

# A GREAT REVELATION

By BASIL LAZER, 1975

*"When the Lord is with any one, He leads him and provides that all things which happen, whether sad or joyful, befall him for good. This is the Divine Providence."* ARCANA COELESTIA 6302.

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Have you ever felt dissatisfied with religion, as we know it today, where so many vital questions are left unanswered? Did you ever have a longing to know God - what He is like; how He operates and what He meant when He said: *"I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."* (John 14: 3)

Have you ever wondered what would become of you after physical death; if it really mattered how you lived your life on this earth and if there were actually such places as heaven and hell? In contemplating modern life, with its never-ending rapacity, intolerance and instability, have you ever asked yourself: "What does it all amount to and is there any sense or reason behind it all?" If you have felt any of these things it will perhaps give you some idea of my outlook before I was introduced to a set of books which I can only describe as the greatest revelation of my life. That was nine years ago and I have since studied all of these great books and am now re-reading them. People say things happen by chance, but I have learned that there is no such thing as chance, but that the Divine Providence is ceaselessly at work in our lives preparing us for our future state when we depart from this world. However, I would like to begin by telling you something of my search for spiritual light and the effect it had on me when I finally found it.

I was familiar with the Bible, particularly the New Testament, but I had never found a Church which demonstrated the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ in a practical way. I tried many of them, but the impression I gained was that for the most part they were doing the Lord's cause more harm than good. There seemed to be no love, understanding, sincerity or tolerance, as taught by the Lord. They gave "stones for bread" and one came away from them feeling a complete lack of upliftment or joy. On the surface these people were quite polite, but you had the feeling that they were entirely wrapped up in themselves and their own affairs, and anyone who did not think and act as they did, simply did not "belong" and were treated as outcasts. All of which made me most unhappy with my (so-called) religious associations, from which I derived neither comfort nor hope. I had come to the spiritual cross-roads, as it were, and was vainly seeking for a living, inspiring faith in which I could really believe.

Also, I despaired of ever finding a religion that would satisfy both my spiritual and intellectual hunger. It was at this point of spiritual desolation that the Lord led me to HEAVEN AND HELL, then to other Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg and thus into the New Church. And here is how it all happened.

While spending a holiday with some friends, I was introduced to someone, who, like myself was also seeking spiritual truth. We had many interesting talks and just before the conclusion of my visit, an absorbing discussion developed on the mode of life which awaited us after death. My new friend then mentioned that, in answer to an advertisement, he had received a book which described life after death in both heaven and hell. I was amazed at this and said it did not seem possible for such a book to be authentic, as the idea seemed utterly fantastic; but he said he was greatly impressed with it and felt it could be true. As he was a man of great integrity with a wide knowledge of the Scriptures, I did not doubt his word, but found it very hard to accept his statement. I then asked to see the book, and he produced a copy of HEAVEN AND HELL. I was eager to borrow it, but he said he would not part with it for even a short time, as it was much too precious. This roused my curiosity and I wondered how the book could have made such an impression on him. He then gave me the address from which he had obtained it and I made up my mind to send for a copy.

So, after returning to Canberra from my holiday, I wrote away for a copy of this book and could hardly wait for it to arrive. You see, in spite of all my disappointments, I still had a great spiritual hunger which had

never been satisfied. A few days later I received the book and sat down to read it with great eagerness. Would I be disappointed? Would it be just another cold exposition? Was I expecting too much, or would it contain the spiritual enlightenment for which I had vainly sought for so many years? These were the thoughts running through my mind, as I began to read the excellent introduction.

How can I describe my first reactions to HEAVEN AND HELL? As I began to read it I was shocked and amazed at what it said about some of the erroneous beliefs on which I had been fed, but how thankful I am now that I did not discard it in anger. Among other things, I felt - deep down inside me - that it could be true. It gripped me in a way no other book has ever done, although it was like a deluge of icy cold water to my spiritual thinking, as the veil was lifted before my astonished eyes and I read an eye witness account of what actually takes place in the world of spirits and heaven and hell. The flimsy spiritual foundation of my life seemed to disintegrate and it began to dawn on me, that if this was all true, I would have to completely recast my spiritual thinking.

I had never heard of Emanuel Swedenborg - the great genius whom the Lord chose some 200 years ago to reveal to mankind the spiritual meaning of the Scriptures, and through whose pen the Lord has manifested His Second Coming to the world. Up till then, I had no idea that such a book could ever have been written, as its whole conception was utterly different from anything in my experience. At first I did not know what to make of it and read it with mixed feelings. This was because I was inclined to be prejudiced against any new spiritual revelations, after having been misinformed and deluded on numerous occasions by other religious sects and organisations, each of whom claimed to be God's Elect. However, after recovering from the first rude shock, I prayed to the Lord to show me if there was anything false in the book, that I might not be led astray, particularly as the things it expressed were so startling and new. After this, I was given a definite assurance in my heart that it was true, so putting aside all the old ideas and clearing my mind of all the dross with which I had previously filled it, I began to re-read the book; but this time with an open mind. I was determined to let it speak for itself and my patience and tolerance were rewarded beyond all expectations.

As I read, I marked many passages which greatly impressed me, and although I could not bring myself to accept everything it said (it was some time before I could do this) I did find myself agreeing with a great deal of it, as it appealed to my common sense and seemed so feasible. It also stressed the importance of love, almost in the very words I had used to certain people, that faith alone, without repentance, love and good works was dead, no matter how much Bible knowledge one had, or how many times one attended Church.

When I had finished reading HEAVEN AND HELL, I had a great desire to study more of Swedenborg's Writings, so selecting some titles from the back of the book, I wrote away for them, little realising what wonderful revelations were in store for me. The next book I read was THE NEW JERUSALEM AND ITS HEAVENLY DOCTRINE.

It was this book which really made me aware of the fact that I would have to do something drastic about my life, if I ever hoped to reach heaven. I was particularly impressed with the chapters on "Repentance and Remission of Sins" and "Regeneration and Temptation". This book made me examine myself as never before, and as I read that our sins are not really forgiven, but remitted only to the extent to which we refrain from committing them, or cherishing them in our thoughts, I began to ask myself where I stood in this regard and had to admit that there were many things which were causing me to turn away from the Lord and have conjunction with hell. This was something quite different to the easy going method of the people, who say all you need do to be saved is to declare that Jesus Christ died for your sins and that you are cleansed from all blame through His sacrifice on the cross.

