

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

by the Rev. John E. Elliot, B.A., B.D.



*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,
baptising them in the name of the
Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*

Matthew 28:19

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"The Lord's twelve apostles had the same representation as the twelve tribes of Israel namely, they collectively represented the Church, and each one of them some essential of the Church; for this reason there were twelve of them."

Apocalypse Explained 430

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

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FOREWORD

The chapters published here by the *Swedenborg Centre* began as a series of Sunday evening addresses given in 1963 to the New Church or Swedenborgian congregation that I was then serving at Southend-on-Sea, Essex, England. The day after each had been given I 'wrote it up' for *New Church Herald*, the predecessor to *Lifeline*, which is published monthly in U.K. by the General Conference of the New Church. These chapters should not therefore be regarded as a piece of careful academic research, but as the efforts of an ordinary pastor to produce something interesting and informative which could add to the faith and understanding of those committed to his care. I pray that all who now read what I said and wrote nearly two decades ago will indeed find much to increase their faith and understanding.

The addresses are reproduced here exactly as they appeared in the pages of *New Church Herald* and are consequently 'dated' in a few minor respects. Many Scriptural quotations are from the Authorised or King James Version instead of the Revised Standard Version or some other more modern one. Also, as the chapters were intended for those familiar with the standard translations of the theological works of Emanuel Swedenborg, direct quotations from the latter occur instead of attempts to repeat the same in my own words for the benefit of those who are unfamiliar as yet with those works. Yet it is to be hoped that these direct quotations may lead the reader to examine for themselves the books from which they are taken, copies of which may be obtained from the Swedenborg Centre, 4 Shirley Road, Roseville NSW 2069, Australia.

John Elliott, November 1982

MATTHEW 10, 2-4
SIMON PETER and
ANDREW (his brother)
JAMES (son of Zebedee) and
JOHN (his brother)
PHILIP and
BARTHOLOMEW
THOMAS and
MATTHEW
JAMES (son of Alphaeus) and
LEBBAEUS THADDAEUS
SIMON (the Canaanean) and
JUDAS ISCARIOT

MARK 3, 16-19
SIMON PETER and
JAMES (son of Zebedee) and
JOHN (James' brother) and
ANDREW and
PHILIP and
BARTHOLOMEW and
MATTHEW and
THOMAS and
JAMES (son of Alphaeus) and
THADDAEUS and
SIMON (the Canaanean) and
JUDAS ISCARIOT

LUKE 6, 14-16
SIMON PETER and
ANDREW (his brother) and
JAMES and
JOHN and
PHILIP and
BARTHOLOMEW and
MATTHEW and
THOMAS and
JAMES (son of Alphaeus) and
SIMON (the Zealot) and
JUDAS (James' son) and
JUDAS ISCARIOT

ACTS 1, 13
PETER and
JOHN and
JAMES and
ANDREW
PHILIP and
THOMAS
BARTHOLOMEW and
MATTHEW
JAMES (son of Alphaeus) and
SIMON (the Zealot) and
JUDAS (James' son)
(MATTHIAS)

PART I – A DISCIPLE

A DISCIPLE is one who learns, an apostle one who is sent out to proclaim what he has learned. Our incarnate Lord selected twelve of the many disciples who followed Him to serve as apostles. What were the names of these twelve men?

The four lists of their names which are to be found in the New Testament, and which are set out in the preceding pages, differ from one another only in a few details. All place Simon Peter in the first and Judas Iscariot in the last positions (according to the Acts Matthias was elected to the twelfth place left vacant by Judas' death). Every list divides into three groups of four men with Simon Peter, Philip and James (son of Alphaeus) at the head of each group. Within the three groups of four, however, the four lists are at variance with one another. In group one Andrew occupies second place in Matthew's and Luke's lists, fourth position in Mark's and the Acts. In the second group Thomas stands second in Acts, third in Matthew and fourth in Mark and Luke. There is apparent confusion, too, concerning the names of the lesser-known disciples of the third group. While Matthew and Mark speak of "Simon the Canaanean" (not "Canaanite" as appears in the Authorised Version), Luke and the Acts refer to "Simon the Zealot". "Lebbaeus surnamed Thaddaeus" of the Matthean list is simply "Thaddaeus" in the Marcan, while Luke seems to refer to an entirely different individual named "Judas (son of James)". These differences can be resolved in the following way. "Zealot" describes a former association of "Simon the Canaanean" with that religious group known as the "Zealots"; what "Canaanean" means is uncertain. And "Lebbaeus" and "Thaddaeus" were surnames of the man whose personal name was "Judas". Of course, this attempt to

reconcile apparent discrepancies within the literal sense of the Scriptures is relatively unimportant. Our real concern is the abiding spiritual teaching we can derive from the study of these twelve men.

"By disciples are meant all who worship the Lord and live according to the truths of His Word". *Apocalypse Revealed* 325.

In every age men and women who learn the Lord's truth and obey it are His disciples. His Holy Spirit enlightens for them the truths they have learned, and also empowers them to practice what they so understand. Truth and goodness have found acceptance in them.

When our Lord's disciples individually are mentioned in the Word something about His goodness and truth which will make us His followers is represented to us. When the Twelve are referred to collectively then all that man can receive from His God is meant, because that number in the Scriptures signifies all things pertaining to faith and love (all the tribes of Israel were twelve in number; twelve gateways leading into the Holy City denote all the different ways whereby men enter upon heavenly life).

In the Being of the Lord Himself love and wisdom are perfectly united; likewise in the heart and mind of the present day disciple faith (or truth) and love (or goodness) are joined to each other. This teaching is suggested in the "pairings" of disciples in Matthew's Gospel and the linking together of all names in the Marcan and Lucan lists by the conjunction "and". For every good affection there is an associated truth, and every truth revealed to men has some application to what they love and do.

The Teachings of the Church further explain that the union of the Lord's love and wisdom within the individual present-day disciple exists within the three major steps we take towards the attainment of heavenly life (the twelve divide into three groups of disciples). Simple obedience "according to the truths of His Word" is the first step; living from a primary motive of unselfish service to one's neighbour is the second; and a supreme love for the Lord at the very core of our character and life the third.

What is the spiritual significance in the Gospel lists of the different orders of names? This is a matter for academic speculation and of no vital importance to men living on earth at the present time. What is declared in *Arcana Coelestia* 6640 concerning the variations in the order of the names of Jacob's sons as they appear in the Old Testament surely applies also to the order of the twelve apostles.

"What they specifically signify when named in the present or some other order no one knows but the Lord Alone. Nor can it be known in the heavens, except from the Lord..."

Clearly the truth lying behind these differences of detail in the Word can be of value to angels who are in the constant endeavour to improve themselves as the Lord's servants; but it is too lofty and therefore is not required for the spiritual advancement of unregenerate men towards the attainment of eternal life.

In these chapters the meaning of individual disciple's names and details relating to them as they are recorded in the Gospels will be studied with the hope that we may see something of those particular "goods and truths" from the Lord which constitute the Church in the hearts and minds of men and which enable them to become His disciples.

PART II – ANDREW

In the first section of his series, I tried to show that in any age the Lord's disciples are those "who worship the Lord and live according to the truths of His Word", and since disciples are receptive of the Lord's Goodness and Truth, therefore the Twelve who followed Him in the world, when referred to in the Word of God, represent to us these Divine gifts. The Twelve signify all Divine virtues as they exist among men, individual disciples' particular virtues and graces. In the coming pages we shall consider the spiritual significance of each of the Twelve, beginning now with Andrew.

The Man

Of Andrew the man we are told very little. The son of a certain Jonah and brother of the more prominent Apostle Simon whom our Lord named Peter, he hailed from Bethsaida. According to John 1, 35-40 he was at first a follower of John Baptist. He and another disciple of the Baptist (possibly John, son of Zebedee) spent a day with our Lord after hearing their first master say of Him, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

After this Andrew "introduced" his brother Simon to our Lord.

On what must have been a subsequent occasion, the description of which is found in Matthew 4, 18-20 and Mark 1, 16-18, the brothers were both called from their everyday work of fishing in the waters of Galilee to become "fishers of men". The immediate abandonment of their worldly occupation should not be reckoned an impulsive, reckless action but the occasion of their response to a call they had been expecting. After their call our Lord went to their home now in Capernaum and there healed Simon Peter's mother-in-law.

The Gospels record three other details concerning this less famous "son of Jonah". On the occasion of the miraculous feeding of the five thousand Andrew informed our Lord of the lad with five barley loaves and two fishes. At a different time, together with Philip, he reported to Jesus that certain Greeks were seeking an audience with Him. And he is associated with Peter, James, and John in posing the question concerning the time of "the end of the age".

Nothing else is known for certain of Andrew the man though historical evidence suggests that he served as an apostle in Asia Minor, perhaps in association with John. Christian tradition has designated him the patron saint of fishermen, to be remembered particularly on 30th November.

Meaning of the name Andrew

"Andrew" is the English equivalent not of a Hebrew or Aramaic name (as Simon and Cephas are) but of the purely Greek Andreas. Its meaning will be seen in the following associated Greek words:

Andres = men, males, husbands.

Andreia = manliness, vigour.

Andreios = manly, masculine, vigorous.

That vigorous disposition seen in the character and physique of men is thus suggested by the name "Andreas" or "Andrew". What spiritual quality is represented to us by "manliness"?

