32, LJ 57

An idea of the differences of subject-matter seen in the heavenly Word in its three senses, may be gathered from the teachings in the True Christian Religion about the ten commandments.<sup>23</sup> For in the first heaven the spiritual-moral sense, which is the interior natural, is seen. In the second

heaven the precept is applied especially to the spiritual relationship to the neighbor or the church. And the celestial sense has to do with the more direct relationship of man with the Lord. 23. @TCR 291-327

The Writings also describe how these senses are unfolded before the angels of the three heavens out of the natural ideas of a man who is devoutly reading the Word. They liken this unfolding to the physiological process whereby the food, in the form of chyle, becomes the source from which the blood- vessels extract their blood, the nerve fibres their juice, and the cortical substances of the brain their "animal spirit." The angels, similarly, extract the interior contents of the Word from the man, without any knowledge of the natural sense and without knowing what the man is thinking; even as man's food is digested without his being aware of it.<sup>24</sup> 24. SS 66, 67, @TCR 236, @SD 5607

Strange to say, the internal sense unfolds before the mind of the angels even though the earthly reader or hearer is not attending to the meaning. For a man usually adds false and disturbing ideas of his own - especially if he is not in the faith of charity. On this account the angels usually understand the spiritual sense more clearly and fully when the letter of the Word is read by little children or by simple minds, than when it is read by adults.<sup>25</sup> This should not discourage New Church adults from a thoughtful reading of Holy Scripture with an endeavor to understand its spiritual meaning. For "it would be better if the man also were in light" and could serve as a plane for a still more profound angelic wisdom, by thinking from the Heavenly Doctrine.<sup>26</sup> 25. @AC 3480[e], 1871, 1776, @SD 895, 4246 26. @SD 5609, 5610, 4247

Spirits and angels communicate with each other by the spiritual language of ideas.<sup>27</sup> This is both spoken and written.

When a man dies, his corporeal memory, which contains words and other material ideas, becomes quiescent, and his speech proceeds from his interior memory which comprises all the man's rational experiences and thus the ideas and ends from which our words originate. Merely natural ideas such as words "are not reproduced in the other life, but only the spiritual things which are adjoined to the natural by correspondences." "Only those things that man has imbibed by means of material things and made rational, come into use."<sup>28</sup>

1. @AC 2472

2. @AC 2471f, @HH 464

Thus the angelic language has nothing in common with man's speech, and angels are unable to utter a single word of human language.<sup>29</sup> From this it seems to follow that the "letter" of Holy Scripture-in Hebrew, in Greek, or in various translations, is not extant as such in the spiritual world. Good spirits and angels would know nothing at all of what is in the "letter," not even the nearest meaning of a single word, still less of the names of countries, cities, rivers or persons mentioned therein. And the same would be the case whether they were reading their own heavenly version of the Word, or whether they were attending some simple-hearted man who was reading it-a man who loved the Word and lived in charity.<sup>30</sup> 29. @HH 237 30. @AC 64, 1767

But a different situation would arise when spirits or angels speak openly with a man. For then they no longer speak in their own spiritual language but in the man's vernacular, as if they were born into it and had no other language.<sup>31</sup> Turning themselves to the man, they conjoin themselves to his thought and memory, adopting all his knowledge so that the man's thought and words seem to be their own, and using them with a skill surpassing man's own.<sup>32</sup> 31. @HH 255 32. @HH 246

"Yet the state of mankind is now such that there can no longer be such a conjunction with angels, but only with spirits who are not in heaven." Such intercourse is therefore rarely granted to men on this earth at this day.<sup>33</sup>

For evil spirits would seek to speak to the man and then would know that they are with him; in which case they could harm him, body and soul.<sup>34</sup> 33. @HH 249, 253 34. @HH 249 ref's; @AC 1075 1, @AE 1182[4]

A special protection was extended over Swedenborg, to enable him to be alternately in a state like that of spirits and angels and to talk with them in their spiritual language, knowing nothing of his own; and at other times in a natural state in which spirits or angels could converse with him in his own earthly languages. Therefore he records:

"When angels turn themselves to a man they know no otherwise than that the man's language is their own, and that they have no other language; and this for the reason that they are then in the man's language and not in their own - of which they have no recollection. But as soon as they turn themselves away from the man they are in their own angelic and spiritual language, and know nothing about man's language. A like thing happened to me when I have been in company with angels and in a state like theirs. Then I too spoke with them in their tongue, and knew nothing of my own, which I had forgotten. But as soon as I was no longer in company with them, I was in my own language."<sup>35</sup> 35. @HH 255; cf @CL 326[4], 329

Similarly, spiritual writing proved to be meaningless to spirits when present in Swedenborg's natural state. When this was read to Swedenborg they could understand nothing, since the writing consisted only of alphabetical letters with curved strokes above them, but with no hint of the spiritual meaning.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, spirits and angels, when present with Swedenborg in his "natural" state, could share his knowledge of the letter of Scripture and could discuss the relation of its statements to the spiritual sense within. 36. @CL 326[5]

Always, the Word which exists in heaven presents the internal meaning which is behind the words of the inspired natural text. Certain summaries of that internal sense which Swedenborg was led to draw up were compared with the Word in heaven and were found to be in conformity with it.<sup>37</sup>

What the Writings give in abstract doctrinal wording is a summary presentation to men of the angelic Word. Therefore Swedenborg, in the Arcana Coelestia and elsewhere, after giving an exposition of the spiritual contents of some chapter of the Scripture was authorized to make such statements as the following: "This then is the internal sense of the Word, its veriest life, which does not at all appear from the sense of the letter."<sup>38</sup> 37. SS 97e 38. @AC 64, 1783:2, 1965, 6597, @HD 7, Inv. 44

To read falsities into the Word closes heaven to man. But to interpret the spiritual sense from genuine truths of revealed doctrine, opens heaven so that man may "think together with the angels and thus conjoin them to himself in his intellectual mind" - provided of course that man is at the same time in good.<sup>39</sup> 39. De Ver. 20f, @AC 3316[3], 2094:3, @HH 114

The Heavenly Doctrine, revealed through the Lord's servant, Emanuel Swedenborg "for the New Church," is in essence the same as the spiritual sense of the Word. This revelation contains explanations of the internal sense which constitute-not a new natural sense, but "a natural sense from the spiritual, which is called the internal sense and also the spiritual-natural sense."<sup>40</sup> 40.

When Swedenborg was in an "interior natural" state, he frequently conversed with angels from the higher heavens and could then understand the arcana about which they spoke. And he was given to see that these heavenly truths could be described in words of natural language even to rational comprehension, and that "there are no Divine arcana which cannot be perceived and expressed also naturally, although more generally and imperfectly . . ."41 41. De Ver. 6, @AR 961[1]

Various volumes of the Writings published in this world are also mentioned as having been read and discussed among angels and spirits.<sup>42</sup> In the New Heaven these Writings would presumably exist written or printed in the universal language of ideas, which employs letters or characters as ideographs which vary in the various degrees of heaven and are read with different degrees of understanding. As a revelation of the Inner Word, accommodated to the rational degree of the human mind, it is no doubt read and studied by angels and spirits - especially by "those who had delighted in it here."

But Swedenborg was also told from heaven "that the truths now published in The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem concerning the Lord and concerning The Word, and in The Doctrine of Life for the New Jerusalem, are orally dictated by angelic spirits to the inhabitants" of a region of Africa. The reference here would seem to be to the Africa in the world of spirits.<sup>43</sup> 42. Eccl. Hist., @AR 716, 875:15, @TCR 461[e], @SD 5946, 5908, 6098 43. @LJCont 76, LJ post. 124, 116, cp @LJCont 73, 75, @SD 4774[e], 5515ff, 5946, @TCR 840

In its forms, the Word differs in the various heavens. But whatever the external appearance, or the forms through which it is revealed, the indwelling Divine truth is a One and infinitely the Same-joining all these forms into the image of God-Man-into a revelation of Jesus Christ in His Divine Human. Viewed as to their essence and contents, and taken together, the progressive Divine revelations to the different churches and the different forms which these take in the heavens, are the one Body of Divine truth from primes to ultimates. Into this Divine Body the heavens are inbuilt. For

"the Word in its whole complex is as one Man as to all and singular things, within and without; and . . . that Man is as the Human of the Lord was in the world; wherefore the Lord is called the Word (John 1)."44 44. @SD 5131

The unity and completeness of the Divine Doctrine is described in the Apocalypse as the city New Jerusalem, descending from God, lucid and four-square - the symbol and epitome of the Heavenly Doctrine, where the water of life is offered to angels and to men.

The heavens of other earths do not have a written Word. But, as was the case with the most ancient people of our globe, most other planetary races have "immediate revelation from the Lord by consorting with spirits and angels, and also by visions and dreams." Such open revelations are usually confined within families, and must be constantly renewed. This may be conditioned to their state of perception. In many cases the truths they learn are inscribed on their hearts.<sup>45</sup> 45. @AC 597[2], 2896, 5121:2, EU 120f

The men of other earths, when their spiritual senses are opened, may also be given visions of the Lord, who is then presented in "an angelic Human." And after death they can be instructed by spirits from our earth about His advent in the flesh and His glorification.<sup>46</sup> 46. @AC 9359, EU 121

Yet it is taught that "the whole of intelligence and wisdom of the angels is from the Lord, by means of the Word which is with man and spirit."<sup>47</sup> Even when a spirit or angel is not himself reading his spiritual Word, or - as is the case with spirits from another earth - if he has no written revelation; yet his mental life of thought and affection can be stimulated and enriched unawares, so far as he has consociation with men who are reading the Word as revealed on our earth. For this reason the angels lament and compare their life to one of relative drowsiness when the church on earth is filled with falsities and consummated by evils.<sup>48</sup> Yet it is also indicated that if the human race failed or could no longer offer the angels an ultimate plane for their wisdom, the memories of spirits can be opened to Supply it.<sup>49</sup> On the other hand, angels come into the greatest clarity when consociated with men who have the heavenly doctrine as a basis of their thought. In this manner also "can the truths of faith be communicated to the angels of other earths."<sup>50</sup> 47. @SD 5193, 5187, 5607, De Ver. 27 48. Coro. 19 49. @SD 2755 50. @SD 5609f, 4663:11, @AC 9357

The written Word, in its manifold forms and degrees in heaven and on earth, is therefore in a special sense the unifying factor which conjoins the universal kingdom of the Lord. And the heavens where the Word is, in any of its forms, serve as the mediate source or dissemination point of spiritual light, and correspond to the heart and the lungs - the vital organs - in the Grand Man of Heaven.<sup>51</sup> 51. @AE 351[2], SS 105ff, cp @AC 9670, @LJCont 30, 14, @SD 5947

## 11 THE DEGREES OF THE MIND AND THE THREE HEAVENS

The observation was made in a previous chapter that all the complex relationships of spirits and angels could not possibly be visualized in any one spatial concept - or in any single geographical image. The diverse fashions in which the Lord's life is received by spirits and angels cannot be expressed in the fixed forms of the natural universe. The world of spirits and angels is really made up of many worlds - and the heavens and the hells therefore sometimes appear as separate "expanses," one above another.<sup>1</sup> 1. Coro. 16, 17, @AE 1133[5]f, @HD 4, @AR 876

The Writings make plain that the spirit of man, which survives the death of the body, is identical with the mind which inhabited that body, and that it is this mind that appears after death in the complete human form, equipped as before with all the organs needed for spiritual life and for sensing spiritual things. It is clear therefore, that we can understand the spiritual world only if we understand how the human mind is constituted, and reflect on what kind of intercourse human beings can have when they associate mind to mind, and no longer by the intermediacy of physical investments.

It would seem beyond doubt that it is the lowest or most external plane of the mind which is seen in the other life as the spirit's external or as his spiritual body, and which would serve the spirit as the means by which he has contact with other spirits and receives knowledge of any events that are external to himself - thus enjoys a sensory life in which he sees, hears and feels his environment. As to this plane of the mind, all spirits and angels, whether good or wicked, are much alike, in that they are all equally possessed of a spiritual body with all its senses which - even with evil spirits - far surpass those of men. In the same way, all human minds are much alike as to the mental functions of memory and imagination - the memory serving as a sort of embodiment for all his character, and the power of imagination being really a form of internal sensation, which the doctrine calls "the interior sensual."

While the bodies of spirits and of angels indeed reflect their differences in inward character, and thus appear beautiful or ugly, shapely or deformed, it is in the interiors that their real dissimilarities consist. It is not in the memory or in the imagination, but in the rational, that human character is finally determined. "The human," the Writings repeatedly say, "begins in the rational."<sup>2</sup> The rational mind is the scene of that choice which gradually builds up his personal virtues and vices and leads his free spirit to incline toward heaven or hell. The quality of his rational mind thus determines the quality of his spirit. 2. Cp @DLW 258, @AC 2106[e], 2194e

This free choice of man's rational mind is guaranteed by the Lord because man's spirit is placed in a spiritual equilibrium between heaven and hell; that is, man's spirit is acted upon by influences from both, or by spirits from heaven and by spirits from hell. Even while living on earth, a man is a spirit who is - unconsciously - present in the world of spirits, the intermediate or preparatory region of the spiritual world.<sup>3</sup> He does not feel the presence of these attendant spirits except as states, affections or cupidities, arising in his own mind as if from his own heart; states which he can accept or reject, harbor or shun, confirm or disown by his own rational decision.

As to his rational mind he is in a spiritual equilibrium - in rational freedom. Indeed, the rational is the first of man to be regenerated or reformed.<sup>4</sup> And therefore it can be said that "the human" really begins in the rational.<sup>5</sup>

1. @HH 292, 298, 438, @DP 307

2. @AC 3671, 3570:4, 3321, 3493:2

3. @AC 2106[e], 2194e, 2767, 4612:2

The Writings therefore state that "the rational mind, while it is in process of being formed, corresponds to the world of spirits; the things above it, to heaven, and the things below it, to hell."<sup>6</sup> With those who look above themselves, to the Lord, and thus are preparing for heaven, the regions above the rational mind, or the interiors of the rational, are opened and formed in the image of heaven, while the regions below it - the imagination and the memory - are being gradually closed to the influx of evil and falsity and ordered so as to harmonize with the higher degrees. 6. @HH 430, @SD 5163, 5167f

These interior degrees, within or above the rational, correspond to the heavens. They are opened or formed by conjunction with heaven, and through consociation with the angels there. But man's choice, by which he invites the angels to consociate themselves, is still carried on in the rational of his natural mind, in the course of his performance of his natural uses in the world. What he seems to himself to choose is to shun the evils of self-love and unworthy passions, and to do whatever seems to him good and useful, just and charitable, and to do it to the best of his ability, knowledge, and judgment. He begins by obeying the precepts which his church or religion sets before him as his duty, and this he does, not necessarily with pleasure, but because he recognizes it as right, just, and fair, and also because he realizes that his eternal happiness depends on such obedience. This motive of obedience to the things of his faith which he has learnt from others and simply accepts without much inquiry, conjoins his rational mind to the first or ultimate heaven. If he passes into the other life in such a state, he is eventually welcomed among natural angels, that is, among the good spirits of the natural heaven, which is the lowest of the heavens.

But there are three heavens. The reason for this is that man is so created that his mind contains from birth three discrete degrees, called the natural mind, the spiritual mind, and the celestial



mind.<sup>7</sup> These are part of every man's equipment, but at birth they are simply potentialities or substantial degrees through which the influx of life passes down to his body. The light of heaven passes through them, but until they are actually opened, the heat of love cannot be felt, for spiritual heat, like natural heat, cannot be felt except where the radiation of light is received, or where there is reaction.<sup>8</sup> 7. @DLW 236-239 8. @DLW 242

The natural mind begins to be opened at birth, and it is gradually infilled by knowledges and affections until man at last becomes rational.<sup>9</sup> The doctrine shows, however, that from heredity the natural degree is pervert and self-centered and thus filled with lusts of evil that inflow into it from hell. Yet, because spiritual light can be received in the faculty of reason, the rational of the natural mind can be reformed and man be conjoined with the first heaven. 9. @DLW 67, 237ff

But the spiritual degree of the mind is not opened, and the Lord cannot conjoin man's spirit with the angels of the second or spiritual heaven, unless man can be moved by a new motivation, or a new love, which is devoid of the self-conscious, meritorious feelings which adhere to the love of obedience. This new motivation begins as love of truth for its own sake, and develops as a love towards the neighbor or as charity, a spiritual love and a life according to spiritual laws of order.<sup>10</sup> 10. @DLW 237, @DP 32[2]

The love of spiritual truth, or the spiritual affection of truth, is a selfless love. But even before the spiritual mind begins to be opened, a man may love some truth - love certain things of faith and doctrine - from the fact that that faith was the faith of his fathers in which he takes a pride. Such a faith is called "historical faith" or tradition. He is bound to it with natural affections.

Perhaps he is by heredity of an intellectual temperament which inclines him to study doctrine and take delight in defending it as his own. The natural love of truth, with the well-disposed, recognizes truth as a guide, as something above himself, and can thus contain the seed of reformation and the promise of salvation. But it must be purified from self-interest and see truth in its own light and love truth for its uses, before man can receive any genuine spiritual motive, which is from the Lord, and which can thus open the spiritual mind. And this purification of man's love is not sudden but very gradual.<sup>11</sup> 11. @DP 233[5], 6

When the love of truth is made spiritual, man is conjoined with the second heaven, which is called the spiritual heaven, and consociated with its angels who are also called angelic spirits. Such a man is inwardly regenerate. His spiritual mind is being filled by the Lord with heavenly wisdom and delight, yet he is not aware of this while on earth, nor does he reflect on any charity that he may have, but simply feels it as a zeal of performing uses.<sup>12</sup> After death he loves to consociate with spiritual angels who also love to do uses of charity without calculating on rewards or praise. The life in a heavenly society of that kind has of course a type of blessedness which natural angels or good spirits could not appreciate and would not enjoy. They therefore live as it were on different planes. For the real differences between human beings lie not so much in what they do as in why they do it. Life becomes richer and more meaningful the more one comes to see the reasons why a thing should be done - the uses which it involves, the good that it does. 12. @DLW 252, @AE 625[5], SD min. 4547

Even in our ordinary natural life we may see illustrations of how a thing done without thought of reward surpasses a similar act done from obedience with recompense in view. If any one should be instrumental in saving the life of another-as in the rescue of a drowning man - he would likely be offended if he was asked to send a bill for his services. The less clearly a man sees the purpose in

the work that he does, the less delight does he take in it, and the more is he likely to demand recompense for it.

But the more he realizes the value and meaning of what he is doing, the more satisfaction does he gain from it, and the more does the recompense seem to him as an undeserved gift of Providence, a blessing from the Lord which enables him to continue his usefulness.

The opening of the spiritual mind and the entrance into the second or spiritual heaven may be regarded as the more interior entrance into spiritual uses, a close, more understanding cooperation with the Lord. The spiritual angels are thus in intelligence. By "faith" they mean truth clearly seen, and by "charity" they mean acting according to that truth from a love of it.<sup>13 13.</sup> @DLW 428, F 4

The highest degree of the mind is the celestial, and the highest heaven is therefore called "heavenly" or celestial. While the lower heavens are said to be inhabited by "good spirits" and by "angelic spirits," the third heaven is made up of "angels properly so called."<sup>14 14.</sup> @AC 1752

The celestial mind is said to be opened, when man's inmost motivations come from a love to the Lord or from a celestial love of uses. It is characteristic of this love that it causes man to turn away from evils as infernal and to apply the Lord's precepts to his life unhesitatingly and immediately, rather than after debating it in the understanding. For the understanding, with such, is already instructed and reformed and responds perceptively to truth when this is presented before it. After death, when such enter the celestial heaven, they become wise in a preeminent degree, yet their innocence causes them to appear simple as they have nothing of pride in their discourse, their entire interest being centered on the proper applications of the truths of wisdom.

Because of this, the celestial degree of heaven seems utterly discrete from the spiritual heaven, as a superior expanse. The celestial think from ends-and the arcana of their wisdom, the wisdom of life, are incomprehensible to the spiritual, who cannot sustain the light, nor breathe the air, of the celestial heaven.

"Every angel is being perfected in wisdom to eternity, but each according to the degree of the affection of good and truth in which he was when he left the world. It is this degree which is being perfected to eternity.

Anything beyond this degree is outside the angel and not within him; and that which is outside of him cannot be perfected within him." Thus the spirit enters into that degree of his life which had been "opened," or secretly furnished, while he was on earth. This is the measure of his life.<sup>15 15.</sup> @DP 334

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Just as the mental life of the angels of each degree or heaven differs from that of the other heavens, so is this variance reflected in the outward aspect of their lives.

The natural heaven is so named, because it receives its quality from the natural degree of the rational mind, i.e., from the reformed rational. In appearance, the natural heaven therefore is a closer replica of the natural world than are the superior heavens. The indications in the Writings are that the natural heaven is very diverse and inclusive, containing groups of angels or good spirits who still maintain their racial or national distinctions. They are usually simple upright spirits, who never cultivated their understanding by interior truths. Those from Christian lands

have doctrine received from the moral or internal-historical sense of the Word. They cannot raise their understanding much above the level of the thought which they had while in the world, or think abstractly from what they see; although they admit some light from the higher heavens. They think of persons, and only the more intelligent among them know that charity is to love what is good in the neighbor.<sup>16</sup> 16. @AE 834, cp 405:2

With these good spirits only the natural degree of the mind has been opened; yet the spiritual degree has not been closed, and therefore they can respond to the influx from the higher heaven.<sup>17</sup> The Writings relate that when spiritual angels were conversing about truths in their abstract way, there appeared before the natural angels corresponding beautiful objective representatives-with a perception of what they signified: so that they saw in natural or external forms or imagery the general idea of what the conversation was about.

The prophets of Israel were allowed to see such spiritual imagery, but without their understanding its meaning.<sup>18</sup> Such representations, although in the ultimate heaven they appear not as if pictured but exactly as in the world, are not "real" in any permanent sense, since they represent only the subjects then thought of by the superior angels. But they are real representations of these thoughts, not mere illusions or phantasies such as evil spirits delight in.<sup>19</sup> 17. @DLW 253, @AE 624[2] 18. @AE 260[e], 513:2, @SD 4214f, @AC 3342, 3475, 4528, 10276:3 19. @AC 3485, @SD 4360[e], 4599, 4214

Here it might be noted in passing, that the Writings have various definitions for what is real. In general it is shown that the things which spirits see and feel in the spiritual world "are not material, but are substantial from a spiritual origin, and yet are real things ... Those things which are in the spiritual world are more real than those in the natural world, for the dead part that is added in nature to the spiritual, does not make reality but diminishes it."<sup>20</sup> The spirit of man, after being freed by death, "is a substance much more real than the material substance" which it wore on earth as a garment.<sup>21</sup> 20. @AE 1218[e] 21. @AC 3726[4]

The one only reality is the Divine truth proceeding from the Lord-"the veriest essential from which are all the essences of things in both worlds." It is the one only substantial reality.<sup>22</sup> Reality is therefore derived from the Divine truth. That which displays the truth, or represents something of it, is therefore genuine, real, true; and it is also substantial. When truth, as the light of the spiritual Sun, "inflows into the ultimate heaven, mediately and immediately, it is received substantially, and appears there as a paradise or in some places as a city with palaces."<sup>23</sup> Such paradisaal regions "are in the first heaven and in the very threshold to the interiors of that heaven."<sup>24</sup> 22. @AC 8200, 5272:2, 6880, 7004 23. @AC 4411 24. @AC 4528

The appearances before the angels "are called real because they appear as they really are" or "because they really come forth" or because they "correspond" to the interior things.<sup>25</sup>

The garments that the angels wear, are "real substances and thus essences in form."<sup>26</sup> They "do not appear as garments, but really are garments."<sup>27</sup> 25. @AC 4882, @AE 553[2], @HH 175, 178 26. @AC 2576 27. @HH 181

Yet evil spirits can present illusions before other spirits and attempt "thereby to persuade them that nothing is real but that all things are ideal, even those that are in heaven."<sup>28</sup> The phantasies of hell are not real, for they are untrue and false. But what is from the Lord is always real. So, for instance, we are told concerning the Lord's provision that the spiritual world also should have appearances of times and spaces, that although they are not material spaces and times corresponding to them,

these appearances about the angels are yet "real, because constant according to their states."<sup>29</sup> It may also be said that a spirit does not have matter, space, time or quantity "as subjects, but only as objects."<sup>30</sup> 28. @AC 4623[e] 29. @TCR 29 30. @DWis 7:5

The reality, then, is not the appearance, but what the angels perceive in the appearance which corresponds to the reality and testifies of it. It may be well to remind ourselves that it is things celestial and spiritual from the Lord that inflow into the nature of this world and there fashion the marvels of the organic kingdoms-of plants and animals and human bodies, and also the greater marvels of the human mind and its life. And it is precisely these same spiritual things which, inflowing into the receptive planes of the heavens, present there, with far greater reality and beauty, the living representations of human states and aspirations, in similar correspondent forms, and also present the forms of art and artifice-the palaces and homes which with precision correspond to angelic needs, structures that are wrought by the Divine architect of the universe. This fact would account for the otherwise cryptic statement that these angelic "representations are as it were the originals of the things that are in the world." Notice, not the copies or even replicas or reflections, but the originals!<sup>31</sup> Or, as another passage puts it, "The representatives which are from the Lord are real, for all the things that are in nature and the world are derived from them."<sup>32</sup> 31. @SD 4215, cp @AC 1632, 1808 32. @AC 1881

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The representative appearances of all the three heavens are not very different, as to essentials. "As to external face, each heaven is like our earth, with a difference as to excellence and beauty according to the degree . . ."<sup>33</sup> There is, first of all, the spiritual Sun-although this is not seen except in modified form in the lower heavens. There are clouds, rain, winds, gravity, and other forces apparently like those in nature. There are greenswards, paradisaal gardens, flowers and fields and fallowland, mountains and brooks, and even the seashore. The vegetation comes forth new each morning, according to the reception by the angels of love and wisdom from the Lord.<sup>34</sup> There are remarkable representative atmospheres, also as it were living; and rainbow effects of unsurpassed splendor and awe. Strange fruit and flowers are seen-not possible on earth except as products of art: blossoms of precious stones, fruits of copper. In the second heaven, there may be found fruit and seeds of silver or silver leaved branches; in the highest heaven these may be of gold. The spiritual heaven abounds especially in magnificence-in ornate palaces and angels clad in brilliant attire, living in marvelous cities, amid works of artifice and skill, with gardens and arbors-where the fruits drop wine; whereas the celestial heaven has a simpler tone. For the celestial heaven, though its power is the greater, finds beauty in simple things, in the human form Divine, in nature's own spontaneous fairness; and places less value on the products or skills that spring from the understanding and its artificial role in human development. Yet there are unsurpassed gardens there, with golden fruits or fruits that drop fragrant oil, birds of paradisaal plumage, and flowers that have captured the secrets of the stays, and purest mountain brooks that bring to these wise angels the message of a revelation to which others are unheeding.

"Every angel receives the heaven that is outside of him according to the heaven that is within him."<sup>34a</sup> 33. @AE 1082[9] 34. @DWis 12:5 34a. @HH 54

For after all, these externals of the three heavens have value only for their representation-that is, for the truths they convey: truths about the Creator and His provisions, and about the states and needs of their fellow-souls. The object of life-here as well as hereafter-is to break the walls that hinder us from understanding each other; to escape from the shadows of pride and envy and

misconception; and to let the light of truth shine into our souls so that we can recognize ourselves and our place and use in the commonwealth of spiritual life.

It is not to be doubted that the representative creations, homes and furnishings, around the angels of each heaven are permanent and constant, so far as they are the correspondences of the affections of the love-the ruling love-of the angels there.<sup>35</sup> But there are also continually given other representations that involve the deepest arcana of wisdom. These are especially given with the angels who attend man when he is reading the Word, and who then perceive the internal glories of the spiritual sense in the form of representative ideas and correspondences.<sup>36</sup> In the first heaven the representations are much like the imagery which is given in the sense of the letter-such as the prophets saw. But in the second heaven the representatives appear -such as they are in their internal form"-thus with far more manifold imagery, far deeper content and meaning. And in the highest heaven they appear in an inmost form, with indescribable particulars and a perceptive depth of wisdom and of happiness.<sup>37</sup> 35. @TCR 78[2] 36. @SD 5607ff, SS 67 37. @AC 3475

In these representatives from the Word, the lower angels have a perception of the Lord's presence, but remotely. The spiritual angels see the Lord more nearly represented. But they who are in the third heaven see the Lord Himself.<sup>38</sup> 38. @AC 3475[e], @AR 926

And what is it that is represented to the senses and the minds of all in the spiritual world, unless it is the presence and operation of the Lord and the reception of His love and wisdom in the human minds of angels and spirits?

The world of nature displays the gifts which the Creator offers to mankind as the means of eternal happiness. But the spiritual world reveals the measure in which men finally make use of these gifts - for good or for ill, The world of men is like a field where the Sower plants the seeds of truth. In the spiritual world comes the harvest, which may be thirtyfold, or sixtyfold, or a hundredfold; but which also contains the tares and thorns and poison things which the enemy has planted.<sup>39</sup> The heavens and the hells and their innumerable societies-separated and distinguished in most discriminating detail-are perceived by the spiritual senses in their common relation to the Lord and to each other. All the phenomena of the spiritual world conspire to reveal this internal relationship, to represent how each soul receives the Divine seed of life and responds to it by filling a place-freely chosen-in the kingdom of eternal uses. 39. Matthew 13

One phase of this reception of the Divine love and wisdom is represented in the three heavens, which mark the degree to which men have attained in their life of regeneration, or how far their rational minds have been opened interiorly. The three heavens represent successive states, therefore, as well as final achievements. A salvable spirit might therefore be introduced first into "the heaven of spirits," then into "the heaven of angelic spirits," and eventually into "the angelic heaven," before he has found his eternal home.<sup>40</sup> 40. @SD 835, 293, @AC 978

Since there are three degrees of life within man's rational which are reached by the life of reformation and regeneration; and three degrees of the natural mind which man can pervert, it is clear that the three heavens, like the three hells, are present as potentialities in every man. But there are divisions of the spiritual world which do not seem thus to depend on the degree of man's response or to man's choice and freedom, but to other factors over which man has little or no control. For it is revealed that heaven is distinguished in general into two kingdoms, more specifically into three heavens, and in particular into innumerable societies.<sup>41</sup> 41. @HH 20

## 12 THE TWO KINGDOMS OF HEAVEN

It is said in the True Christian Religion that the essence of love is "to love others outside of itself, to desire to be one with them, and to make them happy from itself."<sup>1</sup> The Lord created men with this end in view-to make them happy by their partaking in His love in a community of mutual uses. 1. @TCR 43

A little reflection makes it clear that human happiness can never be achieved in solitude. It depends rather on the mutual relations among men. Men are happy when they are among fellow beings with whom there exists a common aim, a common understanding, which can promote an intelligent cooperation in the manifold uses of life. This is noticeable among men, in that people of the same race, the same tongue or nation, or the same family, or the same age-levels, or the same social environment, or the same educational or religious background, or people who have gone through similar experiences, are apt to think and feel in a similar way, and to be able to partake in common undertakings.

When widely different people need to cooperate or to seek to understand each other, there is need for intermediaries who can interpret each for the other and adjust their mutual interests so that no frictions arise.

This is, among men, the greatest concern of governments, both of nations and of lesser societies, and indeed of parents and of every individual man: how to accommodate the conflicting points of view and diverse endeavors of many so that they will labor together for the common good. Here on earth, for the sake of human freedom, men are not segregated or even distinguished by their motives, which vary from the most sordid to the most pure and noble; but are judged by their outward behavior or by their acts and words. For this reason, the relations among men are external and often temporary, and can - at best - never be perfected into that state of complete happiness which the Creator intended. The fulfillment of that end can only be reached after death.

But imagine what infinite wisdom and power must be required to order that eternal world: That world into which the Lord receives daily inestimable numbers of spirits who by a thousand secret ways are led, each to the place of his life in the heavens or the hells. "Man's spirit is nothing but an affection."<sup>2</sup> Each soul represents a different affection-and all vary and conflict unless so placed relative to the rest that each has his freedom and delight and his greatest possible usefulness, howsoever the heavens and the hells are multiplied to eternity.<sup>3</sup> 2. Love ix, x 3. @AE 726 (i)

It is a part of the Divine government to separate the heavens and the hells, to ordinate the heavens according to the degrees of good loves, in a trinal order, and also to arrange the hells according to their opposition to these heavenly loves. "From the necessity of order, heaven is threefold."<sup>4</sup> There are therefore three heavens and three hells; which represent the degrees to which men have allowed themselves to be regenerated by the Lord or the degrees to which they have confirmed themselves in evils and falsities. 4. @HH 29

But the Writings, noting that no two angels are alike and that therefore there are "infinite varieties" in heaven, reveal that heaven is not only distinguished into three heavens in special, but also by a more general distinction, into two kingdoms, which are called the celestial kingdom and the spiritual kingdom.

It is our inference from the teachings that every angel belongs to one, and only one, of these two

"kingdoms", and that every angel also belongs to one, and only one, of the three "heavens." It would therefore follow that the division into kingdoms views the same angels from a different aspect, or with regard to different mutual relationships. In general it seems that the three heavens mark the degree to which man's mind has been opened interiorly through his reformation and regeneration, while the kingdoms mark the way in which the influx of the Lord's life is received.

We cite here the words of the Arcana Coelestia:

"In each kingdom good is implanted by means of truth; but with those who are in the spiritual kingdom good is implanted by means of truth in the intellectual part, while with those who are in the celestial kingdom good is implanted by means of truth in the voluntary part. The implantation of good by means of truth with those who are in the spiritual kingdom is effected by a different method from that by which it is implanted with those who are in the celestial kingdom. With those who are in the spiritual kingdom truth is implanted in the external or natural man, and there it first becomes knowledge, and in proportion as a man is affected by it and lives according to it, it is called forth into the intellectual, and becomes faith, and at the same time charity towards the neighbor. This charity constitutes his new voluntary, and the faith his new intellectual, and both constitute his conscience.

"But with those who are in the celestial kingdom, truth does not become knowledge, nor faith, nor conscience; but it is received in the good of love and, in proportion as they live according to it, it causes a perception which grows and is perfected with them according to the love. This takes place from day to day without their knowledge, almost as happens with infants. That it takes place unknowingly is because it does not stick as knowledge in the memory nor tarry as something intellectual in the thought, but passes straightway into the voluntary and becomes of the life. . .

As they perceive truth from good: they never confirm it by reasons; but when truth is being considered they merely say, Yea, Yea, Nay, nay. . . ."5 5. @AC 10124

In the celestial kingdom, although truths of judgment (that is, rational truths and principles of equity) are written upon their hearts and are never even discussed, still "truths of justice" and application do come into question. And the less wise consult the more wise about them, while these in turn "consult the Lord and receive answers."<sup>6</sup> But these debatable truths of justice are such as come under their observation and sight and pertain to their external memory and bodily life.<sup>7</sup> What they learn through the hearing they do not discuss-as when preachers from the spiritual kingdom are sent to them. For such truths they at once receive, not in the memory but in life. The case is different with the angels of the spiritual kingdom, who receive Divine truths first into the memory, and reason about them as to whether they are true or not, before accepting them as matters of conscience. 6. @HH 214 7. @SD 5587, 5586

The celestial kingdom is therefore more interior, and the Writings frequently identify it with "the higher heavens," while the spiritual kingdom is said to consist of "the lower heavens."<sup>8</sup> But this definition must be qualified by other teachings, from which it appears that those in the ultimate or natural heaven are also distinguished as spiritual-natural or celestial-natural. The spiritual-natural there belong to the Lord's spiritual kingdom, while the celestial-natural belong to the celestial kingdom. The spiritual-natural communicate with the second heaven where all are spiritual; and the celestial-natural communicate with the third heaven where all are celestial. Yet however distinct, the celestial-natural and the spiritual-natural taken together constitute one heaven, because they are in the same degree-the natural.<sup>9</sup> 8. @HH 22, @AC 10068, 10152; cp @AE 322[2] 9.

On the other hand, the Arcana states repeatedly that "the Lord's celestial kingdom is the inmost or third heaven" and that the spiritual kingdom "is the second or middle heaven."<sup>10</sup>

But we are further informed that each kingdom is not only distinguished into an internal and an external, but is in fact tripartite or distinguished into three degrees - which must mean that they each contain three heavens.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, there are intermediates-angels who are called "spiritual-celestial," and "celestial- spiritual"-who serve as links of communication and conjunction between the two kingdoms and at the same time keep them distinct.<sup>12</sup> Thus there are celestial-spiritual societies through whom an influx of the celestial heaven is effected into the spiritual. There are also spiritual celestial angels, which belong to the spiritual kingdom, and among them many are preachers in the highest heaven.<sup>13</sup> For although the angels of the two kingdoms are so discretely different that they generally have no direct intercourse with each other,<sup>14</sup> and live quite separately, yet celestial angels who have no memory for abstract truths yet a great love of them need to have truths presented by means of preachings and thus renew their enlightenment. And this is possible by these intermediary angels. There is no influx from the spiritual kingdom into the higher celestial.<sup>15</sup> But the truths presented by the spiritual and heard by the celestial angels make in the latter a plane for the influx of celestial perceptions, which then perfect their lives. Indeed, the celestial declare that "to live according to truths is to love the Lord."<sup>16</sup> 10. @AC 8796, 9543, 9570, 9670 11. @AC 9993, 9825f 12. @AC 8796, @HH 27 13. @HH 225, De Ver. 3, @AE 831[2] 14. @AC 8796f 15. @AC 8796 16. @HH 225

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From what has been said it is obvious that no diagram or chart could adequately describe the intricate relationship of the three heavens and the two kingdoms. The difficulty increases when we find that the Writings sometimes mention a third kingdom-"the Lord's natural kingdom, of which the first or lowest heaven consists" or, as stated elsewhere, "in which are men while in the world."<sup>17</sup> But while we should not strive for any oversimplification, we may note that the Writings often resort to comparisons, and that their final appeal is always to the human form itself.

It is the Divine which makes heaven, and the angels who constitute it. The image of God Man is impressed on all the relationships within the angelic heaven, which is-considered spiritually-a kingdom of uses, ordered by the Lord into a Grand Man. Only on the basis of the nexus of uses such as the human body presents, can we understand how the innumerable affections, which are angels, can be viewed in their entire complex as one heaven, a unity within which all the stupendous varieties of parts may move around limited objectives, yet toward a common good, even as is the case in the human body. 17. @DLW 232, @TCR 195, 212, SS 34, cp @AE 1222[3], LJ post. 312, 316

For the organization of the Grand Man it is necessary to suppose that all men be different. If all were created alike-and this would have to mean also "at the same time"-there could be no organic formation, but only a massing of identical substances-in itself an impossible supposition. The essential or first external condition for any organic life is dissymmetry, individuality, variety. There could be no mankind and no heavens, nor any freedom or choice, unless differences started with the very soul of man, or from first creation. Every man born is limited and specialized from the first. Before he has any choice he finds himself male or female, with an unchangeable racial genius and with a parental heredity that he has to cope with. His family and social status, his first environment and companionship, are predestined along with many other factors that necessarily



contribute to form his mind.

If would seem absurd to suppose-or to demand of Divine justice-that every human soul, so individualized from the first breath, should be able to find an eternal happiness of exactly the same kind and degree as all the rest or to realize it in the same activities or pursuits. There are of course certain inevitable conditions for happiness. Yet happiness is obviously a relative state which cannot be procured for others by mass production or be the same in any two instances.

And since happiness can never be divorced from use, it becomes clear that in order to introduce men into happiness, the Lord provides uses of a variety and abundance that can be pictured only through the human form.

It is the mutual relations of these uses provided by the Divine love, that are referred to when the Writings describe the two kingdoms of heaven. We read:

"In heaven the Divine love, which is life itself, is distinguished into two kingdoms, one in which love to the Lord reigns, and another wherein love toward the neighbor reigns. Love to the Lord involves uses as to their source (a quo), and love toward the neighbor involves uses as to their object (ad quem). The Divine love, which is life itself, is further distinguished in lesser kingdoms which can be called provinces; and these again into societies, and these into families and houses. Such in the heavens are the distinctions of the Divine love into genera and into species, and these again into their own, which are understood from their differences. Thus are distinguished affections and likewise uses, because every angel is an affection, and also a use. . . .There are similar distinctions of affections in the human body, and likewise of uses; since. . .all things of man correspond to all things of heaven. The heart and lungs in man correspond to the two kingdoms of heaven; the members, organs, and viscera in man correspond to the provinces of heaven, and the tissues of each member, organ, and viscus correspond to the societies of heaven . . ."18 18. Love x

Let us note here that it is not man' but the Divine love that provides uses. It is the Lord that provides our bodies, whether male or female. The human body into which we are born without our choice-grows to its maturity without our effort of will. In every stage of growth, however, we are given a certain freedom to use or to abuse, to cultivate or neglect, the powers which we are given, and we may even develop new powers or abilities on the basis of our native endowments. But we have no choice about our beginnings!

These our predetermined beginnings will necessarily also decide what methods the Lord will employ in our regeneration. "Every one can be regenerated, each according to his state," the doctrine promises, "but in various ways."19 Those in gentile lands are saved differently than those in the church specific where the Word is. Even the ignorant heathen is offered a use in the Grand Man of heaven, even though this place is in some external province such as that of the cartilages or skins - a use which can bring him into heavenly joy.20 19. @TCR 580, @DP 325 20. @DP 254[3], 4, see page 214f

A man is regenerated differently from a woman. But most ancient man-the race of the Golden Age-was of a genius far different from present-day inhabitants of our globe. It is said of them that they had "celestial seed implanted in them" and that their descendants, most of whom perished in that period which is called "the flood," also "had seed in them from a celestial origin." This meant that love ruled their whole mind and unified it so that they could not separate their understanding from their will, Any falling away from truth and good was thus most perilous, since restoration was

scarcely possible in the other life.<sup>21</sup> It was due to their inborn genius, that when they fell they became imbued with direful phantasies and enormous self-love, and at last they were inundated by suffocating profanations, becoming "extinct of their own accord," as by a flood!<sup>22</sup> 21. @AC 310 22. @AC 562f

The race with whom the ancient spiritual church was instituted was not "of celestial seed."<sup>23</sup> They were mainly gentiles with whom hereditary evils had destroyed the will part. They could not be regenerated by any appeal to their good will; but only by appeal to their understanding, which with them had been to some extent isolated from the will—a miraculous provision by which the Lord as it were answers the challenge of evil. They possessed therefore from birth "an entirely different genius from that of the most ancient church, and if the Lord had not brought the human race into this genius, or into this state, no man could be saved."<sup>24</sup> 23. @AC 5113[e], 310 24. @AC 608, 310, 442, 562, 726, 4493:2, 10124, 10786

The voluntary of man has been continually depraved by the accumulation of hereditary evils, "and at length so much that evil has occupied the whole of it, so that no soundness has remained in it. Therefore, lest man should perish, the Lord provided that he might be regenerated as to the intellectual part, and so be saved. Hence now there are few with whom there is still anything sound left in the voluntary part, thus few who can become celestial men, but many who can become spiritual."<sup>25</sup> 25. @AC 6296

It should be observed that man's freedom is exercised within the scope or limit of his inherited genius. The mode by which the men of the most ancient church were regenerated was exactly that which applies to those who "belong" to the celestial kingdom, namely, by an implantation of good by means of truth in their voluntary part, or through the internal man. And it cannot be by chance that the heavens of that church were celestial—and form the inmost core of the celestial kingdom—while their hells are the deepest, including even the worst profaners.

Is there any cause for us to feel envious of these provisions which the Lord made for them and which cannot now be made for us? Is there injustice in our being so fashioned that our freedom lies in a different field—one which can never lead us to the heavens of the celestial genius?

If we could recognize that no men are born alike, and that all men cannot find their happiness in the same heaven, perhaps we may come to understand better what the Writings say about people of various genius, and of their spiritual choice and destiny! Speaking of the celestial men of the time before the flood, the Arcana adds: "It is otherwise with those who do not possess celestial but only spiritual seed, as did the people after the flood, and as also do the people of the present day ... These are arcana with which the present generation are utterly unacquainted, for at the present day none know what the celestial man is, nor even what the spiritual man is, and still less what is the quality of the human mind thence resulting, and the consequent state after death."<sup>26</sup> 26. @AC 310

The grand division of mankind into one type or genius which could easily furnish the celestial kingdom of heaven with angels, and a different, more intellectual genius which can overcome the inheritance of an evil will only by truths of faith and supply the spiritual kingdom of heaven, is not sufficient to account for all the teachings of the Writings about these two kingdoms. For it appears that the dominance of what is of the will or what is of the understanding varies even with those who live at the present external and even day, as to less fundamental faculties and more superficial planes of mind and body.

With these, the will is indeed depraved, although something of natural good may have modified it or healed it in part.

It is thus said of the Africans that they are as a race "of the genius in which are the angels of the celestial kingdom; Europeans being of a spiritual one."<sup>27</sup> The nature (indole) of the Africans is celestial,<sup>28</sup> and their spirits are more interior than the other gentiles, and more receptive of the Heavenly Doctrine. Certain Chinese are mentioned as being of a spiritual celestial genius.<sup>29</sup> Every nation is said to have a predominant genius of its own. The angels were said to have much hope of a certain nation which is of such a nature that it can receive spiritual light and become a celestial spiritual man.<sup>30</sup> None the less "all men whatsoever are born natural, with the potency to become either celestial or spiritual; but the Lord alone was born spiritual-celestial. . ." This teaching would seem to rule out any possibility of any finite spirit belonging by birth to both kingdoms. The "intermediate angels" thus belong either to one or the other.<sup>31</sup> 27. @SD 5518, LJ post. 118F 28. @SD 4783, LJ 74, 118 29. LJ post. 132, @SD 6067. Restrictions against marriages of those of different religions or different genius are noted in @AC 4431, 483, 4493, and 8998. 30. LJ 74 31. @AC 4592[3], 4594

Infants in the spiritual world also are distinguished as of either celestial or spiritual genius or disposition, and they are instructed within the province of their own genius.<sup>32</sup> Mention is also made of three damsels in heaven who usually read the Word together although one of them was of a celestial genius, the others of a genius intermediate between the celestial and the spiritual.<sup>33</sup> 32. @HH 333, 339, @AC 2300f, 471 33. @SD 5618, cp @AC 8733

It is evident that the variety which we see among the children of a single family is often due to differences in genius or disposition derived from various forebears. Some are naturally affectionate, others more intellectual in their interests. Since there are many planes and degrees and many aspects of the mind, and since all things of life are due to a different balance between goods and truths, it is natural that there should be a resemblance in every one either to the celestial or to the spiritual type.

It is fashionable today to refer to such differences as signs of an "introvert" nature or to an "extrovert" type, the introvert being visual, more self-conscious, reflective, and perhaps intellectual, while the extrovert is practical, aggressive, auditory, affectionate, and impulsive; although these types are scarcely ever found in a pure form.

These types, like the kingdoms of heaven, and like the two sexes, differ in their response to the Lord's gifts, and must be educated and later regenerated by different modes. Parents need a great deal of wisdom to discern what modes can succeed with different children. In general the question is whether good can be received by implanting truth immediately in the will or by implanting truth first in the memory and the understanding. The difference between children is largely one of natural genius, and the presence of natural affections, or natural good; not of spiritual good, for this only comes by regeneration. The natural good with our children does not change their essential genius, which belongs to their deeper racial inheritance and adjoins them to the spiritual kingdom of heaven.

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The genius, spiritual and natural, which a man is given, is a gift of the Lord, for him to develop and use, a talent which he should not spurn even if he was not entrusted with more-with two or with

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five, as is told in the parable.<sup>34</sup> For the Lord knows what we can use and what is beyond our ability. He also knows what is needed to perfect the marvelous economy of the Grand Man of human life. He knows in what provinces of the Grand Man of heaven man's spirit can best be employed. He creates each man with this in view, and equips him adequately for such a province; but always He allows man the freedom to progress as far into his use as man desires. By continual purification good spirits are carried into the interiors of the province to which they were allotted, but if they were to aspire beyond those provinces which correspond to their lives, "they could not have heaven."<sup>35</sup>

They may however be transferred to better positions in the province of their life, and "even into other provinces which are more noble, yea, even into some province of the heart, if found worthy." Yet no angel ever reaches perfection. And it should be understood that each angel is perfected in wisdom to eternity according to "the degree of the affection of good and truth in which he was when he left the world. It is this degree which is being perfected to eternity. That which is beyond this degree is outside the angel. . . and what is outside him cannot be perfected within him."<sup>36</sup> 34. Matthew 25:14-30 35. @AC 4797, 4800, 4803, 4805 36. @SD 665-669, @AC 4295, 4803, @DP 334, Luke 7:37f

In the Grand Man, the heart with the entire vascular system, and the cerebellum and the involuntary nervous system, constitute the celestial kingdom. But the lowest heaven is also divided into a spiritual- natural and a celestial-natural, corresponding to the tissues of the body and lower viscera. And man is born "natural, with the faculty or power to become either celestial or spiritual through regeneration by the Lord."<sup>37</sup> There is no indication here that one can by any act of will change one's genius or enter from the spiritual kingdom into the celestial. Indeed, the warning is given that for a man of the spiritual church to seek to reach or insert himself into celestial societies will result in the destruction of his truths of faith and thus of his spiritual life, and the lusts hidden in his proprium-lusts which he had not hitherto realized-will be made manifest.<sup>38</sup> Those of the spiritual kingdom cannot reach even the threshold of the good of the celestial kingdom.<sup>39</sup> Yet there is a way by which man, through regeneration, can have his celestial mind opened, after having the spiritual degree opened. This does not involve a change of genius. It takes place when man receives a celestial love of use, which is motivated by love to the Lord and a consequent aversion to evils.<sup>40</sup> And in the Arcana it is told that if one is, from spiritual, to become celestial, he must needs advance by an intermediate; for to climb up to higher things without an intermediate is impossible.

This intermediate is signified in the Word by Benjamin, the last of the sons of Israel. Benjamin is called a medium, and described as the spiritual of the celestial.<sup>41</sup> 37. @AC 4594, 4592 38. @AC 8794-8800, 8945 39. @AC 8796 40. @DLW 237 41. @AC 4585

It is not necessary here to explain what is meant by this abstract term. What must be stressed is simply that there is a way by which the man of the spiritual church or the spiritual genius may have even the celestial degree opened within his mind and thus enter into the life of the third heaven. Yet the Writings do not indicate that he would thereby change his genius, or leave the spiritual kingdom of his birth. He would instead come into the celestial or highest degree of the spiritual kingdom; for each kingdom has three degrees, and thus three heavens. It is through its third heaven that the spiritual kingdom is conjoined with the celestial kingdom.<sup>42</sup> It is therefore said that "the Lord, from Divine love or mercy, wills to have all near to Himself, so that they do not stand at the doors, that is, in the first heaven; but He wills that they should be in the third, and-if it were possible-not only with Him but in Him."<sup>43</sup> 42. @AE 322[2], @AC 4585 43. Love vi-x, @AC 1799[2]

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The teachings concerning the two kingdoms of heaven all seem to refer to the uses of the angels, which are foreseen and provided by the Lord and organized like the provinces of the human body. Since these uses are most distinct, the kingdoms are also most discretely differentiated and never confused.

Yet uses can be performed only in communion with others. Heaven is therefore distinguished into innumerable societies. There are always opportunities for all angels to contribute useful services to others in their society. And as there are external as well as interior functions carried on in the human body, so even those good spirits whose spiritual faculties have been less developed can "enter into the joy of their Lord." The work on the Divine Providence indicates that

"it has been provided by the Lord that even those who could not be reached by the Gospel, but only by a [pagan] religion, should also be able to have a place in the Divine Man, that is, in heaven, by constituting those things which are called skins, membranes, cartilages and bones; and that they also, like others, should be in heavenly joy.

For it matters not if they are in joy like the angels of the supreme heaven or in joy like that of the angels of the ultimate heaven. For every one who comes into heaven enters into the highest joy of his heart. He can bear no higher joy, for he would be suffocated thereby.

"This is comparatively as with a peasant and a king. A peasant may be in a state of highest joy when he goes about in a new suit of coarse wool and sits down to a table on which are pork, a bit of beef, cheese, beer, and ordinary wine; and he would be oppressed at heart if like a king he were dressed in purple and silk, and a table were put before him spread with delicacies and many kinds of costly dishes with noble wine. From this it is clear that there is heavenly happiness for the last as well as for the first, for each in his degree; thus also for those outside the Christian world, provided they shun evils as sins against God, because contrary to religion."44 44. @DP 254[3], 4, @HH 410

Each heaven or society is a form of use corresponding to some province or tissue of the human body. The novitiate spirit is led by his ruling love to one specific province which he does not afterwards leave.<sup>45</sup> Still, as has been noted, he may, in his further regeneration and growth, be raised into the interior of the province in which he is, and so into nobler functions. And if found worthy, a spirit might even be transferred into the province of the heart.<sup>46</sup> 45. @AC 6611, 1274, @HH 49, 479, @SD 5902 46. @SD 665-669, @AC 4803

## 13 THE THREE HEAVENS

### The Third Heaven

In the Apocalypse Explained is found a summary account of the distinctive characteristics of the three heavens.<sup>1</sup> From this and many other passages we draw the following teachings. But much that is said of the third or highest heaven is also applicable to the celestial kingdom, which is sometimes virtually identified with the inmost heaven.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the angels of the second, or spiritual, heaven are often described in the same terms as those used about the spiritual kingdom. A certain amount of repetition may therefore be unavoidable. 1. @AE 826[2]-828, 831, 834 2. @AC 8796

The angels of the third heaven, which is called the celestial, have as their dominant love "a love to the Lord from the Lord" - so as to have a perception of it. They have heavenly truths written on their life, not merely upon their memory.<sup>3</sup> And for this reason they never talk about truths but listen to others and - from a celestial perception-see within themselves whether what is said is true or not.

This is what the Lord referred to when He said, "Let your conversation be, Yea, yea, Nay, nay."<sup>4</sup> 3. @AC 7877, 5608, 8880, 2227:2 4. @DP 219[3], @AE 826[2], cp @SD 5597, Matthew 5:37

This does not mean that a celestial angel is infallible, or that he can think from "intellectual truth" - by which phrase the Arcana sometimes distinguishes the influx into his inmost soul. Intellectual truth is far beyond the conscious thought of either man or angel, and "is not the man's but is the Lord's with the man."<sup>5</sup> Man "cannot possibly think as of himself from intellectual truth, but only from rational and scientific truth, for these appear as his own." The celestial angels think from the rational, but from "the interior rational," thus from rational appearances of truth.<sup>6</sup> 5. @AC 1904, cp 8443, @DLW 116 6. @AC 4402[2], 1904:3, 3368, 5145:2 SD min. 4545

"The internal in the inmost heaven is the good of love to the Lord . . . and the external there is the good of mutual love" - which is to "wish better to another than to one's self." Into this, conjugal love is implanted. It is through the presence of the celestial that men are able at times to taste-whatever befalls-an inward joy and happiness which springs from innocence.<sup>7</sup> It is through this inmost heaven that the Lord insinuates conjugal love into angels and men.<sup>8</sup> For that heaven is "in the communication of good affections."<sup>9</sup> These angels are also moved with an inmost delight when they perceive from men the sphere associated with innocent caresses of infants and lovers.<sup>10</sup> They are not only the guardian angels who attend babes and take care of them after death, but they are also present with fetuses in the womb.<sup>11</sup> In the Grand Man of heaven, "all the members allotted to generation in both sexes, and especially the womb, correspond to the societies of the third heaven."<sup>12</sup> 7. @AC 2736 8. @AC 5052, 2736, De Conj. 105, @SD 1201 9. De Conj. 107 10. De Conj. 4, 107 11. @AC 5052 12. @AE 985[2], @SD 6051[e], De Conj. 27, 99ff, 105, @DP 144[e]

It is to be observed that while-in the marriages of heaven-the husband always represents the lungs (or the truth of the understanding) and his wife the heart (or the good of that truth<sup>13</sup>), yet it is revealed as an "arcanum" that in the celestial church the husband related to good and the wife to the truth of that good.

