

Candela



Newsletter of the Swedenborg Association of Australia Inc.

Organisational Details are provided on the next page

September 2022

ISSUE 109

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to another issue of Candela, the Spring issue. We hope you enjoyed the previous issue with its special 30-year celebration of the Swedenborg Association. Maybe you were in a photo, and what fun to see people looking so much younger! Swedenborg says that 'to grow old in heaven is to grow young'. Something to ponder there!

Travelling around, I've often seen a lot of flowering wattle bushes in the last few weeks, along suburban roads and for many kilometres on the freeway. I get the impression that some wise and well-intentioned council member or worker decided that it would be wonderful to paint the edges of our roads yellow. There they



are to enjoy, but you also need to watch the road!

Spring brings flowers, as it gets warmer and daylight gets longer. This year's repeat rain also adds to the likelihood of more flowers.

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Please note: The views expressed in this Newsletter are those of each contributor and do not necessarily reflect any particular position of the S.A.A. or its committee.

Next Issue –December 2022

Our next issue will be in December, please send any articles to me by November 10th. They could be about Christmas or be on any spiritual theme.

Email to ruth@duckworth.me or post to the registered office.

Ruth

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Flowers are incredible, the best natural world ballerinas. Flowers are also literally flirtatious because they open up to bring about fertilisation and eventually offspring.

The correspondence of flowers is rich. Flowers correspond to the initial delights that we get in seeing and feeling divine truths and spiritual meanings. An opening flower is a perfect picture of a mind and heart responding to discovering truth. What a wonderful experience that is for us.

But the actual fertilisation happens because bees and insects are attracted, and they come to this and that flower and get pollen on their bee's knees and fur. So, there's another important correspondence. Our mind and heart are not going to go further if we are just loving a delightful idea. It's only going to have a future if we take it in, take it on, and do something with it in ourselves.

I suspect that this is the real reason why flowers tend to be only fleeting. They do their job for their plant and then they give way to forming fruits and seeds, and so they should. But it was the pretty flowers that got it all happening. We have to feel delight to spur us on to activity. It's called motivation. Spring leads on to summer which in turn gives way to fruiting autumn.

Enjoy it all, Julian

The Lord is constantly present with every human being, the evil as well as the good. No one would be alive if the Lord were not present. Only when we let him in, however—that is, believe in him and do what he commands—does he come in.

The Lord's constant presence is what makes us rational, and what gives us the capacity to become spiritual. The light that emanates from the Lord as the sun of the spiritual world is what has this effect.

When we add heat to this light, that is, when we add love to this truth, then the Lord comes in to us. The heat in question emanates from the same sun in the spiritual world; it takes the form of love for God and for our neighbour. The situation in which the Lord is merely present with us, enlightening our intellect, is like the presence of the sun's light in the world. Unless heat is added to this light, everything on earth remains desolate. When, however, the Lord actually comes in to us, it is like the heat that comes into everything in the spring. Since heat and light work together at that time of year, the ground becomes workable, and the seeds sprout and grow up to bear fruit.

True Christianity 774



SWEDENBORG'S OUTLINES OF THE IDEAL SOCIETY

By Julian Duckworth

1. Introduction

In this extended article we're going to look at the way Swedenborg's spiritual teachings give us indications of the kind of government which will lead to the ideal or true heavenly society. These are relevant to us in several ways:

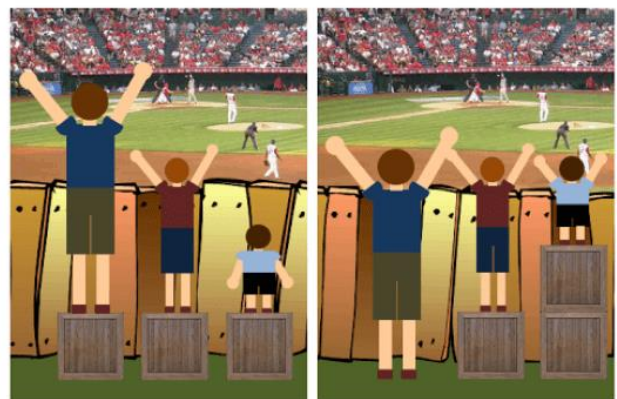
- How communities are formed and governed in the spiritual world;
- How this world's nations and governments work or not, or might work better;
- How our own personal internal government is arranged, especially when we are open to divine guidance, and when we live by that guidance.