The Spiritual Meaning of Andrew

Except for one brief but illuminating reference, the teachings of the New Church say nothing about the spiritual meaning of

Andrew. In *Apocalypse Explained* 821 he is said to signify "obedience of faith". He represents that virile, "manly", "vigorous" determination to practice one's religious principles, a spiritual virtue acquired in the initial stages of the regenerate life. How significant that Andrew, according to the Gospel, was the first apostle to encounter our Lord! The description of his bringing and "introducing" Simon to our Lord indicates that "the obedience of faith" precedes, and is instrumental in, the acquisition of that spiritual faith meant by Simon Peter (who will be the subject of the third section below).

Historical Faith and Spiritual Faith

But how can we speak of "the obedience of faith" if spiritual faith (Simon Peter) has yet to be obtained? Can you practice the principles of a religious faith before you have faith?

The answer to these questions lies in the Teachings of the Church which distinguish between "historical" faith (some translations render "traditional") and "spiritual" faith. Before men and women of the Church receive from their Lord a personal, living, spiritual faith they rely upon the faith of those who have preceded them in the Christian way of life. Until the Lord confirms His truth in our minds, our faith is "historical"; we are obedient to those religious principles handed down to us by parents and teachers. The following quotations from the Writings of the New Church illustrate this doctrine for us:

"By faith, at the present day, is understood nothing else than the thought that a thing is so because it is taught by the Church, and because it is not evident to the understanding... The faith of the present day, therefore, is faith in what is not known, and may be called blind faith; and as it is *the dictate of*

one person in another, it is historical faith. This is not spiritual faith." Doctrine of Faith 1.

*"The first faith in all is historical faith, and this afterwards becomes saving faith when man by his life becomes spiritual; for first of all it is to be believed that the Lord is the God of heaven and earth, and that He is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, infinite, and one with the Father. These things must be known; but so far as they are merely known they are historical, and historical faith causes the Lord to be present, because it is a looking to the Lord in respect to His Divine nature. And yet that faith does not save until man lives the life of faith, which is charity; for he then wills and does what he believes, and to will and to do is of the love, and love conjoins to Him whom faith makes to be present". *Apocalypse Explained* 815.*

Within the Church today (as there must be in every age) there are fine, earnest young people who are manifestly striving to be loyal to their Church and her teachings. They demonstrate a robust "Andreic" determination to be obedient to their faith. The latter as yet will be mainly "historical"; but if they persevere in the Christian way of life then in the Lord's good time the virtue of "obedience of historical faith" will become "obedience of spiritual faith".

Our Lord would have us receive spiritual faith from Him and not rest content with knowledge derived from others. He urges us to acknowledge His Teachings in understanding and in life, to employ His gifts of freedom and reason to give our own assent to His truth. (Simon Peter is the most prominent of the Apostles). Nobody, however, receives spiritual faith without the prior virtue of obedience; in time Andrew comes before his

brother. Once such "Petrine" spiritual faith is present then obedience becomes relatively subordinate, though it must always be a virtue of the regenerate soul. Andrew represents "the obedience of faith", the earliest and ever-present virtue of any disciple of our Lord.

PART III – SIMON PETER

The Man

Enthusiastic, impulsive, impetuous, outspoken. These and several other adjectives could be used to describe the man Simon Peter, of whom so much is said in the New Testament. As our Lord walked on a boisterous Sea of Galilee, who of the Twelve was impulsive enough to try and imitate Him? Who at Capernaum, after many hitherto followers of our Lord had defected and He had asked the Twelve whether they too would leave Him, straightaway replied: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life"? Which one of the disciples, when all were asked at Caesarea Philippi, "But who do you say that I am?" blurted out, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God"? Which one of the three, Peter, James and John, seeing the Lord in glory on the Mount of the Transfiguration impetuously suggested the construction of three shrines? Who openly avowed that he would never deny his Master? And who at the Feast of Pentecost ten days after the Ascension immediately sprang to his feet to refute the charge of drunkenness levelled against the Apostles and then so proclaimed the Christian Gospel that 3,000 souls received baptism?

This apostle's readiness to speak and act belonged to the gift of leadership which formed part of his character. Our Lord Himself knowing that He had such strength of character twice nick-named him a "Rock man". When Andrew introduced his brother, our Lord said: "You are Simon, the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which means "rock"). And at Caesarea Philippi He declared:

"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona!... And I tell you, you are *Peter*, and on this rock I will build my church..."

Meaning of Names

The rare Greek name "Simon" came to be used by Greek-speaking Jews in place of the Hebrew "Simeon". (Simon, Andrew and Philip came from Greek-speaking Bethsaida and therefore have Greek names). "Simeon" means "hearing". "Simon", whatever it meant originally, presumably adopted the meaning of "Simeon".

"Jonah" (Greek spelling "Jona", or "Jonas") the name of Simon and Andrew's father is the Hebrew word for "a dove".

"Cephas" which is Aramaic or Syriac and its Greek equivalent "Petros" means "rock" or "stone".

Spiritual Significance of Simon Peter

In the letter of Scripture Peter is associated with *faith*. He made great confessions of faith at Capernaum and Caesarea Philippi; yet as he began to sink in the stormy water of Galilee the Lord called him a man of small faith. Faith also is his spiritual representation. What, however, is meant by "faith"?

For some faith seems to mean a quality of intellect which is the same as "belief" while others tend to equate it with an act of will we otherwise call "trust". The Teachings of the New Church indicate that belief, trust and much more is involved. At the very start of the small book, *Doctrine of the New Jerusalem concerning Faith*, is the heading: "Faith is an Internal Acknowledgment of Truth". Let us examine this definition.

Truth for us is, of course, to be found in the Holy Word and in the Doctrines of the Second Advent which are drawn from the Word. Faith is an internal acknowledgement of what the Word of God enjoins upon us.

By "internal acknowledgment" much more than knowing what is true or false is meant. According to the Oxford Dictionary to acknowledge means "to admit the truth of" and "to express appreciation of". When the truth we know is admitted into our hearts as well as our intellects, we have that "interior acknowledgment of truth". Faith describes an acceptance by the whole self, that is, with interior will and understanding, of the Commandments and truths made known to us in the Sacred Scriptures. That true faith resides both in man's affections and his thinking is reflected in the names "Simon son of Jonah" and "Peter".

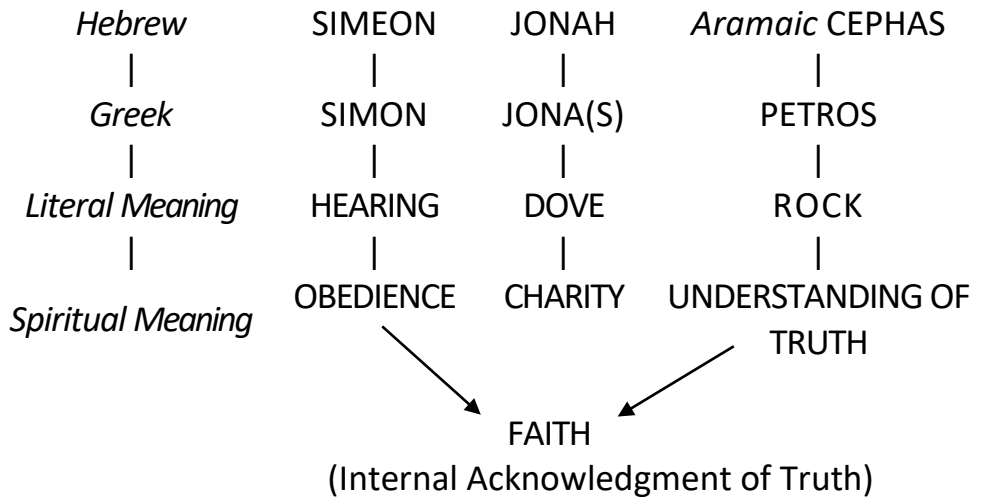
The obedient life of the wise man "who hears these words of mine and does them" is suggested to us by the name "Simon". But men can be outwardly obedient to Divine Commandments for one of many reasons, some good, others bad. It must be asked therefore whence our outward hearkening to Divine Law is begotten. Does self love in us demand that we be outwardly virtuous because that mode of life is more profitable? Or does an unselfish urge to love and serve our Lord impel us to keep

His precepts? In us is Simon, our obedience to God's laws, the offspring of Jonah, "a dove"?

The dove is generally recognised as a symbol of peace, innocence, purity and the Christian love we call "charity". In the Word she brought to Noah evidence that the floods and storms had abated; she was considered fit and clean for sacrifice; and the dove coming down upon the Lord at the time of His baptism signifies the descent of purity, and unselfishness, and Christian love in the characters of the Lord's people who honour His Name. Thus the title "Simon son of Jonah" denotes living according to Divine truths from inwardly pure and innocent affections.

Cephas, Peter or "Rockman" remind us of the quality of truth we seek to hear and obey. Rock possesses hard and enduring qualities. So also the Psalmist says of the Word: "Every one of Thy righteous judgments endures for ever". Human institutions, and the general pattern of society is constantly changing, but the Ten Commandments declare to us in 1982 what they declared at the time of their promulgation three thousand years ago; and their meaning will be precisely the same three thousand years hence. All truth has the hard enduring quality of rock. How significant, therefore, that the Ten Commandments were first inscribed upon two tablets of stone! So the name "Peter" describes the quality of truth or faith set in our understandings.

What has been said so far:



Faith is Acquired

It was shown in the section on "Andrew" that a Christian first serves the Lord by means of a faith which he has received from predecessors in the Christian life. Not being his own it is termed "historical" or "traditional" and is quite different from the personal internal acknowledgment of truth meant by Simon Peter. A real living faith cannot be handed from father to son but is acquired by the individual himself. How does he acquire it?