But this refers to the celestial kingdom of heaven.<sup>14</sup> 13. @CL 75[5], @AC 3236 14. @AC 4843[2], 4837:2, 4823:2, expl. 8994e

Mutual love is also a love to do uses to the community-a love which is to characterize the New Church.<sup>15</sup> The angels of the third heaven thus have a deep love of the neighbor. But by the neighbor they mean uses-uses which relate not only to the good of their society but especially to the worship of the Lord and to His Church, and to the implantation of holy things with little children whom they inspire with innocence. In their wisdom they regard others not from person, but from quality.<sup>16</sup> 15. @AR 353, @AC 2738, SD min. 4606f 16. @AE 828

It must not be imagined that they have no care for matters of civil and domestic life; for such things are what they think and talk about. It is what they see with their eyes that enters their memory and furnishes subjects for conversation and reasoning. They never think of persons that are absent!<sup>17</sup> With them, the holy things of heaven and the church are not held in the memory as rational

abstractions, and therefore are not discussed.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, their interior natural memory, which is the memory for abstract ideas, is not developed. Therefore they seem to themselves and others as simple. The truths which they hear are "hidden" or unconscious, taking the form of "an affection of good which does not descend into speech" but immediately into life. Only when others are uttering truths "or their ministers are preaching them from the Word," do such truths become manifest to their perception. Thus they are perfected by preachings, by books, and by conversation with those who come to them-among whom are preachers from the spiritual kingdom.<sup>19</sup> 17. @HH 214, 271, @SD 5586f, 5122 18. @SD 5587, @AE 826[2] 19. @AE 828. See pages 205, 206

Since their wisdom is hidden in forms of affection, these angels might at a distance appear as children or as naked infants - although to themselves they appear adult and fully clothed. Of some it is said that they go naked inside their homes.

But when meeting others they are seen dressed with much variety-in red or crimson garments, or in fine linen, or in robes of hyacinthine color, with golden ornaments and jewels, etc. These garments in every detail signify the truths from the memory which clothe their particular good. Such apparel, with the celestial, may signify the "truths of justice" or morality which-as was noted-they can discuss and change and apply.<sup>20</sup> 20. @CL 137[2], 42, 75:4, @HH 214, 179, De Conj. 66, @AE 828, @SD 4480[e], 4716, 1797, 5586f, @TCR 686

There are many different types of angels in the third heaven. This makes it difficult to describe their common features. While all other angels are in the separate heavens of their own earth, those of the inmost heaven are together from every earth and live in closest conjunction, so that "they constitute one heaven throughout the universe."<sup>21</sup> Those from our earth are mostly from the men of the most ancient church;<sup>22</sup> but this may refer only to the most internal type-found in the highest heaven of the celestial kingdom. To this heaven those born at this day on our earth cannot be admitted, because of hereditary evils and a change of genius.<sup>23</sup> Some from this earth, whose celestial degree has been opened by regeneration, can be elevated into the third heaven. Indeed, "those who imbibe the laws of life from the Word and live according to them, and worship the Lord, become angels of the third heaven."<sup>24</sup> But because the sensual degree of his mind, which is now destroyed with man, can now be regenerated with "scarcely any one," there are few who are fully regenerated.<sup>25</sup> 21. @AC 6701, cp 7078. @SD 552, 1200 22. @HD 4 23. @SD 1200, SD min. 4711 24. @DLW 239, @SD 5032, @AE 826, @AR 123 25. @AC 7442[4], 9726, 9063, @SD 4629 1/2

That the celestial heavens from different ages and different races must vary in many respects, is obvious. One conjugal couple from the third heaven approached Swedenborg in a horse-driven chariot.<sup>26</sup> Others, he found, dwelt in tents like a shepherd people, yet had a written tablet in their sanctuary. Some of those from the Golden Age are apparently more primitive - like the spirits from Mars or Jupiter - and have "internal respiration" and communicate by the expressions of their faces and by gestures, rather than by articulated words. 26. @CL 42

The abodes of the angels of the third heaven are generally situated on mountains and amid luxuriant vegetation-paradises with beautiful flowers and shrubs, forests of olives and fig trees. Strangely, no rocks or sandy places appear. The mineral kingdom is represented by gold and jewels, which are also used as ornaments in their dress.<sup>27</sup> 27. De Conj. 70, @HH 188, @AC 414, 10608:2, cp @AE 828, 1211:3

These angels live mostly in tents or simple wooden houses.<sup>28</sup> All things in their heaven seem to be alive and sport before their eyes.<sup>29</sup> The air seems like pure ether, and their heaven from below

looks like a thin cloud in the sky, in an inaccessible expanse above the spiritual angels.<sup>30</sup> 28. @HH 223[e], @CL 75, @AC 1102 29. @HH 489[3], @AC 3702[3] 30. @AE 594[18], @HD 4

The wisdom of the celestial angels cannot be divorced from their remarkable perception of correspondences; and those from the most ancient churches are therefore "scattered throughout the heavens in order that other [angels] may enjoy wisdom." It is also stated that "the best of the angels" dwell in a central situation, not associated together, but apart, house by house, or family by family.<sup>31</sup> 31. @SD 5188ff, @HH 50, 189

This dispersion of the ancient wise men within the Grand Man is reminiscent of the way in which the brain, in guiding the currents of life through the nerve fibres into all the viscera and sense organs, establishes ganglia and plexuses as subsidiary centers in the body; and this without depriving these isolated nerve centers of their unity with the brain as to function and structure. The brain and its nervous system in general correspond to the third heaven.<sup>32</sup> The presence of some of the most ancient celestials is similarly needed in the other heavens in order that all the angels may, when the Word is being read by men, derive their share of the wisdom lodged in its spiritual sense. For "the whole of the intelligence and wisdom of the angels is from the Lord by means of the Word which is with man and spirit . . .

Even its minutiae correspond and are turned into angelic ideas in their due order . . ." <sup>33</sup> 32. @TCR 119, @AE 65[3] 33. @SD 5190, 5193f, 5607-5617

There is writing in the inmost heaven. The angels there can express their wisdom-and better than in words-by a writing which consists of inflections and curves which they instinctively know how to construct without either art or teacher; "for all the extension of the thoughts and affections . . . moves according to the form of heaven." And there is also a written correspondential language used by other celestials, which seems to consist in mere numbers, yet contains heavenly arcana. In various heavens, writing is also used for messages between the angels. Some writing comes forth "without the aid of the hand, from mere correspondence with the thoughts. But these writings are not permanent." For they are representative creations which may dissolve in a moment.<sup>34</sup> 34. @HH 260[2]-263, @SD 5579, 5582ff

The Word exists in each of the three heavens, but in different forms.<sup>35</sup> Each heaven is in its own sense of the Word, and from this is their heaven and their worship. The celestials attend mostly to the uses in the Word.<sup>36</sup> 35. @AC 8920 36. @AE 630[9], 1073, @SD 5606

The celestial Word is composed in letters unknown in the world. They are alphabetical characters, bearing some slight resemblance to the Hebrew letters.<sup>37</sup> They treat of the Lord alone, and express the subtle nuances of celestial affections rather than thoughts. Each letter involves some thing which is perceived from affection. For in the Word all symbols-whether in the form of letters or objects or things-originate in the Lord's creative wisdom, and contain infinite truths which men and angels can feel even if they cannot express them except in wonder, awe, and love.<sup>38</sup> 37. SS 71, De Ver. 30-35, @HH 237[e], @SD 5581, 5562 38. See the chapter The Word in Heaven, above

## The Second Heaven

The inmost of the spiritual heaven is mutual love which-as shown above - is the external of the celestial, also called the good of innocence or the truth or form which celestial love takes.<sup>39</sup> This inflows into the spiritual heaven and is there received as the good of charity-a spiritual love which



partakes of the natural in varying degrees. The third heaven is therefore conjoined with the second heaven through intermediate angels-called celestial-spiritual and spiritual-celestial angels-who, together with the third heaven, are referred to as "the higher heavens."<sup>40</sup> 39. @AC 9933[2], 9912, cp 6435, 9473 40. @HH 27, @AC 4585, cp 4286:3, @AE 322[2], @SD 4650, 5549

But only the most interior of the angels of the second heaven can serve as such intermediates. As a rule, the angels of a higher heaven can see those of a lower heaven, but not the reverse. And as a rule, no angel of the second heaven can ascend to the third, and, if they should, they would not retain anything that they experienced. For with the angels of the second heaven the celestial degree of their rational mind is not opened.<sup>41</sup> 41. @HH 209, 34, @DLW 179, @AC 5145, @SD 5549, De Ver. 4

The angels of the second or spiritual heaven are in spiritual love, or the love of truth-the love of the Divine truth proceeding from the Lord. Their love to the Lord takes this form. Spiritual angels admit truths first into the memory, and from that into the understanding; yet they admit no truth into the understanding unless they see it. They see truths from the light of truth. For truths in heaven are spiritual objects, which appear far more clearly to them than natural objects appear before men. He who loves truth because it is true, can see spiritual truths; and those which he does not see in the world he sees afterwards in heaven. Love becomes spiritual by means of truths from the Word, when these are seen, loved, and done.<sup>42</sup> 42. @AE 831f

When the spiritual angels think of love to the neighbor, they mean by neighbor not persons but "truths in act." This love is called spiritual good and has reference to the welfare of the church, of the society in which they are, of their fellow citizens, and of the moral good which is called integrity, as well as of the civil good which has to do with justice.

Chastity and moral virtues reign among them. They know that only those who love to be useful and are intent on their work, can be maintained in spiritual good. For this keeps their thoughts "as it were at home" and holds them back from idleness which is called "the devil's pillow."<sup>43</sup> 43. @AE 831, @CL 16[3], Char. 137f, 128

Yet their delight in good works does not mean that they are deprived of external joys. In the spiritual heaven there may be seen magnificent palaces in which everything within shines with precious stones and with forms unequalled in the world and of beauty indescribable. "For art, especially that of architecture, is there in its own art," since it is from that heaven that "many arts in the world derive their laws and harmonies."<sup>44</sup> Scenic paradises and rainbow colors of ineffable loveliness meet their eyes. Their garments which they sometimes receive as gifts, and sometimes are clothed with unawares, are often of fine linen and silk, and vary according to their functions.<sup>45</sup> These angels live on the fairest of hills, surrounded by lawns, gardens, and Orchards. Their houses are mostly of stone, like marble and alabaster, and their temples may be of precious jewels.<sup>46</sup> Stone signifies natural truth, and-as will be noted-the spiritual is founded in the interior of the natural.<sup>47</sup> 44. @AE 831[6], @HH 223[e], 185, @AC 9466 45. @AE 831[6], 951 46. @AC 643, @AR 585, @TCR 609, @AE 304[2], 411:32, @CL 76 47. @AC 6240, 4402, 5344, 6649e

All spiritual angels have been men of the spiritual church, thus men of the Ancient Church or of the church of today-whose voluntary has been completely destroyed, but in whom a new will has been formed by the Lord, while the old will of the proprium has been entirely separated. For the Lord modifies His spiritual light to make man's natural beautiful like the bow in the clouds, even though much is absorbed and nullified by his proprium. Spiritual angels are of a nature similar to the people after the Flood.<sup>48</sup> 48. @AC 1042, 201, @HD 4, SD min. 4711, cp @SD 3474

"The chief thing of intelligence with the angels, is to know and perceive that all life is from the Lord, and also that all angels, spirits, and men correspond to heaven; and to know and perceive how they correspond. These are the principles of intelligence in which angels are above men. From these they know and perceive innumerable things which are in the heavens, and from these also those things which are in the world. For the things which exist in the world and its nature are causes and effects from those things as beginnings; since the whole of nature is a theatre representative of the Lord's kingdom." (@AC 4318)

The thoughts of the spiritual angels transcend those of men and even of the natural angels. The objects of their thought are spiritual-not limited by concepts of space or by notions of person or material things.<sup>49</sup> As with all finite beings, their ideas are not pure truths, but appearances of truth, and in their case, the rational appearances of the "exterior rational"-by which is meant the abstract knowledges of the interior natural memory seen in spiritual light. Hence the teaching that the spiritual heavens are in the interiors of the natural.<sup>50</sup> 49. @AC 8920[2], 8443, De Ver. 8f, 23 50. @AC 5145, cp 2576:6; 5328e, 4402, 5344, 6240, 6649e, @SD 5549[e]

It is therefore said that spiritual things-things seen in the light of heaven-are stored up as "remains" in "the interiors of the interior natural," in an order which corresponds to the angelic societies of the second heaven, and that man communicates with this heaven by means of these remains. The angels of this heaven are present with man while he is growing up and learning about spiritual things, but leave him if he does not begin to regenerate.<sup>51</sup> 51. @AC 5344, 7836:5, 5342:2, @HH 275

When men read the Word on earth in reverence, its natural sense is transposed before the angels of the second heaven into a spiritual subject matter, according to correspondences; and mediately through these angels, the celestial angels perceive the goods or affections within the sacred text.<sup>52</sup> It is especially true of the spiritual angels that, when the Word is read, their former ideas, which they might have entertained from alien fallacies and from scruples formed in the world, are gradually dissipated and new ideas insinuated which are in conformity with the light of heaven.

Above all other things they relish ideas which enlighten them about the union of the Lord's Human Essence with His Divine Essence and the reception of His Divine in their own human.<sup>53</sup> 52. @AC 2157, SS 64, 67, De Ver. 2, 22f 53. @AC 2249

The angels of the second heaven have the Word as well as other books, written in the spiritual language. The writing is composed of letters resembling those of the Latin language. They also communicate by written messages, as on earth. They use the Word in worship and for general reading, and are especially fond of singing - by which the Lord is glorified from joy of heart.<sup>54</sup> 54. @SD 5604, 5561, 5563, @HH 221-227, @AC 3894, @AR 279, 617f, @AE 326

### The First Heaven

John, in his prophetic vision, saw one hundred and forty-four thousand souls "sealed" in their foreheads with the seal of God-to signify those who, after the last judgment, were to be organized into the celestial and spiritual degrees of the new heaven. But besides he saw "a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues," - which meant spirits "whose quality no one knows but the Lord alone," and who when redeemed from "the lower earth," were to be instructed and formed into the natural degree of the new heaven.<sup>55</sup> 55. Revelation 7:9, 19:6, @AR 363, 365

The natural or ultimate heaven is really the external of the other two heavens. It is called the entrance or court of heaven.<sup>56</sup> For those who are still natural are in the lowest parts of the heavens, thus in the boundaries of some higher heaven. It therefore contains a confusing variety of good spirits whose natural loves partake in different degrees of what is celestial or what is spiritual; that is, who receive the influx either from the celestial heaven or from the spiritual, and thus belong either to the celestial kingdom or the spiritual. These two types of natural angels are quite distinct, yet both together constitute one heaven because they are both in the natural degree. <sup>56</sup>. @AE 798[4], 630, @DLW 253, @AC 9741[3]

The angels of this heaven include many who are in simple good and who believe that every one is equally the neighbor and that charity consists in doing good to the poor and needy, without discriminating. For they love the neighbor as a person.<sup>57</sup> <sup>57</sup>. @HH 31, @AE 449, 834, 1185, @AC 4210

What these angels of the ultimate heaven see in the Word is the "spiritual-moral" sense.<sup>58</sup> The degree of truth Divine which is accommodated to them is said to be "the fifth" descending degree; and this is to some extent perceptible even to men when they are in a state of enlightenment, as when the literal sense of the Word becomes translucent from the spiritual sense now laid bare in the Heavenly Doctrine in natural form.<sup>59</sup> As to understanding, the natural angels are therefore not much different from men in the world. Their spiritual degree is not opened to conscious life. But this does not mean that it is closed as it is with an evil spirit.<sup>60</sup> For their natural mind is opened to the influx of the higher heavens. Wisdom and intelligence are not inscribed upon their life, as is the case with higher angels. Yet they have shunned evils as sins and - if Christian - have believed in the Lord according to the doctrine of their church.<sup>61</sup> In general, they are such as could be reformed but not regenerated. Some of these are described in the Word by the Hebrew man servant.<sup>62</sup> <sup>58</sup>. @AE 1012[3], 1024:2 <sup>59</sup>. @AC 8443, 9407, @AE 1061 <sup>60</sup>. @DLW 253, @AE 624[2], 684 <sup>61</sup>. @DLW 429, @HH 270[3], 4; @SD 5032 <sup>62</sup>. @AC 8974[3], 8977, 8980f

Thus they are primarily servants-being in the "good of faith," obedient to the precepts which their church has taught them.<sup>63</sup> They will depend on the higher angels for leadership and example; even as on earth they were mostly in "historical faith" and did not inquire into the truth of what they were taught by their leaders. Only the more intelligent among them think more abstractly about the neighbor.<sup>64</sup> That there are many shades and degrees of those in the natural heaven is taught in connection with the heavens which are "under the Moon."<sup>65</sup>

Among the natural angels there are many who are distinguished by a love of knowing. And although these angels are said to be natural and sensual, they receive spiritual light into their natural lumen.<sup>66</sup> <sup>63</sup>. @AC 9812[2], 9933:2 <sup>64</sup>. @AE 834, 369:2 <sup>65</sup>. @AE 708. See the section The Heavens "under the Moon." <sup>66</sup>. @ISB 16[5], @AE 834

"Those who have not confirmed themselves in a faith in what is unknown"-that is, in blind faith-"and at the same time have been in some affection of truth, are instructed by angels according to their reception of truths and a life according to them, and are elevated into the societies of those in spiritual love and thence intelligence, These become spiritual; but the rest remain natural." From this we may infer that through the natural heaven there is an entrance into higher heavens.<sup>67</sup> <sup>67</sup>. @DLW 429, @AE 630[3], 12

It is the Lord's presence which makes heaven. The Lord is indeed equally present with all angels of whatever degree. Yet with respect to the reception of His inflowing life He may be said to be "more

fully present in the inmost heaven," while He is present "more remotely" with those who are conjoined with Him by the good of faith.<sup>68 68.</sup> @HH 7f, @DLW 110[e], @AC 9680[2]

That of the Divine which the natural angels can receive is called the Divine Natural-and the Divine Natural Good which thus "makes" the first heaven also includes civil good which has to do with justice among citizens, and moral good which embraces all the virtues of an honorable life.<sup>69</sup> These lower or external goods are said to be from the Lord's Divine Natural and Divine Sensual; yet these "are not lower in the Lord, for in Him and His Divine Human all is infinite," The meaning is simply that "those who are sensual men apprehend sensually the things which are in the Lord and from Him, and those who are natural apprehend them naturally."<sup>70 69.</sup> @AC 9812 70. @AC 4715[2]

"The Lord provides that man may be reformed and saved by those things that he adopts as his religion." By religion is meant the acknowledgment of God and the shunning of evils as sins. "For every nation the Lord provides a universal means of salvation."<sup>71</sup>

Salvation out of pure mercy apart from means is of course utterly impossible.<sup>72</sup> The means are truths. And "everyone in every religion knows the evils and falsities that must be shunned," for most nations have laws similar to the Ten Commandments. "Few are wholly ignorant of God."<sup>73</sup> Such, when they first enter the other life, may appear and act almost like apes. But even these-if they have lived a moral life-can be taught by angels after death and receive something spiritual in their moral life. They are vivified by a knowledge concerning God as Divine Man.<sup>74 71.</sup> @AE 1179[2], @DP 326[9], 322:4

1. @DP 335
2. @DP 254[2], 5
3. SS 116, @SD 5880, 5822, LJ post. 130f

Upright gentiles who have been in obedience and mutual charity from their religiosity, are in spiritual-natural good. And good recognizes truth when it is presented. These are therefore easily instructed and trained into choirs according to their religion, so far as possible.<sup>75</sup> If they have worshiped God under a human form they are conjoined with Christians in heaven.<sup>76 75.</sup> @AC 4988, 2599f 76. LJ 51, @AC 5256[e]

On the other hand, the general teaching of the Writings is to the effect that the Grand Man of heaven "must be composed not of men of a single religion but of men of many religions," and that there are special heavens from each religion.<sup>77</sup> So, for instance, "all communication between the Christian heavens and the Mohammedan heavens and likewise the heavens of the Gentiles is taken away." Without such a provision the Christian heavens would be tormented by the unchaste spheres of polygamy and by pagan idolatries. And if the spiritual ideals of Christianity should constantly encompass Mohammedan spirits with the insinuation that polygamy is a sin, all the delights of their life would turn into misery, and none would be saved except "those who were in heavenly heat and light from the Lord."<sup>78 77.</sup> @DP 326[10], @TCR 729 78. @CL 352

But the Mohammedan heaven is described as threefold. In the lowest degree are those who are being initiated.

In the second heaven are those who give tip polygamy and live with one partner. In the highest heaven are those who - "as do many" - come to acknowledge the Lord as the only God. These latter are separated into heavens that communicate with the Christian heavens, and with them there is

conjugal love.<sup>79</sup> 79. @DP 255, @CL 342, 352, De Conj. 48f

The infinite patience of the Lord is also shown in His gentle permission that monks and nuns are released after death from their vows of celibacy and are received in heaven, and may choose a conjugal life. But if saddened by the sphere of marriage they may choose to dwell with their like "at the sides of heaven" where they may regain a cheerful life.<sup>80</sup> 80. @CL 54, 155

Thus there are "many mansions" in our Father's house. And in the natural heaven the mercy of the Lord is shown. For He does not exclude from heaven those whose interior rational has not been opened and Who cannot be separated from falsities which are not born of their own evils, but which seem to them to contain something good. Good gentiles who have been ignorant of any doctrine, have formed no principles contrary to the truths of faith, and therefore they can receive instruction more easily than adult Christians raised in a consummated church.<sup>81</sup> 81. @AE 708[2], @AC 2590, cp 9192:7; @HH 318 seq., 345

And in every heaven there is a continual progress—a growth of spiritual life. There "all goods are immeasurably increased." The increase is "in proportion to the numbers."<sup>82</sup> For "everyone communicates his own bliss and happiness to others." And "every one who comes into heaven enters the highest joy of his heart. He can bear no higher joy, for he would be suffocated by it." There can be no just complaint whether a man was born in a land where falsities of religion abounded, instead of in a celestial race; or if he died as an infant, rather than having to "bear the burden and heat of the day." There are indeed incomparable degrees and countless variations of heavenly joy even in the natural heaven, yet the lowliest angel has as much of joy as his heart can hold.<sup>83</sup> 82. LJ 12 83. @DP 254[3]-6; Matthew 20:12, @AC 449-459, 537-553, @HH 395-414. See page 215

The outward life of the natural angels shows less perfection than that of higher angels. Yet it seems to be true of all angels, even those from the most ancient church, that their external customs, their dress, their houses, and their moral concepts continue to take color from their earthly environment and the age in which they had lived. Their spiritual uses also take on outward forms such as they were used to on earth.<sup>84</sup> 84. Cp @CL 12, 14, 15, 182, 207, 156a, 75, 76, etc.

The dwellings of the angels of the ultimate heaven are situated in fertile valleys between hills and mountains. The third heaven, which is upon the mountains, apparently does not appear otherwise than as thin bright clouds in the sky.<sup>85</sup> But when something spiritual, such as the good of charity, is talked about in a higher heaven, this truth may inflow into the first heaven "mediately and immediately," and "is received substantially," appearing as a paradise, or elsewhere as a city with palaces. It was so that the Heavenly Doctrine was presented before John on Patmos—descending from the third heaven as a city with golden streets.<sup>86</sup> 85. @AR 896, cp @HH 429, @AE 304[2], @AC 5658[3] 86. @AC 4411, 5658:3; Revelation 21, @AR 896

Good spirits, when they see such representations as horses, lambs, or other animals or scenes similar to those seen by the prophets, "know perfectly well what they signify, and thus gather from them what the angels are conversing about."<sup>87</sup> This perception of the meaning of symbolic representations is an eminent faculty which man unknowingly possesses but which comes to full flower in the other life. And it shows one of the ways in which the spiritual angels can convey their thoughts in a general form adapted to the first heaven. 87. @AC 2179, 3216-3222, 3226

The Heavens "under the Moon"

In treating of spirits who are natural and even sensual, but at the same time in the faith of charity, the Apocalypse Explained informs us that while heaven is divided into two kingdoms, and also into three heavens, yet

"there is a further distinction-between those who receive light, that is, intelligence, from the Lord as a Sun, and those who receive the light of intelligence from the Lord as a Moon. Those who receive the light of intelligence from the Lord as a Sun are those with whom the intellectual and its rational have been opened, and who have consequently thought rationally about what should be believed from a spiritual affection of truth; while those who receive light from the Lord as a Moon are those in whom the intellectual and interior rational have not been opened, but only the natural, and who in consequence have thought from the memory about what should be believed; and to think about this from the memory is to think only from such things as have been heard from a teacher or preacher.... If such in the world were also in the faith of charity they are in the heavens under the Lord as a Moon.... There is the further difference that those who are under the Lord as a Moon can see nothing in the light that those have who are under the Lord as a Sun, for the reason that their light is not genuine light, but a reflected light, which can receive falsities as well as truths if only there seems to be good in the falsities. . . . All those in the heavens under the Lord as a Moon are natural and sensual. . . .

"Their affection of knowing truth and doing good is, like they themselves, natural, and thus partakes more or less from the glory of being learned and from a reputation that looks to honors and gain as rewards-differing in this from a spiritual affection of knowing truth and doing good. . . .

"There are three heavens that are under the Lord as a Moon . . . and yet all who are in these heavens are natural. . . . For the natural like the spiritual is divided into three degrees; the exterior natural communicates with the world, the interior with heaven, and the middle conjoins. . . . They cannot enter into the heavens that are under the Lord as a Sun, because their interior sight or understanding has been formed to receive the lunar light, not the solar light. . . . But those who are natural and are not in the faith of charity are in the hells below these heavens. . ."88 88. @AE 708

Every division of man's interiors has a distinct light of its own.<sup>89</sup> Because man's natural mind here on earth becomes immersed in corporeal and shameful things, it comes to view all things in the fatuous light of nature and self. A man cannot be brought out of this valley of shadow unless he is withdrawn, "at least to some small extent," from sensual things, and brought into an interior natural lumen from which he can better judge about the use and qualify and cause of sensuous things. "If he is able to think still more interiorly," he may then come into a spiritual-natural light, which is partly from the light of heaven within natural light.<sup>90</sup> 89. @SD 4627[5], @AC 6832[2], @DP 166 90. @SD 4627, @AC 6315, 3223f, cp 3263:2

The light that is adapted for those in the first heaven, and also in the world of spirits, appears much like the diurnal light in our world, and is called "spiritual-natural" light. The intelligence and wisdom of man or angel depends on the light in which he views all things. "In the spiritual world, where all are spiritual even in respect to their bodies, each one's eyes are formed to see from their own light." Since the understanding is an internal sight, everything intellectual - requires spiritual light, and it follows that without it no man can have thought, reflection, attention, rational analysis, judgment, or choice.<sup>91</sup> 91. @DP 166f, @SD 4627

"The Lord is everywhere present with light, even in the hells; otherwise there would be no faculty of thinking and thence of speaking." The devils see each other, necessarily. But their light is

comparatively as from a fire of coals-and is meant in the Word by "the shadow of death."<sup>92</sup> 92. @AC 4531, @AR 695[2]

## 14 THE SOCIETIES OF HEAVEN

### ANGELIC COMMUNITIES

In previous chapters it was shown that the angelic heaven is distinguished into three degrees-called the celestial heaven, the spiritual heaven, and the natural heaven; and also, at the same time, divided into two kingdoms-the celestial kingdom and the spiritual kingdom. The three heavens represent stages of regeneration or discrete degrees of perfection, each heaven marking the degree to which the rational mind of man has been opened. The kingdoms, on the other hand, represent the manner in which human minds receive the Divine truth which proceeds from the Lord: those of the celestial kingdom receiving the truth directly into the will or into life, while those of the spiritual kingdom receive it first into the understanding. This means that those of the celestial kingdom are of a different genius than those of the spiritual kingdom, and are regenerated by a different mode. And this genius is something that no man can determine for himself, for it is largely dependent on his heredity.

A man's native genius quite naturally directs him into certain forms of usefulness or certain paths of development, and limits his usefulness in other respects.

It is therefore taught that it is the Divine love, looking to uses, that is distinguished-in its reception-into two "kingdoms," and afterwards into lesser kingdoms of more specialized uses, called "provinces," and these again into "societies," and the societies into families and homes.<sup>1</sup> 1. Love x. Societies innumerable, as the stars or brain cells, @DLW 366

The provinces of heaven are compared to, and indeed correspond to, the various members, organs, and viscera in the body of man, and the societies, to the tissues of which these organs and parts are made up. Since heaven is a kingdom of uses, we can find no more perfect picture of heaven than the marvelous economy of the human body, which itself is created in the image of God and displays His order.

The three heavens are also compared to three parts of the human body-like the head, the trunk, and the extremities. But in a more detailed way the heavens correspond to the three viscera - the cephalic viscera (the brain and nervous centers), the thoracic viscera (the heart and the lungs) and the abdominal viscera (including stomach, intestines, etc.); in which case the external framework of bones, muscles, and skin would correspond to the church on earth.<sup>2</sup> These three viscera are distant, separate, and distinct, one above or below another, like the three heavens which are discrete as to degree and situation. And just as each of the three heavens is founded in a discretely different ruling love, so are the three groups of viscera distinguished by their relation to the fluids of the body; the abdomen preparing the chyle, the thorax preparing the blood, and the brain preparing the nervous force or fluid which the Writings refer to as the "animal spirit." But the inmost province of the body with the inmost vital fluid which from its birthplace in the cortical substances goes forth to operate its miracles in the organs of generation, would correspond to the "heaven of human internals" which is above the angelic heavens and is the Lord's abode with man.<sup>3</sup> 2. @AE 1222.3 3. @AC 3745f, 1999:3, 4, @SD 3036

The two kingdoms make a far less obvious division when seen pictured in the correspondences of

the human body. For the celestial kingdom is called the kingdom of the heart, and this includes not only the heart but also all the blood vessels which go forth to feed all parts and tissues of the body, from head to toe;

and it includes also the cerebellum or hind brain from which all involuntary nerves and muscle fibres of the body are, in the last analysis, ruled.<sup>4</sup> It is therefore almost impossible to find any bodily part which is not in an intimate contact with the blood stream and which is not affected by the pulse and to some extent enervated by the cerebellum.<sup>5</sup> To speak spiritually, we might say that the celestial kingdom cuts across all the three heavens. 4. @HH 95f, @AC 3883-3895, 3635, 9670:2 5. @AC 4325, 9683:2

The same might be said of the "spiritual kingdom," which is called the kingdom of the lungs. In a sense, the lungs are only a portion of man's skin turned inwardly and specialized for the reception of certain aliments from the atmosphere. The motion of the lungs, which is under the partial control of the cerebrum or front brain, is carried along by all the membranes of the whole body, and even by the muscular sheaths and the bones. The oxygen and the aerial spheres drawn in by the lungs affect the blood and through it every cell of the body. The conscious part of man's life, which is felt in the cerebrum as sensations and thoughts and affections, is entirely dependent on the breathing of the lungs.<sup>6</sup> And the Writings therefore say that the spiritual kingdom involves not only the lungs but the cerebrum and all the nerve fibres and muscle fibres over which we have voluntary control.<sup>7</sup> Although so intimately cooperant, the kingdom of the heart and the kingdom of the lungs are not confused; each remains distinct. 6. @AC 4931, 3887:2 7. @AC 9670[2], 4325ff

The two kingdoms of heaven and their subordinate provinces refer to uses. Here on earth, conscious uses cannot be undertaken unless men are joined together into societies or communities, in which they are neighbors one to another. The same is true of the angels. And since there can be no human happiness apart from mutual uses - ranging from acts of personal affection and helpfulness, social courtesy and civic cooperation, to the more abstract functions of instruction, government, and inspiration - therefore heaven also consists of innumerable societies, each of which represent some specific form of use, or its own kind of good.

And those living in the center correspond to the heart and lungs of the society.<sup>8</sup> 8. SS 107

All in heaven are affiliated or consociated with those who are in the same kind of good-who love the same specific types of use, have the same interior end and quality. Spiritual friendships and kinships are based in nothing else than a common love and faith.<sup>9</sup> Such also look somewhat alike in heaven, and even their breathing and pulse are similar. The Lord thus protects them and preserves their special character and holds them in the freedom of their own love. Strangers cannot long remain in a society which has a different love. And hypocrites would soon begin to suffer torture and be unable to breathe and so would cast themselves down and join their like, or be thrown out, like the man without a wedding-garment.<sup>10</sup> 9. @HH 46 10. Matthew 22:11, @CL 10

Few angels ever go out from their society to another. (@HH 49) Indeed it is said that in internal fact an angel never leaves his society, for his society represents his ruling love. Yet this does not mean that the angels are isolated or confined in their society. For all the societies have communication with one another, though not by open intercourse. They communicate by an extension of the spheres of their life - and these spheres extend more widely into surrounding societies the more perfect and interior their affections - are.<sup>11</sup> In each society the best and wisest dwell in the center, yet it is these Who also have the widest communication with other societies.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the more



interiorly an angel is devoted to his own use, the wider his influence and the greater is his intelligence and his sharing in the common sphere of heaven. 11. @HH 49, @AC 8063 12. @HH 50,189, cp @AC 2973

Something of this holds true among men. A person who has entered interiorly, with ardor and love, into a field of use or a profession, not only sees its details more clearly than others, but sees its just relation to other fields without prejudice, contorsion or presumption; and he also exerts a broader influence. Such a man has a clear sight of the genuine truths of his own field of employment, and this genuine truth accords with the genuine truth of every other use, and thus all uses shed a light on his own work and thought.

It is the same in heaven. Those whose intelligence and wisdom are formed out of genuine truths can communicate with other societies freely, but those whose truths are obscured by what is spurious can only have a broken and partial communication.<sup>13</sup> 13. @HH 204

This communication is not obvious to the senses, nor always consciously realized. For in the other world affections, and sometimes thoughts, are communicated within each heaven, society, or province, as a common sphere or a common perception.<sup>14</sup> But we are warned that the case is different in respect to intercourse between the three heavens. Such intercourse is not properly called "communication," but influx.<sup>15</sup> There is influx from a higher heaven into a lower, never the reverse. Influx is a communication by correspondences.<sup>16</sup> 14. @AE 674[3] 15. @HH 206 16. @DLW 88, 186

Influx is not a communication of ideas or thoughts. When there is an influx from a society of the celestial heaven into one of the middle heaven, there is no transfer of celestial ideas into the minds of the spiritual angels. But there is a secret and imperceptible influence, caused by the sphere of celestial love, through which something of corresponding love is aroused in the spiritual angels.<sup>17</sup> Thus the influx of mutual love from the celestials would arouse a love toward the neighbor, or charity, in the spiritual, and make this genuine. Hence also it presents in the spiritual heaven such things as there correspond to celestial ideas. And truths are what limit the influx of good.<sup>18</sup> Influx is received by every one according to his nature and state.<sup>19</sup> 17. @AC 9912, 6366, 6106

1. @AC 4205

2. @AC 2888

The three heavens are so discretely different that they communicate only by influx, or by correspondences.<sup>20</sup> They are distinguished and separated by being in discrete degrees of love and wisdom.

"It is from this that angels of the lower heavens cannot ascend to the angels of the higher heavens, or if they are allowed to ascend they do not see the higher angels or anything that is about them." For an angel is simply his own love and his own wisdom. The love and wisdom of the higher angels is imperceptible to the lower.<sup>21</sup> There is also "a most careful precaution against any angel of a higher heaven looking down into a society of a lower heaven and talking with any one there; for thus the angel would immediately be deprived of his intelligence and wisdom." As soon as an angel of the third heaven would thus descend to the second, "his third degree," in which his wisdom resides, would be closed; and since he has none in the second or first degree, he would thus lose all his illustration.<sup>22</sup> 20. @HH 206 21. @DLW 179, 202 22. @HH 208

This is of course quite understandable, from human experience. Many a learned man would seem foolish if he began to give advice to a skilled artisan. A clergyman had better abstain from competing in the investment market. By the same token, a janitor might find the lecture of a mathematician, physicist, or philosopher utterly meaningless and its wisdom incomprehensible.

But the matter is not so easily dismissed: For the Writings state that each spiritual society, "in its own place, forms three heavens, and three hells under them";<sup>23</sup> and that just as the three heavens are relatively placed one above another, so "all societies of heaven whatsoever are in a like relation." Thus a society may appear as if distributed over a mountain, the summit being occupied by those from the inmost heaven, while some from the second heaven dwell on the hillsides and others, from the ultimate heaven, live in the valley.<sup>24</sup> In other words, an angelic society may consist of three heavens; but these can have no communication except by influx according to correspondences. Yet the society as a whole represents a distinct use in which the various heavens partake. How this cooperation can be effective without any actual social contacts between the angels of the three heavens may be difficult for men to picture; although in many industries and institutions on earth the various levels of enterprise are carried on, each level being practically unaware of the others.

Those whose interests and ideals are diverse generally do not mix socially, even if they are moved by a common charity and an interest in the welfare of the same use. On earth, however, such segregations may engender misunderstandings, envy and dissensions, since the thoughts of men can be known only through their bodily acts and words. 23. LJ 27, cp @AE 1133[6], @HH 541 24. @HH 207, SS 107

The precaution lest angels of different degrees seek to enter into open intercourse and speech and thus lose their illustration, does not mean that there cannot be a certain type of open contact by means of subject spirits, emissaries, or intermediate angels. Such emissary angels are often mentioned in Swedenborg's accounts from the other world. Sometimes an angel appeared to descend-as if flying or floating down-to a lower society in order to confirm the inferior angels in some conclusion, or to guide their decisions; or to perform some visitation or purgative judgment in the world of spirits.<sup>25</sup> On numerous occasions some angel was sent down to accompany Swedenborg or other spirits in an ascent to heaven to observe and visit;<sup>26</sup> which is possible after a preparation of their states, even as it is possible for a man to elevate his thoughts for a time into fields far above his own loves,-a thing which is most necessary since without it regeneration can never commence. 25. @CL 2 26. @CL 11ff

In order to act into the world of spirits, angelic societies send out one of their number as a "subject" or emissary.<sup>27</sup> This subject-spirit can then act as a guardian angel for a person on earth, or can perform other offices among spirits. The subject spirit does not think or speak from himself, but the angels concentrate their thoughts into him and give him a power proportionate to the number of angels which inspire him. Yet he feels entirely as if he acted of his own freedom. His actions and thoughts are however accommodated to the spirits to whom he is sent. It was by means of Subject spirits that societies in heaven could learn about Swedenborg and could communicate to him a knowledge about themselves.<sup>28</sup> 27. @HH 601, @AC 4402, 5956 28. @AC 5983 seq., cp De Ver. 5, @CL 326

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It has been shown that a society of the spiritual world may be viewed as consisting of three degrees

of angels, a society of spirits in the world of spirits, and also of hells in three descending degrees.<sup>29</sup> If we could see the souls or spirits of the men living in a large city and partaking in common uses, we would probably find just such a variety of spiritual states and attitudes; the difference being that in heaven and hell spirits do not live commingled as on earth, but separated according to states of mind and ruling motives, and according to relative wisdom. <sup>29</sup>. LJ 27. See pages 238, 84-87

The teachings seem to indicate that in the other life each heaven or each degree of an angelic society is a complete community of its own, with a visible government and a social life in which all have some share. The form and outward appearance of such communities differ widely. The Writings note that the angels may dwell together-as men do-in vast cities of hundreds of thousands, or in smaller communities. Some live apart, household by household; yet these also are ordered in social relations, the wiser in the center, the simple at the borders.<sup>30</sup> 30. @HH 50

The angelic communities described in the Writings differ in many respects, not only by the fact that some belonged to the celestial kingdom and others to the spiritual kingdom, but also because each community was seemingly formed from spirits living in the same age and often the same country. One heaven which Swedenborg visited belonged to the Golden Age, another, an Asiatic heaven, to the Silver Age, another to the Copper Age, where the Ancient Asiatic Word was still preserved. In each heaven the angels lived in much the same state of culture or external civilization as they had done on earth, although in far greater internal wisdom and happiness.<sup>31</sup> We find several accounts of a heavenly community named for Athens, in which a number of ancient Greek philosophers were living in an environment reminiscent of classical times.<sup>32</sup>

It was a large city with libraries, museums and colleges. Swedenborg heard their wisdom, as they spoke on the subject of the spiritual world with some learned guests who had recently died. He also saw how the city was administered, inspected its ministries, courts of justice, businesses and employments, witnessed its spiritual sports and noted the embroidery worked by the women (who were called "virgins," perhaps because even the aged and long married in heaven appear in the beauty of youth). He was also shown wonderful productions "wrought by artisans in a spiritual manner."<sup>33</sup> 31. @CL 75-77 32. @CL 151a, 182, 207 33. @CL 182, 207, 293:6

There appear to be communities in heaven from various nations. But the real distinction is that of uses. One society, which is described in some detail, was the "Eagle Society" to which ten guests, selected from among novitiate spirits, were invited.<sup>34</sup> This society, to judge from its social customs, dress, and appearance, may have been from spirits who had died in the seventeenth or eighteenth century, and had come from a Protestant country. The special use to which the society was dedicated was apparently the education of youth; its coat-of-arms showed an eagle on the top of a tree brooding over her young. The houses were reared on a mountain which at a distance had appeared like an expanse in the clouds. On their arrival at the inner gate, the visitors and their angel-guide were welcomed by courtiers who showed them around the city, with its magnificent palace and marvelous gardens. Later they partook with the prince in a midday meal of delicate foods which were replenished without labor on the table, the while the prince explained that the real joys of heaven come from the love of use. The palace was constructed of porphyry and jasper, roofed with gold. Its furnishings and ornaments and utensils were of precious substances and of inconceivable beauty. Nothing the angel told them-was fashioned by angel hands, but by the Maker of the universe, as a gift to the prince of the society. And the same could be said of the homes of the other angels. <sup>34</sup>. @CL 11-25; @HH 391, 387

Perhaps we ought to tarry here and ask ourselves what a home in heaven really is. It is love alone that rears a home-or makes a house into a home. Even as a home in this world reflects in its furnishings something of the love, the use, and the sentiments of its owner, so the inside of an angelic home corresponds in detail to the things of the angel's good.<sup>35</sup> Everything in it is in the order of his will, his good, his most gratifying use. It is in his will that a man or spirit finds his inmost privacy. Heaven would not be heaven unless it meant a place of rest and peace and protected use where he can dwell stripped of the outward dignities and be oblivious at times of any accommodations to foreign states. 35. @TCR 553, @AC 1484[e], 7847, @HH 186, @DLW 408

The houses in heaven seem much like those in the world, although each no doubt surpasses the dreams of earth, in grace and fitness. They have chambers and halls for every purpose, amply furnished. They have windows, doors with locks and keys, which are used as on earth. Yet each door betokens a communication between the compartments of the mind, each room a particular state. Nothing is futile. If states change and new spiritual needs arise, the house expands! If anything is useless it disappears.<sup>36</sup> 36. @HH 184, 489:2. LJ post. 318, @AE 536[2], 1226:2, @TCR 78, @AC 1627 seq.

Swedenborg was once invited into the home of a conjugal pair - one of many dwellings which nestled about a central palace, called a "palace of wisdom." The home was partitioned by a wall of translucent crystal; and as they conversed he noticed how the words of his host increased in wisdom when his wife addressed her partner from within the crystal wall.<sup>37</sup> 37. @CL 56[2]

The marvel of the architecture is that every object is pervaded with a living quality-emanates a joy inimitable here on earth. All things are as if transparent from an inner essence and meaning. The very walls of the houses often seem animated with flowing representative forms or symbols that express the interior things of love and wisdom to the minds of the angels.<sup>38</sup> 38. @HH 489

These things could not be, "except the Lord build the house" - build it from a substance which itself is a form of life, a finite medium pregnant with the Lord's infinitude of potential uses.

The Lord is the Architect of human life, and each spiritual house is a gift from Him.<sup>39</sup> Yet the spiritual raw-material is as it were gathered, unconsciously, by the man himself. Nor are we left entirely uninformed about the process of the building. Despite man's life-long labors of reformation and regeneration, the house in heaven is a creation by the Lord, a work of a moment, a work apart from any concept of time. When a new-comer arrives to the society of his own ruling love, he finds the house waiting for him, and recognizes it as his immediately.<sup>40</sup> 39. @HH 190, @CL 12, LJ post. 12 40. @AR 611; @DP 338[4], @DLW 134, LJ post. 318

Houses, gardens-all the visible and tangible things of heaven -are in the Writings sometimes called "creations," and sometimes "appearances," or "representatives." They are indeed appearances, for they are the states or finite forms of the angel's life, appearing to his own senses and to the senses of others who are in a state to appreciate them. From long habit we earthlings have taken it for granted that such objects testify only of the physical world around us and can have no other origin. But they are spiritual realities translated into corresponding forms of mental space and thus presented in the only terms that are perceptible to the spiritual senses of human minds here and hereafter.<sup>41</sup> 41. @DWis 7:5

These things which angels sense around them are not merely subjective or "ideal"-or mere ideas in their minds-any more than they are insubstantial mirages in their atmosphere! Indeed it is written,

"spiritual objects ... are felt as if in the mind, although they are not there."<sup>42</sup> "Exterior spiritual things are so created as to clothe or invest interior spiritual things; and when these are clothed and invested, there come forth (existunt) forms like those in the natural world, into which the interior spiritual things therefore finally close and in which they finally stand forth."<sup>43</sup> 42. Conv. Angels, 9 43. @AE 582

Such representative spiritual creations derive their origin from the Divine which proceeds as heat and light from the Sun of heaven. Their appearing in forms like those in our world "is according to the order of creation, which is, that when the things pertaining to the wisdom of the angels and to their love descend into the lower sphere in which the angels are as to their bodies and their bodily sensations, they are manifested in such forms and types. These are correspondences."<sup>44</sup> Without such spiritual ultimates there could be no sensory life for spirits and angels, no external environment, no contacts, no spiritual societies. It is explained that in heaven the objects perceived by the spiritual senses are "angelic societies."<sup>45</sup> But it is also said that they are "truths,"<sup>46</sup> For in what they see the angels recognize the true representations of spiritual states of reception of the Lord's love and wisdom. 44. @AE 926[2] 45. LJ 9 46. @AE 831[4]

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It is because the external environment of an angel is created in correspondence with his permanent affections and convictions, that no strangers can long remain in an angelic society. If they do, the society would itself alter or be removed. Thus a spiritual law makes it virtually impossible for a spirit - except when he is in externals, as newcomers are-to abide in the home of another. Married partners in the other life cannot dwell together in the same house unless they are similitudes - i.e., interiorly united. "If they are external inclinations"-joined only by superficial likeness of taste or station-"and not at the same time internal, the very house or place separates, rejects, and drives them away."<sup>47</sup> For in the spiritual world there are no spaces but appearances of space, and these are according to their states of life or love. 47. @CL 50

Spirits and angels who are of the same opinion can appear together in one house and even in the same room; and when they converse each one feels as if the thought of his friends were his own ideas originating with himself.

Indeed, if the guests disagree, they disappear from sight.<sup>48</sup> But in conversations out of doors the thoughts of others are perceived as not coming from one's self; and there spirits may meet even if their opinions differ.<sup>49</sup> 48. @SD 5177, 5531 49. @AC 9213[5], @DP 338[4]

These occurrences may seem strange and fantastic to us; and even spirits, when they first enter the spiritual world, may find them amazing. But to spirits they soon become so familiar that they forget that their life was ever different. Spirits and angels do not reflect upon their houses or think of external objects except as the normal representative forms in which their conscious experiences come. In heaven, the things that serve for use in the homes, are constant.<sup>50</sup> In the world of spirits, and among mixed groups of spirits such as Swedenborg often encountered, many changes occur, sudden and sometimes revolutionary, as during the events of the Last judgment; and these are described in the prophetic sayings and visions of the Old and New Testaments: in which the earth was shaken and cities were consumed and many strange wonders were witnessed. Yet to a spirit, in the world of spirits, the sudden disappearance of his house is but the normal consequence of his affections being changed and his thoughts being centered upon a new field of use nearer to his real aspirations and interests. 50. @TCR 78

And after all, does not a similar thing happen in our minds repeatedly every day, without causing wonder? For our mind's eye is accustomed to sudden shifts from one field of knowledge to another. We cheerfully accept the fact that our mind, our spirit, is ruled by spiritual laws, laws of love which defeat space and time and follow a logic of their own.

While here on earth, our mind is in constant flux, hesitant, restless, tasting many conflicting delights, choosing not only between good and evil, but between all the varieties of each, between the subtle shadings and colorings of each. Throughout a life-time it gradually seeks out the furnishings and materials by which the house of life can be shaped; and as the ruling love is 'confirmed, this house is remodeled and adapted again and again to new states.

Yet it is not until the spirit reaches heaven that the final design is revealed: as a home, a place where the spirit can be at rest, where he is secure and free and beyond temptation and surrounded with others in whose uses he shares.

This is the significance of each angelic community, with its common environment and mutual life. The spirit cannot perform uses alone. The Writings show that each society is therefore bound in a communion of good and truth, in that the knowledge and intelligence of all become available to each one, as if by a choral thinking. Each feels and acts as if he had this wisdom individually, or of himself; but on reflection he gratefully acknowledges that it is bestowed by the Lord through the society in which he is.

Each society is a form of use. Within the society, mutual love binds all together into a human form-in all the social and domestic bonds of love. But interiorly, the love of the society goes out beyond its own borders. Each society is but a part of the Grand Alan. Its real use is directed outwardly, to others beyond its borders-whom it would protect and serve and benefit, and if possible draw into closer conjunction with itself, into the choirs or gyres of its uses.

## 15 THE OCCUPATIONS OF ANGELS

In the attempt to picture what the life of heaven might be like, Christians have gone to various extremes. Some have thought that heaven was to be a material paradise planted on earth after this had been purged and renovated by the fire of the last judgment-an abundant paradise in which the elect of God without labor were to enjoy the utmost luxuries after their spirits had been reincarnated in their earthly bodies. Others, rejecting such gross concepts of eternal happiness, have imagined that the souls of the blessed, after death (and possibly to eternity), would remain as unembodied minds in a perpetual state of ecstasy. Both these ideas sprang from an inability to see that the spirit of man after death remains a man, in a spiritual body, having heart and lungs and brain and senses, and thus a complete human life in a complete and permanent spiritual world.<sup>1</sup> 1. Wis. vii.

The life of heaven is a complete human life, and the blessedness of the angels comes from a love of uses, from a delight in cooperating with other spirits in acts of charity and mutual service.

In its organization and life, an angelic society therefore resembles a human community, and all the angels are engaged in employments and offices much as on earth. In appearance these occupations seem to differ from ours only in their greater perfection. "In heaven every one is in his own occupation (opere) according to correspondence, and the correspondence is not with his occupation but with the use of each occupation . . ." <sup>2</sup> It is obvious that many occupations could serve no useful

purpose in the eternal world. But each man has a use to perform to the spirits of other men, and he may perform this use on earth through services which directly regard only the welfare of the material body and which therefore are not needed in the heavens. There he finds occupations which really correspond to his interior use and express it. And, it is said, "he who in heaven is in a function or work corresponding to his use, is in an altogether similar state as when he was in the world; for the spiritual and the natural act as one through correspondences, with this difference, however, that he is in a more inward joy, because in spiritual life, which is an interior life and therefore more receptive of heavenly blessedness."<sup>3</sup> 2. @HH 394 3. @HH 394

Although offices and manual occupations in the other world thus resemble ours in appearance, we are warned that they are all spiritual, and so utterly different that they cannot be described in the words of human language, except as to external form. Angelic uses cannot be understood except by spiritual ideas which in some measure can fall into the interior rational sight when a man withdraws his mind from ideas of quantities and instead thinks of qualities.<sup>4</sup> 4. @DWis 7:5:3, @AE 1191, 1226, Char. 142, De Ver. 10

With this in mind, let us note that all the societies of heaven are distinguished by their uses, functions, or goods of charity. Some of the angels mentioned by name in the Word, like Michael and Gabriel, were actually angelic societies who appeared to the open vision of men in a personification, or through a "subject spirit." Michael appeared before Daniel as the champion of Israel against the forces of the world, and to John at Patmos as the defender of the faith in the Lord and the protector of the New Church against the dragon of "faith alone."

Gabriel appeared to Daniel several times and later to Zecharias the father of John the Baptist, and to Mary the virgin of Nazareth and probably also to the shepherds at Bethlehem-and always in connection with the prophecy or announcement of the advent or birth of the Lord. And to manifest that Gabriel was an entire spiritual society, it is told that the shepherds first were addressed by the angel and that then "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host."

But about the general uses of angelic societies we are instructed that "some societies are employed in taking care of little children; others in teaching and educating them while they are growing up; others similarly instruct and educate boys and girls who are of a good disposition from their education in the world, and thence have come into heaven." There are also societies that "teach the simple good from the Christian world and guide them in the way to heaven," while others teach and lead various gentiles. Some societies have as their use to defend newly arrived spirits from infestations by the evil, while other societies attend spirits who are confined in the "lower earth." Some angelic societies attend spirits in the hells and keep them from tormenting each other beyond prescribed limits. Certain societies serve to attend the spirits that are being raised from the dead.<sup>5</sup> 5. @HH 391, @AC 967

All heavenly societies also send guardian angels to watch over men and ward off the influx of evil affections and thoughts, inspiring them instead, so far as they will receive, with good affections by which men's deeds might be motivated.<sup>6</sup> While in this office the angels are not aware of the man with whom they are. They mostly act through subject-spirits.<sup>7</sup> Their use does not involve any personal intercourse with man, for they perceive only the interior affections and thoughts of those with whom they are, and they feel these as their own. Hence they must separate themselves whenever there is an interior disagreement. Yet when serving as guardian angels they do in no case recede altogether from the man,<sup>8</sup> for if they should intermit their care for a single instant, man would be plunged into irretrievable evils.<sup>9</sup>

They observe what the evil spirits with man are intending and so far as man suffers it they bend what is evil into good.<sup>10</sup> Thus they dissipate influxes of new and alien evils. With those in temptation, the angels instill strength to resist. When with man they assume his interior memory-a thing not permitted to evil spirits.<sup>11</sup>

1. @HH 391, @AC 5980, 5992
2. @AC 5985. See *Spirits and Men*, Bryn Athyn, Pa., 1958, pp 42 seq. 8. @AC 5979
3. @AC 5992
4. @AC 5980, 5992
5. @SD 3104

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A few of the employments of angels can be described in human terms, because men also have uses that are spiritual in essence and purpose-such as the use of teaching and the priestly use. The guardianship of human souls, the government of spirits, the mothering of infant souls, and the preparation of children and newcomers for heaven are clearly spiritual functions. We can also see the propriety of angels assisting in the process of resurrection, and-as is sometimes the case-of serving as media of Divine revelation. But the objection might occur that such uses could be performed by a small number and need not require all the untold and ever increasing hosts of heaven. We might indeed be reminded of the teaching that the Lord acts mediately through heaven "not because He needs their aid, but that the angels there may have functions and offices and consequently a life and a happiness in accordance with their offices and uses."<sup>12</sup> 12. @AC 8719

Yet it is apparent from the doctrine that the angels which perform such uses as have been described, are the subjects or emissaries into which are concentrated the love, interest, attention and enlightenment of entire societies, which thus, as a whole, are occupied in these tasks. For this reason we doubt that heaven will ever be threatened by any unemployment problems. And it is equally true that those who die in the Lord henceforth shall "rest from their labors" even though their works and real uses follow them.

The satisfaction in a use lies, after all, not in the strenuousness or ardor of the work we do (for that rather engenders an unhealthy martyr complex or a proprial pride), but in the feeling that one is actually cooperating in perfecting a good work; not hindering, but as it were aiding, in the accomplishment of the Lord's Divine purposes. And even on earth, a use is not the result of any one individual's enterprise or effort. Behind a task well done there stand organized societies whose representative he is who performs it. A use such as that of the Church is "backed" by numerous persons of varying talents who have an extension of thought into widely different fields of knowledge, intelligence, and use. Their contribution to the spiritual use is not always manifestly spiritual or even intellectual. The essential support they give is that of affection and active interest and love of the use, and thence of thought and labor and wealth; and all this combines to form a background and basis for the spiritual use. Here below, differently from in the heavens, the harvest is plentiful and the laborers are few. But here, as in the heavens, however many may cooperate in the work, and however few be the souls that are ready to be instructed, the task of bending our efforts towards the common use will bring with it an unending satisfaction to all.

Each man's affection, though directed towards a common use, takes a unique and singular form. Man regenerates through the special uses, forensic and domestic, which he has assumed as the



calling or occupation of his life, and through these uses he expresses that "good of charity" which he receives from the Lord.

We are often thrust into our varied occupations by circumstances or necessities, rather than by choice. And sometimes we pause to ask ourselves, what all these routine tasks of earthly life are meant for. No one denies that people must be fed and clothed and housed and provided with such recreation, rest, healing, and enjoyment as bodily life requires. No one seriously questions that the mental life also must be provided for, through instruction and study and social contacts, and the culture of the arts and sciences by which the rational mind can be perfected. And the New Church man knows that the highest group of uses looks to the end that men might receive what is spiritual from the Lord;

which necessitates a knowledge of God and eternal life, acquired from parents and teachers and books, the same as other knowledge, and especially from the Word and doctrinal instruction.<sup>13</sup> 13.  
@DLW 331-333

But all these uses entail many routine tasks. And because of the dominant loves of self and of worldly possessions and corporeal delights, mankind has forgotten the end for which man should labor. External uses and the tools of living have become so complex and absorbing and obsessive that they have become ends instead of means, and they leave scant -room for that life of charity, felicity, contentment and peace of mind which they were intended to secure for mankind: a state when the needs of the body will be sufficiently filled so that they do not disturb or worry the mind; and when the mind will be sufficiently informed so that it can be an intelligent servant of the spirit!