It's important to remember that Swedenborg was fully active in spiritual things during the last thirty or so years of his life. Before that, he was pretty much involved in government and corporate management. He was made an Assessor at the Swedish Board of Mines, an important position because Sweden developed mining extensively due to its rich ores. He eventually resigned this position. In 1719, when he was 31, his family was ennobled and the name Swedberg was changed to Swedenborg. This now entitled Swedenborg to be a member of the Upper House of the Swedish Parliament, the House of Nobles, with which he kept up involvement even when his main attention was in spiritual writing, spiritual experience and divine revelation. So, he understood government matters well, from his own personal experience.

We also need to run through the different systems of government which there are in countries around the world. This will give us some context. We seem to be currently experiencing a move away from democracy towards autocracy and



populism. There are certainly fewer democracies now than there were a decade ago. Democracy, while 'fair', has its own inbuilt problems and it tends to work slowly. In today's world of speed and greater freedoms, other ways of governing often look appealing, but they also bring on their own difficulties. The question then becomes whether an ideal society is even possible here in this world?



Equality

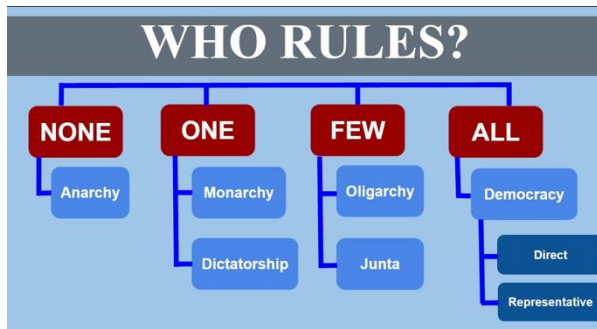
Justice

There are in fact about fifteen types of national government which range from the classic totalitarian regime, usually in the absolute power of one person or family or royal family, through religious theocracies where scriptures determine everything, through oligarchies where the immensely rich hold all power, through various types



of democracies, mostly parliamentary or presidential, through federalism where states within in a country have autonomy in many things, going on to citizen government where (as in Switzerland) every citizen has the right to challenge any government ruling and where too in several 'cantons' an annual group of chosen citizens becomes a panel for that year to make all new laws. The ultimate of course is anarchy, non-government. The only present example of this is Freedom Christiania, part of Copenhagen, where apparently anything goes, and it has amazingly been around quite a while.

What works, and what works best? It's hard to say because every system, especially if it has the welfare of everyone at heart, has its strengths but will also have its weaknesses. Some say that a benevolent dictatorship is ideal,



but benevolence might not last very long of course. With government, all kinds of factors are involved - time, budgets, funding, opposition, power, referendums, personality, integrity, hung parliaments etc, and not least, human nature. In our current time we need to add misinformation and social media influences. A well-worn axiom is that "a week is a long time in politics".

2. An opening quote from Swedenborg about governing.

The following quote is a good place for us to start with some Swedenborg comment on the nature of government.

"In heaven no one is commanded or ordered but thought is shared and another spirit there acts willingly in accordance with this. Sharing of thoughts along with the wish that something gets done as a result is a flow from one to another and with the one receiving it, it becomes perception. And what's more, in heaven, those there not only think but they also talk together, mainly about things to do with wisdom. In these exchanges there is nothing of ordering or commanding from one to another because no one seeks to be the master and see someone else like a servant. Everyone wishes to minister to and serve others. This shows what the form of government is in heaven."
(Arcana Coelestia 5732)

This passage gives the fundamental idea about the origin of all forms of organisation in heaven. Notice that the idea of government is only mentioned at the end. The starter is in the sharing and exchange of views, well given and well received, knowing that all who are in heaven acknowledge the Lord and want only to be led in their thinking by the wisdom that comes from being obedient to the Lord.

This wisdom is shared and it will always be well received because everyone has the same ultimate purpose, which is the welfare of all, the common good. Interestingly, the purpose of discussion is touched on, not only thinking but talking together, which brings perception.

This is a primary law of the society of heaven, that when a person talks with another and they have the same goal, they bring new perceptions to each other which would never come about in their own thinking, and by this they are increased and enriched. So heaven is a dynamic state of united purpose, full agreement and increasing wisdom from sharing.