First there must be knowledge, of and the endeavour to walk in, Divine ways. While from his heart man seeks these ways, the Lord lays down in His understanding the firm foundations of truth upon which the whole edifice of a complete angelic life is raised up. When "Simon son of Jonah" is brought to our Lord, He adds "Peter" to his name.

Substance of the Rock

What will be the prime substance of the bedrock foundation of the Christian life? Which is the essential of all truths?

The spokesman for the Twelve answered these questions at Caesarea Philippi when he said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God". The worth of this confession is shown us in *True Christian Religion* 342:

"What is the first principle of a faith in the Lord God, the Saviour Jesus Christ? The answer is: It is the acknowledgment that He is the Son of God. This was the first principle of faith which the Lord, when He came into the world, revealed and announced. For unless men had first acknowledged that He was the Son of God, and thus God from God, in vain would He Himself and His apostles after Him have preached faith in Him... The Lord said that upon this rock He would build His Church, that is, on the truth and confession that He is the Son of God; for rock signifies truth, and also the Lord as to Divine Truth. Therefore the Church does not exist in anyone who does not confess this truth that He is the Son of God..."

To profess Jesus Christ as the Son of God meant for early Christians, and must still mean, that He is not only Man but in some way God. A true Christian believes in the Humanity and Divinity 'of our Lord, though he may be totally incapable of explaining their relationship.

Many have taken the Lord's words, "you are Peter (Petros), and on this rock (Petra) I will build my Church" to mean that the apostle himself is the foundation. Not the building of an ecclesiastical empire upon the man is meant, however, but the establishment of the Church in Peter and all others who

acknowledge in head, heart, word and deed the truth he confessed. Whenever men know and inwardly acknowledge that all Divine power resides in our Lord Jesus, then He can lay the firm, fixed foundations of faith.

Much more could be written under the heading of Simon Peter, and indeed something will be added when the principal three, Peter, James and John are considered together. Before this the two sons of Zebedee and their spiritual meaning must be discovered.

PART IV – JAMES AND JOHN

The men

If the assumption is correct that their mother Salome was also a sister of Mary, then James and John were first cousins of our Lord. This would help to explain why the rest of the disciples were indignant when they heard the brothers and mother seeking from the Lord the two most important positions next to Him in His Kingdom. The other ten considered that James and John were asking our Lord to favour members of His own family.

Before their call to discipleship these two worked with their father in his fishing business in Galilee (Luke says they were partners with Simon). The family was probably "well-to-do" since Zebedee was able to employ servants and John was known to no less an influential man in Jerusalem than the High Priest.

With one exception in the Gospels James is always named before his brother because he was presumably the elder. He must not be

confused with James, son of Alphaeus, nor with James, the Lord's "brother", who, though he was no follower of our incarnate Lord, became after the Resurrection a leader of the Christian community in Jerusalem and who is thought to be the author of the New Testament Epistle of James.

Both sons of Zebedee possessed a fiery temper. On one occasion they urged our Lord to let them invoke fire from heaven upon a Samaritan village that would not receive Him, and He Himself nick-named them "Boanerges" or "Sons of Thunder". We can imagine that, without Peter's impetuosity and readiness to speak, they could so charge their words with emotion, as we have heard a Lloyd George, Winston Churchill or Aneurin Bevan do, that their hearers felt the very heavens shake. Perhaps this was why both men were to be numbered amongst the first martyrs of the Christian Church. Why about fifteen years after the crucifixion did Herod not only arrest James along with Peter but also had him executed? And why was John banished to what must have been a concentration camp on the island of Patmos? Probably because the authorities regarded them as dangerous firebrands.

Yet young firebrands in their declining years often display great tenderness towards their fellow men. How true of John if we are to believe certain reports which have come down to us concerning him in his old age! Tradition has it that the very aged John, a leader of the Christian community in Ephesus, used to be carried into church on account of his infirmity. Then he could summon up enough strength only to utter, "Little children, love one another". When his flock grew weary of hearing this same message and asked why he so repeated

himself, he replied, "It is the Lord's command, and it is enough if that alone is done".

The meaning of names

The English forms James and John represent the Greek Jacobos and Joannes which in turn are derived from the Hebrew Jacob and Johanan. Jacob comes from a Hebrew verb meaning, "to take by the heel" or "to supplant". The Old Testament character rightly bore the name of "Supplanter" for, when he was born, he was seen to grab the heel of his brother, a portent of his later efforts to hold back and overtake Esau; and in later life he actually supplanted him by securing for himself Esau's birthright and blessing.

Johanan means "Jehovah has been gracious" which is approximate in sense to "the disciple whom Jesus loved", a phrase found instead of "John" in the Gospel bearing his name. (Jesus is Jehovah who showed us His grace and love by coming to redeem us; and his grace and love are received by those who strive to be His disciples).

Spiritual meaning

There are several passages in the Teachings of the New Church which assert that the three, Peter, James and John, signify faith, charity and the good works of charity (the next section will consider those passages in the Word where these three are mentioned together). Why James and John mean charity and good works is hardly dealt with explicitly, and thus relevant teaching from other parts of the Writings of the New Church must be drawn upon.

What are meant by "charity" and "good works" which the world uses almost as synonyms? By "charity" we have to understand not "helping lame dogs over stiles" or "supporting worthy causes" but an interior state of mind and character, and by "good works" not merely deeds which prove beneficial to others but an external expression of charity in the heart of the doer.

"Charity consists in willing what is good, and good works consist in doing what is good from willing what is good". (TCR 374).

"Charity and good works are two distinct things like willing what is good and doing what is good". (TCR 421).

In the Gospels, John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, is sometimes seen without his brother, but James is always accompanied by John. By himself John must bear the signification of James too, since charity must always be within good works as the soul is within the body. When both are named however the context presumably demands the specific mention of inward charity and outward works.

Significance of their names

The attempt which follows to show that "Supplanter" and "Jehovah has been gracious" correspond to charity and good works must be regarded as wholly speculative.

The view of the present writer is that a clue to the spiritual meaning of "Supplanter" is supplied within those parts of the Writings which discuss the Esau-Jacob stories of Genesis. According to *Arcana Caelestia*, as far as Genesis 28, Esau represents natural goodness and Jacob associated truth. Then at the start of the exposition of chapter 28 we read:

"The reason why Jacob here represents the good of truth is that now he has taken away the birthright of Esau, and also the blessing, and thus by so doing puts on the person of Esau, but still no further than the good of that truth, i.e. truth which he previously represented..." (3659).

In terms of human experience and character Esau typifies a natural milk of human kindness which is inherent in us all to a greater or less extent, but which must not be equated with the acquired virtue called "charity" in the Teachings of the Church. Within charity there must be some measure of faith, some knowledge and acknowledgment of truth. Love for the Lord and the neighbour tempered by the truths of religion in the Christian life gradually "supplants" truthless natural *bonhomie*. Jacob first represents truth acquired and acknowledged; then by assuming Esau's representation his own changes to the "good of truth" or charity. So, too, James signifies charity rejoicing in the truth which supplants in us hereditary disposition towards goodness.

The following explanation of the name "John" will seem much less strained than the foregoing concerning James. That we can perform any real good work in life is surely because "Jehovah has been gracious" towards us. Both charity and good works are the Lord's gifts, as these words testify:

"Whatever a man wills, and whatever he understands, enter into him by influx from without; the goods of love and charity, and the truths of wisdom and faith enter from the Lord, and everything contrary to these from hell..." (TCR 362).

And we rightly sing in the offertory hymn:

"To Thee, from Whom we all derive
Our life, our gifts, our power to give;
Oh may we ever with Thee live,
Who givest all!"

Boanerges

One more thing must be said about the Lord's disciples in whose hearts charity resides and in whose lives good works abound. Spiritually they are "Sons of Thunder". In them the Lord's truth always elicits an electrifying response. The moment it descends into their minds it flashes as lightning throughout their whole character and the love or charity in their hearts thunderously acclaims its joy at the very presence of the Wisdom of the Lord.

<i>Hebrew</i>	JACOB	JOHANAN	?
<i>Greek</i>	JACOBOS	JOANNES	BOANERGES
<i>English</i>	JAMES	JOHN	BOANERGES
<i>Meaning</i>	SUPPLANTER	JEHOVAH HAS BEEN GRACIOUS	SONS OF THUNDER
<i>Spiritual Meaning</i>	CHARITY	GOOD WORKS	ZEAL FOR TRUTH

PART V – THE INNER THREE

Three different incidents in the Gospels suggest that Peter, James and John formed an inner ring among the Apostles. Of the twelve only they witnessed the raising of Jairus' daughter, the Transfiguration of our Lord and His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane (though on this last occasion, being "heavy-eyed", they could hardly have seen very much of what He endured).

In other New Testament passages, especially in the Fourth Gospel where James is not mentioned by his personal name, Peter and John are most prominent and occupy positions of influence. Commissioned to go ahead and prepare what was to be the "Last Supper", these two reclined in the places nearest to our Lord, John or "the disciple whom Jesus loved" lying on His breast. To them Mary is reported to have brought news of the Lord's Resurrection, whereupon they both immediately ran to the tomb. Although John arrived first he waited until Peter had gone inside to investigate before he himself entered. Days later while seven disciples were fishing on Galilee John recognized the Risen Lord standing on the seashore but Peter plunged into the sea and swam to the shore.

The Acts of the Apostles relate several events in which these two were jointly involved.

Previous chapters have already stated that Peter, James and John represent to us the three cardinal Christian virtues called faith, charity and the good works of charity. When, in the Word, the three are mentioned together or when Peter and John are associated with one another, we are being taught that all progress in the regenerate life demands the presence in some measure of all the virtues to which they correspond (when James is not named then John represents both charity

and good works which are an expression of charity). Whether we undergo a raising-up of our affections from a state of spiritual death, or we enjoy an experience of beholding something of the glory of our Lord or we sink into the abyss of temptation, He will call upon faith and charity that are already within us.