Surely, on reflection, we would admit that the work of our hands and brains, the uses of human society, the material products of its factories and fields, look to nothing else than the states of men's minds and spirits. For apart from these they are meaningless and stupid. The real use a man performs, whether in the machine shop or the farm or the trading mart, the office or the study, is his contribution to the potential happiness of his fellow men and his community, through the fidelity, sincerity, justice, and zeal which he puts into his special function or calling.

Sometimes men have performed "more excellent uses" from a natural affection and a selfish ambition "than those do who are in the spiritual affection of use."<sup>14</sup> Yet only so far as one acts from a spiritual affection can his work yield a spiritual use which looks to the spiritual happiness of others. Secular uses, having in view the temporal good of the bodies of other men and through this the health and contentment of their rational minds, may thus embody a spiritual use. This is the reason why there are, in the societies of heaven, a profusion of different occupations, of far greater variety than on earth, which at first glance might appear merely secular. 14. Love xvii:3

Even with us, the quality of a man's intentions and personal attitudes sometimes seems to shine out in his natural accomplishments or works. But in the other life the inner quality of a spirit is as easily recognized in the sphere of his life and works as the natural excellence of a man's work is discerned here by his fellowmen.

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A chapter in Heaven and Hell (387-394) is devoted to show the employments of the angels. But why should there be any need of employments in heaven? Do not the Writings teach that "everything the angels have need of is given them?" "The houses in which the angels dwell are not erected, as houses are in the world, but are given them gratuitously by the Lord, to every one in accordance

with his reception of good and truth."<sup>15</sup> Their garments they receive as gifts, and sometimes they are clothed with them unknowingly, according to their changing states.<sup>16</sup> Their food and drink, in all variety, is "from a spiritual origin, and therefore is not prepared but is given daily" - a table appearing laden with food when there is need, and disappearing when the meal is over. Like the manna of Israel the food cannot be stored up for another day.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, all are fed according to the uses they perform. In short, "everything they have need of is given them."<sup>18</sup> 15. @HH 190; 266e, LJ post. 12 16. @HH 181 17. @SD 6088 18. @HH 190, @DLW 334

What then do the angels do? Can it be that "they sow not, neither do they spin?" Are there no builders in heaven? no tailors? And will our wives get along without cooking or washing dishes? or sewing garments?

In a certain sense, civilization has long had this objective-to reduce the drudgery of those Casks that once were all performed in the home; when each family had to raise its crops and mill its grain and fish and hunt and pick and preserve and brew, and milk its herd and weave its cloth and build its house; and in addition protect itself against wild beasts and marauders. Since the time of the Last judgment, life has strangely changed in many lands.

Each person still has an appointed use - a specialized use. Nothing comes by magic, and generally nothing is given gratis. But by a peculiar system of exchange, and through various inventions, men can live almost unconscious of how their houses were built and heated or their clothes made or their food prepared. The food does not appear on the table (except for those who have servants), but the housewife can find it all ready in the market or kitchen! There is a police department to protect us against robbers. We are blissfully unconscious of the myriads of specialists who continually labor to keep the arteries of commerce throbbing and the hidden mechanism of industry running smoothly. We do not see or know who raised the fruit we eat or who mined the coal we burn or ultimately furnished the credit for our business. Each of us has a special use in the commonwealth and because of that small contribution we are freely benefiting from the uses of all the rest!

The uses of heaven make up a Grand Man-an organic whole. And this may remind us that in the human body we are consciously aware of only a small superficial fringe of all the processes that go on to keep us well and able to perform the work we do during our hours of wakefulness. Our conscious life is in fact resting on the interrelations of only a few billion tiny pinpoints-the cortical cells of the cerebrum. By virtue of these, we can seemingly control certain surface muscles and also the tongue. But even this is by the help of involuntary nerves and muscles which govern all the rest of our body without our will or effort. We swallow food, but the digestion goes on without our having anything to do about it. The heart pumps, the blood and lymph circulate, the body cells grow and divide, the germ cells form,-all without our even being aware of it: unless we do something disorderly and we overstrain the patience of nature. It is the soul - the Lord the Creator acting through the soul and then through all the tissues - that provides as free gifts food and protection and form and substance for each part of the body.<sup>19</sup> Yet each organ and each single cell has its own function and contributes its peculiar use to the whole, while unconscious of the uses of the rest. Each cell receives its necessities gratis, by influx from the soul through other groups of tissues. 19. @DP 296[14], 15

The Lord is the Soul or life of the Grand Man of heaven. All uses that are real uses are done by Him, although the angels cooperate in a few things. This should not necessarily imply that there are societies of cooks in heaven, who supply the rest; or a building department which works in secret;

or spirits whose use it is to prepare garments. For the teaching is succinct: "The necessary things of life that are bestowed by the Lord gratuitously and that exist in a moment, are food, clothing, and habitation, and these correspond throughout to the use in which the angel is."<sup>20</sup> And the same applies to things that are not exactly necessary, but useful and delightful, things that embellish the home, the dress, or the table and give beauty proportionate to the angel's use and splendor commensurate with his affection. And it applies also to "things enjoyable" which are provided for the social life of the angelic partners and their friends. These things are not procured for one's self as in the world, but are provided in a moment.<sup>21</sup> They are gifts provided, when occasion calls for them, not by prudence, or labor, but by the Lord. They are spiritual - spiritual uses, the very products and forms which spontaneously express spiritual states of friendship, and love, and spiritual hospitality. 20. Love 12:3, @AE 1226[2], 4 21. LJ post. 323, Love xii.

Yet unless angels had something to do with the mediation of these gifts of life, they would have no reciprocal part in either the uses or the happiness of heaven. The Lord acts not only immediately from Himself, but also mediately through heaven. He acts through angels-"not because He needs their aid, but in order that the angels may have functions and offices and consequently life and happiness . . ." For happiness is impossible for human beings except through uses in which they appear to act from themselves but have a perception that it is from the Lord.<sup>22</sup> The Writings compare the Lord's immediate giving of what angels need to the way the soul provides what is necessary, useful, and enjoyable to every part of the human body.

What ever is needed by any part is drawn from the common good - the blood stream and the vital fluids - through the neighboring tissues. And each part thus contributes something new and shares of its own with the rest. It is by opening and directing the paths of influx from one heaven to another that the Lord provides for angelic needs, so that each heaven may contribute to the needs of the other.<sup>23</sup> 22. @AC 8719 23. Char. 137, 138, Love 12:4

This is illustrated by the manner in which the conversation among angels of a higher heaven may cause the angels of a lower heaven to receive the truths broached, not in their abstract form, but "substantially," in the form of a paradise or a palace which is livingly before their sight; and there may be a constant succession of such changing correspondences, or concrete forms of truth.<sup>24</sup> These are indeed instantaneous spiritual creations by the Lord. Yet they are mediated by the higher angels and presented in forms taken from the lower heaven and thus adapted for reception. It must be the same with food and clothing and with the homes of the angels, which correspond to their more constant states. 24. @AC 4411

Angels have both minds and bodies. They have interiors and exteriors, although both are spiritual. The teaching has been cited that "exterior spiritual things are so created by the Lord as to clothe or invest interior spiritual things."<sup>25</sup> But the exterior spiritual things, or the correspondential creations, have a twofold use. Thus the plants in heaven have the external spiritual use of refreshing and stimulating the minds of the angels, while their internal spiritual use is to represent Divine things and cause an elevation of the mind. Those who on earth were skilled in botanical science might "come after death into a knowledge of spiritual uses from the plants in the spiritual world, and cultivate that knowledge with greatest delight."<sup>26</sup> It is also told that those who in the world loved their country and its common good more than themselves and have studied the laws of justice, are able to perform similar uses in heaven.<sup>27</sup>

And those come into the function of preaching and administering ecclesiastical affairs, who on earth had loved the Word and sought for truths from the love of the uses of life, not only for

themselves but for others.<sup>28</sup> 25. @AE 582 26. @AE 1214, 1211, 1212 27. @HH 393, cp @TCR 414 28. @HH 393

By uses, the angels understand uses and good works of ministry, administration, and employment, with priests and magistrates as well as with merchants and workmen. Good works which are not connected with their occupation they do not call uses, but alms, benefactions, and favors.<sup>29</sup> 29. Love xiii:1

Since the Lord provides the necessities of life, the angelic employments are not inspired by any love of gain for the sake of a living, but by a love of use. When we read in the Writings that there are "negotiations and derivative wealth" in heaven-which implies banking business-and that there are rich merchants there, we must not think of these uses as mere hobbies, nor confuse those uses with the cruder practices which we meet with in the world.<sup>30</sup> The love of trading is spiritual when for the common good, even though man's personal good is also considered; and it corresponds to the acquisition and communication of knowledge. Those who have love and wisdom more than others, have more dignities and possessions in heaven than others.<sup>31</sup> 30. @HH 393, @DP 217, cp @SD 3523, @CL 207[2] 31. @DP 217, @SD 3523, @TCR 801, @AC 10042[10]

The desire for money and gain has of course no place in heaven.<sup>32</sup> One who has placed his heart in riches and dignities finds himself after death "like an actor in royal robes when the play is over."<sup>33</sup> And he would be told that "in heaven . . . there is no trading, for there is no gold or silver, nor any such things as are traded with in the world."<sup>34</sup> 32. @HH 393 33. @DP 217 34. @AC 4453, @SD 4385

Yet it is related that there are coins of gold and silver in the other life also. Whether used for trading or not, they are sometimes given to young people as tokens of diligence and virtue.<sup>35</sup>

Nothing exists in heaven which is not spiritually significant. Yet angels look at these things with different eyes: the splendor does not blind them, the paradises do not delight them, but the representatives, which aid them to think distinctly of celestial and spiritual things.<sup>36</sup> 35. @SD 5666 36. @AC 1619-1622

Angels have homes where they live with their eternal partner. There are servants and masters, and domestic duties which are also at times discussed among them.<sup>37</sup> Women there as here like to make embroideries and other handwork to present to their friends.<sup>38</sup> Artisans fashion objects of beauty, but "in a spiritual manner and with a spiritual significance."<sup>39</sup> Scribes make copies of the original writings of the wise, and also copies of the angelic Word. Literary sports are held in some societies. And there are libraries in many societies, carefully divided according to the various sciences.<sup>40</sup> One specific society seems to be the central reference library of our planet. In it we would find the archives of human literature since the days before "Enoch," and the correspondential writings of the Ancients. Swedenborg found vast numbers of scholars studying there; the most ancient sages were in the inmost rooms, where none but they could stand the brilliance of the light. The library was divided into departments, and reading rooms arranged according to the perceptive faculty of the students. Other students throughout the heavens have communication with the scholars of this great society, so as to be instructed in all doubtful matters.<sup>41</sup> 37. SD min. 4773, @HH 234 38. @SD 5661 39. Cp @AC 552, @SD 2646f, @CL 207[e] 40. @CL 207 41. @SD 5999, cp 385

Some newcomers were amazed at finding such a library in an angelic society, and exclaimed, "Are there also books in this world? Whence are the parchments and the paper? Whence the pens and

the ink?" An elder of the city replied, "We perceive that in the former world you believed that this world was empty, because spiritual! And that you believed this because you entertained an idea of the spiritual as abstract from the material and to you what is abstract from the material appeared as nothing and thus empty, when in truth here is the fullness of all things.

All things here are substantial, not material; and material things derive their origin from the substantial. We who are here are spiritual men because substantial and not material. Hence it is that all things which are in the natural world are here in their perfection, even books and writings and many more things."<sup>42</sup> 42. @CL 207

The uses of the angels would be futile gestures if the substance of heaven were a mere illusion! And would it not be strange if, in the world of human minds, whence flowed the thoughts now imprisoned in human literature, there were no imperishable record of them in their fullness and completion?

### Angelic Marriages and Spiritual Offspring

No uses are more fundamental among angels as well as among men than the uses which converge in marriage. Marriages are spiritual in origin, and therefore holy. In a true marriage we can reach the summit of human happiness, the tenderest depths of love. It might therefore seem strange that while poets sing their conviction that even death cannot break the bonds of love, yet Christian tradition teaches that angels and the spirits of the departed are sexless beings-neither male nor female. The reason for this ignorance is found in the fact that the minds of men were so sensual that they could not conceive of a pure marriage relation, and that the Lord when on earth therefore withheld the precious truth concerning marriages in heaven. This was among the interior truths to which He referred when He said, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

When the Lord said that "in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God,"<sup>43</sup> He sought to lift the minds of the scoffing Sadducees and His other hearers from an impure concept of marriage. On the other hand, the New Testament often likens the kingdom of heaven to a marriage-the spiritual meaning of which is a conjunction of good and truth or of will and understanding.

Such spiritual nuptials must be initiated in each man's life while he is still on earth.<sup>44</sup> 43. Matthew 22:30, cp Mark 12:18-27, Luke 20:27-38 44. @CL 41, @HH 382, Luke 20:35

The Writings show that men after death are male and female not only as to soul and mind, but also as to every detail of their bodies, which are also purely spiritual. Thus conjugal partners in heaven can be conjoined even as to bodies.<sup>45</sup> The marriage of good and truth by which man becomes an image and likeness of God, reaches its full completion only in "the marriage of two minds and two bodies."<sup>46</sup> They are conjoined not only by their mutual offices, and their community of thoughts and affections and uses to others, but by the cohabitation of marriage with its ultimate delights-which surpass human conception, and are necessary ultimates even for angels.<sup>47</sup> Angelic pairs in the third heaven, we are told, "pass the night in each other's bosoms as they were created into a one;" and the wife receives the virile semination of the husband. By this appropriation of the forces of his manhood the wife becomes more and more a wife; and by the sphere of her love the partners are conjoined more and more deeply to all eternity, so that while they may be called two when considered as husband and wife, they are "one angel."<sup>48</sup> Each has the feeling of being in the other

"as though united even in the flesh, although they are separate beings."<sup>49</sup> Those who are in truly conjugal love, in heaven "return to their early manhood and to youth-to the flower and joys of the age when conjugal love begins to exalt the life with new delights . . ."<sup>50</sup> Women who have died old and worn out with age, if they had lived in faith and charity and in a happy conjugal love with a husband, advance with passing years into the flower of youth and attain a beauty beyond earthly conception.<sup>51</sup> The beauty of an angelic couple from the Golden Age is described by our seer in a narrative from heaven.<sup>52</sup>

It is also said: 45. @CL 32, 33, @AE 1004[2], 992:3, De Conj. 66 46. @AE 984[3] 47. @CL 51f 48. @CL 172f, 177, @AE 992[3], cf De Conj. 66 49. @CL 178 50. @AE 1000[4], @AC 553, @HH 414, @DP 324[4], @CL 137[7] 51. @HH 414, @AC 553 52. @CL 42, cp 56:3

"In general, married partners [in heaven] have an interior comeliness of face, the man taking from his wife the charming glow of her love, and the wife from the man the lustre of his wisdom. For there, two partners are united as to their souls, and a human fullness is apparent in each. This is in heaven; for nowhere else are there marriages. Below heaven there are only connubial ties which are made and broken."<sup>53</sup> 53. @CL 192

Lest we imagine that love truly conjugal is so self-centered that it outlaws a chaste love of the sex, we are instructed that the interior spiritual friendship between men and women surpasses the love of man for man or of woman for woman. An angelic husband sees other women through the eyes of his wife.<sup>54</sup> 54. Described, @CL 55, 44, 75:6

The marriage love of the angels is frequently described in the Writings, especially in the work on Conjugal Love, to which we refer the reader for a fuller picture.<sup>55</sup>

1. See also @HH 366-386. What angelic wives have to say about marriage may be gathered from various relations in @CL 155a, 208, 293, 294.

But one aspect of heavenly marriages must here be noted. For on earth, the purpose or end of marriage is the procreation of new individual human beings. The first command of God when He created man and "made them male and female" was, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." But the marriage of a love truly conjugal survives when our days on earth are over. Already in middle age, the period of procreation has usually passed; yet conjugal love has not ceased. Old age can mean a lovely companionship of souls and minds, and love can increase even after the care of children has no longer a place in our life, and after external charm and natural usefulness have diminished. Although the procreation of the race is the first end of marriage those who are spiritual in their marriage look to union as a further end, and "in that union to spiritual rest and its pleasantness."<sup>56</sup> 56. @CL 385, 387, 368, 254

From this union of minds in angelic marriages there are born spiritual offspring; yet "children are not born, but instead of children, goods and truths, and thus wisdom . . ."<sup>57</sup> Conjunctions there are conjunctions of minds. For in heaven the wisdom with the husband "feels nothing more delightful than to propagate its own truths, and the love of wisdom with wives feels nothing more pleasing than to receive them as though in a womb, and thus to conceive, carry in the womb, and bring forth."<sup>58</sup> And such spiritual proliferations are also the origin of natural proliferations with men. For from the universal sphere of generating and propagation which - from the Lord - fills both worlds, the souls of both angels and men are "in a perpetual effort to fructification and to the production of its own likeness."<sup>59</sup> 57. @CL 44[9], 211:2, @HH 382a, @AE 1000[5], @SD 6110[40] 58. @CL 115 59.

The love of such spiritual offspring with angel partners is one with their desire to become internal similitudes-to be one with the other in spirit. And each "offspring" of their union is like a new child of their mind - a new state of innocence - a new receptacle which displays new aspects of life and receives life from the Lord in a new individual way. And there is in angelic storge nothing selfish or self-centered.<sup>60</sup> For every new state of enlightenment thus born is turned into uses toward society and- unconsciously-toward the human race. <sup>60</sup>. @CL 211[e]

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The life of heaven is far from a state of dreamy abstractions. The joys of heaven have nothing in common with an idle, undetermined life without objectives. This would be deadly to the soul. If the angels were in absolute perfection and equal purity, there might of course be no need for them to extend to each other mutual help through uses and occupations. Besides, if all in heaven were directly inspired and led of God, there would be no need for governments and subordinations and for judges and graded courts of justice such as actually exist there. Here again we leave an angel to explain:

"In this world we are instructed and learn what is good and true, and what is just and fair, in like manner as in the natural world; and we learn it, not immediately from God, but mediately through others; and every angel, like every man, thinks truth and does good as if from himself, and this- according to the state of the angel-is mixed and not pure.

"There are also among the angels the simple and the wise; and the wise must judge when the simple from simplicity and ignorance are in doubt about what is just or swerve from it. . ." <sup>61</sup> 61. @CL 207

For angels are still men. And though good reigns universally from their intentions or ends, they may even at times do "something of evil in external form."<sup>62</sup> Hence there are not only courts of justice, but teachers and preachers. As we have seen, even with the celestial angels, who have truths of judgment written on their hearts, the truths of justice which have to do with life do come into question, and on such matters of enlightenment the less wise consult the wise, and these the Lord.<sup>63</sup> 62. @AC 6159, @HH 487[3] 63. @HH 214

Since only the natural mind can be vitiated by hereditary and acquired evils, it might be thought that angels are altogether pure and holy, without any faults. But all angels possess a natural mind which cannot be put off. It remains; yet it is so reduced into submission and "correspondence" with the interior minds that the natural seems as if absent or as transparent. The angels are constantly being perfected by the Lord, and He uses various means to induce this correspondence. But "such is man, such is a spirit, such is an angel," that not to eternity can the Lord effect a correspondence, except in a few most general things. It is by these few things that He keeps them in an angelic life.<sup>64</sup> 64. @SD 2157ff, 2292, cp 3474f

## 16 A DAY IN AN ANGELIC SOCIETY

In the work on Conjugal Love, Swedenborg is allowed to relate a visit made by ten novitiate spirits to heaven. In this relation, the life of the angels in a heavenly society is described - in many ways so similar to the life which might be imagined in some Utopia on earth that the differences may not at

first striking.

Love and charity, which make heaven, must necessarily take a social form. We cannot conceive of love without objects. We cannot picture a charity which dwells alone and revolves around itself. It is the essence of love to love others outside of itself, to will to be one with them and to make them happy from itself.<sup>1</sup> And love, when received, must respond by reciprocal action. This necessarily must result in a complex of human relationships such as we call uses, and in the formation of societies, each society being centered around some particular way of expressing mutual love. 1. @TCR 43

There are, indeed, certain angels who are said to live alone or apart, as conjugal pairs, not in societies but in habitations situated on lofty mountains scattered among the other angelic societies, and yet these constitute as it were a central region of heaven.

They are said to be the best of all the angels, and are classed among the celestial. Their love is more universal and all-embracing - not confined to a strictly limited group of neighbors. Their character is outstanding and unique, and is so integrated as to be "all-one;" and thus they dwell alone, for they are not so dependent upon the constant association afforded by community life. They perform exalted uses difficult to define. It is ever the way that those in high offices seem somewhat isolated from others - seem detached from the common sphere of personal relationships.

Certainly, these celestials who live alone are yet at the very heart of the complex of uses which is the kingdom of the Lord. Their "society" is the universal heaven; their power is exerted modestly and perhaps secretly, but the extension of their uses and influence surpasses that of others. And the inference we draw from what is said about them in the Writings is that they are few as compared with the untold numbers of angels who dwell in societies.<sup>2</sup> 2. @HH 50,189, cp @AE 988[6], @CL 205, @AC 471, 10813

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The life of the angels is closely tied up with the uses of others in their society, and in consequence they naturally progress on the basis of the reaction and the stimulus which they receive from their companions. And so they enter into common states of enlightenment and common states of affection. All finite life has fluctuations and periodicities in it. The angels are sometimes in a state of intense love and highest illustration and then in lessening degrees of love and wisdom-a state of relaxation from uses. Thus by turns they come into less heat and less light; something of shade and cold or of obscurity and less delightful moods steal over them and modify their enjoyment in their work, or confine their use to a more limited range.

We are taught concerning the New Jerusalem, that "there is no night there." For the Lord is the Sun of heaven, and He is constant.

The angelic Sun does not, as ours, appear to rise and set. Yet there is the same appearance of successive days there as with us, in one society after another. The light grows dim and the angels go to rest in their homes, to sleep-perchance to dream -under the benign protection of celestial angels with whom the state of morning has then already come.<sup>3</sup> 3. @HH 159, 157, 155, 146; @AC 5962, cp 9684

And when the mists of unconsciousness have again dispersed into a dawn of new beauty, the citizens of a heavenly society are restored to full vigor and keen, penetrating attention; and the



special affection of spiritual love which is, with that society, to be the inspiration of the new state into which they are entering, stirs them as with a common delight at the prospect of what may be done on this day. (@CL 11-25)

In certain societies this affection is voiced every morning in the sweetest spontaneous songs of virgins and young girls, who apparently are the wards of the society, since they live in houses around the public squares. These songs resound throughout the city and move the very souls of the listeners, bringing with them a sense of harmony.<sup>4</sup> 4. @CL 17, 55

But when the singing is over, the city becomes silent and still: the windows, and sometimes the doors, of the houses are closed; the streets are deserted except, on occasions, for some sight-seeing visitors who wander about under proper angelic escort. All the citizens are intent upon the duties of their offices and engaged in their several occupations. Without the distracting sense of time or hurry, without the anxieties of impatience, their work goes forward in a state of increasing enlightenment until its climax of illustration and efficiency is reached, at high noon! And then, without allowing the anticlimax to set in (which a growing fatigue of mind and body often brings on in this world), they stop their labors, and the doors are opened, and they partake in a noonday meal-to prepare for a new state, typical of other, more social, uses.

It would be interesting if we could pierce behind those closed doors awhile, to try to understand the uses which the angels perform in their morning states.

But no mere guest may do so. Perhaps, if he did, there would be little to be seen - by him. Or perhaps they would appear commonplace and simple, these angelic tasks: outwardly viewed, the same as many earthly occupations?<sup>5</sup> But for the present, we can only suggest that these morning hours of the angelic day are sacred to the inmost uses of which the angels are capable, and pointed to that end for which the society as a whole cooperates -an end Which is not centered in that society but directly upon the specific function of the society in the Grand Man of Heaven. 5. @DWis 7:5:3. See page 250 seq.

Let us return to consider how the angelic day progresses. At noon the angels dine. "Dine? What a gross idea of heaven!" Yet, a dinner is what you make it! And food is far too universal a thing to be absent from heaven. Even a flame needs food. And the angels are not incorporeal beings. They have bodies, compared to which ours are but as dead husks! The angelic body is sensitively alive; the angels eat-and exquisite food is theirs. But since the spiritual bodies that are to be sustained are spiritual, the food also is spiritual. What is our mind here, becomes our body there.

Here also our minds feast, and even glutton, on knowledge or opinion or sense-delight that is boiled together in some man's mental cauldron. The things that we eat would raise the hair of an angel's head with horror. Witness a play in a modern theatre: the more vulgar the wit, the greater are the salvos of delighted laughter. Or we read, perhaps, in the scandal-hunting Press, in the "red-blood" novel, in the sensational magazines surcharged with "sex"! What disgusting brews and stews-cooked up in the filthy vessels of sensual minds and later garnished and served up as delicacies-have not gone to feed our imaginations! And when it comes to intellectual life, mark the false poise and pretence, the borrowed opinions cited without understanding, the conceit and doubt and shallow dismissals of truth and decency, in literature and art and learning! Here and there we turn critics and begin to strain a gnat or two-but Oh, the camels that we, unresisting, must have swallowed whole-humps and sprawling legs and all! And in religion! Happy indeed is he who receives his mental food but little tainted by the gross imaginations and blind conceits of men or by

the leaven of the false traditions of Scribes and Pharisees whether long dead or still living!

Happy he who receives it pure, directly from the Word of God in its letter and its spirit and in its Divine doctrine now provided as manna from heaven!

For only this food, provided by the Lord, is angels' food. It is very real, that food from heaven. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God." This proceeding Word is the creative sphere of Divine truth which fashions all things of heaven. We know well that our minds would waste away if deprived of the truth that comes to us from without. But on earth we do not see this spiritual food as a real, substantial thing-whereas in heaven we do: for in the light of heaven we see the reality-see our utter dependence upon the nourishment which we so often disdain on earth.

But in heaven we would recognize a further thing,-that the reality, the truth, upon which our lives depend, is not of man's making. For in this land of perpetual miracle, the food appears to be prepared, and to be replenished, on the platters and in the Cups, without human agency.<sup>6</sup> 6. @CL 16, @SD 6088[6], LJ post. 323e

Here, again, the question comes up as to the part the angels have in their spheres of use. If all is provided, without labor, why then are there any employments at all? For even houses, and gardens, and garments, furnishings and works of art are given gratis there-as gifts from the Lord! What is there left for angels to produce? Yet even the conversation at the fable might be concerning the uses of the society - an exchange of wisdom and knowledge with a view to perfecting common uses!<sup>7</sup> And strange to say, those who are indolent-spiritual parasites living on the labor of others, beggars who only desire to talk and play and sleet) and eat-tan find nothing but an empty table, if indeed they should be able to attend such a heavenly feast!<sup>8</sup> In the universal spiritual world the lot of an idle soul is to go hungry, for only those who are in a use come into contact with the reality which is the sustaining substance of human life.

If we reflect we must admit that the minds of men (both the good and the evil) can be sustained only by the knowledge of realities! And what is real except the Divine truth? <sup>7</sup>. @CL 16[2] <sup>8</sup>. LJ post. 338, 337

A further question - What is a feast if we lack a sense of taste? The angels have all the senses and they are far more exquisite than man's. They also have that of taste, but their sense of taste flows forth from a spiritual origin. Taste corresponds to a desire for knowledge or a natural perception of good and truth.<sup>9</sup> Yet it is also definitely said that they lack a sense of taste, although they have something analogous which is adjoined to the sense of smell!<sup>10</sup> For the discriminatory Judgment which is based on externals as such, and which is characteristic of men who choose and "cultivate" their tastes, is lacking to spirits, since their food always corresponds to their states. <sup>9</sup>. @AE 618, LJ post. 323, @AC 1480[e]. <sup>10</sup>. @AC 1516, 1521, 1880, 1973, 4622, 4794, @SD 3567

But let us leave this persistent paradox, and inquire what state in angelic life is introduced by this noonday banquet, which seems often to be a gathering of those in similar uses or professions, and which - in a fashion - serves to confirm the morning state of illustration and spiritual use and appropriate its goods and truths.

In the afternoons the angelic society presents quite a different aspect. The social intercourse of the inhabitants commences, the atmosphere of civil interest and moral virtue reigns in whatever is

done.<sup>11</sup> In the society whose life Swedenborg describes in some detail, - the society whose use included that of education, and whose coat of arms depicted an eagle on the top of a tree, brooding over her young - the social life, we are told, took its color from different states. On the avenues boys and girls were playing, while nurses and tutors sat on the porches overseeing them. But in the outskirts of the city various games were in progress for the boys and youths-racing, ball-play such as tennis, trials of skill as to which were the more ready in speech, in action, in perception, thus calling forth their latent abilities. Laurel leaves were given to the more active, as an encouragement.<sup>12</sup> 11. @CL 16[e], 17 12. @CL 17

Outside of the city, Swedenborg was told, there were also theatrical performances by stage-players, representing the various virtues and graces of moral life, and among, them were also actors for the sake of comparisons, that is, roles which suggested a contrast. Yet "it was established by law that nothing of the opposite shall be exhibited, which is called dishonorable or unseemly, except figuratively, and as it were remotely."<sup>13</sup> For in heaven the moral issues of life are not between good and actual evil. There could scarcely be any interest among the angels in such crude contrasts. The more subtle dilemmas which concern angelic choice and angelic prudence and judgment must be conveyed in the more delicate contrasts between lower and higher forms of good-and the literature and drama which angels would compose are studies in such nuances of relative perfections. 13. @CL 17, cp 138: @TCR 62

But we doubt whether the wiser angels take so much pleasure from these dramatic representations of the wisdom of life. It is rather hinted that they find their recreation in the living representations which their gardens and surroundings - with ever changing detail of beauty and truth-present as a continual stimulus to their thoughts.<sup>14</sup> The wise gather, there as here, to converse and exchange views on the deeper aspects of life and faith. In heaven, there is indeed a certain transference of thought without speech-in matters that pertain to their common loves and common uses. But there is also private thoughts, for each angel is utterly individual in his interior thinking, and grows more and more so.<sup>15</sup> The tendency of heaven is not towards a blurring out of the unique individuality of each angel into a sort of vague unanimity in which there is merely choral thought and each angel is but an echo of the others! No. Each citizen of heaven becomes more and more valuable for his characteristic contributions to the common use. His conversation - as we picture it - becomes increasingly precious to his friends: it is not exhausted on closer acquaintance. His digestion even of common experiences is of a different type.

And in ever greater perfection he will be able to express these individual perceptions in the speech of heaven, and this with an added power to convey and illustrate the thought by spiritual representations which graphically depict it for others.<sup>16</sup> 14. @AC 1619,1622e, 4411 15. @DP 42. It is true of the angels that "the more closely one is conjoined with the Lord, the more distinctly does he seem to himself as if he were his own, and the more clearly does he recognize that he is the Lord's." 16. @AC 3343f, 3475, 1869, @SD 2186f, 2192f, 4006, 5519

The uses of the society during the morning period, which alone is dignified by the angels as their work-period, are (we take it) spiritual uses properly so called. Such uses need not necessarily be performed by social contacts. The thought of person brings spirits into social presence in the other life. If personal thought ruled in the morning hours, the city would then have a different appearance. But spiritual uses are performed by the power and aid of spiritual thought which is abstracted from persons and places and which views the essence of things, views principles, and is

thus more immediately under the guidance of the Lord. We are thus taught, that

"In heaven they think about a thing, without person, because when person also is thought about then is called up the society which is in such a thing and thus the thought is determined thither and is fixed. For in heaven where there is thought there is presence, and presence would bend to itself those who are in that society, and would thus disturb the influx of the Divine there. It is otherwise when they think abstractedly concerning a thing: then the thought diffuses itself in every direction according to the heavenly form which the influx proceeding from the Divine produces, and this without disturbance to any society. For it infuses itself into the general spheres of the societies and in that case does not touch or move any individual member in the society, thus does not divert any one from the freedom of thinking accord - to influx from the Divine. In a word, abstract thought can pervade the whole heaven without stopping anywhere, but thought limited to person or place is there fixed and stayed."17 17. @AC 8985

The spiritual uses (properly so called) of the angels are performed not only within the society, but outside it.

Yet no angel ever leaves his society-for to leave it is to leave his ruling love and his illustration. But, although not away from his society, his home, his use and love, an angel can perform services in the universal spiritual world. It is in this paradoxical way that angels control evil spirits and examine them; it is so that angelic spirits govern the hells, resuscitate the dead, and serve as guardians over men. For (as we conceive of it) all these functions are usually effected by angels who are present not in person but by aspect.

We are told that while the Lord in Person dwells in the very Sun of heaven, and also within the angels by influx, and always apart from space, yet He can still appear in Divine angelic form in heaven, and this by aspect-presence. Similarly it is true of angels that they "appear to be present in a place where their look is fixed or is terminated, even when this place is far away from where they actually are."18 (We are of course referring to spiritual "places" and "distances.") This presence by aspect can be directed to all the quarters of the spiritual world. For while the angels are always turned interiorly to the East where the Lord is, yet exteriorly they can in company face each other, and turn to any side. Moreover, while an angel-like a man-only sees what is near him and "does not even perceive in himself all that is taking place in his own society," yet he can see towards all the quarters at once, as if his sight was all around. This is not external sight, but occurs "inwardly" in their mind.19 And this their sight (or aspect) is therefore described as their interior sight or that of thought. 18. @HH 121,196, @SD 5987 19. @HH 593, @SD 5528

We gather that there is much variety in the use of this interior sight. Still, it seems necessary to suppose that this is the kind of sight by which the aspect-presence of the angel's is effected, and by which they can be present away from their societies in any quarter, present even in hell when some use calls them there; and that in the performance of the spiritual uses of which we have spoken, the aspect-presence is from interior thought abstracted from person. They are not present with men in person, indeed they do not see or know the person with whom they are, although they see his spiritual states, which then become a reflective plane for their own perceptions and delights, of which they are keenly sensitive.

Nor are they present in any social sense, when they fix the gaze of their internal sight upon an evil spirit who has gone beyond the range of his permitted action. The angel then, no doubt, sees the spirit, but sees him as to the abstract quality of evil, even as a judge is impersonal in his judgments.

The power of this angelic inspection is almost incredible. A look of an angel's eyes puts a host of spirits to flight, or causes them to swoon with fear. "If anything makes resistance, which is to be removed because it is contrary to Divine order, the angels cast it down or overthrow it by a mere effort of will, and by a look."20 20. @HH 229

An elliptical and difficult notation in the Spiritual Diary (4061, 4062) suggests the double-presence which this form of use may require. It is couched in the form of unfinished sentences, as follows:

"I was instructed that the angels are not-as would appear-consociated in their places, but that most of them are in their functions and uses, and wheresoever these are, even so they appear to be consociated; while they are in uses, they are likewise in the society. Wherever they are, then, it is in like manner, their powers are constantly determined in endeavors with their fellows, thus no such idea is to be formed of societies as that they are together and that thence they rule inferior spirits and men, but wheresoever they are, even while in uses, they are in societies, although they can then also be associated with others according to uses."

The uses performed spiritually by the angels in their morning states are too various to be comprehended under any one idea. But we conceive that they perceive "nothing more blessed" than to bless others to their fullest power. It is not enough to perform uses among themselves-and thus perfect their mutual happiness, as in a society of friendship, It is not enough "to be in societies and have mutual love and thence to derive their felicity, so that each should have the felicity of others set over to his own account."21 This is not enough! Their uses must extend to others, outside of their own society.

And this is done in the morning state! 21. @SD 3617

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Still, no society prospers without citizens who look to its welfare, and promote its social development, its "moral, civil and domestic life." And these things also are works done, even in the third heaven, from affection. But because such "works" derive somewhat from the world, and also from what is useful to themselves and their own, they do not regard them as more than "derivations and productions" from their real uses, "which are done with them from the Lord" and have relation to worship, to the church, to the implantation of holy things, to innocence, to the good of society in general and particular; and which "do not regard persons but such things as are with persons."22 22. @AE 828

The celestial angels are such that they perform these internal uses, but do not talk about them. But even celestial angels discourse about what is around them-things which their external sight sees-and also about moral, civil, and domestic undertakings, which "keep the life of their body in such a state that the life of their love can dwell in it and perform its uses."23 23. @AE 828[2]

The state of decreasing illustration, which prevails in the afternoon, may thus take on an aspect of moral, civil, and social uses. Thought then becomes personal, and less abstract; and with the young something of emulation enters in-as in their sports. There is also more of enjoyment of representations. The many blessings of the society come into external focus. The appreciation of personal qualities brings friends together-irrespective of what their particular functions and offices may be. The confidence of mutual love asserts itself, and compensates for the fact that the full illustration granted to all in their spiritual uses is now on the wane. Life feels full and satisfying, the common hope for future progress is rejuvenated from mutual appreciation.

And this state, again, is confirmed by food from the Lord, no doubt exquisitely adapted to the needs of that more external state.

For the angels sup, in their homes, sometimes in company with guests-angelic couples or, on rarer occasions, visitors.<sup>24</sup>

1. @CL 19, LJ post. 337

Time! There is no notion of time. If there be clocks in heaven, they would show only the sequence and quality-not the duration-of successive states. And so, when the light of day is lessened, the best of friends would part, and the most ultimate of the uses of heaven would claim attention-the domestic use, the interests and delights of the home.<sup>25</sup> 25. @HH 162 seq., @DLW 73ff, @AE 571[e], 1219:4

Not only the church and the community, but also the home, requires administration in heaven.<sup>26</sup> The home - in both worlds - is the foundation, the fulcrum and mooring of man's life,-the focus upon which all other uses react. For uses performed to others bring with them its returns-in various perceptible and imperceptible ways. And this return is epitomized in that most reciprocal of all relations - married life. Between two conjugal partners in heaven, reciprocation of love is complete, so that they two are one life, one flesh. Between them there is unity in all things. According as their love has been purified with both by ascending to spiritual uses, it can descend pure into the most intimate and ultimate life, even to the life of the body. Conjugal love, therefore, is the most fundamental of all loves, celestial, spiritual and thence natural. It is said "thence natural" because natural loves, which "have relation to the loves of self and the world," are not in themselves evil, but are the ultimates of the love to the Lord and of charity.<sup>27</sup> In the conjugal life the soul of man seeks its self-preservation and perpetuation, and the home is meant as a protection for the individual-man or woman-and a protection for his specific use. There he is to be fed, strengthened, and confirmed, not only by outward food but by the spheres of love and peace, not only as to body but as to the life of his mind and its affections. Into the home is as it were gathered that of the world which can serve as a means for perfecting the uses of the man and his wife. It becomes a little world which they love - not for itself, indeed, but for the use it indirectly serves. 26. @HH 388 27. @TCR 394f, @CL 65,67f

Yet into these natural loves all the celestial and spiritual loves of man inflow from the Lord; and therefore all joys and all delights from primes to ultimates are gathered into love truly conjugal. Love, wisdom, use, become here personal, rather than abstract. And this implies that even in heaven the domestic uses of husband and wife take the most concrete forms. Among the uses of the angels we find therefore mentioned, as the last, "to attend to household matters there, for there are such there as man knows nothing about!"<sup>28</sup> And we are informed that "angels talk with each other just as men do in the world, and on various subjects, as on domestic affairs, and on matters of the civil state, and of moral and spiritual life." But often the topics are exalted - touching subjects such as the glorification of the Lord! And there is no difference, except that their conversation is more intelligent than that of men, because it is from more interior thought.<sup>29</sup> 28. SD min. 4773 29. @AC 5249, @HH 234

The husband and his wife would surely discuss the progress of their wards if they have any. The experiences of the day and matters social and moral, are no doubt talked over between them. And that which was only intelligence, becomes, when they are together, imbued with a wisdom which is born as a spiritual offspring from the conjunction of the wife's will with the husband's

understanding. And this they convey, not merely by that inner spontaneous perception which communicates unuttered thoughts, but by the outward mode of speech, whereby the delight of reciprocal states is aroused.

The Writings speak much of the "evening state" of the angels, which is, as it were, the twilight before morning. In this state they are in a certain obscurity as to the natural man and its good.<sup>30</sup> Without such alternations even heaven would seem "dry and little esteemed"; just as the manna seemed to the Israelites a too unvaried diet! The interior things of heaven cannot be appropriated to man unless he is let down somewhat more into his proprium, and there confirmed by the enjoyments of natural pleasure or natural delights.<sup>31</sup> Then he feels the zeal of good as his own-and "the pure good of truth ... is modified by the Lord by means of the enjoyments of loves which had belonged to his life before"-delights that are external yet in some measure agreeable with heavenly good;

such as "the enjoyments of doing good in a large way," which has "something of glory" in it, yet also "benevolence and zeal to be of service" - an enthusiasm perhaps somewhat undisciplined. In such evening states the angels feel "the enjoyments of magnificence in the embellishments of the home and in the ornaments of dress, and many similar delights. Such enjoyments do not destroy the good of heavenly love, though they set it aside; and at length, according to the degree of man's regeneration, they become the ultimate planes of heavenly good, and are then no longer called concupiscences but enjoyments."<sup>32</sup> 30. @AC 8431, 6110:6 31. @AC 5672, 8487 32. @AC 8487

But the ambitions and enjoyments of the natural man soon dissolve-with the angels-into gratitude and worship, and deep humiliation. With this there comes at last the peace that passeth understanding, the peace of innocence and of complete surrender to the power of love-the Lord's love, which again is reflected in conjugal love. The life of the individual is felt to be nothing in itself, his power is felt to be utterly futile. And so even the angels surrender their thoughts-their puny conscious life-for awhile, and sleep commands them: and the creative love of the Lord descends into their minds and bodies to relax and re-order the strained fibres that the conscious activities of the day are bound to have displaced out of their true relations.

One thing stands out from these teachings: that new states are continually born to the angelic couple - as spiritual offspring from their conjugal life.<sup>33</sup> No individual - whether man or woman - is equipped for the full life of heaven, or for its uses. The two - together - are one angel, as a use considered; and thus, in the view of the Lord, they are one.<sup>34</sup> 33. @CL 51, 65e, 44:9, @SD 6110[40], @AE 1000[e] 34. @CL 50[e], 52, 56, 44:6, 75:5

Their states together are not confined merely to the evening states. But their need of each other's more tangible presence is greater when their enlightenment is less; even as on earth, the comfort of companionship is most needed in times of temptation and affliction.

Yet the glorious morning state is also theirs, together, however short it may perhaps seem. And in the more specific uses of the forenoon, there is a conjunction more interior than ever before-a conjunction in the more abstract things of spiritual thought and affection, which is necessary to each and both.

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It is not to be expected that the life of heaven can ever be grasped by natural thought, still less described in a brief narration of the outward features. Yet these features, as given in the Writings,

are to be the basis of our rational thought about the other world.

## Part Three: The Nature of the Hells

### 17 THE FALLACY OF UNIVERSAL SALVATION

Out of the confusion of modern life we hear the call of many persuasive voices which seek to dissuade us from feeling the reality of evil or sin. These voices - some bold, some cautious - proceed alike from the chairs of learning and from the pulpits of sectarians, as from marts of trade and from halls of pleasure. They ask in varying intonations, "What is evil?" "Is anyone really responsible for sin?" "What other hell is needed, beside our earthly pains and discomforts?"

These skeptical questions are indirect, contorted echoes of the age-old dogma of Predestination, which like the mythical hydra, grows a new head for each that is cut off. For the persistent fallacy within the dogma is that man is not free. And from that assumption it would follow, that the evil a man does is not his fault.

A man who rejects the religious falsity that God should predestine anyone to eternal damnation, might yet be attracted by the idea that an omnipotent God would instead arrange for a universal salvation, and permit no soul to be lost, however much steeped in evil.

When he so argues, from the light of his own intelligence, and setting aside, at the time, the testimony of Divine Revelation, he fails to reflect that such a provision would also be an utter negation of human freedom and choice. For he is then thinking from a natural affection which seeks, above all, to avoid spiritual responsibility so as to be free to do as it pleases.

Man is usually not aware, at such times, that his wish-thought is not prompted by innocence and good-will. "It would be lovely," thinks the Universalist, "if there were no hell! but only good for all! a perfect consummation of the end of creation! a complete answer to any doubts about the mercy of the Lord!" "But wait," says the Christian Scientist, "would it not mean more than that? If God, by an act of omnipotence, could take away the possibility of the results of evil, why could He not equally prevent evil itself, prevent any evil from occurring? And if so, perhaps what we judge to be evil is not such, but all, even now and here, is good, and its evil aspects, such as war, crime, and disease, are only illusions born in our immature and earth-bound minds? Evil exists only in our imagination! Abstain from thinking anything is wrong, and - presto! all evil vanishes."

It is not only the universalists and the various sects of mental healing that can argue themselves into these imaginary heavens, The fundamental illusion comes from what the Writings call man's "natural good!" For this "natural good," which all flesh is heir to and which is sometimes brought to the fore through misfortunes and diseases or physical weakness and dependence on others, makes man kind-red to the gentle animals, and urges him to think from impulse and confirm whatever pleasant fancy that may at the moment please the "natural" man, or help to dismiss his anxieties, or soothe his doubts about his own virtues. Man continually gravitates into this mood of natural good, which is keen to see what is delightful to the natural man. It takes the form of generous impulse, of courage, of gayety, of friendship, of pity, or of other virtues; but within, it always centers in self. It discourages self-exploration. It is superficial and fickle, unreliable. It turns away from the discipline of reason, and is carried away by persuasions "like chaff in the wind," being as easily led by evil as by good, provided the evil be presented as good.<sup>1</sup>



It is also called "good from proprium,"<sup>2</sup> a good that is unable to serve as a plane for the influx of heaven. It is not to be confused with conscience. 1. @AC 6208, 5032, 7761, 8002, 8772 2. @AE 458[8]

From the nature of this "natural good" we may see that it lacks judgment. It is not instructed by truth, and therefore cannot recognize evil; nor can it recognize what is genuinely or spiritually good. From natural good one is apt to be blind to the faults of one's children, partial to one's family, biased against one's rivals. It lays one open to be imposed upon. It leads to credulity and self-deception, and to a misplaced optimism. And in the joy of conscious self-expression it forgets to inquire as to the wisdom of one's act or speech. It may often try to outdo charity itself in generosity!

Yes. Natural good can as easily join hands with atheism as with religion! It can feel quite indignant about the narrow-mindedness of the church and the uncomfortable coldness of rational common sense. It is also averse to the love of spiritual truth, because it prefers to judge doctrine by its own "feelings" and fickle states. Therefore "natural good" leads a man into spiritual darkness, and into a moral twilight where good and evil seem to blend into a vague, colorless sameness.

(Parenthetically: It is on such natural good that theatre audiences and fiction readers often love to feast. Mental food is there provided, salted with salt that has lost its saltiness! Impulsive sentimentality there receives its undeserved laurels! Courage without judgment is vicariously enjoyed! Wishful thinking bears unreal fruit! Criminals are turned into heroes by a sudden act of sacrifice! Good and evil become so indistinguishable that everyone feels the better for it! For here humanity is weltering in its own imagination - each man enjoying by proxy what he cannot experience in person!)=

It is this "natural good" - so abundant in all of us - that stands ready to respond to the subtle fallacies which hide the interior spheres of the hells. And they always lead, indirectly, towards a denial of any essential difference between good and evil, or to the doubt of the existence of any permanent evil, or - for that matter - of any eternal truth!

It is like the serpent whispering to Eve, "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Is it not man, who, by eating of the fruit of experience, determines what is good and what is evil? Does not what is good in one age become evil to the next?

If this denial that evil is really opposite to good could be established in men's thoughts, the victory of the serpent would be complete; and there would be that profane marriage of heaven with hell, of which William Blake wrote! To save us from that, hell is permitted by the Lord to show its ugly features, not alone in disease and death, but through crime and war, through obvious sin and falsity. Yet evil is not exposed - in its eternal opposition to God - in any of these temporary events. It was necessary, when men began to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for the Lord Himself to reveal this eternal opposition and to teach in the written Word what was against His will, what was permanently contrary to His merciful purposes by which His creatures might enjoy His gifts of eternal happiness. He warned men against evil by forbidding certain symbolic acts which, if not shunned, would defeat His plan for their happiness. And when mankind still persisted in their evils, insisting on determining for themselves what evil was, He revealed, by His own mouth, the consequences of sin. Even in the New Testament, however, He spoke in symbols, and described heaven and hell in parables and similes. Hell He depicted as a place of darkness and disappointment, a lake of unquenchable fire, where the wicked would undergo eternal chastisement.

Christians have usually taken this quite literally. Modern Catholic textbooks brand as rashness any suggestion that the "fire of hell" is figuratively used,<sup>3</sup> and insist that hell (and also "purgatory," a thing of their own invention) is in a place. Among Protestants, such orthodoxy is more rare, although the preaching of "hell-fire" is still the vogue among evangelists in terrifying their hearers into contrition. The Writings of course make clear that hell is a state rather than a place, and that whatever the appearance - its "fire" is actually the loves of self and the world, its darkness is due solely to the falsities which lead to willful ignorance.

And it was left for a New Church man<sup>4</sup> to remind us that the "eternal punishment" of the wicked, in the Greek text (Matthew 25:46), meant rather discipline than torture, and that the word used (kolasis), suggests "pruning," "checking ... .. tempering," "correcting"; which, of course, must be an eternal process in the hells; even though punishments are neither continuous nor everlasting. 3. See *God and Creation*, by T. B. Chetwood, S. J.; Bemiger Bros., New York, 1928 4. C. J. N. Manby, *The Eternal Duration of Hell*, Carswell Co., Toronto, 1901, page 62.

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The aversion of men to recognize the nature of evil has led thinkers in every age to seek for some way of evading the fact that it can persist permanently. In the ancient Orient such a way was found in the doctrine of "Nirvana;" according to which all creation, after an epoch, returns into its infinite source - leaving no trace, like a flame that has been "blown out." Another oriental phantasy, - of much influence even among Western peoples - is the doctrine of transmigration of Souls, according to which the period of man's choice is extended over many life-times, man's spirit being reincarnated, either as a higher or lower form of life, and re-born, as a king or a pauper, as a man or as a beast, until he attains the Nirvana of blessed extinction; unless the world is dissolved ere then.

A counterpart of the same idea is found among sects such as "Jehovah's Witnesses," who believe that at the impending Last judgment, the wicked, whether dead or living, will be annihilated, leaving the newborn earth to be enjoyed by living and reincarnated saints alone. But this simple solution of the world's troubles did not generally find favor in the Christian Church, although there were many prominent Church Fathers and Christian preachers who believed in the eventual redemption or conversion of the hells. Among them were Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and many others, and later John Scotus Erigena. And in Swedenborg's lifetime, Lavater, who corresponded with Swedenborg, and Jung-Stilling, who wrote about him, also defended Universalism; as also William Law, the mystic.

Later a Universalist church was founded, in 1770, in America, on the creed that all must pay their debts to God, but that a harmony of all souls with God will eventually ensue. As an organized movement this church is negligible; but their doctrine has greatly permeated the thought of our contemporaries, as if by a silent capillary attraction. For "natural good" stands ever ready to solve unpleasant problems by closing its eyes to the essential issues. And the essential issues are, first, What has the Lord revealed? and second, Can man have spiritual freedom if he is prevented from making his choice permanent?

Modern Christendom about us is more and more veering away from dogmas. It has "found a formula" for evading the force of the Gospel teachings. The idea of hell lingers in the theological schools, even though the fear of a personal Devil is very rare and the clergy have to reduce their flocks into very unsound emotional states before hell-fire has any meaning for them. The real

underpinnings of religious motive are weakened by the influence of a popularized version of evolutionary teachings which present man as basically good, evil as a superficial disease due to the infection of the environment, and civilization, not religion, as the healer. "Give man what he wants, feed him and clothe him and amuse him and he will become good" - that is the general philosophy.

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The demoralizing influence of the persuasion that the hells are eventually redeemed has penetrated even into the organized New Church. In the middle of last century, Thomas Lake Harris, by an apparent reception of the Writings, gained a number of leading New Church men as converts to his amazing form of spiritistic "celestialism." He claimed to divulge - in inspired doggerel verse - the celestial sense of the Word. And among his teachings was the redemption of the hells! A number of years later, Dr. W. H. Holcombe, the author of several popular New Church works, became a prey to a similar influence and a pretender to a "celestial" status, from the point of view of which he felt free to make good the supposed omissions of Swedenborg. He claimed that evil spirits could descend and corporeally obsess men who were fully regenerated, and that, by living in their organism, the sensual spirits would have a new chance for repentance; and this until all the hells were "redeemed!"

Even in more recent times the idea was revived. In 1898 to 1901, the Rev. Albert Bjorck carried on a seemingly able defense of the idea that a change of will can take place also with the devils in hell. Swedenborg's testimony to the opposite effect he dismissed by his claim that the law, by which such a change of state is possible with the devils, is a new law which came into operation only after the Second Advent had occurred!<sup>5</sup> Later, however, he retracted these views. 5. Manby, op. cit., page 17

That we should find those within the New Church who will defend the non-eternity of the hells is surprising; not because it is not quite natural that we should wish that evil would eventually cease; not because there is not with all of us that "natural good" which tends to escape from accepting realities; not because - with New Church men - the problem of combining the idea of Divine omnipotence with the permission of evil looms any less difficult when we are in states of merely natural thought; but because the Writings are perfectly clear in their teaching that if any spirit from his free will sincerely desires to repent and leave hell, he is given every assistance by the Lord. There is no question at all about the freedom of those who desire to come out of hell, for the whole endeavor, of Divine Providence is working in their behalf. But the question is whether a spirit shall have the freedom to remain in hell, remain in his evil loves and in their delights, if he chooses this course despite all the inevitable disadvantages which his choice implies.

It is easy for a man here on earth to say that he would prefer even annihilation to a life in hell. But no devil desires annihilation. He loves his own life - even more than any angel does. He treasures it above any angelic blessedness. The notion that any devil desires to leave his evil loves - or to leave hell except for the purpose of extending his power over others and to deceive credulous spirits - is a pure assumption, which could be confirmed only by Divine Revelation. And Divine Revelation denies that it is ever so.

Reason might put in a word here also. For if the choice of man, the freedom to choose and cultivate and confirm a ruling love, is not to lead man into the eternal fruition of such a choice and preference, but - after death - would be again reduced to a thing of no value, and be played upon by undesired circumstances and thus be cheated of its conclusion and fulfillment, with the certainty that whatever he decides, he would nevertheless be pressed back into one direction only - viz., to a

subservience to the Lord's dictate: what feeling could man have but that his "freedom" is but a brief vanishing flash, like a match which flares up and then flickers out forever?

On the other hand, if there was no provision against a change of love with the devils, could there be any such safeguard for the angels? Could not they as easily degenerate, and fall into infernal loves, reducing the spiritual world into an uncertain, disordered chaos of beings who had no aim, no reason for living, no settled personalities or permanent qualities?

But enough of such speculations! It is because human freedom is the most real thing in creation that the Lord protects man's final choice and permits him to preserve what he has chosen. It is because of God's great love for the freedom, which makes man the image of God, that it is provided "that no one's life can be changed after death, because it is organized according to his love and consequent works; and ... that a change of organization is possible only in the material body, and is utterly impossible in the spiritual body, after the former has been cast away."6 6. @CL 524[2], @DP 319, 326, BE 110: 2

All who come into the spiritual world are distinguished as to their quality of life by this test, that those who can be saved "can resist evils as of themselves," while the rest cannot do so.<sup>7</sup> The "inmost of the Divine providence respecting heaven" is to lead each salvable soul to his own situation in the Grand Man of heavenly uses, and this is accomplished by means of his affection of good and truth which corresponds to that place and use. The Lord continually withdraws man from the deepest hell - whither he tends. But if any one cannot be withdrawn in freedom he is prepared for his own place in opposition to heaven, that is, for his own position in hell, so that his power for evil shall be counterbalanced by a corresponding heavenly influence.