Then I read: "A man who is examining himself in order to carry out repentance, should examine his thoughts and the intentions of his will, to discover there what things he would do if permitted, that is, if he had no fear of the law, or of losing reputation, honour or monetary advantage. A man's evils are in his thoughts and intentions. It is from them that all evil actions done with the body proceed. Those who do not examine into the evils of their thought and will, cannot carry out repentance, for they afterwards continue

to think and will the same things as before; yet it is in the willing of evils that evils are committed. This is the meaning of self-examination."

"With every man there are evil spirits and good spirits; the evil spirits are in his evils and the good spirits in his goods. When the evil spirits come near, they bring out his evils and the good spirits, on the other hand, bring out his goods. Hence there is conflict and combat from which the man feels interior anguish of mind, and this is temptation. It can therefore be seen that temptations are not brought about from heaven, but from hell. God tempts no one."

"In temptations what is being fought out is whether good shall have dominion over evil, or evil over good. The evil which wants to gain dominion is in the Natural or External man, while the good is in the Spiritual or Internal man. If evil wins, then the Natural man rules; but if good wins, then the Spiritual man rules." The Lord alone fights on man's behalf in temptations and conquers for him.

Unless a man believes this, the temptation he undergoes is only an external one and of no help to him."

I pondered these new-found truths very deeply and then asked the Lord to show me how to put them into practice. My prayer was answered, in that for the first time I began to gain victories over temptations in my life. It was not easy for me, as there was no one of my acquaintance who knew anything about the Writings and even if they had, would have rejected them as heretic and of the devil, because they exposed once and for all the great erroneous doctrine of justification by faith alone. Such is the spiritual darkness into which many people have fallen, because they have closed their minds to truth and flee from anything which unsettles their spiritual complacency. Here, I would like to add that the New Church minister, through whom I had obtained the Writings, corresponded with me regularly and greatly encouraged me in the new stand I was taking. He was a tremendous help (and still is) and never once let me down by failing to answer, to my entire satisfaction, the many questions I put to him.

In a way, I was fortunate in not being able to discuss these great truths with sceptical people, who, in their ignorance, would have tried to turn me against them. Although I found it very difficult to discard many false notions I had previously thought were true, the Lord in His Divine Providence, led me to a gradual acceptance of these revelations, until I reached the stage when I had no doubt whatever that they could have come from only one Source - the Lord Himself.

That has been my experience through the Writings in the nine years I have known them, and there is no other experience to equal it. These books have definitely changed my life for the better and the Lord has thus opened an entirely new avenue in my Christian experience, which will, I feel, have eternal consequences. I think the main reason for this was because, on reading these great revelations, I not only believed them - I wanted to live them. So, by putting them into practice, I was able to demonstrate that they were true.

Other books of the Writings I have read and greatly appreciated are:- DIVINE PROVIDENCE, TRUE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, THE FOUR DOCTRINES, THE LAST JUDGMENT, EARTHS IN THE UNIVERSE, DIVINE LOVE & WISDOM, ARCANA COELESTIA (12 Vols.), APOCALYPSE REVEALED, BRIEF EXPOSITION, CONJUGIAL LOVE, CORONIS, APOCALYPSE EXPLAINED (6 Vols.), DOCTRINE OF USES, CHARITY and THE WHITE HORSE.

Although these great books are all wonderful and inspiring, they are also extremely practical and contain much which can be applied to daily life. I am writing this because I believe there are many others in the world, who like myself, would derive great benefit from these books and because I am firmly convinced that only the Lord Himself could have written such Divine revelations through His dedicated and faithful servant, Emanuel Swedenborg.

A few months after I became convinced that the Writings were indeed spiritual truth from the Lord and presented revelations which were entirely new to the world, I joined the New Church. This Church (which is also known as the Church of the New Jerusalem) was formed as a direct result of the Lord manifesting Himself in His Second Coming through the great books mentioned above, and is also the Church foretold in the Book of Revelation (Chapters 21 and 22). As for me, for the first time in my life I feel that at last I have found a religion, a belief and a Church which are all one would hope for. And, perhaps most important of

all, the Divine revelations contained in these books have made the Lord far more real and wonderful to me, than I would have ever thought possible. I feel I am really beginning to know Him and to understand something of the great Divine Love, Wisdom and Order behind every aspect of creation in the universe. I don't doubt any more, nor am I vaguely sailing on an "uncharted spiritual sea", like a ship without compass or rudder. For the first time I know where I am going and what comes after the death of the natural body. It is all revealed in these great books. The Lord has kept nothing back. This, in turn, has given me a new hope and assurance, not only for this life, but especially for the great spiritual life which we will all enter after death, which will continue to eternity and beside which this life is but a passing shadow.

**Here are a few more quotations from these amazing books:-**

We may gather that inwardly we are spirits from the fact that after we depart from our bodies which happens when we die, we are still alive and just as human as ever. Even while we are living in our bodies, each one of us is in a community with spirits as to our own spirits even though we are unaware of it. Good people are in angelic communities by means of [their spirits] and evil people are in hellish communities. Further, we come into those same communities when we die. (HEAVEN AND HELL 437-438)

No explanation is necessary to see that we need to be led away from our evils in order to be reformed, since if we are given to evil in this world, we will be given to evil after we leave this world. This means that if our evil is not set aside in this world, it cannot be set aside afterwards. The tree lies where it falls; and so too our life retains its basic quality when we die. We are all judged according to our deeds. It is not that these deeds are tallied up but that we return to them and behave the same. Death is a continuation of life, with the difference that then we cannot be reformed. (DIVINE PROVIDENCE 277)

Since we all live forever after death, then, and are assigned places either in heaven or in hell depending on how we have lived, and since both heaven and hell are necessarily in a form that causes them to act as unities, and since none of us can be assigned to any place in that form except our own, it follows that the human race throughout the whole world is under the Lord's supervision, and that each one of us is being led by him in the slightest details, from infancy to the end of life, with a particular place foreseen and provided for. (DIVINE PROVIDENCE 203)