Spiritually these three, the inner group of apostles, are inseparable companions. Faith is truly faith only as long as it is associated with charity and good works, while charity untempered with the truths that constitute our faith ceases to be charity; and our works will never be "good" unless they are directly inspired by faith and charity. The following quotation from *True Christian Religion* 367 shows that "faith alone" and "charity alone" are poor spiritual conditions.

"Faith separated from charity is not faith, because faith is the light, and charity is the heat of a man's life. If then charity is separated from faith, it is like heat separated from light, so that a man's state becomes like that of the world in winter, when all things upon the earth die. Charity and faith, to be genuine, can no more be separated than the will and the understanding. For if these are separated the understanding fades away, and presently the will also. So it is with charity and faith because charity resides in the will, and faith in the understanding."

When our Lord called Simon Peter "a hindrance to me" He indicated that faith divorced from charity becomes that self-intelligence which impedes the influence of the Holy Spirit. And by rebuking James and John for seeking the two most important places in His kingdom He showed that charity apart from faith becomes nothing but crude self-seeking.

Acknowledging that the principles represented by the inner three are interdependent, can we ask whether any one is more

important than another? Which is primary, faith or charity? The Teachings of the New Church would have us distinguish what predominates in time from that which is more important in the end. While we are acquiring Christian virtues, faith occupies the more important position, first of all historical or natural faith, the obedience of which is meant by Andrew, then personal and spiritual faith represented by his more illustrious brother. The end in view of all Christian endeavour, however, is the performance of the good works of charity. The prominence of Simon Peter in the Gospel records is indicative of the primacy of faith in regenerating souls of the church militant on earth, but John is termed "that disciple whom Jesus loved", and he rested upon the breast of our Lord, to show that love is greatest among members of the church triumphant. "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity".

In *Apocalypse Explained* 822 we also find:

"As it has been shown that in the Word of the Gospels the apostle John signifies good works, which are also called goods of charity and goods of life, and that it was on account of this signification, that John reclined on the Lord's breast, I will now show what good works are; but here only that they include in themselves all things of charity and faith that are in man. No one has known heretofore that all things of a man's life are in his works, since works seem to be mere movements... And yet these are what make manifest the charity and faith in man, and also complete and perfect them; and this for the reason that neither faith nor charity are in man until they actually come forth; and they actually come forth in works.

"All things of charity and faith that are in man are in works, because works are activities arising from his will and thought; and all things of the will and thought are brought forth and poured out into works, precisely as all things of cause are into effects, and all things of a seed and tree into fruits; for works are their complements".

Let it not be thought that, once faith and charity have been acquired, the regenerate soul then stagnates. Angels are constantly endeavouring to improve themselves. Consider what is said about Peter and John in chapter twenty of the fourth Gospel. John's arrival first at the sepulchre shows how love predominates in us and impels us to discover more of what the Lord teaches in His Word, but Peter's entry first inside teaches us that by faith we are led to investigate the contents of the Word. When faith has ascertained what the Word enjoins then charity follows into possession of such knowledge. The beginning and end of human improvement is charity, but faith plays a leading role for a time.

PART VI – PHILIP

The Man

"Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter."

Possibly he was so named by his parents after "Philip tetrarch of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis" who rebuilt Bethsaida Julias on the north-east shore of the Galilean lake.

The fourth Gospel places his call to discipleship on the day following Simon Peter's first encounter with our Lord; and as Andrew had introduced his brother, so Philip brought his

companion Nathanael to Him. Yet while Andrew referred to Jesus as the "Messiah", Philip after rightly declaring that He was the One to come promised by Moses and the Prophets, then erroneously called Him "the son of Joseph", which He never was.

Two other references to Philip in John's Gospel present us with a man willing to follow and learn but understanding little. First when some 5,000 men beside the Sea of Galilee were naturally hungry after listening for a long time to His teaching, the Lord asked Philip – not for His own information since "He Himself knew what He would do", but to lead him to reflect – how such a vast crowd were to be fed. This disciple's reply, "Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little" shows that he did not yet think of his Master as One Who would in any circumstances provide for men's needs. Even though he must by now have witnessed several miraculous deeds, he did not anticipate at all what the Lord was about to do. Secondly, while the Lord was delivering His farewell address to the disciples in the Upper Room, Philip interrupted Him with the request, "Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied". Although he knew that none "can forgive sins but God Alone" and had heard his Lord forgive men; although he knew nobody performs miracles "unless God be with him" and had now seen very many performed by Him, he still beheld nothing of almighty God, "the Father", in Jesus. Thus his Lord plainly declared: "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'show us the Father'?" Whether the earnest Philip now understood we do not know.

John's Gospel also records that, when certain Greeks sought an audience with our Lord, they made their first approach to Philip who

then told Andrew, and they both informed Him. Was the desired audience granted? The Gospel gives no answer.

Where and how Philip later served as an apostle is difficult to determine because early Christian writers tend to confuse him with "Philip the Evangelist", one of seven whose appointment is mentioned in Acts 6. Despite the confusion of these two personalities, however, it may be assumed that "Philip the Apostle" worked and died at Hierapolis in Asia Minor near to, and possibly in association with, John and Andrew.

Meaning of Names

"Philippos", a Greek proper name in use long before the start of the Christian era (Alexander the Great's father was Philip of Macedon who lived 350 years before the Incarnation) was also a common noun meaning "a lover of the horse".

Although it was a town in which common Greek was spoken, the name "Bethsaida" is nevertheless Hebrew in origin. "Beth" means "a house" (as in Bethlehem, House of Bread, and Bethel, House of God), "saida" is derived from a verb whose basic meaning is to "hunt" or "track down" animal life. In the context of hunting for sea creatures it means, "to fish", and therefore Biblical concordances give "House of Fishing" as a translation for Bethsaida.

Spiritual Meaning

"Lover of the horse". Many characteristics of this noble creature can be mentioned to illustrate the doctrine that it corresponds to human intellect or understanding, in particular our understanding of the Word of God. With understanding we can be carried through life, making rapid progress in work, study and, sometimes, human relations. The horse's strength

typifies the power of intellect, while his remarkable ability to change direction at full gallop, pictures the mind's ability to switch from one avenue of intellectual enquiry to another. As a creature most suitable for battle before the days of mechanized warfare, he suggests to us the role of intellect in human debate or polemics; and when his spiritual meaning is our understanding of the Word we see that with which the Lord has endowed us to combat falsehoods. The four horses and their riders seen in vision by John when the first four of seven seals on the book in the hand of the Almighty were broken, represent to us four different qualities, which "colour" our understanding of that Divine book.

The spiritual meaning of Philip can be summed up, therefore, as our will to know, understand and be wise in the truths of religion.

Relationship with Faith

In considering the first quartet of the Twelve Apostles we have seen that there are really two essential cardinal Christian virtues, faith and charity, and in this and further chapters it will be shown that disciples named in the second and third quartets all relate in some way to these two spiritual qualities. Philip's relationship is more with faith since "the truths of faith" become seated in the intellect and understanding. How significant that Philip should hail from the same township as Peter and Andrew! "Faith", "the obedience of faith" and "love of understanding" all involve the intellectual pursuit of knowledge and wisdom, meant by "Bethsaida". Common to these three spiritual virtues is hunting and searching for knowledge of what is true.

The quest for knowledge for its own sake is not in itself virtuous. Our Lord once declared with sadness, "Woe to you, Bethsaida", because its inhabitants were unrepentant. And we too are in a state of condemnation if our pursuit of the truth is no more than idle curiosity. Happy shall we be, however, if our Bethsaida produces Petrine faith, Andreic obedience and Philippic love of understanding!

Love of Understanding

In this life it matters little whether the context of man's understanding is great or small provided that he wills to have such understanding. Philip denotes the *love* of understanding. Consider the following passage from *Doctrine of Faith*:

"Many who have no internal acknowledgment of truth are however granted the faith of charity. In life such persons have looked to the Lord and, for religious reasons, have avoided evils; but they have been held back by worldly cares and business and also by the lack of truth in their teachers. Still they are inwardly, in their spirit, in the acknowledgement of truth because they are in the affection of it; therefore after death, when they become spirits and are being taught by angels, they acknowledge truths and receive them with joy." (Para. 30).

Let not these words be interpreted as a counsel of indifference' towards matters of faith. If men honestly desire wisdom, they will welcome every opportunity to improve their understanding of truth. For some folk however, through no fault of their own, the opportunities are few.

The above quotation should be seen rather as an assurance that the Lord will ultimately satisfy all good men and women who in this life have been hindered in their quest for eternal verities.

Philip was not denied access by His Lord to what is true even though he betrayed considerable want of understanding and faith.

Faith is Always Wanting

In one sense the Lord's people are always in the position of Philip, for none can ever claim to have perfect knowledge and understanding. With the father of the demoniac boy we cry out, "I believe, help my unbelief". Nor should we be happy if there were nothing more for us to comprehend. Indeed angels never reach a state in which there is no further truth to learn, understand, and thereby add to their faith and way of life. Heavenly life without a challenge to learn and improve ourselves would be quite worthless. Therefore the Lord is eternally supplying the truths of faith to those who have that Philip-like love of understanding.