Note that the emphasis in this passage is that there is nothing of commanding or ordering because this would create a hierarchy, a "top-down" factor which by its very nature goes against the idea that the Lord alone is each person's focus, reference and the cause for obedience, and other people are seen only as equal in having that. However, as we will see when we look more at government in heaven, there are those with a greater wisdom than others but still treated as equal - the essence of what is heaven - and these are looked to and called upon by everyone to be in positions of leadership because of this wisdom.

3. Forming community in heaven

Each of us, after we have died, will enter the spiritual world as a fully spiritual being. We're out of our physical body and now unaffected by set time and fixed space. We will increasingly begin to follow and pursue what we most love being, whatever that is. This will lead us to look for others who have similar loves. Finding such others we will come into our own home community, recognising this is our place to be and we will remain being there from then on. We feel this to be our permanent home. This, according to Swedenborg, will probably come about after a number of 'meet-ups' with other

The one we discover and find to be right for us will match our own love and focus, and it will have others with whom we feel a deep affinity with and a sense of like-mindedness. Those there will feel an affinity with us and be openly welcoming. This is because in heaven, each community becomes more perfect by the increase of the number there.



Painting by Caitlin Connolly

We need to appreciate that this discovery comes after we have gone through the initial period of being in the spiritual world - in the "world of spirits" - where we come to see who we truly are and we realise we will always go after what we most love and follow our life's delights.

These communities of heaven will have similar-loving, like-minded spirits in mutual love, wisdom and usefulness. Those there won't be identical but similar and there will be a clear recognition that certain spirits there are the right ones to carry out this particular use while other spirits are best in undertaking another important task. How is this decided?

In a way, this will simply come about naturally (or spiritually) because it will be seen, felt and recognised among all those there. The nature of being spirit means that there is a greater openness and authenticity among spirits who are



communities which, while heavenly, somehow don't feel to be our true place. But this one does! Every community in heaven (and they're countless!) is different in its quality and sense of use.



together. Being no longer physical, nothing can now be hidden or even be unknown or unfelt. So, in a greater way than can ever be possible here in this very physical world, function and involvement, responsibility and co-operating will be obvious, and virtually just fall into place.

We need to remember that every spirit in heaven, in whatever community they are in, loves the Lord, loves what the Lord asks them to be and do in life, and this is always their first reference. Because of this, there is a full accord and agreement in everything. The first quote from Swedenborg emphasised that in heaven there is no commanding or ordering but shared thinking and dawning perception.

Even so, as we said earlier, some are better suited at certain things than others who are equally better suited in different uses. This might well all be completely clear to everyone in the community of course, but it also suggests a working model. If we think about a group of say fifteen people standing in a circle discussing and deciding something, then at different times in the planning and for different purposes, a number of people may each be called on or invited or just step into the centre to initiate something, and then go back into the circle while another comes forward to add their part and expertise. No organiser or spirit-in-charge. But it is all being governed.



In this world here, such a model would probably be prolonged and tortuous, partly because our communities are mixed ones, and also because time and space inevitably slow processes down. But to live in full spirit quickens everything. Swedenborg is always pointing out that in the spiritual world, and particularly in heaven, there is an immediacy to things. Thought of someone brings them present. Angels can say in a word what it would take someone in this world ages to relate. The highest angels get taught directly by the

Lord or mediately through the Word and they immediately put this into their will and do it. Such is heaven's speed, its spiritual speed.

4. Spiritual community, here in this world

In this world we live and work and deal with other people, people who are physically close to us or those at a greater distance, where travel taking time is inevitable. Of course, recent technology has altered this to a large extent, yet physically we cannot overcome distance. We are also aware of a personal sensation of feeling close to some people with whom we share an affinity, and a sensation of being very far away from some people with whom we have little or no affinity. This is true in spite of their physical closeness to us or distance from us.

Swedenborg gives us a remarkable picture of the spiritual reality which exists behind the physical settings and apparent lay-outs of our place in this world. It gives us a very good indication of spiritual communities being formed and existing, unknown to us now. It also touches on our understanding of government. Here is the passage, from *Arcana Caelestia* 1277.

"The case is similar with people on earth in regard to their souls, which are always tied to some community of spirits and angels. We on earth have a position in the Lord's kingdom too, and it likewise depends on the character of our life and on our state. It makes not the slightest difference whether some of us are far apart on the planet, even if the distance is many thousands of miles; we can still be together in the same community. If we exercise kindness in our lives, we are in an angelic community. If we fill our lives with hatred and similar qualities, we are in a hellish community"

Similarly, it does not matter in the least if a large number of us live together in one place on earth; all of us are still individuals when it comes to the character



of our lives and our state of mind, and each of us can be in a different spiritual community.