A person's duty to cleanse himself from evils is like a servant coming in with his face or clothes filthy with soot or dung, and going to his master and saying: 'Please wash me, Sir.' Would not the master say to him: 'You foolish servant, what is this you say? Look, here are water, soap and a towel; haven't you got hands and the power to use them? Wash yourself.' So the Lord God will say: 'The means of cleansing I have provided; and you have been given by me the power to will and act. So use the gifts and talents I have given you, and you will be cleansed.' (TRUE CHRISTIAN RELIGION 436)

A man who fights against evils cannot but do so as of himself, for one who does not fight as of himself does not do so at all, but stands like an automaton that sees nothing and does nothing, and from evil he is continually thinking in favor of evil, and not against it. But be it well known that it is the Lord alone who fights in a man against his evils, and that it only appears to the man that he fights of himself, and also that the Lord wills that it should so appear to him, because without this appearance no combat takes place and therefore no reformation. (DOCTRINE OF LIFE 96)

The current belief is that charity is no more than doing good, and that then a person does no evil; consequently it is the first thing in charity to do good and the second not to do evil. But the exact opposite is the case. The first thing in charity is to banish evil, and the second is to do good. For it is a universal law in the spiritual world, and so also in the natural world, that so far as a person does not will evil, he wills good. So in as far as he turns away from hell, from where all evil comes up, so far does he turn towards heaven, from where all good comes down. And in the same way, to the extent that anyone rejects the devil, so far does the Lord accept him. No one can stand between the two twisting his neck around so as to pray simultaneously to both. (TRUE CHRISTIAN RELIGION 437)

As man was created to perform uses, and this is to love the neighbor, so all who come into heaven, however many there are, must do uses. All the delight and blessedness of these is according to uses and to the love of uses. Heavenly joy is from no other source. He who believes that such joy is possible in idleness

is much deceived. No idle person is tolerated even in hell. Those who are there are in workhouses and under a judge who imposes tasks on the prisoners that they must do daily. To those who do not do them neither food nor clothing is given, but they stand hungry and naked; thus are they compelled to work there. The difference is that in hell uses are done from fear, but in heaven from love; and fear does not give joy, but love does.

(APOCALYPSE EXPLAINED 1194)

"Those who confirm themselves in doctrine and life, that faith alone, without good works, justifies and saves, close heaven against themselves by making excuse for evil works. They do this by saying and believing that evils are not seen by God; or that they are remitted in the case of those who have faith, or (according to some) with those who have the confidence of faith, and (according to others) with those who are justified by faith. Many of them, therefore, think insanely in this way; 'Of what importance is it to do good, when good does not save me; and what does it matter if I do evils, when evils do not condemn me? I am in grace because I have faith.'

And so they live to themselves and the world, neither abstaining from evil because it is evil, nor doing good because it is good. And if they do abstain from evil, it is from fear of the civil law and the loss of reputation, and not from any fear of the Divine Law and of the loss of eternal life. And if they do good, it is from the love of reward and not from the love of God; and yet according to the quality of his life, such is the man."

(APOCALYPSE EXPLAINED 797)

No one, though, should believe that we have wisdom if we know a lot, grasp what we know fairly clearly, and can talk about things intelligently. We are wise only if these abilities are united to love. Love is what produces wisdom, through its desires. If wisdom is not united to love it is like a meteor in the sky that vanishes, like a falling star. Wisdom united to love is like the constant light of the sun and like a fixed star. We have a love for wisdom to the extent that we fight off the demonic horde--our cravings for whatever is evil and false.

(DIVINE PROVIDENCE 35)

Evil people are constantly and intentionally leading themselves deeper into their evils. We say they are doing this intentionally because everything evil comes from us. We turn the goodness that comes from the Lord into evil, as already noted. The basic reason evil people lead themselves deeper into evil is that they are making their way farther and farther into hellish communities, getting in deeper and deeper as they intend and do what is evil. This increases their pleasure in evil as well, and it takes possession of their thoughts to the point that nothing feels more gratifying. Furthermore, when we have made our way farther and deeper into hellish communities, we are wrapped up in chains, so to speak, though as long as we are living in this world, we do not feel them as chains. They feel like soft linen or slender threads of silk that we like because they caress us. After death, though, the softness of the chains turns hard, and the caresses start to chafe.

If we consider theft, robbery, plunder, vengeance, domineering, profiteering, and the like, we can recognize this growth of the pleasure we find in evil. Do not the people who are committing these evils feel surges of pleasure as things go well and as obstacles to their efforts vanish? It is well known that thieves get such pleasure from theft that they cannot stop stealing; and strange as it sounds, they love one stolen coin more than ten coins freely given. It would be the same for adulterers if things were not so arranged that the power to commit this evil decreases as it is abused. Still, though, for many people the pleasure of thinking and talking about it is still there, and if nothing else, there is the insistent urge to touch.

What people do not realize is that this is happening because they are making their way farther and farther, deeper and deeper, into hellish communities as they commit these evils intentionally and consciously. If the evils occur in our thoughts only and not in our volition, we are not with the evil in some hellish community yet. We enter such a community when the evils are in our volition as well. If at that time we are also conscious that this evil is against the laws of the Ten Commandments, and if we regard these laws as divine, and still deliberately do it, this sends us down so deep that the only way we can be rescued is by active repentance.

(DIVINE PROVIDENCE 296 -3-5)

"Everyone knows, or may know, that evil originates from hell and that good is from heaven. Consequently, everyone may know that so far as man shuns evil and turns away from it, so far he shuns and turns away from hell. So too, he may know that so far as anyone shuns evil and turns away from it, so far he wills and loves good; and consequently to that extent he is brought out of hell by the Lord and led to heaven. These things every rational man may see, providing he knows that there is a heaven and a hell and that evil and good are from their own respective sources.