This, we are told, "is the inmost of the Divine providence respecting hell."<sup>8</sup> 7. @AE 116[5], 971:2 8. @DP 68, 69

Evil is the fruit of deliberate choice, and comes from a ruling love which is in actual organic relation to other subordinate evil affections. But modern man seems to find it increasingly difficult to regard it as more than a result of disease or a bad social environment. He finds it meaningless when the Writings speak of evils as the corrupt opposites to the grand organization of good loves that in actual uses displays the fulfillment of the Divine ends of creation. He does indeed recognize more obvious evils - theft, murder, crime and selfishness - when they threaten his own safety. Common perception persists among men, aided by many remnants of religious teaching. And there are of course multitudes of good people who cherish the general truths of the Word and obey the commandments there given. But the vision, even of these, is confused by the seductive influence of "natural good." For natural good looks at acts, not motives. It does not see that an evil love can express itself even through moral virtues, through loyalty and courage, industry and benevolence, through friendship and modesty and temperance and courtesy. It takes these things at their face-value, and is ready to believe that if one or two of these virtues are shown, an act must be genuine. It has little appreciation of the fact that unless the evils of the heart are uncovered and resisted, good works are not goods of charity. "Natural good" cannot recognize its own superficiality, and is satisfied with poor results.

The Writings certainly do not encourage us to judge of men's spiritual states or to go about suspecting their motives! But the Writings teach quite definitely that an evil is not shunned except from the Lord, or except it be seen as a sin against God. This is what "natural good" forgets. It does not see evil as a sin against God, but as an uncomfortable complication in human relations.

Therefore the world balks at the idea of hell. There are no devils, no "villains of deepest dye," nowadays. No black and white, only shades of gray.

The noblest love is traced to some ignoble jungle instinct, the coarsest brutality to an inferiority complex innocently acquired in childhood. How then can one speak of good and evil? They have both lost their inner meaning. And the chief virtue of a man of liberal education is "to give the devil his due." And while a Christian - if he emphatically condemns some evil - would be criticized for his harshness, as the Lord for His "hard sayings," yet if that Christian exercises tolerance and forgiveness towards an evil doer, it would very likely be mistaken (by natural good) for indifference to the evil done. And from that same "natural good" men find much to admire in the worst of their fellows, and find it hard to believe that an atheist, because he engages in philanthropy from professed self-interest or animal good nature, should not thereby have atoned for all his blasphemies and for the spiritual harm that he has callously done in robbing the innocent minds of others of their inner peace and comfort.

No. The world finds it hard to believe in hell, or in the permanent nature of evil. But the Doctrine of the New Church restores the necessary knowledge of what evil is. The Writings even list the acknowledgment that there is a hell, among the essentials of faith which every child must learn and later confirm.<sup>9</sup> 9. @AC 2225, 5135:3

Evil being a perversion, it cannot be known except from good. "Good discloses evil."<sup>10</sup> Evil is that which is contrary to the love to the Lord and love towards the neighbor. The loves of self and of the world are not originally, or in themselves evil; but by themselves-separated from spiritual loves - they are evil: they are evil when they dominate over, and destroy or harm these loves of heaven through which happiness and wisdom can alone be established among men.<sup>11</sup> For then, the love of self comes into opposition to all the ends of creation. 10. @AE 239[3] 11. @TCR 394, 403-405

Swedenborg, while conversing with two angels who had been brought up in heaven and were at a loss to understand how anything evil could exist, took care to explain that while good proceeds by degrees to a greater good or to a lesser good, and while evil similarly progresses to a greater or lesser evil, yet there is no relation or progression of good to evil, but that in every respect they were opposites.

When the least of good becomes "nothing," "there springs up, on the other side, evil."<sup>12</sup> Evil, conjoined with its falsity, is therefore said to be a nothing; "yet regarded in itself it is not nothing, although it is nothing of good."<sup>13</sup> 12. @CL 444[3] 13. @DP 11, 19, @CL 444[3]

The Word describes the beginning of evil and sin as the eating by Eve and Adam of the forbidden fruit. For evil is a turning away from God and from His order wherein all things are subordinated to love and charity. And the all-inclusive falsity through which evil operates is the confirmed belief that one knows good and evil and becomes wise from oneself and not from God.<sup>14</sup> In all evil there is therefore hidden an anger against the Lord and against the holy things of the church through which the Lord speaks and acts.<sup>15</sup> From these things it is clear that evil is not an act but a motive or spirit, a perverse love centered in self, an attitude of utter opposition to good. 14. @CL 444[4] 15. @AE 693[4]

When this spirit of rebellious self-love was formed with men, hell came into existence, simply by perversion of true and good things into uses not in accord with a good end. Evil has no power except by truths and appearances of good. If it acts by manifest lies or falsehoods, it is impotent to

do any harm to the good, but is as it were "laughed out of court." It then meets its judgment, its penalty, which is merely that its power to seduce the good is taken away and it must go elsewhere, seek a sphere where pretense and falsity are tolerated. So it is that the evil flock together to form hells, where the evil of one can find delight and power through the phantasies that rule in another.

While man still so desires, he is free to repent of evil and become reformed. No man is taken away from this opportunity by death, for the Lord foresees all possibilities of repentance. After death, however, he is led by his confirmed ruling love, and if this is evil, he is devastated of goods and truths. The law of Providence is that good and evil, truth and falsity, must not be mingled, but that good should be united to its own truth and evil to its own falsity.

From the evil spirit, therefore, is taken away the truth which he had adjoined to his evil.

Yet there is with every devil of hell certain human graces left! Even a devil was once a tender, innocent babe, a docile child. And therefore remains of good and of truth were stored at the depths of his mind, as borrowed states reserved for whatever use the Lord might find for them. The definite teaching is that "the good and the truth which are not adjoined to evils and falsities, are not devastated." The remains, with the evil, are reserved by the Lord and withdrawn beyond man's reach, and are used-in the other life-to temper and modify the states of the spirit; and this in order to maintain for him something of the power to think and will, "so that there may be something human still left," and thus a communication with heaven!<sup>16</sup> And note this sentence of Doctrine: "There is indeed a communication with heaven of the evil, even of those who are in hell, but no conjunction by good and truth; for as soon as good and truth flow down from heaven and come into hell, they are turned into evil and falsity, whence the conjunction is at once broken. Such is the communication."<sup>17</sup> <sup>16</sup>. @AC 1906, 7556, 7560 <sup>17</sup>. @AC 7560

We gather from this that while an evil spirit is his own form of evil and falsity, yet he has always not only a human soul, still unperverted, but also an external man which is tempered and modified by remains which cannot enter his consciousness without being perverted, but which can unconsciously modify his life. Therefore the devils retain the use of their reason to differing extents; and evil spirits, like evil men, may have aversions for certain types of crime, "drawing the line" at one while rushing into another without hesitation!

Yet another law of mercy provides that when good and evil with a devil have been profanely mixed, both are removed from his consciousness, often by a long sufferings, in order that the spirit may not utterly perish in the eternal tortures of a conflict of opposite delights.<sup>17a</sup> <sup>17a</sup>. @AE 1158, cp 1159; @AC 301, @DP 226

Let us not think that, despite these endeavors by which the Lord ameliorates the lot of the evil, the devils are in such delights of their own that whether one chooses heaven or hell is of no moment! Hell is not a place of eternal torment.

But neither is it a state of eternal delight. The very nature of their delights is to avoid the laws of order and the necessities of labor and justice. To do this, they retreat into a phantasy which cannot be maintained; or they inflict harm on others, to whose retaliation they are then subjected. And they are soon forced - in order to rebuild their phantasies upon some basis of truth - to labor under others, in return for shelter and food.

Punishments for excessive evil-doing bring the devils into new hells, described as "hells within the

hells." By the torture of these penalties, which are administered by other devils, but moderated by laws, the offenders are cowed until they-from fear-consent to use self-compulsion and abstain from carrying their evils beyond a limit. Then they are taken out of these hells of punishment and returned to the hell of their ordinary routine life.

The devils rebel against their restriction, against the enforced labor which they are required to perform. Yet they are willing to undergo all this rather than give up the delights of their life's love. Even their punishments are permitted for their own good, and their own amendment. They "cannot indeed be amended as to interiors, but only as to exteriors."<sup>18</sup> But so far as they are, by fears of consequences, brought into an external order, they have also the advantages which civil order brings; they can, in a fashion, perform spiritual uses of a vile sort, and thus become for the time a superficial part of the Grand Man of uses, and are so far lifted out of the state which is called "hell," the state of their interiors, to which they return again when their uses stop.<sup>19</sup> 18. @AC 6977 19. @AC 696

This picture of hell is not so very different from the states of the life of corporeal and sensual men on earth: a life with its own peculiar pleasures, purchased at a price of the happiness of their neighbors and at the constant risk of retaliation; but a life which is preferred by choice, and cannot be ameliorated except on the surface. The fear of hell has its functions, and does indeed remove evils temporarily, but it does not implant goods of love and charity.

What man does from such fear does not remain for long.<sup>20</sup> With those who are in the good of faith there is no fear of hell and of damnation, but there is a "holy fear," which is an aversion to doing and thinking anything against the Lord and against the neighbor, or against the good of love and the truth of faith.<sup>21</sup> 20. @AE 1133, 193:5, @DP 139 21. @AC 2826

But the doctrine about hell is revealed that we might see evils, know their source and origin, and thus be enabled to shun them in ourselves.

## 18 SPIRITUAL PENALTIES

Common perception - or the light of common sense - has always been able to see, in every age, that there is a God, that there is a heaven, and that there is a hell. These acknowledgments are also intrinsic parts of the doctrine taught in every Divine revelation, and "without a knowledge and acknowledgment of these things man is unable to think spiritually."<sup>1</sup> 1. @HH 512[3], @AC 5135[3]

While all good people are disposed to accept the truth that God rules, and also the truth that a heaven of blessedness is to be the reward of him that overcometh; yet the idea of an eternal hell fills men with dread and dislike. Good men would wish that God could do without a hell in the economy of His universe.

That good should be rewarded is recognized as just and proper by the rational mind. But that evil should be punished is accepted with some hesitancy and reservation. Primarily (we hope) it is because we do not wish to see others suffer that we feel this reluctance to admit the justice of hell's existence. But secondarily, we must admit also to such a hesitation because we fear that our own soul may deserve just such an abode as hell, and we shrink in horror from the fact of its actuality.

In the New Church we are amply instructed about the present necessity and the deplorable causes of hell. We are assured that the Lord condemns no one to hell; that He is not the creator of the evils

which lead to hell; that He predestines all to heaven; that His outpouring love extends itself even to the devils; and that He never punishes anyone, but forgives; indeed that He never ceases to avert evils and disasters from all, but separates them from the worse evils, and lifts them up by many modes and hidden ways, from the lowest hell toward which they gravitate! We are even told that angels - who are only distant images of the Divine love - would willingly undergo pain and even endure hell for the salvation of the devils from their hells - if it were possible.<sup>2 2.</sup> @AC 2077

This is a very different picture from that presented by the pagan, Jewish, and medieval Christian idea of a retaliative, avenging God; and from the Calvinistic idea of a God who personally selects a few for salvation, and consigns the rest to extinction or to a place of eternal torture.

In more refined paganism we find, for instance, the belief in a Tartarus, where the condemned were destined to lack just that for which they had cupidity here on earth, and were fated to be in contact with that which they abhorred! Spite was the law of such retaliation by the gods. Dante, in his *Inferno*, has exactly the same idea; punishment for the sake of what men had done here on earth; torture like that of Tantalus.

In medieval Christian myths and pictures of hell, angels and saints were often painted as watching, with pitiless and self-righteous abhorrence, the fate of the poor heretics who were being pinched by ferocious and malicious arch-devils in a lake of burning brimstone. At Swedenborg's time, it was still widely regarded as heresy to doubt that hell consisted of material flame and sulphur.

The New Church doctrine has no room for any place of everlasting, never-ending torture in the after-life. There is indeed a hell - and this is eternal.

But those who enter hell are kept there actually by their own evil will; and if they can will to rise above hell they are allowed to do so - if their desire is genuine. Swedenborg saw thousands of spirits liberated from the hells. What they are eternally prevented from doing is to rise out of hell and take the hells - or their evils - with them! Therefore we are told that if a devil so much as puts his foot out of his hell, he is grievously punished.

The punishments which are applied in hell are not eternal. They are mainly disciplinary; not retributions for sins committed on earth, but reactions to acts that the evil continue to commit in hell. Thus punishments in hell cease when external order has been restored. In other words, penalties there are not permitted for the sake of retribution, but for the sake of amendment of life and the maintenance of a condition of order and relative justice in a society which is composed of self-seeking rebels and desperate tyrants.

The general truth is that hell and heaven are parts of the same universe and are subject to the same laws of life as apply in a more imperfect way among men.

The Lord rules both by the infinite power of His Divine truth.<sup>3</sup> But in heaven the angels see and receive the good - the Divine good-which the laws of truth contain and to which truth leads. In hell the Divine truth alone - without Mercy - is seen. It is seen not as Divine truth, but as inexorable necessity, as fact, as what is possible.<sup>4</sup> The hells are bound by the laws of possibility, the laws of limits. We are told that the laws of possibility are laws of Divine order.<sup>5</sup> And evil always seeks to escape these laws - seeks to make a new universe for itself by phantasy. It is unwilling to admit the facts of reality, and tries to hide from the truth, which always seeks it out in some form or other. Thus the infernals seek to retire into logic-proof compartments, where they can, in imagination,



defeat the laws of possibility and build new worlds more to their liking than the real world of God, - insane, contorted worlds, in which evil is not evil, where might is right, and impossibility can be circumvented, and sins are not found out, and abuse does not bring diseases and discomforts. 3. @AE 726 (2) 4. @AC 9049[3], 9534:2, 2258:3, 7273:2 5. @AC 8700, 8765e

The hells are actually in the same world as the heavens, In all their periods of rational sanity the devils also belong to the orderly form of the Lord's universe - His kingdom - even though they may be "the least" in this kingdom. But when the devils are in their phantasy, they are living in another spiritual world! - opposite to heaven -having only a slight contact with the Lord's kingdom, and therefore appearing in the spiritual world as if far away. Sometimes the hells also appear to be underneath the world of spirits, and the devils seem - in the light of heaven - to walk upside down, like those of the antipodes!

### The Origin of Penalties

To inquire into the origin of the penalties of hell, we shall descend into the plane of Moral Philosophy. What we shall say is only illustrative of our New Church doctrine.

Let us reflect that finite life - such as ours, which we sense as "consciousness" - implies freedom within limits.

A child, from the beginning, learns by finding all the limitations of his life and power. He is a living conatus which is constantly frustrated. He feels he cannot budge this; cannot lift that; cannot have the moon - so alluring a toy - to play with; cannot reach his rattle; must avoid bumping against hard objects; must not touch certain things. He finds how much candy he may safely eat. He learns when he must obey - and whom he may safely ignore. He learns what his scope of freedom is! He finds his place, in an already overcrowded world.

These limitations around his life he learns to accept - because, if he extends himself beyond them, he is penalized. We thus learn the limits of our powers by penalties - by bumps and knocks and strains and pains. We learn the subtle differences between a maximum use of our muscles, organs, mind, faculties, and the abuse of these things.

The good man does not resent his limitations or blame them on injustice; but he seeks to make the best use of the opportunities which the Divine Providence opens before him.

He finds compensation in an internal contentment with what he has been given as his field of life and responsibility. And he knows that if he were a king or possessed the wealth of the world his uses and responsibilities would be magnified while his happiness would still depend on contentment with his lot.6 6. @AC 4981, 5051e, 8717e, @HH 278[2], @DP 250, 254:3, 4

The good and wise man recognizes the wisdom of the limits and boundaries which have been placed around his developing spirit. He thanks his Maker for the freedom which he has, and for the fact that normally these limits gradually, slowly, widen out. He sees the folly of an impatient ambition which would break down his environment or strain his body beyond its limits, and seeks not to rush in disorderly fashion into premature undertakings. He sees that his body, brain, knowledge, society, are all limitations which must be bent, not broken; must be treated with kindness and order; for then they will grow pliant, give way little by little, as our uses expand. This moral principle seems to be involved in the parable in which the Lord said, "Make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. . . ."7 7. Luke 16:9, @AE 242[20], 700:17

The evil or unwise man regards these natural, finite limitations of life as unjust impositions! as undeserved penalties! Such men resent the presence of anything that limits their ambition or pleasure; they feel tortured at the thought that they have an environment which they cannot control. The evil do not feel any obligations towards the Lord. They make no effort to read in the obstacles the intent of Providence, and thus cannot solve the riddle of how to succeed without resorting to destructive measures. They abuse their brain and body. Their finite limits, the walls against which they strain and fret, are so hammered by their ambitions, so pounded by their irrational desires that these walls become harder and harder, and their life - strange to say - becomes narrower and more solidly confined, until veritably confined within dungeon walls. Such is the feeling of those who are in the prisons of hell. They always were - mentally - in a prison, but a prison of their own making.

Penalties thus come from the world of reality, which the evil desire to ignore. They object to the law of limits - the law of order. They resent that they cannot act in an infinite, omniscient way - that they cannot be gods. So evil tends to deny God. But even the egocentric world of phantasy has its limits. Devils must return to the realities of life. They must have food and clothing, even for the upkeep of their phantastic illusions! There must be some grain of reality with them in order to sustain and feed their illusions of greatness or dreams of power, or their phantasy of successful revenge.

So they descend from phantasy and begin to do evil and speak falsity in the actual spiritual world, that is, to their companions. For a while a measure of success is theirs. They feed on the delight of evil in actual deed; they are in their heaven which is the real hell! But soon they begin to encounter opposition. They learn their limits - the fact that they cannot control other people's reactions. They are back in what is to them hell, in disappointment, punishment, misery, labor! This, that is to them hell, is however really the means of bringing them something of refreshment and power of life, something of peace and decency.

### The Object of Penalties

In both worlds the only object of punishments is to cause men and spirits to be made aware of the real truth of their environment. When a child, heeding not its mother's warning, touches a red-hot stove, its brain registers the sensation of pain in order to make the mind aware of the environment of its body, so that it may know the truth about its surroundings.

Penalties in hell happen very similarly. They bring the spirit's ambitions down within the proper limits. They forcibly reveal actualities. Only so can even the devil continue to exist. Only so can he borrow some power from the ultimates of the spiritual world; for power lies only in realities,

Power comes from ultimates.<sup>8</sup> From ultimates we derive our food, which is converted into bodily power. And just as a man needs food and shelter for the sustenance of his natural body - whatever he uses this body for, good or bad, and even if he does nothing at all of use;

so also spirits must have spiritual food for their spiritual bodies, even if they use this food for no true use, that is, even if they make their mental life (so far as they are able) to consist of mere phantasies. 8. @SD 1039

Spiritual food is especially a form of knowledge; and it grows from the spiritual ultimates of the soil there - a spiritual soil. That soil is very real. Spirits actually walk on it. Cities are built upon it. It appears sometimes fertile - in heaven, or where good spirits are; sometimes - as with evil spirits -

barren.

We must realize that the ultimate of the spiritual world actually coheres with the plane of "material ideas," which is with men and - quiescently - with spirits. The heavens and the hells alike are founded on mankind; they rest on the natural memories of living men. The whole field of human knowledge is open to spirits according to states and associations; and on the basis of that association with men, the Lord is able to give to all the societies of the other world the ultimate sustenance of life.

Food, in the spiritual world, is given to all according to their states; and this means according to their uses.<sup>9</sup> This food is spiritual, and given gratis by the Lord. It is seen to appear spontaneously and instantaneously. Yet we are told that the heavenly soil is fertile - that all things of it grow from seed, but seed created rather than sown. The fruit is edible. We understand this to mean that food is created in the same order as on earth; but the process is there hidden, and has no time element in it: it is instantaneous. The reality there clearly appears, that food is created by God, even as was the case with the loaves and fishes multiplied beside the lake of Galilee. 9. See pages 255, 268.

The memory-soil of material ideas which are quiescent with spirits but active with mankind on earth, is the ultimate in which the vegetations of heaven have their roots. Even the devils can carry on their life of phantasy - their delights of evil - only by means of knowledges derived from others, and this means, in the last analysis, from those who are not in phantasy but who are in something of spiritual sight;

that is, from those who are still spirits in the world of spirits, or from men on earth.

The devils thus have a certain affection of knowledges, a hunger for knowing the actualities of their environment. Without this their life would wither - their very thoughts stand still.

The first requirement for satisfying their hunger - for drawing in the knowledge so essential to all life - is usefulness, work. It is well known in the world that knowledge is the real source of a man's livelihood; knowledge is necessary for his use. But mere dead book-knowledge is not what brings a blessing. It is the knowledge which comes in the course of a man's labor, study or endeavor to perform uses, that gives experience of the kind which blesses his use and gives him an increment - a livelihood. Even in hell this is the case. Evil spirits must labor for the knowledge that is to sustain them.

That this is the case appears from the following teaching. After describing the evil as being interiorly insane, our quotation states: "There is this sole remedy for their insanity - to be put to work in hell under a judge. So long as they are at work there, they are not insane; for the works with which they are occupied hold the mind, as it were, in prison or bonds, to prevent its wandering into the delirious fancies of their lusts. Their tasks are done for the sake of food, clothing, and a bed, thus unwillingly from necessity, and not freely from affection."<sup>10</sup> 10. Love xv, cp LJ post. 230, @AE 122

The second requirement is that evils, when they are indulged in, should bring punishments upon them. These punishments are necessary because through them something of the life of reason is restored. And reason, sufficient to see facts, speak truth, and perform uses, is necessary if spirits are to draw knowledge - or have spiritual food. All punishment is "done for the sake of the amendment" of the spirit.<sup>11</sup> For the penalties are such that they as it were take away the evils, or

imbue the faculty of doing what is good; thus, in themselves, all the punishments are vastations, because they devastate evils by the putting on of the faculty of speaking truth and doing good; and this faculty is a something superadded - the gift of the Lord;

"for if evils were merely taken away, without the donation of faculties of good, nothing of the man would remain, because there is nothing but evil in man."12 11. @SD 3489[2] 12. @SD 1039

In discussing the meaning of penalties in the spiritual world, we have tried to show that they are not of God's will, yet that they are a necessary phase of the life of delights which the evil have chosen; because the evil also have to have contact with the realm of actualities. Further, we have suggested that the life of enforced usefulness, or adjustment to the life of their society, is actually the source of all that even the devils treasure - or of that measure of rest and comfort and delight which they have. By punishments they can learn a certain restraint which amends their outward life, and their lot.13 13. @AC 6071[6]

We also noted certain general principles about the reasons for

punishments in the other world; and the origin of those penalties in the effort of the evil to escape from the realities of life, and their refusal to accept the laws of order and the universe as it is constituted.

From this it may be easily seen that even the good may have to undergo penalty so far as they have evils (external faults), and so far as they have false ideas of life. Certainly this is the case on earth! And life in the world of spirits is much like that in this world, with the marked difference that in the spiritual world justice is wiser and more constructive than on earth.

The penalties of the good are termed vastations, for they have in view the wasting or removal of external evils, falsities, bad habits, misapprehensions, and faults.

This, however, is true with the good: they undergo their vastations with less resistance, less reluctance, and therefore with less pain! Indeed some serve what they believe to be their penance, with a consent on their part; somewhat as we might regard an unpleasant operation! Still, if they should see the full purpose of the vastation, they probably would find the vastation to be over!

Punishments, however, are unwillingly submitted to. They are reserved for the evil, and have the object of instilling into evil spirits a wholesome fear of harming the good, or of attacking their fellow devils while they are in a quiet, harmless, state.

Evil is to be so balanced against evil that each is rendered harmless; this is the external social principle on which hell is organized.

Judges are placed over the spirits in the world of spirits and in the hells. In the world of spirits, these judges exercise only civic and moral judgments. They refer to the higher tribunal of heaven and to the providential laws of invisible Order, any questions about spiritual states. When certain evil spirits declared it blasphemy of certain priests to say that adulterers cannot acknowledge God or be received into heaven, the judge in the world of spirits sent the plaintiff to the gateways of heaven and of hell, and the question was soon settled!14 14. @CL 500[4]

Judges in the hells are evidently sometimes evil spirits. But generally they seem to be good - certainly they must be just. The government of heaven is over them. The issues they decide are

merely matters of behavior, and their functions are oftenest to see to the employment of the evil in workhouses and prisons.

Labor for each other, amounting almost to slavery, is the most usual penalty of hell. But besides this, every crime is immediately met by terrifying punishments, which encourage the self-restraint of the criminal. (These penalties have to do with the world of phantasy into which the evil plunge themselves).

### Punishment by Phantasy

As already mentioned, most punishments go hand in hand with the phantasies of evil. The phantasies entertained on earth are totally changed: priests want to build, not dogmas merely, but houses! avarice makes for mice and lice; corporeal cupidities become filth in which they revel; cruelty exaggerates itself into a phantasy of bloodshed and gore, which affects others and makes them feel that such atrocities are actually taking place. Pride of erudition brings phantasies of dwelling in library cells underground: such want to be left to their studies and to escape "life," - but as they read the candles go out! The lust of glory and fame is cured by the irritating presence of mice and vermin, etc.

Others, who practice evil secretly, as the lascivious, also seek to dwell underground.<sup>15</sup> 15. @SD 385

The vastations of certain of the learned is described. Thus Melanchthon reads over what he has written by dictation from heaven concerning the goods of charity, and understands not a whit; the writing fades overnight. He is in two states: sometimes he is in a chamber doing things that pertain to his ambition; sometimes he is in a hell, under a judge who is much feared; and doing really useful, but mean, work.<sup>16</sup> 16. @SD 5932, @TCR 797

Certain phantasies are obviously their own punishment. A rather harmless experiment was made on one puffed up with pride on earth; he despised others in comparison with himself, and finally entertained contemptuous ideas about the angels of heaven. His punishment is called inflation. He was as it were puffed up (in phantasy) until he filled the universe and had no space left. Then he looked about and found no place to go, and began to long for his previous size.<sup>17</sup> Here is quite a parable: if we think we have already arrived at the goal - we have "no place to go!" Consider the pathetic aimlessness of the man who has achieved his dreams of power or wealth or a surfeit of fame; the roue, who in dissipations has tasted the fruits of every pleasure and has nothing left; the Alexander who has no worlds left to conquer; the "nouveaux riches"; or the retired man of late middle-age who has nothing to do; these face the same vastation. <sup>17</sup>. @SD 3113

One type of vastation is that of people who are so opinionated and self-confident that they will not acknowledge interior or more interior truths unless they discover them themselves or are the means of their coming to light. Such a spirit was rolled up like a mummy in a woolen bandage, in which, when he tried to extricate himself, he became more intricately involved; also his hands were detached from him in the air (to make him trust less in his own powers).<sup>18</sup> Here we note this: that such a one refuses to accept any truths that are not of his own good; he is wrapped up in his own ideas, inextricably!

The wool in which he is wrapped signifies truth of one's own good, and here of natural good. <sup>18</sup>. @SD 1370-1378, 1410-1414, 3298-3300

There is also the torture of spheres.<sup>19</sup> This we often experience on earth; we feel the torment of a

too artificially pietistic sphere in which we somehow become involved, or of a blasphemous sphere which we are forced to endure. The evil man suffers when in a sphere of truth and penetrating scrutiny. We read of the punishment of a female magical spirit bent on destroying the body of Swedenborg by disease. She was found out, and was made pendulous like a ghost, but evaded capture; that is, she was denied a basis in the natural, and then by a magical method she raised herself into the celestial and spiritual sphere. While thus suspended, she suffered excruciating tortures, for by phantasies her ideas had been directed to the first threshold of the angelic sphere.<sup>20</sup> 19. @AC 953 20. @SD 4468

Those who are revengeful and think themselves greater than others, being contemptuous of others in comparison with self, suffer laceration.<sup>21</sup> Their face becomes like a round cake! Their arms look like rags on a whirling "scarecrow," and they are lifted up toward heaven, while their character is proclaimed before all and shame invades their very inmosts. Then they are carried to a miry lake near the filthy Jerusalem and rolled in mud. This is repeated until the cupidity of preeminence is taken away! This is normally done in more unostentatious ways; but extreme vanity calls for more humiliating publicity. The hardest thing to overcome on earth is our vanity - about our value to society or to our friends; but we soon find that our place can be quickly filled. Yet the main purpose of the penalty is to teach us to distinguish between our person and our use. The honor of the use is often appropriated by men and ascribed to themselves; the use is then taken away in the spiritual world until the person has been utterly humiliated. In the spiritual world man loses the protection of his use if he ascribes the merit of the use to himself. 21. @AC 956

A common type of spiritual punishment is that of "discerption," or racking, that is, a tearing apart of the limbs, and a crushing or collision by being violently shaken.

In this form of torment resistance is induced to increase the pain!<sup>22</sup> 22. @AC 957

Swedenborg, witnessing such a penalty, wondered greatly, because the spirits so punished had been speaking well and confessed sound doctrinals and even preached them. But it soon appeared clearly, that they were the deceitful - who from habit speak one way and think another; who pretend friendship but intend theft or self-advantage, and harbor envy of all they see. As soon as their externals of speech and knowledge are removed, they begin to know themselves as evil, and hence labor to retain by phantasy the external which they had in the world. Evil spirits make this possible by inducing on them "as it were bodies - visible ones - and bodily senses" - thus sensations "almost like those of the body, but much less gross."<sup>23</sup> The real bodies of spirits are the actual expressions of their real states. But these "induced" bodies are phantasies - bodies such as they would wish to have in order to deceive. As long as the spirits identify themselves with such imaginary bodies, punishing spirits have power over them - for they have no protection from the laws of truth, or from the Lord of heaven. The torture comes from their own mind, stimulated by punishing spirits! Their false external seems to be torn apart, with infinite pain of spirit and body; and it is the influx of evil that thus makes the good deceptive external so precarious. 23. @AC 959, 969

Evil spirits, while in an external state and sphere, are permitted to appear good - without such dire punishments. But when their internals once begin to come out, they are not allowed to deceitfully hide themselves by phantasies. If they do so, they become spiritual outlaws, pursued and persecuted, the prey of punishing spirits. The same holds true on earth. When a man has shown himself a hypocrite, his efforts to rehabilitate himself in the eyes of others are vain.

## Real Appearances versus Phantasy

The power of truth - especially natural truth! - is so great in the spiritual world that it protects from all the hells. Swedenborg was in communication with two friends, who separately went through a number of the hells; and Swedenborg describes how they were protected from all the phantasies in them, and the terrors and miseries there.

One was Sven Lagerberg, a fine Swedish general and senator, a man universally respected. The other was Hjerne, the vice-president of the College of Mines.<sup>24</sup> 24. @AC 6423, SD min. 4781ff, @SD 6036

Some spirits, from the fact that phantasies abound in the world of spirits, come into the persuasion that all things whatsoever are mere phantasies.<sup>25</sup> This is far from being the case. But unless we reflect deeply, it is hard to picture the completeness of the phantasies produced among the souls even in that region of the world of spirits which is known to us - and was known to the ancients - as "the Lower Earth," also called "Hades," "Sheol," the "Underworld," etc. It is not only the light that is illusive; it is touch and sound and every sense. Phantasy is so real there, that it lays complete siege to all the senses. It is not merely illusion - not merely an image in the air; it is the actual but pervert sensation of a spiritual thing or a spiritual state. Yet it is vastly different from the real appearances sensed by the angels and by good spirits in their normal states. The things seen and sensed in heaven are real, and therefore they are called real appearances, because they actually are substantial creations, visible to all who are in the state of heaven. Inwardly they are forms of truth; while inwardly in the phantastic appearances there is nothing real, for phantasy is an evasion of truth, an apparent evasion of the spiritual law which governs the evil. 25. @SD 4305

Before we can know what the phantasies of the world of spirits are in their essence, we must know what the real appearances of heaven are in their essence, and how they are effected.

The essence of spiritual things is known only from revelation. This is true in respect to the mind of man, and of his soul, and of the life of all animate things, for all these are spiritual; and while men can study the results of life, and the manifestations of the mind, and the operations of the soul in the body, yet what these spiritual things are in their own essence is beyond Science to tell. Even Philosophy - in its whole known history - has been groping in the dark as to the meaning of the two great facts of Mind and Matter. Some have tried to explain mind - or life, or the spiritual - as a form of material activity.

This concept is called Materialism, and has led to the denial of God or of anything not seen or determined by the senses. Others have denied that there is such a thing as matter, saying that matter is simply a sensation, a phantasy without real existence outside of man's mind. This is called Idealism, and leads to the notion that all is God, that we are component parts of God's consciousness. And those philosophers who have realized the evident absurdity of both these positions, have tried in various ways to compromise between them, but unsuccessfully, since they could not explain the essence of either mind or matter.

And so, lest the sanity of rational man be utterly destroyed, the Divine Philosophy was revealed in the Doctrines of the New Church. It is there given, as a matter of revelation, that the two different phenomena that are called natural and spiritual are sensations of two discrete kinds of substance, which, in their essence, are entirely unlike. Natural substance, which is called matter, has spatial dimensions, is fixed, is unable to change its state, and if induced to undergo changes of state or

place these changes occur according to fixed periods of time. Thus it is dead. Spiritual substance, which is properly called the spiritual-substantial, is living, from the Lord's life. It is not fixed, but utterly plastic; and has not space or time as properties.

The marvelous fact is that despite these wide differences between the two substances of creation, they cannot be told apart by sensual demonstration. Only through the material senses can we see and feel matter; and only the spiritual senses of man can see and feel spiritual substance. And when man's spiritual senses are opened with the death of the body, he sees the things of the spiritual world just as if it were still the natural world which he was beholding. The similarity is so illusive that at first the spirit believes himself still in the world of space and matter. Nor could he, from his senses alone, ever convince himself to the contrary. His reason, if consulted, can tell a difference; for the laws of the other world are of an entirely different order, and cause strange coincidences, sudden changes of environment, keen perceptions of what others are thinking and desiring.

But his senses there record the experiences of spiritual life in the same apparent way in which life on earth was recorded - as a life in a body equipped for all corporeal and mental functions, in surroundings of the same kind. And so before him rise up the appearances of time and space and material organizations - yet, these same governed by laws which the reason sees to be laws of a substance discretely above matter and space. For a substance is characterized not by its appearance, but by the laws according to which it acts.

Now it is not to be thought that the things seen in the spiritual world - the appearances in heaven - angels, animals, plants, hills, valleys, rocks, works of human skill, buildings, garments, books - are simply survivals of memories from earth-life. Heaven is not a dream; its appearances do not come from the sensory experiences man had while dwelling on earth amid space and time. They do not exist simply in the minds of the beholding angels; they are not phantasies aroused in angelic minds through some law of correspondence. But these "appearances" are "real substances, and thus essences in form."<sup>26</sup> They are substantial even as the angels themselves - and they are called "appearances" simply because they are substances sensed by the angels - appearing before them and outside of them in correspondence with their own states of love and wisdom. 26. @AC 2576

An angel is nothing but a certain love and its wisdom in spiritual form and in spiritual relation. The perception of this spiritual relation is what takes the place of space and time in the spiritual world. The law of all life is that sensation is necessary to see a thing in relation to other things. And whatever you care to call it, that relation will appear on any plane as spatial dimension appears to us-as figure, environment-in the accustomed forms of human life.

What the spiritual eye sees after death, is just such a relation as it saw under spatial dimensions here, before death clarified the vision. It is the spiritual that sees through our material eye, even now. The eye in itself - apart from the mind - is blind and dead. In heaven, the eye of the spirit sees, and his ear and nose and hand sense, apart from any material organ.

The appearances there correspond absolutely to the reality, and exhibit the true relations among spiritual objects.

The so-called appearances of the spiritual world are, therefore, not phantasies, but are the substantial spiritual things themselves seen and felt and heard. And since all sensation is as to origin spiritual, we sense things under the same mental forms in both worlds, albeit in one world



they are spiritual, and in the other natural. They cannot be told apart, because they correspond. Sensation, in each world, is the appearance - the presentation - of the realities of that plane.

Phantasy is something entirely different. It is the "real" appearance of unrealities - of things which in themselves are not such - of false relations. Except in the spheres of phantasy, there are no false relations in the entire spiritual world, for it is governed by the Lord.

Only through phantasy can evil prevail over good or disturb that order which provides a place for every human soul. If we could protect our soul from the power of phantasy, we would be safe from all the hells.

Reference was already made to the phantasies that spring from a person's own cupidities or evil longings. The devils in hell, yearning for the delight of evil, find satisfaction in realistically picturing the evils which they would indulge in; and this is permitted to the point of entire self-deception; without this, life in hell would be unrelieved misery. Their phantasies affect other evil spirits also, whom they choose as victims, for the law exists in the other life that thoughts can even be represented to the life; and therefore phantasies can be induced on a spirit, so that the spirit believes himself to experience - in keenest realism - the horrors which others desire him to feel.

A good spirit is protected against such phantasies which devils seek to induce; and only when a spirit has committed some evil, is the Lord's protection withdrawn.

But one other circumstance may lead even a good spirit into the realm of phantasy. This is when some falsity of religion is adhered to with some degree of confirmation, and strong and impure natural affections prevent his instruction in the truth.

Then he is imprisoned in the "Lower Earth)" near the hells, and evil spirits inflow to arouse this falsity, producing phantasies of various kinds. Some good spirits then seem to themselves to be cutting unending cords of wood to merit heaven. Others fill overflowing ditches, vainly seeking to acquire spiritual wisdom by self-intelligence. Some again are tortured with the thought that they are in hell - or suffer what seems like bodily pangs or tortures of phantastic nature because they thought that eternal life was impossible apart from the material body. And untold others are the constant prey of sirens and deceivers who turn whatsoever they think into falsity and whatever they do into sin, removing from them the hope of salvation.

These last groups of phantasies serve for vastation and temptation. They are the forcible means of breaking trust in human prudence, and of inducing that despair which precedes the renunciation of evil habits of thought. Such vastation awaits all who in this life regard themselves as rich and in need of nothing, and know not that they are "wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked."

It is to make unnecessary these phantasies and vastations in the spiritual world, that the Writings now reveal the truth.

## 19 THE NATURE OF THE HELLS

### Aversion to the Truth about Hell

It is a habit of man to shut his eyes to what is unpleasant, to ignore what he does not like to acknowledge, and to pretend that it does not exist. From "natural good" - from their inborn desire

to avoid discomfort and responsibility - people often lull themselves into a feeling of security even in the face of real dangers. Parents may blind themselves to the faults of their children, and refuse to believe that their child could do anything wrong or turn out anything less than perfect. Nations have shown indifference to the encroachments of subversive influences until they suddenly find themselves in bondage. And the same danger waits upon every man in respect to his spiritual life. For every one is in a manner engulfed in the routine of the day's tasks and occupations and in the prospects of pleasure and enjoyment, and seldom stops to reflect on the many influences that are shaping his destiny. Indeed, one reason for this is that the most potent of these influences are invisible, stemming from heaven and from hell.

"No man can be regenerated unless he knows such things as are of . . . spiritual life." And these he can learn only from Divine revelation.

Among such necessary truths is this, "that there is a heaven and a hell, and that man is to live to eternity, in heaven if he has done well, in hell if he has done evil."<sup>1</sup> "He who does not know that there is a hell and a heaven, nor that there is an eternal life, cannot even think about the life of heaven, nor apply himself to receive it. . . ." <sup>2</sup> 1. @HD 177 2. @HD 178, @HH 512[3]

For this reason, Divine revelation discloses the nature, not only of heaven, but of hell - in the Old Testament by vague allusions, in the New Testament by more definite statements, and in the Heavenly Doctrine by extensive descriptions and doctrinal presentations. And it is the duty of the New Church not only to accept the unpleasant and tragic fact that the hells exist, but also to endeavor to understand what makes hell, how evil spirits are judged, and how the hells are governed so as not to defeat the Divine end in creation.

### What is Meant by Hell

Our first question is, naturally, what we mean by "hell." Among many simple Christians, hell is thought of as a place somewhere in the physical universe, perhaps in the bowels of the earth, a place of everlasting torment presided over by a cruel Spirit called the Devil or Satan. Despite the inroads of skepticism, this is still the Catholic teaching. Others, less bound to the creeds and traditions of the past, tend to be silent about any personal Devil or on the whereabouts of hell. Many deny the existence of any hell, and - as an afterthought -doubt personal immortality altogether, confining their beliefs to the affairs of this world. And these latter, if cynically inclined, might offer the opinion that this mortal life is hell enough, or at least suggest that we suffer for our sins here and now.

And it is true that - just as the kingdom of God "cometh not with observation ... for behold, the kingdom of God is within you" - so the tyranny of hell is indeed an internal state, not an external place merely. But it is a state which proclaims itself in outward forms also, both on earth and in the other life. Hell, like heaven, starts as an internal state within the human mind.

There is no other origin of hell than the mind of man. Hell did not begin with any race of fallen angels created before the beginning of the world. All the inhabitants of hell, as of heaven, are from mankind.<sup>3</sup> 3. LJ 14

This is a cardinal doctrine of the New Church. And it does away with any idea that some one Satanic Majesty rules over the pandemonium of the hells. In the work on Heaven and Hell, the section which treats of the hells begins with a chapter entitled "The Lord rules the Hells." Humanly

speaking, we may be certain that if the hells were ruled by any one else they would be infinitely worse than they are. For evil, suffering, and punishment proceed not from the Lord but from man.

How shall we then define "hell"? The Writings give a great variety of definitions: Hell is the lamentable state of the unfaithful.<sup>4</sup> Hell is evil, or sin.<sup>5</sup> The delight of evil, perceived as good, is hell.<sup>6</sup> Hatred, in all its varieties, makes hell.<sup>7</sup> Evil and falsity, in their conjunction or mating, makes hell.<sup>8</sup> The love of self is the infernal itself.<sup>9</sup> Loves opposite to those of heaven constitute hell.<sup>10</sup> Hell is to do evil from an evil will - to will well to oneself and only from this to do good to others.<sup>11</sup> Hell is to will to be above all.<sup>12</sup> Where faith and love are not, there is hell.<sup>13</sup> The denial of God, and in the Christian world, denial of the Lord's Divinity, makes hell.<sup>14</sup> A natural affection of use, without the spiritual, bestows hell upon man.<sup>15</sup> Hell is what is external separated from what is internal.<sup>16</sup> 4. @AC 5 5. @AC 6279, @AE 797[3], @AR 62 6. @DP 93 7. @AC 693 8. @AC 8481, @HH 422, 425, 384 9. @AC 1304[e] 10. @AC 3957[8] 11. @AC 4776[2] 12. @AC 2654[5] 13. @AE 803[e] 14. @DLW 13[e] 15. Love xvii:2 16. @AC 10489

Hell is the same as evil; but evil means, not wrong doing or harmful acts, but evil loves. Thus we are told in the doctrine that the love of self and the love of the world not only rule in hell but make the hells.<sup>17</sup>

The love of self and the love of the world are evil when they are separated from the higher loves -from the love to the Lord and the love towards the neighbor which rule in heaven. It is this separation which perverts the loves of self and the world and turns them against all heavenly uses.<sup>18</sup> 17. @HH 554 18. @TCR 395, 403, cp @DLW 345

From what has been said it is clear that hell is not far off from man, but inflows into all human affairs, into all things of daily life, whenever man acts or intends or feels moved from a selfish impulse that rebels against charity. Here in the world this influx manifests itself in ugly forms -in unkindness and arrogance and private vices if not in open crime. We are warned to think and believe, when this influx begins to move us, that the evil we feel as the prompting of our own heart and nature really comes from hell, from the invisible presence of the sphere of evil spirits.<sup>19</sup> But to do so, we must be able to feel an aversion for hell - an aversion founded not on fears but on the rational knowledge of what the hells actually are like and what they are in their naked crudity when exposed to the light of heaven. 19. @DP 320

### Hell as an Environment

Poets are often sensitive to truths when theologians hesitate. An unnamed poet is cited by B. F. Barrett:

"It is the soul's prerogative, its fate

"To shape the outward to its own estate;

"If right itself, then all around is well;

"If wrong, it makes of all without a hell."

And Milton has his Satan say,

"The mind is its own place, and in itself

"Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven."20

1. Barrett, Heaven Revealed, Philadelphia 1885, p. 73

Hell is a state of life. Yet it is also a "place," in that it appears as an environment as vivid and tangible as the physical world. The doctrine is that there is no time or space, no place, no actual distances or physical dimensions, in the spiritual world.

But on the other hand, there is no life without sensation, and spiritual things are sensed after death even more acutely than physical objects. Every spirit has a body which feels itself constantly surrounded by spiritual objects, even as our mind, while thinking, is moving within a world of imagery drawn (in our case) from the memory and the imagination - a world at least to some degree independent of the physical world around us. This imagery takes on the form of mental space and mental time. In this world we can imagine only those things which have a basis in our own memory and our own sense-experience. But in the other life we can see represented around us the states of other spirits and angels and can be affected by these states, and even participate in the knowledge and the ideas of other spirits. In other words, we can then live not only in our own mental world but in that of others, by a direct spiritual experience.

Every spirit and angel appears in a form which testifies to his state at the time. Thus we learn that a spirit who has recently come into the spiritual world appears-even as to face and garments - as he did on earth, but as his state advances he begins to appear quite different, so that he could hardly be recognized. A spirit is seen as to his active state.

The objection might be raised that if our spiritual surroundings after death are like the imagery of our minds on earth, there would be little order and only an obscure connection between spiritual events. For does not our mental scenery shift in the twinkling of an eye, and is it not moved by every passing emotion, so that there often seems to be no consistency or sound connection in our imagination? But it is here that we find the great difference between life in the two worlds. This world is outwardly ordered by fixed progressions, or by apparent laws of interrelated physical effects, into which our mental life seems to be fitted in the best it can.

The spiritual world is governed from within - by spiritual laws which display spiritual effects from spiritual causes and thus order all spirits with reference to their reception of, and response to, the inflowing life that proceeds from the Lord.

This means that they are all arranged according to their ruling loves, and are consociated according to the similarity of the delights of their loves, that is, in the mental environment that contains the kind of objects, images, thoughts and ideas which best feed and sustain their ruling love.

The fact that all spirits seek that common environment which best agrees with their delights, causes the appearance that the hells are far removed from the heavens. The approach of the heavens, or even of a few angels, to the hells would cause the devils excruciating torment. For it would mean the introduction of a totally opposite sphere of thought, a sphere of rational ideas which would challenge and destroy the illusions in which evil spirits take delight. Their environment would suddenly change. Their palaces would shrink to hovels, their gardens would turn into wastes. It is of mercy towards the hells that the Lord, by His spiritual laws, provides that hell, to all sensation, should be a place apart.

The Situation of the Hells

When spirits enter the other world they are usually instructed that they are in an intermediate sphere, called the world of spirits, that heaven is above them and hell under their feet. Indeed, the entrances to the hells, although normally kept shut, can sometimes be seen as clefts or caverns reeking with foul odors, or as smoking gulfs, at the circumferences of the world of spirits - the paths to hell tending obliquely underground.<sup>21</sup> And it is a striking fact that man's rational mind while it is being formed corresponds to the world of spirits; while the lower, sensual and corporeal levels of the mind -which man has in common with the beasts and which by inheritance have been perverted into forms of self love and love of the world, alone - bear a correspondence, at this day, with the hells.<sup>22</sup> 21. @HH 428ff 22. @HH 430

That the spiritual world, like the mind of man, contains many levels, is only to be expected. The hells, which are the results of the perversions of man's natural mind, are arranged in degrees, one below the other. This is a consequence of the ordering of each kind of evil spirits into the kind or type of mental life which best represents the level of motives and attitudes, falsities and phantasies, with which they have circumscribed their lives.

All in hell have chosen this their level by confirming their evil as allowable and pleasant, confirming it in freedom and according to their reason, just as none enter hell except from the world of spirits, where they are in full freedom of choice, so all evil spirits have once been rational; but they have deliberately abused their rationality and perverted their rational minds, so that all in hell are - in the eyes of heaven - more or less insane. But those in the milder hells, although no longer rational interiorly, can still appear rational in externals; and some live a tolerable life, able to reason about external things and control their imagination to some extent. Those in the middle hells are also able to appear somewhat rational in externals, or in matters of corporeal life. But those of the lowest hells, who are wholly corrupted, have nothing of rational restraint, for they are then like beasts living for the body alone.<sup>23</sup> 23. @CL 442, @TCR 34, cp @DLW 274f

There are three hells - one below another. They correspond by opposition to the three heavens. The mildest hell is opposite the ultimate or natural heaven. The inhabitants of that heaven are in the good of faith, or in obedience to what they have accepted as the doctrine of their church, without much enlightenment. Those in the first hell would therefore be in disobedience to what they had known as right or true, and to be willing followers of evil leaders and of proponents of falsities. The spirits of the second hell are more interiorly evil - they are the opposites of the angels of the second heaven, who are in the affection of truth, in charity and in enlightenment. The second hell, in general, would thus be in the affection of falsities and in evils from falsities. They are not mere followers, but embrace false principles from an inordinate conceit of self-intelligence and propagate them with a cunning zeal in order to captivate the minds of other spirits and rob them of whatever remnants of truth and virtue they might still have. And finally, the lowest hell is opposite to the highest heaven, the celestial heaven where those dwell who are in supreme love to the Lord.

The devils of this third hell are most malignant, being in hatred from the love of self -which is the utter perversion of celestial love.

Because the hells are formed in the natural and sensual degrees of man's mind, the entire world of spirits and the entire heaven "are as it were excavated beneath, and under them is a continuous hell" which stretches out under every mountain, hill, or plain.<sup>24</sup> Each society or community in the spiritual world may indeed be represented as forming three heavens, one above the other in separate expanses or on the surfaces of concentric globes-, and below them a series of hells in three levels under the ground. "Those who are above dwell among themselves, as men dwell in cities in

which hundreds of thousands are together."25 24. @HH 588 25. LJ 27, @AE 1133[5], cp 702:2

Thus it is clear that although the heavens and the hells are opposite and never mingle, yet the Lord coordinates them all within His universal economy of uses. For although these six levels are discretely separate, the society as a whole has reference to some single, distinctive use. To the interior sight of the angels, however, the spirits of hell are "sometimes" represented as walking upside down, as if inverted; as if they lived in the antipodes of the spiritual earth!26 26. @DP 300, @AC 9128[e]

Yet there is no single space-arrangement that can fully express this relationship of spiritual opposites, or the relation of the heavens to the hells. For there is no actual space in the spiritual world. On each level, the various communities of the hells are, moreover, distinguished according to their "quarters" - which answer to west, north, and south. In the eastern quarter there are no hells since the last judgment. It is true, in the other life, in general, what is said (through the psalmist) of man in particular: "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us."27 The spiritual east is where the Lord is; and all angels have the east before them, no matter in what direction they look; which is of course a paradox unless we consider that we do this ourselves in our mental life all the time, when, in our reflections, we turn our attention to all kinds of states and ideas without changing our own essential point of view. 27. Psalms 103:12

The hells are thus - in a general way - recognized according to their situation in the various quarters. In detail, this is known to the Lord alone. But in general, the hells of the western quarter are known to be the worst, - for there dwell those who want to be worshipped as gods and who burn with hatred, cruelty, and revenge against all who do not acknowledge their supposed power over other souls. In the north and south are those who from a love of worldly things, live in the evils of avarice, cunning, theft and robbery and in hostility towards others. In the south toward the east are the abodes of haughty spirits who do not believe in the Divine yet are not so deceitful. The farther from the east the more horrible are the hells, and behind the hells are deserts and murky forest tracts in which malignant spirits roam like wild beasts.28 28. @HH 587, @DLW 339

### External Aspects of Hell

The hells may appear from above like deep abysses or like stagnant lakes, like caves or openings in the earth or under the mountains. But ordinarily the hells are closed up and not seen. The spirits who dwell in the plains and valleys of the world of spirits see each other until the good are separated from the evil. Thereafter evil spirits no longer see the good spirits, although the good can see the evil!29 But the hells below are not seen except by special permission. Yet this underworld, to those who visit it, would be seen as a place of oppressive heat or of extreme cold, of darkness and confusing horrors, a world gone to ruin by neglect and misuse, containing all those features which are harmful and abhorrent to man. The abodes of the infernals are miserable caverns, tumbling shanties, or half-wrecked cities, steeped in filth and encroached upon by poisonous jungles and marshes, full of decaying vegetation and ferocious beasts, pestiferous insects, snakes and rats and birds of prey. There are also vast forests, bogs and quicksands, and rocky deserts, angry seas and treacherous whirlpools, and regions subject to flood or volcanic eruptions.

The soil itself is often septic, barren and foul, and the air is heavy with evil stench. 29. @HH 583

But the almost incredible truth is that all this is what evil spirits love! Create for them a clean and

fruitful paradise, and they would soon transform it into a filthy and ugly wilderness, in which alone they would feel at home. It seems impossible to imagine that they could enjoy the discomforts, deprivations, and sufferings which such wretched surroundings would bring about. Yet we must remember that an infernal spirit loves his own evils, and a part of his environment is the projection of his own states of mind.<sup>30</sup> It is the mental world in which he glories, and it contains all the evils which he has justified as good and delightful and thinks of as desirable because they give him a sense of power and self-importance. 30. DP, last par.

The Writings give no justification for the notion that animals or plants are, like man, immortal. Yet there exist, in the spiritual world also, vegetation and animals of all kinds - more various even than on earth. But in the spiritual world they have no continuous or individual existence, but are created in correspondence with the active affections and thoughts of spirits and angels. They represent the mental background of the spirit, and change according to his changing states. The vegetation around a spirit is a correspondential or symbolic picture of those things of his understanding which he loves - the fields of fertile knowledge which he actively cultivates. Sandy wastes would represent accumulation of knowledge put to no use. The animal life which surrounds him represents the natural affections aroused in him.<sup>31</sup> An angry spirit may at his first approach be seen as a furious tiger; a deceitful one as a snake or fox; a sensual spirit as a wallowing swine. An evil spirit's proprium is seething with jungle instincts only slightly repressed. The bestial forms that are seen in hell are the lusts of the devils. 31. @DLW 52

Interior, spiritual affections are human. Evil spirits are lacking in such affections. Yet on closer acquaintance even a devil takes on a human shape: for even evil spirits are not animals, but men, having human souls and interior mental degrees which, although not opened, are yet the media of a Divine influx which rules all that part of their spiritual constitution over which they themselves have no conscious control.

And all evil spirits were once innocent babes into whom the Lord instilled remains of good and of truth, and these remains still keep open the power of thinking and the faculty of freedom.

Once, Swedenborg was taunted by a good spirit for talking to a devil. He silenced his critic with the words, "In speaking with him, I speak with his faculty of understanding, consequently with the Lord."<sup>32</sup> For that faculty, which is from the Divine influx into every human being, is continually present, whether it is used rightly or not. For the same reason, evil spirits are seen in the human shape, although twisted and deformed. It is their natural affections which make them seem like beasts or worse, and cause them to be environed with ugliness and pollution. They love their own cupidities and falsities, which are mirrored in their surroundings. 32. @SD 3094

If this were all, hell would not be hell. But from an overpowering instinct it is their delight to vent their evil lusts on others, to act as cruel beasts to others. And since they cannot find any good spirits to persecute or oppress, they meet up with others of their own ilk. They find their jungle or their desert infested with vicious breeds not of their own making. Their hostile neighbors ravage their abodes and make them suffer retributions and compel them by turns to shameful servitude, or the torture of realizing the futility of their own schemes of domination. How this continual rivalry and retaliation is controlled, will be discussed later. But we are here concerned with the fact that an evil spirit who loves his own evils also suffers from the evils of others who insidiously seek to injure his life by instilling worse evils into his mental realm - evils which seduce him into torments and bind him under alien powers which he had not reckoned with, evils which inflame him with lusts of revenge and desires for dominion that lead him into new disasters, to the delight of his persecutors.

Yet there is no escape. For the world in which he lives is that which he loves, even if it is vulnerable to assault from others like him. He suffers if he leaves the surroundings which he has built up.

He is proud of them. He does not - when left to himself - see them as shoddy and hollow, as hideous and filthy; but until they are seen in the light of others, to him they are delightful, elegant, and admirable.

It is difficult to understand how this illusion could be possible, unless we realize that the environment in which a spirit lives is formed while he lives on earth; formed day by day, selected thought by thought, confirmed act by act, throughout life. Think of a mind which seeks on every opportunity to sink itself into lascivious thoughts and feeds its imagination on bawdy literature or vicarious crime; which finds its recreation in the daring sophistry of thinly disguised immorality; which feels pride in deceptions and profitable dishonesties; which harbors envies and rankling hatreds; and seethes with revenge or retaliation under a veneer of courtesy! Think of the mind which from the conceit of opinion is contemptuous toward any truth which cannot be proved with touch or sight, and feels itself the judge of right and wrong according as it favors selfish expediency! Is not such a mind a hell in lesser form? Does not such a man's spirit move in a world of filth and poisons and confirmed illusions, like those of an evil spirit?