Here we must pause to note a difference between angels in heaven and good men on earth. Although angels' perception is capable of improvement, they do not possess falsehoods which congregate in the minds of men walking this earth. When we enter the spiritual world we shall discover that our lives have been influenced by many misunderstandings, but if we also have that quality of character represented by Philip we shall undergo a process known as "vastation" whereby we are divested of all falsehoods. The small work Athanasian Creed speaks of "followers of Philip" who separate the Divine of the Father from the Human of the Son; yet such are blameworthy only if they have coupled such a gross error to evil willing and selfish desires. Where men's motives are good, where there is the "love of understanding", the most serious mistakes can be corrected.

In speaking of this Philippic excellence I have tried to avoid giving the impression of a cold, arid academic search for knowledge for its own sake. Scholarship is important, even more so today perhaps than ever before, but it will not by itself lead us to the Lord our Saviour. Scholarly love of knowledge brings us to Him only when it associates itself with humble readiness to obey what is true in the everyday affairs of life. When those gentile Greeks sought to "see Jesus" they approached Philip; and he, before approaching Him, called on Andrew to accompany him. Philip is truly the Lord's disciple and apostle in us when we desire to know and understand so that we may serve Him with greater love and with more loyal obedience.

PART VII – BARTHOLOMEW

He is also Nathanael

For centuries it has been assumed by many, but not all Christian writers, that Bartholomew whose name is found in the first three Gospels and Nathanael who figures in the fourth, are one and the same. The following considerations among others have led to this conclusion:

1. John 21, 2, implies that Nathanael was one of the disciples.
2. Other disciples had two or more names; Matthew was also called Levi, and Peter even before he acquired that name was known as Simon Barjona, and
3. In all three lists of twelve names found in the first three Gospels Philip and Bartholomew are linked together while in John's Gospel Philip is said to have introduced Nathanael to our Lord.

In the light of these pieces of evidence it would be reasonable to assume that Nathanael Bartholomew was the full name of the apostle under consideration.

The Man

The Scriptures say little, though enough, for us to form some image of Nathanael's character. A native of Cana in Galilee he was a critical, honest man of vision. When Philip said: "We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph", Nathanael replied with the criticism: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Nowhere, he must have reasoned, did the Old Testament associate Nazareth with the promised Messiah; and possibly the village had a bad reputation. But despite his criticism he was fair-minded enough to respond to Philip's invitation, "Come and see!" And when the Lord saw him approaching He testified to his singleness of mind with the exclamation: "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Here was one different in character from the first Israelite, that arch-deceiver the patriarch Jacob! Moreover as soon as Nathanael perceived that Jesus indeed was He Whom Philip had acclaimed him to be, he honestly laid aside any prejudice concerning Nazareth and confessed: "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God! Thou art the King of Israel!"

Such a confession revealed him as a man of vision, unlike earnest Philip who clearly misunderstood so much. The Lord also promised Nathanael that he would be in future even more of a "visionary"; "You will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man".

Nothing more is known about this apostle, and little credence can be given to the tradition that he lived and served in India.

Meaning of Names

"Bartholomew" is the English form of the Greek, "Bartholomaios" which in turn represents the Hebrew-Aramaic "Bar Talmi". Aramaic "Bar" means "son" and is compounded in other names such as "Barjona", "Bartimaeus", "Barabbas", and "Barnabas".

"Talmi", found in the Old Testament, is said to mean "full of furrows". A ploughed and therefore furrowed field ready for sowing metaphorically describes one who is receptive and quick to take and develop new ideas. "Bartholomew" probably means therefore "the son of him who has a responsive disposition".

"Nathanael", the Greek form of the Hebrew "Nathaniel" which was the name of no less than ten unimportant Old Testament characters, can be decisively translated "Given by God".

Spiritual Meaning

Granted the identification of Nathanael with Bartholomew we cannot conclude that the spiritual significance of the two names is the same. Nor can we positively say that they are different! Since the meaning of "Bartholomew" is not absolutely clear and since this name appears only in the lists of the Twelve, we must content ourselves with the tentative suggestion that "Son of what is Furrowed" represents something of those virtues which spring up in a mind fully prepared to receive, and foster the growth of, Divine truths.

Of the significance of Nathanael one can feel more certain. Brought to our Lord by Philip who represents, as was shown in the previous chapter, "love of understanding" he represents to us understanding of, or enlightenment concerning, the Word, which the Lord imparts to those seeking truth for its own sake. Consider this statement found in *True Christian Religion* 231:

"Enlightenment comes from the Lord alone, and is granted to those who love truths because they are truths, and who apply them to the uses of life; with others there is no enlightenment in the Word. Enlightenment comes from the Lord alone, because the Word is from Him, and consequently He is in it; and it is granted to those who love truths because they are truths, and who apply them to life, because they are in the Lord and the Lord in them..."

Nathanael is that "God-given" understanding with those who have a Philippic "love of truths because they are truths". And what the Gospel says about Nathanael suggests to us one who is enlightened – he uttered a true confession concerning the Person of the Lord, and his Lord promised him the experience of even greater vision.

Other details relating to this apostle provide some commentary for us on the attitude of the truly enlightened. Like him they are both critical and guileless. Before they accept any proposition as "gospel truth", they consider it carefully and even proffer objections. When the modern world declares that the "with it", the open and broad-minded, are the enlightened, the churchman must reply that he too seeks to be up-to-date and is ready to accept new methods, ideas and interpretations if upon careful scrutiny they are spiritually and morally sound and valuable. Those good souls to whom the Lord grants

understanding will always be critics of the new and untested as Nathanael was when Philip informed him that Jesus of Nazareth was the One long promised in the Scriptures.

Associated with their discriminating attitude of mind the Nathanaels of every age cultivate an honest and guileless disposition. *Apocalypse Revealed* 624 reads: "... by 'guile' is meant persuasion to evil by falsity, properly from cunning and design; for he who persuades to anything from cunning or guile also persuades from design; for cunning or guile proposes something to itself, conceals its purpose, and does it when opportunity offers..."

Whenever the many misconceptions and false principles in us are recognized as such and yet we persist in wicked ways, we become full of guile. We see the truth which counsels righteous living but we deceitfully and from set purpose look towards falsehoods which confirm us in the practice of selfish and sinful habits. Nathanael however typifies the single-minded who direct their attention solely towards just and true principles of life.

Nathanael represents that understanding or "vision" which is "God-given" to those who first seek understanding (Philip) and who strive to be critical but honest and open minded.

Hebrew/Aramaic

|

Greek

|

English

|

Literal Meaning

|

Spiritual Meaning

Nethanel

|

Nathanael

|

Nathanael

|

Given by God

|

Understanding or
Enlightenment

Bar Talmi

|

Bartholomaios

|

Bartholomew

|

Son of what is
furrowed?

|

Virtues of a
receptive mind?

PART VIII – THOMAS

The Man

Thomas refused to accept his fellow disciples' word that they had seen the risen Jesus, even as they had all dismissed as "idle tales" a like testimony of women folk. This disciple, therefore, was no lone doubter. He differed from his companions only in his declared intent to touch as well as to see his Lord's wounds before believing that He had indeed risen as He said.

In speaking of "doubting" Thomas we must not ignore certain fine qualities which are reflected in those parts of the fourth Gospel where his name appears. The greatest of the New Testament confessions concerning the Person of the Lord, "My Lord and my God", emerged through his lips when he actually beheld Him in the upper room. Inwardly he believed, but outwardly he sought irrefutable proof for his belief. Moreover, like Simon Peter, he was a man of courageous intention, for while the rest of the disciples were trying to dissuade their Master from returning to Judaea to raise Lazarus from the dead because the authorities sought His life, Thomas boldly urged: "Let us also go, that we may die with Him".

"A matter-of-fact and unmystical but loyal and courageous character" is surely a fair estimate of the man.

Christian tradition associates the name of Thomas with the sub-continent of India. In the year 1500 the Portuguese explorer Cabral met among the people living in Southwest India certain Christians who to his astonishment, had never heard of the Pope and who claimed that the apostle Thomas was the founder of their Church. Today the Church of the St. Thomas Christians, may still be found. The Apostle's grave is said to be situated near Madras.

Meaning of names

Thomas is derived from a Hebrew verb meaning "to be doubled" and therefore bears the meaning of "twin". Didymus, the name by which he was probably called in Greek-speaking circles, means precisely the same (modern translations prefer "Thomas, called the Twin" to "Thomas, called Didymus"). Whose twin brother was he? We do not know, although certain traditional answers to the question have come down to us. What was his full name? Tradition calls him "Judas Thomas".

Spiritual Meaning

"Twin" immediately directs our attention to one of the two primary Christian virtues, faith and charity, of which much has already been said in this booklet. The fact that this apostle sought visible and tangible proof of the Resurrection before he would believe, uttered a confession greater than those of Simon Peter and Nathanael and is named together with these latter two in John 21, 2, indicates that spiritually he represents to us some facet of faith rather than charity.

Thomas' desire to confirm beyond all doubt by means of external sensual proofs that his Master was risen suggests our resolve to verify from without the faith we have adopted within. The reader should find the following quotation from *Arcana Coelestia* 8078 helpful here:

"Merely natural faith is that which is insinuated by an external and not by an internal way, as sensual faith, which consists in believing a thing to be so, because the eye has seen it and the hand has touched it. This is the faith of which the Lord said to Thomas, 'Thomas, because you have seen, you have believed: blessed are those who do not see, and yet believe' (John

20,29); also as the faith of miracles, which consists in believing a thing to be so merely from miracles... also as the faith of authority, which consists in believing a thing to be so, because another, to whom credit is given, has said it. But spiritual faith, on the other hand, is that which is insinuated by an internal, and at the same time by an external way; *insinuation by an internal way causes a thing to be believed, and in this case what is insinuated by an external way causes it to be confirmed...*"

The need to confirm, before giving our absolute consent to, what the Church teaches is insisted upon in the Writings of the New Church. What we are inwardly disposed to accept must be seen and then confirmed by us in that external objective "court of appeal" of the letter of the Scriptures. "Doctrine is not only to be drawn from the sense of the letter of the Word, but is also to be confirmed by means of that sense. For if not confirmed by it, a truth of doctrine appears as if only the intelligence of the man were in the doctrine, and not the Lord's Divine Wisdom; and thus the doctrine would be like a house in the air, and not on the ground, consequently without a foundation" (*Sacred Scripture* 54). Thomas the disciple demanding conclusive evidence of the "fact" of the Lord's Resurrection signifies spiritually, the present writer suggests, the right resolution to confirm all doctrine and every truth of faith by means of the sense of the letter of the Word. Till we discover such corroboration we remain in some degree in doubt.