If we make these two acknowledgments, we simply reflect on the evils within ourselves and, to the extent that we abstain and turn from them as sins, throw them back into the hell they came from. Is there anyone who does not know--or who cannot know--that what is evil comes from hell and what is good comes from heaven? Can anyone, then, fail to see that we abstain from hell and turn away from it to the extent that we abstain and turn away from evil? On this basis, can anyone fail to see that we intend and love what is good to the extent that we abstain and turn away from evil, and that in fact the Lord releases us from hell to that same extent and leads us to heaven? All rational people can see this provided they know that hell and heaven exist and know where evil and good come from. If, then, we reflect on the evils in ourselves, which is the same as self-examination, and abstain from them, then we extricate ourselves from hell, turn our backs on it, and make our way into heaven where we see the Lord face to face. We may say that we are doing this, but we are doing it in apparent autonomy, and therefore from the Lord.

When we acknowledge this truth from a good heart and a devout faith, then it is subtly present from then on in everything we seem to ourselves to be thinking and doing, the way fertility is present in a seed at every step until the formation of a new seed, or the way there is pleasure in our appetite for the food that we realize is good for us. In a word, it is like the heart and soul of everything we think and do.

(DIVINE PROVIDENCE 321-7)

There is also something I can say from experience, because I have been allowed to talk with angels. I have talked with some who lived many centuries ago, with some from before the Flood and some from after it, with some from the time of the Lord, with one of his apostles, and with many who lived in subsequent centuries. They all looked like people in the prime of life and told me that the only thing they knew about death was that it was damnation.

When people who have lived good lives get to heaven, they all enter the young adulthood of their earthly lives and keep it forever, even though they had been old and debilitated in the world. Women, even women who had become old and frail in the world, return to the flower of youth and beauty.

(DIVINE PROVIDENCE 324-4)

### **The Resuscitation of Man from the Dead and his Entrance into Eternal Life**

When the body is no longer able to perform its functions in the natural world corresponding to the thoughts and affections of his spirit which he has from the spiritual world, then man is said to die. This takes place when the respiration of the lungs and the beatings of the heart cease. But yet the man does not die; he is merely separated from the corporeal part that was of use to him in the world, for the man himself lives. It is said that the man himself lives, since man is not a man because of his body but because of his spirit, for it is the spirit in man that thinks, and thought with affection makes man. Hence it is clear that the man when he dies merely passes from one world into another. And this is why in the Word in its internal sense "death" signifies resurrection and continuation of life.

There is an inmost communication of the spirit with the breathing and with the beating of the heart, the spirit's thought communicating with the breathing, and its affection, which is of love, with the heart;<sup>1</sup> consequently, when these two motions cease in the body there is at once a separation. These two motions, namely, the respiration of the lungs and the beating of the heart, are the very bonds on the sundering of which the spirit is left to itself; and the body, being then deprived of the life of its spirit, grows cold and begins to decay. This inmost communication of the spirit of man is with the respiration and with the heart, because on these all vital motions depend, not only in general but in every part.

After the separation, the spirit of man continues in the body for a short time, but only until the heart's action has wholly ceased, which happens variously in accord with the diseased condition from which a man dies, with some the motion of the heart continuing for some time, with others not so long. As soon as this motion ceases the man is resuscitated; but this is done by the Lord alone. Resuscitation means the drawing forth of the spirit from the body, and its introduction into the spiritual world; this is commonly called the resurrection. The spirit is not separated from the body until the motion of the heart has ceased, for the reason that the heart corresponds to the affection that is of the love, which is the very life of man, for it is from love that everyone has vital heat; <sup>1</sup> consequently, as long as this conjunction continues, there is a correspondence, and thereby the life of the spirit in the body.

How this resuscitation is effected has both been told to me and shown to me in living experience. The actual experience was granted to me that I might know fully how it happens.

As to the senses of the body I was brought into a state of insensibility, thus nearly into the state of the dying, but with the interior life and thought remaining unimpaired, in order that I might perceive and retain in the memory the things that happened to me, and that happen to those who are resuscitated from the dead. I perceived that the respiration of the body was almost wholly taken away; but the interior respiration of the spirit went on in connection with a slight and tacit respiration of the body. Then at first a communication of the pulse of the heart with the celestial kingdom was established, because that kingdom corresponds to the heart in man. <sup>1</sup> Angels from that kingdom were seen, some at a distance, and two sitting near my head. Thus all my own affection was taken away although thought and perception continued.

I was in this state for some hours. Then the spirits who were around me withdrew, supposing that I was dead; and an aromatic odour like that of an embalmed body was perceived, for when the celestial angels are present everything pertaining to the corpse is perceived as aromatic, and when spirits perceive this they cannot approach; and in this way evil spirits are kept away from man's spirit when he is being introduced into eternal life. The angels seated at my head were silent, merely sharing their thoughts with mine; and when their thoughts are received, the angels know that the spirit of man is in a state in which it can be drawn forth from the body. This sharing of their thoughts was effected by looking into my face, for in this way in heaven thoughts are shared.

As thought and perception remained with me, that I might know and remember how resuscitation is effected, I perceived that the angels first tried to ascertain what my thought was, whether it was like the thought of those who are dying, which is usually about eternal life; also that they wished to keep my mind in that thought. Afterwards, I was told that the spirit of man is held in its last thought when the body expires, until it returns to the thoughts that are from its general or ruling affection in the world. Especially was I permitted to see and feel that there was a pulling and drawing forth, as it were, of the interiors of my mind, thus of my spirit, from the body; and I was told that this is from the Lord, and that the resurrection is thus effected.