When people who are several hundred or several thousand miles apart appear before the inner senses, they can be so close (depending on their spiritual location) that they sometimes touch. As a result, if several people were to have their inner eyes opened on earth, they could congregate and talk together, even if one were in India and another in Europe. This has even been demonstrated to me. So each and every person on earth is immediately present to the Lord, directly under his eyes and his loving care."

The point this fascinating passage is making is that we are already, now, in some spiritual community with others we are spiritually close to somewhere around the world, near or far off. Under divine government we may well already be serving some use, along with those others, in a way which at the moment we can't know or understand anything about. This is another form of government which is spiritually already and always in place in the midst of our scattered efforts of governance across and around the world.

5. Swedenborg's outline of a community in heaven

While we have already touched on this several times, Swedenborg says some important things about the make-up, quality and organisation of a community in heaven. Much of what we will cover is more fully dealt with in Heaven and Hell nos. 41-50 and 51-58.

Communities in heaven come into being by the like quality of good and faith among those in them. The variety of good in heaven is infinite and every angel in any one community is in their own good. Communities in heaven are near to or far from each other according to their degree of likeness or difference.

Those in one community are arranged with those in more perfect good, and so in love, wisdom and intelligence being towards the centre and those with lesser perfection being further away from the centre. This positioning is not organised by the angels but by the Lord who positions each angel where they will best be, with the result that each angel feels they are in freedom, in their own wisdom and therefore completely happy.

Each community has a sphere which extends to affect other communities, those in the centre of heaven extending to affect all other communities. Each angel in a community has a sphere which extends to every other spirit there, those in the centre affecting every spirit the most.



The Light by Akiane Kramarik

Each community is a perfect smaller representation of the whole of heaven and can appear to be in the form of one angel. So, the whole of heaven, a whole community in heaven and each angelic spirit is in the same construct which is the pattern and form of heavenly life coming from the Lord and being lived in good leading to use. While there is endless variety there is only the one basic form of heaven as outlined above. This form is ultimately the Lord's own form which seeks to love others outside Himself, to want to be one with them, and to bless them with good.



6. Swedenborg's outline of government in heaven

As with the previous outline of one community in heaven, this outline of government is based on Heaven and Hell, here with nos. 213-220.

Swedenborg explains that because there are communities in heaven there are also governments so that everything of heaven will be maintained and be in true order. Every community has a different way of being governed, according to the kind of good in which it exists, so that its government completely matches and provides for its purpose.

Even so, while there is differing government, there is finally only the government of mutual love in heaven as a whole and in all its parts, because mutual love is heaven and forms heaven's only government.

Government in the level of heaven called celestial, is where those there see everything more immediately because what is right and true and just is written on their hearts and so the Lord governs them directly. In that level of heaven nothing is ever disputed or is disagreed about. When anything about applying truths to life comes up, everyone refers to the wiser ones there who enquire of the Lord and get answers.

to see what is good from thinking about the truth which makes it good. They are also led by the Lord but in a different way, more indirectly, because they have laws and governors who understand the laws of heaven and give direction. If they are unsure, they are enlightened by the Lord.

All governors serve and do what is good from their love of good, and provide for it to be done. They never dominate or dictate, but always put the good of society and the neighbour in first place, always far beyond their own good. Because of this, these governors are given honour which they do not seek but accept, not for themselves but for the sake of the good which is brought about. Everyone fully understands that all honour is to be given to the Lord.

7. Government in the hells

We have been concentrating on the ideal form of government and seeing ways in which shared equality, mutual love, putting the Lord first and oneself last, creates community and arranges government in an ideal even perfect way. This makes heaven and heaven is where the Lord is and is received.

Those who turn against the Lord and against the good which makes heaven are in themselves in hell. If this opposition is intentional and becomes the love of their life, then they will take themselves off to hell after they die, feeling and believing that this will be their heaven. In hell, they will continue to seek to dominate, control, undermine, encourage hatred, and get revenge when they cannot get their own way. This terrifying situation would very quickly become so acute that hell and each of its inhabitants would quickly come into unbearable states where it would be almost better if they no longer existed.

Because of this, the Lord governs the hells to keep the best order possible, to keep each occupant in the most bearable



Government in the level of heaven called spiritual, is where those there come



state that can be maintained, and to preserve the tragedy which hell is, in the most restrained condition that can be achieved.