It is to expose that hidden world, which slumbers in every man's proprium, that the Writings picture the hells with a stark and sometimes shocking realism. But over against all this, the Doctrine, by contrast, also unveils another realm; a kingdom of God which men might aspire to reach by the Lord's help, through the simple means of shunning evil and falsity and walking humbly before their Maker. This kingdom of Heaven is not of man's making. It is created by the Lord through the Divine truth which is given to mankind by means of a series of revelations. But it is formed in man's mind as a mental environment which - once established - becomes the home of his spirit; and this environment, not of phantasies, but of realities, containing all the riches of knowledge and all the delights of love, becomes after death objective and living as a domain of beauty and joy, which angels share together, and by sharing make more blessed to eternity.

## 20 THE GOVERNMENT OF HELL

The Lord alone rules the universe. He rules heaven, which is called His kingdom, and He also rules the hells, where His government is under continual challenge. How the Lord in His infinite wisdom can do this - and indeed with the greatest of ease<sup>1</sup> - transcends human and angelic understanding. For it implies an infinite foresight and an infinite power. Yet some of the modes of His government are revealed.<sup>2</sup> 1. @SD 2234 2. @AE 726 (1), @DP 201f, @SD 2737

The universe is a work cohering from primes to ultimates, and contains ends, causes, and effects in an indissoluble connection (@TCR 47). It is created in discrete degrees, as circumferences, one after another, which the Lord rules as one continuous thing, animating and actuating them unceasingly, as easily as a man, from his understanding and will, animates and actuates his body.<sup>3</sup> 3. @DWis 12:5, Ang. Id.

This would be impossible unless all things of the two worlds, the spiritual and the natural, were constantly maintained in order. And order implies distinctions and subordinations.

Therefore the heavens are distinct, coordinated one with the other and subordinated according to discrete degrees which correspond to each other and communicate only by influx. The Lord



governs them from within, or by influx from primes to ultimates, thus by continual mediations. And from the heavens in their order the Divine influx proceeds into the hells that lie below.<sup>4</sup> All this influx takes place according to correspondences. 4. @AE 702[2]

But if this governing influx takes place according to "correspondences," how then can the hells be ruled? Or - to rephrase the question - how can the hells "correspond" to the heavens?

The answer is made in the Writings. They "correspond by opposition." For evil is nothing but a perversion or misuse of something good. And since each heaven and every society in heaven stands for a definite and distinct good or use, there are - at least potentially - as many hells or infernal societies as there are heavens.<sup>5</sup> This does not mean that the heavens could not exist without the hells. Human freedom did not originally require any equilibrium between good and evil, for there is just as much freedom in an equilibrium between greater and lesser goods. But the fact is that as soon as a hell is formed or an evil is committed, this hell or this evil finds itself counteracted by the heaven or the good which it opposes. This is so in general and in particular. 5. @HH 541

"The Lord continually arranges that all kinds and species of good and truth in the heavens shall have opposite to them in the hells evils and falsities of the kinds that correspond to them by opposition." "Opposite must fully correspond to opposite that there may be an equilibrium."<sup>6</sup> 6. @AE 1043[2], cp @DP 69

### The Two "Kingdoms" of Hell

When we reflect, therefore, that the heavens are distinguished into two kingdoms, the celestial and the spiritual, it is not surprising that the hells are also divided into two dominions, signified in the Word by the names Devil and Satan. Opposite to the celestial kingdom of heaven stands the diabolical "kingdom" of hell. Opposite the spiritual kingdom of heaven stands the satanic kingdom of hell.

These perverse realms are called "kingdoms"; but they have no kings to rule them, nor have they any real coherence except by their opposition to their heavenly counterparts. The dominant quality of the diabolic kingdom is the love of self; that of the satanic kingdom is the love of the world.

The hells are divided into three degrees or levels of degradation - three hells one below the other. Each of these hells represents the extent to which an evil spirit has descended into evil of his own choice and freedom; even as the three heavens represent the actual progress which good spirits have made in regeneration. But when the Writings mention a distinction of heaven into kingdoms, the reference seems to be to the manner of a spirit's regeneration and to his inborn and hereditary genius, over which man or spirit has no control. The celestial kingdom seemingly consists of such as have been regenerated by receiving truth in their will - which was the case especially in the celestial church of most ancient times when as yet evils had not become hereditary and the will had not yet become wholly perverted.<sup>7</sup> The diabolical kingdom of hell would thus consist especially of those evil genii who act secretly and invisibly by insinuating their evils into the will of another. Such are the hells of the most ancient people; but also many at this day become genii.<sup>8</sup> 7. @AC 4712f, 483, 5113:3, 3432, 4493:2, 310, 608, 6701, @SD 5518[e] 8. @AC 310, Cor. 38, @SD 5574, 5577

The spiritual kingdom of heaven consists of those who are reformed by the truths of faith and have received a new will or conscience in the understanding. This new way of regeneration was characteristic of the Ancient Church; and "unless the Lord had reduced the human race into this

genius or into this state, no man could ever have been saved."9 In general, men of our race at the present day are of this spiritual genius; which is the reason why they can be regenerated only with difficulty. But still there are races with celestial traits, like the Africans; and children are born of various genius - celestial or spiritual or intermediate.10 It may therefore be concluded that it is heredity which largely determines whether a man is destined for the celestial kingdom of heaven or for the spiritual; although he can modify his genius to a certain extent as his personality develops. 9. @AC 608[e] 10. @AC 736[e], 2300f, @SD 5518[e]

If this be so, it would appear that if a man chooses evil for good, his native bent would determine the infernal kingdom to which he most inclines. The satanic kingdom is that toward which men of the spiritual genius are most easily led. The evil spirits of this kingdom fight against anything that encourages the affection of spiritual truth, inflaming men instead with an infatuation for what is false and perverse, darkening the light of reason and inducing anxieties and torments.11 11. @AC 1820, @AE 655[2], @DLW 273[3]

The inhabitants of the diabolical kingdom are called devils. These, from an evil will, love to do evil, generally from a love of exercising power from a love of self. They become foolish, from lack of self-restraint. Those in the satanic kingdom are in evils from the understanding, and are called satans or, simply, evil spirits. Their love is to confirm evil by all manner of falsities hatched from the pride of their self-intelligence. And they eventually become insane. The devils have usually lived in crime, open or hidden, and have thus rejected all acknowledgment of God from their hearts. The satans have confirmed themselves in favor of nature, and so denied God.12 12. @AR 387, @CL 380

As to situation, the diabolical kingdom, comprising three hells, one lower than the other, appears in the west on each of these levels of the spiritual world; and since a good spirit faces the east, these devils seem to act upon him from behind. For they seek to arouse the slumbering will of his inherited nature and to inflow secretly to move him to those spontaneous or impulsive actions which - the Writings tell us - are governed from the cerebellum, or the hind-brain. Since this circumvents the exercise of man's reason and freedom, the worst genii of this kingdom are confined to their hells most strictly, and if any are permitted in the world of spirits they are accompanied by moderating spirits. It is said that in hell such genii lead a silent and solitary life, and sit brooding upon a single continuous thought by which they seek to rule others.13 Thus they attempt to hold others in some fretting suspicion or hatred or in some interior phantasy of evil. 13. @AC 8593, 8622, @HH 579, @SD 639, 5572, 5574

The satanic kingdom, which is opposite to the spiritual kingdom of heaven, is situated, in its various degrees, toward the north and south. Those hells are not so deep nor so grievous as the diabolical hells. They are described as "at the sides" and "in front," that is, in front of the diabolical hells.14 The love ruling with the satans is thus more external - being especially that of possessing the wealth or goods of others from a love of the world, which they indulge with every sort of art or artifice. They delight in dishonesties and thefts, taking a pride in cunning. With them it holds true that nothing is sweeter than stolen fruit, 14. @HH 544, @DLW 273[3]

The two infernal kingdoms are connected by an influx from the hells of the love of self into the hells of the love of the world. And there is an intermediate genius of evil spirits who as it were transmit the influx.15 Yet this communication by influx does not mean any intermingling, and because all who are evil are in constant rivalry and friction, the hells are kept separated from each other in various ways, to prevent them from destroying one another. Each hell is hidden from the others by fogs or watery abysses, or are confined in other ways.16 15. @AC 9671[3] 16. @AC 8237

## Diversity of the Hells

Thus the hells are most exactly distinguished from each other and into societies as innumerable as the species and kinds of evils. They are counted in the hundreds of thousands; and this apparently from our earth alone.<sup>17</sup> Some of the hells of Venus, Mars, and other earths are also described. The pagans, the Moslems, the Jews, the Papists, and the Reformed have their own special hells, as do the people of previous ages, of the Ancient Church and of the Most Ancient Church.<sup>18</sup> What separates them is of course the utterly different ways of thinking which characterizes different civilizations and religions and races. 17. @SD 4922 18. Coro. 38, 45

But in all ages the evils into which men have fallen take certain general forms which are recounted in the ten commandments. Thus there are hells for adulterers and sirens, for thieves and the avaricious, for the cruel, for the deceitful, for hypocrites, obsessors, sorcerers, and blasphemers, etc.

And the Writings also name certain hells from their appearance - as "the filthy Jerusalem," "Gehenna" the cadaverous hells, the urinous and excrementitious hells, the slimy hells, the fiery hells, and so forth. And below all the hells is the pit of the profaners, spirits who were once reformed and then fell back into the loves from which they had abstained. These are neither in heaven nor strictly in hell. They are neither men nor women, and appear as black, emaciated bodies, unable to think or will, each a mere shell of his former self. All their good has been profaned, for evils have so mixed themselves with good that they cannot be separated but must both be shriveled away into relative unconsciousness.<sup>18a</sup> 18a. @AE 1158[3]

## The Pleasures of Insanity

The life of the infernals can take many forms, all repulsive, all ending in failure and disappointment. The human pursuit of happiness is largely dependent on the mutual relations between men and women. just as heaven is defined as the conjunction of good and truth and is therefore the home of conjugal love, so every hell is in "the connubial connection" of evil with falsity and is the abode of scortatory love in all its ugly varieties.<sup>19</sup> Spiritual adulteries find their expression in all manner of illicit relations, so that the hells display all kinds of sexual perversions, many of which are described in Swedenborg's private Diary. 19. @HH 422, @CL 429, cp De Conj. 93

There are no marriages in hell, and no permanent partners. In infernal societies the men are generally separated from the women. But at the end of his labor in some infernal workshop, a man is permitted to seek out some one prostitute.<sup>20</sup> Or he may be "delivered over" to some one harlot who, if necessary, by phantasy assumes alluring beauty or innocence, ready to be seduced. Promiscuity seems to be forbidden, at least in some hells.<sup>21</sup> 20. De Conj. 54, 62, @CL 192[e] 21. @AR 153[10], @CL 505, 510, 512, 54, 521, cp 79:5; @SD 6106[4]

There is neither mutual love nor any mutual respect between the sexes, but a contemptuous rivalry by which each seeks dominate the other by compulsion or subtle cunning.

Their sex-life is sordid, and by degrees its fever is turned into coldness, hate, and aversion, into rejection, blasphemy, contention and open fights. For adulterous love is fiery in externals, but cold in internals, and ends in frustration, impotence, and unhappiness.<sup>22</sup> 22. @AE 991, 1003e, De Conj. 9e, @CL 514[e]

A graphic picture of hell is the description in the Writings of the so-called "infernal marriage," in

which the two partners are held together by a stubborn desire to make each other miserable through exquisite tortures, living by turns in pretended friendship in order to find opportunity to humiliate and reduce the other into subjection. And it appears in such cases that the man, despite his pride of reason or strength and his rankling hatred, is no match for the obstinate persistence of a woman who can subject him to the yoke of her authority by methods with which he cannot cope.<sup>23</sup> 23. @SD 4745, De Conj. 62, @CL 291f

It is therefore hardly credible that Swedenborg was repeatedly informed by evil spirits that "they would a thousand times rather live in hell than out of it." But nowhere else can they indulge in their sole delight, which is to see others suffer and thus boost their own sense of importance.<sup>24</sup> Nowhere else can they escape the light of truth, which spoils their evil plots and disperses their cherished phantasies and thus causes them far greater torture than their companions can administer. Nowhere but in hell can they escape contact with the sphere of conjugal love, innocence, and charity from heaven, which causes them nausea and aversion. 24. @SD 5830, @CL 524[4]

### The Milder Hells

We must not think that all hells are equally grievous. There are degrees of evil. Man's lot after death depends largely on how far his rational faculty has been warped by his selfish loves. An evil spirit can be kept out of the sphere of phantasy and be retained in a relatively mild hell, if he can still listen to reason. And just as in this world a man's rational - or his sense of perspective - is judged by what he laughs at, so we find that evil spirits may discover how insane they are as often as they laugh.<sup>25</sup> Where bitter malice has bitten deep into the soul the rational mind becomes utterly deranged.

But less vicious evil - such as we observe in men of weak character who simply "follow the multitude" in doing evil and do it with little reflection, preferring an irresponsible life of pleasure to any worthwhile work - such evil does not utterly destroy their reason, even though they misuse it. And it seems that at times their saving grace, which prevents their becoming worse, is a residue of a sense of humor. For Swedenborg relates that he once visited "a certain hell where they were not so very evil." He saw a room in which many were assembled, and adjoining it was another apartment belonging to a judge. And there came a pompous spirit much in love with his own importance who solemnly seated himself on a kind of throne, believing that he was meant to be judge. But no sooner was he seated than pandemonium broke loose: the others sneaked behind him and some crawled across under the throne and some sat on top of him and made fun - of him in various ways and - strange to say - made him invisible not only to Swedenborg but also to himself. Finally, the real judge came and took his seat. He is described as very tolerant of their practical jokes, but insisted firmly that they must not do evil -to anyone. They had tremendous respect for him, for he had great power. And they cheerfully sought out the evil doers and surrendered them to be judged. Some were arraigned and sentenced, the rest were commended and let go. Apparently there was little resistance to authority; which made it one of the milder hells. But to any one who treasures peace of mind, such a bedlam can certainly be described as a hell.<sup>26</sup> 25. @SD 6034, @HH 578 26. @SD 5932

### Punishments as Deterrents

Hell can be spoken of in two ways -as an abode into which the wicked long to come to indulge their delights and do not desire to leave; or as a place in which evil spirits suffer torments and punishments from which they long to escape. There is a proverb about those who wish to eat their

cake and have it also. This is precisely the case with evil spirits. They want to be free to do evil and also to escape the consequences of evil.

And when those consequences come, they blame it on the Lord and call them "punishments," or argue that if there was a God, He could prevent those results from occurring.<sup>27 27.</sup> @AC 8700

The doctrine of the New Church is very definite, that the Lord predestines no one to hell, nor condemns any one to hell, nor punishes any human soul. He seeks continually to take away the causes of human misery and the causes that lead to what appears as infernal punishments. He seeks continually to elevate man's spirit from the hells, and lead evil spirits so far as is possible to a milder hell. He ordains also that no man should undergo any punishments for the hereditary evils with which he is born.<sup>28</sup> But He cannot prevent spirits from suffering the results of the evils which they in their freedom confirm and insist on perpetrating. For by the doing of evils man removes himself from the Lord's protection. <sup>28.</sup> @AE 989[e], @HH 342

Evil punishes itself.<sup>29</sup> What we call punishment is merely the result of an evil going to its extreme and overreaching its power; exceeding its limit. <sup>29.</sup> @AC 696, 967, 6997:6, 8223:3, 9033:2, @HH 509

Here we should note the fallacy of the widespread idea that infernal torments are the stings of conscience on the part of remorseful souls when they are convicted of sin. Evil spirits have no conscience. If they had they would be saved; for the possession of a conscience implies a new will in the understanding and a desire to act according to what is known as true and good, just and fair. Evil spirits can feel remorse. But remorse is not repentance; it is only the regret which a criminal feels when he recognizes that he is facing disaster.

The Lord continually pardons. But forgiveness does not take away the results of evil. Hell is indeed a state in which an evil spirit meets up with recurring punishments, mostly from his own victims who retaliate whenever he commits a trespass against them. But the Lord does not retaliate.

#### The Law of Retaliation

The law of heaven which is the source of angelic blessedness, is the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you." The same law rules in hell: whatever an evil spirit has of peace, decency, order, or comfort, he has by an external compromise with others, by letting them alone if they let him alone, by cooperating with them so far as they cooperate with him. But each devil maneuvers to turn this law to his special advantage. He does not really recognize the "rights" of others, only his own. He wants more from others than he gives them. He twists the moral law out of balance. So he does evil to others, accusing them of doing evil to him. And he claims the right to visit on them revenge for what they do to him. The heavenly law is thus turned into the infernal law of retaliation, which demands evil for evil, stripe for stripe, a tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye. This is the law of hell, and also to some extent the law of civic society on earth.

And this is permitted in hell. An evil spirit is not punished for retaliating to the exact extent of the evil another did to him. The trouble is that the evil spirit does not feel satisfied with any law. He wants to go his enemy one better. He wants to exact two stripes for a stripe, two teeth for a tooth! And the law of infernal justice is renounced for an endless chain of growing provocations.

But the law still stands. If a devil does evil towards another beyond what that one has done to him he is immediately open to punishment or persecution from all quarters, and those who punish him do so with impunity - and enjoy this to the full.

The law which rules in hell is thus not a golden rule but a rule of iron. Its immediate purpose (or at least its effect) is not to inculcate charity but to instill fear of evil doing. It is not a law that is loved, but one that is dreaded. The Writings therefore say that the Divine truth, which proceeds from Divine good as a sphere and encloses and contains the heavens, extends also into hell; but they who are there do not receive it as coming from Divine love, but as truth separate from love. The law is therefore constantly resented as an enemy. "The sphere which guards hell is a sphere of Divine truth separate from Divine good ... Such a sphere reigns in hell in the external form, but still it is in internal form a sphere of Divine truth conjoined with Divine good, through which those there are guarded lest one inflict evil on another beyond measure."30 30. @AC 9498, 9534, cp 10188

The law of retaliation, which is the law of external order as it is understood and enforced in the hells, was among the laws, judgments, and statutes promulgated from Mount Sinai by the Lord. As such it is a Divine law which contains written in it an internal sense perceptible to the angels. It was this internal sense which the Lord referred to in the sermon on the mountain when He said: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."31 31. Exodus 21:25, Matthew 5:38 seq.

Seemingly, the Lord thereby abrogated the law of retaliation as a law for the internal church. Yet it is noted in the Arcana Coelestia that, although some of the Mosaic statutes have been "abrogated as to use at this day," and some of them "ought wholly to be observed and done," the law of retaliation, which was so obviously necessary among the Jews, is among those precepts which may still "serve a use" if so desired (si libet).32 The golden rule is the law of the internal church. But the civic state still enforces order through the fear of penalties, which to the law-breaker appears as retaliation. Nations still stand poised to let loose retaliatory destruction on an aggressor. With the world in its present state, individuals blame their own private retaliations also on necessity and self-defence. But the law of retaliation which governs through fear of reprisals and maintains external order by keeping evil and crime within certain limits by balancing evil against evil - is still utterly barren of spiritual results. In order to break the chain of retribution, one must cease to retaliate and turn the other cheek. And this must be done, not from a craven fear but from the spirit of forgiveness - from a love of the neighbor and respect for his freedom and welfare. 32. @AC 9349

## 21 INEQUALITIES AND DIVINE JUSTICE

It is recognized by all sensible men that human life is laid within certain limits, some common to all men, others individual to each person. One's heredity marks one limitation, for all have not equal native abilities. Opportunities differ according to environment and social groupings. Experience also may be wide or narrow, quite apart from one's own endeavors. And because of all these factors, it is obvious that man's freedom is also circumscribed. Although all men are born with the same faculties of liberty and rationality and can turn to good or to evil, every one differs as to the things in which he can exercise a choice.

Observing these inequalities, some moral philosophers have sought to maintain that there is a "law of Compensation" by which all the lacks or sufferings which men experience would be made good, if not in this world yet in another life. The poor would be made rich, the foolish wise, those without honor would become exalted. Presumably the reverse would also hold true, the wise would become foolish, the rich poor, etc.; and life would thus even out all differences into a deadly equality, in the name of justice.

Nobody dares to say that the good shall become evil and the evil good: that would push the law of Compensation too far! But there are those who suggest that since some choose evil on earth they should be given other opportunities in the hereafter: or perhaps be born again on earth (by a transmigration of their souls) so that they may redeem their mistakes.

There is something radically wrong with such concepts of Divine justice. For man's spirit is formed once and for all by his life, however short, on earth. Every one is born under different limitations in order to become a distinctive vessel responsive to the influx of the Lord's life, and thus to be able to contribute to the marvelous perfection of the heavens, which depends on endless varieties of human conditions and endeavors. Apart from the fact that no human race could possibly exist under the condition of absolute equality, we must recognize that the heavens, as to spiritual uses, are a Grand Human Form in which all existing varieties compensate, each for the lack of the others. It is this inequality and this diversity which enable spirits to work together for the perfection of the whole. Every one there has a place reserved for his unique abilities, and may enjoy the delight of his part in the Lord's work.

At the risk of repeating what was said in previous pages, we must note that the penalties suffered by the spirits in hell have no other source than a resentment against their limitations. Evil spirits, in effect, rebel against being finite. They want to act as gods and decide what is good and evil, want to exert omnipotence, to claim omniscience. Yet they are compelled to realize that there are laws which they cannot oppose - laws which describe what is possible and what is impossible. They see these laws - not as merciful provisions for eternal salvation, but as laws of inexorable necessity from which they continually seek to escape.

#### Punishments in the World of Spirits

Evil spirits, like all others, enter the spiritual world immediately after dying, in a state of utmost peace, protected by celestial and spiritual angels who seek to hold them in the state of love and charity which still are stored up as "remains" of their childhood innocence. They are then attended by friendly spirits who arouse their memory of moral and social affections not perverted.

But these states of their resuscitation are forgotten like a dream that has passed, when, on the third day after death, they wake up in the world of spirits, as if from sleep. They then resume the thread of their life where they had left it off on earth. They soon find companions like themselves, and live a life of the same habits as they had on earth. Indeed, the same states in which they had been while in the world, return and cause them to act in much the same ways as they did on earth. Their disposition leads them into one wickedness after another, not only against each other but against good spirits who, especially in the first state of the world of spirits, are associated with them in the same societies, even as on earth. Evil spirits do not, however, succeed in doing any real harm to the good; for those evils which they seek to inflict are turned by the Lord into good - having the effect only of temptations or trials by which the good are strengthened rather than weakened.<sup>1</sup> Nor are the evil spirits punished for their wicked attempts, for this is their nature from their life in the world, But if they do any evil "beyond what they have acquired from life in the world," punishers are instantly at hand to chastise them for it! "For the law in the other life is, that no one must become worse than he had been in the world."<sup>2</sup> 1. @SD 4471 2. @AC 6559

We may indeed wonder why this should be so. But it is plain that here the wicked meet up with their first limitation. What they are is tolerated: but they must not pervert any new truth or adulterate any new good, and thus "exceed the delight of their life" by stealing some truth which

they had not yet known and thus not turned into a falsity, or by entering into some use not theirs and spoiling it for others in order to enhance their own depraved delight.<sup>3</sup> 3. @SD 4471, 4055, 4224, @AC 6569

Yet this is what they try to do. And so persistent are they that they are not deterred until after many punishments - sometimes repeated two hundred times during the several years that they remain in the world of spirits.<sup>4</sup> 4. @SD 4471

It is to be understood from certain teachings that among the punishments just mentioned are those consequent upon the many evils which do not necessarily spring from the ruling love of the evil spirit, but from his external character, and which are aroused when his worldly states return, as they all do in the world of spirits. Among such evils are: hidden enmities, self-indulgence, adulteries, and other evils of thought or habit, which not only return but are manifested before spirits and angels with shame and grief, and lead to punishments, with much variety.<sup>5</sup> 5. @SD 4110

For an evil spirit is at first in externals such as he had in the world. But after a period which varies from a few days to a year, he comes into the state of his internals. He is then more and more separated from association with good spirits and enters more blatantly into his real character and into a communion with the hells that correspond to his particular evils.<sup>6</sup> At the same time he is also deprived of the good traits and moral habits that he had in the world, and also of the truths of faith in which he had been brought up. This vastation of good and truth follows the law which the Lord expounded: "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have."<sup>7</sup> But before he is vastated of his former knowledge of the truth, he is brought face to face with the fact that he has forsaken it: he is convicted in his own sight of having lived contrary to his avowed belief. This, however, is not so with those who had had neither any truth nor any charity, for they are carried into hell without such a judgment.<sup>8</sup> 6. Cp @SD 5492ff 7. Luke 8:18 8. @AC 4169[e], 7465e

Having renounced the truths or standards which he had externally professed, the evil spirit becomes openly evil. His evils are as it were collected together as the evils of his own genus. Yet at the same time the fear of punishment becomes so great, the while his impulse for wickedness is irresistible, that he casts himself gladly into the hell where he finds others of his own quality. Thus the evil spirit enters into his ruling love.

This deprivation of truth and of the pretences of external goods has the effect of confirming the evil spirit in the fact that he is in evil of his own free choice; and by punishments he is forced to confess that he cannot blame any one else. No one is ready for hell until he himself knows and is inwardly convinced that he is in evil and could not possibly be in heaven.<sup>9</sup> Punishments endure and warnings continue until he realizes this. We therefore read in the Writings many accounts of infernal spirits who with the utmost frankness and something of boasting tell of their evil delights and disgusting preferences for filth and corruptions. They feel nothing of self-consciousness about their state, no embarrassment or regret.<sup>10</sup> Their only regret is that when they instinctively seek to vent their fury upon the good they are foiled and punished. 9. @AC 7469[e] 10. DP last Par.

## Punishments in Hell

In his own hell, the evil spirit is punished - that is, chastised by other spirits - "according to the evil actually acquired in the world," thus for the evils of their ruling love. This love is perpetual with them, as a passion which smoulders or flames; wherefore the hells spiritually appear as a lake of



sulphurous fire. Hence the Son of Man in the parable says to the wicked, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels"; and their lot is called "everlasting punishment." It is so called because to the good the passions of hell would be a terrible punishment. Yet to the evil, the angry flames of their own loves are the delight of their existence. "They find rest in their evils and in the falsities therefrom." They retire into their hells to escape the pains and torments which they suffered in the world of spirits when the light of heaven fell upon them.<sup>11</sup> 11. @AE 411a

In the hells they are not under any judgment for their evil loves, but are among their like. But what they now feel as punishment is not any eternal or unceasing torment, but the anguish when they are withheld from their love, when it is quenched for a time by a fear of doing the evil to which their heart inclines.<sup>12</sup>

And this fear is induced by the punishments which follow when they rush upon each other and try to subjugate one another and inflict injury, or by continual controversy, bickering and contemptuous mockery fight each for their own falsity. The latter is heard from a distance as a gnashing of teeth.<sup>13</sup> 12. @AE 890, @AC 8232 13. @HH 573, 575

The life of the infernals among themselves is far more various than the life of men in earthly communities, and their intrigues and persecutions are made exceedingly much worse by the skill of evil spirits in magical practices. By this is meant the subjugation of others by the power of hypnotic thought, which in the other life can be employed for torturing other minds with phantasies of excruciating terror. One spirit can impose phantasies upon another, and thereby punish him. If we remember that somewhat the same sensations can be experienced by the mind on earth in nightmares in which a bodily condition invites free access for evil spirits, and in the hallucinations attending mental diseases, it can be realized that, in the spiritual world, spirits (who are minds set free to follow out their loves and secret fears) can suffer most exquisite pains in their spiritual bodies as well as in their imaginations. And it is noted that spirits have senses far more keen and perfect than men, thus can feel incomparably more profound delights and - if evil - suffer more acute agonies.

The punishments of hell are in every detail symbolic or correspondential, for they represent the state of the spirit's mind. In every case they fit the crime. In the physical world many such punishments would appear absurd and some impossible. Spirits who deceitfully say one thing and think the contrary seem to be on the rack or hurled against walls or rent asunder. One who from pride had contempt for others was seen by Swedenborg to become inflated like a balloon that seemed to fill the universe, until he had no place to go!<sup>14</sup> Other spirits are immersed in a black lake, or into boiling water, or suffer the horror of total darkness. Some are whirled around or rolled naked on the ground or contorted in painful fashion, or put into a pyramidal sack or infested with snakes, vermin or ulcers, or burnt with fire.<sup>15</sup>

One common form of punishment is to be confined in a veil from which one cannot struggle out, or else locked inside a tun, or wrapped up and twisted in a woollen cloth, or suspended in mid-air like a ghost. Or the body of the spirit may feel and appear as if torn apart. 14. @SD 3113 15. @AC 963f

The devils are not punished for being evil. Indeed it is permitted them to enjoy visiting such punishments as we have described upon companions who have done evil to them; for such penalties are according to the law of retaliation, which is the law of infernal societies. Yet in hell they "chastise one another according to the evil which they actually acquired in the world, for this

evil they bring with them into the other life."<sup>16</sup> For such is their ruling love, their very nature which they cannot and will not change. 16. @AC 6559, 8223

But the reason why such punishments are permitted is that there may be an amendment of their external life. The dread of sure punishment causes them to retreat within themselves, and to sit in morbid solitude like skeletons or ugly, deformed monsters, brooding in internal torment, until they can again return to their society, its external order, and its gross delights.<sup>17</sup> Still they repeat their offenses and are as often punished. They soon learn that to return into the world of spirits means a worse penalty, for until their corporeal delights can be laid asleep, they cannot abstain from evil acts. Therefore they recede into their hells and remain there until cowed by the dread of punishments.<sup>18</sup> 17. @SD 4471, cp @AC 824 18. @SD 4471f, SD min. 4791f

Let us note here that evil spirits may descend into their hells, sometimes different hells, before they are finally confined there. And also, that punishments are apparently administered in special hells; not in their own abodes, but in places which the devils themselves regard as "hells." When their punishment is completed, they are drawn up from these places of torture and returned to their own abodes. This lends the appearance to certain passages in the Writings as if the hells were not eternal. Thus it is said: "Such is the equilibrium of all things in the other life, that evil punishes itself, and unless it were removed by punishments, the evil spirits must necessarily be kept in some hell to eternity. . . ." 19 19. @AC 967

It is of mercy that evil spirits are thus brought out from these special hells of punishment. And it is also of mercy that the penalties meted out to them by their like are kept within bounds by angels who are present to regulate their severity and "alleviate the pains of the sufferers as much as they can."<sup>20</sup> 20. @AC 967

### The Governors of Hell

It is said in the Apocalypse that the Lord has the keys of hell and of death. It was to subjugate the hells that He came on earth to be tempted and to conquer, to be slain and to rise again, and thus prove the futility of the efforts of the hells. Differently from man, He fought all the hells. His government is over all. But in exercising this government He not only rules immediately by His sphere of Divine truth, but also mediately, both by means of angelic spirits and - in a sense - through evil spirits, though never through their evils.

The hells are organized much like earthly societies, with the difference that all in hell are evil. And it is important to note that the love of dominating over others is the most virulent lust of hell. The ones who gain control of an infernal society are those who are most malignant, whom the rest obey from fear. These are set over them and maintain an external order.<sup>21</sup> They rule of course from a love of self, and hate those who do not fawn upon them. They are willing to be called devils provided that they be allowed to command others. As with all despots, their rule is insecure and precarious, for their unwilling subjects are in constant rebellion and continually plot their overthrow.<sup>22</sup> Like Pilate and Herod, they make common cause when united in like phantasies and lusts; but when the common enemy is apparently defeated, they fall out and then rush at each other.<sup>23</sup> Since the infernals do not acknowledge the Lord, they may even worship some powerful devil that is set over them, as their god. So long as they maintain the justice of expediency, such demagogues are permitted to be masters within their domain, and administer the punishments of retaliatory law. 21. @HH 220, 543, 595 22. @AC 5721, 1749, 7773, 8232 23. @AC 1322, 8226, @TCR 45

But such governors of hell can maintain their power over other evil spirits only so long as they do not transgress the law. And to see that this is not done, angels of various heavens are placed as moderators over them, and as judges, guardians of justice. It is related in the Spiritual Diary<sup>24</sup> that the punishers in the places of punishment are of a varied sort. Some are of course the evil. But there are also some spirits who are interiorly good, but who from their external man wish to rule, and are - for a time, supposedly - given this opportunity. There are also certain spirits belonging to the province of the kidneys in the Grand Man who have a strict sense of justice but who also - from a communication with the hells - have a delight in punishing or convicting others to be punished. Such sometimes serve as judges in hell.<sup>25</sup> Neither is there any lack of moderators of different character. 24. @SD 5050 25. @AC 5382, 5384

Good spirits are sometimes allowed to look into the hells and see what is going on there. The devils cannot see these visiting spirits, unless for some purpose. Indeed, the devils cannot even see those in the hells nearby; but the hells appear to angels whenever the Lord so pleases. And the object of this inspection is to moderate the hells and keep them in order.<sup>26</sup> 26. @AC 8237

The middle hell is held in bonds through the spiritual angels, the first hell through the angels of the ultimate heaven. The celestial angels are the media by which the Lord restores order in the lowest hell.<sup>27</sup> While they are there nothing of evil can touch them, since they are protected by a heavenly sphere of good from which the evil flee. We are also assured that any spirit who is in natural truth, having lived justly in the world, may pass safely through the hells. The power of truth in the other world is tremendous, for it shatters all those illusions and falsities which give the devils the ability to rule by fear.<sup>28</sup> 27. @AC 6370, @AE 1133[6] 28. @AC 6369f, 6423

Angels on certain occasions are said to descend into hell. Yet they never leave their heavenly societies. In fact there is between heaven and hell a great gulf which cannot be crossed (Luke 16:26).

This paradox is explained when we realize that there are no distances in the spiritual world; the angels descend into hell by means of aspect-presence - by the projection of their thought or gaze.<sup>29</sup> And thus they can observe when any new hell is opened and detect if any devil bent on mischief should escape into the world of spirits, and also, by merely revealing their presence, restore order in some hell or stop excessive punishments.<sup>30</sup> 29. Luke 16:26, @AC 8343, 4533 30. @AC 5992, 4533, 6677, @HH 400

When an infernal spirit is let out from his place of punishment, it is not to be supposed that his nature is changed. From a dread of the consequences to himself he is compelled of himself to put away certain evils. But he has not compelled himself in any freedom. And "in the whole spiritual world there is not a single instance of any one having been removed from evils in any other way than by combat or resistance as if from himself, or of any one doing this except from the Lord alone."<sup>31</sup> To be forced by others to compel oneself is one thing. It is acting from a selfish proprium. To resist one's evils "as if from oneself," thus from freedom, is quite another. For with it comes the acknowledgment that the power comes from the Lord. 31. @AE 1164[e]

No. Punishments do not take away the will or thought or intention, but merely stop the determination to act. It is told in the Arcana that when released from age-long confinement in an infernal vat or "tun," certain deceitful spirits whose worldly success had gone to their heads were at once possessed of an insane phantasy that they were gods and owned the universe. That indeed kept them quiet, and out of harm's way, so long as they kept to themselves. But it showed that their

We have traced the development of evil spirits to this point - when fear of penalties render them less harmful to others, less aggressive. Three more phases of their life remain to be considered. One of these is their life of phantasy - the real arena in which they can indulge their full license.

Another is the life of their necessities - the labors to which hunger and want eventually drive them. For even devils must eat and find shelter: they cannot subsist on phantasy alone. And because they are thus driven to perform things needful in society they also will reluctantly seek a place in the real world of uses. For "by reason of the evils of punishment they at length abstain from doing evils."<sup>33 33.</sup> @AC 6071[6]

And the third aspect of the life of the infernals is their eternal fate - the permanence of their ruling loves - and the effect which this has on the spiritual equilibrium between heaven and hell.

## 22 PHANTASY AND REALITY

It was suggested in a former chapter that evil spirits really live in a different world from the good. Our mental life on earth is excited by both these worlds, and the spirit of man is therefore balanced between heaven and hell, receiving the influx of each. Heaven is present when man is in the inner acknowledgment of the Lord and of His laws of order and thus sees all things, spiritual and natural, as they really are; sees the real purpose of life, sees that only a life according to the Lord's teaching and leading can fulfill the conditions for eternal happiness. But hell enters in where this is denied and the Lord's doctrine of charity and faith is viewed with aversion and hatred; and this results in man creating a different universe for himself, in which there are no spiritual laws, and no sins against God but only sins of others against oneself.

This imagined universe - in which man is the master and might is right and only such theories as work out to one's pleasure and advantage are true - is the special world in which the evil spirits of hell live and love to live.

While he is on earth, a man's cherished falsities are only felt as opinions, as abstract knowledge in his memory, expressed at times as speech or writing. But in the other life, his delights and thoughts become changed into forms of most lifelike and tangible correspondences.<sup>1</sup> Those who have cultivated an aversion for spiritual truth seek refuge in dark caves and valleys, in the hells. The avaricious dwell in cells and vaults, guarding their imagined treasures with greatest cunning.<sup>2</sup> Those who ascribe all things to nature and to their own prudence, delight in studying magical arts, for which they had no use on earth. The most fastidious gourmet forms an unaccountable appetite for most disgusting fare!<sup>3</sup> Ambitious priests persist in a desire to build, not dogmas only, but houses - which usually fall to ruin by the next day for lack of any real cohesion. Many who are in the pride of erudition find themselves in library cells underground - for they want to escape "life" by their abstractions: but unfortunately, as they read, their candles or lamps go out, and what they write vanishes from the paper by morning.<sup>4</sup> 1. @HH 485-490 2. @CL 268 3. @AR 183[8] 4. @TCR 797

In other words - and without giving any more shocking examples - the world which evil spirits build for themselves is bound to fall apart whenever any ray of truth finds its way in. Their lives are a web of beloved illusions, which they protect so far as they can because their delight depends

on them.

Speaking of the state of the hells in general, the Writings testify that "phantasies are the things which rule there, and these appear altogether to the life ... for they have no other life than that of phantasies. . . ." They perceive them as living realities, with all the fullness of sense, not only sight, but touch and sound and taste.<sup>5</sup> 5. @SD 4380, @AC 4623

Essentially, the phantasies of the devils are based on the same laws of spiritual sensation as the sensory life of the angels. Evil spirits have the same bodily senses as the angels and even if not so perfect as those of the angels they are yet incredibly more keen and sensitive than man's. This enables them to feel both delight and torment far more acutely than men can.

"But it should be known that the sensitive life of spirits is twofold, namely, real and non-real. The one is distinguished from the other in this, that all that which appears to those who are in heaven is real, and that which appears to those in hell is not real.... The real differs from the non-real in this, that the real is actually such as it appears, while the non-real is actually not such as it appears."<sup>6</sup> 6. @AC 4623

By this definition, "all things which appear in the hells are nonreal," but they appear as it were real "because those there are themselves in phantasy, and not in thought from faith. . . ." <sup>7</sup> And further reading shows that the evil spirits, "as far as they are in the lusts of evil and the persuasions of falsity, are nothing but phantasies as to their thoughts; and to see anything from phantasies is to see things which are real as not real and things which are not real as real; and that, unless it were freely given them by the Divine mercy of the Lord to have their senses affected in that manner, they would have no life of sense, and accordingly no life. . . ." <sup>8</sup> 7. @SD 5806 8. @AC 4623

Strangely enough, evil spirits can-in certain states-calmly recognize that their phantasies were phantasies, and that "the sum total of their existence" consisted in such phantasies.<sup>9</sup> We must also notice that they have both pleasant phantasies and tormenting phantasies. They can induce on themselves forms of beauty and adornment - as do sirens and others by means of sensuous thought.<sup>10</sup> They can represent magnificent things by closing the interiors of the mind of others and opening its exteriors only.<sup>11</sup> And they themselves see their own abodes and tawdry possessions as things of extra-ordinary beauty and wealth and themselves as men of dignity and importance; not from any state of contentment, but from pride of achievement. In persuading others of their importance they, like supreme actors, also persuade themselves; although not for very long. 9. @SD 4380 10. @SD 5224, @CL 505, @TCR 80 11. @AR 926[2]

In such phantasies, they also find freedom to indulge in all the dreams of their imagination with a sense of actual realism, seeming to ensnare and torture their enemies, to deceive and rob and slaughter them to their heart's content or subdue them under their power; and all with impunity.

Yet in hell, they are not content with these delights of the imagination; but they seek to impose phantasies upon others. For in the other life, thoughts can not only be represented to the life before others, but actually be induced upon the minds of selected victims when these have no Divine protection. Spirits can make another spirit believe himself to experience with the keenest pain the horrors which they desire him to feel, by enveloping him in the nets or clouds of their own phantasies. All evil spirits are subjected again and again to persecutions by their companions, because their own cherished falsities and their stubborn self-reliance make them vulnerable. They live in constant fear, therefore, studying how to avoid and avert the schemes of their rivals, and to

hide themselves from their influence until they themselves can retaliate.<sup>12</sup> 12. @SD 4339

The extent to which phantasy can go is illustrated by a punishment imposed on certain spirits who longed to be again possessed of an earthly body by obsessing men. A phantasy of a body was induced upon them even to the sensations, and they were then, in phantasy, mangled and broken and inspired with horror, exquisite pain, and shame, until their ambition was quelled.<sup>13</sup> 13. @SD 4207, 404

"All things that really appear in the spiritual world are correspondences," for they correspond to the mental states of the angels or spirits, and signify nothing else.<sup>14</sup> The spiritual, that is, the affections and thoughts, clothes itself there with forms such as appear in the three kingdoms of nature. The surroundings of the angels are therefore quite permanent, changing only in details. But phantasies, the Writings explain, "are not correspondences."<sup>15</sup> The reference is to appearances of palaces and beautiful garments and adornments which evil spirits present to view from phantasy, and which perish in a moment when the phantasy ceases; for then the true correspondences of the states of the devils appear, and foul things, ruins and sordid ugliness, come to view.<sup>16</sup> 14. @AE 575[3] 15. @TCR 78, @AE 575[3] 16. @SD 5224, De Conj. 11

Yet even the creations of phantasy are correspondences, but they correspond to unreal things - to impossibilities and distortions, which are the imaginations bred in the minds of the devils. They correspond to falsities, that is, to nothing real. They describe things which can exist only in corrupt human minds. There is no truth in them.

For this reason phantasies cannot be maintained for long. They come to a sudden forcible end by encountering some bitter reality that cannot be evaded. An evil spirit cannot live in a dream-world for long. He is, after all, an inhabitant of a very real world - the spiritual world - which has its unchanging laws. He is a member of a society on which he depends for subsistence. He has a spiritual body which hungers and thirsts and feels cold and heat. His enjoyable life of phantasy can be fed only by contacts with the actual world around him. He has no power even to think and will unless he can have a share of spiritual food to sustain him. And the Writings state that food in the spiritual world "is similar to food in our world, but it is from a spiritual origin and is given from heaven by the Lord to all according to the uses they perform; to the idle, nothing is given, because they are useless."<sup>17</sup> 17. @AR 153, vii.

### The Food of the Devils

What can be meant by this "food from heaven"? For do not evil spirits feed on falsities, and on evil delights?<sup>18</sup> This is indeed so, since all that enters their minds is turned into falsities and evils. Yet it is also true that they must base their falsities on the appearances of truth and their evils on pretensions of good. Evils conjoined with falsities have no power whatsoever - even in the world of phantasy - unless they rest on the appearances of realities! And whatever goes on in their minds, yet their spiritual bodies are a part of the actual and substantial spiritual world and must be fed on real spiritual food, on food from heaven.<sup>19</sup> 18. @AC 1695, 680 19. @AR 153, x

Spirits are human minds released from the physical body. And the spiritual body is really the lowest degree of the mind which we use in this world, and which we organize out of our experience to become an image of our inner or rational minds. This lowest degree, or ultimate, of our mind is the memory with its affections, which is no longer used for thinking in the other world but appears as a body and is felt as a body for our spirit. The food for this body is knowledge; but to the senses

of spirits it does not appear as knowledge, but as food and drink such as he had on earth. In fact, the kind of knowledge which men have and know as knowledge, as natural ideas, such as those of the literal sense of the Word, does not enter the minds of spirits as knowledge, but it is seen by them as food! What they think of as knowledge is cognitions or rational knowledge, and the memory they use in the other life for thinking is the interior memory, which is the memory of their ruling love and character, thus of their rational mind.<sup>20</sup> @AC 3114

The angels know full well that this is so, and with them the knowledge which appears only as food is as it were digested quite unconsciously until its inner essence is freed as spiritual ideas or celestial and spiritual truths, such as are present in the spiritual sense of the Word and make them wise and intelligent. But knowledges or scientifics in which there is no life from the goods of truth cannot sustain the interiors of the mind of a spirit, but only the externals of his mind and his body.<sup>21</sup> And thus the devils in hell feed on knowledge, but not on truths and goods, and this food nourishes their body, but is turned into falsities in their minds. <sup>21.</sup> @AC 6078, cp. 6110: @SD 818, 1563, 6088

This food is given them "from heaven." In a sense, it is the same food as that which angels enjoy; even as both good and evil men can enjoy the same knowledge, although they interpret and use that knowledge in utterly opposite ways. Knowledge is neutral. "Facts are facts." It is the use you make of them that makes truth or falsity. Knowledge is derived by sensation from the ultimates of nature which were created by the Lord. And the entire field of natural knowledge is like a soil out of which springs spiritual food, for the sustenance of man's mind. It is a spiritual soil - a spiritual ultimate, the foundation of heaven.

And indeed it is the very land or earth on which spirits walk, and on which their cities are built; and from this soil springs the vegetation seen in the other world, not from seeds sown, but from seeds created.<sup>22</sup> In heaven this soil is fertile, but in the hells it is barren or full of noxious weeds. <sup>22.</sup> @AE 1211

The soil of hell is barren and can yield only a slight production of foodstuffs, because evil spirits cannot even develop knowledge with that detachment and fairness which is necessary if it is to be rightly organized for use. And therefore they are forced periodically to abandon their phantasies, and seek their spiritual food from heaven!

In this world of ours, food is a material reality. In the spiritual world, it is a spiritual reality. And since the real spiritual world is a world of uses, evil spirits must seek some place in it - some employment in society - before they can obtain food. Their minds must become centered on something outside of themselves. Their first effort is of course to beg for food of others who are employed, but this does not succeed for long.<sup>23</sup> Swedenborg reports that he often saw grandees and women of rank begging food and receiving only some bread and a little milk - the milk of human kindness! - and being told to get to work, for food is not given to the idle. Such, in the world of spirits, gladly rise up and follow their benefactors, and are given various tasks to do. But they do them so unfaithfully - wanting only to talk and loiter about and sleep. They are unfitted for doing "works of good use," and only able to do "works of evil use!" So they are cast out as useless.<sup>24</sup> <sup>23.</sup> @SD 6088 <sup>24.</sup> @AR 153, ix

Such vagrant spirits may wander about in deserts for a time. But eventually they find their way to a suitable hell, where an overseer or judge puts them to work for wages or for food and shelter, and at a task for which they are fitted. Unless they finish their task neither food nor clothing is given

them.<sup>25</sup> And if they do harm to others they are tormented until they show remorse and are willing to get back to work. Such hells sometimes appear as vast caverns where the spirit thenceforth is confined, finding a measure of sordid pleasure in intervals of dissolute life and private vices such as he longed for on earth. 25. @AE 1226

Those in the world of spirits - not yet in hell - may spend their wages on bread, which can be bought from good spirits who work for their living willingly and thus have some abundance. But foods other than bread cannot be bought.<sup>26</sup> Even those in hell are nourished by such food, which in their case is coarse and sparse. Their spiritual bodies are thereby restored with a sense of wellbeing, even if they complain about the quality and quantity of what they are given. 26. @SD 6088

It is to be noticed that even as angelic happiness lies in the performance of uses and responsibilities, so the evil spirits are relieved of their insanity and of the pressure of their evil delights, so far as their minds are held to their work. In fact, when they are performing their tasks, which are described as menial and vile, they "are not so much in torment."<sup>27</sup> For even though the devils do their work grudgingly, from necessity rather than from choice, yet their labor assists them to forget themselves to some degree; and it is the remembrance of self that is the cause of most human unhappiness. 27. Love xv, @AC 696

#### Uses in the Hells

It might be questioned what kind of uses the evil spirits in hell are able to perform. We read in the Apocalypse Explained that "the uses performed in the heavens and the tasks done in the hells are in part like those done in the world, although for the most part they are spiritual uses which cannot be described by any natural language, and . . . do not fall into the ideas of natural thought."<sup>28</sup> Certain heavenly uses, having to do with instruction or the communication of affections and thoughts, can be conceived as purely spiritual. But other spiritual uses can be thought of only in their correspondential appearance; for indeed they appear as earthly occupations, as a multitude of trades and manufactures, having to do with nourishment, clothing, habitation, recreation, etc.<sup>29</sup>

It must be understood that in heaven all these functions concern spiritual exchanges of knowledges and delights which are the real commodities that are shared by human minds. 28. @AE 1226 29. Cp. @AE 1191, Wis. vii, 5, Char. 142, @DLW 333

It is told, in the Spiritual Diary, that in the other life "there must be no one who does not perform a use, to his world, to the human race, to the world of spirits, to heaven. . ."<sup>30</sup> Thus even devils perform uses. And we are reminded that in the human body, there are excretions from various organs that serve a use even though vile: as for instance the bile which aids in digestion, and even certain lymphs rejected by the brain, which temper the blood. And these excrementitious matters contain valuable chemicals, such as minerals, which are salvaged by the bloodstream and used again in the economy of the body, much as manure is utilized to enrich the soil of the fields.<sup>31</sup> 30. @SD 3147 31. @AC 1103

It is therefore stated that even those who have neither conscience nor charity can become "servants in the kingdom of the Lord" after death - even as, in the regenerate man, the love of self and the love of the world are servants under the rule and control of the love of the neighbor and the love of the Lord. And while the infernal spirits themselves do not have any correspondence with the heavens, yet their works do have "correspondences with the heavens," even as the representative worship of the Jews, who were idolatrous, had a correspondence to heavenly things.<sup>32</sup> 32. @SD



Evil spirits cannot carry on any exalted functions; although some of them are by turns made governors over the rest. Hell consists of innumerable prisons, workhouses, and camps of slave-labor. Some devils - more feared and hated than the rest - have slaves under them. But even such a position is unenviable, the work of a taskmaster ruling by force, and it must be classed as a vile and lowly use.

Each hell by itself is a society, with all the diverse uses created by common needs and necessities, like clothing and shelter, food and drink, and recreation, which must be supplied through the work of the evil spirits themselves.

The Writings present two somewhat different pictures of what the hells are like. Seen as to the evil loves which smoulder and chill and destroy, the hells appear like foul swamps, dark forests, and barren deserts, with ferocious beasts and venomous pests, where the spirits hide in terror or stalk in vengeful passion. But when the hells are seen as to their external uses, they are seemingly like cities, repellent and unclean, but ordered by some sort of law enforced in brutal fashion. They would resemble the slum districts of some earthly cities, where self-interest compels a certain unwilling cooperation to maintain an appearance of fair play, and crime and vice are kept somewhat indoors.

#### Uses of the Infernals in the World of Spirits

But the uses of the devils have wider applications than to their own world or their own society. When the corporeal delights of an evil spirit have been somewhat put to sleep and frustrated by inevitable punishments, he may then, we are told, be elevated into the world of spirits from time to time, that he may there serve for certain vile uses, but half-heartedly and with scarcely any delight. As soon as these are done, he reverts to his hell.<sup>33 33. @SD 4471, @AC 696</sup>

What these uses are is only vaguely indicated. But instances are given of devils called up from hell in order to speak to Swedenborg and to spirits in the world of spirits in order that the state of the infernals might be understood. The evil spirits then are utterly frank and describe their delights and attitudes, hiding nothing about their punishments and displaying their contempt for truth and good with indifference to what the hearers think. There is even the desire to shock the good spirits.

But the infernals are sometimes brought up permissively, to serve as a leaven of judgment by tempting good spirits or hastening evil spirits on the road to hell. This is a purely negative use, which the Lord turns into good.

Another cause why an infernal spirit should be permitted to re-enter the world of spirits is connected with the fact that at least two angels and two infernal spirits attend every man. Usually these attendants are spirits connected with some heaven and an opposite hell which use the two groups of spirits as subjects.

But occasionally - to judge from certain teachings - angels from heaven and devils from hell are called to perform this work of guardianship.<sup>34</sup> With a good man, the devils or evil spirits would then be compelled to serve, under subjugation.<sup>35</sup> For man, while on earth, requires to be nursed by an influx from hell also, before he is reformed, since otherwise his proprium would have no life at all, and his hereditary and natural affections - and with them the so-called mediate goods, or auxiliary natural motives - would wither away.<sup>36</sup> "Man cannot live without communication with

the hells by means of spirits there; for the whole of his life which he derives. . .by inheritance, and everything that he himself superadds from himself," is a life of selfishness, cruelty and contempt. Hence man could not be bent toward heaven unless at the start he could have his own delights, thus unless spirits of a like nature were adjoined to him.<sup>37</sup> When evil spirits thus emerge from hell to battle against angels, they come into a freedom they had not before enjoyed, and "are not in any infernal torment but in the enjoyments of the loves of self and the world, as also of all the pleasures in which man himself is; for they are in every thought and affection of man. But when they are sent back into their hell, they return into their former state."<sup>38</sup> 34. @AC 5852 35. @AC 968 36. @AC 4563, @HH 293 37. @AC 5993[2] 38. @AC 6657, 5852

Man, when he opens the floodgates of his heart to unrestrained passions, may actually invite such devils to emerge from hell and possess his memory and knowledge - sometimes even his vocabulary! The devils may take on the things of man's sensual mind so completely that they do not know but that they are the man. The spirits and the man then think in conjunction and are of one will, yet each knows no other than that he thinks and feels in and from himself.<sup>39</sup> 39. @AC 5853

Fortunately for man, the story does not end there. For in the meantime, the angels are present in man's interior ends, in his goods of life and truths of faith, thus in his inner aspirations.

And by a tacit, imperceptible influx the Lord, through them, holds the man back from the freedom of thinking and willing evil.<sup>40</sup> The man is thus free to repent and bethink himself as to what he is doing from the impatience of the flesh, and thus separate himself from the infernal spirits by a simple effort of thought. 40. @AC 5854

When this occurs, the devils have no place to go. They can be in man's ideas only so long as these accord. Nor can they remain in the world of spirits unless they are "with men" as attendant spirits. Their choice is therefore to plunge themselves back into their own hell, despite its many drawbacks. It would seem that this constitutes a final judgment on such devils, and that they, thereafter, never again emerge of their own choice. For their judgment is so severe, the pain of their banishment and of the heavenly sphere that they meet, is so severe as to be ever remembered.<sup>41</sup> Their fate is described in the incident of the devils named "Legion" whom the Lord drove out of the man in the land of the Gergesenes and who then chose to go into a herd of swine which forthwith ran in panic into the sea and perished. (Matthew 8:28-34) Evil spirits naturally rush into the delights corresponding to their particular evils; here "swine" are mentioned because swine correspond to the delights of greed and avarice.<sup>42</sup> 41. @SD 4471f 42. @AE 659[6]

Since the first advent of the Lord, evil spirits can no longer possess the bodies of men. But many devils - especially sirens and adulterers - are clever at obsessing a man's interiors, that is, his thoughts and affections, through his exteriors - through sensual experiences and seductive allurements to which he may be exposed or through the symbols of evil which lodge in every man's corporeal memory. By this means they seek to return into the world through men. And the only defense against them is the protection which is extended by the Lord through His Heavenly Doctrine in which He lays bare their deceits and artful appeals.<sup>43</sup> 43. @AC 1983, @SD 3716, 4601, 3699, 4448, 4594

The object of the last judgments performed by the Lord at His coming in the flesh and at the close of the epoch of the First Christian Church was to confine the hells within the compass of law, so that they could not break out repeatedly into the world of spirits and interfere with the spiritual freedom of mankind.

But this does not mean that the hells are not still dependent on the human race as a common basis, even as are all angels and spirits. For through intermediating spirits which serve as their subjects, they rest - as to their mental life - upon the material ideas which are continually formed and stored up in the corporeal memory of the men living in the natural world - ideas which they interpret according to their own design and use to build up their phantasies. And through these subject-spirits, which they inspire with their hate and cunning, they tempt and mislead men; yet when those their agents are punished for evil-doing, the hells themselves feel the punishment as keenly as the subject spirits.

The Writings do not warrant any blurring over of the unhappy state of the infernals. Even the less distressing periods in their existence are spoiled by discontent and insatiable lustings for the impossible, and even their pride is accompanied with a self-pity that blames all failures on others.

Yet the almost incredible fact is that they wish to remain in hell; and also that they, through retaining the faculty of reason, can serve uses outside of hell.