The celestial angels who are with the one who is resuscitated do not withdraw from him, because they love everyone; but when the spirit is such that he can no longer be associated with celestial angels, he longs to get away from them. When this takes place, angels from the Lord's spiritual kingdom come, through whom is given the use of light; for before this he saw nothing, but merely thought. I was also shown how this happens. The angels appeared to roll off, as it were, a coat from the left eye towards the bridge of the nose, that the eye might be opened and be enabled to see. This is only an appearance, but to the spirit it seemed to be really done. When the coat thus seems to have been rolled off there is a slight sense of light, but very dim, like what is seen through the eyelids on first awakening from sleep. To me this dim light took on a heavenly hue, but I was told afterwards that the colour varies. Then something is felt to be gently rolled off from the face, and when this is done spiritual thought is induced. This rolling off from the face is also an appearance, which represents the spirit's passing from natural thought into spiritual thought. The angels are extremely careful that only such ideas as savour of love shall proceed from the one resuscitated. They now tell him that he is a spirit. When he has come into the enjoyment of light, the spiritual angels render to the new spirit every service he can possibly desire in that state, and teach him about the things

of the other life so far as he can comprehend them. But if he has no wish to be taught, the spirit longs to get away from the company of the angels. Nevertheless, the angels do not withdraw from him, but he separates himself from them; for the angels love everyone, and desire nothing so much as to render service, to teach, and to lead into heaven; this constitutes their highest delight. When the spirit has thus withdrawn, he is received by good spirits, and as long as he continues in their company everything possible is done for him. But if he had lived such a life in the world as would prevent his enjoying the company of the good, he longs to get away from them, and this experience is repeated until he comes into association with such as are in entire harmony with his life in the world; and with such he finds his own life, and what is surprising, he then leads a life like that which he led in the world.

This opening state of man's life after death lasts only a few days. How he is afterwards led from one state to another, and finally either into heaven or into hell, will be told in the things that follow. This, too, I have been permitted to know by much experience. (HEAVEN AND HELL 445-451)

(See also Nos. 453-535 of HEAVEN AND HELL for a full account of what takes place in the world of spirits after man's resurrection. These revelations are so wonderful, convincing and enlightening and are described so completely, that after reading them, no one need ever again have any doubts or fears about death and what awaits us when our spirit, or soul, leaves our earthly body. This should do much to dispel the misconceptions, dread and hopelessness with which many people view the thought of physical death.)

I have talked with some on the third day after their decease, when the things described above (449-450) took place. I also spoke with three whom I had known in the world, to whom I mentioned that arrangements were now being made for burying their bodies; I said, "for burying them"; on hearing which they were smitten with a kind of surprise, saying that they were alive, and that the thing that had served them in the world was what was being buried. Afterwards they wondered greatly that they had not believed in such a life after death while they lived in the body, and especially that scarcely any within the Church so believed. Those who, in the world, have not believed in any life of the soul after the life of the body are greatly ashamed when they find themselves to be alive. But those who have confirmed themselves in that disbelief seek association with their like, and are separated from those who have had faith. Such are for the most part attached to some infernal society, because they have also denied the Divine and have despised the truths of the Church. For so far as anyone confirms himself against the eternal life of his soul he confirms himself also against whatever pertains to heaven and the Church. (HEAVEN AND HELL 452)

When the spirit of man first enters the world of spirits, which takes place shortly after his resuscitation, as described above, his face and his tone of voice resemble those he had in the world, because he is then in the state of his exteriors, and his interiors are not as yet uncovered. This is man's first state after death. But subsequently his face is changed, and becomes entirely different, resembling his ruling affection or ruling love, in conformity with which the interiors of his mind had been while he was in the world and his spirit while it was in the body. For the face of a man's spirit differs greatly from the face of his body. The face of his body is from his parents, but the face of his spirit is from his affection, and is an image of it. The spirit comes into this affection after life in the body, and then exterior things are done away with and interior things are uncovered. This is man's second <sup>1</sup> state. I have seen some who have recently arrived from the world, and have recognized them from their face and speech; but seeing them afterwards I did not recognize them. Those who had been in good affections appeared with beautiful faces; but those who had been in evil affections with misshapen faces; for man's spirit, viewed in itself, is nothing but his affection; and the face is its outward form. Another reason why faces are changed is that in the other life no one is permitted to counterfeit affections that are not his own, and thus assume looks that are contrary to his love. All in the other life are brought into such a state as to speak as they think, and to manifest in their looks and gestures the inclinations of their will. And because of this the faces of all become forms and images of their affections; and in consequence all who have known each other in the world know each other in the world of spirits, but not in heaven nor in hell (HEAVEN AND HELL 457)

In disclosing his acts to a man after death, the angels to whom the office of searching is given then look into his face, and their search extends through the whole body, beginning with the fingers of one hand,



and the other, and thus proceeding through the whole. As I wondered at this the reason was given, namely, that as the single things of the thought and will have been inscribed on the brain, for their beginnings are there, so have they likewise been inscribed on the whole body, since all things of the thought and the will extend from their beginnings and there terminate as in their ultimates; and this is why the things that are inscribed on the memory from the will and consequent thought are inscribed not only on the brain, but also upon the whole man, and there, come into existence in order in accordance with the order of the parts of the body.

It was thus made clear that man as a whole is such as he is in his will and its thought, even to the extent that an evil man is his own evil, and a good man his own good. <sup>1</sup> From these things it can also be confirmed what is meant by the book of man's life spoken of in the Word, (Revelation 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12, 21:27 and elsewhere) namely, that all things that he has done and all things that he has thought are inscribed on the whole man, and when they are called forth from the memory they appear as if read in a book, and when the spirit is viewed in the light of heaven, they appear as in an image.

To all this I would add something remarkable in regard to the continuance of the memory after death, by which I was assured that not only things in general but also the minutest particulars that have entered the memory remain and are never obliterated. I saw books there containing writings as in the world, and was told that they were from the memory of those who wrote, and that there was not a single word lacking in them that was in a book written by the same person in the world; and thus all the minutest particulars might be drawn from one's memory, even those that he had forgotten in the world.