Doubt can be a virtue

In this life certain folk seem to develop a guilt-complex because they entertain doubts relating to matters of faith. Let it be said to such good souls that honest doubt is a virtue in those who

seek to be quite sure of their faith. The saints in heaven above also experience doubt, as we see in *Arcana Caelestia* 7298:

"Moreover it should be known that, according to the laws of order, nobody ought to be persuaded straightaway about what is true; that is, what is true should not be so confirmed straightaway that no doubt remains. For truth which is so impressed upon anybody becomes persuasive truth which can be neither expounded nor qualified. Such truth is represented in the future life by that which is hard and which does not admit what is good into itself in order that it may have application to life. Thus in the future life when any truth is first set before good spirits something of what is opposite is also set before them, which leads to doubt. So they are left to think and reflect whether the truth be so, and to collect reasons and thereby admit that truth rationally into their minds."

Such doubts arise, of course, from the determination to be quite sure of the truth for oneself and to confirm it from the ultimate statement of Divine Wisdom, the letter of Scripture, before receiving it as one's faith and way of life. Doubts exist also in the minds of those ill-disposed towards the truth but they differ entirely from those of the well-disposed in that they are entertained to refute, not to establish and confirm it. "Those who are in a negative attitude of mind, that is with whom what is negative reigns universally, doubts cannot be anywise be removed, for with them one scruple avails more than a thousand confirmations; for one scruple is like a grain of sand placed close before the pupil of the eye which although it is single and small, nevertheless takes away all the sight. But they who are in the affirmative attitude of mind, that is, with whom what is affirmative reigns universally, reject the scruples

from fallacies which are contrary to truths; and if there be any which they do not comprehend, they cast them aside, and say they do not as yet understand these things, and still they remain in the faith of truth" (*Arcana Coelestia* 6479).

"Doubting Thomas" portrays for us any would-be follower of the Lord Jesus Christ who is seeking heavenly wisdom but who reserves his full allegiance to all doctrine until he has confirmed it by the literal sense of the Word. Thomas is our desire for confirmation while we are still in a state of doubt. Our doubts, however, must be honest. Once these are resolved we must be ready to follow wherever the Lord's truth leads us, like Thomas even unto death; for us it will be the demise of all former prejudice and self-seeking.

PART IX – MATTHEW

The Man

As he sat day by day in his office on the shore of the Galilean lake collecting taxes from fellow Jews on behalf of the Romans who ruled his country, Matthew must have seen our Lord pass by many times and overheard Him addressing groups of enquirers before that unforgettable day He stopped to say: "Follow me!". Matthew's decision to abandon his worldly occupation and become a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth was no more impetuous than that of Simon, Andrew, James or John who, on receiving the same call, "immediately left their nets and followed Him". In accepting the Lord's invitation he took a premeditated step, and an irreversible one too. While fishermen among the Twelve could, and did for a short time after the Resurrection, return to their former employment, he

was to leave his behind him for ever. Fishing was a humble and honourable calling; tax collecting was neither.

In those times tax men were despised, not because their counterparts in every age are unpopular among tax payers, but because they were collaborators with the hated Romans, who now ruled the peoples of Palestine. Only covetous, unpatriotic Jews therefore chose to be tax-collectors. Public opinion concerning them is reflected in the Pharisees' question: "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" (They asked this when Matthew invited our Lord and his former associates to his home to celebrate his conversion). "Tax man" and "sinner" in the public mind belonged to the same ilk. Whether, judged by the standards of his own day and age, Matthew was particularly covetous and dishonest we cannot tell.

Sherlock Holmes solved one crime by observing that the dog did not bark. Is the absence in the Gospels of a single word spoken by this apostle likewise significant? Was he an essentially quiet man whose talents lay in listening and in making careful mental notes of what others say and do? Does ecclesiastical tradition which attributes the authorship of the first Gospel to him stem from the fact that he was by disposition a recorder of other people's deeds?

Meaning of Names

Each of the first three Gospels links the name "Matthew" with "Thomas" in its list of the Twelve, but only the first Gospel so names him when describing his call. In this latter context Luke refers to "Levi" and Mark to "Levi" to "Levi the son of

Alphaeus". Possibly the apostle was called "Levi" before, and "Matthew" after, his conversion.

"Levi" means "cleaving" or "conjunction", as the reader of Genesis 29,34 will appreciate. (The meaning of "Alphaeus" is to be discussed in the next chapter). "Matthew" is an Anglicised form of the Greek "Matthaios" which in turn is derived from a shorter form of the Hebrew "Mattathiah", and it means "the gift of Jehovah".

Spiritual Meaning of Levi

Although "Levi" and "Matthew" are names of the same man they do not necessarily convey to us the same spiritual meaning. (The same principle of interpretation of the Word arose when "Nathanael" and "Bartholomew" were considered). The two names are here treated therefore under separate headings.

Arcana Caelestia 3875, in explaining the meaning of the record of the birth and naming of Levi, son of Leah and Jacob, declares:

"That cleaving in the internal sense denotes charity, is evident from the fact that charity, or mutual love, is spiritual conjunction, for it is a conjunction of the affections that belong to the will, and a consequent agreement of the thoughts which belong to the understanding, thus it is a conjunction of minds, as to both parts. That cleaving in the supreme sense denotes love and mercy, is hence manifest, for the infinite and eternal, which is predicated of charity or spiritual love, is mercy, which is the Divine Love towards the human race, sunk, as it is, in such great miseries; for since man of himself is nothing but evil, and what is in him so far as it is from himself is nothing but what is infernal, and since he

is looked upon by the Lord from Divine Love, his elevation in this case out of the hell in which he is of himself, and his deliverance is called mercy. Since therefore mercy is from the Divine Love, by cleaving in the supreme sense is signified both love and mercy."

"Levi" represents supremely that "love that will not let me go", the infinite mercy that ceaselessly strives to "draw all men to Myself". True brotherly love in us causes us to "cleave" to one another because it is the Lord's love and mercy in us. And the description of the call of Levi the disciple instructs us that we accept the Lord's call to follow Him in the life of regeneration not from any love which is our own but by means of His indwelling love which seems to be our own.

Spiritual Meaning of Matthew

Since the Writings of the New Church nowhere mention the name of Matthew, we can but guess at the spiritual virtue he represents. The present writer tentatively suggests on the basis of two lines of thought given below something like: "An ability received from the Lord to draw from the literal sense of the Word correct confirmations of what is true".

(i) Matthew belongs to that quartet of disciples in which the spiritual meanings of the other three, Philip, Bartholomew and Thomas all relate to the acquisition of truth and faith. In the previous pages we have already put forward the following:

Philip = Love of understanding

Bartholomew = Understanding

Thomas = Desire for confirmation

Matthew would complete the pattern if he represented the ability to obtain the desired thing meant by Thomas, namely a "gift of the Lord" in us to see confirmations of truth on the printed pages of the Scriptures. First we receive interior enlightenment, then exterior confirmation.

(ii) Matthew 10,3 speaks of "Matthew the tax collector". Are we meant to see in his former occupation an emblem of his later work, just as fishermen Simon and Andrew subsequently became "fishers of men"? Was Matthew a collector of information? And does the phrase "Matthew the tax collector" depict our gathering together of confirmations of doctrine from the Word of the Lord?

Apocalypse Explained 513 declares that payment of tax was a mark of subservience. The literal sense of the Word is a "taxpayer" when it yields to us confirmations of doctrine – which relatively are subordinate to our understanding of, and enlightenment in, the truth. There is a Matthew in us when we are enabled to "tax" the Lord's Word for such confirmations.

PART X – JAMES SON OF ALPHEUS

The Man

Was this James who occupies ninth position in all four New Testament lists of the Twelve, a brother of "Levi the son of Alphaeus", Matthew the tax-collector? And if so, who was Alphaeus their father? No satisfactory answer can be given to either question, but if Alphaeus was also Clopas the husband of a certain Mary, both of whom are mentioned in John 19. 25, then we may be allowed to identify the apostle who is the subject of this chapter, with "James the less", son of the aforesaid Mary and brother of Joses (see Mark 15.40).

Why was he named "James the less", literally "James the little one"? Because he was not very tall? Because he was, or had not long ceased to be, a youth? Or to distinguish him from James son of Zebedee? We can but guess.

Meaning of Names

James or Jacob means "a supplanter" (see chapter IV above).

"Alphaeus and "Clopas" are both derived, it is said, from the Aramaic name "Chalphai" which in turn comes from a Hebrew word involving the idea of change and renewal. Bible concordances therefore declare Alphaeus to mean "a successor".