It is essential to appreciate that the Lord loves those in hell - differently from those in heaven, but just as much - and ideally would bring those in hell into heaven if that were possible. What prevents that is not the Lord but the state of those in hell who might well at times sense a different life than the one they are following, but their burning delight is to love themselves and rule over others, believing this is the ultimate delight in living, and this fully consumes them. It is their love, and they will keep returning to it because they have made it their own.



The Fomors by John Duncan

So, the Lord permits hell but also governs it. Because hell is based on fear, the Lord arranges that the more cruel in hell are made the governors and those in hell are made obedient to them from fear of them. This complete distortion of the mutual love of heaven is the best possible way to maintain all semblance of order and reduce everything to the most bearable that can be kept in place. Without such government, everything would erupt and the weaker piteous cringing spirits in hell would have lives beyond endurance. But in hell, as spirits, they cannot end their lives.

This and more is outlined in the final part of Heaven and Hell, especially in nos. 536-544.

8. Last comments

Now that we have gone through the ideals of heaven's communities and its government, and also touched on the kind of government that is necessary in hell, it is clear that heaven's government is unlikely to come about in this world, even though government here might gradually progress towards the kind of government there is in heaven.

This is because in the world, we are all in a formative or 'pre-heaven' stage where we experience all kinds of mixed and unclear situations full of how things look rather than how they really are. So, there isn't much scope for idealism and perfection, although transparency in government is a recent call. We also live among people who love, think and act differently from each other and we can only sometimes guess at motivations. We also live with ourselves and go through personal ups and downs because, as yet, we are neither in heaven nor in hell.

On a brighter note, we see that people can come to work together and make things happen, and governments can co-operate to bring solutions and support to emergencies and outbreaks. What we might well be seeing is something of heaven being brought to bear in this world and behind that, something of the Lord's infinite providence which is at work over everything in our lives with the goal of bringing us to heaven.

May our governments and ruling bodies want the best for all people and may they learn from troubles and crises wherever they rise up around this world.





L'ALP D'HUEZ

By Howard Thompson

“Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.” (Isaiah 2:3)

Each July and I spend 10-15 minutes each morning catching up on the previous days action in Le Tour de France. One aspect of this annual 3 week bicycle race is that each year the cyclists take a different route, revisiting famous French cities and epic alpine mountains only every few years. The 2022 edition of the race brought the riders to the climb of L'Alp d'Huez for the first time since 2018.

Having been afforded the opportunity to visit The Alps several times in my life, such mountains always bring to mind an image of the path to heaven the Lord has shown us in His Word. I am struck by the reality of both a path to heaven for all people and the unique path we each take.

I am The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord. (John 1:23)

First, I wrestle with the imagery of a straight path, because I do not feel that the path, even if followed, is intended to be straight. This brings me to reflect on the image of L'Alp d'Huez. Through 21 switchbacks riders climb just over 1,000



metres in 14 km of riding, often as a climactic end to a nearly 200 km stage.



These guys are racing up a mountain most humans could not ride up. The path up the alp is not straight, but it is the easiest route, probably first traversed by shepherds accessing the high meadow for their flocks in summer (the significance of this is not lost on me either). I think the path to heaven is like this. It is not a straight road but it is the easiest. We can try to cut corners or take a different route but we will suffer in the effort.

No angel knows the paths along which they are taken, only the Lord. (Heaven and Hell 519)

The other interesting aspect of the climb is that some who have conquered the climb have felt that they had done it on their own, while the true champions of the sport acknowledge that they only accomplished the climb with the support of their team, their sponsors and the technical equipment that allowed them to perform and climb the mountain. Those who reach the top without this acknowledgment do not remain at the top very long. We do not go up to the mountain of the Lord on our own either. We need to acknowledge that the Lord has made the path for us. We need to acknowledge that when we step off the path and our friends are there to help us, that it is the Lord working through them to keep us on the path.