The reason also was disclosed, namely, that man has an external and an internal memory, an external memory belonging to his natural man, and an internal memory belonging to his spiritual man; and that every least thing that a man has thought, willed, spoken, done or even heard and seen is inscribed on his internal or spiritual memory; <sup>2</sup> and that the things there are never erased, since they are also inscribed on the spirit itself and on the members of its body, as has been said above; and that the spirit is thus formed in accordance with the thoughts and acts of its will. I know that these things seem to be a paradox, and are therefore believed with difficulty, but yet they are true. Let no one believe, then, that there is anything that a man has ever thought in himself or done in secret that can be concealed after death; but let him believe that all things and each single thing are then laid open as clear as day. (HEAVEN AND HELL 463)

### **Delights Changed Into Correspondences**

But the delights of life of those who have lived in the world in heavenly love are changed into such corresponding things as are in the heavens, which come into existence from the Sun of heaven and its light, that light presenting to view such things as have what is Divine inwardly concealed in them. The things that appear in that light affect the interiors of the minds of the angels, and at the same time the exteriors pertaining to their bodies; and as the Divine light, which is Divine Truth going forth from the Lord, flows into their minds opened by heavenly love, it presents outwardly such things as correspond to the delights of their love. It has already been shown, in the section on representatives and appearances in heaven ([170-176](#)), and in the section on the wisdom of the angels ([265-275](#)), that the things that appear to the sight in the heavens correspond to the interiors of angels, or to the things pertaining to their faith and love and thus to their intelligence and wisdom.

Having already begun to establish this point by examples from experience, to make clearer what has been previously said on the ground of causes of things, I would state briefly some particulars respecting the heavenly delights into which the natural delights of those who have lived in heavenly love in the world are changed. Those who have loved Divine truths and the Word from an interior affection, or from an affection of the truth itself dwell in the other life in light, in elevated places that appear like mountains, where they are continually in the light of heaven. They do not know what darkness is, like that of night in the world; they live also in a vernal temperature; there are presented to their view fields filled with grain and vineyards; in their houses everything glows as if from precious stones; and looking through the windows is like looking through pure crystal. Such are the delights of their vision; but these same things are interiorly delightful because of their being from correspondences with Divine heavenly things, for the truths from

the Word which they have loved correspond to fields of grain, vineyards, precious stones, windows, and crystals.

Those who have applied the doctrinals of the Church which are from the Word immediately to life, are in the inmost heaven, and surpass all others in their delights of wisdom. In every object they see what is Divine; the objects they see indeed with their eyes; but the corresponding Divine things flow in immediately into their minds and fill them with a blessedness that affects all their sensations. Thus, before their eyes all things seem to laugh, to play, and to live.

Those who have loved knowledges and have thereby cultivated their rational and acquired intelligence, and at the same time have acknowledged the Divine-in the other life have their pleasure in knowledges, and their rational delight changed into spiritual delight, which is delight in cognitions of good and truth. They dwell in gardens where flower beds and grass plots are seen beautifully arranged, with rows of trees round about, and arbours, and walks, the trees and flowers changing from day to day. The entire view imparts delight to their minds in a general way, and the variations in detail continually renew the delight; and as these correspond to Divine things, and they are in the knowledge of correspondences, they are constantly filled with new cognitions, and by these their spiritual rational is perfected. Their delights are such because gardens, flower beds, grass plots, and trees correspond to sciences, cognitions, and the resulting intelligence.

Those who have ascribed all things to the Divine, regarding nature as relatively dead and merely subservient to things spiritual, and have confirmed themselves in this view, are in heavenly light; and all things that appear before their eyes are made by that light transparent, and in their transparency exhibit innumerable variegations of light, which their internal sight takes in, as it were, directly, and from this they perceive interior delights. The things seen within their houses are as if made of diamonds, with similar variegations of light. The walls of their houses, as already said, are like crystal, and thus also transparent; and in them seemingly flowing forms representative of heavenly things are seen also with unceasing variety, and this because such transparency corresponds to the understanding when it has been enlightened by the Lord and when the shadows that arise from a belief in, and love for natural things have been removed. With reference to such things and infinite others, it is said by those who have been in heaven that they have seen what eye has never seen; and from a perception of Divine things communicated to them by those who are there, that they have heard what ear has never heard.

Those who have not acted in secret ways, but have been willing to have all that they have thought made known so far as civil life would permit, because their thoughts have all been in accord with what is honest and just from the Divine-in heaven have faces full of light; and in that light every least affection and thought is seen in the face as in its form, and in their speech and actions they are like images of their affections. Such, therefore, are more loved than others. While they are speaking the face becomes a little obscured; but as soon as they have spoken, the things they have said become plainly manifest all at once in the face. And as all the objects that come into existence round about them correspond to their interiors, these assume such an appearance that others can clearly perceive what they represent and signify. Spirits who have found delight in clandestine acts, when they see such at a distance flee from them, and appear to themselves to creep away from them like serpents.

Those who have regarded adulteries as abominable, and have lived in a chaste love of marriage, are more than all others in the order and form of heaven, and therefore in all beauty, and continue unceasingly in the flower of youth. The delights of their love are ineffable, and increase to eternity; for all the delights and joys of heaven flow into that love, because that love descends from the conjunction of the Lord with heaven and with the Church, and in general from the conjunction of good and truth, which conjunction is heaven itself in general, and with each angel in particular. What their external delights are, it is impossible to describe in human words. These are only a few of the things that have been told about the correspondences of the delights of those who are in heavenly love.

From these things it can be known that the delights of all are changed after death into their correspondences, while the love itself continues to eternity. This is true of conjugal love, of the love of justice, honesty, goodness and truth, the love of knowledges and of cognitions, the love of intelligence and

wisdom, and the rest. From these loves, delights flow like streams from their fountain; and these continue; but when raised from natural to spiritual delights they are exalted to a higher degree.

(HEAVEN AND HELL 489-490)

### **Divine Love & Wisdom.**

Nothing is done in or through the body except from volition and through thought; and since these two are acting, every element of volition and thought must necessarily be present within the act. They cannot be separated. This is why we draw conclusions on the basis of deeds or works about each other's purposeful thought, which we refer to as "intent."

I have learned that angels can sense and see from someone's single deed or work everything about the intention and thought of the one who is doing it. From the person's volition, angels of the third heaven see the purpose for which it is being done, and angels of the second heaven see the means through which the purpose is working. This is why deeds and works are so often mandated in the Word, and why it says that we are known by our works. (DIVINE LOVE & WISDOM 215)

According to angelic wisdom, unless volition and discernment, or desire and thought, or charity and faith, devote themselves to involvement in works or deeds whenever possible, they are nothing but passing breezes, so to speak, or images in the air that vanish. They first take on permanence in us and become part of our life when we perform and do them. The reason is that the final stage is the composite, vessel, and foundation of the prior stages.