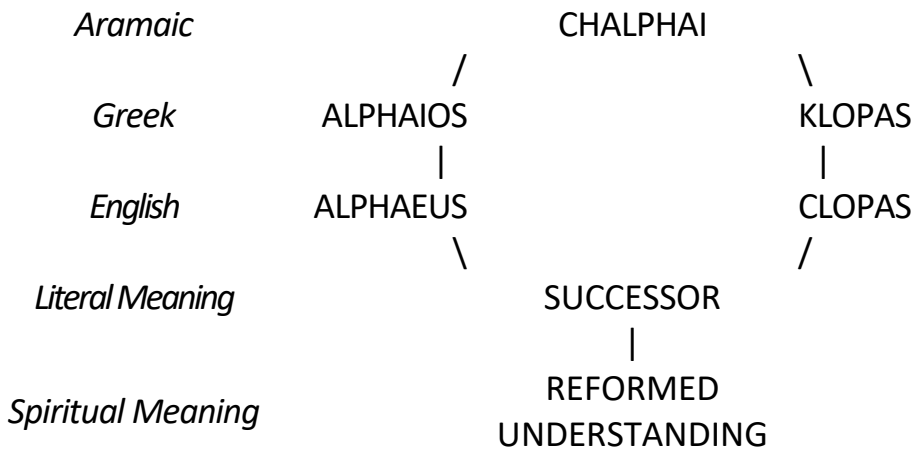
Spiritual Meaning

The first quartet of the Apostles represent the principle virtues of faith and charity while the second quartet relate more particularly to faith. We may presume therefore that the last four are concerned in particular with charity.

James, son of Zebedee, we have already seen, represents for us that true brotherly love or charity which men acquire from their Lord as they honestly pursue the Christian way of life and which "supplants" merely external natural good-will and disposition in them. Presumably the same virtue is involved in the name "James son of Alphaeus". Yet the name Alphaeus must have some significance of its own, and this is suggested in the next paragraph.

The Teachings of the New Church show that in preparing man for eternal life our Lord reforms his understanding before he renews his will. Man receives a new mind, then a new heart. "The first act of the new birth which is an act of the

understanding is called Reformation; and the second which is an act of the will and thence of the understanding is called Regeneration." (*True Christian Religion* 587). "Alphaeus" seems to signify that reformed understanding which is the "successor" to false ways of thinking and believing, and from which a new will is born to "supplant" the old corrupt loves of self and the world.



"The Little One"

How descriptive of a present day "James son of Alphaeus" who constantly receives faith and love into a new mind and heart! Such are citizens of the Lord's kingdom who seek for themselves not reputation and wealth but opportunities to be of service to others. They desire not to be ministered unto, but to minister in the belief that they themselves are relatively unimportant "little ones".

Consider what Swedenborg says in *Heaven and Hell* 408:

"I have talked with spirits who supposed heaven and heavenly joy to consist in their being great; but such were told that in heaven he that is least is greatest, since he is called least who has, and wishes to have, no power or wisdom from himself, but only from the Lord, he that is least in that sense having the greatest happiness; and as he has the greatest happiness it follows that he is the greatest; for he has thereby from the Lord all power and excels all in wisdom. What is it to be greatest, unless to be the most happy? For to be the most happy is what the powerful seek through power and the rich through riches. It was further said that heaven does not consist in a desire to be least for the purpose of being greatest, for that would be aspiring and longing to be the greatest; but it consists in desiring from the heart the good of others more than one's own, and in serving others with a view to their happiness, riot with recompense as an end, but from love."

Men and women of reformed understanding and new-born will (James son of Alphaeus) unceasingly seek "the good of others more than one's own" (they are also "James, the little one").

PART XI – SIMON THE ZEALOT

The Man and His Names

No more than the names of this man are given to us, which according to *Matthew* and *Mark* were "Simon the Cananaean" (not Canaanite as appears in the Authorised Version) and according to *Luke* "Simon the Zealot". If the assumption that "Cananaean" is derived from a late Hebrew word meaning "to

be jealous" is correct, then we may conclude that *Luke* gives us a Greek name which is equivalent to the original.

There are at least two possible reasons why this Simon was also called "the Zealot". Either he had been a member of the Zealots, a religious party fanatically opposed to Roman overlordship, or our Lord or his fellow apostles so nicknamed him on account of his manifest zeal to be righteous. Perhaps he excelled the spectacular righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Spiritual Meaning

Simon literally means "hearing", and spiritually denotes all those good souls who hear the Word of God and obey it. The complete name "Simon the Zealot" therefore represents our zealous performance of those good works which Divine revelation enjoins. But what exactly is "zeal"?

'Zeal, regarded in itself, is intense ardour of the natural man." (*True Christian Religion* 146). Like anger, it can be the outward manifestation either of inward love of the neighbour or of its very opposite love of self. (Similarly that fire which we detect in the voice of the preacher can be fed by love of truth or love of falsity). The Christian disciple therefore by self-examination should know the real inward character of all his zeal to build a world according to that which is Divinely ordained. Does a sincere love of God, a desire to see others eternally happy and a yearning for social justice burn in his soul? Or is he consumed inwardly with the lust for reputation, wealth and power? Does genuine charity or crude selfishness ultimate itself in fiery speech and zealous activity?

"The root principle of charity is good-will, and good-will has its seat in the internal man. When anyone who has charity resists an enemy, punishes the guilty, and chastises the wicked, it is evident of course, that he acts by means of the external man; but after he has done so, he reverts to the charity which is in the internal man; and then, so far as is possible and expedient, he wishes well to the erring one, and from good-will, does good to him. Those who have genuine charity are zealous for what is good; and their zeal may appear in the external man as the flaming fire of anger; yet on repentance of the adversary this instantly dies down and is appeased. It is otherwise with those who have no charity; their zeal is anger and hatred. for their internal man is "heated and aflame with these evil passions". (TCR 408).

PART XII – JUDAS SON OF JAMES

One or Two Apostles?

Matthew 10,3 Lebbaeus called Thaddaeus.

Mark 3,18 Thaddaeus.

Luke 6,16 Judas son of James.

Acts 1,13 Judas son of James.

John 14,22 Judas, not Iscariot.

Were "Lebbaeus" and "Thaddaeus" on the one hand and "Judas son of James" on the other, names of one or two men? One suggestion has been that Thaddaeus died not long after the appointment of the Twelve and that our Lord then invited Judas to take his place. The more likely explanation however is that

Matthew and *Mark* reproduce nicknames, *Luke* and *John* the proper name, of the same disciple.

The Man

The name "Lebbaeus" is certainly derived from the common Hebrew word for "the heart" (lehabh), and "Thaddaeus" is formed from a possible Aramaic equivalent (tadh). "Hearty", "cordial" can therefore be taken to represent both of these names.

The one incident recorded in the New Testament which involved this disciple portrays a man "hearty" in disposition. Hearing his Lord declare that only disciples who loved Him by keeping His commandments, and not the world as a whole, would behold Him in the future, this genial Judas who felt for all men, interjected, "Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to us, and not to the world?"

Nothing else is known about "Judas, not Iscariot". In the past he has been wrongly identified with our Lord's half or step-brother who wrote the New Testament letter of Jude and who called himself "servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James". This explains why the translators of the Authorised Version call the apostle *brother* instead of "*son* of James". Who James the father was, we cannot tell.

Spiritual Meaning of Judas

"This time I will praise (confess) the Lord; therefore she called his name Judah." (Genesis 29, 35).

"Judah, your brothers shall praise (confess) you." (Genesis 49, 10).

A dictionary of Scriptural proper names gives "praised" as the meaning of Judah, Judas or Jude, and the two verses quoted above indicate why the fourth son of Jacob was so called. It is formed from a Hebrew verb "jadhah" which the Teachings of the New Church carefully render "confess" in order that it may be distinguished from another common Hebrew word for praise, "halal" (from which comes Hallelujah, praise the Lord). The distinction is not pointless pernicky linguistic hairsplitting, but yet another example of that quality of like celestial and spiritual terms contained within the Word of the Lord.

"Confess" is celestial, "praise" spiritual:

What does the celestial term "confess" involve? Not confession of particular sins but of the Lord, His Wisdom, Goodness and Almighty Power. "I will confess the Lord" implies an acknowledgement by us that left to ourselves we are thoroughly self-centred and that in Him is everything of real value and virtue. And such confession is not simply an intellectual conviction; rather it pervades the whole will and life of the best regenerate people.

Strictly Judah is descriptive of that highest degree of human perfection found amongst the most exalted of the angels and is therefore spoken of in the Writings of the New Church as "the Celestial of Love". Yet that virtue can in a small measure be found in men and women on earth if true brotherly love called charity is already present in them. From "James", or "Jacob", which we have seen before represents charity, there is begotten a confession in mind, heart and life that "there is none good but One"; "I am nothing, Thou art all", which is involved in the name Judah or Judas, a confession especially characteristic of celestial angels.

Spiritual Meaning of Lebbaeus and Thaddaeus

The Teachings of the Church say nothing about either of these names, and therefore what is offered here is wholly tentative and conjectural.

Cordiality towards all men is not necessarily a spiritual virtue. It is an hereditary disposition and if it serves merely as a veneer to conceal interior selfishness it is of no permanent value to us at all, for in the eyes of heaven and the Lord the quality of all our worldly behaviour is determined by our interior motives and love. The Lord does not of course intend the genial people of the world to become less genial persons; rather let them engage in self-examination and repentance so that what is outwardly so acceptable may be invested with wisdom and love from above and become inwardly acceptable too. Behind heartiness, good-nature and forbearance can lurk conceit and self-love, and they are not Christian virtues (Thaddaeus in us) until we undergo a change of heart and mind.