## 23 DIVINE FORESIGHT AND PROVIDENCE

It is the continual aim of the Divine providence that man may become a heaven in form and thus an image of the Lord, a receptacle of the gifts of life and of love and wisdom. And "the inmost" of that Divine providence is that every one should be continually prepared by the Lord for his own place in heaven, or - what is the same - for his own place in the Grand Man of heaven. What the Writings call "the Grand Man" is a structure of possible uses; a structure so sublime and perfect that no man can see it in its wholeness, yet can see it in an image in all the complex organs and viscera that cooperate spontaneously in the human body. But this allotment of a place in heaven is accomplished only for those who permit the Lord to lead them to heaven. These the Lord prepares for their own places in heaven.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the man who - in freedom - does not permit the Lord to lead and assign him to heaven, is prepared for his own place in hell. The Lord indeed continually withdraws such a man from the lowest hell to which he gravitates, and bends him to a milder hell, yet if he cannot be so withdrawn he is allotted a place in hell according to the love that rules in him.

And this place is opposite to a certain place in heaven.<sup>2</sup> 1. @DP 67 2. @DP 69, 203, @AC 3854

"If the Lord did not lead the states of human minds every least moment," the minor evils into which man fell by his own choice would lead to incredible extremes - greater and greater to eternity - even as an arrow shot from a bow would go farther from its mark the longer it travels if its aim was but slightly erroneous. But the Lord foresees "with an unceasing adaptation" how each man would lead himself, and leads him "from infancy even to the end of his life," in the least unnoticed events, foreseeing and providing his place.<sup>3</sup> 3. @DP 202, 203

When we say that the Lord provides, a "place," we mean that the Lord provides a use, a function which can become a means for his happiness; for usefulness is the only means toward happiness, even in hell. Yet "a man is not born for his own sake, but for the sake of others."<sup>4</sup> His happiness is not an end in itself; but the end is use - uses to others by which happiness can come to others and then revert to him. Each man is born a certain form of use into which he is gradually led by his own affections, his form of mind, his native bent, his education and training, his free decision and effort. No man can survive without performing a use of some kind. Whether he comes to perform this use

from a love of self alone or from a love of use for the sake of home, society, the commonwealth, the church, and heaven, depends on his own choice of inner delights. 4. @TCR 406

And it is this free choice that determines whether he finds a place in heaven or an opposite place in hell. The Lord, from His infinite love, leads every man towards conjunction with Himself in heaven; but from His infinite wisdom He foresees whether man - in his freedom - is willing to follow. Thus we read: "The operation of the Divine providence for the salvation of man is said to begin at his birth and to continue unto the end of his life. To understand this it must be known that the Lord sees of what quality man is and foresees what he will want to be, thus what he will be;

and in order that he may be a man, and therefore immortal, the freedom of his will must not be taken away. . . . Hence the Lord foresees man's state after death, and provides for it from his birth until the end of his life. . . . Since, then, the Lord foresees the states of all after death, and also foresees the places in hell of those who are not willing to be saved, and the places in heaven of those who are willing to be saved, it follows that for the evil . . . the Lord provides their places by permitting and withdrawing, and for the good by leading; and unless this were done unceasingly . . . neither heaven nor hell would continue to exist, for without that foresight and providence together neither heaven nor hell would be anything but confusion The Lord, every moment, regards the eternal. For "the entire future is present to Him and the entire present is to Him eternal."5 5. @DP 333

The Divine foresight is necessary in order that the freedom of man be protected. Wisdom must know beforehand in order that love may provide and ameliorate. But the Divine foresight does not interfere with the human choice between heaven and hell, but is the means whereby Divine love prevents such choice under conditions where it would not be really free. It is therefore shown in the Doctrine that man, when acting from freedom, does not act "from necessity." There is no such thing as "fate," and human life is not shaped by the unavoidable force of circumstances.<sup>6</sup> Nor is the Lord "bound by necessity," for the things, most essential, which flow from the secret operations of His providence, "do not follow from necessity, but in application to the freedom of man."<sup>7</sup> 6. @DP 212 7. @AC 6485ff, SD min. 4692

All men are created for heaven. Every one who is born can be saved, and be regenerated according to his state.<sup>8</sup> The Lord's foreknowledge does in no way imply any "predestination to hell" for any man. To believe, as some do, that the Lord suffers some to be born for heaven and some for hell, by a Divine selection which no man can alter, and that this is done by God to manifest His majesty and power, is "a cruel heresy" which involves "abominable accusations against the Divine."<sup>9</sup>

But the same imputation of evil to the Divine is contained in the belief that God can save any man out of pure mercy apart from means and apart from man's free cooperation. Such a belief as that man is saved by faith alone - faith granted by Divine grace to some and not to others - and that God can change man's state in a moment from damned to saved, even on his death-bed, induces a false security which blinds man to the need for repentance and for the shunning of evils as sins against God.<sup>10</sup> 8. @TCR 580 9. @DP 330, 340 10. @DP 340, @TCR 463 and chapter

If God could assign all to heaven without man's choice entering in, all would be saved. But heaven is not a place into which souls can be herded and made happy merely by being within its bounds. Heaven is a state of delight. A novitiate spirit in the other life, inquiring what heaven was, was told, "Learn what delight is and you will know what heaven and hell are." And after inquiring he learned that the very being of man is love and that the activity of love makes the sensation of

delight. Love, or good, inflows from the Lord into every one, but man in his freedom receives it as a delight in wisdom or turns it into a delight in insanity. The delight which man finally makes his own, becomes permanent; for he can have neither will nor sensation, thus no life, without it.<sup>11</sup> 11. @CL 461

Every one is born for heaven. This is the reason why all children who die in their childhood are received and trained in heaven and become angels, differing according to their genius. And similarly all men are saved unless they have employed their freedom as responsible adults to confirm evils by falsities with deliberation. Evils of heredity are not imputed to men, but only evil conjoined with falsity. Children who die at a tender age are in a state of innocence, and innocence is the love of being led and instructed. They enter freely into this love, and feel it as their own, even though they never have the opportunity, as adults have, of developing any contrary ruling love, i.e., an evil love.

Is this lack of opportunity a curtailment of human freedom? Certainly the children in heaven do not so regard it! But possibly we might mistakenly imagine that human freedom requires a choice between heaven and hell.

If so, evil must have come actually by creation! when yet "God saw every thing that He had made, and behold, it was very good." There was always plenty of choice for man between higher goods and lesser goods. (@CL 444[3]) Freedom does not depend on the existence of evil or of the hells. The choice that presents itself before each man differs in scope and kind. And since evil arose and the hells present their allurements to men, every adult can choose evil.

Under such circumstances, it would be a denial of freedom if the Divine prevented man from confirming his chosen delights by permitting him to taste the delights of evil but not to keep them, not to remain in them. The testimony of Swedenborg concerning the devils is that after much experience they were unanimous about one thing - "that they would a thousand times rather live in hell than out of it."<sup>12</sup> Nor must we forget that in the spiritual world "eternity" is not thought of as time but as state.<sup>13</sup> 12. @SD 5830 13. @AE 1131[2], 889

The notion of the "Universalists" - those who believe in the ultimate redemption of the hells and thus in a universal salvation - is therefore as untenable for New Church men as the alternative idea that at the last judgment or the end of this world the wicked would be annihilated and only the saved survive. The official belief among Protestants is that the disembodied spirits of the dead will "sleep" or at best flit about in vacuity until the day of judgment when they are to be judged to heaven or to hell. The more literalistic among Protestants and Catholics picture the hells as a place of unceasing physical punishments by fire and brimstone - torture of body as well as of soul; which has caused a revulsion of feeling in modern times against the idea of any hell at all, or even of any after-life. The Roman Catholics also introduced the idea of a Purgatory, a fiery place in which those who die in grace must by sufferings make amends for their minor sins and for "every idle word" before being worthy of heaven. The Writings describe the Roman doctrine of Purgatory as a "figment" and "a fable" invented to terrify the populace and increase the power of the priesthood.<sup>14</sup> For the truth is that in the world of spirits a soul is not held accountable for what he did on earth but for that which he still persists in doing.

Nor can the prayers of men or the assistance of "patron saints" aid the souls of the dead.<sup>15</sup> 14. @AR 770, 784:2, @TCR 475 15. Cp. the apocryphal book, 2 Maccabees, 12:40-45

## Redemption from "the Lower Earth"

It must be recognized that there are appearances in the letter of certain Scriptures which have been invoked to confirm each of the different doctrines of the Christian world about hell. Even the unscriptural Catholic teaching about Purgatory finds a faint authorization in a statement of Paul that "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is; . . . he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." (I Corinthians 3:13, 15)

But though there be no Purgatory, there are in the "lower earth" below the world of spirits places of detention where souls unprepared for heaven undergo vastations - and the more dire of these may be mistaken for hells because they are surrounded by hells which infest them. Indeed, in the early part of the Spiritual Diary and in the first volume of the Arcana, Swedenborg describes them as hells which are redeemed. For the spirits therein felt as if they were in hell. Those who are kept in these "lower earths" are spirits who from simplicity or ignorance have imbibed falsities of religious belief and yet have been dutiful and conscientious according to their light, and have avoided hatred, revenge, and adultery. To get rid of false principles and misplaced loyalties is a difficult and long process, and is attended with heartaches and the pain of disillusionment. Such spirits must be reduced to complete confession of ignorance and to obscurity and confusion, and experience many phantasies in which they feel themselves utterly without hope of salvation, and think that their torment would be eternal. But Swedenborg records that, conversing with them while under a special protection by angels, he was "permitted to comfort them." And he tells of innumerable instances, especially after the Last judgment, when such spirits were released by the thousands and thus redeemed from hell, to be taken up into places where angels instructed them for life in heavenly societies.<sup>16</sup> @AC 699, 1106ff, @SD 228, 5480, etc.

In referring to these places of vastation, where multitudes of spirits were confined and as it were imprisoned before the Last judgment, Swedenborg (as was noted) sometimes calls them "hells," using the language of Scripture. Thus it is said in the Psalms: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell." (16:10) "The sorrows of hell encompassed me." (18:5) "Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell." (86:13) And Peter wrote that Christ, having been put to death in the flesh, was "quickened by the Spirit, by which He also went and preached unto the spirits in prison" - meaning in Hades or "the lower earth." (I Peter 3:19)

Swedenborg also testifies that spirits, especially evil spirits, are sometimes sent down into special hells for punishment; from whence they are later delivered. And devils are often immersed into such hells to be punished; and each punishment removes something of evil, for it imbues them with horror and fear of doing it.<sup>17</sup> For punishments in the other life are never unceasing, nor are they imposed except for the purpose of amendment. No spirit is punished without purpose, such as that he "may be so tempered as to be able to be in a good society," or in an orderly state.<sup>18</sup> Unless this were the effect, "the evil spirit must necessarily be kept in some hell to eternity" - that is, kept in a hell of punishment continually, which is "contrary to Divine wisdom" with its end of good. For "there is no man who is not liable to eternal damnation, because in no one is there anything but mere evil" as to his proprium.<sup>19</sup> Looked upon from Divine truth, every one would be condemned! Yet the Divine love and mercy as it were intercedes and saves, so far as man will allow.<sup>20</sup> But in an evil state, as in hell, man cannot receive the Lord's mercy in love, but only in the fear that follows punishment. <sup>17.</sup> @AC 828f, 957 <sup>18.</sup> @SD 2826 <sup>19.</sup> @AC 967, @SD 2827 <sup>20.</sup> @AC 2258

## The Eternity of Hell and the Permanence of Character

As noted above, there have been those in the New Church who seized upon the teachings about these places of vastation and punishment to confirm their opinion that the hells are eventually all to be redeemed;

and articles have been published even in New Church journals advocating the view that hell is not eternal. Since there are hundreds of statements in the Writings which explicitly state that "he who once enters hell remains there to eternity" or that the life contracted in the world abides with man forever, some irresponsible writers have suggested that perhaps there may be a "new law" established after the Last judgment - a law of "celestial" type - by which the hells will eventually be redeemed and changed, but which Swedenborg did not know about!<sup>21</sup> 21. See pages 286f, above

To repeat the innumerable asseverations of the Writings that hell is eternal, is hardly necessary, as it is a cardinal doctrine.<sup>22</sup> But it is of interest to note that every Divine revelation has implied or expressed the same teaching. Daniel wrote that the risen dead would awake, "some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt." (12:2) The Gospels and the Apocalypse speak of hell as everlasting fire and eternal damnation. (Matthew 18:8, 25:46, Mark 3:29, 9:43ff, Revelation 20: 10) <sup>22</sup>. Among these passages are: @HD 239, @AC 7541[3], 8637, 10749, 6657:2, @SD 5830, @CL 79[e], @AE 1220[3], 383, 194:3,4, @DP 319[3]

That which gives eternal permanence to a man's character is his ruling love which he acquires and confirms during his life on earth. And since it is of mercy that he is free to choose this love and its delights, it is provided that what he chooses and loves shall be preserved in his mind and life, as memory and as habit. What he loves and confirms by thought and act becomes more and more easy to recall and repeat. Repetition of the same mental states of intention and effort give facility and spontaneity both to thought and to action, and establishes habits which are engraven in the very organism of his spirit and his body, until he acts almost unconsciously from his confirmed affections, as if from "second nature."

It is well known that it is by training and habit that one acquires skill and perfection in any field of work or play. But the Writings reveal that it is by his life in the body that man's eternal character, or the ruling love of his spirit, is formed and confirmed. For spiritual substance - the substance of man's soul and spirit and mind - is such that by itself it has no permanence of form, or constancy, for it does not possess the quality of space or of time.

This is the reason why no angels could be created directly into the spiritual world, but must first be born on an earth. We must here briefly summarize what was shown in greater detail in our second chapter: The human soul, in order to become an immortal and permanent individual being, must be adjoined to a body of natural substances and thus find a beginning in time and become associated with a world of space, and thus become limited, or individualized, as a form of potential use different from any other. Each human soul, already before birth, is differentiated by being an offshoot of the paternal soul and spirit, as well as by a distinct heredity from the mother. Yet the soul does not become individualized, permanent and immortal, except by the act of birth and the experience of sensation as a free being.

From the time of birth - the opening of the lungs and the beginning of conscious sensation - the soul commences to mold its own substance into the forms which we call the mind, and begins to arrange all sensations and experiences into harmony with its own various preferences. And when rational freedom is attained, it is man's free spiritual choice that determines the internal form of the mind or spirit, and decides its ruling love. And it is to be specially noted that the spirit forms itself always

by reference to the sensations of the body, and confirms that form by efforts and actions in the body. It is the world of sensations, which the body and brain present before the mind, that allows the spirit to exert its free choice, its valuations of delights, its selection of good and truth or of evil and falsity. The soul thus assumes a ruling love according to the choice and free decision of its rational mind; or - what is the same - the ruling love is formed, and once formed, is fixed by life in the material body.

Thus evil - and hell - cannot arise except in human minds living in earthly bodies. Man's mind from birth is of three degrees. The two highest-the "celestial" and the "spiritual" -are always in the order of heaven. But the lowest of the three mental degrees is the "ultimate spiritual" or "spiritual-natural," and is called the natural mind. The natural mind operates among the inmost organics of the physical body, and there only "can the ultimate spiritual separate itself from the superior degrees" and become perverted into evil.<sup>23</sup>

It is in the rational of the natural mind that man's eternal choice is made. <sup>23.</sup> @DLW 257, 260, 345

The further explanation is given, that "no man's life can be changed after death, because it has been organized according to his love and the works therefrom; that if it were changed, the organization would be torn apart, which can never be done; also that a change in organization is possible only in the material body, and is entirely impossible in the spiritual body after the former has been cast off."<sup>24</sup> <sup>24.</sup> @CL 524, BE 110e

It might be thought that a change could still occur after death, since the spirit of man retains from its abode in the material body a "limbus" or fringe of the inmost substances of nature as a perennial medium by which he is provided with something relative to the things which are in nature, and something which -by remaining in the world of space and time - shall preserve and limit his existence as an immortal individual.<sup>25</sup> But this "limbus," although it must contain a record of all man's natural experiences, cannot any more change its form, for there are no longer any natural sense-organs to induce changes upon it. Instead, it guarantees that the corporeal memory, which recorded man's external experiences in the world, shall become quiescent and inactive and unchanged forever. <sup>25.</sup> @DWis 8:4, 5; @DP 220, @TCR 103, @DLW 257, 388. See The Doctrine of the Limbus, earlier in this work.

Attention is called by the Writings to this "corporeal memory" as the plane in which all the interior things of a man's mind are terminated while on earth. For every man orders his memory according to his affections and preferences, so that the association of each idea (or field of ideas) with every other is a perfect picture of his whole character and ruling love. The agreement or harmony of his internal, rational, or spiritual man with this memory, remains after death as it was on earth. Man's interiors can indeed grow and be perfected - as with the angels and with infants who grow up in heaven. But the external - or the corporeal or sensual memory - cannot grow or change. And there can be no growth of internals except so far as the order which man has imposed upon his external memory will allow it!

If a man has ordered his corporeal memory into a form corresponding to an infernal love, his interiors can never alter and put on a heavenly quality. And this, Swedenborg notes in his Diary, is illustrated by the Biblical proverb (in Ecclesiastes 11:3) that "if the tree fall toward the south or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be."<sup>26</sup> <sup>26.</sup> SD min. 4645f, @SD 5552, @AC 4588



The mind that we form while on earth is the spirit which is immortal. And it cannot change its essential character after death, because it is organized even more intricately than our body. The human mind is organized, we are taught, "inwardly of spiritual substances and outwardly of natural substances and lastly of material substances."<sup>27</sup> At death, the material substances are rejected. The inmost natural substances go to constitute what we have referred to as the "limbus," and these natural substances "recede" or withdraw from the spirit itself which enters the spiritual world and is seen there under the form of a spiritual body.<sup>28</sup> But note that "the mind, the delights of whose love are good, consists inwardly of spiritual substances such as are in heaven; but the mind, the delights of whose love are evil, consists inwardly of spiritual substances such as are in hell; and the evils of the latter are bound into fascicles by falsities."<sup>29</sup> The very body of an evil spirit is organized into disorderly forms, wherein the fibres act in an order or gyre or flux which is opposite to that of heaven.<sup>30</sup> 27. @TCR 38 28. @DLW 257 29. @TCR 38 30. @DP 315[3]

### Spiritual Equilibrium

The organic character of the mind guarantees for man that the free choice of a ruling love which he makes on earth shall not be merely chimerical, that is, a mere appearance, but shall have permanent results - the enjoyment of chosen and confirmed delights, Since the delights of the evil and of the good are opposite, heaven and hell are separated and are never confused.

Yet they find a meeting place in the mind or spirit of man. The familiar doctrine is that while man lives on earth, his spirit or mind is unconsciously situated in the world of spirits, midway between heaven and hell, and by being subject to an influx from each, man is in spiritual freedom of choice, or in an equilibrium between good and evil.

The equilibrium between heaven and hell is the Lord's doing. It would be impossible to suppose that it is a numerical balance - or that the angels and the evil spirits are equal in number - for such a conception would destroy the idea of human choice. Yet the equilibrium in the world of spirits is "diminished or increased in accordance with the number of those who enter heaven and who enter hell."<sup>31</sup> It is upset continually by the evil, and restored by the Lord, who alone can regulate and equalize it with precision in accommodation to human freedom. How He accomplishes this is told. Each hell is placed under restraint by a heavenly society to which it "corresponds by opposition." If the infernal society gains a preponderance, it is restrained by "the stronger presence of the Lord" or by a conjunction of several angelic societies (assisting each other), or, by the splitting of the infernal society or the sending out of some of the evil spirits into desert regions, or by the transference of certain spirits from one hell into another, or by the segregation of the evil society, by veiling its influx or sending it down to a lower depth. There are also ordinations of the heavens, and judgments of various kinds in the world of spirits.<sup>32</sup> 31. @HH 593 32. @HH 594, @SD 5003

But there is a certain equilibrium, or a state of freedom, in the hells themselves. Their essential choice is of course made already. But they can emerge from their phantasies if they will, and can then view their own states in rational light, and can acknowledge truth when presented to them. They can even be enabled to perceive profound arcana of angelic wisdom, from their own faculty of rationality; but are unwilling, from their faculty of liberty, to will or act otherwise than according to their evil delights.<sup>33</sup> They can be in doctrinals and have more knowledge than many others.<sup>34</sup> Some hells even refer to God the Father as the Creator of the universe, and this without hatred; but all the hells are filled with bitter hatred against the Lord in His Divine Human.<sup>35</sup>

In some hells they continually wrangle about religious truths, yet have nothing of religion.<sup>36</sup>

1. @DLW 266
2. @AC 1798, 2049:3
3. Ath. 201
4. LJ post. 202, @SD 5103, cp @TCR 14

In the state when their evils and phantasies are active, the inhabitants of the hells cohere in opposition to the heavens, and the whole of hell, so regarded, can be described as a Grand Monster - monstrous human form, the "soul" of which would be the love of self and self-intelligence.<sup>37</sup> But when considered in relation to the Grand Man of heaven, the hells correspond to the excrements rejected from the Grand Man, and to the unclean and vicious things of disease which-like germs and toxic substances-invade the body and cause fevers and disorders. Thus it is said that before the Last judgment, the Grand Man from this earth was as it were threatened by disease.<sup>38</sup> 37. @AE 1224[4], @DP 302, @TCR 68 38. @AC 2996, 5711-5726, @AE 622[5], @TCR 119

Yet since the devils never lose their faculties of liberty and rationality, by reason of the good remains of infancy which are still reserved within them,<sup>39</sup> and since they thus retain something of the human form, they can on occasions perform certain vile uses in the kingdom of the Lord, "which is not only over heaven but also over hell." 39. @AC 7556, 7560, 7601

Even with the devils the life which is God acts upon them from without, giving them the ability to have thought and will, speech, act, and sensation - which "continually impels them toward order" and gives them immortality. They retain the faculty of rationality, Those evil spirits who are not yet vastated of truth and external good can temporarily serve uses corresponding to the spleen, the bile, or the kidneys, through which there is judgment and discipline.<sup>40</sup> But devils, who are in the full conjunction of evil and falsity, serve in other capacities; for their influx - for which they are not blamed - acts as a leaven which induces temptations and fermentations with good spirits, and thus serves to clarify and confirm what is good and true.<sup>41</sup> 40. @DP 26, @AE 1143[5], @DLW 162, 240, @SD 3094, 1005 41. @DP 25, 26, @AC 986, 1079:2; cp 9534:2, @SD 4461, 4471, 5693

In a sense, then, the spirits of the hells, by the necessity of their performing routine uses and from fear, come to refrain from open evils. They can be said to have an unwilling place within the kingdom of the Lord.<sup>42</sup> And thus the evil as well as the good are constantly offered the opportunity for a certain happiness - the happiness that comes from forgetting one's self and the deceptive delights of one's own will, and being merged in the larger self of human society. 42. @AC 7541

Evil cannot contribute to good. Yet one evil may balance the effects of another, even as extremes tend to counteract each other.<sup>43</sup> in itself, evil has no value. But its existence serves by contrast to accentuate for an ungrateful race the marvelous spiritual blessings which the Lord offers to those who love Him and obey His commandments. 43. @SD 2874

## Part Four: The Last Judgment

### 24 EXPECTATIONS AND PROPHECIES

Among the many startling claims made in the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg the most extraordinary is this, that the long awaited "last judgment" - the day of doom predicted by the

prophets of Israel and by the Lord Himself - has already taken place. It occurred, these Writings testify, in the year 1757. A more world-shaking event could hardly be imagined. Yet even as the Lord was made incarnate by birth from a virgin in the obscure town of Bethlehem, and lived his early life in a backward and despised country far from the centers of civilization, unnoticed by the high and the mighty; and even as His redemptive work was performed without leaving any remarkable effects upon the contemporary scene; so also the Last judgment, which, He foretold, would take place at His second coming, occurred as it were inconspicuously as far as the world was concerned, and unobserved by any mortal save the Lord's servant, Emanuel Swedenborg, who acted as an appointed witness and recorder.(\*)

(\*) The main treatments on the last judgment are found in the published works *The Last Judgment* (1758) and *Continuation concerning the Last Judgment* (1763); also recurrently in *The Apocalypse Revealed* (1766). The *Spiritual Diary* contains extensive descriptions of events connected with the judgment (nos. 4925 to about 6022), as does the posthumous work, *The Last Judgment*, written before 1763. The *Apocalypse Explained*, written 1758 to 1759, also gives many teachings on the subject.

And the reason neither of these two events - the incarnate life of the Lord and His coming again to judgment - made any immediate stir in the world was that they concerned a kingdom that was not of this world. When the Lord was asked how the kingdom of God would come, He therefore answered: "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation" (Luke 17:20). At His first advent the Lord's work of redemption was effected beyond the sight of men, in the spiritual world, where He subjugated the hells. And at His second advent, which was not a coming in the flesh but a coming as Divine truth, the Last judgment was also performed in the spiritual world, thus not among men but among spirits.

How this judgment proceeded, in fulfillment of prophecy, is now revealed in the Writings. It may be regarded as a spiritual revolution which utterly changed the conditions of the world of spirits, inducing a new order upon that world so that spiritual freedom and the possibility of progress can be assured for the spirits of men.

Before we can inquire intelligently into the effects which this last judgment has had upon the lives of men during the two full centuries that have since passed, we need to consider what men have thought in past ages about the possibility of such an event, what circumstances and conditions made it necessary, what is the nature of the world of spirits as the only possible scene of a general judgment, how the judgment was finally precipitated, and how it proceeded in order to its climax and aftermath and its intended results.

### Gentile Beliefs and Legends

Prophecy, in some form or other, has been a part of every religion since ancient times. The mainspring of human progress has been a hope for an eventual state of safety and bliss. This is inscribed on every human heart. But throughout the ages the hope has been sobered by the realization of human failure; by the recognition that contrary and evil forces are at work, not only abroad but in the human heart, to prevent men from reaching their goal - the goal which their God, or gods, had intended for them.

Some nations were gripped by a pessimism which caused them to believe, as do many in India, that the created world with its individual beings is but an illusion, or at best a temporary creation

bound for eventual dissolution into nothingness.

In the centuries before and after Christ this took the form, as among the Stoics, of the belief that the world was predestined to pass through successive cycles again and again; and at the end of each full cycle would return by a great conflagration to the original living fire out of which it had sprung; and that it would then be born again, to repeat unendingly the same cycle.

Even the mythologies of some nations echo the universal fear and hope of mankind. In the Norse myths the end of the world was to come at the "Twilight of the Gods" - at Ragnarok, when Thor had slain the Midgard serpent, only to perish in its poisonous fumes; while the gods and their enemies mutually destroy each other in a final battle, and the sun goes out and the earth is engulfed by the sea and the stars fall from heaven and time is no more. But in the Elder Edda the sibyl foretells that then a new earth would arise out of the cosmic waters and the golden tablets of the primeval race would be re-discovered; and Balder, the god of love, would return to rule over the hosts of the virtuous in halls of purest gold.

### Old Testament Prophecy and its Fulfillment

It might be thought that these legends were independent inventions of sages who voiced the fears and hopes of men somewhat differently in each nation. Yet there is a consistency in their general thought which indicates that they have a common source in a primeval revelation. And the Writings tell of an ancient Word that is now lost except for parts preserved by Moses, an ancient Word the teachings of which spread widely in the ages before our history dawned. In the portion preserved by Moses, in the first part of Genesis, there is the story of a great flood which came as a judgment, wiping out the first race of men when they had profaned their high estate. Only Noah and his seed were saved in the ark to re-people the new earth which emerged from the waters.

The Israelites religiously preserved the knowledge of the great flood. And when the nation became disobedient, the Lord inspired prophets to threaten it with another judgment to come unless it should repent.

The people were indeed punished whenever they departed from their allegiance to Jehovah, and finally their temple was destroyed and they themselves were carried away as captives to Assyria and Babylonia. Yet the later prophets spoke of a more final reckoning. There would come a great and dreadful day of Jehovah, a day of doom which would burn as an oven (Malachi 4:1), when the Lord Himself would come with all His saints to fight against the wicked nations who had gathered to ravish Jerusalem. Great portents would occur. The Mount of Olives would cleave in twain, and living waters would go forth from Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:4, 8). There would be wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke, the sun would be darkened, and the moon turned into blood, and the stars would cease their shining (Joel 3). And the "Ancient of Days" would sit on the throne of judgment and the books of judgment would be opened; and the dominion over all nations would be given forever after to One who was like the Son of Man, and who came with the clouds of heaven (Daniel 7:9-14; Malachi 3:16). Then God would create new heavens and a new earth, where the wolf and the lamb could feed together on the holy mountain of the Lord (Isaiah 65:17-25).

These prophecies were scattered, vague, and difficult to reconcile. And often they were accompanied by hints of the coming of a most holy Messiah, an anointed King who would suddenly come to His temple, and who was seemingly identified with the Son of Man coming in the clouds as

well as with One who should come out of Bethlehem of Judah (Malachi 3; Daniel 7, 9). It was suggested also in Daniel that many who slept in the dust of the earth would awake at the time of judgment, some to everlasting life and others to everlasting shame (12:1, 2).

Our doctrine makes clear that when the Lord came on earth, by birth from the virgin Mary, He did fulfill the prophecies of the Old Testament about the coming of a Messiah. He actually performed a "last judgment" on the Jewish Church, which had then reached its consummation and end. Indeed, the Lord Himself stated: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31); and He said also: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:18).

The Writings teach concerning this judgment that by temptations and Victories over the hells the Lord not only glorified His Human, and made it Divine and one with the Father, but also performed a redemption in the spiritual world, elevating into new heavens all those spirits of the spiritual genius who had been held captive by evil spirits. It was indeed a universal and final judgment, not only on the Jews but on all the spirits of the Ancient Church as well.

### New Testament Prophecy of a Further Judgment

The Jewish prophecies about the day of Jehovah were thus spiritually fulfilled. In a spiritual sense, the sun and moon had been darkened, and the stars extinguished, and new heavens and a new earth had been formed by the finger of God. The apostle Peter, in his famous address at Pentecost, seemingly made this claim, saying "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel . . ." (Acts 2:16-21). Yet, despite this, the Lord made new prophecies about a further judgment, to take place on the occasion of His second advent, when He, as the Son of Man, would come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, after the darkening of the sun and moon and the falling of the stars from heaven. And then He would send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet to gather the elect from the four quarters of heaven (Matthew 24:29-31).

In a parable the Lord also described the second advent as the coming of the Son of Man in His glory, saying that He would sit upon the throne of His glory, and that all nations would be gathered before Him so that He might separate them, the evil to eternal punishment and the righteous to inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world (Matthew 25:31-46).

The book of Revelation, called the Apocalypse, further describes this judgment and the conditions that would lead up to it. John here writes at the Lord's bidding about the things that should be thereafter, and ends his book with the Lord's assurance: "Surely, I come quickly."

Since this book has deeply influenced Christian thinking, let us briefly review the prophecies which it contains.

It opens with the Son of Man appearing to John in glory, giving his messages to the seven churches which were in Asia Minor. John then sees heaven opened, and watches while the Lamb opens the seven seals of a book. He sees how the dread of the coming judgment spreads over the world and hears seven angels sound their trumpets of doom and woe, until finally the temple of God is opened in heaven and the ark of the covenant is revealed.

Then there comes a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun gives birth to a man child who was to rule the nations; and a great red dragon, seeking to devour the man child, is cast down from heaven, while the woman is kept hidden in the wilderness. The Lamb is now seen on Mount Zion with a hundred and forty-four thousand who are redeemed; and an angel having the

everlasting gospel proclaims the approach of the judgment. Seven angels pour vials of wrath upon the earth, and the evil gather for battle at Armageddon. Then the scarlet woman-symbol of the city of Babylon, mother of abominations-is destroyed, and a great voice proclaims the coming marriage of the Lamb.

And so the Lamb appears - but now as a rider on a white horse; and His name is given as "the Word of God." "Out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations." And an angel comes down and binds the dragon, or Satan, in the bottomless pit for a thousand years. After that Satan is loosed for a season, and his armies besiege the camp of the saints, until fire comes down from heaven to destroy them, and Satan and other beasts are cast into a lake of fire.

And then John saw the dead, small and great, stand before God's throne of judgment while the books were opened, and all were judged according to their works. The first heaven and the first earth pass away, and John sees a new heaven and a new earth. And the holy city, New Jerusalem, comes down from God out of heaven, foursquare and golden, with translucent walls, foundations of jewels, streets of crystal, and gates of pearl. A river of water of life flows out from the throne of God; and Jesus, speaking through an angel, proclaims Himself the Alpha and the Omega, saying, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

### Christian Expectations of the Last Judgment

The New Church reader can easily perceive that all these prophecies of the Old and New Testaments have now indeed been fulfilled in spiritual reality. But the apostles and the early Christians forgot that the Lord spoke only in parables. They came to expect a physical return of Christ in the clouds of the earthly sky, a resurrection of the dead in their physical bodies, a destruction of the physical world, and a renovation of the earth into a physical paradise for the chosen few.

Thus Paul and Peter were certain that the end of the age would come in their lifetimes, and that the world would then perish and its elements melt with fervent heat. For did not the Lord say, "This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled"? When this did not occur, later Christians saw in every natural disaster an omen of the near approach of the last day, of which the Lord had yet said: "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven" (Matthew 24:36). In the year 1000 A.D. multitudes of Christians became frantic in expectation of the dreadful day of the Lord at the end of the predicted millenium. Even in our own century numberless sects have arisen, persuaded that they had calculated from prophecy the exact year and date of the Lord's return. Indeed, a certain powerful sect now declares that "Millions now living will never die," and that the Lord returned invisibly in 1874 to begin the process of resurrecting the dead saints and organizing His faithful for eternal life on earth.

### Modern Skepticism and Orthodox Beliefs

There are, of course, increasing numbers among Christians who have come to regard the literal prophecies of the Bible as incredible and impossible of fulfillment. And this skepticism is furthered not only by the apparent delay of the last day which the - disciples had regarded as near at hand, but also by a greater knowledge of the laws of nature and by a growing preoccupation of men with the things of this world, from the love of comfort and pleasure and pride in human achievements. Yet it should not be forgotten that the Roman Catholic Church holds as a fundamental dogma not only that the spirits, of men will at death pass either into heaven or hell, or into purgatory, but that

these spirits will reenter their material but refined bodies at the general judgment at the second advent of Christ.

Note also that the main branches of the Protestant Church put forth as part of their faith that Christ will return in visible manner "at the last day," to judge the quick and the dead; and that this belief in a material resurrection is shared also by the Mormons.

### The New Church Doctrine of Judgment

The New Church doctrine concerning the Last judgment is so utterly different from all these views that it is hard to find any common ground, except in the universal perception which men must have that if human beings are responsible for their actions, a time must come when they become accountable and are judged or rewarded.

The essential difference lies in the understanding of what is meant by, the second advent of the Lord. The doctrine makes clear that the Lord never promised to return by a personal appearance, but by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth. He was to return "in the Divine truth which is the Word," thus by revealing the interior truth of the Word.<sup>1</sup> It is unquestionable that judgment is impossible without truth, for it is truth that unveils hidden states of evil and good. The Lord said of those who rejected Him: "I judge no man" (John 8:15); "the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him "in the last day" (John 12:48). And of the Holy Spirit He said: "When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment" (John 16:8). "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.... The time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in parables, but I shall show you plainly of the Father" (John 16:13, 25). The Lord's second coming would be a spiritual advent as a new unfolding of His Word, a new revelation of Divine truth in the form of plain doctrine. Only so could a last judgment be possible. 1. @TCR 3

### Judgment in the Spiritual World

And this last judgment could take place only in the spiritual world. There are indeed continual judgments going on in the natural world - taking the form of punishments for crimes, losses due to human error, diseases which come as the results of abuses, and misfortunes and disasters which are sometimes called "acts of God" and sometimes accidents, or which are assigned to the forces of nature. In human society evils of various kinds lead to wars and strife which are judgments on men and nations. And it is often seen how the cumulative effects of the evils of a society or a nation reach a crisis which can no longer be avoided. It is obvious that evil is punished and good rewarded even on earth, and that unless the laws of men could provide for such judgments, before the courts of justice or before the tribunal of public opinion, society could not endure.

But natural disasters and sicknesses may strike the innocent as well as the guilty, even as the rain falls on the just and on the unjust. Such events, like every detail of man's life, are governed by the Divine Providence according to laws of permission which have in view what benefits the spiritual life of man. Sickness and poverty and misfortune may be blessings in disguise. Wealth and power may be curses to some, blessings to others. Thus external failures, frustrations and trials, are not to be classed indiscriminately as judgments or retributions for sins.

In the dispensing of worldly justice, society seeks to protect itself from evil and harmful acts. The intention of evil, or evil purpose, cannot always be discerned in the natural world, and never with any certainty. Yet a bodily act which is evil in form may be done from an innocent motive or from

ignorance. The final justice can be seen only when the spirit is known. For man is a spirit. The clothing which we call the material body is not permanently man's, but is shed as a discarded garment at death. And the natural mind which is formed while man is in the world, and which is indeed part of his spirit that lives to eternity, also contains many things for which man is not wholly responsible. For it takes color, without man's choice, from his environment, and it is strongly affected by his heredity.

This is the reason that a final judgment cannot be made upon man's spirit immediately after his resurrection into the spiritual world on the third day after death. The spirit of man cannot be judged until he comes into a state of freedom, and is no longer under the compulsion of thoughtless habits imbued in the world, of mass opinions unconsciously accepted, or of the overpowering lusts that originated from states of the body. Hence it is that man after death does not pass immediately into heaven or hell, but comes into a great intermediate world which the Writings call "the world of spirits." And there the spirit remains until his character is clarified or unified. It is in this world of spirits that judgment takes place; the world of which it may be said: "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known" (Matthew 10: 26).

The novitiate spirit undergoes a gradual change, even in his appearance, as he is weaned from natural states and comes to realize his own ruling love and chosen delights. At first he adopts a life similar to his life on earth, seeking a somewhat similar occupation and similar pleasures. His natural affections lead him to associate with spirits who are of his own nation and have external loyalties to the same church. But by degrees and stages his inward, spiritual affections begin to assert themselves. And then he may abandon many of his former habits and associations and seek out societies of spirits kindred to his own concepts of charity and use. This transference into the society of his like is what essentially constitutes his "judgment." If he is so brazenly evil that he cannot restrain himself from crime and deceit and violence, he is constantly thwarted in his persecution of other spirits and finally casts himself into some hell where that type of evil is the delight of life. In either case - although the evil may occasionally be brought before examiners and evicted from good societies - there is no great throne of judgment; no appearance of God Himself to deliver the final verdict upon the good and the evil. The judgment is simply a purification of the societies of spirits which proceeds as normally as the purification of the human body from poisons and waste material. Indeed, the Greek word for "judgment" in the New Testament is *krisis*, and means separation.

Why a Last judgment?

But if this process of judgment proceeds continually upon the spirits who arrive from earth daily, what is meant by the "last judgment" which the Word predicts so frequently and in such graphic and awe-inspiring terms? What is the Last judgment that follows the "consummation of the age?" And why is it necessary?

It becomes necessary when the normal stages of judgment are disturbed in the world of spirits. For that world, like every human society, is an organic form. It relates to the Grand Man, which is the Lord's kingdom of uses. The world of spirits is like an alimentary canal, a digestive system, which receives the newly arrived spirits who are to be absorbed like food into the body of the Grand Man. Normally, the stomach and intestines absorb the food and put it to use in the tissues. But if there is an accumulation of indigestible food in the stomach, and the digestive organs are overtaxed, there would ensue a disturbance of the whole system-a convulsive pain and a generation of poisons which would threaten the life or welfare of the body. (@TCR 119, Coro. 19)



The same would be the case when the church on earth breeds evil and hypocritical spirits who accumulate in the world of spirits and upset the orderly course of judgment and the balance or equilibrium between the heavens and the hells. Such double-minded spirits evade judgment because their interior evils, or their real motives and loves, are hidden by moral externals and by the appearance of piety which simple good spirits accept as genuine. Wicked leaders are then protected by the good who, because of natural loyalties and sentiments of sympathy, are misled by them into false beliefs. The course of judgment is then arrested, so that the evil become predominant in the world of spirits.

"The world, because it judges from externals, does not know what the state of the church is."<sup>2</sup> Nor can the state in the world of spirits be known except from a Divine revelation. Yet every man's spirit is, unbeknown to him, in the world of spirits, and thus midway between heaven and hell. And when the church on earth approaches its end or consummation, by departing from the good of charity, and comes into spiritual darkness and confusion and thus into monstrous falsities, it is unavoidable that a last judgment, a general judgment, must occur in order to restore the equilibrium in the world of spirits, and thus assure that the good spirits there may resume their progress towards their heavens and that men on earth may retain their freedom in spiritual things.

2. Can. Red'n. iii

### Three General judgments

The Writings therefore state that "a last judgment is nothing other than the end of the church with one nation and its beginning with another."<sup>3</sup> The "flood" of Noah was actually not a flood of waters, but a judgment in the spiritual world on the spirits, or genii, of the primeval race. The end of the Jewish Church, signalized by the crucifixion of the Lord, was marked by another spiritual "last judgment"; which had its significant natural consequences in the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews. And when Christendom, after sixteen centuries, was ripe for a spiritual judgment, the Lord returned in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

@AC 3353

## 25 THE SCENE OF THE JUDGMENT

The outstanding fact about the "last judgment" revealed in the Writings is that it occurred in the world of spirits, not upon earth. It took place in the year 1757 A.D., commencing in the last days of 1756. The cause of the judgment was the deplorable condition of the Christian Church as to spiritual life; and the immediate occasion was the accumulation of crowds of evil spirits from Christendom in the intermediate region between heaven and hell; which threatened the spiritual freedom of spirits and men and prevented good spirits from finding the way to heaven.

That the judgment would occur in the spiritual world is sufficiently obvious, since John, in his vision of the future, "saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." That the judgment would not involve the destruction of the physical universe can also be seen from the facts that the Lord in His Divine providence looks to a continual growth of His heavenly kingdom from the human race, and that the Lord's infinite love could never be conceived as content to stop the procreation of the human race, which is the seminary, or seed plot, of the heavens.

It is clear, further, that a general last judgment could take place only in the spiritual world where all can be together, since no problems of space can arise there, as would surely be the case if the

scene of the judgment had to be on the earth. And besides, can we not better see the merciful purpose of the judgment if it prepared for a time when the human race of the future could live on in untold generations, and perform its celestial functions in a state of greater freedom and progressively greater enlightenment?

But the spiritual world is hidden from the eyes of men, and this for the sake of man's freedom; since, if he came face to face with spirits, his rational mind would be shaken. Yet the truth about the Last judgment is necessary as a phase of that truth which shall make men free. Therefore the Lord prepared a man to bear witness of how it occurred. He was prepared, unknowingly, from his youth. He was trained to observe and to understand what he observed. He was first introduced into the sciences, like a spiritual fisherman, and strove patiently to see the design of God in nature and in the marvels of the human body. At the age of fifty-five he was intromitted into open intercourse with spirits and angels, always under the Lord's special protection and guidance. Daily he explored the arcane regions of the spiritual world, and after five years he was inspired to begin to publish a revelation of the spiritual contents of the Word, in the Work called the Arcana Coelestia. When the Last judgment came he was sixty-nine years old, a meek man, loved and respected of men for his learning and personality; a typical student, too astute to be imposed upon in anything having to do with experience, yet remarkably tolerant and incredibly diligent and patient. And despite the fact that he had then been in communion with spiritual beings for fourteen years, and had published volume after volume about the unseen world, he had managed to keep this his unique state entirely secret even from his most intimate friends. He pursued his financial affairs, planned and worked in his garden, took part in political battles and social engagements; and at the same time he wrote down his Spiritual experiences with much detail in his diaries or journals.

#### Swedenborg's Record of the Last Judgment

From these journals, as well as from many statements in the Arcana Coelestia, we find that Swedenborg had long seen, in the confused and perturbed state of the world of spirits, the signs of an inevitable judgment. He saw this more than ten years before it came.() **And when the judgment finally broke in sudden fury, he recorded what he saw from day to day in his journal. Seemingly he was so fully occupied in observing and reporting that he had time for little else. We have no record of any letters or memorials written by Swedenborg during this period.** () @SD 1316, 488, 4371, @AC 1850[4], 2121ff, 2243:7, 4057

His journal of every stage of the judgment enables us also to see its progress through his eyes. He mentions the fate of a number of historically known persons and what happened to many of his deceased friends, and describes how the very face of the world of spirits was changed and reformed amid the sometimes phantastic events which marked the destruction of the old order in that world.

This day by day recital, told by a trained observer in entirely objective fashion, not only confirms the actuality of Swedenborg's visions but provides us with a visualized basis for our thought about the spiritual world, and with illustrations of the working of spiritual laws. It also throws a new and interior light upon the character of many persons, institutions, nations and churches, and thus permits us to reinterpret history from the viewpoint of the Divine providence. And, finally, the bald matter of fact description serves to prevent the acceptance of the Writings by any who are not ready for it, and is therefore a protection against the profanation of the doctrine itself.

The account of the judgment may indeed be classed with other memorable relations which are

found interspersed in the Writings. One of Swedenborg's friends, Count von Hopken, once asked him why he published such relations of his experiences in the other life, which would prove an obstacle to the reception of the doctrine. But Swedenborg then replied that the Lord had commanded him to publish them, although he realized that there would be those Who would ridicule him for them and regard them as incredible.<sup>1</sup> 1. Docu. 6:27

Men have a reluctance to picture the life of the spiritual world for fear of materializing it. Even Swedenborg himself went through a state, during the first few years after his spiritual senses had been opened, when he experienced repeated shocks at finding the spiritual world so substantially complete, so complicated, so confusingly like the natural world and yet so utterly different! Spirits had bodies, yet no bodies; they lived upon spaces, yet not in spaces; they were surrounded by nature, yet it was not nature. There were so many perplexing appearances and apparent contradictions!

Yet this spiritual world, which is more real than ours, more various and complex, and more truly substantial, was the scene of the Last judgment. And we must therefore seek to understand what it is like if we are to understand Swedenborg's account.

### Permanency and Change in the Spiritual World

The spiritual world is the realm of the Divine proceeding, the kingdom of Divine truth. All things, that is, all spiritual states and qualities, appear there in their true relations. There is no single phenomenon there that does not testify to a spiritual state; nor is there any appearance which does not have a significance that angels and intelligent spirits can sense. Every appearance corresponds to an actual spiritual reality. In heaven this is obviously so; but also below heaven even every false appearance or phantasy actually represents and manifests the perverted state which it is employed to hide, and it is only those who themselves are not in the light of heaven who cannot discern the real state that is represented.

What fixes relative positions in the spiritual world is the Divine truth. All spirits and angels appear located according to their reception of the Divine truth. Hence we read: "All places, wherever they are, are appearances of Divine truth in ultimates. Divine truth in ultimates appears in such forms as those of nature, and all places receive Divine truth variously."<sup>2</sup> Spirits who have no belief, or have no certainty, are therefore seen to wander about, and "cannot be kept in any fixed place where Divine truth is."<sup>3</sup> 2. @SD 5363 3. @SD 5373

The source of all permanency is the Lord. The Divine love never alters, and neither do the gifts of His love or the truth which proceeds from Him. There are certain things in the spiritual world which may be called constants; like the spiritual Sun, and the atmospheres which proceed from it and act as His ever-living hands. Indeed, the spiritual atmospheres are the source of the eternal, basic substance of all the heavens; out of which all human and angelic minds are created as well as all things which appear in the spiritual world. But there are also certain other sources of permanency in the heavens. Angelic societies as such are permanent, and do not alter except by a continuous growth; and the things which angels possess and use remain constant, although "to the eyes of those who wander from society to society such things are changed according to consociations."<sup>4</sup> Ruling loves are constant with spirits when once confirmed. And both heaven and hell are therefore permanent, 4. @TCR 78

It is different in the world of spirits. For it contains element; which are in constant flux: mixed

states, opposites striving for dominance, even as is the case in the natural minds of men. For the world of spirits is the intermediate realm between the heavens and the hells. That world is therefore constantly changing, according as it is occupied by spirits of different character.

Yet even here there is an inmost order, an underlying arrangement of states, so that all spirits may appear present with reference to their reception of Divine truths in ultimates. The Writings amply testify that the spiritual world in appearance is almost the same as the natural world. Not only are spirits perfect human forms with nothing lacking, but there are also hills and valleys, rivers and fields, vegetation and animal life, cities and houses, and all the objects that we see on earth. And as far as the world of spirits is concerned, it has the coherent features of an entire world. Many newcomers are impressed with its vastness, as if they had passed from a village into a great city.<sup>5</sup> But it is seen also as a winding valley between mountains and rocky tablelands.<sup>6</sup>

It is said to be situated in the lower parts of the spiritual world, immediately below the heavens; and the heavens then appear as mountains rising round about, but subsiding When the evening state approaches.<sup>7</sup> And below in the valley there are sometimes seen caverns or gulfs which are the gates of the hells, and which are opened when evil spirits choose to enter. 5. @TCR 475, LJ 27 6. @HH 429 7. @SD 4923

The world of spirits may thus appear wider and more inclusive, or more confined, according to the different states and points of view of different spirits. Heaven, to the novitiate spirit, seems as if in the clouds, because to him it is an unattainable state. But sometimes the heavens seem nearer, within the horizon of thought; and when a spirit is prepared a narrow, well guarded road may open by which he may travel to his home in the mountains of salvation.

Here we discern a spiritual law by which spiritual things are visible and tangible only in so far as the spirit is able to appreciate their significance and use. All things in that world are visible to spiritual sight, but only as much appears as the Lord permits. And we may recognize that this same law governs the human mind, for that only becomes present before our thought which is pertinent to our state or belongs to our active affections.

### The Six Expanses of the Spiritual World

It is, of course, utterly impossible for the intricate relationships of all the spiritual states of all spirits and angels to be comprehended in one geographical concept or represented in any one picture taken from the natural world! For this reason the various relationships of the heavens and the hells to spirits in the intermediate world have to be represented in differing and paradoxical ways. Space - or the appearance of space, for there is no actual space in the other world - is merely the sense perception of spiritual states, spiritual conditions. Newcomers, that is, novitiate spirits, are therefore instructed that heaven is above them, and that the hells are below their feet, under the ground on which they stand.<sup>8</sup> The heavens are not ordinarily apparent, except as mists or bright clouds overhead. But the ground under the heavens and the world of spirits is said to be as if were hollowed out to accommodate the hells; and there is a hell situated beneath each angelic society.<sup>9</sup> 8. 5 Mem. 10, @CL 461, @HH 422 9. @HH 583, 588, 541

The spiritual world as a whole is represented as six "expanses" or strata. The heavens appear to spirits as three atmospheric expanses, one above the other, and the hells also as three, below the earth of the world of spirits.<sup>10</sup> Yet these expanses, including the intermediate one of the world of spirits, form one globe containing concentric globes one within the other.<sup>11</sup> We find in this

description a peculiar resemblance to the ancient idea of the universe, with the earth in the center, while the planetary spheres, in concentric orbits about it, were conceived as the abodes of the blessed dead and of the gods. Hades and Tartarus were then imagined to be in the center or on the nether side of the earth. And indeed this idea conveyed to the ancients a certain truth about the spiritual world. 10. @AE 702[2], 1133:6, LJ 27, @AR 260, 879, et al. 11. Ibid.

The physical truth about each solar system is that its center is the sun, around which all the planets move. And when we think of the Lord as the source of all things of our lives, we must visualize Him as the Sun and center of the spiritual world. Yet the earth or globe of the spiritual world does not appear to move or revolve, because the relations of spirits and angels to the Lord are fixed by death, since their ruling loves cannot thereafter be changed. The Lord as a Sun is omnipresent, but appears to the angels as constant in the sky before them at an angle of forty-five degrees, and appears bright or dim, or hidden by clouds, according to their states of reception.

But when it comes to representing the relationship of spirits and angels with each other, the laws of the spiritual world cause this to be seen in many different ways. The "expanses" or levels represent the discrete degrees in which the angels or spirits principally live as to ruling affections and conscious life; and these degrees answer to the various degrees of the human mind which, on the basis of life on earth, had become educable and open. For it is a man's mind that is his immortal spirit.

Each "expanse" or degree separates those who can associate together in the other life from others with whom there can be no mental community or social contact. Yet each expanse is a world as it were by itself, and is marked by great variety. So, for instance, the world of spirits is said to have its zones of climate - relatively frigid or tropical or temperate.<sup>12</sup> It has also its quarters, to which Swedenborg gives the same names as ours; but they are always oriented, not by the north, as on our maps, but by the east "where the Lord is." 12. @TCR 185, @SD 5144-5147, 4383

### Consociations and Societies

There are also other physical parallels. There are continents in the world of spirits which distantly correspond to the continents of our earth but are not in the same proportions, since they do not mark geographical relations or distances but human relations or spiritual proximities.

And in visualizing the world of spirits as the scene of the Last Judgment it is important to remember that when spirits first enter the other life they retain all the natural affections, tastes and temperaments that they had on earth, and also the same convictions and beliefs, the same loyalties and habits, the same talents and ambitions. It is natural, therefore, that spirits should congregate in societies of their like - and especially in communities of their own religious faith and practices: Catholics with Catholics, Protestants with Protestants, and so on. It is also natural that national loyalties and common social habits should create separate groups, for common concepts of civic government and interests born of similar education create a unique genius in those of the same nation. And this is true even of citizens of the same town, who have the same kind of social customs. To add to this, common professions, offices or occupations bring many together after death. And, finally, friends, or those who like similar diversions or pleasures, are naturally attracted to each other after death when they meet as spirits.

All this is according to spiritual laws which operate in both worlds. Even on earth "birds of a feather flock together," as the saying is.

But in the spiritual world there are no material obstacles as on earth; no distances, no need for money to travel, no lack of time! All that is needed in order to meet with kindred souls is a definite desire and the pertinent knowledge. There are, however, laws that are peculiar to the spiritual world, and that bring about an order there quite different from that of the natural world.

#### The Four Quarters

One of these laws has to do with the four quarters, which in the spiritual world represent general states and have no connection whatever with the quarters of our earth. Our four quarters are determined by the meridian, or by the sun. But the spiritual quarters are not from the Lord as a Sun, but from each angel according to reception.<sup>13</sup> There is no space in heaven, and yet there are definite relations. The Sun, which is omnipresent and is always thought of as the East, appears before his face wherever an angel turns! In the eastern quarter of heaven dwell those who are in an interior good from love to the Lord and thence in a clear perception. In the west of heaven live angels who are in the good of charity and thence in a more obscure perception. The south is the abode of those who are in intelligence and wisdom from conjunctions of good and truth; and in the north dwell those who are in relative ignorance, in obscure light of truth or doctrine, and who may even be in falsities and yet long for truth. 13. @DLW 126, @SD 5527ff

Such is the arrangement of societies in heaven. And it would be the same in the world of spirits if that world were in a state of order. But when evil spirits predominate, as they did before the Last judgment, considerable confusion is bound to arise, since the external affections of spirits may bring them into quarters where they do not internally belong. And thus we find from the Writings that evil and abominable spirits came to occupy sites in all the various quarters. Spirits who were in a direful and selfish love of dominating through religion, usurped places in the eastern quarter, and those who sought to maintain power by keeping the multitudes in ignorance established themselves in the north.

The learned who wanted to rule through false dogmas had strongholds in the south, and in the western quarter were those who exercised command by means of cunning and malice and a supreme love of possessions.

#### The "Middle Space" of the World of Spirits

But there is another spiritual law which throws light on the general arrangement of spirits in the world of spirits. For it provides that the "middle" or central region of the world of spirits shall be occupied by those spirits who possess and read the Word and worship the Lord, and thence have somewhat of spiritual light; in other words, those who are of the Lord's specific church. This means that before the judgment in 1757 the middle of the world of spirits was occupied by those nations which, owing to the Protestant Reformation, had access to the Old and New Testaments; and in the most central portions were those among them who were in the good of faith and charity and could still maintain some of the uses entrusted to the Lord's specific church. They enjoyed, we are told, something of spiritual light. Spiritual light in its essence is the Divine wisdom, which enters the understanding of man as far as man has knowledges, and from these the faculty to perceive it.<sup>14</sup> 14. @LJCont 14

It is especially mentioned in this connection that spiritual light does not pass through spaces, or natural atmospheres, as is the case with light from the sun of the world; but it passes "through the affections and perceptions of truth" and thus is transmitted instantaneously "to the last limits of the

heavens." We take this to mean that spiritual light is transmitted through those spirits who have the knowledge of religious truths to other spirits, and these can receive the enlightenment as far as they have some religious ideas to be awakened. Spirits in the world of spirits can thus serve as media through which enlightenment reaches other spirits, or they can take away or prevent the enlightenment of others and thus arrest their spiritual life. Something like this, of course, happens also among men.