Faith apart from good works is just this kind of airy nothing or image, and so are faith and charity apart from their practice. The only difference is that people who put faith and charity together know what is good and are able to intend and do it, but not people who are devoted to faith apart from charity.

(DIVINE LOVE & WISDOM 216)

There are two abilities within us, gifts from the Lord, that distinguish us from animals. One ability is that we can discern what is true and what is good. This ability is called "rationality," and is an ability of our discernment. The other ability is that we can do what is true and what is good. This ability is called "freedom," and is an ability of our volition. Because of our rationality, we can think what we want to think, either in favor of God or against God, in favor of our neighbor or against our neighbor. We can also intend and do what we are thinking, or when we see something evil and are afraid of the penalty, can use our freedom to refrain from doing it. It is because of these two abilities that we are human and are distinguished from animals.

These two abilities are gifts from the Lord within us. They come from him constantly and are never taken away, for if they were taken away, that would be the end of our humanity. The Lord lives in each of us, in the good and the evil alike, in these two abilities. They are the Lord's dwelling in the human race, which is why everyone, whether good or evil, lives forever. However, the Lord's dwelling within us is more intimate as we use these abilities to open the higher levels. By opening them, we come into consciousness of higher levels of love and wisdom and so come closer to the Lord. It makes sense, then, that as these levels are opened, we are in the Lord and the Lord is in us. (DIVINE LOVE & WISDOM 240)

Anyone who has any sense at all and has not become inwardly convinced of false principles on the grounds of intellectual pride, on hearing people talk about higher things or on reading about them understands, retains them, and eventually affirms them if there is any desire for learning. This holds true for evil and good people alike. Even evil people who at heart deny the divine gifts of the church can understand, discuss, and preach higher things, and can defend them in scholarly writing. However, when they are left on their own to think about them, their thinking is based on their hellish self-centeredness, and they deny them. We can see from this that our discernment can be in spiritual light even though our volition may not be in spiritual warmth.

It also follows from this that our discernment does not lead our volition, or that wisdom does not give rise to love. It merely teaches and shows the way. It teaches how we should live and shows us the way we should follow. It also follows from this that our volition leads our discernment and gets it to work in unison

with itself. The love that is the substance of our volition gives the name of "wisdom" to whatever in our discernment it finds harmonious.

I will be showing below that on its own, apart from discernment, our volition accomplishes nothing. Everything it does, it does in conjunction with our discernment. However, our volition gains the cooperation of our discernment by flowing into it, and not the other way around.

(DIVINE LOVE & WISDOM 244)

There are three levels of the human mind called earthly, spiritual, and heavenly; that these levels can be opened in us in sequence; that the earthly level is opened first; and that afterward, if we abstain from evils as sins and turn to the Lord, the spiritual level is opened, and ultimately the heavenly level. Since the sequential opening of these levels depends on how we live, it follows that the two higher levels may also not be opened, in which case we stay on the earthly level, which is the most remote.

It is recognized in the world that we have an earthly self and a spiritual self, or an outer and an inner self. It is not recognized that the earthly self becomes spiritual by the opening of a higher level within, and that this opening is accomplished by a spiritual life, a life in accord with divine precepts, and that unless we live by these precepts, we remain centered on the physical world. (DIVINE LOVE & WISDOM 248)

(A detailed explanation of Degrees, including those of love and wisdom, spiritual and natural degrees in their successive and simultaneous order, the degrees of the natural mind and the origin of evil, as well as many other remarkable disclosures, may be found in Part 3 of DIVINE LOVE & WISDOM. This should prove a rich and rewarding field of study for those who wish to go more deeply into the Divine operation in all things, and thus see the perfect order through which the Lord works in every aspect of His creation.)

Even though we say that functions are useful because they relate to the Lord through us, we cannot say that they are from us for the sake of the Lord. They are from the Lord for our sake because all useful functions are infinitely united in the Lord, and none of them are in us except as gifts from the Lord. We can actually do nothing good on our own, only from the Lord, and the good we do is what we are calling useful functions. The essence of spiritual love is to do good to others for their sake and not for our own. This is infinitely more so in regard to the essence of divine love. It is like the love of parents for their children. They do good for them out of love, for the children's sake, not for their own sake. We can see this clearly in the love mothers have for their little ones.

People believe that because the Lord is to be revered, worshiped, and praised the Lord loves reverence, worship, and praise for his own sake. In fact, he loves them for our sake, because they bring us into a state where something divine can flow in and be felt. This is because by these activities we are removing that focus on self that prevents the inflow and acceptance. The focus on self that is self-love hardens and closes our heart. It is removed by our realization that in our own right we are nothing but evil and that nothing but what is good comes from the Lord. This yields the softening of heart and humility from which reverence and worship flow.

It follows from this that the purpose of the useful functions the Lord provides for himself through us is that he may bless us out of his love; and since this is what he loves to do, our receiving it is the joy of his love.

No one should believe that the Lord is with people who simply worship him. He makes his home with people who do his commandments--that is, his useful functions--and not with the others.

(DIVINE LOVE & WISDOM 335)

### **How our Intentions and Objectives are Manifested in our Spiritual Sphere After Death.**

Anyone who reflects may see that man has communication with heaven by means of internal things, for the whole of heaven dwells within internal things. Unless a person is in heaven as regards his thoughts and affections, that is, as regards the thoughts in his understanding and the affections in his will, he cannot go to heaven after death, since he has no communication with it at all. During his lifetime a person secures that communication by means of truths in his understanding and goods in his will, and unless he secures it

then he cannot do so subsequently, since his mind cannot be opened after death to interior things if it has not been opened to them during his lifetime.

Man is not immediately conscious of the fact that a spiritual sphere surrounds him, the nature of which is determined by the life of his affections. That sphere the angels are able to perceive more clearly than any aroma reaching the keenest sense of smell in the world. If in his life he has been interested only in external things, that is to say, in the pleasures that are gained from hatred against the neighbour, from consequent revenge and cruelty, from committing adultery, from self-aggrandizement and consequent contempt for others, from unseen acts of robbery, from avarice, from deceit, and from luxuriousness, and other vices like these, the spiritual sphere which surrounds him is as offensive as the aroma in the world coming from dead bodies, dung, stinking refuse, and other things such as these. Anyone who has been leading a life like this takes that sphere with him after death; and being entirely surrounded by that sphere he cannot exist anywhere else than in hell where such spheres belong.