On our own we are constantly falling but the Lord is constantly putting us on our feet again. (Arcana Caelestia 8391)

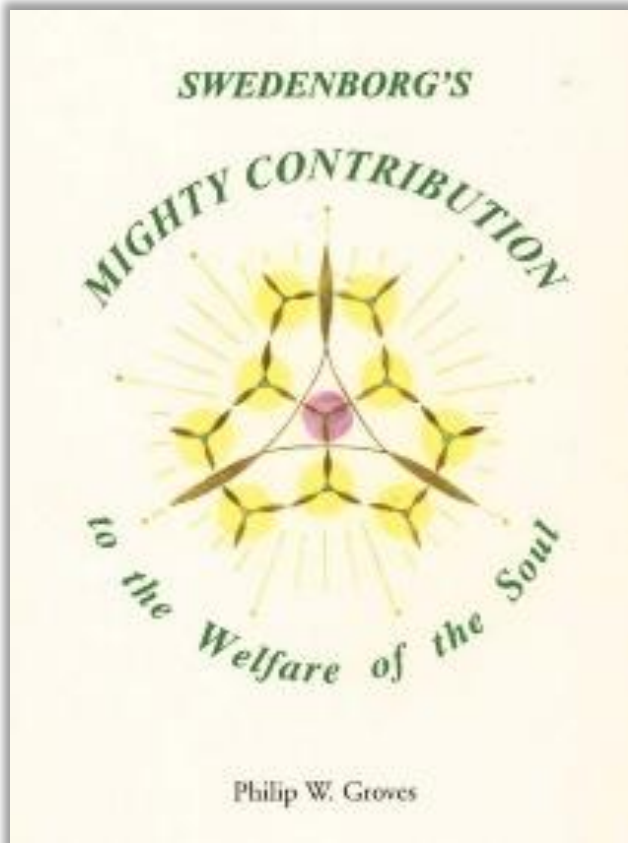
I wrestled with the apparent conflict between the idea of a straight path and a path unique to each of us. L'Alp d'Huez is what I see when I close my eyes and listen. Perhaps the path is the same but the journey is different. Maybe that is the way I need to see it.

Anyway, I hope this helps someone else see more clearly as well.



Book Offer for This Quarter

Below is this quarter's book offer. **Candela** readers who order the following titles during the next quarter will receive the discount below, **while stocks last**. Complete the Order Form below and send to the Swedenborg Centre or phone on 02 9416 2812 and mention this page.



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Also check the website at www.swedenborg.com.au for details of **group events** which are held online, but you can also be physically at various locations around Australia. Follow the "about → contact" menu items on the website for a list of locations and contact info of your nearest group convenor, and see the "events" menu item for Zoom links so you can join online events.

Our new website is continually being updated with new study material and latest news and information.



WITH YOUR SPIRITUAL EYES OPEN

There are a bunch of stories in the Bible where people aren't

seeing something, and then there's an unveiling. Their spiritual eyes are opened. Here's a sampling of just a few of the places where this "seeing further" happens:

In [Luke 24:30-32](#), two disciples have been walking along the road to Emmaus, joined part way along by Jesus (who just a few days earlier had been crucified and then resurrected), but they haven't recognized him, until this scene:

"And it came to pass, as He reclined with them, taking bread, He blessed it; and breaking, gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He became invisible to them. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while He spoke to us in the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?"

In [2 Kings 6:16-17](#), there's another famous story, where the prophet Elisha's house has been surrounded by enemy soldiers, and Elisha's servant is afraid:

"And he said, Fear not; for they who are with us are more than they who are with them. And Elisha prayed and said, Jehovah, open his eyes, I pray, that he may see. And Jehovah opened the eyes of the lad and he saw; and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha."

In [Genesis 21:17-19](#), Hagar has fled into the wilderness, and she and her infant son Ishmael are on the verge of dying of thirst:

"And God heard the voice of the lad, and the angel of God called to Hagar out of the heavens, and said to her, What ails thee, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad, where he is. Arise, lift the lad, and make thy hand firm with him, for I will set him for a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water, and she went and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink."

Here's another well-known one, from [Numbers 22:31](#), when Balaam's donkey has balked when the way is blocked by an angel that Balaam can't see:

"And Jehovah uncovered the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of Jehovah standing up in the way, and His sword was drawn in His hand; and he bent himself, and bowed himself down on his face."

A little later in the same story, in [Numbers 24:3-5](#), in Balaam's prophecy, it's mentioned again:

"And he lifted up his enunciation, and said, Balaam the son of Beor has said, and the man whose eyes are opened has said: he has said, who heard the sayings of God, who beheld the vision of Shaddai, falling forward, but having his eyes uncovered; How good are thy tents, O Jacob, thy habitations, O Israel!"

What are some takeaways for us, when we read about this? One is that there are spiritual things that we don't normally see -- but that **they can still be real**. Another might be that we should cultivate the humility to acknowledge that there's a lot more going on than we fully understand.

From <https://newchristianbiblestudy.org/>