But in the world of spirits - where there is no space, no distance - it is provided that from those who are in the greatest enlightenment from the Word spiritual light can spread, as from a center, to all nations and gentile peoples, however distant they may appear to be, in proportion as they can receive.

The Writings show that it is most necessary that there should be on earth a church where the Word is read and the Lord is known. For from such a church there are continually maintained in the world of spirits societies which are in spiritual light. At the time of the Last judgment there were still such societies there, from the Reformed nations, through which the Word could enlighten all regions of the world of spirits "by a spiritual communication."<sup>15</sup> But the Writings also disclose that the Christian Church at that time had come to its consummation and end; and that it had, as a whole, come into a spiritual darkness because increasingly men had ceased to acknowledge the Lord as the God of heaven and earth, and because they had separated faith from charity, so that the Word was no longer understood and the light of truth was almost extinguished.<sup>16</sup> 15. SS 110 16. SS 112

For this condition there could be no healing from within the Christian Church itself. Its light had failed, and only a flicker remained among those faithful few who had been gathered in the "center" of the world of spirits. Even among them spirits had insinuated themselves who sowed discord and false ideas. Yet all the Protestants of whom there was still some hope of salvation because they lived at least a moral life were, as the judgment drew near, led into the so-called "middle space," where they were distributed according to countries and nationalities, in cities and societies resembling their own on earth. Thus the Germans, the Dutch, the English, the Swedes, each dwelt in separate regions of the middle space. But surrounding the dwellings or cities of the sincere Christians, and also above them, there were immense multitudes of spirits on all sides who were Christians only in form or by external habit, and who, from their self-love and worldliness, made nothing of evils of life.

And at the outer borders of the Protestant middle space were the openings of various hells.<sup>17</sup> 17. LJ 48, LJ post. 2, 142

### The Outer Circuits

What has just been described as the middle space, or the region of the Reformed or Protestant nations which still enjoyed something of spiritual light, was, the Writings tell us, surrounded on all sides by a vast region or circuit inhabited by those of the Papist religion. These were outside the middle space because the Word, although known, was not read among them, and therefore their spiritual light was feeble. In fact, the Writings do not include the papal church among the "churches in the Christian world," but call it "Christian gentilism."<sup>18</sup> 18. @AE 955[5], @AC 3447[2]

The Moslems, whose holy book is the Koran, which contains stories borrowed in distorted form from the Old Testament and the Gospels, were assigned a district still farther from the middle

space. And around this Mohammedan district, and stretching to a remote distance, was the circuit or region of the gentiles or pagans, who were in deep spiritual ignorance.

These almost geographical descriptions of the arrangements of the spirits in the world of spirits may make us forget that there is no space in the spiritual world. Yet whenever the relationship of various groups of spirits comes into question, space appears! And does not the same occur in the private spiritual world of our own minds? In our thought of persons, liked or disliked, admired - despised, do we not think of them as near or remote, as above or below? Some things are accessible and familiar to our minds, whereas other fields of thought seem to belong to a foreign world, strange and forbidding. And are there not, in our minds, fearful undercurrents of anger and passionate ambition which seek to overwhelm the mind with phantasies, and which make our suffering conscience pray for a judgment and cry out, "How long, O Lord"?

Are there not heights of pure ideals which we can vision vaguely in the form of doctrine, with a cherished hope for a loftier and freer and more abundant life; yet fail to visualize in detail, and picture far above us as if in a distant cloudland?

What happens in the mind of man so continuously occurs on a tremendous scale in the collective mind of the human race in the world of spirits. That world is the true mirror of the internal state of the race on earth.

How that world was precipitated into a convulsive judgment in the last days of December in the year 1756, we will attempt to relate in the next chapter.

## 26 THE JUDGMENT ON "BABYLONIA"

### The Ordination of the Heavens

When a specific church or dispensation outlives its function as the mediate source of spiritual light, and no longer serves as a means for continual judgment in the spiritual world, it enters a period of spiritual vastation which culminates in its utter consummation, when materialism and atheism rush in together (Coro. Summary). The Writings reveal that when a church so, departs from the truths of faith and the goods of charity, the world of spirits is filled with evil spirits from the millions, who go thither from the world, and who interpose themselves between heaven and the church like a black cloud which prevents the sunlight from shining. They cut off much of the influx of heaven, so that the truth of faith and the good of charity can no longer penetrate to the men of the church (ibid.). Being deprived of their basis in human minds the angels lament that their state of life becomes as it were drowsy, and that heaven is like a body deprived of feet.<sup>1</sup> A general judgment is thus called for, to be effected by a new advent of the Lord, a new revelation of truth from His mouth, or from His Word, by inspiration.

For by this there is redemption from the hells, and the formation of new heavens, whence a new church is produced on earth. 1. LJ 19

But before this redemption can be effected the heavens must be ordained by the Lord.<sup>2</sup> A new state, preparatory for judgment, must be induced upon the angelic heavens; and especially upon those good spirits of the lowest or natural heaven who had been cast into obscurity by the evil, and had been as it were driven away from their inheritance by evil spirits who, by spiritual pretensions, had come to usurp the power there. 2. @AR 225, @AE 258



The ordination of the heavens is possible only by the power of Divine truth. And angels can be in the perception of spiritual truth - the truth of the spiritual sense of the Word - when men on earth are piously reading the Word in its literal sense without being misled by false doctrines. If falsities intervene, the literal sense is distorted in meaning and does not yield its spiritual sense for the attending angels.

With the design that the heavens may be ordained or ordered by a new perception of the spiritual meaning of the Word it is therefore necessary that a new Divine revelation be given on earth, through which the falsities of the consummated church may be recognized and removed and the literal Word seen in its genuine sense.

This was why the Lord raised up His servant Emanuel Swedenborg, and through him, by Divine inspiration, opened the spiritual sense of the Scriptures for men. This was done in the eight years preceding the Last judgment; and the many volumes of the *Arcana Coelestia* stand as an everlasting record of this Divine preparation for the judgment. The fact that this work at first found few readers on earth did not prevent its functioning in the heavens. For through its expositions of the spiritual sense the literal Scriptures were again opened so that they could testify before spirits in the other life to the interior laws by which judgment is there performed. The Word was no longer closed to spiritual beings, even if men were as yet unable to receive the new revelation.

It is thus significant that the ordination of the heavens is described in the Apocalypse in an early chapter which begins: "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven.... And immediately I was in the spirit." John then describes how he saw the throne of God, and around it the four and twenty elders and the four cherubim and also a sea of glass (Revelation 4). Thereafter John saw the Lamb, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who had seven eyes and who opened, amid the jubilation of the angels, the book that was sealed with seven seals, which none either in heaven or earth had been able to open or even to look upon (ibid. 5).

The Apocalypse next tells of many preludes to judgment - many preparatory or temporary judgments which were attended with much dread, many woes and persecutions; although the servants of God were first "sealed" or marked lest they be harmed when the seven trumpets of doom were sounding. And then, it is said, the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of the covenant was seen!

We do not recognize, in the Apocalypse, any prophecy of the historical procedure of the Last judgment. Yet it discloses the principles of judgment. And it is therefore notable that the next thing spoken of in the book is the appearance in heaven of a woman crowned with twelve stars who was clothed with the sun and had the moon under her feet, and whom we can all recognize as a representative of the New Church - not the New Church on earth, for this was not yet - but the New Church in the heavens. And this heavenly woman was in pain to be delivered of a man child, Who was then swiftly caught up to heaven lest he be devoured by a great red dragon. The man child, the Writings reveal, signified the Heavenly Doctrine, but the "nascent doctrine" which was later to be formulated and published on earth.<sup>3</sup> 3. @AR 533, 535, 543

The celestial woman plainly signifies the heavens after their ordination before the judgment. What, then, was meant by the man child, or the "nascent doctrine," which was born in heaven and yet caught up to God's throne lest it be profaned? Was the doctrine of the New Church the offspring of angelic minds?

The answer appears to be that the Heavenly Doctrine here means that spiritual sense of the Word which became seen in its fullness in heaven when the Lord opened the Scriptures by inspiring the writing of the Arcana Coelestia on earth. Before the judgment, this heavenly teaching could not be communicated to spirits in the world of spirits, whose minds were confused with wrong interpretations of the Scriptures. Spirits not imbued with such falsities of faith could indeed be instructed, and children were always taken into angelic care when they died. And if this be so with children, it would also be so with the good among the gentiles who had not known the Word and could therefore not have perverted it.

### Preparation of the Gentiles

In many places in the Arcana mention is made of the dreadful state of the spirits who were accumulating in the world of spirits from Christendom, as a sure indication that the last times were at hand, and that a judgment would pave the way for a new church. And it is noted that "seldom if ever" is such a new church established within the old church, but among gentiles.<sup>4</sup> 4. @AC 2121-2130

Swedenborg published the last volume of the Arcana Coelestia in 1756, and during the remainder of the year he was apparently busy preparing a comprehensive subject-index of the whole work. Besides, he was planning to extract the doctrinal parts inserted between the chapters and to publish this material under separate titles. The articles which had been headed "The Doctrine of Charity" were, after the addition of a preface, to be arranged into a book which was to be called The Heavenly Doctrine of the New Jerusalem. It seems to have been while he was arranging the chapters of this book that he heard it announced in the world of spirits that "somewhere amongst the gentiles there begins to take place a revelation from heaven; that is, that spirits and angels speak with them and teach the heavenly doctrine, especially about the Lord; and that those there embrace it, and that thus a new church from heaven is rising up. . . ." <sup>5</sup> Certain spirits near "the entrance to Africa" were also expecting revelations of the unblemished doctrine of heaven and were promised "a Bible, but a new Bible, from the Lord."

And the angels rejoiced that the Lord's advent was now at hand and that "the church now perishing in Europe should be renewed in Africa," and this by the Lord, and not through missionaries from the Christians whom they distrusted. The Heavenly Doctrine, it seems, would be received among these and other nations in the spiritual world, and thence be propagated to other spirits and finally to spirits of other earths.<sup>6</sup> 5. @SD 4770-4776 6. @SD 4777-4781

### The Spiritual Babylon

But meanwhile the heavenly doctrine became an issue among Christians in the spiritual world. In a certain Swedish city below the world of spirits the temporary masters plotted to retain their dominion by adopting the doctrine of charity and the acknowledgment of the Lord as an official creed.<sup>7</sup> Shortly after, Swedenborg was led to see a highly organized network of societies which was maintained and controlled by such as were in the love of exercising dominion by means of the holy things of the church. 7. @SD 4835, 4838, 4842f

These spirits, who came chiefly from the Roman Catholic nations, were entrenched in vast cities on top of, and also inside, the mountains which stretched on all sides around the Middle Space where the Reformed nations dwelt.<sup>8</sup> The whole district was called "Babylonia"; for in the Word the tower of Babel represents an attempt to rule from a love of honor and power by using the pretenses of

piety and the authority of the church. Later, the kings of Babylon conquered Judah and desecrated the temple, taking its sanctified vessels to be put to profane use; and the kings themselves were even worshiped as gods. In Christian times, the popes of Rome arrogated to themselves the power of Christ as His vicars on earth. The worship of saints and relics was introduced, and the priests imposed a spiritual tyranny over the minds of men by pretending to have authority to forgive sins by demanding blind faith in their dogmas, even forbidding or discouraging the reading of the Word. Thus arose the spiritual Babylonia in the world of spirits. 8. LJ 58

On earth there are limits beyond which the love of dominion dares not go. Obvious abuses of authority eventually lead to rebellion. And in the sixteenth century the Protestant Reformation caused many nations in Europe to separate from the Roman Church and purify religion from some more patent evils, such as the selling of indulgences. While retaining many falsities, such as the ideas of a vicarious atonement and a tripersonal Godhead, and adding the falsity of salvation by faith alone, Luther and other reformers reestablished the reading of the Scriptures, which were forthwith translated into the vernacular languages.

The effect of this was of such moment that the Protestant or Reformed churches took their positions at the center of the world of spirits, in the "middle space" where the Catholics had before been. And the spirits of Babylonia were as it were forced into the outskirts of the Christian region in the world of spirits.

In the other life the bonds of worldly restraints are loosened. Those who are in the love of dominating others will aspire to be revered or even worshiped in the place of gods, and will resort to persuasion by fear and to various hypnotic and magical methods of controlling the minds of their subjects.

Thus we find from the Writings that Babylonish spirits, in their insane ambition, often proclaimed some one of their own rank as a god. But when this occurred, the mountain on which they were usually opened up into a cleft, and they were swallowed up by the hells.<sup>9</sup> Before the Last judgment commenced, one such mountain of phantasy was situated in the eastern quarter at the height of the sun; and bishops and prelates, aided by Jesuits, established there a great city, ruled by a consistory through many underlings who were distributed like so many "commissars" over the mountainside, and who constantly inspected the multitudes below from watchtowers. The faith they inspired was mainly this: that the things they said were from the Lord, who was with them in His own presence.<sup>10</sup> But Swedenborg tells how presently this mountain sank down to the level of the horizon and was transferred to the left, or to the north, amidst the terror of the spirits upon it. 9. @AC 10412 10. @SD 4965ff, 4956f, LJ 58

And here was a strange thing. For this occurred while Swedenborg was reading in Isaiah concerning Lucifer the king of Babel; which caused the attention of the angels to be centered on that mountain!<sup>11</sup> Seen by the angels, the internal sense of the prophecy was a clear denunciation of the profane love of dominion; and a glimpse of this truth communicated itself to the more intelligent of the spirits who had been kept under the spell of their Babylonian oppressors, so that they no longer gave them support. For Isaiah wrote: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning. . . . For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." 11. Isaiah 14; @SD 4970ff

It must be realized that spiritual mountains, while they appear in every way as solid and real as those in the world, may be the results of phantasy. When the Lord said, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you"; it was such mountains that He meant. Even as mountains are upheavals of the earth's surface, so man's ambitions can raise his love to impossible heights of pretense and self-deception, and can impose its phantasy of greatness upon simple souls. By constant assertion, lies and prejudices can become the means of enveloping entire nations - as under Hitler - within a cloud of phantasy which prevents truth from entering. And it was a similar hierarchy of bold and sanctified falsehood that ruled in the Babylonish region of the spirit world before the general judgment. But phantasy, however overwhelming it may feel itself to be, however firm its dictatorship, is brittle. An ounce of true faith may make its towering mountains sink to the level of the earth.

To understand the phenomena which accompanied the Last judgment we must always keep in mind that the very earth on which the spirit walks is spiritual. He sees himself, and feels himself to be, in the relation in which his mind and personality stand to other spirits.

Even on earth we speak of looking up to those we admire, envy, or wish to imitate. We are conscious of class distinctions and social levels, as if some people were above us and others below us. Greater education, greater wealth, more exalted Uses Or greater powers and abilities, segregate some to heights above us. Such distinctions may be based upon realities of solid worth and on uses performed. If not, a comparatively small occasion can create an upset of these levels of society. A government may topple, a reputation be pricked like a balloon, a system of financial credit may collapse and a whole nation may be plunged into turmoil and chaos. For our lives, even in this world, are founded on our faith, our confidence in others. Where faith is shattered we experience a spiritual earthquake.

But the severity of such an earthquake is according to the importance of the faith that has been shaken. If a friend proves false, or an enterprise proves chimerical, or even if a nation falls, we can still readjust our lives. But if the very faith on which we have built our lives should be challenged, the whole world seems to tumble into ruins about us. Those who have faith in the Lord and in His Divine providence are on solid ground which no judgment can upset. But those who - like the evil spirits who had usurped lofty positions in the Babylonia of the spirit world - trusted in themselves and their own prudence, and whose power depended on the credulity of the multitudes, these became desperate when new truth began to break through from heaven.

### The Onset of judgment

The main judgment on Babylonia commenced "at the end of the year 1756 and in the beginning of the year 1757"; and by the 5th and 6th of January it was, in general, completed.<sup>12</sup> The first preparations had taken place in the eastern quarter, where the 'mount of the congregation' was removed and sank down to a lower level. This did not cause its abandonment. For in desperate attempts to bold the confidence of the simple, some of the evil spirits resorted to a magical phantasy by which they produced a "sun." But even by their phantasies they could not make it shine.

Therefore they placed a man in this artificial sun and hailed him as God the Father. He then became their mouthpiece, authorizing their crimes and their new dogmas which kept their subjects in fear of purgatory. And whenever this profane spirit was judged a successor was appointed.<sup>13</sup> 12. @SD

The judgment had barely begun. In the Spiritual Diary - which had by this time turned into a commonplace book with only a few dates noted - we find hundreds of pages describing how the strongholds of the papal religion were devastated, tract by tract, city after city, and how the multitudes of spirits who had lived in mutual charity were liberated. Swedenborg himself was everywhere, observing, and conversing with spirits about the sole Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ who had all power to save. At the very start he seemed to have been personally involved in the very center of the cyclone of judgment, although he himself was unhurt and remained in a strange calm. For in a wakeful vision he visited a certain senator in the southern quarter, in a great Babylonish city which spiritually was called "Rome." The house showed a resemblance to a palace on the Capitoline Hill. The senator, with some other spirits, had been trying to form a doctrine of life; and they accepted some things which Swedenborg told them, although they still adhered to some of the Catholic extravagances.<sup>14</sup> 14. @SD 5210

It was noted that Swedenborg, in this period, had been putting together the work to be published later as *The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine*, of which he states that it was revealed to him out of heaven.<sup>15</sup> It consisted mostly of articles extracted from the *Arcana* and of copious references to that work. Some of the Babylonians had already been considering how they might pretend to receive this doctrine and subtly pervert it to their own ends.<sup>16</sup> But now the senator with whom Swedenborg visited seemed to receive certain things which Swedenborg said about the Lord. And when the prelates and cardinals of that place perceived this, they conspired together and formed a mob which broke in by the windows of the house and sought vainly to kill the senator and drag his seemingly dead body away.

Swedenborg was then brought into a sleep, for his own protection, since spirits cannot harm a man when he is asleep. And when he awoke, his persecutors and their allies in the vast district had already begun to be overthrown and cast into what appeared as a gloomy gulf which opened in the southern mountains.<sup>17</sup> 15. @HD 7 16. @SD 4988 17. @SD 5211f

This direct attack on the Heavenly Doctrine seems to have been the signal for the release of the winds of judgment upon the whole Babylonian tract. A papal consistory, with a changing membership, still exercised dominion from the distant south, although no popes were allowed to show themselves, nor was any denial of the Divine permitted.<sup>18</sup> But soon the events came too close upon one another for description. The peaks of the mountains of the papal tracts in all the four quarters flowed together as into a continuous chain, suggesting that the leaders of the hierarchy were joining in a defensive action. But whether ignorant or learned, and whether good or evil externally, this action brought upon them a common judgment; for inwardly they had magnified themselves from self-love beyond endurance and were therefore carried down into a deep chasm in the south, together with some of the popes.<sup>19</sup> And then, it is mentioned, there was a great rejoicing among the Catholics who had lived in mutual charity according to their religion. <sup>18</sup>. @SD 5215, 5229 <sup>19</sup>. @SD 5230-5234

The chasm just spoken of widened out below into a vast subterranean hell, in an orderly arrangement as to quarters. Angels were sent to effect this arrangement. For it was a new hell, which is kept closed below but open above, and is for those of such character who had lived since the beginning of Christianity.<sup>20</sup> This judgment occurred, it is noted, "in the last days of the year 1756." And at this point, also, the judgment on the Mohammedan tract seems to have begun,<sup>21</sup> which will be described later. <sup>20</sup>. @SD 5336ff <sup>21</sup>. @SD 5239f

## The Mountain of Multitudes

But the judgment on Babylon was far from completed. Investigating an infestation which seemed to come from the north and west of the papal district, Swedenborg was conducted to a strange mountain which consisted of cities, one below another, connected by winding shafts or stairways. It was inhabited by an immense multitude of spirits; far too many, Swedenborg thought, for the size of the mountain! It was found that these were spirits from various ages since the first beginning of the Christian Church, many being monks, some being idolaters. Those of the earliest ages lived in the lowest cities, separated from those of later centuries. The remarkable thing was that while these multitudes lived on and within the same mountain, and were, so to speak, in the same space and had the same cities as the ultimate of their sensory life, yet those of different centuries were unable to see each other or to interfere with one another's activities; because in the spiritual world different opinions and manners of thinking cause spirits to "turn to different quarters," and then they disappear from each other's view, and sometimes their houses vanish with them.<sup>22</sup> 22. @SD 5249ff

This apparent crowding of many spirits into an impossibly small space used to puzzle Swedenborg at first, and he thought that perhaps one spirit was, as it were, within another.<sup>23</sup> He realized, however, that there is no space in the spiritual world and, that spirits can be present in a moment by what is called "aspect presence"; which is effected by thought from some affection, and causes them to appear where they really are not. Their real abode is always according to their ruling state. As to this more permanent state they always rest in some idea of place. Generations of corporeal spirits who have been attached to the same city will therefore seem to themselves to live in that city, although the houses may appear somewhat different to each. It is also explained that the ideas of similar buildings, streets and cities - ideas utterly lifelike - are not from their own memories but from the material ideas of the men they as it, were "possess."<sup>24</sup>

And this is why it is said that the spirits may disappear when they turn themselves to a different "quarter"; for by this expression is meant that they are turned to such ultimates in the human race as correspond to the falsities or evil loves which they delight in, although the spirits are not aware of the men with whom their thoughts terminate.<sup>25</sup> 23. @SD 2338, 5531 24. @SD 5092 25. @SD 5251f, 5610, 4683

Now, while Swedenborg was in the City of Multitudes a visitation by angels took place. The governors of the innumerable monasteries were cast out and also the monks, who were a lazy crew who had kept people subjugated by means of phantasies and violence. Their agents of oppression had been controlling the communicating shafts, and were cast into hells along with pagan idolators; and those in the lowest city who had ruled the rest - even as the papists had always done, by means of evoking the power of tradition - were cast into the southern gulf; and the mountain was dispersed like smoke. And, coincident with these events, the gentiles in the farthest circuit were being prepared for judgment.<sup>26</sup> 26. @SD 5255ff, LJ 58:6

## The Papal City

The next Catholic district to be visited was in the neighboring region of the western quarter. Here there was a vast mountain country, much of it excavated and filled with monasteries which were entered through caverns covered with roofs. On top of one mountain was a small city ruled by a pope who lived in a palace like that on Monte Cavallo in Rome. Catholics coming into the other life always have a pontiff set over them, but seldom is any pope from the world so appointed. Yet this

was the case with the pope who had ruled twenty years before, "because he believed in heart that the Word is more holy than is believed, and that the Lord ought to be worshiped." This pope was Clement XII, known as a reformer rigid in discipline and austere in personal life, a patron of language studies. And Swedenborg notes: "It was perceived that in the world he had been blind" - whether physically or spiritually blind is not said. But Swedenborg adds, "Perchance he was saved." And when the judgment came, Swedenborg reports that he saw some spirits escaping, taking with them first a golden image of Mary and second the pope, before any harm could befall him.<sup>27 27</sup>. @SD 5249ff, 5270, 5272; @LJCont 59; LJ post. 102

But below the papal city there was an immense metropolis inside the mountain and stretching far and wide. It was a monastic city, containing multitudes, some of other religions. The monks lived off the people and were obviously hypocrites. And our scribe notes: "I found some acquaintances in that city."<sup>28 28</sup>. @SD 5271

The Lord had warned that He would "come quickly," and as "a thief in the night." Despite many warnings and much delay, judgment strikes like lightning. This underground city heaved up and sank down, and the monks were forced out by an irresistible Divine force. The well behaved among the populace were allowed to remain, however, under the supervision of judges and priests.

Thus the judgment on this part of the Babylonian tract did not leave utter destruction in its wake. For a great part of the Catholic communion were spirits who had lived in good according to their practices, although they had not been in truths. And since every nation (gens) is served by its own spirits - although sometimes by others - yet a sufficient remnant of Catholics was left in the former papal city, where now the streets remained but neither the Monte Cavallo nor St. Peter's Basilica.<sup>29</sup> @SD 5406, 5408

And there were other concessions granted in the western quarter. Near the northern angle there are a number of societies which are devoted to external delights. And the enterprise that is pursued there is the introduction of credulous newcomers into the kind of heavens that they had imagined would provide them with eternal bliss. In some societies they play, or dance, or converse or feast; in others they discuss religion or politics, or even revel in ribald talk or unchaste pretenses of innocence. By such attractions evil and ignorant spirits with a bent for leading others entice them into remaining under their control. But since these external joys of the imagination soon begin to pall, those false heavens are permitted as useful means by which many are withdrawn from their foolish notions concerning intromission into heaven.<sup>30</sup>

And angelic spirits are then able to instruct them that the real delight of heaven is a love of use. <sup>30</sup>. LJ 56, cp @CL 7-9

Judgment is not for the sake of punishing the evil, but for the sake of saving the good. In the next chapter we shall complete the account of Babylon's fall, and of the preservation of the innocent who hearkened to the voice from heaven: "Come out of her, O My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and receive not her plagues!"

## 27 THE FALL OF "BABYLON"

### The Treasure City

Among the cities of the papists in the world of spirits there existed, before the Last Judgment, an

immense underground metropolis which extended straight across the western quarter, and then, at right angles, straight across the southern quarter up to the great southern "chasm." The city was at the border of the "middle space" or inner square, which was occupied by the Protestant nations. The name of the city was called Great Babylon, or Rich Babylon, by Swedenborg. It was, of course, a spiritual city - a city of doctrines elaborated for centuries. Ingenuity and inventions of all sorts were there esteemed, and the inhabitants excelled in "the light of nature," or a "natural lumen," in which falsities can shine as resplendently as truths.<sup>1</sup> 1. @SD 5280ff

What this persuasive light is can be judged to some extent from the cleverness with which the Catholic Church builds up faith in its dogmas through carefully constructed reasonings, such as were employed by the schoolmen of the Middle Ages and which resulted in monumental systems of philosophy like that of Thomas Aquinas, which is still used; and then confirms these dogmas by proclaimed miracles.

For many centuries no learning was permitted unless it was authorized by the Church. Scientific research and speculation were driven underground, to survive only as alchemy and sorcery. Popes and bishops also exerted power by much material wealth and a vast part of Europe's land was in their hands. This hoarded wealth - but especially the apparent wealth of learning monopolized by prelates, monks and Jesuits - was represented in the spirit-world by gold and silver and precious stones, which were concealed in the Rich City Babylon in dark vaults lit by candles.<sup>2</sup> It was represented also by the fact that the priests performed their masses, "not in the common language of spirits, but in a language composed of high-sounding words which induced an external holiness and awe, but were utterly unintelligible"; although this is against the law of the spiritual world.<sup>3</sup> 2. Revelation 18:23, @SD 5282-5293 3. LJ 56; @SD 5289, 4931, 6049

But when they began to commune with certain magical hells, and while the dust they thought to be gold was being carried out of the crypts, the ground under these treasures commenced to bubble up and an earthquake engulfed many in nearby hells. Panic followed, and crowds of Jesuits and monks poured up through the shafts which connected the underground city with the mountaintop. Some tried to rescue their golden images, but in vain. Presently the mountain was borne away, exposing the city with its magnificent monasteries, palaces and temples. And at last the city itself was blown away by an east wind and dispersed as if into smoke; and with all its treasures it was cast into a great sea farther off to the west. A deluge came upon the place where it had been, and a monstrous dragon was at last seen hovering over it.<sup>4</sup> 4. @SD 5294-5303

Thus perished the great city Babylon, with the riches it had amassed through the ages; and it should be understood that the loss of these riches signified that the spirits ruling there had been deprived of the truths and goods which they had externally possessed, and by which they had exercised power. For "from him that hath shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have." (Luke 8: 18).

The districts themselves in the world of spirits are permanent, while their populations shift and their features change in consequence. Swedenborg gives a number of diagrams of the various quarters to show their relative situations and the arrangement of the cities. In the case of the Rich Babylon this was the more necessary, he explains, "on account of turning to a quarter opposite from those who are above me."<sup>5</sup> Possibly this meant that while Swedenborg was observing these evil states he had to turn the sight of his understanding from the direction in which his angelic guardians faced - or from the direction of his love. 5. @SD 5302. The diagrams are found between nos. 5249 and 5485 of the English edition of the Diary.



## The Aftermath of Judgment

Even after the great cities of Babylonia had been destroyed, and their dominion broken, there were immense districts to be judged. One was a monastery region in the west, with twenty times as many monasteries as on earth. There the monks were sinful and gluttonous, and were almost entirely ignorant of doctrine. They went about at night, intimidating simple souls with miracles and threats. Only a few cloisters were above the earth, to observe the state of things there. The rest were beneath, for new monasteries of the same orders had been formed in each age, and the older ones had then let themselves down to lower levels. Those of the Dark Ages dwelt beneath those of the time of the Reformation and were not in so wicked a state.

There were also many women, who had lived in almshouses, who infested Swedenborg while he was in the western quarter. These had lived indolent lives, and had loved gossip, eating and sleeping, and going to church - yet without any desire to be instructed. There were also beggars and hoboos who acted as if they were stuck together. In the west also there were many rich men who had lived in various centuries and continued to cherish phantasies of wealth. When their dwellings were laid open they scurried about like rats to save their treasures.<sup>6</sup> 6. @SD 5309-5321

All these regions were judged. But there remained in the farther west about twenty mountains, called the "seven mountains" in the Apocalypse because "seven" signifies what is profane.

The spirits there were mostly from various parts of Italy and many were crafty in disposition, claiming that they possessed the power belonging to the Lord's human nature, and attempting in vain to practise the methods of the Inquisition. Some proclaimed themselves as gods; others maintained a devil-cult while at the same time worshipping the Divine, so that they might have a protective communication with certain simple good spirits who lived in a heaven on mountains that rise up near the Middle Space of the Protestants. In the judgment which these malignant spirits invited when their evils broke out, they were dispersed by earthquakes and became insane or stupid. Some were led through deserts and swamps, and had to cross certain bridges and then go through an underground tunnel; and the farther away they went the more stupid they became, until they lay down like corpses. Some were cast into the hells of the Nephilim - the antediluvian hells.<sup>7</sup> 7. @SD 5630-5638, 5648-5658

In the eastern quarter, the spirits who had made the phantastic "sun" were also promptly judged, and were dispersed into deserts in the north. But in the same quarter were multitudes who had been held in subjection, yet had been pious and upright and devoted to duty. Some of these were transferred farther east. But others, who were in inner sanctity and yet were infected with something of hypocrisy and a desire to rule, were brought to the west and the north, where those had formerly been who dwelt in almshouses. From the nuns and young women living in convents, the evil and adulterous were cast into deep hells. The rest, those who were not idle, were led to form a society without convents. But only a few stayed, for most of them could not be weaned from their conventual life. Many who had been diligent in domestic service, from affection and religion, were brought outside the region of the church to form a society in which they could learn the truths of faith and yet be protected from the infesting spheres of men. But those who were idle, and cultivated piety alone, were distributed among the adherents of their own religion to act as servants.<sup>8</sup> 8. @SD 5337-5343; LJ post, 109

Swedenborg then records: "Thus was Babylon devastated and utterly destroyed on three sides, the south, the west, and the north; this commenced at the end of the year 1756 and in the beginning of

the year 1757; yesterday and today these three tracts, today being the 6th of January, 1757."9 9. @SD 5336

The whole district was ruined. For the eastern tract also was cleared of false heavens. It is interesting to find that many of the things which happened before Swedenborg's eyes remind us of the prophetic descriptions in the Apocalypse, where it is said that the great city Babylon was mourned by the merchants of the earth, in that in one hour her judgment was come. For to the devastated tract came many merchants, who were accustomed to trade in her precious merchandise of gold and incense and slaves and the souls of men, and who lamented when they could not even drag any of these from the bottom of the western sea where everything had been cast. These "merchants" were monks and others who had been traveling abroad when the destruction came.<sup>10</sup> And some of the wealthy of the neighborhood, who lived only for luxury and amusement and worshiped God only from habit, were seen fleeing with millstones over their left shoulders, to signify how they could not get rid of their execrable dogmas by which they had enchained others. It is said in the Apocalypse that the sound of a millstone should not be heard again in Babylon (Revelation 18:11, 21).<sup>11</sup> 10. @SD 5344, 5333 11. @SD 5335

### The Residue of the Catholics

What happened to those pious and good Catholics who had an affection of truth is also told. Many of them had been living in subjection in the eastern quarter. But now these were transferred to the west by a direct way across the Protestant tract; and they seemed to stop on the way and borrow silver and garments from the Protestants who were in truth but not in good, even as the sons of Israel borrowed from the Egyptians.<sup>12</sup> They were then given fertile tracts in the northwest, near the Protestants, where they were instructed by priests from the Reformed in a school or college whence there is an entrance to heaven.<sup>13</sup>

These new colonists in the west inherited also much treasure left underground by the monks, and this because they had an affection of truth. Other groups of simple good Catholics who had lived among the monks underground, but protected from the contagion of idolatry, were given places in the various quarters formerly occupied by the evil. Those who strongly adhered to Catholic tradition remained hidden near the western sea.<sup>14</sup> 12. @SD 5405ff 13. LJ 63, @SD 5504f, LJ post. 110ff 14. @SD 5503

Thus a new, orderly arrangement was made around the Babylonish tract, providing a city like Rome in the west, with a good spirit presiding as "pope," schools conducted by converted monks, and enough spirits, both good and evil, to serve the needs of Catholics on earth.<sup>15</sup> The hells descend obliquely into the earth at the outer borders of the tract. Since new spirits arrive all the time from Catholicism on earth, and many hundred thousands roam at large in the world of spirits, they are successively vastated. Similar monasteries appear, and there are similar judgments on a smaller scale. Babylonians gather as before on the mountains which represent their loves, and seek to establish new "heavens." But before as many as two thousand gather, they are judged and their society is dissolved. They cannot return, and their false heavens collapse of themselves through the nearness of good spirits.<sup>16</sup> 15. LJ 56, @TCR 820, @SD 5408, 6022, 5501f 16. @SD 5598f, @TCR 818ff

Monks still persist in sending out emissaries to seduce the Reformed, but are punished if they do; for Babylonian spirits now have no intercourse with other spirits, but all spirits go to their own places soon after death.<sup>17</sup> Possibly the rise of nationalism may be of significance in this connection. The world of spirits is organized on the basis of natural affections, and the power of Babylonia is

weakened by national loyalties. 17. @TCR 817f; LJ 64, @AR 812[3]

Many and great heavenly societies are formed from Catholics.<sup>18</sup> All spirits who can receive truths of faith in the goods of life are instructed and elevated to heaven. It is not their fault that they are born in the Catholic Church.

All their infants are in heaven, but these are ignorant of their parents' falsities. 18. LJ post. 112

#### The Catholic Church on Earth

It is to be observed that the description of the Babylonia of the spiritual world cannot, without many reservations, be regarded as a picture of the Catholic Church presently on earth. For one thing, the spirits of many past centuries were subject to the Last judgment. The Writings say: "As regards Babylon in the natural world or on our earth, those meant by Babylon there are not in the same state as those in the spiritual world; and yet the exhortation (Revelation 18:4) is also for them, that they may take heed to themselves": "Come out of her, O My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues: for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities" (Revelation 18:4, 5).<sup>19</sup> 19. @AE 1107

Concerning the end of Babylon the Writings say also: "Not that the idolatrous worship of such in the world will be destroyed and themselves with it, for this will remain, but not as the worship of any church but as the worship of paganism; consequently, such after death will come among pagans, and be no longer among Christians. But from those who have adored the Lord, and not the pope or saints or graven images, a new church will be gathered up by the Lord."<sup>20</sup> 20. @AE 1029[8], 10

#### The Judgment on the Mohammedans

In the last days of the year 1756, before the Mountain of Multitudes had been destroyed, the judgment came upon the Mohammedan spirits, whose tract was outside and round about the Catholic circuit.<sup>21</sup> This judgment took less time. It took the form, mostly, of a migration from the west near the south, where the Moslems had dwelt distinguished according to nations. From this district they were led by a way around the Christian region, and through the deserts and bogs in the north beyond where the City of Multitudes still stood, and past the gulfs of that quarter unto the east, and, even farther, to the south.

On the way the good were separated from the wicked, and it appeared as if these latter were cast into marshes and lakes or scattered in a far off desert in the north. The rest went on to the east and there colonized a vast area of mountains and valleys, behind certain Christian societies of instruction in the east towards the north. But the best proceeded farther south, and it was there that those Moslem heavens were established which had communication with Christian heavens because they accepted the belief that the Lord was not only the Son of God but one with the Father. Some of these arrive at their heavens by an inner circuit, going from the lower earth, first to the east, then to the north and on a higher level over the west, and so to the south.<sup>22</sup> 21. @SD 5240ff, 5258ff 22. @SD 5258ff, LJ post. 91ff

The reason the judgment took this form of circuitous travel is that in the other life all states and spiritual contacts are repeated, so that each spirit may thus confirm or reject his previous attitudes. This often takes the form of communication with different quarters or classes of spirits, or by travel through the quarters.

The Koran, the holy book of the Moslems, written by Mohammed, contains distorted fragments both from the Old Testament and from the New. A few pages in the Koran even contain correspondences by which there is some light in the Mohammedan heavens.<sup>23</sup> The religion of Islam stresses the unity of God and was permitted in Providence that it might eradicate the prevailing idolatries; but it is accommodated to the genius of the orientals, and therefore allows polygamy and gives sensual ideas of heaven. The Lord is acknowledged as a great Prophet, and in a sense as the Son of God because He was born of a virgin.<sup>24</sup> 23. @SD 5809[8] It is stated in the Koran that in it "There are some verses clearly to be understood; they are the foundation of the book; but others are parabolic" (Chap iii.) 24. @CL 342, @AE 1180[2], Koran 3:40-43

Moslems after death usually seek for Mohammed, because they think he will intercede for them at the day of judgment. For this reason, before the Last judgment, a spirit impersonating Mohammed was always provided who had acceded to the Christian religion, and who therefore appeared in some place beneath the Protestant Middle Space.<sup>25</sup>

Some of these substitutes refused adoration; but others arrogated power to themselves, and when multitudes of good spirits deserted them they became openly angry and wanted their followers to invade Christendom. To quell such a crew the real Mohammed, a black and terrible spirit, was once raised up from the lower regions to announce, "I am your Mohammed," and sink down again.<sup>26</sup> 25. LJ 50, @LJCont 69, @TCR 829, @CL 344, @SD 5243 26. @SD 5666 (a), @LJCont 70, @TCR 830

One distinguished group of Moslems were the Moguls, whose empire - originating with the conquests of Ghengis Khan and Tamerlane - was beginning to totter in the 18th century. As spirits they were proud, and lived in wealth and magnificence on a mountain in the south. They were hostile to Christians, and their mountains were cast down and those of them who from love of self thought of Mohammed instead of God were deported into deserts or into hells.<sup>27</sup> 27. @SD 5729

There are three grades of Mohammedan heavens. The first is introductory. The second consists of such as have rejected polygamy. The third or highest consists of those who acknowledge the Lord as the only God and one with the Father. Swedenborg conversed with some of these; and they gave reverent attention to the teaching that the Lord glorified His whole body and, differently from any man, took all things of the body with Him, because His soul was infinite. The same was also explained by angels to certain gentiles in the east.<sup>28</sup> It may be noted as of interest that the Koran claims that Jesus was not crucified, but only His image, but that God took Him up unto Himself (chap. iv:157). 28. @SD 5063, 5244, LJ post. 87, 129

Moslems are instructed by teachers of their own religion who have been converted to Christianity. They are so docile and obedient that Christian spirits were moved with shame.<sup>29</sup> But when some "wished to go and join the heavenly Christian Church" they were advised to remain in the doctrine of the Koran about the Lord as the greatest Prophet and the Son of God, for their spiritual good and conscience had been formed from this faith, which could not suddenly be extinguished.<sup>30</sup>

The general teaching is that the Mohammedan heavens must remain distinct from the Christian heavens.<sup>31</sup> Yet there is influx from the Christian heavens, and it is stated that many Mohammedans became Christians.<sup>32</sup> 29. @HH 515, @SD 403ff, 344 30. LJ post. 97, @SD 5669 (a); @HH 516 31. @CL 352, 342, LJ 50 32. @SD 5246

Judgment on the Gentiles

It was noted that in the Babylonish City of Multitudes there were many idolaters from previous ages who were cast out into lakes and marshes toward the west. When this occurred, there started also a general judgment upon the gentiles who occupied two circuits beyond that of the Mohammedans. In the inner circuit were the Africans, and in the outer fringe were spirits from "the Indies" and other pagans. Still farther toward the circumference certain gulfs appeared, and the great surrounding sea which appears as a boundary for spirits of our earth. Still, these circuits appeared as if laid out, not in a plane, but in a globe.<sup>33</sup> 33. @SD 5240-5248, 5263-5265; @AC 9583, LJ 48, LJ post. 126, SS 105e

The gentiles, like the Mohammedans, were judged by migrations through various quarters. All such spiritual travel is according to the successive states of thought from affection, for the ways that one walks spiritually are actual determinations of the thought.<sup>34</sup> The Lord had said that at His second coming He would "send His angels ... and they shall gather together the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:31). This actually took place with the gentiles. They were led from the west, where most of them lived, and were brought a short way in the west and then directly above the northern level of the Christians without communicating with them, and so to the east; and were eventually allotted places at the east and south, on both sides of the Mohammedan heavens. Some who in the world had worshiped God under a human form were conjoined with Christians in heaven, even as it is written in Luke: "They shall come from the east and west, and from the north and the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." 34. LJ 48

During their migrations, the evil among them were diverted and cast into various gulfs, two of these openings to the pagan hells being on the two sides of the Moslem heavens, and two others stretching obliquely downwards in the west.<sup>35</sup> The judgment on these vast multitudes was completed in a few days. For "everyone after being yielded up into his own love and into his own faith is immediately assigned and carried to his like."<sup>36</sup> 35. LJ post. 127, LJ 51f, @SD 5263ff, 5279 36. LJ 51

### The Africans

The best, and also the most intelligent and lovable, among the gentiles were the Africans. They had an interior judgment and a genius akin to those of the celestial kingdom.<sup>37</sup> Even before the judgment they had received instruction from angels in the Heavenly Doctrine, and had been promised "a Bible, but a new Bible from the Lord."<sup>38</sup> They were therefore more receptive of the Heavenly Doctrine than others on this earth, and were told that the Lord would come and establish a new church and that "His appearing is made through angels who teach."<sup>39</sup> 37. @TCR 835, 837, @HH 326, @SD 5518 38. @SD 4770ff 39. LJ post. 118, @SD 4783

Some years after the judgment, Swedenborg was brought, by changes of state, to the spiritual Africa in the southern quarter.<sup>40</sup> He even drew a diagram of the district, which in some respects corresponded to our terrestrial Africa. He found that the wisest and best lived in a central region. These perceptively knew all that was in Swedenborg's mind, and more, and could speak truths; and although they seemed deficient in the knowledge of correspondences they were yet delighted to see their value. They told him that in this great tract they all worshiped the Lord, and were taught by many who communicated with the angels of heaven; and that the communication is not through speech by the angels, but through an interior perception; and that these are their instructors whom they perfectly discriminate from all others.

If papists or other Europeans intrude and are unwilling to be their servants they send them away to

These African spirits then received a copy of the Word and read it. At first they could see no holiness in it, but afterwards more and more of the internal sense became apparent. And then they gave it to their teachers, who admitted that they already had it. In fact, these angelic teachers said that they "dictated it to the men in Africa with whom they had communication, just as the Lord guides: hence it is evident that there is a revelation there."41 41. @SD 5946

In another account of the same visit, Swedenborg notes that some of these instructors "speak with Africans in the world;" that this speech falls into their perception interiorly; and that they "perceive the influx and so receive the revelation with enlightenment."42 In still another passage about the spiritual Africa, Swedenborg states: "It was told me from heaven that the truths now published in the Doctrine of the New Jerusalem concerning the Lord, concerning the Word, and in the Doctrine of Life for the New Jerusalem, are orally dictated by angelic spirits to the inhabitants of that country."43 42. LJ Post. 124 43. @LJCont 76

Whether the Africans "in the world" here meant those in the world of spirits or those on our natural earth seems somewhat problematical. Certainly the Writings do not elsewhere mention any modes by which doctrine can be revealed to men by oral dictation on the part of angels. But in closing his account of his visit to the spiritual Africa, Swedenborg writes: "Afterwards they were given the work Heaven and Hell, which they received and preserved: similarly also The Last judgment and Earths in the Universe and also The White Horse, lastly The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem, that they might pick out (ellegant) those things which they saw useful."44 All these books were published in 1758. 44. @SD 5946

It is thus obvious that Africans in the spiritual world had knowledge of the Writings as well as of the Sacred Scripture, and that having this, they could the better receive angelic speech as an enlightenment of interior perception.

That the books of the Heavenly Doctrine, after their publication on earth, existed in similar form in the spiritual world is clear from the above accounts. How far they can be of use in instructing gentiles depends, of course, on the states of these spirits. Novitiate African spirits seem to gather still in the far west near the north; and there, we are told, they are visited by some of the instructors who in vast numbers are sent forth from a Christian heaven - which is also identified as a certain "seminary" - to distant nations. Those Africans who were in communication with this missionary school were such as had lived well and acknowledged one God under the human form. They were in the love of truth, desiring to find out how to live rightly, and knowing that the Lord would give them enlightenment according to the kind and amount of their good of life. Afterwards Swedenborg, who spoke with them about the Lord, heard "that a great many spirits and angels who are instructed in Divine truths from the heavenly doctrine were sent thither."45 45. @SD 5515ff, LJ post. 119

But these things could not have happened before the Last judgment was completed; for the heavenly "seminary" or college from which these teachers of the Heavenly Doctrine were sent forth was itself purged in the judgment before it could be a means of healing the nations. How the judgment on the Protestant nations took place, and what were its after-effects, will be discussed in following chapters.

## 28 THE JUDGMENT ON THE REFORMED

### The Decline of the Christian Heavens

When we think of someone going to heaven, we think of heaven as a state of eternal and undisturbed bliss. But heaven, after all, is not a place, but is a society of souls which takes its quality from those who compose it.

In the beginning of the Christian Church, a heaven was formed from those who lived in acknowledgment of the Lord as their Savior and in a good life for the sake of Him and of the Divine precepts. Soon, however, the church on earth, as it grew in numbers and external power, declined in its simple loyalty to the Lord's teachings, and its doctrine began to be confused. Many Christians, after apostolic times, came to worship the one God under three persons without having the idea of three gods. These were admitted into the Christian Heaven; as were also other spirits who had lived a moral life, and many who, from habit in the world, acted piously, even though they were interiorly malicious.

Thus the heavens gathered after the Lord's advent deteriorated. At first they consisted of spirits who had heaven within them, and who worshiped the Lord and thence had heaven around them also, as is the proper order.

But, successively, the spirits who entered became more and more external; and while even these were given happiness and an abundance of all things, so that they lacked nothing, they began to place heaven in dignities and in the magnificence and beauty around them. And when they craved service from others and reverence for themselves, they could no longer receive such luxuries and pleasures from the Lord; whereupon they gradually began to provide these things for themselves by phantasies and arts unknown in the world. In vain were angels sent to warn them. Their societies grew worse, so that the original good spirits had to be taken out and concealed for ages in various places inaccessible to the evil. In appearance, many of these societies of refuge seemed to be situated in the "lower earth" below the world of spirits. Those who were of a more interior kind were instructed, however, and preserved in heaven.<sup>1</sup> 1. @SD 5745-5749; LJ post. 141, 169, AR, Preface

All spirits who are flagrantly evil as well as inwardly wicked promptly and naturally gravitate into hell.<sup>2</sup> But those who retain a moral behavior and emulate a spiritual life in externals are permitted to remain among good spirits who trust them; and the evil can indeed guide and instruct the simple good, who look no further than the surface.<sup>3</sup> This is the reason for the long-suffering tolerance of the Lord, which permitted the evil to maintain themselves for centuries in these false and transient heavens. Their final judgment was delayed lest the simple good should suffer. For let us note this, that spirits are taught by those of their own church and religion, and the Christian Church had so falsified its original truths that it could no longer supply a true standard of spiritual judgment - could no longer distinguish genuine religion from pretense. It could not lead men except to heavens that were imaginary or false. 2. LJ 69 3. LJ 59

The same, of course, was true of the pagan religions. Toward the middle of the eighteenth century the "heavens" formed from those who had died from our earth since the Lord's advent were heavens only in name, for those in them were not angels but spirits of various religions.

But the more spiritually minded among them, and all those who had died as infants and been

brought up among these in the other life, were, as was said, removed from their corrupted societies and concealed by themselves, under the protection of the ancient heavens.<sup>4</sup> 4. LJ 2, 69, 59, @SD 5747, 5745

The Spiritual Diary relates one remarkable instance of how the decline of the original Christian societies in heaven affected simple good spirits. For some time before the Last judgment, some of the apostles - who had lived in heaven in great happiness, yet not in any particular eminence, but in what seems to have been the ultimate heaven - were remitted into the state in which they had been on earth. It was certain literalistic spirits who thus stirred up the corporeal state of these apostles. The effect was that the apostles - as they did in the world - came into the phantasy that they were to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. They also maintained that none should be admitted into heaven except those who had suffered persecutions and miseries. And while they were in this state the apostles could remember nothing of what they had learned in heaven in their first state, or even that they belonged in heaven. And while they fluctuated, as it were, and were by turns in one state or another before the Last judgment, it is afterwards told of them that they attended while Swedenborg wrote the True Christian Religion and, on June 19, 1770, were endued with new power from on high and sent out to be the heralds of the new age.<sup>5</sup> 5. @SD 1321-1332, @TCR 791

Before the Last judgment the general state of the simple good spirits of the ultimate heaven was one of confusion. It was disorganized because so many evil spirits were consociated with them in externals; and as long as this was the case, enlightenment failed and the interiors of their minds could not be opened.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, even the state of the middle heaven was disturbed. And nothing could restore the even pace of angelic progress except the removal of the evil spirits from their position of prestige and leadership. 6. @AE 684[1], @TCR 121, 119

Remember that these evil spirits who had taken over the power were from the Christian Church itself! They represented the means of salvation!

They were trusted exponents of the teachings of Christ. And as long as they were so trusted it was to them that Christians turned for guidance in the way to heaven. The simple could not be expected to know that in the last times there would arise false Christs and false prophets who, if it were possible, would deceive the very elect (Matthew 24:24).

### The Reformed in the World of Spirits

The first group of evil spirits which became the object of final judgment was, as described in previous chapters, the "Babylonians"; mostly Catholics who exercised dominion through the pretense of being vicars of Christ and able to forgive sins, and who held the people spellbound with various mysteries, miracles and superstitions. The judgment which destroyed the phantasies of Babylon in the world of spirits, and dislodged these spirits from their high places, took place quickly, in the space of a few days, and was virtually completed by the sixth day of January, 1757.

But the judgment on the Protestant strongholds in the world of spirits was more protracted, and had to be effected by successive changes. Swedenborg testifies that it began about the seventh day of January - after the judgment on all the Catholic, Moslem and gentile regions had drawn to a close - and was nearly completed by the seventh of April, although it continued with certain residues throughout the year 1757. One reason the judgment on those from the Reformed churches was delayed was that the reading of the Word had been restored at the Reformation, and that by the Word they had communication with the heavens and thus a certain protection. For the same reason



"all the Protestants or Reformed of whom there was still some hope," or "who had led lives of charity and its faith," were, at the time of the judgment, collected in the central region of the world of spirits; while in the surrounding districts were those who made "seeming heavens" for themselves, being in externals without genuine internals. Such false heavens appeared situated mainly on mountains and rocky plateaus on all sides of the "middle space."<sup>7</sup> It was upon these latter, not upon those at the center, that the Last judgment came. 7. LJ post. 142, @SD 5347

### The "Lower Earth"

But it is easy to oversimplify the appearances by which spiritual relations are expressed in the world of spirits. And before the Last Judgment had, as it were, straightened out these relations, they were especially confusing.

In general it can be said that at the time of the judgment the entire level which is usually described as the ground level of the world of spirits was entirely occupied by evil spirits.<sup>8</sup> Below this earth-level, and concealed from the evil, was a "lower earth"; and it was there that the salvable Protestants lived in central communities, surrounded on all sides, and above also, by evil spirits who had indeed read the Bible and frequented churches, but had made nothing of the Commandments and had loved self and the world.<sup>9</sup> And farther off to the sides were many, dark caverns stretching far off and leading down obliquely into the hells. In fact, these hells were thus situated underneath the Babylonian district, which extended around that of the Reformed. 8. @SD 5481-5485 9. LJ post. 142, 139

It is also told that the "lower earth" was so arranged that it had various levels or strata; and good and evil spirits dwelt in such a way that they were in alternate strata, so that the good might restrain the evil and thus maintain order; even as in the world the public opinion of decent people controls open crime, or as the involuntary fibers in the human body rule the voluntary fibers.<sup>10</sup> 10. @SD 5485, 5781

This "lower earth" is therefore sometimes referred to by Swedenborg as "below the feet." There good spirits lived, "encompassed by the hells," yet well protected from them.<sup>11</sup> There is, a certain temporary protection, as we well know, in modesty, ignorance and lack of pretension. These spirits were in falsities about heavenly life and in a state of vastation, sometimes attended by despair and spiritual torment; like the "souls under the altar" whom John heard crying: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou delay to judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Revelation 6:10).<sup>12</sup> 11. @CL 231, @AR 845, @AE 899[2] 12. @AC 7090, 4947, 699

But there were also many spirits there who were in faith and charity and who lived in peace and tranquility. On a hill in the "truly Christian" middle of this district there stood a quadrangular place which is identified by Swedenborg as "the New Jerusalem." And it is said: "All things in the other life must be considered in relation to such a site."<sup>13</sup> In fact, Swedenborg made a diagram of the "lower earth" to show the relationship of this "New Jerusalem" to the various kinds of evil spirits who were arranged according to their characters in the angles extending between the four quarters.<sup>14</sup> 13. @SD 5471, cp 5302, 5347 14. @SD 5471-5491

What was meant by the New Jerusalem is not here explained. It is clear that it was the abode of those who were in the greatest light from the Word, and through whom that spiritual light was spread to receptive spirits on all sides, even to the gentiles in the farthest circumference.<sup>15</sup> The New Jerusalem, of course, signifies the New Church as to doctrine and life; and in memorable

relations written by Swedenborg after the Last judgment he mentions certain "Jerusalemite cities," one of which he saw besieged in vain by evil spirits.<sup>16</sup> But even before the judgment, the genuine Christian remnant in the "lower earth" received the heavenly doctrine of charity and faith, and thus constituted a nucleus which was to be raised up to form the New Heaven out of which the New Church was to descend. 15. @LJCont 14 16. @AR 655

### The Mountain Level

It was mentioned that on the ground level of the world of spirits only evil spirits lived before the judgment. But above the world of spirits, and around it, there arose mountains on which the worst sort of Christians had sought to establish themselves in order to exercise command and gloat over their eminence; for indeed the glory of dignity and superiority rivals even the delights of dominion. These were external men without internal spirituality. They established a great many cities there, and each city meant some particular type of religious doctrine. Into these they lured many simple souls who thus became their partisans and supporters, and who had wandered up into these mountains in their search for the true heaven.

Both good and evil spirits thus lived on this level.<sup>17</sup> These mountains were indeed the proper place for the ultimate or natural heaven, and Swedenborg at first called them the "heaven of spirits," which he found to have been usurped by evil spirits. 17. @SD 5485

But high above these mountains there was still another expanse, overhead and as if invisible in the clouds. This was occupied by several types of pietists who were in the conviction that they were sanctified and holier than others, because their thoughts were continually in the clouds, attempting to think of the invisible God without determining their thought to think of the Divine under human form.<sup>18</sup> 18. @SD 5377ff, LJ post. 142

### Preliminary Judgments

Even before the Last judgment, societies of evil spirits were in periodic ferment.<sup>19</sup> Not only is peace impossible for the wicked, because of constant jealousies and underhand intrigues; but when evil becomes open and brutal, and begins to injure the well-disposed, the Lord sends angels for a visitation; causing rulers to be deposed and conspirators to be sent away to lower levels, or even into their hells. Such visitations are always for the protection of good spirits, who are then taken away and secreted. Sometimes a society is overturned and good spirits are established where the evil were, even as the Israelites dispossessed the nations of Canaan.<sup>20</sup> Certain Swedish cities in the lower earth underwent preliminary purifications; and previously to that it is mentioned that Charles XII, in his haughty stubbornness, "declared war on God," thinking himself to be the Devil himself.<sup>21</sup> 19. @SD 5838 20. LJ post. 135ff, @SD 4925ff, 4944 21. @SD 5034ff, 4884

There were also various signs given of the approaching day of doom. There were earthquakes in divers places, and a storm cloud or misty sphere seemed to spread over the mountains and rocks as a sign of the Lord's presence in the angelic heavens above them, and especially in the ultimate heaven.