People however who are interested in internal things - that is to say, who have taken delight in expressing good-will and charity towards the neighbour, and most of all who have found blessedness in love to the Lord - have a pleasing and lovely sphere surrounding them, which is the heavenly sphere itself; and for that reason they are in heaven. All the spheres which are perceived in the next life have their origin in the loves and in the affections deriving from those loves which have governed them. Such spheres have their origins as a consequence in their life, for their loves and affections derived from these loves constitute their life itself. And because they have their origins in their loves and affections derived from these they have their origins in the intentions and the ends in view which cause a person to will and to act in the way he does. For everyone has as his end in view that which he loves, and therefore a person's ends determine what his life is and constitute the essential nature of it; and this is the main source of the sphere around him. That sphere is perceived most perfectly in heaven the reason being that the sphere emanating from ends in view exists throughout the whole of heaven. These considerations show what someone is like whose interest is in internal things and what someone is like whose interest is in external ones, and why a person ought not to be interested only in external things but to be interested in internal ones also.

But someone who is interested only in external things pays no attention to internal ones - no matter how skillful he may be in the conduct of public affairs and no matter how great a reputation he has earned for being learned - because he is the kind of person who does not believe in the existence of anything which he does not see with his eyes or feel by touch, and therefore does not believe in heaven or in hell. And if he were told that he was going to enter the next life immediately after death, where he will see, hear, speak, and enjoy a sense of touch more perfectly than when in the body he would reject it as an absurdity or sheer fantasy, when in actual fact that happens to be the truth. His reaction would be the same if anyone were to tell him that the soul or spirit which lives after death is the real person and not the body which he carries around in the world.

From this it follows that those who are interested only in external things pay no attention at all to what is said concerning internal things, when yet it is these that make people blessed and happy in the kingdom which they are going to enter and in which they are going to live for ever. Such unbelief is present in most Christians, as I have been allowed to know from those to whom I have spoken who have entered the next life from the Christian world. For in the next life they are not able to conceal what they have thought since thoughts are laid completely bare there; nor are they able to conceal what ends they have had in view, that is, what they have loved, for this reveals itself through the sphere surrounding them.

(ARCANA COELESTIA 4464)

### **Love Toward the Neighbour**

A further reason why the life of evil desires leads to the confirmation of falsities is that those people do not know what heaven is or what hell is, nor also what love towards the neighbour is, and what self-love and love of the world are. If they did know what these were, indeed if they had merely the wish to know, their thoughts would be completely different. Who at the present day knows of love towards the neighbour as anything other than giving what he possesses to the poor, using his own wealth to help anyone else, and

doing good to him in every possible way, irrespective of whether he is good or wicked? And because by doing this he would deprive himself of his own resources and would make himself poor and wretched, he therefore casts aside teaching concerning charity and embraces that concerning faith. Then he uses many ideas to confirm himself against charity, that is to say, the idea that he is born in sins and as a consequence cannot by himself do anything good at all; and that if he does do the works of charity or genuine piety he inevitably places merit in them.

And when on the one hand he has thoughts like these, and on the other he is motivated by a life of evil desires, he associates himself with those who say that faith alone saves. In doing this he confirms himself all the more in that idea, until he is convinced that the works of charity are not necessary for salvation. Once these ideas have crystallized, he then easily accepts a new one - that because this is what a person is like the Lord has provided the means of salvation which is called faith. At length he accepts the idea that he is saved even in his final hour when he dies, provided that in confidence or trust he asks that God may be merciful to him by looking upon the Son as having suffered for his sake - giving no weight at all to what the Lord said in [John 1:12-13](#), and in a thousand places elsewhere. So it is that faith alone has been acknowledged within Churches as the essential thing. But the reason it is not acknowledged everywhere in this way is that parish priests can gain nothing from faith alone, only from preaching about works.

But if those same people had known what charity towards the neighbour really was they would never have fallen for this falsity that is taught. The fundamental requirement of charity is to act in an upright and just way in everything connected with one's duty or function. For example, if a judge punishes a wrong-doer in accordance with the laws, and does so out of zeal, he is moved by charity towards the neighbour, for he desires the reform, and so the good, of that person, as well as desiring what is good for the community and his country. He punishes him to prevent him doing further harm to the community, and so is able to love him if he is reformed - as a father loves a son whom he chastises - and in so doing loves the community and his country, which in general is his neighbour. The same applies to all other people in the duties or functions they perform. But in the Lord's Divine mercy these matters will be discussed more fully elsewhere.

(ARCANA COELESTIA 47302-3)

(An excellent summary of love toward the neighbour, or charity may be found in THE NEW JERUSALEM & ITS HEAVENLY DOCTRINE Nos. 84-105 and the whole subject of this fundamental Christian teaching in all its aspects is thoroughly covered in Chapter 7 of TRUE CHRISTIAN RELIGION. After a study of this chapter one has an entirely new conception of how the Lord means us to exercise love and charity in all spheres of our daily life.)

These are just a few significant quotations from the Writings, each book of which has something new and wonderful to offer in the way of Divine revelation and truth.

I cannot speak too highly of these remarkable books and strongly recommend them to all serious thinkers who are seeking spiritual enlightenment.

However, these wonderful teachings and revelations will be of no use to us unless we are prepared to apply them to our lives. We must be willing to say: "This concerns me, personally. What can I do about it? Where must I start?" It is only when we begin to think in this way, that the Lord can speak to our hearts through the Writings and show us how we can co-operate with Him as He gradually brings about our reformation and regeneration. It is my sincere hope that the preceding quotations and my own humble experience may help others to see what is involved in all this, in which case this booklet will not have been written in vain.

*"There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known."* (Luke 12: 2)

*"If you love me, keep my commandments."* (John 14: 15)

*"You are my friends if you do what I command."* (John 15: 14)

*"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* (John 16: 33)