If there is a connection between the names of Judas and Thaddaeus, it must be concluded that the latter describes the former as to its external aspect. The celestial disposition involving total reliance upon the goodness and truth of the Lord and therefore confession in one's whole being of Him, must in ordinary everyday affairs manifest itself as that heartiness that is typical of Divine love which seeks the eternal and temporal happiness of others. Indeed, the Doctrines of the Second Advent show that only with the highest celestial types are men's everyday activities truly worthy of the Lord. In every stage of spiritual development below the celestial the external is being made to conform whilst the inward character undergoes change. We learn what is true, act from a sense of duty, follow

the dictates of our conscience and thus compel ourselves to act aright (stages of the new birth represented by Reuben, Simeon and Levi, the first three of Jacob's sons). The Judah stage, however is one of love, which is established within and flows down into man's worldly life; and the world sees that love as "heartiness". "Hearty Judas" represents it seems "The Expression in life of the Celestial of Love".

<i>Hebrew</i>	(LEBhABh)		<i>Aramaic</i> (TADh)		<i>Hebrew</i> JEHUDAH
<i>Greek</i>	LEBBAIOS		THADDAIOS		JOUDAS
<i>English</i>	LEBBAEUS		THADDAEUS		JUDAH, JUDAS, JUDE
	\		/		
<i>Meaning</i>		HEARTY			CONFESSED
<i>Spiritual Meaning</i>		EXPRESSION IN THE LIFE OF CELESTIAL LOVE			

PART XIII – JUDAS ISCARIOT

The Man

His father's name was Simon. He came from Kerioth in Judah and was not therefore a Galilean like the other eleven. After his call to discipleship, he became the "treasurer", carrying a box into which well-wishers placed contributions, and from which he paid for the material necessities of the Lord and His disciples or gave to the poor. These few facts alone concerning Judas Iscariot seem to be indisputable. All else – why our Lord who perceived the man's character ever called him, his reasons for accepting the call, why he became a traitor, and how he met his end – is so confusing that one writer calls the Judas story "an unsolved conundrum".

Why indeed did He choose such a man if, as John's Gospel declares, "Jesus knew from the first... who it was that should betray Him"? To ensure that the prophecy, "Even my bosom friend in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted up his head against me," would be literally fulfilled? (This idea is propounded in Hugh J. Schonfield's recently published book entitled *The Passover Plot*). To such questions we must positively reply that a loving God does not set traps to precipitate any man's downfall, nor will He use him merely as a tool for the execution of His purposes. All men in every age, Judas Iscariot's included, in the eyes of the Lord are ends in themselves, not simply means to an end.

The man Judas must have been invited by our Lord to serve as one of the Twelve because he could have become a good Christian and a pillar of the nascent Christian church. But alas, of his own free-will he consented to the will of the devil who "put it into the heart of

Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him". What Judas did was foreseen by the Lord, but not pre-determined by Him.

Some people have doubted the sincerity of this disciple's acceptance of the Lord's call and have suggested not only that his future actions were perceived by Him but also that he was intent on treachery from the very start. Others find it difficult to believe that a secret agent in the employment of the Pharisees, as he has been depicted, could exercise those spiritual powers with which all Twelve were invested when sent out two by two to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Those who assume that Judas' intentions were initially honourable are left to consider why he subsequently turned traitor. The Gospel suggests that he was motivated by greed (he habitually "helped himself" to the contents of the box he carried on behalf of them all) but few will be satisfied with that explanation alone. Would any man, even the most covetous of men, sell another for a mere \$500, the present-day equivalent of 30 pieces of silver? Other motives must have been there too, the most probable being that despite all he had heard, he still entertained visions of this Jesus of Nazareth as a political leader who, by means of the supernatural powers within Him, could cast off the yoke of Roman rule and make the Jews a great independent nation in the world. By securing His arrest, it is thought, Judas hoped to compel the Lord to employ such great powers to save himself from condemnation and thereby demonstrate them to all the world. When however he saw that our Lord would not so save Himself but instead was ready to die a criminal's death, Judas repented of his actions and destroyed himself.

One last problem must be discussed. What did Judas in fact do after the arrest of Jesus? The first Gospel states that a repentant Judas having returned the 30 silver pieces to the Temple committed suicide and that the chief priests then purchased with the money a field to serve as a cemetery for aliens.

The Acts of the Apostles however, declares that Judas himself bought the field where a sudden terrible end overtook him.

Meaning of Names

See the previous chapter in this booklet for details concerning the meaning of the name "Judas" ("praised", or rather "confessed").

The English spelling "Iscaiot" represents the Greek "Iskariotes" which is derived from two Hebrew words, "Ish Kerioth". "Ish" is one of two common words for a "man" (compounded, for example, in Ishbosheth, "man of shame") and the place-name "Kerioth" means "cities".

Spiritual Meaning

In this series it has already been asserted that the final quartet of the Apostles relate to the virtue we call "charity" and are associated with our delights, affections, and love. Nominated last of these four and indeed of the Twelve Judas represents the lowest of human delights, namely of touch, taste, smell, hearing and seeing.

Now, these "sensual and worldly delights" are not the invention of the devil, as some have imagined, but they are part of the whole pattern of life which the Good Lord sets before us. Although the hells endeavour to corrupt us by

entering into these delights, their origin is nonetheless divine. Judas appears in the word of the Lord both as a disciple and as a traitor to impress upon men the truth that their urge to gratify natural appetites exists in regenerate and unregenerate souls alike. The good Christian indulges with moderation in sensual pleasures because they help to preserve him in a state of mental and physical healthiness without which he could not discharge his daily responsibilities, while a bad Christian pursues the same types of pleasures merely to satisfy himself.

A present-day disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ must be a living example of the principle embodied in the statement: "Charity itself is to act justly and faithfully in the office, business and employment in which one is engaged, and towards those with whom one has any dealings". There comes a time however, at the end of the day or the week, when his enthusiasm wanes and his body is tired. To refresh himself he engages in certain activities or pastimes which facilitate the restoration of mental and physical energies and which the Teachings of the New Church call "diversions of charity" since the will to serve the Lord and the neighbour is being temporarily diverted into another channel. And the Lord is then present or "confessed" by that disciple not only in his deepest resolve to live for Him but also in his most exterior sensual affections. Judas the disciple represents such a good man.

The traitor Judas however denotes for us a human condition in which the avoidance of pain and the pursuit of pleasure become an end in themselves. The hells enter in, as the devil entered Judas' heart, and they are allowed by men to persuade them to forsake what is spiritual and divine and to live only for themselves. When the devil is admitted by us into our minds

and lives he ensures that we are "led away by sensual and worldly delights".

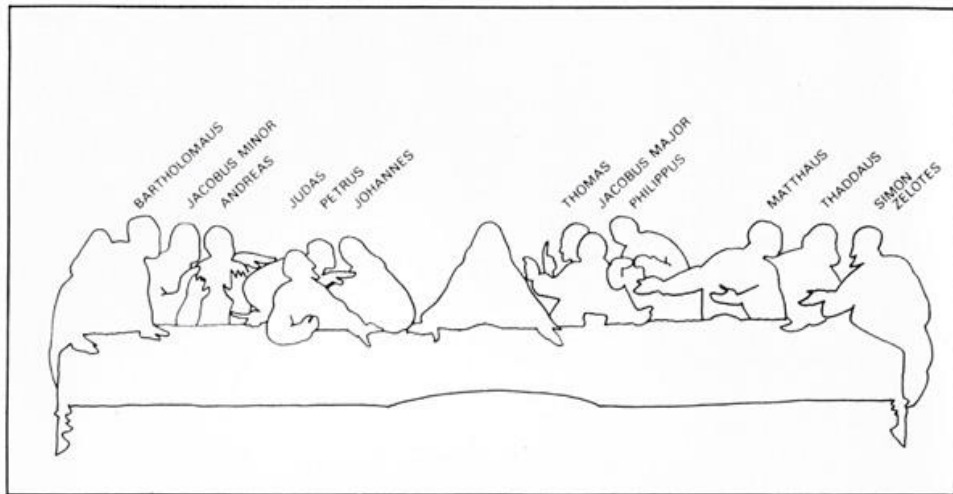
The Teachings of our Church aver that, when mankind fell from a state of pristine integrity, delights of the senses became an instrument of evil and selfishness. *Arcana Coelestia* 243 reads:

"In the most ancient celestial men the sensual things of the body were of such a character as to be compliant and subservient to their internal man, and beyond this they did not care for them. But after they had begun to love themselves, they set the things of sense before the internal man, and therefore those things were separated, became corporeal, and so were condemned".

The twofold signification of Judas, disciple and betrayer, can be focused also through his name "Iscariot", or "man of cities". In the Divine Word a city signifies doctrine, that is, knowledge of truth brought together into a coherent system. (The Holy City, New Jerusalem, describes the New Church as to its doctrine). Now men can find delight in the Teachings of the Word either because they lead to this intelligence and wisdom without which they cannot live the unselfish life of service or because the world will account them wise. Selfish or unselfish motives can lead us to become "a man of Cities".

Moreover what is said about Judas and "the box" leads to the same point of doctrine. Into the human memory valuable items of knowledge are placed, and an honest disciple of any era draws upon the wealth of his knowledge (be it much or little) to provide what is necessary for the life of religion. An unfaithful disciple appropriates what he holds in trust from and for the Lord to gratify his own desires.

Judas Iscariot, disciple and traitor, thus represents all external sensual delights which are enjoyed aright by those who strive to love and serve their Lord, but which are instruments of the devil in men who entertain him and in consequence would hand over to destruction all else that is the Lord's with them.



By disciples are meant all those who worship the Lord and live according to the truths of His Word.

Swedenborg: *Apocalypse Revealed* 325.