The higher heavens seemed to be brought nearer, causing the interiors of the evil spirits to be disclosed so that they could no longer appear like moral Christians. Their lusts were set free, and they began to reject their pretended piety of the former state with contempt and ridicule. And with this, all the splendid possessions that they had made by artifice vanished away; their palaces

turning into vile huts, their gardens into stagnant pools, and their temples into rubbish.<sup>22</sup> The most acute reasoners among them rushed into the middle and assumed the dominion, and the rest fawned upon them as if they were tutor-angels. These were "the beginnings of sorrows" (Matthew 24: 8). Here and there the ground opened to belch out fiery smoke. And where disorders affected the lives of the simple good, visitations of angels took place. As at Sodom, the angels were often offered violence while they assured the escape of good spirits.<sup>23</sup> 22. @LJCont 23f 23. @LJCont 25f

The evil spirits on these rocky places were mostly those who professed the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. Some had professed charity, but had in their private lives indulged in shameful vices while still enjoying a measure of official enlightenment in their uses. It is notable that the evil can hide behind a moral external for a long time; but when the heavenly sphere of real love and charity approaches too closely they finally cannot endure it, and feel so suffocated that in desperation they cast off their masks as if in relief. For, of course, there is nothing "harder on the nerves" than to live a life of pretense.

### The Beginning of the judgment on the Reformed

The Last judgment on the Reformed nations in the world of spirits broke out on the sixth of January, 1757, at the same time as the papists of the eastern quarter were brought down beyond the northern tract.<sup>24</sup> Those first affected were various external spirits living on a mountain immediately above and around the center of the Protestant middle space, thus also above the hill in the lower earth which was called the "New Jerusalem."<sup>25</sup> These spirits were of various sects - Lutherans, Calvinists and others.

Most of them lived outside of the cities, and this would indicate that they were not strongly fortified in doctrine, but had been churchgoers mainly interested in self and the world. Their fate was to be brought obliquely down into hells bordering the Protestant region and below the Babylonish districts. There they were deprived of all doctrinals and were scattered, never to return, in desert places in the various quarters according to their character. Those from the cities who had lived morally from fear or for the sake of reputation were banished into mountain regions.<sup>26</sup> 24. @SD 5348, cp 5336f; LJ post. 143 25. @SD 5347, 5471 26. @SD 5347ff, LJ post. 142

What brought on this first judgment was their inability to refrain from criminal acts, and from seditious plotting against those who held the Word holy and worshiped the Lord as the God of heaven and earth.<sup>27</sup> 27. @LJCont 27

### The Reformed Nations

The Spiritual Diary records, with meticulous detail, the progress of the judgment from state to state and place to place in the world of spirits, a world which changed its appearance during the process. But in general there is a relative fixity in that world also, for it is organized according to the natural affections which ruled the spirits when they lived on earth.

Prominent among those ruling natural affections is the bond of nationality. This we sometimes call patriotism or love of country. But it may be only a love of one's kindred, one's familiar customs and confirmed ways of thinking, common knowledge, and a loyalty to what we regard as our own. Such common affections mold each nationality into a genius which is distinct from that of others and which survives death. Spirits at first therefore gravitate to their compatriots and form cities like those in which they lived on earth.

The geography of the world of spirits is, of course, vastly different from that of earth. For the directions, or cardinal points, in the other life indicate the inclinations of the mind and the ruling characteristics or genius, as well as the state of intelligence and affection. The nations thus appear there in their quarters according to their religion, and "according to each nation's common faculty for receiving Divine truths."<sup>28</sup>

The Protestant nations, at the time of the judgment, were led into the middle space because the Word was read among them, and they were in greater spiritual light than others. <sup>28</sup>. @SD 5395, LJ 48

Before we can describe the course of the judgment we must therefore first picture the situation of the various nations. The English appeared in the central part of the middle space, the Dutch toward the east and the south, the Germans more towards the north, the Swedes in the west and the north, and the Danes toward the west.<sup>29</sup> Of the English it is said that they had an interior perceptive sight as to religion, and that many of them would receive the Heavenly Doctrine and come into the New Jerusalem. They also had freedom of speech, which encouraged sincerity.<sup>30</sup> <sup>29</sup>. @LJCont 20 <sup>30</sup>. LJ post. 2-6

The Dutch were in the love of trading, not in the love of wealth alone; and while they often held to their religious principles after they had been proved wrong, they excelled in distinguishing phantasy from reality, and kept spiritual light conjoined with natural light more than others. They tended to be secretive from prudence.

The Swedes were worse than any others in Europe except Italians and Russians. They were outwardly sincere - like the Dalecarlians - from a hereditary disposition, but inwardly they could harbor hatred against those who did not favor them, and they had no respect for honesty. Of course, there were good Swedes as well! Not much is said about the Danes, except that some were hypocritical and preferred to rule rather than to work - a trait not confined to them.

The Germans are spoken of as a "noble nation" which was not of so unified a quality because divided by religious differences and into many principalities. They devoted themselves less to matters of judgment and more to matters of memory and book-learning, the history of letters, and so on. They kept spiritual things inscribed on their memories and seldom elevated their thoughts. The Germans were under despotic government in each dukedom, and did not enjoy freedom of speech and of the press like the "free nations" of Holland and Britain.

And influx adapts itself to efflux.<sup>31</sup> <sup>31</sup>. @TCR 814f

Among other spirit groups in this intermediate world Swedenborg found the Jews. Although not Christians, they read the Word of the Old Testament in the original Hebrew and therefore had communication with some of the heavens, and were for this reason preserved and tolerated in the "middle space." They, however, dwelt underneath the Protestants - a "little to the left, in a parallel with the sole of the foot and below."<sup>32</sup> <sup>32</sup>. @SD 5619, LJ post. 251

The Moravians, followers of Zinzendorf, also belonged to no special nationality. Their situation was at first in a valley near the Jews. They were characterized by their peculiar "societies of interior friendship," based on doctrinal brotherhood and the conviction that they alone were saved.<sup>33</sup> <sup>33</sup>. @LJCont 86, SD min. 4763, et al.

The Quakers are described as wandering spirits. They could form no societies, for they rejected the

sacraments and have no fixed doctrinals of faith, but speak from enthusiastic spirits who obsess them and cause them to commingle profane ideas with what they know from the Word. Their state seems to have gone from bad to worse, and finally they fell into nefarious practices and ideas which their founder and William Penn and others disowned. The early Quakers had ecstatic convulsions, but these ceased after the first type of enthusiastic spirits was removed from them.<sup>34</sup> @LJCont 83ff

### Cities in the World of Spirits

The "nations" just described were societies of spirits, often governed by the same princes or kings as had recently ruled over those nations on earth. Such rulers were tolerated as long as they administered their offices justly. These societies usually took the form of cities - cities which were in great part replicas of those on earth, with corresponding districts, streets and buildings.<sup>35</sup> 35. LJ post. 136f

Skeptics would here exclaim: What! Cities in the spiritual world? How could there be houses and streets in that world, except as apparitions floating in the air?

And if they then, after death, should be amazed on being shown that there were even libraries there, and pens and ink and writing and mechanical arts, the angels might tell them: "We perceive that in the former world you thought that this world was empty because spiritual, and that you so thought because ... what is abstracted from the material appeared to you as nothing and thus as a vacuum. Yet in this world there is a fullness of all things. Here all things are substantial, not material; and material things derive their origin from things substantial."<sup>36</sup> 36. @CL 207[5]

It may seem that the reality of spiritual cities has little to do with the Last judgment. But this judgment often took the form of a destruction or rearrangement of cities in the world of spirits, as we shall show in our next chapter. And the New Church is consistently described as a spiritual city, a holy Jerusalem. The cities of the Reformed in the world of spirits are also referred to collectively in the Apocalypse as that "great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified"; a city where, it is said, His "two witnesses" would prophesy for a thousand, two hundred and sixty days, and would be slain, and their bodies left as dead on the street for three days and a half, after which they would be raised and ascend to heaven (Revelation 11:3-12). The acknowledgment of the Lord as the one God-Man and the life of spiritual charity are the two witnesses which in our modern world have been left as dead in the churches. Swedenborg relates that, while he was writing out the explanation of this chapter of the Apocalypse, he was stricken by a pestilential smoke issuing from that spiritual Sodom, and seemed to lie for three days and a half as if dead in the street, mocked by the voices of its evil inhabitants. When his spirit recovered he went forth into the city and rebuked the wicked spirits. And presently the center of the city collapsed and sank down and became a rocky plain, while the inhabitants were dispersed.<sup>37</sup> 37. @AR 490,531, @SD 6108

In the spiritual sense, a city means a doctrine, and in this case a doctrine which rejects the Divine Human of the Lord and defends a love of dominating from self-love and from a pride in one's own intelligence.<sup>38</sup>

It is called a "great" city with reference to the widely spread doctrine that man is justified in the eyes of God by faith alone apart from repentance. When such a doctrine dominates the religious thought of a society of spirits, that society becomes a Sodom and an Egypt, whatever appearance it

may take from the national origin of the spirits that inhabit it, and whether it resembles a London or an Amsterdam or a Stockholm. But the connection of these spiritual cities with those on earth needs further examination in our next chapter. 38. @AR 502

## 29 THE DOWNFALL OF "THE DRAGON"

### The Origin and Nature of Spiritual Cities

The abodes of angels are exactly like houses on earth in appearance, and where many live together the houses are arranged to form cities. Such angelic mansions seem quite separate from the abodes of men; and yet "they are with man in his affections of good and truth. Their presentation to sight as separate is from an appearance."<sup>1</sup> This teaching is prefaced to the work *The Last Judgment*, because it is necessary for the understanding of the manner in which tremendous upheavals visibly occurred in the cities of the world of spirits when the states of the inhabitants changed. The passage goes on to state that a spirit, after death, "no longer subsists on his own basis, but upon a common basis, which is the human race. No angel or spirit subsists without man, and no man without spirits and angels."<sup>2</sup> 1. LJ 9 2. Ibid., cf @DLW 92, @AE 726[6]

The doctrine further teaches that the ideas of spirits are terminated in the material ideas of men's memories, although man is utterly unaware of it.<sup>3</sup>

The spirits are also unconscious of the fact that they thus employ man's ideas, and sometimes they assume his whole memory and think themselves to be the man.<sup>4</sup> This is especially so with the spirits who attend man most intimately. But spirits feel lost if they cannot terminate their ideas in material things and attach their thoughts to places and external objects.<sup>5</sup> 3. @SD 3022f, 2751ff, @AC 5858 4. @AC 5853, @SD 1938 5. @SD 2751f, 3753, 3610

Spirits who by natural affections are consociated with the men of some city in the natural world therefore have as their ultimate of thought and sensation the very duplicate of that city; not from their own corporeal memory of it while on earth, for that memory becomes quiescent after death, but from the memories of men.<sup>6</sup> The cities which thus become the environment of these spirits have a very "strict and material" correspondence with the natural cities, "according to the ideas of the thoughts of the men in the world" in whose memories the spirits dwelt so intimately.<sup>7</sup> 6. @SD 5092 7. @SD 5716

But when a judgment comes, and many of these spirits are scattered, the spiritual city changes its features. Corporeal spirits, who sought out the most material features, are removed; and more interior spirits, less bound to material ideas, come into possession. The city is perhaps still the same city, but it now represents more plastically the interior affections of these spirits. It may become more beautiful, to answer to the state of spirits who have progressed away from undesirable ultimates. Or, on the other hand, if wicked spirits take over the city and the good spirits flee away, that city may lose most of its nobler landmarks and former attractiveness and change into a mass of slums and ruins, to correspond to the states of the evil crew which is now uprooted from all orderly externals. Such a city cannot for long maintain itself in the world of spirits, but will eventually sink down into hell.

Swedenborg observed concerning the cities in the world of spirits that their correspondence to their earthly counterparts was "close and material, according to the ideas of thought of men in the world"; but that "now, in this last time of the church, another arrangement takes place, and another

correspondence: thus through correspondences not so direct and close, but more remote."<sup>8</sup>

The new correspondence is with the internal state. And since the angelic city-societies are perfect images of the celestial and spiritual states of love, wisdom and use, it is even said that "the angels are completely ignorant of what a city is, and of the name of any city, for they are in spiritual ideas." A city to them signifies a doctrine, or a principle of doctrine, and thence a use based on doctrine; and it stands also for the interiors of the mind wherein truths are conjoined with good.<sup>9</sup> 8. @SD 5716; cp 5092 9. @AC 5297

We are therefore warned that the existence of cities in the spiritual world "does not fall into sensual ideas, but only into rational ideas enlightened by spiritual light." In this light it is recognized that "the spiritual appears before a spirit as the material does before a man; and that all the things which exist in the spiritual world are from a spiritual origin." The houses of the cities there "are not built as in' the world, but rise up in a moment created by the Lord; so, too, all other things."<sup>10</sup> 10. LJ post. 12

Such cities therefore have, in a sense, two origins. The elements which compose them come from the ideas of men on earth, which are also spiritual creations produced in the minds of men by the Lord's power. But these elements are unconsciously selected by the spirits in the other world; and indeed it is the Lord who causes them to be brought together into a complete mental environment - a house or a city - in which the spirit dwells as truly as man dwells in his. And because there are many spirits who are in the same general states and in the love of the same externals, in which they can meet and associate, there arise cities which remain as long as there is such a common bond.<sup>11</sup> 11. @SD 5252, 5531

#### Judgment on the City Dwellers

Cities are, as a rule, formed first of all by good spirits, but are later usurped by the evil.<sup>12</sup> For in the cities the wicked, although in private vices, can live an orderly moral life - an ability which they take with them from the world; so that a certain amount of law always reigns in these cities.<sup>13</sup>

The good and the evil do not dwell promiscuously, but in the good cities the best spirits are in the center, where the public buildings usually are; and these are then the governors and magistrates. All are arranged as to quarters according to their character; in the east those who are in a clear good of love, in the south those who are in a clear light of truth, and so on.<sup>14</sup> But the evil would then live in the outskirts, where their influence would be less felt. In wicked cities, on the other hand, the evil would occupy the center, and the upright would be crowded into the suburbs. 12. @SD 4930 13. @SD 5714 14. LJ post. 12

Law and discipline rule in every city. But a spirit usually does not dare to go outside his city lest he fall into the hands of robbers; even as a man falls prey to strange and dangerous influences, and may be robbed of his faith and knowledge, if his thought does not remain within his own religious doctrine. There is a certain protection in that which is familiar and within the range of one's own thinking. But the robber spirits, if they should enter the cities, are not allowed in the houses, but remain in the streets, where they are deprived of power.<sup>15</sup> 15. @SD 5714

But we are told also in the Spiritual Diary that newcomers who had died within the last ten or twenty years are usually given abodes in the suburbs and environs of the cities. Such spirits, whether good or evil, minister to men as attendant spirits and serve as subjects through whom the

heavens or the hells exert their influence on men. These ministering spirits are in the process of vastation; their character is not yet well defined, and they are therefore not ready for the judgment.<sup>16</sup> 16. @SD 5361

The last judgment upon the Reformed nations began with a general clearing out of the evil spirits who occupied the mountain region above the genuine Christian center, which lay in the "lower earth." These were mostly those who were outside the cities, But soon the exploration extended to those in the cities who had lived morally, but only from fear of the law and for the sake of honor and profit.

These had lived "within the church without the church, or in religion without religion," and their numbers were immense.<sup>17</sup> 17. @SD 5353, 5359, LJ post. 147

The cities affected were sometimes double or triple, one city beneath another. In the lower or subterranean city there were often spirits who had dwelt there from ancient times, and were there more secure from change. And the cities were situated either on top of the mountains or within them.<sup>18</sup> 18. LJ post, 12, 19; @SD 5249ff

On the ninth of January, 1757, the cities of the Dutch began to be cleansed from the evil, while those who had something of religion were suffered to remain. Spirits of more humble character among the Dutch lived in cities that were covered above, and most of these spirits were preserved. Such covered or roofed-over cities prevented the inhabitants from being under constant inspection by the evil on the surrounding mountains.<sup>19</sup> 19. @SD 5366ff, @LJCont 51

## London

There were two English cities named after London. The upper city was situated on a rock in the Christian middle space and had much resemblance to its earthly counterpart, with districts like Cheapside, the Exchange, the Temple, Islington, Moorfield and Wapping. The well-disposed lived in this city, and we are told that they rejoiced that they could still be in their beloved England and in its great city. The best dwelt in the east, where they all worshiped the Lord, and the intelligent lived in the south. Those who periodically inclined to evils gathered around a malicious rabble-rouser near the middle of the city, and were as often conveyed in hordes outside of the city.<sup>20</sup> There was also another way of purifying the place. Those who were of a contrary genius could be seen only on occasions, for they turned their backs to the other citizens and became invisible; and these were allotted quarters under a small hill which seemed to heave up within the city. Although the hill was small, thousands of wicked spirits congregated there, waiting for their final dispatch to their hells; but some returned.<sup>21</sup> 20. LJ post. 268, @SD 5712, @LJCont 42 21. @SD 5360

Yet there was another London of similar layout. This was not Situated in the Christian middle space but farther to the north, and below, "in a plane on the level of the sole of the foot, a little to the right." Here the evil dwelt, and this city sometimes sank down in the middle to deliver the worst to hell, and then rose up again.<sup>22</sup> In this London, Swedenborg was conducted by mean streets in which there was not a living soul, although all the houses were full; for they were all spiritually dead and invisible to the eyes of the angels.<sup>23</sup> Yet on the east side a little city appeared where a remnant of good spirits lived, well protected by guards. Stockholm, Swedenborg confides, did not have any such little city in the east. <sup>22</sup>. @LJCont 43, @SD 5016 <sup>23</sup>. @SD 5711f

## Stockholm



In fact, the Swedish cities were in a hopeless state. Swedenborg, his interior sight opened, was led through several streets in the ancient quarter of Stockholm, and the angels told him that although he saw many people walking about, not anyone was spiritually alive, so that his angel companions shuddered and wanted to turn back. No windows appeared in the houses, but dark holes; for evil spirits see in their own light, which to the angels appears as darkness.<sup>24 24.</sup> @SD 5711

Since the spirits in Stockholm cared nothing for doctrinals, but only for sensational news and material things, they allied themselves readily with devils and ridiculed anything of the church and heaven. And so the city was from time to time partly destroyed. The left side of one principal street was laid waste in the central city, and also a part of the southern quarter, very close to Swedenborg's own house.<sup>25 25.</sup> @SD 5721

Most of the districts in Stockholm were represented in this supernatural replica. There were the same marketplace, the same bridge, the same shopping streets, even the same apothecary's shop.<sup>26</sup> But the upright and honest Swedes were associated together in another city which resembled Gothenburg.<sup>27</sup>

And, strangely enough, the rest of the Swedish cities were not scattered as in the world, but arranged closely around Stockholm into a vast metropolis, the worst spirits being in the center. The cities were divided by walls and a "sense of distance"; Boras was to the north, Falun to the east. Even country dwellers had houses in the cities for fear of robbers. These spirits - representing an active state of the people at that time - had no regard for civic good and civic truth or for morality, because not for religion; and "civil good and civil truth are the foundation of religion."<sup>28 26.</sup> @SD 5711 <sup>27.</sup> @SD 5036 <sup>28.</sup> @SD 5037

Therefore this compound city began to sink down, the center more deeply, almost as water eddying from a sink. The better sort among the inhabitants were separated and sent out by angel guides, and the houses were overthrown. Those remaining began to rebuild the city in a different order, with the better spirits at the circumference. Falun sank down most deeply in this judgment, for its evil inhabitants were of a more interior kind.<sup>29 29.</sup> @SD 5034ff

### Cities of the Jews

Similar judgments overtook the cities of other nations - German and Danish. The Jews, from their place below the Christian middle, were dispersed and their synagogues destroyed; after which they wandered about without worship in the northern desert. But some are described as living in ghettos under the earth of the north of London, "where Tower Hill is." "Portuguese Jews" also have an abode in the southern quarter, being of a more intellectual type. They had ceased to expect a Messiah and their attitudes were modernistic.<sup>30 30.</sup> @TCR 841ff, @LJCont 79ff, LJ post. 284

After the judgment the Jews inhabited two great cities which constantly changed in appearance because of newcomers arriving and departing. These cities were ankle-deep with filth and reeked with evil odors, and the people went about in rags. Yet some spirit whom they believed to be Moses sometimes appeared to them and sought to dissuade them from expecting a Messiah since Christ was the Messiah. A few take heed to this spirit and are then instructed in synagogues composed of converted Jews.<sup>31</sup>

These receive new garments and copies of the Word and abodes in decent cities. Others are eventually judged, being cast into a wilderness or into hells like that of the avaricious, which is

called Gehenna. The cities of the Jews used to be known as "Jerusalem," but after the judgment the name was changed because spiritually Jerusalem means the church as to doctrine, where the Lord alone is adored. 31. @LJCont 80

Since they read the Word in its original Hebrew, Jews, in the other world as in this, often act as bankers or trade in precious stones which they procure for themselves from heaven.<sup>32</sup> Being external men they think little of religion, but much of an expectation of being led back into Canaan. More than other spirits they persuade themselves that they are still in the world, although some of them believe that their dead ancestors will rise from their sepulchres and find their lot in a material paradise, such as has been the aim of the Zionist movement in recent times.<sup>33</sup> 32. @AE 717[4] 33. LJ post. 251-261, @TCR 845, cp @SD 2878, @DP 260

### The Dragon Cast Down

In the Apocalypse, the evil spirits from the Protestant part of Christendom are prophetically represented by several monsters, and by a being called the false prophet. All symbolize some aspect of the pernicious doctrine of salvation by faith alone which is made the excuse for a life of outward sanctity and morality, and a formalistic piety without self-examination and actual shunning of evils as sins against God. But we read particularly of a "great red dragon" with seven crowned heads and a tail which ensnared the stars of heaven; a dragon which is also named "that old serpent called the Devil and Satan which deceiveth all the world," and which, when cast down to earth, persecuted the celestial woman whose man child was to rule the nations with a rod of iron (Revelation 12). This dragon, overcome by Michael and his angels, was later, it is said, cast into a lake of fire, and then "bound in the bottomless pit for a thousand years," after which he should be loosed for a season until the final judgment (Revelation 20).

John also saw a blasphemous beast rise out of the sea, whose power and eloquence came from the dragon. This signified justification by faith alone among the laity. Next came a monster out of the earth, which signified the same faith with the clergy and is identified later with the false prophet (Revelation 13: 11; 20). Those signified by the dragon justify all people in their evil loves in order to obtain their good will, confirming their position by the letter of the Word apart from true doctrine; and they curry favor especially with the powerful and the wealthy. Being sensual men, they hold the spiritual sense in aversion and thus wander into all manner of heresies, for they are willing to join any religion.<sup>34</sup> 34. @SD 5370ff, 5422

These constituted as it were the head of the dragon. Their real loves were selfish and worldly and they used the Word only as a stepping stone to honor. The tail of the dragon was made up of other spirits who used the Word for preaching but not for life; and also of an immense number of pietists who - as was before noted - dwelt in an invisible expanse high above the world of spirits. They were literalists who had no use for doctrine by which to understand the Word rightly.<sup>35</sup> Many of them were idle, and their excessive piety made the angels of the surrounding heaven melancholy. They were therefore explored and judged, and let down to the earth level and led around to gloomy plains and distant forests where their thoughts would not disturb anyone. Their fall from heaven was hastened when the spirits of the dragon began to conspire to destroy the heavenly doctrine, which was now as it were coming to birth in the world of spirits. And their fall was represented to the sight as a shower of stars, a Milky Way, falling from heaven (Revelation 12:4).<sup>36</sup> 35. @LJCont 28 36. @SD 5373ff, 5426

The judgment on the "solifidians," the champions of "faith alone," now increased in intensity. For

these spirits - not from a zeal for their doctrine, but from a delight in dominion and prestige - came by scores from all quarters except the east to stir up a rebellion. They had been in the mountain regions, maintaining themselves through an external moral behavior. But now they were discovered and hurled down, and in the process they became black as devils.

These were such as are meant by the he-goats whom the Lord condemned in His parable of judgment (Matthew 25:31).<sup>37</sup> All sorts of evil were represented among them. Some despised all sciences, others loved to cause mental or physical torture, and the like. Many, among them archbishop Erik Benzelius (the elder), were seen as "robber priests" and were cast into a lake in the south-eastern angle and thus removed from the world of spirits.<sup>38</sup> 37. @SD 5731 1/2ff, 5758ff 38. @SD 5722ff

### The Combat of Michael

The Spiritual Diary tells how one evil state after another, one crew of wicked spirits after another, was inflamed to overt actions and then cast down from its false position. It would be impossible here to recount these many judgments, which were always directed to liberate the spirits who were still in a salvable state. The exact order is not always clear, for Swedenborg retraces the story at times to give further details. But the value to future generations is more than historical; for here we have an analysis of all the evils and weaknesses to which the human heart is susceptible, even to tragic and dreadful depths of perversity, but also an insight into the lofty wisdom and tender charity of angelic states.

The judgment went on through January and February. And when the hypocritical spirits established on the mountain level had been unmasked and swallowed up, the evil spirits who on the level of the world of spirits had been plotting open evils under their protection had no more defenses and no power to resist, and so these also were cast into their various hells. This occurred, we read, on the thirtieth day of March, 1757.<sup>39</sup> 39. @SD 5696-5699

And now the universal judgment reached its climax. There appeared as it were a hand stretched out by the Lord over the heavens. And then began that battle between Michael and the dragon which is described in the Apocalypse (chap. 12). It lasted for days.<sup>40</sup> Myriads of angels not seen before appeared over the middle space of Christians. At the same time there appeared a tremendous number of evil spirits who, when seen together, looked like a vast dragon raising his back on high and lashing with his tail as if to tear down the heavens. 40. LJ post. 167f, 186f, @LJCont 28, @SD 5742, 5746

This was the appearance. The reality was that the angels, in the entrance to heaven, were speaking concerning the Lord and the life of charity. And since the dragonists were attacking these truths they were compelled to listen, and the attention of all was centered on the discussion. The dragonists and all who heard were compelled to fall back into the thoughts which they had entertained in the world about the Lord and about faith. It became clear that the dragonists wished to talk only of an invisible God, rejecting the Lord's Divine Human and making salvation a matter of faith alone, not of life. This verbal or spiritual battle became - for all the heavens that had gathered together through the ages of Christianity - a most grievous and heart-searching temptation, verging on despair. The real issue between the good and the evil was at last made clear beyond doubt. It was perceived by the good spirits that the Lord had held them in truth while the devils had persuaded them of falsity. And now this internal conflict was relieved, as the judgment caused a unification throughout all these Christian heavens of those who could acknowledge the

doctrine of heaven.

Although it was seen that it was impossible for those who opposed the heavenly doctrine to remain in these heavens any longer, the dragonists resisted, insisting that they had always been there. Then the Lord was seen as it were outside of the spiritual Sun, descending in a bright cloud with angels attending, and there was heard the sound of trumpets. This was a sign of how the Lord protects the angels and draws the good away from communion with the evil. When this occurs, the evil rush openly into the abominations of their lusts. And then these spirits of the draconic crew were seen cast down, by hundreds of thousands, from one heaven after another, into the western quarter, where the earth was seen to open and they were covered by dense clouds.<sup>41</sup> 41. @SD 5743f, LJ post. 168, @LJCont 28

"Thus perished the old heaven and the old earth." And Swedenborg adds in his Diary: "These things occurred from the thirty-first of March to the eleventh of April, when Easter was celebrated in the year 1757."<sup>42</sup>

He also tells that the spiritual battle which marked the crisis of the Lord's redemptive work was felt in his own mind as a temptation, and from that experience he calls to remembrance the terrible temptations which the Lord suffered from earliest youth to the end of His life, and by which He not only subdued the hells but also reduced the heavens into order and glorified the Human, without which no mortal could have been saved.<sup>43</sup> But it is well to note the difference between these two redemptions. Swedenborg, though he felt the temptations while the heavens were in travail, was only an observer; and the Lord came in His second advent, not to suffer temptations, but in His glorified Human to exert the power that He had taken on seventeen centuries before. <sup>42</sup>. @SD 5746 <sup>43</sup>. @SD 5743

But what is meant by the "Michael" who overcame the dragon? Michael - the Writings show - signifies all those who defended the Lord's Divinity and the life of charity. These were "chiefly from the ancient heavens who all remained steadfast, and from those who were in them from the gentiles and from infants everywhere" who had grown up in those heavens.<sup>44</sup> 44. @SD 5747; cp @AR 548, 564, @AE 735

### Redemption from the Lower Earth

The real objective of the Last judgment was not to overthrow the evil but to liberate and redeem the good. And these were not all in the heavenly places from which the wicked had now been cast down, but were also in vast numbers in the "lower earth," which the Scripture refers to also as the pit, the grave, Sheol, or Hades.

Normally the lower earth represents a transient state of vastation which well disposed spirits must undergo if they have been in principles of falsity. Such spirits may have lived a life quite free of hatreds, revenge or adultery, yet have been imbued with a spurious conscience hard to change. Some of these therefore suffer hard things before they can put away their false principles. They may seem to themselves unhappy and tortured by evil spirits, and imagine themselves eternally condemned to their fate, though angels occasionally come to comfort them.<sup>45</sup>

Others are in natural delight but in no spiritual delight, and care only for worldly and corporeal things. Their correspondence relative to the Grand Man of heaven is to the undigested food in the stomach and intestines.<sup>46</sup> Some are in something of combat because their faith is defiled with

worldly ideas. Spirits who placed merit in good works seem to themselves to be cutting wood to keep themselves warm, and feel that they must remain in their place until they have really merited heaven.<sup>47</sup> Spirits of still another type are in great obscurity and in a sleepy state, for they are afraid to think, knowing that they will then ruminate on all the evils they had perpetrated from imprudence even though not from set purpose.<sup>48</sup> 45. @AC 699, 1106ff 46. @AC 4940ff, 6914, 6928, 5392 47. @AC 4943 48. @SD 1771

Yet many in the lower earth are concealed there and guarded for ages lest they should be injured by the spirits of the dragon, while these occupy the heavens for which they are destined. In the lower earth they are in safety and have communication with heaven. They live together cheerfully and worship the Lord, nor are they aware of the hells that surround them. In the west, towards the south, great numbers had been reserved who from childhood had cultivated doctrinal learning for the sake of reputation, but later had led a Christian life and put off some of their pride. These were in the lower earth, removed from evil contagion, in order to be initiated into spiritual life.<sup>49</sup> For the protection afforded in the lower earth comes from an absence of spiritual pretensions. 49. @SD 5480

Only after the cleansing storms of judgment had restored spiritual equilibrium in the world of spirits could these "souls under the altar" (Revelation 6:9) be safely elevated into heaven, their rightful inheritance.<sup>50</sup> They were then by turns raised as if from a grave, or liberated as if from captivity. As soon as the world of spirits had been delivered from the powerful spheres of the dragon which they could not have resisted successfully, they were brought out as if in an exodus and, after various temptations, were instructed in the internal truths of the Word.

Swedenborg saw immense numbers of spirits so released after the judgment, to be organized into heavenly societies. Many seemed to find abodes in the "mountains of the east."<sup>51</sup> 50. @AR 325ff 51. @AC 8099, @AE 899[2], @SD 5480

Spirits who are misled by the evil may serve as powerful tools of the hells. Certain foolish spirits, it is told, who were emotionally pious but who had no affection of truth, merely trusting the authority of their leaders, became a "fulcrum to the infernal crew," that is, became subject-spirits for the hells. They were then cast down from the mountains of the hypocrites and concealed in the lower earth, so that those among them who could act from the heart might serve for the "ultimates of heaven"! Piety is indeed an ultimate of heaven. In fact, they were allowed to move into a city of good Christians and practice their devotions to their hearts' content, yet at the same time were told to enjoy social intercourse as far as they desired.<sup>52</sup> 52. @SD 5814f

What is said of the lower earth and the "false heavens" cannot be understood unless we realize that evil spirits who usurp a position in some mountain or heaven on high are not really there! They are not in heaven except in phantasy and in the view of those whom they can infect with their phantasy. The angels saw these spirits "where they were as to body," thus on "the plane of the ground," or wherever their ruling love was.<sup>53</sup> The Last judgment, in the final analysis, was the dispersion of the phantasies of evil by the Divine truth. And the immeasurable and eternal effects of the judgment were expressed prophetically by John in Patmos: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." 53. @SD 5789 1/2, 5816

## 30 THE EFFECTS OF THE LAST JUDGMENT

### Redemption by Divine Truth

The Lord said, "I came not to judge the world but to save the world." In the eyes of the Lord, a judgment is permitted for the sake of the salvation of spirits and men. The purpose and aim of the Last judgment was the salvation of souls seemingly lost, and the formation of these into new heavens where their progress into more abundant spiritual life would no longer be arrested. To accomplish this the Lord made His promised second advent, not in person as when He was born on earth, but "in Divine truth which is the Word" - in the Heavenly Doctrine which is seen as the internal sense of the Sacred Scriptures.<sup>1</sup> It was this Divine truth which caused the Last judgment in the spiritual world at the consummation of the Christian age; even as the Lord had said of anyone who rejects Him: "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). This "word" of the Lord took new form in "a revelation from His mouth or from the Word," as doctrine for the New Church written through Emanuel Swedenborg as the inspired agent.<sup>2</sup> 1. @TCR 3 2. Coro. 20

This Divinely revealed doctrine contains "the universal theology of the New Heaven and the New Church" (TCR, subtitle). In its teachings the Lord could be seen in His Divine Human as the one God of heaven and earth, one in essence and in person. It was this new vision of the Lord as Savior, that could lift the good spirits of the "lower earth," whether Christians or gentiles, out of their state of ignorance, free them from their entanglements in false persuasions and from the weight of a spurious conscience; introduce them into a state of instruction by spiritual ideas; and form them into communities to carry on spiritual uses. To them the Lord came, not as a judge, but as a deliverer; or as that Holy Spirit, the Comforter, which would lead them into all truth.

In the spiritual world this change of state was usually seen as a migration of the redeemed spirits from the lower earth into some mountainous plain or hill country formerly occupied by the evil spirits of the false heavens which had met their judgment. The ordering of these good spirits after the Last judgment was at first according to nations and corresponding heavenly affections. Such societies undergo various fermentations to rid them of alien spirits. This is sometimes effected by the society assuming a human form and appearing as one man; the meaning being that its members assume a common use, and that all who cannot cooperate in that common use are rejected.<sup>3</sup> Afterwards these good spirits form societies that are most distinct according to their particular kind and species of affections of good and truth. For all spirits, as soon as their vastation is completed, are led by designated ways to the interior societies which correspond exactly to their lives; and they cannot then, as formerly, turn aside and form artificial groups or societies in other places.<sup>4</sup> 3. @SD 5760; LJ post. 176 4. LJ post. 177

### The New Heaven

This allocation into new heavens happened, after the Last judgment, to "all who since the Lord's advent and up to this time had lived a life of faith and charity."<sup>5</sup> It involved not only those who had been liberated from the lower earth but also angels of the Christian era who had been reserved in heaven for centuries.

The New Heaven was "distinct from the ancient heavens," which constituted "higher expanses," being of different genius. Those higher expanses consisted of celestial angels, mostly from the Most Ancient Church, and spiritual angels, mostly from the Ancient Church; while the lowest expanse,

organized in 1757, contained angels who had been in "the good of faith" according to the doctrine of their church.<sup>6</sup> Yet this lowest expanse, as appears from other teachings, is also of three degrees, or of three heavens which are represented as expanses one above another. For "each heaven founded by the Lord after the consummation of each church is made triplicate." And the New Heaven will therefore contain celestial and spiritual as well as natural angels.<sup>7</sup> 5. @HD 2 6. @HD 4 7. Coro. 16, 17, @AR 876, 342, 363

In the widest sense, the New Heaven is said to be formed of "both Christians and gentiles; but as to the greatest part from the infants of all [races] in the whole world, who had died [as infants] since the time of the Lord. For these latter have all been received by the Lord, educated in heaven and instructed by angels, and thereafter preserved, so that they, together with the rest, might constitute the New Heaven."<sup>8</sup> 8. @HD 3. Italics added.

In a more restricted sense, the New Heaven is said to be formed from Christians, and also from "all the infants of Christians" who have been imbued with the two essentials of Christian faith and life.<sup>9</sup> The Christian heavens are distinct from those composed from gentiles, although there is an influx as of light from the Christian heavens, and thus a communication with those of other religions.<sup>10</sup> The Christian heavens are said to constitute the provinces of the heart and the lungs in the Grand Man of heaven, and from them the light of the Word goes forth to other heavens. And it is from this new Christian heaven that the holy Jerusalem, that is, the New Church upon earth, will descend.<sup>11</sup> Yet in a general sense the entire New Heaven, containing spirits from many religions, is consociated with the New Christian Heaven, since this New Heaven contains only spirits who have lived since the beginning of the Christian era, and is based on faith in the Lord's Divine Human and the knowledge of His advent, and thus has a unanimous quality.

That there is a distinction is clear. For "infants and children born outside of the Christian Church are introduced by other means than baptism into the heaven designated for their religion, after reception of faith in the Lord, but they are not mixed with those who are in the Christian heaven."<sup>12</sup> 9. @AR 486, 876, @SD 5763 10. @SD 5947 11. AR pref., 612, 876 12. @TCR 729; cf 678

### Gradual Formation of the New Heaven

The establishment of the heavens from the Christian era and their final ordering into a complete form was a gradual process. The spirits who were taken up into heaven before the Last judgment because they were in truths from good were signified in the Apocalypse by the "hundred and forty-four thousand" redeemed, who alone could sing the new song of the Lamb (Revelation 14).<sup>13</sup> They had been regenerated while in the world and constituted the beginnings, or the nucleus, of the New Heaven.<sup>14</sup> But it was not until a little before the Last judgment that these angels began to be ordained into an "internal" of the New Heaven. The external of that heaven came mainly from spirits who were in good but not in truth, and who had been concealed in various places, especially in the "lower earths." These were not incorporated into the New Heaven until after the Last judgment.<sup>15</sup> Swedenborg often records the elevation of these vast multitudes from the lower earths, and notes that this took place from the beginning of the year 1757, and that their elevation to constitute the New Heaven occurred especially "from the end of April and into the month of May."<sup>16</sup> 13. @AE 430[17] 14. @AR 619, 623 15. @AR 878 16. @SD 5763, @TCR 115

In 1757 Swedenborg observed that the New Heaven is not formed immediately, but when there is a sufficient number of good spirits.<sup>17</sup> He explains also that the New Church on earth will grow "according to its increase in the world of spirits."

Only those spirits receive the doctrine "who have been in a spiritual affection of truth; these only are conjoined to the heaven where that doctrine is, and they conjoin heaven to man. The number of these in the spiritual world now increases daily, therefore according to their increase does that church which is called the New Jerusalem increase on earth."<sup>18</sup> "The falsities of the former church must first be removed" before truths can be received so as to remain. It is therefore of the Divine providence that the New Church "should at first be among a few," afterwards with more, and finally reach fullness, that is, "be provided among many, even until it grows to its appointed stature."<sup>19</sup> The New Church doctrine "cannot be acknowledged and thus received except by those who are interiorly affected by truths," thus by such only as have "cultivated their intellectual faculty and have not destroyed it by the loves of self and the world." <sup>17.</sup> @AE 397 <sup>18.</sup> @AE 732 <sup>19.</sup> @AR 547, @AE 732

In a letter to Dr. Beyer, written in 1766, Swedenborg states that "the New Heaven of Christians, out of which the New Jerusalem will descend from the Lord (Revelation 21:1, 2), is not yet fully completed."<sup>20</sup> The next year he relates: "I daily see spirits and angels, from ten to twenty thousand, descending and ascending and being set in order." Later, in 1770, he comments that "the spheres of spiritual truths are as yet few, being only in the new heavens."<sup>21</sup> But in April, 1771, he wrote Dr. Beyer that "the New Heaven from which the New Jerusalem will descend is now almost completed."<sup>22</sup> <sup>20.</sup> Docu. 230 <sup>21.</sup> Docu. 234, @TCR 619[6] <sup>22.</sup> Docu. 245, BB

By the "completion" of the New Heaven was meant, of course, only that it had become a functional whole, complete as to all the uses that are represented in a human form. And this near completion followed within a year of that memorable day, June 19, 1770, when the Lord sent forth His twelve apostles into various provinces of the spiritual world to proclaim the new gospel that the Lord God Jesus Christ alone ruled over the two worlds and over the lives of men and angels.<sup>23</sup> <sup>23.</sup> @TCR 4, 108, 791

### The New State of the World of Spirits

That the Lord had now subjugated the hells and ordered the heavens was indeed clear from the new state of the world of spirits. It is true that multitudes of evil spirits arrive there continually, and seek to form false heavens where they can exercise power. But as often their endeavors are frustrated by swift judgments, and each spirit is compelled to proceed in due course on paths which lead to the society of those who are in the same ruling love.<sup>24</sup> There are also many spirits who are in falsities of faith who find themselves in lower earths and places of vastation until they can amend their lives and come into states more receptive of instruction by angelic tutors of their own religion. Most religions and denominations are still represented by societies in the world of spirits.<sup>25</sup> Some spirits are led to explore the imaginary heavens where they think to find eternal bliss in various sensual pleasures; but these pleasures pall within a few days and they are glad to go away.<sup>26</sup> As soon as spirits congregate in considerable numbers under false leaders, or with malicious intent, their societies are dissolved. No false or imaginary heaven is permitted to endure for more than a generation - about twenty years.<sup>27</sup> Spirits from the earth are now seldom able to remain in their first state, which is not unlike their life in the world, for more than a year, and with some it may last only for a few days or for some months. They then pass into the state of their internals and are separated, the good from the evil, generally within a period of ten to thirty years;

although some are taken up into heaven or immersed into hell almost immediately after death.<sup>28</sup> <sup>24.</sup> @SD 5871ff, LJ post. 176ff <sup>25.</sup> We conclude from this that the baptism of an infant or adult by a minister of the old Christian Church on earth does not enroll the man's spirit in the New Heaven,



but into "societies and congregations" in the world of spirits "according to the quality of the Christianity in him or around him." (@TCR 680 end) Similarly, John's Baptism did not introduce his converts into the Christian heaven, and they were therefore given a new baptism - one "into the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 19:3-6, @TCR 690 end, 691 end) 26. @CL 4-9 27. @AR 866 28. @HH 426, 498, @AR 866, @SD 5361

The reason the normal processes of judgment are now again operative in the world of spirits, and everyone is borne to his place in heaven or hell according to his life, is that the equilibrium between heaven and hell, which was at the point of perishing, is now restored, and the communication of heaven with men is no longer Cut off.<sup>29</sup> No man was ever born who could not be in free choice. But before the judgment spirits could not progress or advance according to that choice, but were arrested and detained. Even the happiness of the angels of heaven was diminished when the powers of evil had secured footholds in the lower heavens. And the doctrine states that "unless judgment were then executed, no man on earth would be saved, nor could any angel in the heavens remain in his state of safety."<sup>30</sup> For man as to his spirit is in the world of spirits, and his spiritual freedom depends on the equilibrium there between heaven and hell. 29. @AE 754[3], Can. Rdn ii, v; @LJCont 11, @HH 589ff, LJ 33f 30. Can. Rdn v:9

After the Last judgment the prayers which are addressed to an impersonal God or to a Godhead of three persons, or prayers which are offered from a state of faith without charity, can no longer be heard, but are driven back like smoke before the wind.<sup>31</sup> For the response to such prayers comes only from spirits cast down from heaven. 31. @TCR 108, @AE 277[9]

#### Revelation after the Judgment

Many teachings in the Writings declare that before the Last judgment, when the hells had surged up and passed over the great interstice or "gulf" fixed between hell and heaven, so that they covered the world of spirits as it were like a dark cloud, "not any doctrine of the church could be conveyed by the Lord through heaven to the men of earth ... or be infused into man, without being falsified."<sup>32</sup> "Not until after the Last judgment was the spiritual sense of the Word revealed."<sup>33</sup>

"Interior truths were not revealed on earth until that separation" of the evil spirits from the good had been effected. After the judgment, "the reception of Divine truth and good became more universal, more interior, easier, and more distinct." The good in both worlds came into a better state for receiving truth and good from the Lord. After the "tangled veil of falsities" has been taken away by the judgment "man is led, in a freer and more spontaneous spirit, to discard falsities and to receive truths."<sup>34</sup> 32. Coro. 20 33. @AR 804 34. @AE 1217, Coro. 20, LJ 73, 74

It is therefore stated: "After the Last judgment was accomplished there was then joy in heaven, and also a light in the world of spirits such as there was not before. . . . A similar light also then arose with men in the world, from which they had new enlightenment." It is made very clear that this spiritual light is from the Word. "Immediate revelation is not granted to man except that which is given in the Word." And "the light in which are the angels of heaven who are from this earth is from the Lord by means of the Word."<sup>35</sup> 35. @LJCont 30, @AE 1177, 351

Nothing that men or spirits may do can prevent the Lord from inspiring the writing of a Word on earth; even as the most depraved condition of the Jewish Church did not prevent the Lord's descent as the Word made flesh. The writing and publishing of the Arcana Coelestia took place while the false heavens entirely shrouded the world of spirits and cut off communication between heaven

and the church. But it was a Divine revelation which only the future New Church could receive. We have no evidence that any man before the judgment understood its teachings. In fact, it was not addressed as doctrine to the New Church, since there was then no New Church. Swedenborg therefore wrote, in 1763: "If anything had been revealed by the Lord either it would not have been understood, or, if understood, still it would not have been received; or if received, still, it would have been afterwards suffocated. . . . Hence it is that after the Last judgment, and not before, revelations were made for the New Church. For since communication has been restored by the Last judgment, man can be enlightened and reformed, that is, can understand the Divine truth of the Word, receive it when understood, and retain it when received."<sup>36</sup> 36. @LJCont 11, 12, @AE 260 1/2

The light of truth came from the Word; but its sudden new spread was due to the New Jerusalem societies which now held a central position in the world of spirits. Human mediations were necessary. "For spiritual light," we are instructed, "does not pass through spaces as does the light of the world, but through the affections and perceptions of truth"; and it is from these affections and perceptions that there arise appearances of spaces in the spiritual world.<sup>37</sup> Spiritual light is essential if human minds are to recognize truth, and it is given when men are introduced into societies of good spirits and angels. But light does not bring sight unless there are objects to be seen. And the objects of spiritual sight had to be provided for men by the Writings. 37. @LJCont 14

The year after the judgment Swedenborg, by Divine command, began to publish the doctrines for the New Church. Some volumes were so entitled: *The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine*, in which he states that it is "for the New Church" (no. 7); *The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem Concerning the Lord, The Sacred Scripture, Life and Faith*; *A Brief Exposition of the Doctrine of the New Church*; and "The Universal Theology of the New Church" - subtitle of the *True Christian Religion*. Thus it is clear that the Writings were given for the establishment of the New Church, which may be considered as having been born in 1757. For "the Lord derives and produces a new church on earth through the new heaven by means of a revelation from His mouth or from His Word, and by inspiration."<sup>38</sup> 38. Coro. 18, 20

### Descent of the Holy City

The New Church "descends" from the New Heaven just so far as men in the world are introduced into the spheres of faith of the New Heaven and see the truths of the Writings as a way of life, so that the Heavenly Doctrine is not only known and loved but is made a basis of thought and spiritual enlightenment. It is folly to cry, "Lo here!" or "Lo there!" whenever some contemporary writer or orator expresses a patronizing approval or gives voice to some sentiment which seems to harmonize with New Church truths, although interlarded with falsities;

or to think that acts of social justice or generosity, or devotion to scientific truth, are signs of the descent of the New Church. The light of the New Heaven cannot permeate the former churches in some unconscious way to make them "new"! For falsities must be examined and renounced before the new faith can be received. The old and the new cannot dwell together, any more than an owl and a dove in the same nest; the conflict resulting would endanger our spiritual life.<sup>39</sup> 39. BE 102f; @TCR 619,784

When and how the New Church would be established on earth Swedenborg was not allowed to know or predict, beyond hinting that there had to be Christian universities to prepare a new clergy free from the old errors, and that the gentiles would eventually be more receptive than those of the European world.<sup>40</sup> But that the Writings were to be the means of its establishment is clear from

one of his letters to Beyer: 40. Docu. 234, LJ 74

"I am certain of this: that at the appearance of [the "Universal Theology of the New Heaven and the New Church"] the Lord our Savior will labor both mediately and immediately toward the establishment throughout the whole of Christendom of a new church based upon this theology" (Docu. 245BB, April 30, 1771).

Indeed, the New Church would become the "truly Christian Church." However its various organized bodies may grow, decrease, or be replaced by others, yet as the final dispensation it "will never undergo consummation," but will "endure to eternity"; being "foreseen from the creation of the world" as "the crown of the four antecedent churches."<sup>41</sup> 41. Coro. 24, lii

#### The State of the World after the Judgment

The dreaded "day of Jehovah" - the universal judgment in the spiritual world - came swiftly, was not discerned on earth, and was not accompanied by any convulsions of nature or any unusual or startling events of history. And Swedenborg the witness calmly warns us that "the state of the world hereafter will be quite similar to what it was before, for the great change which has taken place in the spiritual world does not induce any change in the natural world as to external form;

so that after this there will be as before civil affairs, peacemakings, treaties, and wars as before."<sup>42</sup> 42. LJ 73

Yet the crisis in the spiritual world has obviously had many indirect results in the natural realm, and the aftermath of judgment may be seen in every field of human life. The two centuries which have elapsed since 1757 have witnessed more rapid and revolutionary changes in men's thinking and manner of living than had occurred previously since the dawn of civilization. Even the surface of the earth bears the scars of human enterprise and testimonies to a new age for man. In a sense, that progress distantly reflects the changes in the world of spirits in a way which Swedenborg could not have foreseen, for he did not claim to predict natural events. The Last judgment broke down the barriers which had arrested spiritual progress, and the Christian centers in the world of spirits recovered communication with all the nations and tribes there. On earth this is represented by the manner in which the impediments of space and time have been decreased through improved communications, due to discoveries and applications of new sources of mechanical power - coal, gas, oil, electricity, chemical and nuclear energy. Steamships, trains, automobiles and air liners, space vehicles and artificial satellites, computers and nuclear devices, mass production of printed matter, obligatory education, the use of telegraph, telephone, radio, cinema, television and other media of public information - all these things have contributed to bind the peoples of the earth into a mental community which approximates the conditions of the after-life.

Even the wars and revolutions of modern times take on new proportions and new meaning. The American, the French and the Russian Revolutions were symptoms of the new age no less than the Industrial Revolution and the scientific advances with their vast social adjustments which often tend to regiment people into more fixed educational and economic patterns. All over the world, suppressed and backward peoples, still chafing under their social, economic and religious bonds, have demanded self-determination under a new international charter. The natural minds of men seem to have been set free to challenge the past, and to dream of a future no longer confined even to the conquest of this little globe alone!

## The Restoration of Spiritual Freedom

But how are men using their new freedom? The Last judgment produced and ordered new hells as well as new heavens. Both are ready, when invited, to inflow and inspire human lives. Natural progress is only the by-product of the spiritual freedom now restored. It is therefore shown in the Writings that the real difference hereafter is in the state of the church, This will be similar in external form, but dissimilar inwardly. "To outward appearance" there will be divided churches as before, with the same doctrines, and the same religions among the gentiles. "But henceforth the man of the church will be in a freer state of thinking on matters of faith, that is, on spiritual things that relate to heaven; because spiritual liberty has been restored to him.... But man does not observe this change of state in himself since he does not reflect on it."43 43. LJ 73

The angels with whom Swedenborg conversed on this subject said that they do not know things to come, but do know that the man of the church now "can better perceive interior truths if he wills to perceive them, and thus can be made more internal if he wills it." They added that they had slender hope of the men of the Christian Church, but much of some nation far distant from the Christian world.44 44. LJ 74

Since Swedenborg's time many nations have indeed obtained freedom of speech and of the press and religious liberty, although in many other lands these freedoms are severely restricted. Such tolerance is apparently not the fruit of Christian charity as much as the result of a distrust of organized religion and a realization that one cannot claim liberty for one's self unless one grants it to others. The recent syncretist and "ecumenical" movements among Protestant sects seem to stem from an increasing indifference to any authoritarian revelation and to sectarian creeds, and from a desire to play a part in social improvement while avoiding the expense of local competition. Even in pagan lands there is a widespread tendency to substitute secular ideals for religious goals.

And, everywhere, freedom for the good involves liberty for the evil, who may, for instance, abuse the freedom of the press by carrying on a flagrant propaganda for the crude philosophy that might be right and that there is no reckoning after death, no Divine law before which men need bow.

The obvious world struggle today is not between the New Church and the Old - for the Heavenly Doctrine is known to few - but between the various consummated churches (which still defend their ancient falsities even though they have lost their historic momentum) and the aggressive spirit of secular thinking which rests on faith in man's intellectual and growing scientific achievements. We see humanity in a mental and moral chaos, seething with issues of such vast dimensions that they are beyond any one mind to grasp - issues involving the very destiny and survival of our race and of its precious institutions of marriage, church and state. Man, as never before, holds within his hands the means of his own destruction.

But the New Church sees that it is by balancing and ordering the forces of evil and falsity that the Lord procures, for the vast multitude of His church universal, a freedom and a power that turn all events into an ultimate good. The effect of the Writings on men in the world, so far, has been largely that of a ferment, hastening the judgment on many religious falsities, even though the Heavenly Doctrine in its organic whole has not been received.

Yet the New Church is provided as the appointed city of refuge for all good souls who thirst for the water of life.45 Within and beyond the conflicts of history, with their issues of natural justice, there lies a deeper spiritual justice which is not decided by prudence but through a correspondence with

spiritual conflicts that are fought out in the world of spirits.<sup>46</sup> It is well to remember, then, that what we witness in these days is the aftermath of the Last judgment. We are experiencing the convulsive, prolonged birth-pangs of a new world which Providence destines to be, in its turn, the womb in which the New Church will some day be nurtured. And over that world the Lord God Jesus Christ doth reign. 45. Cp @AE 641-643 46. @DP 251f

## APPENDIX

### 1. Nothing of man's life perishes by death.

At death, nothing of man's life is left in his body. "It matters not whether a man dies in his bed, or in battle, or in any other way, for whatever is vital in man, or however much dispersed may be the parts of his body, yet they are collected together in a moment. . ." (@SD 1099, cp 1104, @AC 179) There is from the Lord "a living and mighty attraction" which "wills to draw all men into eternal happiness, thus unto Himself." By reason of this force of His mercy, "nothing from the vital substance can remain in what, is corporeal and material, but it is necessarily drawn out. . . ." (@SD 1104) Nothing vital can remain. (@AC 179, 4622, 2475, cp 10236)

When the spirit leaves, the matter of the body can no longer manifest any signs of life - either sensations or motions. The cells and fibres of the body are no longer obedient to the human soul and eventually decay. All human life is withdrawn. Yet various tissue cells, such as fat cells and skin cells, are - before their chemical make-up alters or dissolves - still susceptible to the influx of life from the spiritual world, and may multiply by mitosis if artificially fed in the laboratory, and continue to live in a vegetative fashion.

Live blood of the same type may also be transfused from one person to another, and certain tissues and organs have been transplanted and as it were reorganized and adopted by the soul of the recipient patient. For "influx is according to form" and reception is according to forms and states. (@CL 86, cp @TCR 8, 35: 11) It is also a law of influx that, when this falls into forms not correspondent, it is varied - as in all organic creation. "The God that vivifies every beast is the same God as vivifies man; but the recipient form causes beast to be beast and man to be man." (@TCR 8[3]) Similarly, the permanence of species is explained by the fact that reception of the influx of life is according to form. (@CL 86, cp @AC 687, @TCR 366)

That an isolated tissue may continue to live and multiply by cell division after a man's death (as in the case of a skin culture) does not imply that any segment of man's life remains in it. What inflows seems rather to be a vegetative soul which manifests no human purposes or uses. Note the law of creative influx, given in Divine Love and Wisdom, nos. 340, 343.

## II. Death by violence

Since the spirit lingers for a time in the dying body, the question occurs what should properly be done to this discarded garment of the spirit. The manner of death can scarcely affect the order of the soul's resuscitation, or hasten resurrection. Even the Lord, after a violent death, did not rise until the third day. But differences in the fatal disease or in premature embalming or cremation may hasten the cooling of the interiors of the body and thus cause the "separation" of the spirit. (@AC 179, @HH 446)

The body, as the former abode of the spirit and as formed in the image of man's personality, claims a dignity even in death. The burial signifies the resurrection. But it also marks the grateful

restoration to the earth of the matter borrowed by the spirit for its uses during its mundane existence.